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I spent the pseudo May-Day holiday weekend at a Philip Thorby course on Monteverdi's *L'incoronazione di Poppea*. This was organised by Kate Cullen, with local support from Roxana Gundry (who also let the family use her caravan on the coast). The singers were an ad hoc group, not necessarily "early" aficionados, of varying ability but very keen. I swapped my broken harpsichord for a new one by Colin Booth for the weekend (its first outing – I felt very privileged): it happened to be a twin to Roxy's, which was used by Philip. I've enjoyed such courses with him before and couldn't miss another go at *Poppea*, especially since he never does the same thing twice: his understanding of the music continually develops, and he has amazing insight and enthusiasm. It was, however, hard work for some of us. We started at 10 and finished at 6; with virtually all scenes being dialogues or monologues, the singers had plenty of rest, but the continuo (apart from two harpsichords, there were two theorbos, harp, cello and gamba) was there most of the time, and Philip did eight-hour stretches virtually without a break.

His current approach was one that until recently would have appalled me: enormous rhythmic flexibility. I had assumed that Monteverdi's rhythmic notation was so detailed that keeping to the tactus made it come out right – the singers just had to work within it. But no! I'm not sure how consciously Philip had thought it out, but it seemed to me that he had the tactus still behind the music, so that tempo fluctuations within the phrases gained tension from straining against it. And it avoided completely the usual vices of singers – slowing down at cadences and in particular hurrying across tied notes at the half-bar (what an effort it took to get that right when I was involved in Hickox's staging and then recording!) Philip's concern was to get the full characterisation out of each phrase, which, particularly in the angry dialogues, involved speeding up the short notes and overlapping entries. But sometimes he calmed the end of a phrase to prepare for the different mood of the next. The singers caught the style, especially Nerone and Poppea, who performed brilliantly: I hope to hear them again. As an opera, it's Macchiavellian, but I think that Monteverdi enjoyed setting each scene as human interactions and wasn't bothered about the more complex ideas of the librettist Busenello. CB

REVIEWS OF MUSIC

Clifford Bartlett

MERULA

Merula Curtio precipitato et altro capricci (1638) Edited by Phoebe Jevtovic (*Recent Researches in the Music of the Baroque Era*, 177) A-R Editions, 2012. xxii + 46pp, €70.00

This is an extraordinary publication. There are two long songs here: one I have written about several times as being incredibly moving, the other is probably incomprehensible to any listener. I first heard "Hor ch'è tempo di dormire" (*Canzonetta spirituale sopra alla nanna*) at a lunchtime recital in a small Cambridge church a decade or so ago performed by a Japanese soprano and lute duo¹ in an undemonstrative way that mesmerised me into the world of a mother lulling a baby but worrying about her Son's future. The singer seemed hardly to communicate with the audience, but drew it into the mother-child relationship, sustained by a two-note ground (A major minim, B flat semibreve figured 7 6). I've heard it several times since, and am always impressed. But beware the versions on You-Tube, which miss by various degrees the simplicity that this lullaby for Baby Jesus demands.

The contrast is the title song. It has a ludicrously vast range (C below the bass stave up to the E flat above middle C) and virtuosic bars of wide-ranging semiquavers. The text is deliberately bathetic and may have had some satirical meaning, but that is lost to us – the editor doesn't get anywhere near close enough to explicate the text. I can't see any relationship to Monteverdi's *Combattimento* that could have enough parodic reference to be witty. She has a paragraph on its hero, Marcus Curtius, who saved Rome from disaster in 362 BC, but no explanation why he should be a figure of fun. She says little about the other songs: indeed, the introduction is remarkably short compared with most A-R volumes. The usual presentation of texts and translations is included, though each piece needs some individual comment: it is difficult to get the tone of the ironies and parodies. But others deserve straight performance, especially the simple ones.

There are 16 songs. Nos 2-6 are for soprano or tenor, 7-9 are undesignated and 10-16 are for soprano. The accompaniment is just continuo, except that the closing "Sentirate una canzonetta" (a version of *Girometta*) has two bass parts (one just minim bottom Cs, the other quaver C G C G) and four alto-clef instrumental bars at the end. There are a few odd remarks about performance practice. The 1638 edition is not, as the editor claims, "very

lightly figured". Particularly when the source is in score, there's no great need for help except perhaps to show the 7 6 on the first two chords of "Hor ch'è tempo" until the voice enters. I don't see why the editor adds 5 6 in bars 55-57 of No. 2, where it's obvious. The remark on p. ix that "as there was no standardized frequency for pitches, transposition was a perfectly acceptable performance solution" is confusing. Pitch is unlikely to have varied much beyond a semitone, so transposition by a semitone is unlikely to be a serious consideration long before equal temperament was used; transposition could only go to sensible keys. A piece of information that is insignificant except that it's good to be tidy about birth and death dates is that Merula was baptised on 25 November 1595, which Grove Online should update from 1594-95.

This is a strange publication. Perhaps someone will come up with some meaningful context, but it's excellent that the Lullaby is more readily accessible than it was.

HILTON & JEFFREYS

John Hilton Three Dialogues... for solo voices and continuo Edited by Peter Holman & Cedric Lee Green Man Press. (Hil 1), 2012. 27pp + extra scores & bc, £11.80

George Jeffreys Six Motets... Edited by Derek Harrison Green Man Press, 2012. 21 pp + 2 extra scores & bc part. £7.90

John Hilton, born in 1599, was organist and parish clerk at St Margaret's Westminster from 1628 until his death in 1657. These pieces may have been written for a music local society. Peter Holman devotes a paragraph to ruling out the Italian influences that have been postulated, and favours influences of dialogues in court masques. All three survive in a group in the composer's hand. The first is secular – Juno, Venus and Pallas [Athene] each trying to persuade Paris to award her the golden ball. A concise story in 104 bars, of varying length – I wonder whether leaving the barring as in the original might put off non-specialist singers: I don't think their preservation is essential, and those who want to check can find the facsimile in Garland's *English Song Books* vol. 4. The voices are SSSB (alias G2G2G2F3). *King Solomon and the 2 Harlots* can be sung by two trebles and a bass (as the title-page indicates), though if a full cast is required, a third soprano is needed to set the scene. For reasons I don't understand, two empty bass staves appear at the beginning (my facsimile is packed away somewhere, so I can't check whether it is thus in the MS, but I doubt it) and why can't Solomon be the bass in the final trio. *Job, God, Satan, Job's wife, and the Messengers* could, if desired, be performed by

¹ I was sent a copy by a well-known Canadian singer; it seems to have come from a book or article by the German musicologist Silke Leopold.

SSSSSTBarB. At least four trebles are needed, since the four Messingers sing consecutively. Job is an alto, his wife presumably another treble. The opening shows the conventional C1C3C4F4 clefs, but I wonder if the styles of God and Satan might be influenced had God been notated in octave-treble (as equivalent of C4) rather than in bass, like the F4 Satan. Peter Holman stresses that the normal secular accompanying instrument was the theorbo, with the bass viol as alternative rather than a supplement. However, if you've only got a piano, you can still put on a performance and act out the drama.

Jeffreys is first heard of in 1631 as the composer of songs performed for the king in Cambridge in 1631 and became one of the two organists at Charles I's court at Oxford in 1643 – not a long-term appointment! He was a steward to the Hatton family from 1646 till his death in 1685. Most of his compositions seem to have been written for the court. The editor suggests that the duets might have been sung in church. The texts avoid specifically catholic content, though I suspect that they were intended for private use, not for church. Both solo parts are in tenor (C4) clef, so are not as high as modern singers would expect in tenor duets – apart from an occasional G, the top note is F – and they can be sung by boys or women up the octave. The music flows rather more than Hilton achieves, is well worth singing, and would be good practice for continuo players – though I'd recommend ignoring the realisation, which is often awkward because the editor insists on never doubling the voices. Organ is presumably the intended instrument, and there is good precedent and current experience that organ doubling is acceptable and often desirable. I think Derek Harrison should master my one-page guide to reading 17th-century basses. There's something wrong with the figuring in bar 17 of the first piece: the bracketed figures are unnecessary and all the Ds in the bar should be major. There is also an error in the text of the last item (footnote 4 to the separate text on p. 3). The first words of the antepenultimate line are printed *dieae nocte* and corrected to *dic nocte*: I presume the original underlay had *die et nocte*, with *e* & *i* indistinguishable on the reproduction. The underlay needs correcting on p. 19, bars 10–11. It is, however, odd that the erroneous version is in the text and the corrected version footnoted – I would have expected the other way round.

VITALI SONATAS

G.B. Vitali *Sonatas op. 5. Vol. 3 Sonatas 10–12* edited by Martin Perkins Edition HH (50 295), 2012. 28pp + parts, £24.95

I'm catching this edition rather late, thanks to not keeping in touch with HH. This must be the first publication by Martin that I've seen, and it is, not surprisingly, well done. There are two editions of the work, 1669 and 1677, with few differences. The 12 pieces are for two, three, four and five parts. Vol. 3 contains two pieces a4 (*La Sassatelli* and

Cappricio detto il Molza) and one a5 (*La Scalabrina*) – and don't ask me (or, probably, Martin) what the titles mean. They are scored for two violins, one (two in no 12) violas and violone (probably not 16') with a figured part headed *Organo*. They look interesting – no 10 begins with a chromatic fugue, and no. 11 is in F minor, though notated with one flat! If my assumption that the editions still followed earlier practice, sharps and flats that result in naturals being played are adjusted rather than using the sharp=major/flat=minor system. The other comment is probably more a matter of house style, but I find that printing bar lines right through a system is a bit distracting: they should, in fact, break before the continuo part

CHARPENTIER FOR CORPUS CHRISTI

Charpentier *Ave verum pour un reposoir*, H 329 & H 523 Édition de Louis Castelain Éditions du Centre de musique baroque de Versailles (CAH 236). 24pp, €

CMBV has a substantial catalogue of good and well-edited music, and I'm pleased that they have sent a couple of sample review copies. They look good, and those I have seen in passing seem well edited. The format is slightly larger than A4 – if French paper uses the standard A & B sizes, that must add a bit to the price – and the music is easy to read. The double Hitchcock numbers are unnecessary, since Charpentier makes clear that the *Ouverture dès que la procession paraît* immediately precedes *Ave verum corpus* and is explicitly linked. I would have thought that H. 329 (the motet) would be an adequate identification. It was written for Corpus Christi, 17 June 1683. The scoring is for two *flutes allemandes* and a *basse de flute*, with four-part strings (original clefs G1, C1, C2 & F4, transcribed as treble, two altos and bass) with *clavecin* (not *orgue*) sharing the bass line. Curiously, there are only five bass figures in the *Ouverture*, but the player doesn't need fuller information.

There are some detailed aspects of the presentation of this scoring that is puzzling. For instance, is there any significance in the second flute doubling the C1 *haute-contre* on the second stave but when solo, both flutes occupy the top stave; the violin duet is also set out in the same way, but the MS has the second part on the second (*haute-contre*) stave, but in the G1 clef: do the parts of the edition allocate it as *divisi* for the top part? And shouldn't the heading to the top stave preserve the plural *violons* (with or without the double l)? This is evidently not a piece for four strings and three flutes but a larger ensemble. I would, in fact, have preferred a more musicological heading to the staves, though the information is given in the commentary. If the occasion is a procession, there might be an advantage in carrying a harpsichord than an organ to the appropriate station, but organ is specified at "Esto nobis".² The vocal scoring is for two

2. I would also ask why the *haut-contre* part in those two clefs is printed in C3, suggesting that a normal viola is expected when clearly that is not

trebles (G2 & C1) and bass, with solos, and a duet of the trebles. A fine piece, well worth performing and well edited.

LECLAIR Op. 7/1

Leclair Concerto pour violon et orchestre, op. VII no 1. Édition de Louis Castelain Éditions du Centre de musique baroque de Versailles (CAH 237), 2012. Score: 26pp. Parts available

It is frustrating when customers order facsimiles of the Leclair concertos then fail to find decent scores – there's not a single concerto accessible by searching for "Petrucchi Leclair". The score is very welcome, and no doubt the parts will be much easier to read than the facsimiles: the original solo part has 13 or 14 staves per page (16 in Concerto 6), which is a bit of a strain to read, especially if you are at the stage of knowing it more-or-less by heart then suddenly needing to find the bit you are not sure of! The orchestral parts are not quite so bad. I can't judge the parts of the new edition though – a sample part or two should always be sent with review copies of orchestral scores to check that they have been produced sensibly. Parts are listed as being available, including separate ones for cello and organ – they are the same in the original print, so is the organ part realised? The edition explains that *organo* designates figured bass, which can be played on organ, harpsichord or theorbo, though was that really still a feature of French orchestras in the 1730s? The score tidies up a lot of little slips in the source, noted in the commentary. I hope the appearance of clean modern editions will encourage more frequent playing, and not just by the early-music experts.

If there was a cover note with the prices of these two CMBV publications, I'm afraid it has been mislaid. The price of the Charpentier score came up easily on the www, but I had no success in finding prices for the concerto.

SYMPHONIES FROM ZAÏS

Rameau Opera Omnia: Zaïs. Symphonies extraites de la partition d'orchestre Édition de Graham Sadler Bärenreiter (BA 7564), 2011. 62pp, £27.00

It is a good idea to publish the complete instrumental pieces from a French opera and let the performers choose their own suite rather than take one already fixed – and commendable that it is linked to the ongoing *Opera omnia*. I think I should have done that with Purcell's *Fairy Queen* and *King Arthur*, since I've produced so many ad hoc selections! In fact, the idea isn't new, since Maxwell Sobel published all the instrumental pieces from Leclair's *Scylla & Glaucus*. I often get requests for Rameau suites, and have nothing to offer except an extensive selection (by Gustav Leonhardt) from *Les Paladins* (26 movements), and

smaller suites from *Les Fêtes d'Hébé* (for Christophe Rousset) and *Les Boréades* (edited by Graham Sadler for Paul McCreesh): otherwise, I suggest enquirers contact Graham Sadler. The contents page lists the items in the original order and by key, speeding up the process of selection – a list by scoring would have been useful too. But it is difficult to perform a suite with any fluency if you have to turn from one place to another between movements – and any set of hired parts is likely to be unusable with tabs attached to the pages or large scribbles of arrows and page numbers. The solution, if I was doing it, would be to keep the parts on loose sheets and photocopy them when a customer requests a specific selection and order of movements – but I'm not sure if Bärenreiter is geared to do that. Nevertheless, the idea is commendable. The dramatic Overture is a marvellous demonstration of Rameau's imaginative orchestration (*le débrouillement du Chaos, et le choc des Éléments lorsqu'ils se sont séparés*). I hope advantage is taken of the availability of the music and that orchestras will try it.

HANDEL ORATORIOS

La Resurrezione, HWV 47 Vocal score. Bärenreiter (BA 4096-90) 2012. xv + 127pp, £27.00

Reviewing *La Resurrezione* is more straightforward than *Samson* (see below), chiefly because there were no revivals after the initial pair of performances. Changes were made between the autograph and these performances, but they were lost until 1960. The few copies from the autograph are unimportant, and the work was largely ignored. In the performing score, the opening was changed significantly. The introduction lists the first five items – what was printed by Chrysander and is the score available on-line. I hope that the full score (HHA I: 3) includes a section on the revival of the work, since it is one of Handel's few oratorios that was ignored until the early-music movement was under way and such information should be noted while the pioneer performers are still around. Christopher Hogwood recorded it in 1981, and I think he had performed it some years earlier, though I can't remember if it was before the QEH performance by Peter Holman not long after EB and CB married in 1975: I can date it fairly clearly, since Elaine pumped the organ/regal that I was playing.³ We used the Chrysander score, but I copied out the missing opening section, and the orchestral parts were based on a BBC set (copied, I think, for Charles Farncombe), but corrected. Performances have been given with increasing frequency over the last couple of decades, though it was still a rarity when I heard it at the first Berkeley Early Music Festival with Nic McGegan in 1990. I can't remember why we should have produced a typeset edition in 1993, based on the main sources – normally my preface would have mentioned it. But as far as I know, that was the only edition available until this recent HHA

the case. BC

3. Though memories differ: EB remembers pumping for Peter. Sadly, my corrected Chrysander and other info like the programme is mislaid.

one, by Terence Best, whose name is in small print on the back of the title page. The title page itself only mentions the arranger of the keyboard reduction, a fair amount of which is continuo realisation. I suspect that singers will now use the vocal score, though it's more expensive than our A4 complete score.

Any detailed study of accuracy needs to be done in a review of the full score, which I'm sure improves on detail over mine. The Preface is excellent, though the editor might have warned people that the revised version of Ursula Kirkendale's documentation has some rather dubious speculation on the events – I'm no expert, but Anthony Hicks was! I understand that Bärenreiter is responsible for the vocal scores, not the HHA – I probably mentioned some years ago that the accidentals in one phrase of *Israel in Egypt* was changed by Bärenreiter from the HHA score. Here the cast list includes *Choir*, when the editor makes very clear that the choir was merely the five soloists.

Händel Samson HWV 57 Vocal score. Bärenreiter (BA 4099-90) 2012. xix + 432pp, £45.50

Samson is one of Handel's most powerful oratorios, and it works well on stage. I've completely forgotten the Handel Opera Society production in 1970, but was extremely impressed by Harry Christophers' Buxton Festival staging in 2008 (see *EMR* 126). I checked to see what full scores I had on my shelves and found one from the 18th century (Arnold) and two 19th (English Handel Society edited by Rimbault, and Chrysander – available on-line) and four vocal scores (three from Novello, of which the most widely circulated is heavily cut, and one from Peters). There are no doubt other vocal scores, but the only 21st century full score is the Bärenreiter Halle Handel Edition, costing €585 (about £470: strangely, the on-line catalogue didn't come up with a UK price). The alternative is our copy of Chrysander which we sell at a tenth of the price.

Samson needed a proper modern edition and now there are two high-quality 21st-century vocal scores. Novello got in first with a fine version edited by Donald Burrows (£19.95). Bärenreiter doesn't name editor, Hans Dieter Clausen,⁴ on the title page but just the person responsible for the piano reduction, as in *La Resurrezione*, Andreas Köhs. I don't deny the skill of the reducer: it's a job I have rarely done and avoid – with the justification that any competent rehearsal pianist ought to be able to read most aria accompaniments, and choruses usually only need treble and bass lines, with the pianist doubling voices if needed. If they can't, I wonder what they learn at music college.⁵

4. known to Handel scholars for his 1972 study of Handel's conducting scores – performing scores seems to be the current term, since Handel's arms were more likely to be fingering the keys than waving at musicians.

5. Apart from a handful of potential top-grade soloists, who have probably made their name before entering academy or college, students need all-purpose keyboard skills, not the technique to play Liszt or Sorabji.

I could go through the scores in detail, but it might make easier reading if I sample one of the best-known pieces in the oratorio – “Let the bright Seraphim”, which I've known since my early years when a local soprano came and sung a couple of sacred solos at the annual church Women's Meeting service – I think my suspicion of vibrating sopranos derives from her! The obvious difference is solidity of the font. It's not so much actual size – for the first six systems, the BA⁶ typesetter could have imitated the NOV layout, and the overall difference is only between 21 and 22 systems (“lines” to those who don't know the technical term). The musical advantage of NOV is that it indicates the instrumentation, and adds a trumpet phrase on a separate stave in bars 5-6, which an accompanist might prefer to the repeated semiquavers of the violin: BA omits the violins but includes trumpet and viola on one stave. My inclination is normally to omit violas, however interesting their part may be.⁷ The general appearance is quite different BA is bolder, and some may prefer the cream paper; NOV's white can reflect bright light, but despite the smaller print, seems to me more elegant. What neither edition does is to show how to turn it into a *dal segno* aria so that it can be used as a solo: there's no objection to repeating bars 9 to 59 in a concert of music for soprano and trumpet, for instance, and judging by requests for separate parts for the movement, more want the aria only rather than the aria + chorus. (The older Novello editions treat it as a full da capo aria, with the last bar of the B section ending with a full semibreve.) NOV has a footnote stating that the libretto has the spelling *Seraphims* whereas Handel wrote that in bars 9 & 17 but *Seraphim* in bar 39.⁸ The user of BA has no idea that its *seraphim* is the less likely reading. Perhaps the editor was influenced by Luther's German translation as *Seraphim*.⁹ All other editions I have seen omit the S except Arnold, though a previous owner has crossed it out. Is it entirely for euphony or an attempt to correct Handel's supposed ignorance. Winton Dean's authoritative study of the Oratorios retains the S.

The main difference between the editions is their size and their price. In principle, including all the variant movements in the vocal score is ideal. But is it practical? NOV is 300 pages long, BA is 432. NOV weighs 840g, BA is 1190g. I won't repeat previous comments on that topic! The production of cheaper chorus scores isn't really a solution to the high price of vocal scores, since their price will

6. I'll abbreviate the publishers from here on.

7. I remember a chunk of a lecture in the late 1960s by Arthur Hutchings on the unexpected nature of some of Handel's viola parts, demonstrated by his singing first the obvious fill-in then what Handel wrote.

8. The only Biblical use of the word is in Isaiah 6.2, which is spelt *Seraphims* in the 1611 original, an on-line 1769 edition and modern editions. Cruden's concordance of the AV, published in 1737 (six years before *Samson*), also has that spelling. The Prayer Book Te Deum, however, has *Seraphin*.

9. Perhaps the German editor was influenced by Luther's translation: I don't have an 18th century copy, but the facsimile of the 1534 edition has *Seraphim*. This spelling is used in a sample of Latin versions. I'm not, of course, concerned with what is the correct spelling of the Hebrew.

increase even more since far fewer will be sold. NOV must have confidence that it will sell a lot more copies than BA to enable it to charge so much less, even though (I imagine) BA has a more world-wide impact than NOV and in general a greater musicological credibility. But BA is weighed down by over 100 pages of alternative versions while NOV has the important ones on only 20 pages. Perhaps it would be better to produce a standard version (the one that has circulated most widely) then make alternative movements as required available on pdf files. It would probably be less bother and less expensive than adding so much to the vocal score.

I've said nothing about the work itself. Despite the sample movement I chose to look at more closely (because of its popularity, not because I expected any great differences), there's very little to favour one score over the other apart from whether you want all the alternative versions or prefer the cheaper option. The success of new editions depends on price and marketing as well as the desire to include everything. But BA does have one asset that is not in NOV: a table of what was included in each of Handel's performances – an idea expanded from Burrows's *Messiah*!¹⁰

HANDEL'S OP. 3 for ORGAN SOLO

Handel's Celebrated 'Oboe' Concertos... edited by Gerald Gifford Edition H H (11 288), 2012. is + 60pp, £16 95

This is keyboard reduction of the op. 3 concertos, a mixed bunch of pieces concocted (perhaps not always by the composer) from early music by Handel. The title page describes them "as performed in Westminster Abbey at the Commemoration", i.e. the unwittingly premature celebration of the hundredth anniversary of Handel's birth, in 1784, "adapted for the Organ, Harpsichord or Piano forte", the instruments probably being in descending order of preference. No arranger is named, but the publisher was Hermond Wright, who claimed to be "Sole Proprietor of all the above Author's Works". The edition is fine (in editing and appearance), though from the couple of pages shown in facsimile, I wonder whether a transcription was necessary. A feature of the copy used (from St John's College, Cambridge) is it having been part of Samuel Butler's library. The author of *Erewhon* (is he still read? His idea of machines developing intelligence through natural selection – in a book published while Darwinism was still under suspicion – should keep it alive, though it is worth reading anyway) was a Handel fan: the introduction quotes his famous judgment: "Handel is so great and so simple that no one but a professional musician is unable to understand him."

I was interested to see how the notorious mistakes in the original parts of No. 3 were dealt with. The Adagio before

the fugue has the second bar omitted. The author of the solo sees that it doesn't work and transcribes just the chords. This can be corrected from the Chandos *Te Deum* (HG 37 p.76), but the editor instead takes a version from Arnold which probably has no direct Handelian source. The problem in the fugue is the missing bar after 80. The transcriber, surprisingly, doesn't just reproduce the keyboard fugue on which the movement was based, so misses the lost bar, but it isn't a disaster! Curiously, two of the concertos have a superfluous figured bass. Congratulations to Gerald Gifford for an excellent edition.

BREAK BREAD WITH THE HUNGRY

Bach Brich dem Hungrigen dein Brot... [Study score]. Bärenreiter (TP 1039), 2011. vi + 48pp, £8.50

Bach Brich dem Hungrigen dein Brot... Vocal score. Bärenreiter (BA 10 039-90), 2011. iv + 50pp, £7.00

This isn't a cantata that lives in my mind, but I think it should do so. The opening chorus (218 bars long) has an extraordinary instrumentation (2 recorders, 2 oboes and strings) used with great imagination, as is the first vocal entry. The alto aria is accompanied by oboe and solo violin, the bass by continuo alone, which requires some careful thought about the rhythms, and the soprano sings with smooth semiquavers from unison recorders. There is also one secco and one accompanied recit and a closing chorale. The nickname of the "Refugee Cantata" ceased to be valid after it was shown to date from six years after the relevant event – but the story of the rich man and Lazarus is still appropriate. The edition is based on NBA I:15. Both Breitkopf and Carus vocal scores are cheaper (£7.00), but I suspect this is the clearest to read.

ITALIAN 18TH-CENTURY MUSIC FROM LIM

Gaetano Greco 15 Toccate ed. by Friedrich Lippmann. LIM, 2012 (*Fondazione Arcadia*, 10) 31 + 60pp. €25.00

This volume presents a selection of the more musically satisfying toccatas for harpsichord (playable also on the organ) of Greco, chosen and edited by Lippmann, who has been working on this *oeuvre* since 1985. The rather too brief preface, editing criteria and notes are in Italian and in understandable if unidiomatic English (e.g. for *ligatures* read *ties*). The Greco entry in *Grove* by D. Fabris is duly footnoted, but the dubious hearsay recorded by Burney is quoted, uncorrected and without a page reference.

Greco (ca.1657-1728) was a Neapolitan composer, organist, violinist, and influential teacher; his composition pupils included Porpora, D. Scarlatti, Vinci, Porsile and possibly Pergolesi. Among his many harpsichord pieces, written presumably for learners, his *Intavolature per Cembalo* are single and multi-movement toccatas, closer in style to A. Scarlatti's than to Frescobaldi's, but generally shorter and lighter. While practically devoid of modulations, their

10. NB I don't have any edition of *Samson*, but BC prepared for Warwick Edwards of Glasgow University a version for hire some 20 years ago.

simplicity is an attribute of their “modernity” rather than a defect. They have enjoyable, easy passage work, with some arresting approaches to cadences (such as diminished chords on the raised IV or VII), and some written-out descending arpeggiation of long chords (elsewhere to be extemporized).

The editor apologizes for not adding rests to show an unvarying number of polyphonic voices, but this is a feature of Italian keyboard tablature, especially in toccatas, permitting full chords, doubled bass notes and two or three part writing, so this decision is welcome!

The two ornament symbols in the sources might have been interchangeable. Instead of preserving an uncertain distinction, the editor chooses to adopt one for ‘short’ shakes and one for ‘longer’ ones, obvious alternatives not normally needing two symbols, changing them as “necessary”. We can’t see these revisions, so we lose the chance to test other options. I’d be very curious to know if *tre.*, as opposed to *tr*, is found (as in D. Scarlatti, possibly for what Nicolò Pasquali called a ‘tremolato’ of three repeated notes). Lippmann also silently removed some ties. Again, it’s better to see and break them than not to know that they were suggested.

The sources are mid-18th century manuscript copies: five from Naples, one from Brussels, and one in the British Library. Lippmann lists only “the most important differences”, this not being an exhaustive critical edition. A distinction between editorial and original accidentals would enable the player at least to consider a few retrospective alterations.

Very interesting are the two complete versions of a 3-movement Toccata (Nc-22.1.22 *olim* M.S. 74 pp.55-68 and Nc-M.S. 71 ff. 3v-5r). Without complete notes we have to accept that the lower voice (in the 4th bar of the *Fuga*) is strangely missing in the 2nd version: I’m in favour of editorially correcting or at least adding “*sic*” to confirm such anomalies. Another possible typo, one that spoils a sequence, is in bar 21.

The limitations of these pieces, however, are part of their charm. As for earlier “toccatas” a four-octave harpsichord (C-c”) is sufficient. The keyboard style, if technically unchallenging, is very effective rhythmically, with imitations and contrapuntal textures which lie well for the hands. In some formal ways they are traditional, in style almost *galant*, juxtaposing long chords to be extemporaneously arpeggiated and passages in opening movements, fugatos and untitled pieces (one headed *Corrente*) typical of Italian sonatas in the following numbered movements. Some of these contain a few continuo figures, like several early ones of D. Scarlatti.

I’m sure we are indebted to Lippmann for having sifted through and selecting these works. You can then find and

view them, at least those in the Neapolitan manuscript sources, after free registration at www.internetculturale.it. Search Gaetano + Greco. The “tablature” equates to our modern keyboard notation, just using various clefs (including G1 and C4 for the right hand). Barbara Sachs

Giuseppe Sammartini *Cantate a voce sola* ed. by Mariateresa Dellaborra. LIM, 2011. (Fondazione Arcadia, 7) 78 + 108pp €25.00

This excellent critical edition presents all nine surviving secular solo cantatas by Giuseppe Sammartini (1695-1750), primarily a composer of instrumental music. What a wonderful surprise they are! Four are very low for soprano (b flat /b to e”/f#”), two normal (d’-g”), and two of the three requiring a pair of violins require a wide range, from a to g” and a comparable technique. *Solitudine campestre* is high (f’-b flat”) and has harpsichord obbligato sections in both its arias as introductions, codas and interludes.

It certainly warrants the exemplary editing and presentation of the musical and poetical texts found here. There may be a few small hurdles, as well as chuckles, for the reader of the English translation: there being no footnotes in the music, all discrepancies and editorial decisions are given in the commentary; some of the introduction was so awkward that I had to look at the original Italian to be sure what it meant, but clumsy expressions elsewhere are understandable. The translations of the poetic texts are reliable, and the Italian version footnotes variant spellings and words found in musical settings by other composers. The modernization of spellings, accents and punctuation aids comprehension and pronunciation, though *altri’ n braccio* is an obvious typo for *altri’ n* and a few cases of *à* appear, an archaic relic that the transcription criteria promised to eliminate.

The music contains original marks for articulation, dynamics, embellishments and continuo figures. In addition, Sammartini offers us a convenient “have your cake and eat it” solution to the problem of accompanying truncated cadences. Under the vocal appoggiatura, falling a 4th from I to V before the final tonic chord, the continuo is silent under the appoggiatura, entering with a short chord under the 2nd note (V), in order to play the tonic chord without delay. This means that the dominant chord doesn’t clash with the appoggiatura, nor does it have to be “saved” by an ungrateful 5/4, nor is the cadence postponed until after the singer has ended.

Every one of these cantatas looks inviting, as indeed the impact of the Italian cantata style in England in the 1730s must have been. Barbara Sachs

Giovanni Battista Sammartini *Cantate per la Quaresima - Il pianto degli angeli della pace* (J-C 119) ed. by Maria Vaccarini Gallarini LIM, 2011 (Fondazione Arcadia, 8) 78 + 84pp €25.00

G. B. Sammartini (1700-1775) was the younger brother of Giuseppe. The entry in Grove by N. Jenkins and B. Churgin (who catalogued his works, of which this is 119) calls this Lenten cantata, dating from 1751, "outstanding among his sacred output". Scored for 2 trumpets, 2 oboes and strings with three soloists (SAT), the crying angels of peace (Alliance, Testament and Grace), who together sing *Amare lagrime* – twice after the overture and again at the end of the cantata (it is reprinted in full). In addition to a few short recits each angel has a longer one preceding his accompanied aria. The 2nd aria has cello obbligato added to the orchestra. (According to contemporary accounts, a gift of chocolate to the priest who gave the sermons cost over three times the fee to the solo cellist and seven times the rent for the harpsichord.)

The edition includes a perfectly legible facsimile of the three-page Italian libretto, without transcription or translation. The introduction, source information, critical apparatus and editorial remarks are translated in full. The music is taken from MS scores by Sigismund Keller in 1873 and 1880, probably made from no longer extant parts; early parts survive only for the string *Introduzione*. Combining all of these has required Maria Vaccarini to consider a myriad of differences in articulations, bowings, figurations, rhythmic details, etc., some of which were possibly marks by players rather than copyists. Her commentary is very detailed, if not exhaustive. I am surprised that she silently suppressed ties between small smaller values in the continuo, considering them "without motive", transcribing them with longer values instead. I'd be the Devil's Advocate vying with the Angels: perhaps they suggest optional chord repetitions or harmonic changes? Only the recits have sparse continuo figures, and therefore original ties always give extra clues. The editor also suppressed conflicting dotted or lombardic rhythms, but it may suffice to know that plain quavers might be so performed *ad libitum*.

Sammartini was extremely important for the development of the early classical style, and yet this dramatic and lyrical cantata, from his middle period, still exploits the musical expressivity of the earlier Italian cantata in rendering the changing poetic figures. The rich, sophisticated orchestral writing not only accompanies, but also introduces each aria.

Barbara Sachs

EMBELLISHING ADAGIOS

Carlo Zuccari *The true method of playing an adagio: a facsimile edition of the 1762 publication with an Introduction and Commentary by Christopher Hogwood* Edition HH (290 fac), 2012 xi + 15pp, £1.85

Zuccari (1704-92) was an Italian violinist with a wide-ranging career, including membership of the Italian Opera orchestra in London in 1760-64. His collection of 12 one-page Adagios with bass, plain treble and embellished

treble are instructive, despite not being by a well-known musician. His suggestions are by no means routine, and are useful for hinting when not to add anything. The editor puts them into context, finishing with a list of don'ts from an amateur Italian player 1779 which all embellishers should know. Google Petrucci Zuccari for five concertos and a set of sonatas in facsimile, together with the work reviewed here. Unfortunately, the black on white image is clearer to read than the rather dark background of the HH edition: the paper looks much too dark, and I wonder if the final copy came out with less contrast than the proofs. This edition, however, does have the advantage of the editor's introduction and critical commentary.

Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro adapted for Covent Garden, 1819* Edited by Christina Fuhrmann A-R Editions (N 55), 2012. [xx] + 270pp, \$252.00

I'm not quite sure what to make of this. The idea is good – such adaptations are part of operatic history, and to understand the ethos of the period, one needs to have some experience of them. But I guess that, if any are to be revived, it would be better to use examples that are not based on the major works of the repertoire. It's difficult enough to compare the familiar with the unknown, and even more so if the known has (rightly) such an exalted status. And so much is missing, including finales. But as far as it goes, it is fascinating. The editor's introduction is excellent, opening up a musical world that is often passed over. All interested in how operas were adapted in the time of Bishop should read it, but if you want to perform it, you will probably have to undertake an enormous amount of work.

I seem to be concentrating in this issue even more than usual on non-musical aspects such as lay out, but there are simple ways that would have made the edition more user-friendly. Here are a few specific comments.

- For easy reference, the list of movements in Table 1 should be numbered.
- The first page of each movement should have a footnote repeating the source information of the table (to save turning back to the introduction or on to the critical report, which is difficult to locate quickly since it isn't at the end of the volume.
- The single-system-per-page for ensembles not only wastes space, but gives the wrong impression of the importance of ensembles and exaggerates the impression of the contrapuntal ability of the composer. Print can be smaller, parts amalgamated on fewer staves, and the chorus put on two rather than four staves – I wonder if the person responsible for the layout has experience in vocal scores.
- What's the point of including fragments of instrumental scores as an appendix to a vocal score.

The back of the title page has the usual phrase about study

or performance. But there's no mention of a full score or parts. It's not clear whether the editor has actually produced a performable version. This seems to me to be an incomplete document, and it might have been better to have chosen a more reconstructable opera, or at least include information that the editor has typeset a full score available either through A-R or independently, or perhaps on-line. (Googling "Bishop Marriage of Figaro" hit several references to this edition and a performance next month of the Mozart opera at the Bishop's Palace, Salisbury – not in Bishop's version.)

I assume that A-R survives primarily on subscriptions rather than individual sales, so this will circulate anyway. It is a fascinating document, but I doubt if any except the rich will buy personal copies.

BOOK REVIEW – THE TRUMPET

John Wallace and Alexander McGratton *The Trumpet*
Yale UP, 2011. xx + 338 pp, £30.00. ISBN 978 0 300 11230 6

This starts from Gilgamesh and finishes, slightly prematurely, in 2004. Obviously, to the extent this is aimed at a specific audience, we are not concerned with the latter part of the book, though quite how late or early is debatable. I am not sure that the opening sections are really relevant. There are various ways of defining a trumpet. Personally, I have never thought of a didgeridoo being one. In view of the picture of Bach's trumpeter Reiche holding a curled instrument, perhaps horn and trumpet were still not entirely separated, but on the whole it seems reasonable to assume that a trumpet is a metal tube that has a blowable hole or mouthpiece at one end and a flare at the other; it can be straight, but if folded it has straight sections. It is usual to distinguish the trumpet as natural or valved, though the "natural" trumpet is some way down the development of the instrument.

The book tries to deal with the physical nature of the trumpet, the social circumstances in which it flourished, and what sort of music it played. 338 pages is rather a short span in which to cover so much, and one criticism is that many players will feel that the place devoted to the music itself is not helpful enough in extending their repertoire. Others will need more on technique. The book is well balanced but perhaps not specific enough on some topics.

A couple of Saturdays ago, I came home after spending a day on the Brussels Mass by, perhaps, Biber.¹¹ I was curious to see if the book mentioned it. It didn't. I wasn't too surprised – music of dubious authorship tends to get ignored. But the Salzburg Mass is probably genuine, and

bears the name of the place where it was performed. But the only mention of that distinguished musical establishment in the book was three pieces by Biber's son (one being for nine trumpets. But both masses use trumpets brilliantly, and the 53-part Salzburg Mass is easily accessible. I've played that five times (organ, not trumpet), but a single performance of the 24-part "Brussels" mass (also for Salzburg) struck me as being better music. It has a choir of four trumpets and timps, the Salzburg mass has two such groups. The score of the Brussels mass happened to fall open at the "Et resurrexit", which begins with fifteen bars for two trumpets playing quite virtuosically in anticipation of the two soprano solos (but with a wider range than the singers, up to top C) as an exciting prelude to the new section of the text. There are other sections when the trumpets are far away from loud simplicity. I'm not saying that the Brussels Mass is special, merely that there is more to worth writing about than can be encompassed here.

The countries covered are chiefly Italy, Middle-Europe, France and England. Surely the Spaniards used trumpets for more than fanfares? There is just a passing mention to the Lisbon court partbooks of c.1770 with 54 sonatas requiring up to four choirs of six trumpets.¹²

I was puzzled that so much was said about the cornett: it reminded me of days when Gabrieli canzonas were played by trumpets, whereas he scored nothing that was playable by them. Only much later in the 17th century were some solo lines written for trumpet or cornetto. I was impressed by the way virtually all Handel's significant trumpet parts were neatly mentioned – though I didn't notice any reference to the opening of the last movement of his *Ode for St. Cecilia's Day*. The table listing the cantatas with trumpet(s) in Bach's first and second cycle is revealing – far more included trumpets than I would have guessed, especially the number of small-scale arias with a solo trumpet relating to the soloist and not featuring fanfares.

The book is as fluent to read as such a book can be expected to be, information seems accurate, music examples are to the point (and not printed so big that a couple of players can read them on a music stand), footnotes are usually there when you want them, there's an extensive bibliography (though no references to editions of music) and a thorough index of names (though not of many pieces).

Two books are held over to the next issue:

Mary Tiffany Ferer *Music and Ceremony at the Choir of Charles V* (Boydell Press)

Laurence Decobert (CMBV)

11. "Brussels" is the title only because the MS is there. On the strength of a day's workshop, I reckon that I now have more faith in his authorship than I did after the 2004 Prom. for which BC edited it.

12. But no reference to the source. A friend of BC is preparing an edition: brian.clark@primalamusica.com

TUDWAY: NO MERE COPYIST

Hugh Keyte

The Choral Music of Thomas Tudway (c.1650-1726) The Choir and Orchestra of Ferdinand's Consort, Stephen Bullamore 77' 13"

Priory PRCD 1034

Is it true? Jubilate, Magnificat, My heart rejoices, Nunc dimittis, Sing O heavens, Te Deum Wimpole

It's a real achievement to have ferreted out, edited and recorded first-rate music by a known English composer that has somehow slipped through the net: not only that, but produced such enjoyable performances that – if the record sells as it deserves – Thomas Tudway's name should take its place alongside those of such contemporaries as Blow, Humfrey and Wise, who had been his fellow Chapel Royal choristers in the early days of the Restoration.¹

The CD comprises a Magnificat and Nunc dimittis that were presumably written for King's, Cambridge, where Tudway was organist from 1670 until his death in 1726; the oddly-titled anthem *Is it true that God will dwell with men?*, composed for the 1702 re-opening of the chapel after the installation of the new pavement; the anthem *Sing, O heavens*, which boasts a very early (and delightful) use of an organ trumpet stop; and three generously-scaled items with orchestra that were composed for an occasion that seems never to have materialised, the consecration of the new chapel of the Tudor Wimpole Hall², near Cambridge: the anthem *My heart rejoiceth in the Lord* and the morning canticles *Te Deum* and *Jubilate*.

To my ear, the evening canticles are a good deal more impressive than, say, the familiar set by Daniel Purcell, though they do reflect the parlous state of treble choristers at the time, allotting most of the text to ATB soloists. But the solo writing has a beguiling intricacy that suggests that Tudway's lay clerks were of a much higher standard: indeed, the men of any cathedral and collegiate chapels who might now think of adding them to their repertory will need to have agile tonsils. The same is true of *Is it true?* Where Tudway has such a fertility of invention and firm grip on structure that there's never that feeling of semi-meandering that mars so much large-scale Restoration church music. Full choir is more prominent in the infectiously celebratory *Sing, O heavens*. But with the Wimpole Hall items we enter another world, with assured and endlessly varied orchestral writing and a truly leisurely scale: *My heart rejoiceth* is over sixteen minutes long, the *Te Deum* (which adds trumpet to the oboes and strings) a full twenty-four minutes, the *Jubilate* almost nine. The canticles in particular are splendid works which

would grace the opening service of an early-music festival.

The ten voices of Ferdinand's Consort cope never less than adequately with the sometimes fairly hair-raising demands of Tudway's solo writing. And they balance well with the single strings, pair of oboes, and occasional trumpet, the spacious acoustic and impressive 1704 Renatus Harris organ of St. Botolph's, Aldgate (stylishly played by Edmund Aldhouse) facilitating a satisfyingly rich tutti, though I feel that the voices in the solo sections are a touch too distant throughout the recording. (The organ is a Goetz and Gwynne restoration to its state after John Byfield's 1744 adaptation, but with the original Harris pitch and temperament.)

A minor quibble concerns the booklet. There are too many small errors in the texts, the artists' biographies seem over-inflated for the context, and the information on the music, fascinating though it is, is a little short on background. For example, it would have been helpful to explain that the text of *Is it true?* (for the King's chapel re-opening) is taken from Solomon's sonorous oration at the dedication of the First Temple. And many listeners will share my initial puzzlement concerning *My heart rejoiceth*. The composite text was carefully geared to its original context, the celebrations of the Peace of Utrecht, but why should an anthem that dwells first on the divinely-assisted trouncing of one's enemies and then on the establishing of peace have been deemed appropriate to the consecration of a country-house chapel? We need a little more information about the man who built it: Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford, a devoted patron of the Arts whose vast library survives as the British Library's Harley Collection. He had effectively been Queen Anne's prime minister during the latter part of the War of the Spanish Succession and brokered the 1713 Utrecht Treaty that ended it, so the proposed recycling of this anthem would have constituted a feisty assertion of his former status, in defiance of the political enemies who had engineered his fall from power 1614 and two-year stint in the Tower.

Quibbles aside, this is a record that should appeal to early-music lovers in general, and not just to church musicians. And more power to Priory Records' arm for taking a chance on such out-of-the-way repertory.

Stephen Bullamore is currently preparing an edition of the complete works of another neglected composer, John Weldon. Score and parts of all the items on this CD are available on hire from him at info@stephenbullamore.co.uk

CB

1. He has hitherto been known for his copying of church music.

2. Construction of the present Wimpole Hall began in 1640.

FINDING A FINER SONG

John Potter

The 12th century Conductus repertoire has always been a bit mysterious for singers and musicologists. It's a huge collection of stuff and no one's quite sure what it was all for, and being mostly for one or two voices it's not most people's first choice of material for modern concert programmes. Last October fellow tenors Christopher O'Gorman, Rogers Covey-Crump and I recorded a selection of 12th century music for Hyperion as the first 'outcome' of the AHRC-funded *Cantum Pulciorum Invenire* project run from the University of Southampton by Mark Everist. The big musicological problem with the *conductus* is rhythm: many of the pieces have a mixture of syllabic sections that carry the poetry, and longer purely 'musical' stretches sung mainly on a single vowel, the *cauda* or tail (often longer than the beast itself). The latter are notated in one of the rhythmic modes, but the bits which tell the story have rhythm but no metre.

The very idea of polyphony not having metre was incomprehensible to most 20th century musicologists, so editors generally strait-jacketed the music into the generic medieval rum-ti-tum, even though they must have known that this could not possibly have been how much of it worked. In due course it came to be the norm for most recordings of medieval polyphony too, which, beautifully sung though many of them are, often completely misrepresent the music as it was originally conceived. One of the principal research questions of *Cantum pulciorum invenire* (or the *Conductus* project as we call the performance arm) was to come up with a solution which better acknowledged the conceptual subtlety of conductus rhythm, and to record a series of CDs that would give a more historically appropriate idea of what it might have sounded like (at least in terms of its rhythm).

If you come from my sort of chorister background it's drummed into you from a very early age that reproducing what's in the score is basically what you do. It provides the shortest and most efficient route to the music. The discipline that this engenders in young children is probably one of the main reasons that it has taken early musicians so many generations to free themselves from the rigorous interpretation of scores that were never intended to be taken literally. It's also the reason many professional singers are reluctant to sing from facsimile or original notation: why add extra doses of homework before you can make the actual music? If you're a busy singer you simply don't have the time. When I was an academic I occasionally came across enterprising students who wanted to sing from original notation and while encouraging their endeavours I always played devil's advocate, believing that the gains were rarely outweighed by the pain.

But... it's never too late! In the case of the *Conductus* project it soon became obvious that the original notation might contain vital clues to understanding a lost performance practice – sometimes modal rhythm is specified, sometimes it isn't, so there was no escape. We took our first tentative steps last spring, sight-reading from facsimiles of the Florence MS alongside Mark Everist's team of musicologists. It was often hilarious, with we three tenors frequently all at sea. Like most of our fellow performers we're very much of the get-there-by-the-shortest-possible-route school of practical vocalism, and reading from facsimile would not normally be our first choice (after all, what are musicologists for if not to furnish you with the notes?). We had to decipher ambiguous pitches, four-line staves and strange clefs (not to mention the dreaded *ficta* issues, though there were mercifully few of these) before we could even begin to have a dialogue with the musicologists about the real issues of the project: how do two or three voices fit together without any metre?

After a week of experiments, during which we gained more confidence and began to realise that it might actually work, Christopher O'Gorman and I took away the two-voice facsimiles and the musicologists' proto-editions and met from time to time to explore further. After much frustration and seeming to get not very far, the unmeasured sections gradually came together, becoming something like simultaneous performances of separate solo chants. As ensemble singers (Chris is a former Masters student of mine) we can easily adjust to each other's trajectory, so once we knew what the texts meant we could repeat passages, amplifying the text each time to a point at which poetry and music became the same rhetorical entity. As with so much of early music practice, it was largely about ignoring our modern instincts; it wasn't that the original notation was particularly revealing – my guess is that in a predominantly oral culture notation isn't going to tell you the half of it anyway – but rather that we didn't have modern notation imposing all sorts of concepts alien to a medieval oral procedure. Once we'd crossed that ideological threshold we felt rather liberated, at least as far as rhythm and rhetoric were concerned.

Of course it's only a first step, and not without a number of ironies. We may have liberated ourselves from metrical rhythm, but in doing so we stuck rigidly to the notes on the page. We also stopped and started together, tried to stay in pitch, and assumed that the pitches in the MS were the same as their modern equivalents. We sang fairly straight without too much sliding around. There is no evidence for any of this – it's just what 21st century early

musicians instinctively do, based on the experience of the last thirty years or so.

The way to investigate these more elusive and unquantifiable parameters is through live performance. Performances are unique events that never happen the same way twice; if you re-visit a piece you do it differently from last time, and it's gone as soon as you've done it. Recordings are the opposite of this: you're stuck with them for ever. They can document a stage in the research process, but like most academic outcomes (and they're no different from books or articles in this respect) they are fixed artefacts (otherwise they'd be work in progress and you wouldn't get the funding). Making the music permanent in this way is really problematic: you can't expect someone to buy a CD and listen to it only once, and there's not much point in introducing improvised elements to a medium that then reproduces the same performance each time. The early music recording industry has been a huge success story, but at a considerable cost to its relationship with history. I can't see us departing from the notes in the manuscript on any of the recordings – we'll probably never know how to do this in any definitive way and we certainly wouldn't want to be stuck with the results. But in live concerts? Who knows? – they might well be the opportunity for much more radical experiments. The first outing is by candle light in the medieval church on the Harewood House estate on July 10th if you want to find out (accompanied by a film by Michael Lynch in case you get bored with looking at two tenors).

for more information visit the Cantum Pulciorum website:

http://www.southampton.ac.uk/music/research/project/cantum_pulciorum_invenire.page

or John Potter's *Conductus* page:

<http://www.john-potter.co.uk/conductus.php>

(which also has a short preview of the Michael Lynch's film for the project)

GESUALDO REVIEWED

Listening to broadcast record reviews, I generally talk back at the radio, often unprintably. Just now and then, however, I find myself contentedly murmuring 'Yes! Yes!', as I did throughout Tess Knighton's hour-long survey of Gesualdo recordings on Radio 3's Record Review (Saturday 19th May). This was a model programme of its kind, I felt, with Tess in impressively relaxed discussion with Andrew McGregor. Her judgements on the man, his music, and the recorded performances were spot on, and a salutary corrective to the still-prevailing view of Gesualdo as a neurotic musical freak.

Clifford asked me to write this after listening to most of the programme with me, but I will take the opportunity to pass on news about his church music. Tess regretted that

there is only a single recording of the complete 5-part *Cantiones sacrae* (the excellent one by the Hilliards), but this is soon to be joined by a recording of the twenty six-part motets of *Cantiones sacrae II* directed by James Wood, who has spent three years restoring the missing sextus and bassus parts – a real labour of love. I was hugely impressed by his preliminary attempts back in the eighties, and look forward keenly to hearing his final thoughts. His recording will be issued by Harmonia Mundi France early next year. It will include the 7-part Pentecost motet *Illumina nos*, an extraordinary and powerful work that in certain unchromatic passages sounds disconcertingly like Robert Fayrfax. Stravinsky's 'completion' was on the basis of an inaccurate transcription of the five surviving parts with additional parts that he asserted were not meant to be in Gesualdo's style. Both James and I have produced our own solutions on more modest historicist lines, which I gather differ interestingly.

Hugh Keyte

Apologies for the omission of corrections and additions to Hugh's review in our last issue of Andrew Weaver's book on Ferdinand III. We both thought it was on my computer, but by the time I noticed that it wasn't, it was too late to get the file. (Now if BT had set up Hugh's broadband on the agreed date, this wouldn't have been a problem.) We will include it in the August issue. CB



(As heard, by me, Radio 3 'In Tune'. Punctuation exactly as above!)

LONDON CONCERTS

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Acante et Céphise

UCOpera is an enterprising offshoot of the University College London Union Music Society which, over the years since their formation in 1951, has put on annual opera performances, generally of little-known works. The most recent of these was Rameau's 1751 *Acante et Céphise*, given its very first British staging during a four-day run in the college's own Bloomsbury Theatre, preceded by a talk from Graham Sadler. So soon after ENO's production of *Castor and Pollux*, this is something of a Rameau 'two buses at once' story. Although four young professional soloists (Lawrence Olsworth-Peter, Katherine Blumenthal, Kevin Greenlaw and Anna-Louise Costello), conductor (Charles Peebles) and director (Christopher Cowell) were used, the 44-strong chorus and large modern-instrument orchestra were drawn entirely from the student population, none of whom are studying music (there being no music courses at UCL). The plot (the usual 18th century tosh) broadly revolves about pregnancy and birth, representing the occasion for which the work was written, the arrival of a grandson to Louise XV. Small adjustments to the original text allowed a more democratic reflection of all new births, rather than those who are created Dukes the moment they pop out of their Royal Mums. I saw it on the first night (19 March), which can be a mistake for a fully professional opera production, but was perhaps even more so for an amateur production. The acoustics of the theatre did no favours to the orchestra or singers but, unfortunately, neither did their playing. It has to be said that the evening wasn't entirely note or intonation perfect and that some of the singing could have done with a bit more polish. But it was a glorious opportunity for the students to experience the thrill and complexity of fully staging an opera. Many musicians have started life in different professions, so a number of these youngsters may find themselves in a more professional setting in the future. And, of course, it gave the audience the chance to hear a little known French opera – or, more precisely, a *pastorale héroïque*... at least, most of the audience did, though the editor/reviewer of a newly published glossy early music magazine who was sitting next to me left at the first interval, barely a third of the way through. I wonder what her review will be like!

BRUCKNER CHOIR SINGS MATTHEW PASSION

Despite their exotic Germanic names, the Anton Bruckner Choir and Cöthen Baroque are both London based outfits: the former a 54-strong amateur choir who pay for the privilege of rehearsing for weeks and putting on concerts

like this (Bach's St John Passion at St John's, Smith Square, 24 March); the latter drawn from the usual London circuit of period instrument players. The advantage of concerts like this, rather than solo affairs, is that ticket sales to friends and relatives of the choir can fill a hall, although the talking, sweet unwrapping, coughs, ringing mobile phones and the noisy rattling of programmes during the music can make the professional concert-goer yearn for a smaller, but more educated and better behaved audience. Despite these distractions, this was a good show, the choir appearing well-drilled, particularly at lower volumes, and without the prominent and wobbly voices that can bedevil such forces. Of course, one of the key benefits of such occasions is the chance given to younger professional singers and players to gain much-needed employment and experience. On this occasion, the singers that impressed me were countertenor Michal Czerniawski, tenor Michael Solomon Williams as the Evangelist and baritone Joshua Copeland. The conductor Christopher Dawe generally kept the pace going and the forces together, but he made the unforgivable decision to have the interval right in the middle of Pilate's interrogation (just after the plaintive *Erwäge, wie sein*) rather than at the end of Part One where Bach and, I assume, God, intended everybody to hike off to the bar. I don't suppose Jesus would have been best pleased at having his torture time extended so bizarrely either. Of the instrumentalists, leader Persephone Gibbs, along with Julia Black, Graham Walker, Henrik Persson, Eva Caballero, Joel Raymond and Matthew Fletcher made significant contributions.

MATINS & TENEBRAE

My only concession to holy week (which, as far as London's musical life is concerned, has become increasingly predictable over recent years) was the concert *Tenebrae by Candlelight* given by Chapelle Du Roi in St John's, Smith Square (4 April). With music based around the holy week service of *Tenebrae*, a combination of the normal pre-sunrise Matins and the sunrise Lauds services but moved to the previous evening so that the normal progression from dark to light is reversed to one of light to dark as the sun sets. As well as the natural reduction of the sun's light, the service uses an array of candles that were extinguished one by one. This concert concentrated on the three lessons and responds from the Matins part of the service, the lessons taken from the Lamentations of Jeremiah in versions by Palestrina (complex), Victoria (modest) and Lobo (a little-known but impressively dark work), each followed by the first three of Victoria's 18 *Tenebrae* responds, each guaranteed to make any

descendants of Judas feel rather uncomfortable. The *Tenebrae* settings were interspersed with Lenten motets by Victoria and Guerrero and a little burst of Englishness towards the end, with Tallis (including his magnificently subversive *In jejuniu et fletu*) and Byrd. The two groups of candles on the stage were gradually extinguished by adjacent singers as the concert drew to a close. After an evening where the texts were not a bundle of fun, it was nice to finish with Victoria's Marian antiphon for the Wednesday of holy week, *Regina coelorum*. The 8 singers produced a beautifully coherent, blended and unforced sound with their fresh, clean and musical voices, topped to perfection by the ubiquitous brace of Ashbys. Alistair Dixon directed with a commendably light touch, gently shading the volume and emotional tension. The reluctance of the audience to applaud was a reflection of the exquisite mood set. He seems to have booked Chapelle Du Roi into holy week and advent slots at SJSS until the end of time.

CHORAL PILGRIMAGE

The Sixteen opened the latest of their annual choral pilgrimages (the 12th) in Winchester Cathedral (13 April). This year's programme, with its companion CD, is based on music from 15th and 16th century Flanders and features two Magnificat settings from Lassus (together with the motets that inspired them), three rather special Josquin motets and extracts from Brumel's glorious 12-voice *Missa Et ecce terrae motus*. The latter (the "earthquake mass"), along with the Lassus *Timor et tremor* with its wild opening harmonic wanderings (reflecting the "fear and trembling") and emphatic cross rhythms on the closing *confundar*, gives the programme the title of 'The Earth Resounds'. So, did the earth move for me? Indeed it did. The packed cathedral bore witness to The Sixteen's seemingly unerring eye for creating popular programmes of complex music and presenting to a wide public in an engaging manner via their frequent TV programmes and links with Classic FM. The evening started appropriately with the low growl of Josquin's darkly monumental *Praeter rerum seriem*, and the interval was heralded by Lassus's act of homage to the past master in his joyful *Magnificat super Praeter rerum seriem*. It is easy to forget that Josquin died 11 years before Lassus was born. The evening ended with the spectacular Lassus *Magnificat octavi toni super Aurora lucis rutilat*, the motet of the same name having opened the second half, the high entry being in sharp contrast to the opening grumble of the first half. I would have liked to have heard the whole of the Brumel Mass, but that would be a different sort of concert. Incidentally, I had also hoped to have heard the pre-concert talk, given from the altar steps of the huge cathedral while the audience were shuffling in and chatting amongst themselves. I had consequently positioned myself carefully close to the front out of the way in the side aisle where I knew I would be able to hear the talk – until a representative of the sort of officious uniformed bouncers that such places of God

seem to attract insisted that we return to our seat (which, curiously for press seats, were way to the back of the cathedral) where I could hear not a word, despite amplification.

BACH'S BEAUTIFUL MIND

Bach did his best to promote the musical careers of his sons, so it was perhaps appropriate that Jeffrey Skidmore, director of the Birmingham-based Ex Cathedra Consort and Continuo invited his son Andrew to share an all-Bach concert ("Bach: The Beautiful Mind", Cadogan Hall, 19 April). The G and E flat major cello suites were inserted between pairs of motets in each half, making for an interesting combination of sounds and textures. I have given Andrew Skidmore several favourable mentions in his continuo role, but this is the first time I have heard him as soloist. He showed a masterly understanding of the architecture of these two works, for example in his build up to the climax of the opening G major *Prélude* and in the similar exploratory movement of the E flat suite. His playing was gentle and unforced, with the lightest of touches, both of bow and finger, avoiding the prominent initial transients (and the tap-tapping sound on the fingerboard) that so often add an unnecessary distraction to cello tone. His meditative reading of the first *Sarabande* showed his ability to use a subtlety of articulation and phrasing of motifs. However, he should learn a stronger negotiation style with his Dad who saved a bit on fees by expecting him to play continuo cello as well as his two challenging solos. As for the rest, well, the 10 singers of the Ex Cathedra Consort produced the professionally polished sound that I have come to expect, both individually and in consort. Jeffrey Skidmore directed with his usual self-evasive and dedicated devotion to the music.

REVOLUTIONS: DAWN OF THE CANTATA

This was the title of the Academy of Ancient Music's nicely-conceived programme of early 17th century Italian music (rather more ancient than usual for them), directed by an impressive AAM newcomer, Jonathan Cohen (Wigmore Hall, 26 April). A pre-concert talk explored the various continuo instruments (on this occasion, cello, gamba, lirone, theorbo, harp, organ and harpsichord) and the nature of the minimal scoring of the music. It was broadcast live on Radio 3 so *EMR* readers have had the chance to form their own opinion of it: I thought it was inspiring. The singers were soprano Anna Prohaska and the tenors James Gilchrist and Benjamin Hulett, the tenors upping the full-blooded dramatic and emotional scale of many of the texts. If I had read Anna Prohaska's CV (full of names like the Berliner Philharmoniker, Wiener Philharmoniker, Deutsche Staatoper Berlin) before I heard her sing, I would have wondered why on earth AAM had booked her. But for the 'early music' vocal scene, she is a real find. I don't know what, or how, she sings with these orchestral big boys, but I thought that her beautifully

eloquent and pure voice was just the thing for this repertoire, as was her presentation, notably in Monteverdi's *Ohimé ch'io cado* but also in Cavalli's *Restino imbalsamate* (from *La Calisto*) and *Il combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda*. Jonathan Cohen impressed me both as a director and keyboard player but also as the deviser of this fascinating concert.

TWO CONTRASTING CLAVICHORDS

The British Clavichord Society continue with their programme of occasional recitals, this time with Linda Nicholson (Art Workers Guild, 28 April) playing two contrasting mid-18th century clavichords from a private collection. The first, demonstrated by pieces by Benda, Scarlatti and CPE Bach, was a 1763 Hass, restored in 1894 by Dolmetsch. This was built in Hamburg and featured a sumptuously decorated case. The second instrument was built by Pehr Lundborg in Stockholm in 1775 at a time when Sweden had banned all imports of manufactured goods and was encouraging home-grown companies to develop their own goods, improved to suit the climate. This was iron strung and came in a plain red box with minimalist Chinoiserie decoration and was demonstrated with more CPE Bach and two Mozart pieces. The meticulous articulation of the playing allowed the different colours of the two instruments to shine through. However I could have done without the abrupt stop in the middle of a CPE Bach *Adagio* as, with a cry of "I can't stand it", the player walked off and a tuner was called from the audience to correct a single high note that had gone slightly out of tune. For what it is worth, I was far more distracted by that rather curious interlude than I had ever been by the one naughty note.

POETICALL MUSICKE

Poeticall Musicke was formed in 2010, mostly from current and past Guildhall students. They seem to have a range of formats based on a continuo group of gamba, theorbo and keyboards. There are a couple of CDs available for free download from their website – "unauthorised copying, hiring, renting, public performance and broadcasting of the record is encouraged"! For their concert in St James' Islington (28 April) they included two sopranos, two recorders, two violins and viola for a programme of Locke (the music for *The Tempest*) and Couperin (*La Française* and the *Trois Leçons de Ténèbres*). The players made an attractive and coherent sound in their two works, reflecting the stylistic differences between Locke and Couperin well. The two sopranos had contrasting voices, Roya Stuart-Rees's voice is slightly restrained but has a beautifully clear sound with an attractively light upper register that warmed in mid-range. She impressed me with her ability to shade her tone, to trill properly and to negotiate the French ornaments with style and fluidity. It was also good to hear a singer who was not afraid to use her mouth to shape the tone. Rosemary Galton has a

stronger voice with a slight edge to it that was not helped by her developing vibrato and occasional comparative intonation insecurity. Both young singers, of course, are still developing their voices, and both have potential. The venue is new to me as a performing space and has a lot to recommend it, combining a pleasant acoustic bloom with the intimacy of a relatively small space in an attractively bright but relatively standard issue Victorian suburban church. This was the first of their series of 'Islington Proms' concerts, and the only one to feature the early repertoire. There should be more.

LONDON HANDEL FESTIVAL

The London Handel Festival celebrated its 35th year with an enormous programme of events ranging from fully staged opera to talks about music and walks of musical interest. The Festival opened with the final of the Handel Singing Competition (15 March, in St George's, Hanover Square – as were all the concerts below unless otherwise stated). As long-term readers may know, this is an occasion that has caused me some grief in the past, not least because of the judges' apparent preference for voices that I consider unsuitable for Handel singing, fine as they may be in a later repertoire. Although it has been very rare for an inappropriate voice to actually win, some of the finalists have raised an eyebrow or two. However, of late things have been changing, and the Handelian singing standard of the finalists has increased – this year there was only one singer whom I felt did not fully demonstrate an understanding of the style appropriate for the period.

The evening started with soprano Anna Gorbachyova. She was born in Siberia and has recently been studying at the RAM. I first heard her in the finals of the Cesti International Singing Competition in Innsbruck in 2010 where she won both the first and the audience prizes. She is a beguiling performer, and her acting impressed me in the title role of Cavalli's *Calisto* in last year's Innsbruck Festival. But I still have doubts over her use of vibrato. Although it doesn't seem to effect her intonation, it has an unsettling effect on her (otherwise attractive) vocal quality, rhythmic pulse and definition of her ornaments. This is a shame, because she has a strong dramatic presence, shown to very good effect in *M'hai resa indelice*. Tenor Niel Joubert hails from South Africa and is also now at the RAM. He displayed an assured and consistent tone over a wide range of volume. He showed a fine sense of the fluidity of the melodic line in extracts from *Tamerlano*. Curiously, in 'Gentle airs, melodious strains' it was the continuo cello who proved to be far from gentle, and with far too much vibrato to boot! Joubert's cadenza at the end of *Empoi, per farti Guerra* was the more effective for its simplicity. Soprano Raphaela Papadakis is studying at the Guildhall following a stint at that powerhouse of female singers, Clare College, Cambridge. She coped well with the mood swings that Handel depicts in his cantata *Agrippina condotta a morire* as she ponders whether or not

to kill her son Nero. Mezzo Anna Starushkevych is from Ukraine and is also now at the Guildhall. Like several of the other singers, none of whom were completely devoid of any trace of vibrato, hers was gentle and rather effective and didn't interfere, or replace, some well placed ornaments. As well as her excellent dramatic presence, with nicely placed gestures, Anna's voice portrayed a real emotional insight and depth in her characterisation of Bertarido from *Rodelinda*. Her *da capo* elaborations and cadenzas were spot on. Like Anna, tenor Alexander Sprague displayed a similarly attractively lyrical voice, with a clean tone and timbre, the whole wrapped up in an effective stage presentation, using simple gestures. Here was another singer who could produce a proper trill, rather than relying on vibrato. The final finalist was soprano Lucy Hall who, with a shrug of her shoulder and a shake of her head, proceeded to berate *Capricious man, in humour lost* (from Saul). Her pleasant acting style worked alongside a very attractive voice to show the contrasting mood of *Credete al mio dolore* from *Alcina*. After what was rather an emotionally wrought evening, it was good to finish on a happy note or two with *Rodelinda's Mio caro bene!* All the singers had fine voices and have promising careers ahead of them, not least from future appearances at the London Handel Festival who are very loyal to their competition finalists. I thought four of the singers could have won but, in the end, the top two prizes went to Anna Starushkevych and Alexander Sprague. Anna also won the audience prize and, along with Raphaela Papadakis, a chance to appear in the York Early Music Festival, who were seeking two singers for a production – a soprano and mezzo (of which there was only one!)

SOUTHBANK SINFONIA

Southbank Sinfonia are a modern instrument post-graduate training orchestra who spend a week studying baroque technique with Adrian Butterfield, the Associate Director of the Handel Festival. They gave a concert (16 March) of instrumental works by Handel, Rameau, Vivaldi and Muffat (directed by Adrian Butterfield) and two choral works by Zelenka, starting with his powerful but quirky *Miserere* with its shuddering opening and closing movements, and concluding with the bubbly *Gloria* from his *Missa Votiva*. Ruby Hughes, winner of the first and audience prize in the 2009 singing competition, was the soprano soloist, and is reviewed more fully below. The choir for Zelenka was Vox Musica, and his pieces were conducted by their director. I wasn't too keen on his accenting all the fugal entries in the *Miserere*, and was rather surprised that he needed to be reminded by his choir to acknowledge the soloist, Ruby Hughes. So I will acknowledge her, but not him!

ACOLLEGIUM FLORIDUM, VARAŽDIN

The Varaždin School of Music is one of the oldest such institutions in Croatia, and is also the home of the Aestas

Musica Summer School. Their 50-strong choir, Collegium Floridum, gave a fascinating concert of works by Croatian composers at Conway Hall (21 March), directed by Dada Ruža. A few days later they repeated it in Farnham Castle as part of the Tilford Festival's 60th anniversary celebrations. The choir (aged from around 15 to 19) made an impressively rich and well-blended sound in a wide range of repertoire, slipping effortlessly from 17th century polyphony to Croatian folk songs. I have been impressed by both the soloists (Ana Lice, soprano and Kora Pavelić, mezzo) when I heard them previously during various Varaždin Baroque Evenings festivals (where I sit on a jury), and enjoyed hearing them again. Of the eight other soloists drawn from the choir, baritone David Oštrek stood out. The composers featured included Lukačić, Jelić, Ušper from the 17th century and Vanhal from the 18th, the latter spending almost a decade in the Erdödy Palace, now the home of the Varaždin School of Music. His Mozartian *Stabat Mater* was particularly impressive, as was Ušper's *Magnificat*, sung by an 8-strong chamber choir. Of the small group of players, I particularly liked the continuo cello and organ playing of Doris Nikolić and Božica Tuđan.

LONDON HANDEL FESTIVAL

Riccardo I

The London Handel Festival might have been expected to reel out a big operatic gun for their 35th anniversary production, but instead they gave us *Riccardo primo, re d'Inghilterra* a rarity amongst rarities (Britten Theatre 29 March). With the flimsiest of plots based on a loose grasp of history, the work was as much a showcase for the likes of the Miss Faustina and Miss Cuzzoni and the truncated Mr Senesino – and eventually, after a bit of revision, the newly crowned George II. The opera has traditionally had a bad press, and the amateurish operatic direction (from James Robert Carson) and staging of this production did its best to put me off with its cod-period dress confused with completely unrelated video imagery (including, at one stage, a lion, presumably for those who hadn't yet twigged who the opera was about) and bizarre directional instructions to the poor singers, one of whom was directed to collapse in a heap at the very end, for no apparent reason. "*Riccardo primo* is better than one might expect", opined Katie Hawks in her intelligent programme note, a view reinforced in her pre-event talk. Musically, that is certainly the case. The royal connotations of the plot and the new King gave Handel the chance for a large orchestra and some delightful instrumental timbres, with some special effects, including the opening storm – and some impressive arias from several of the characters. As is so often the case, it was Laurence Cummings, a conductor who seems to live and breathe Handel, who rescued the evening, drawing fine playing from the instrumentalists and fine singing from the young cast. I saw the second of the two casts, with Katherine Crompton, Hannah Sandison and Jake Arditti being particularly fine.

Handel's organist contemporaries

Although St George's Hanover Square has housed the delightful looking Handel chamber organ (originally intended for the nearby Handel House) for many years, it has, as far as I can recall, never been heard in a solo capacity in any London Handel Festival events. This surprising omission was corrected with a solo recital given by Robert Woolley (28 March) and his programme of works by Stanley, Goodwin, Roseingrave (one-time organist at St George's), Walond, John James (the organist, not the architect of the same name who designed St George's Hanover Square), Nares (his dramatic Introduction and Fugue in A minor) and Handel. Robert Woolley's playing demonstrated the fact that both organs and music of this type and period demand a well-defined understanding of articulation and the moulding of individual musical lines as well as a delicacy of touch, notably with the release of notes at the end of chords when lifting the fingers too quickly will cause the pipes to spit back rather than gently cease to speak. The concert was preceded by a wide-ranging talk by Dominic Gwynn on the chamber organ in Georgian musical life.

Inchanted Forrest & Fireworks Music

The Handel Festival has traditionally encouraged performances from London major conservatory's, with the Guildhall, Royal Academy of Music and Trinity all giving impressive performances. The Guildhall Baroque Orchestra devoted the first half of their concert (30 March) to a work that was unfamiliar to me, Geminiani's curious suite *The Inchanted Forrest*, a multi-section work in two parts composed for a Parisian pantomime and then reworked as an orchestral suite. It is a structurally and musically complicated piece, written for a large orchestra including trumpets, and incorporating frequent snatches of quartet (played by Rafael Font and Hannah Sutcliffe, violins, Elitsa Bogdanova, viola, and Vladimir Waltham, cello). Handel's Harp Concerto in B-flat (published as op. 4/6) was given a confident reading by Oliver Wass, who added a big cadenza to the central *Larghetto*. The evening finished with what must have been one of the loudest occasions heard in a Festival, with an impressive performance of the Music for the Royal Fireworks, the first of many that we are likely to hear this year. The orchestra was directed by Adrian Butterfield with his customary impressive encouragement and restraint and musical sensitivity.

Some competition finalists

The Festival has traditionally been very supportive of its competition finalists, letting them form the mainstay of many of their concerts over the years, but this is the first year that they have given the previous year's finalists a combined showcase of their own (11 April), as well as lunchtime concerts for the finalists and an evening performance for the previous year's winner. Unfortunately two of the singers were struck down and

unable to appear, so honours must first go to the impressive Carleen Ebbs for expanding her slot with extra pieces and to Stephanie True (apparently the only fully healthy singer, although she nearly fell foul of UK immigration!) for singing the piece that Emilie Renard was to have sung, as well as her own programmed work. Keri Fuge (last year's second prize winner) gave an emotionally charged performance of *Armida abbandonata*, notably in the *accompagnata* and aria *O voi, dell'incostante / Venti, fermate, si*. Adrian Butterfield directed the London Handel Orchestra, the lack of rehearsal opportunities resulting from the demise of so many of the planned singers only occasionally showing itself, notably in the first piece where there didn't seem to be much of an agreement within the band as to the speed, with the continuo cellist in particular rather too loudly pushing the speed of the first aria well beyond that wanted by the singer and the other players. However, all came together well for the impressive final piece from last year's winner, Stephanie True, her flexible voice with its clear runs and well articulated trills making a highlight of *Silente venti*, notably the virtuosic *Alleluia*.

Sounds Baroque

One of the Fringe series of events of the Festival was the concert given by Sounds Baroque (16 April) with soprano Anna Dennis and counter-tenor Andrew Radley (16 April) and the programme 'A Cardinal's Delight', reflecting the influential Cardinal's and other assorted aristos that were patrons of Handel et al. Judging by the works in this concert, the Cardinal's delight ranged from cherubs to erotic and exotic tales and shepherds' desires. Scarlatti's *Questo silenzio ombroso ossia il Sonno* ('Sleep') compares a lover's desire with the sighs of a nightingale, with music more in the 17th century mode of recit and arioso than the works of Handel that featured in the rest of the programme – *Scherzano sul tuo volto*, *Tanti strali al sen mi scocchi* and *Il Duello Amoro*. The *Duello* was the highlight of the evening, with excellent singing from Anna Dennis and Andrew Radley exposing the drama of the cantata as the shepherd Daliso attempts to woo the unresponsive Amarilli. It was refreshing to hear two voices without the operatic overlay that is so inappropriate for music of this period. In between the wooing, we heard the five players of Sounds Baroque in Corelli's Sonata I in D and Caldara's Trio Sonata (Op1/5) with its dreamy *Adagio*.

Orpheus

'Orphée' was the title and the theme for the concert (17 April) featuring the inspiring soprano Ruby Hughes, the well-deserved winner of the first and audience prizes in the 2009 Handel Singing Competition and currently a BBC New Generation Artist. Built around contrasting vocal interpretations of the Orpheus myth by Clérambault and Rameau, the programme also included instrumental music by Handel, Rameau and Couperin. These elicited excellent performances from Rachel Brown and Adrian Butterfield (flute and violin) and Katherine Sharman and

Laurence Cummings on viola da gamba and harpsichord, the two solo instruments demonstrating a delightful musical fluidity and exquisite elegance in the melodic line. But the focus of the evening was on the singing of Ruby Hughes, who once again proved an outstanding interpreter of music of this period, with the clarity of her ornaments and runs and the ability to control the gentlest of natural vibratos.

RAM Water Music

I wasn't able to hear the concert by the Royal Academy of Music Baroque Orchestra concert (18 April), but managed to hear them put through their paces by Laurence Cummings in part of an earlier rehearsal of the Water Music. There was some pretty impressive horn and trumpet playing from Meredith Moore and Carys Evans and Hannah Bishop and Edward Philips respectively.

Keri Fuge

I managed to get to five of the nine lunchtime concerts, starting with soprano Keri Fuge (28 March), winner of the second prize last year. Her programme came under the title of 'Desire and Demise', and she started by introducing it as demonstrating the way that women "try every trick in the book to get what we want" – her words, not mine. What she also demonstrated was a powerful, well-developed and agile voice with a consistent timbre over her range, but with rather more uncontrolled vibrato than I recall from last year. She has a pleasantly engaging stage manner, avoiding any overly operative gestures. On the downside, I found her singing too loud, even in the gentlest of pieces; and although I saw the emotion in her face (for example, in *The Blessed Virgin's Expostulation*, I didn't really hear it in her voice. She was impressively supported by Nikolay Ginov, cello, Asako Ogawa, harpsichord, and Aelx McCartney, theorbo.

Trinity Laban Orchestra

The Trinity Laban Baroque Orchestra gathered together some 13 nationalities (29 March) for their concert of Blow, Muffat, Vivaldi and Handel. I was particularly impressed with their ability to play quietly, without losing tone – few professional orchestras manage to do that well. Kristina Chalmovská was the soloist in a Vivaldi Cello Concerto, with rollercoaster solo parts in the outer movements cuddled around an expansive central melodic *Adagio*. Unfortunately the Festival didn't provide a detailed programme for this concert (unlike most of the other lunchtime concerts), so I don't have a record of the other players – but was astonished to hear afterwards from their director, Walter Reiter, that none of them were first study period players. Impressive.

The Regent's Soloists

The Regent's Soloists (Laura Piras, flute, George Clifford, violin, Kate Conway, viola da gamba, and Nathaniel Mander, harpsichord) were formed in 2011 and won the Early Music Prize at the Royal Academy of Music. Despite

the possibly limited repertoire suggested by their name, they played music by Leclair (his fascinating *Deuxième Recreation de Musique*) and Telemann (in one of his French moods) surrounding a sequence of very well-played harpsichord works by Foucquet, Duphy and the irrepressible Balbastre. Although clearly very well rehearsed, they performed with the vitality and freshness that is so essential to live music making, and captured the grace, charm and lyricism of French music.

Emilie Alford

Having won the Audience Prize in the 2011 Singing Competition, mezzo Emilie Alford committed what many would see as a form of female professional suicide by changing her name – to Emilie Renard. I would normally look out for concerts by competition prize winners, and may have missed some of Emilie's on that account – indeed I initially wondered why this Renard lady was getting such a high profile in this year's Handel Festival. Anyway, 'tis done, and she is as compelling a performer as she was with her earlier moniker. As with her 2011 competition performance, it was obvious as soon as she walked on that she had won over the audience – she is one of the most engaging young performers around, her bubbly personality and eye contact with listeners being just the start of it. As one audience member was overheard to say after the concert, "she was a joy". This sort of persona can cloud even the most hard-hearted of reviewers' views on the actually music but for those not blessed with such a charismatic nature and good looks, I am afraid to reveal that, by any standards, she can also sing extremely well. For example, her long-held and vibrato-free note (until the expected ornamental addition towards the end) right at the start of her concert was enough to tell me that here was a singer of real technical ability and talent, regardless of personality and looks. It was also very refreshing to hear a singer display less vibrato than she did a year ago. Her comprehensive and wide ranging programme of Handel's arias for soprano castrati was unrelieved by any items for instruments only – an impressive and challenging feat in itself. She was accompanied with distinction by the Dewar Quartet and Christopher Bucknall, harpsichord.

Rêveries Musicales

Rêveries Musicales (Leo Duarte, oboe/recorder, Julie Kuhn, violin, Jonathan Rees, viola da gamba, and Tom Foster, harpsichord) are another group that formed at the Royal Academy of Music, reinforcing its continuing prominence in the UK's early music instrumental teaching world. Their programme of Handel on a domestic scale gave all the players a solo opportunity, including the Recorder Sonata (HWV369, and also reworked as an organ concerto), Viola da Gambe Sonata in g (364b), Oboe Sonata in F (370) and the Harpsichord Suite in d (437), with Tom Foster improvising his own opening prelude. Of these, it was the violin sonata that stood out for the delicacy of tone and expressive playing of Julie Kuhn,

especially in the helter-skelter passages. Unfortunately, the oboe playing was far too frenetic for its own good in the Oboe Sonata, and was also far too dominant in the concluding Trio Sonata, not allowing the violin to be heard in the correct balance.

Dublin Messiah

I wasn't able to get tickets for *Il Pastor Fido* or *Messiah* (24 April), but a music student friend commented on the latter performance, which was given in the Dublin version, just one of ten versions of the 'well-known' work. She felt that the singer's voices were a bit too big for her taste in this type of music, noting that "the tenor, Stuart Jackson, had elegant coloraturas but the bass's, Lisandro Abadie, were a bit blurry. The mezzo-soprano, Christine Rice, was a little too operatic as was the soprano, Sophie Bevan, but they were all very good singers and they grew on me during the concert and I ended up enjoying it. Sophie Bevan's beautiful 'I know that my redeemer liveth' was one of the highlights of the evening. The choir was brilliant, the two countertenors giving the choir a special sound. It sounded like it was a joy for the performers... beautiful music in a fantastic performance." I would have liked to have heard it. The usual Handel Festival choir and orchestra was in attendance, with Laurence Cummings.

Reviews of concerts in May and June in the next issue of *EMR* will include the Fenton House Early Keyboard Competition, the Crickhowell May Music Festival, the Lufthansa Festival and Bachfest Leipzig 2012.

STRIGGIO – GABRIELI – TALLIS

Clifford Bartlett

I only managed to get to one of the events of Cambridge Early Music's weekend of concerts on May 18-20, *The Festival of the Voice*. There were seven services (only one pair clashing) at King's, St John's and Sidney Sussex Colleges, talks, a tour of Trinity College gardens, and one of the King's services lead to an organ recital by Margaret Phillips. The four concerts were Sixteen's 2012 touring programme *The Earth Resounds*, Trio Medieval, Joel Frederiksen (*basso profundo* and plucker) and – the one I did get to – the Striggio Mass a40/60 and other big pieces. Congratulations to Selene Mills for organising her biggest event so far!

I Fagiolini's concert offered the largest Renaissance piece known (on the strength of its final *Agnus a60*) as well as three small-scale pieces – marvellous singing by the alto William Purefoy accompanied only by organ (David Roblou) of Viadana's *O dulcissima Maria*, Bassano's take on Palestrina's *Introduxit me rex* with virtuosic cornetting by Gawain Glenton and no mean sackbutting by Emily White, with the other organist, Catherine Pierron, and Merulo's Canzon *La Leonora* – curiously, we had been

listening to Radio 3's record review the day before, and couldn't make any sense of a Merulo Toccata: Canzonas are easier to shape, and Roblou certainly showed it as an effective piece of music.

I said "we". Hugh Keyte was invited to house-mind while the Bartletts had a long weekend in Devon at the beginning of the month – I played *Poppea* (or rather, one of the harpsichords) at Ashburton (see p. 40) and the family enjoyed a few damp days on the coast (see p. 1) – and he stayed on when we returned. His input was essential for the last work of the concert. Giovanni Gabrieli's *Magnificat a20/28* needs rather more "reconstruction" than the word normally implies. It comes from the same MS as the *Magnificat a33*, but that has the advantage of a cut-down version a17 published posthumously in *Symphoniae Sacrae II* (1615) so that it is a matter of expansion rather than invention.¹ All that survives is two four-part choirs – and not necessarily the most significant ones. There are stretches where all that is known is how many bars there are to fill, and it is also not clear what the alternatives of 20/28 mean. Roland Wilson has also made an attempt to complete it.² It is a complicated task in that there are unique features for which there are no precedents. Roland Wilson ignored the a28 aspect and produced a 20-part setting – one which gives the impression that he was thinking of early Gabrieli rather than a more exuberant later style. Hugh's version is elaborate. He has thought of a function for which a work of that nature would have been required, and made the most of it (a pity the canon-effect came in a bit early!) It's a real tour-de-force and it certainly made a brilliant ending to the concert.³

The familiar work was *Spem in alium*. I first sang it under David Willcocks in the antechapel of King's in 1960 or -61, with several hundred singers surrounding the audience. I've no idea how effective that performance was, but learning the piece so well at weekly rehearsals – supplemented by playing through the score on the piano – fixed it firmly in my head as an intellectual and emotional masterpiece. This performance was more compact, with performers round the eastern end of the antechapel. As on the CD (the one with the Striggio Mass), there was a mixture of singers and players. The CD worked well, but I was less happy with it live. It seems to me an imposed and unnecessary variety to mix vocal and instrumental entries in the opening sequence of polyphonic entries; changing texture at voice 20 "praeter in te" might work, but I think that reserving instruments for the tutti

1. It was assumed when that was first reconstructed (by Andrew Laurence King) that the published version was a reduction from the 33 part one, but this needs further investigation. There are indeed problems with some of the larger 1615 pieces, but Hugh's current assumption is that the a28 piece was created posthumously in Austria.

2. Download version at <http://musicalfiata.com/index.php/editions>: it uses old clefs, but can be bought in modern ones. His recording is due in September. Hugh's score will be available from I Fagiolini's website.

3. Hugh's expansion of the *In ecclesiis a14* (1615), which he argues to be a cut-down version, is on the same CD as the *Magnificat*, due in early June, and it will be performed live at the Proms. There is further information on the music at I Fagiolini's website.

might be more effective. But it's certainly worth experimenting and Hugh argues strongly for it being created for a secular milieu. I still want to hear the work sung in a circle, not half-circle – the Willcocks layout was in that respect nearer, though he didn't group the choirs into four rather than eight

Coincidentally, Hugh was also, back in 1981, responsible for the publication of Striggio's 40-part motet, *Ecce beatan lucem*, which began the concert. That is a very different piece, depending more on texture and harmony than melody, and there are indications of scoring in the account of Lassus's performance in 1568, which Hugh used for Radio 3's parallel wedding extravaganza for Diana and Charles. The Mass *Ecco si beato giorno* takes material from the motet and is in a similar style. In fact, the sound, from where we sat (probably the ideal place in the centre, three rows back from the conductor, Robert Hollingworth) favoured the Striggio style rather than helping Tallis's more melodic writing. But a significant element in performances in King's Chapel is the chapel itself: it was even suggested that those sitting beyond the screen in the chapel itself may have heard the music more clearly. The performers were supplemented by 25 local amateurs – though one wouldn't have guessed: the standard of renaissance singing is now very high, though (as one of my CD reviews implies) not all conductors have adequate understanding! I was disappointed that I didn't hear The Sixteen, since comparison between their suaver style with the Fagiolini tendency towards a shout would have been interesting. The programme note quotes approvingly a 1580 eulogy of the performers at Nonsuch Palace (the country house of the family whose London home was Arundel House, where *Spem* probably had its premiere), as "a solemn choir by voice and instruments so sweet to hear". I'm not sure that Robert was after that effect, but what he did here was remarkably impressive – even the organisation was a tremendous feat, and his conducting shaped the music without being over-fussy. He managed the nitty-gritty of keeping time with such spread forces while retaining the feel of individual choirs playing like chamber musicians in the sections where the choirs were functioning independently.

IN MEMORIAM GUSTAV LEONHARDT

On 29 April, The Bach Players put on a memorial concert for Gustav Leonhardt concert at St James's, Piccadilly. It was a mixed programme, with reminiscences as well as appropriate music. Having heard Nicolette's talk, I can understand why she assembled reminiscences in the April *EMR* and to offer this concert. I had no idea that she grew up so close to him. The two families lived almost next-door in Amsterdam, and from the age of four Nicolette mixed with Gustav's four-year-old. Later, English students studying with him stayed at her house. I'd love to have been able to reprint her warm and close tribute, but sadly she thought it too informal for print –

and I can see the point. The other close connection was Mark Deller. His father Alfred and Leonhardt formed a close relationship, and (unknown to most early-music fans) the Stour Village Festival was accepting early instruments and at least some appropriate voices (the recordings of the period are a bit of a mixed bag in that respect).⁴ The Harnoncourts were welcome there long before elsewhere in Britain. Nicholas Anderson reported on the pioneering Leonhardt/Harnoncourt Bach Cantata recording. The programme included a description of studying with Leonhardt by Skip Sempé.

The concert was framed by a typical Bach Players feature, Pachelbel and Bach cantatas based on the same chorale. Pachelbel is greatly under-rated, congratulations to Nicolette for pushing the idea. Mark Deller sang Purcell, eloquent and musical despite being three years old than James Bowman. Silas Wollston played harpsichord music by Louis Couperin and d'Anglebert's *Tombeau de Mr de Chambonnières*. I decided that a memorial concert like this should not be reviewed but in itself treated as a worthy memorial. The only note I made in the programme looks like "French growls laid-back" – I've no idea what it means and how it could be appropriate! CB

GARSINGTON OPERA GOES FOR GOLD

Performances of Vivaldi operas remain something of a rarity, so anyone within travelling distance of Wormsley ("an hour's drive from London" according to an impressive promotional video – <http://vimeo.com/31370240>) should not miss the opportunity to experience Garsington Opera's *L'Olimpiade*, which will be performed on 3, 5, 9, 14, 22 and 29 June, starting at 6.05pm.

With a fine cast (including Tim Mead and Michael Maniaci) in the very capable hands of seasoned baroque opera conductor, Laurence Cummings, it promises to be a lively affair. Metastasio's plot is a typical mix of love and intrigue, disguise, thwarted plots, near death experiences and the obligatory "and they all lived happily ever after" conclusion. There are some absolute gems in the score, such as the duet at the end of Act I, and occasionally some real pyrotechnics like Aminta's *Siam navi all'onde algenti* near the beginning of Act II.

Fittingly for 2012, the entire storyline is built around the original Olympic Games – but let's hope that there are no such goings-on during the London games!

To book tickets visit <http://www.garsingtonopera.org/our-season/book-tickets> or call 01865 361636.

Brian Clark

4. This year is the Festival's 50th anniversary, and I will be reporting on it in the August issue.

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2

Trumpet
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Clarinett
2do
Bassoon
1mo
Bassoon
2do
Piana
Forte

For two German Flutes

4

Musical score for two German flutes, measures 4 through 11. The score is written for two staves, each with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The music features a complex, fast-paced melody with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes. The first staff is marked with a 'P' (piano) dynamic. The second staff is marked with a 'P' (piano) dynamic. The third staff is marked with a 'P' (piano) dynamic. The fourth staff is marked with a 'P' (piano) dynamic. The fifth staff is marked with a 'P' (piano) dynamic. The sixth staff is marked with a 'P' (piano) dynamic. The seventh staff is marked with a 'P' (piano) dynamic. The eighth staff is marked with a 'P' (piano) dynamic. The ninth staff is marked with a 'P' (piano) dynamic. The tenth staff is marked with a 'P' (piano) dynamic. The eleventh staff is marked with a 'P' (piano) dynamic.

3

Musical score for two German flutes, measures 12 through 19. The score is written for two staves, each with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The music features a complex, fast-paced melody with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes. The first staff is marked with a 'P' (piano) dynamic. The second staff is marked with a 'P' (piano) dynamic. The third staff is marked with a 'P' (piano) dynamic. The fourth staff is marked with a 'P' (piano) dynamic. The fifth staff is marked with a 'P' (piano) dynamic. The sixth staff is marked with a 'P' (piano) dynamic. The seventh staff is marked with a 'P' (piano) dynamic. The eighth staff is marked with a 'P' (piano) dynamic. The ninth staff is marked with a 'P' (piano) dynamic. The tenth staff is marked with a 'P' (piano) dynamic. The eleventh staff is marked with a 'P' (piano) dynamic. The twelfth staff is marked with a 'P' (piano) dynamic. The thirteenth staff is marked with a 'P' (piano) dynamic. The fourteenth staff is marked with a 'P' (piano) dynamic. The fifteenth staff is marked with a 'P' (piano) dynamic. The sixteenth staff is marked with a 'P' (piano) dynamic. The seventeenth staff is marked with a 'P' (piano) dynamic. The eighteenth staff is marked with a 'P' (piano) dynamic. The nineteenth staff is marked with a 'P' (piano) dynamic.

For the Guitar

Musical score for guitar, measures 12 through 19. The score is written for a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The music features a complex, fast-paced melody with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes. The first staff is marked with a 'P' (piano) dynamic. The second staff is marked with a 'P' (piano) dynamic. The third staff is marked with a 'P' (piano) dynamic. The fourth staff is marked with a 'P' (piano) dynamic. The fifth staff is marked with a 'P' (piano) dynamic. The sixth staff is marked with a 'P' (piano) dynamic. The seventh staff is marked with a 'P' (piano) dynamic. The eighth staff is marked with a 'P' (piano) dynamic. The ninth staff is marked with a 'P' (piano) dynamic. The tenth staff is marked with a 'P' (piano) dynamic. The eleventh staff is marked with a 'P' (piano) dynamic. The twelfth staff is marked with a 'P' (piano) dynamic. The thirteenth staff is marked with a 'P' (piano) dynamic. The fourteenth staff is marked with a 'P' (piano) dynamic. The fifteenth staff is marked with a 'P' (piano) dynamic. The sixteenth staff is marked with a 'P' (piano) dynamic. The seventeenth staff is marked with a 'P' (piano) dynamic. The eighteenth staff is marked with a 'P' (piano) dynamic. The nineteenth staff is marked with a 'P' (piano) dynamic.

CD REVIEWS

CHANT

Filia Sion Vox clamantis, Jaan-Eik Tulve
ECM New Series 2244 (476 4499) 71' 07"

The verbal basis of this programme is the development of the concept Daughter of Zion from a personification of the Jewish people as God's bride to the mother of Jesus and the eventual extreme veneration of her as represented by the Old Testament, the New Testament and the Latin liturgy – not as I assumed from the cover an angry disc of a voice shouting in the wilderness sung by a daughter of Zion! The booklet notes concentrate on the texts and barely notices the music, which is a pity, since inquisitive listeners like me want to know where it comes from – only Perotin, Grudencza and Hildegard are named. Mostly, chant expands with drones or simple part-singing – it can't all be improvised, surely! The Estonian choir (a dozen singers) isn't a chant or early-music specialist, but is extremely impressive. The booklet note is in French and English, the texts in Latin (apart from the Hebrew closing track) and English. Jaan-Eik Tulve is the choir's regular conductor, and he produces a sound and style that is utterly convincing, and I'm not in the least interested whether each item is performed according to current musicological ideas or not! CB

MEDIEVAL

Sacer nidus – The Holy Nest St Adalbert, Boleslaw I the Valiant, and Otto III in *Music of the Middle Ages* Ensemble Peregrina, Agnieszka Baduzińska-Bennett 70' 09"
Raumklang RK 3106

The quality of medieval ensembles is now amazingly high (at least, compared with what one heard when I was first interested in medieval music), even though there is a suspicious similarity between ensembles: most seem to emanate from Basle. But I'm not complaining. There are three singers, one player of the vielle and lyre, and a director who sings and plays the harp. The relationship between the historical subject and the sound is, of course, only evident if you read the introduction, all of which was new to me – I studied 5th-century BC Athenian history at school, not Poland a millennium ago. The music relates to the story primarily through the words, though the music makes pleasant listening by itself. But if that isn't enough, there is a problem in that the Latin texts are not opposite the German, English and Polish translations, so not

quite full marks for the thorough booklet. But I've nothing but praise for the performers and the musicology that lies behind them. CB

Hameln Anno 1284 Medieval Flute Music on the trail of the Pied Piper Norbert Rodenkirchen fl, Giuseppe Paolo Cecere strings, Wolfgang Reithofer perc 58' 42"
Christophorus CHR 77359
Meister Alexander, Frauenlob, Peter von Rüben, Wizlaw III & anon

The Brothers Grimm's telling of the Pied Piper is more compact than Browning's, but still goes further than any plausible history – at least, as far as the rats are concerned – and it is suggested that the children went with their parents to occupy territory further east. Rodenkirchen picks up a connection with a piper of the period, a shadowy figure who may (if he existed) have inspired Wizlaw and builds an eloquent programme. The cylindrical transverse flute has six holes with a pythagorian tuning. I would prefer a programme with singer as well, but there is considerable variety, and it might open up a repertoire to modern flautists. CB

Exit rosa: Chants for the nuns from manuscript Q. 11 from Bologna 54' 14"
Tactus TC 280002

The contents of the MS are mostly monophonic, but there are a few pieces with two parts on a single stave. The items recorded here mostly come from the second of the booklets that constitute the MS. There are various hints that it was intended for female use, though the music itself (on the evidence of a reproduction in the booklet and the incipits in RISM BIV) isn't written up the octave. The singing is excellent, with rhythms that feel right (so I'd rather not analyse them!) There is a considerable variety of forms and styles, so the listener won't get bored! There are texts, but no translations, though those who regularly sing Latin texts should recognise a fair amount. CB

In Taberna: Medieval Songs and Dances Corte Antica 61' 11"
Newton Classics 8802126 (rec 2000)

This comprises music mostly of the 12th to 14th centuries. *In taberna quando sumus* is, of course, here, and the (usually lively) *Astra tenenti* from *The Play of Daniel*, sung rather slowly and with no relevance to a tavern. This is primarily an instrumental collection, with just one singer, five players

(one of whom also sings) and a narrator in 15th-century Paduan dialect, who (even if he spoke in English) would intrude after the first hearing. The playing itself doesn't have the conviction of the recordings reviewed above, though has a fair number of well-known pieces, which might be useful for teachers and lecturers. CB

15th CENTURY

Divitis/Févin Lux perpetua: Requiem Organum, Marcel Pérès 65' 33"
Æon AECD 1216

It's a long time since I heard a new disc from Organum, and it sounds very different: none of the deliberate (and often effective) roughness – though the chanter has (or is affecting) a less trained voice – but a slow, sombre, low and beautiful sound. Pérès's stimulating note proposes that this is part of the requiem tradition. That may be disputed, but it makes an effective and convincing performance. Of the five MSS, two are anonymous, two ascribed to Févin and one (used here) to Divitis. This is based on the Occo Codex, from the Alamire stable, a beautiful MS available in facsimile and now enjoying extensive study. Well worth hearing. CB

Les fantasies de Josquin: The Instrumental Music of Josquin Desprez Ensemble Leones, Marc Lewon 71' 05"
Christophorus CHR 77348

I think the first, title track on solo lute isn't the most appealing one, and it takes a few tracks to hit the high points (I write this in case you sample a track or two and pass it by), but once there, the recording is full of delights – the music, of course, but also the instrumentation and the playing. What could be more satisfying than this well-arranged anthology. Sometimes I wonder: is the music as good as I thought? But a phrase suddenly firmly answers "yes". The bonus is a short piece by Arvo Pärt for an ensemble that includes a gittern and violin newly made from wood two thousand years old. A second bonus is a booklet note by David Fallows, whose first page is a clear summary of how Josquin's life has changed in the last decade or so. Buy it! CB

ad modum tubae Les Haulz et Les Bass (Gesine Bänfer, Ian Harrison, David Yacus, Christian Braun, Michael Metzler, Andrea Piccioni) 64' 51"
Tantalon TAL90007

In keeping with the title, the performance opens with a majestic trumpet announcement (picture a grand trombone-pitched tone, not the high glossy rattle that came in later centuries). This develops into alphorn-style call-and-answer with a second trumpet, and further into hocket and excellent use of its spatial game-play. This imaginative intro by David Yacus is all leading us, of course, to Dufay's *Gloria ad modum tubae*, in which most of these games continue. The shawms then continue into a chanson, subtly and sympathetically varying the brightness of tone. The trumpets rejoin for *Se la face ay pale*, out of which emerges a further trumpet sequence of speculative medieval riffs, an idea which comes in for a bit of re-use in some subsequent tracks. The whole feel of this is of a live performance, and it is evidently enjoyed by those present – including the sharing of some unseen private joke during Michael Metzler's percussion improvisation. The different flavours of the pieces are perceived clearly and developed to keep each exciting and fresh. For example, *Ce jour de lan* is revealed as being in step with today's Breton tradition, in mode, and emphasised by the use of bagpipe and shawm (bombarde). At the end we fly East, leaving the sophistication of medieval Europe, in a sequence which takes us through the current folk music of Italy, Turkey, Bulgaria and Arabia: reversing the historic path of these instruments, and finally reminding us of exactly the combination of instruments used to weaken the resolve of the defenders of Constantinople in 1453. Fun! *Stephen Cassidy*

Ian Harrison appears again in *Northlands*: see p. 38.

Musiques et chants au temps de Jeanne d'Arc Ensemble Amadis, Catherine Jousselein

Jade 699 749-2 62' 33" (rec 1999)

Binchois, Dufay, Dunstable, Fontaine, Frye, Grenon, Grossin, Guilielmus, A. de Lantins & Paumann, and anon

I must confess that I always think Joan of Arc lived earlier than the 15th century, an error shared by BC, judging from his placing it as medieval, not 15th century. So for those who are equally vague, the date is 30 May 1431. The music is mostly a bit later, but never mind – it's well performed, calling on eight singers and eight players, though only the last piece (Lantins' *In tua memoria*) has more than four performers. The slim booklet is in French only – but the beauty of the music and performances enabled me to enjoy it without summoning up vestiges of early French. *CB*

Vinum et Musica: Songs & dances from Nuremberg sources Capella de la Torre, Katharina Däumli with Dominique Visse A Challenge Classics CC72544 70' 01"

This is a wide-ranging programme from Morton to Willaert (the first and last pieces, though the programme isn't otherwise chronological), but with a Salomone Rossi *Kaddish* as from Monteverdian Mantua – though it does sound quite archaic. The ensemble comprises five players (shawms, cornett, dulcian, sackbut and organ) and one singer. The emphasis is on music rather than wine. There are two classical Latin pieces – Willaert's *Dulces exuviae* (Virgil), and Hofhaimer's *Exegi monumentum* set to the meter of Horace's poem. This is an attractive and unpredictable anthology. The common element is loosely Nuremberg, and the booklet note is very readable (starting with grilled sausages). Texts are in the original language, German and English, properly set out in a readable type-size. Not obviously exciting – the loud wind often plays subtly – but highly recommended. *CB*

16th CENTURY

G. Bassano *Amor Sacro – Amor Profano* Monika Mauch, Capricornus Ensemble Stuttgart, Henning Wiegräbe dir 71' 55" Coviello Classics COV 21108

Great meals are often made, by groups releasing discs of Italian diminutions, of the connections made by – inter alia – Ganassi and Dalla Casa of the affinities of woodwind instruments with the human voice. Some of the treatise-writers couched their admonitions in terms of the instrument being as flexible as the voice; others in terms of their shared rhetorical possibilities. But these premises all too often accompany one-size-fits-all performances, with diminutions on sacred texts performed exactly the same fashion as diminutions on (often, very) secular texts, or fantasia-inspired writing that never carried a text. Was it really the case that the original model served only as a *soggetto*, its text then carrying no resonance? Bovicelli surely wouldn't have bothered recomposing his diminutions on *Io son ferito* overlaid with the *Ave verum corpus* text if he hadn't been searching for a different mode of expression. Capricornus Ensemble Stuttgart here posits the idea – in a remarkably coherent disc – that there was a differentiation in expression from one text to another, but that it took effect in the compositional stage rather than in the *modus* of performance, Bassano being particularly thoughtful about where he applies his divisions. Silke Leopold, in a perceptive

booklet note, points out that in the Song of Solomon motets the top and bottom of the texture is embellished, suggesting a dialogue between lover and beloved, and that in *Fuit homo* the diminution is almost all in the bass, giving the piece a strongly male character. This is perceptive programming, sympathetically recorded and played with warmth and commitment.

Catherine Groom

Milton and Peerson *Sublime Discourse: The Complete Instrumental Music* Fretwork + Michael Chance cT & Sophie Yates *virginals* Regent Records REGCD341

I'm puzzled why this is reviewed so late – probably my fault. Some of Peerson's viol music has been available for a half-century, thanks to Schott and Marilyn Wailes, though I sensed that serious viol-consort players thought it a bit lightweight. It is perhaps more out-going than the core repertoire – maybe because it was intended for choir-boys' education and recreation, but it's fine for listeners. Milton senior's music tends to be a bit more serious, especially his *In nomine* sung to a text with a familiar opening (*If that a sinner's sighs*); a pervasive musical phrase also seems to be a deliberate borrowing, though its source(s) escape me. Beautiful playing: Pearson has been underestimated, and it is good to come across the Milton's father as a person of considerable musical ability. *CB*

Victoria *God's Composer* Simon Russell Beal presenter, Harry Christophers, The Sixteen 60" DVD Coro DVS6

This is last year's BBC4 Victoria documentary and it helps to remember that it is a documentary rather than a concert. Bearing this in mind eases the frustrations which arise when music is talked over or abbreviated. Those same frustrations are also eased by the inclusion amongst the extras of uninterrupted and complete performances of several of the pieces partially heard in the main feature, though these extras are audio only. Watching the film again after a gap of some months, I am re-struck by the same things. It is a visual feast, to which The Sixteen themselves contribute by not succumbing to the dismal all black that is becoming the sartorial default of so many ensembles. The informed enthusiasm and humility of presenter Simon Russell Beale also strikes a resonant chord, additional reverberation arising from the childlike joy with which he opens the door in El Escorial through which the gout-ridden King Philip could see and hear mass in the basilica from his

bed. The script could have used some slightly sharper editing – we are twice told, for no particular reason, that Victoria dedicated a book of masses to his king – but I did like the emphasis on his Spanishness and the spiritual and aesthetic links to St Teresa of Avila and El Greco. The Sixteen do what they do with consummate skill, but as I have observed before in these pages, their Victoria is not Victoria's Victoria. It is especially frustrating not to hear a note of music sung in the convent chapel in which he presided for the last 25 years of his life, although we do see SRB sitting at the (silent) organ. How exciting might it have been to have heard even one piece from ATBarB in this context. The various extras include, as well as the audio tracks previously mentioned, interviews with some of the performers. These, too, needed some editing to avoid repetitiveness and one speaker contradicts (with the truth) a point made to seem exciting in the main script. So, in strict EM/HIP terms, this is a mixed bag – but Victoria was a really great composer and we must be grateful that someone somewhere was prepared to make an hour of prime-time television available to publicise the fact. David Hansell

17th CENTURY

Allegri *Missa In lectulo meo, Missa Christus resurgens, Miserere, Motets* The Choir of King's College London, David Trendell 72' 15" Delphian DSCD343103

Were Allegri alive and receiving royalties, he would have been overwhelmed by the success of the *Miserere*, even though it developed a life of its own and since the famous King's College recording with master Goodman has suffered from an out-of-mode ending. This recording devotes 12 minutes to it, but that leaves an hour for the more worthwhile first recording of two masses a8, together with their source motets. *In lectulo meo* is by Pierre Bonhomme, *Christus resurgens* is by Allegri himself. The listener can, of course, play the tracks in order, but it's a nice idea to reveal the source during the mass. The less famous King's College Choir lacks the distinctive sound of its Cambridge namesake, but has a more "period" style; the vibrato annoyed a bit at first – though it didn't worry me for long, and does justice to some fine, if less grandiloquent double-choir music. CB

de Arauxo *Tientos* Louis Thiry org, Patrick Bismuth vln/vla/vla da spalla 53' 23" Paraty 411116

This is a curious offering. The massive

collection of Tiento's published in 1626 by Correa de Arauxo is one of the highlights of the whole organ repertoire. It seemed to serve no liturgical purpose but was rather an exemplar of advanced compositional techniques. The 69 works are of sumptuous beauty, designed specifically for the vagaries of the Spanish late-Renaissance organ and usually featuring complex solo lines for the distinctive solos stops. The concept of hearing these works played on a French organ with a violin picking out the solo lines took me quite a while to get used to. But having accepted the premise of the recording, the actual playing cause me even more alarm. The violin playing is idiosyncratic, with aggressive opening transients (or perhaps scrapes is a more accurate word), pronounced swelling onto notes, poor intonation and tone, and a generally overly-dramatic and distinctly unsettling projection of the melodic line. I would find this irritating in any baroque music, but in the sinuous lines of this Renaissance polyphony it is frankly unpleasant as well as stylistically obtuse. Unfortunately, the organ playing is also curious, with an unsteady sense of phrasing, touch and articulation, occasional overly legato notes, and the omission of most of the (unwritten) ornaments that Correa and other contemporary composers thought essential. Correa's music certainly deserves to be heard, but not like this. Andrew Benson-Wilson

Buxtehude *Vocal Works 6 Membra Jesu nostri* Siri Karoline Thornhill, Dorothee Wohlgemuth, Patrick van Gertham, Jörg Dürmüller, Klaus Mertens SSATB, Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra & Chorus, Ton Koopman 55' 43" Challenge Classics CC72255

If you know this piece well, I recommend you either prepare yourself for what one of my friends used to call "a challenge" when she meant "a nightmare", or – depending on your emotional state – steer clear of this recording altogether. I assume that most regular readers need no alerts to Koopman's approach in general and either love or hate his continuo realisations; where these, to me, have usually been restricted to often rather quirky counter-melodies, both he and the continuo lute player have quite a few original harmonic twists up their sleeves. There are various other aspects of the recording that might provoke criticism – his decision to use a choir of 15 on the evidence of the three ripieno parts for a single cantata in the Düben Collection, not changing to viols for *Ad cor*, the six of the seven cantatas, and the decision not to fill out the disc with other works, despite his booklet note lament that

"there are still plenty of unknown works in Buxtehude's oeuvre waiting to be enjoyed". How long must we wait for someone to take Clive Wearing's late 70s idea of contextualising these works through the use of Passiontide chorales and Biblical readings? BC

Castello / Fontana *Sonate concertate in stil moderno* John Holloway vln, Lars Ulrik Mortensen hpscd, Jane Gower dulcian ECM New Series 476 4641

'Much has been made', writes John Holloway in his booklet note, 'of Castello's use of the term "soprano" for the solo instrument in the two violin Sonatas: the fact is that as printed they go beyond the tonal range of all other likely instruments, and especially the second Sonata is so idiomatically violinistic that it is obvious that "violino" is the intended instrument'. But, wait. Over the page, here's Peter Holman's take on the issue: 'Castello the wind player tends to write his florid ornamentation in rapid stepwise patterns and just labels the solo parts of his two sonatas "à soprano solo" – implying that they are conceived for the cornett as much as the violin'. The fascination of these pieces is, of course, that they allow for that hoary old chestnut to be debated for time immemorial. Their very *locus* in the Venice of the early 17th century yields possible *modus* of performance rooted in the old dance traditions of violin playing, in newer church traditions of mixed consort music, in the *piffari* tradition of St. Mark's, in the emerging operatic manner of monophonic line and bass and in many more ways besides. It is, therefore, a mark of John Holloway's musical integrity that his gentle and persuasive advocacy for his instrument in this repertoire is so entirely convincing that whilst listening to this disc, one can't imagine this music any other way.

Catherine Groom

Corelli *12 Violin Sonatas, Op. 5* Trio Corelli (Elizabeth Zeuthen Schneider vn, Viggo Mangor lute & theorbo, Ulrik Spang-Hanssen org) 125' 34" (2 CDs) Bridge Records Bridge 9371A/B

There are surprisingly few recordings out there of this benchmark publication – Andrew Manze, Monica Huggett and Elizabeth Wallfisch come out at the top of the list on amazon.com (ahead of Arthur Grumiaux). I've listened to this set quite a few times and, although there are many moments to enjoy, I found myself constantly hearing more of the organ than the violin, and wondering if the lutenist was actually there for most of

the time – and I think my ears are quite sensitive. [I'll attest to that. CB] The violinist's booklet note appeals for no "bitter and ferocious feud of words and letters" about their choice of scoring (having just listed what the original print says, she mentions that Corelli and Pasquini, whom she considers the most likely original performers, would almost certainly have experimented with Ottoboni's new Christofori fortepiano). It would appear to demonstrate that she knows the choice is controversial, but let it not be said that it was I who started the argument. The first six sonatas feature "Corelli's" ornamentation, while sonata no. 9 is given with Geminiani's embellishments; the remainder are decorated to the performers' own tastes. While this is a pleasant enough set, I don't feel as if I discovered anything new about these 12 sonatas and, if such projects are to be successful, that is what they have to do in order to draw in an audience. BC

Froberger *Diverse* Alejandro Casal *hpscd & org* 64' 28"

enchiriadis EN 2032

FbWV 102-3, 105, 202, 404, 506, 615, 620, 632-3.

The Sevillian harpsichordist Alejandro Casal has put together an attractive and varied programme of Froberger's music which he plays on a copy of a c. 1680 Claude Labrèche harpsichord by Joop Klinkhamer and the 1735 organ at the Iglesia de San Hipólito in Cordoba. Both are very well recorded and suit the music admirably. Toccatas and Suites are played with intelligence and drive; the more contrapuntal *Ricercar*, *Fantasia* and *Capriccio* are a bit understated, though played with care and commitment. The real treats are Casal's performances of three of Froberger's lamentations, which are played with loving attention and real sense of what the music is doing. A recent article by Rebecca Cypress in *Early Music* 40 (2012), 45-54, sees these pieces as part of the French devotional 'Méditation' tradition, freezing time to contemplate future death; Casal's performances capture this sense of the music very well.

Noel O'Regan

Guerrieri *Sonate di Violino* Parnassi musici 59' 58"

cpo 777 543-2

Sonata di Violino a 1.2.3.4., Opera Prima in Venetia 1673 (selection)

The title is slightly naughty – perhaps that is what the original print is called, but there is also music by Guerrieri's teacher [Antonio Maria] Turati and not everything is played on violins. The versatile lutenist Sven Schwannberger also plays on what is described as a *flauto italiano*, a recorder in G with a conical

bore. The programme opens and closes with sonatas a4 (2 violins, viola, cello and continuo), the first by Guerrieri and the last by Turati, entitled *La Rovetta*. These would both have sat happily alongside the repertoire on last issue's 1600 disc from Alessandrini, and the performances are equal in stature, too. Elsewhere, though, I had reservations – on Track 10, I felt the pitches of the flute and organ were a little too close for comfort (and that's not taking in account the wind player's penchant for "variously" lozenge-shaped notes), and where the booklet talks about the violinists improvising in works that did not make it on to the disc (despite its relative shortness), it is the organist who fills in some rather odd gaps on Track 4, with some unfortunate doublings. I did, however, much enjoy the contributions of the harp, including a solo with continuo (Guerrieri stipulates *Alpa* [sic] *doppio overo Teorbo*) and the theorbist's contributions as the obbligato melodic bass in the trio sonata by Turati. An interesting disc, but I could have done without the recorder. BC

Legrenzi *Missa Laurentana quinque vocibus* Oficina Musicum 58' 42"

Dynamic CDS710

+Alma Redemptoris mater, Congratulamini filiae Sion, Hodie collaetantur coeli & 2 sonatas (La Spilimberga & La Querini)

This is an odd CD. Purporting to be a recreation of sorts, a mass for five voices and continuo (complete with the Propers chanted by a female "cantor", although the intonations for the Gloria and Credo are sung by a man, as well as three Marian pieces for soprano(s) and continuo) is framed by two trio sonatas and some organ improvisations – so the strings never play with the voices. The music is very nicely written (as always with this composer) and the performances are adequate, though neither of the solo sopranos particularly impresses and the choral sound ranges from the well-shaped and vigorous of the *Et resurrexit* to the lacklustre and untidy beginning of the *Agnus Dei*. The instrumental contributions are altogether better, and the continuo combination of lute and organ works really well for the vocal material. Surely some of the bigger names of the early music world must discover Legrenzi some time soon? BC

Monteverdi *Mass for 4 voices, Ninth Book of Madrigals* I Solisti di Milano, Complesso vocale Polifonia, Angelo Ephrikian 132' 40"

Newton Classics 8802117 (rec 1967-69 3 CDs)

Also includes *Salve regina* No. 2, *Litany*

Ariadne's Lament, *Scherzi musicali* & *Madrigals and Songs*

I wonder who thought of reissuing this.

Irrespective of performance style, however could the man in the box pass a performance of the 1650 Mass with the organ so dominant – it's not the volume as such but the dull audibility of the bass. And the tempi are so slow! Some early recordings are of historical interest, others are curiosities. As such, perhaps it should either have a note explaining how Monteverdian performance styles have changed or alternatively reprint the original notes as a period piece – Berta Joncus's new note would be more suited attached to new recording. I'm not against reissues – I sometimes get paid for writing notes for them! Some of the secular pieces are more acceptable – I definitely suggest not to start with Disc 1. But apart from handling of tempi, the main difference from later recordings is the absence of the theorbo – and most theorbists are stylistically more clued up than an all-purpose harpsichordist on an instrument remote from any that Monteverdi would have known. The tenor solo and duets are the main attraction – enough to recommend a bargain box if the booklet had contained texts and translations. CB

The inclusion of SV (Statkus Verzeichnis) numbers in the running order is a bit pedantic. I keep a copy of the catalogue on my desk, but have never included the numbers on our editions (72 items, ranging from one page to 200). Virtually all his music with titles used more than once can be identified by adding a date, number of voices, or I, II or III for repeated texts in the church-music collections of Selva Morale and the 1650 print.

Purcell *Love's Madness* Dorothee Miels, Lauten Compagnie Berlin, Wolfgang Katschner 75' 46"

Carus 83.371

Songs by Purcell, Johnson, Locke, Pepusch and Ravenscroft, and traditional songs

I remember vividly my first lesson as a postgraduate at the Royal Academy of Music. My illustrious professor took one look at the Purcell I'd brought and tossed it aside, saying, 'You vont to know how to play this musik? Vell, you look at the bassline. Now, shall ve go and haff a beer?' The Lautten Compagnie Berlin seems to have taken a leaf from his book. Rarely have I come across a Purcell song disc whose musicians are so patently revelling in the texture in the bass register. This isn't to undermine soloist Dorothee Miels, whose performance is outstanding, particularly in her 'drunken' rendition of 'Tis women makes us love (alright, it should be a catch, but with a performance this good, who cares?); but she's aided and abetted all the way by her band. The jew's harp underpinning the uproarious rendition of *Bedlam Boys* that opens the disc made me laugh out loud, but the 'straight' songs are textured with equal care: listen to the warmth and flow

of the bassline in *Oft she visits*, and the twanging, plangent theorbo sound in *The Blessed Virgin's Expostulation*. Not all the repertoire is staple Purcell: the sound-world is expanded with traditional songs including *Willow Song* and *The Three Ravens*. Enthusiastically recommended.

Catherine Groom

A. Scarlatti *La Colpa, Il Pentimento, La Grazia* Mechthild Bach S, Petra Geitner S, Kai Wessel A, Orchester und Vokalensemble La Stagione, Michael Schneider (2 CDs in a box)

Capriccio C5126 (1992)

Stradella: *Lamentatione per il Mercordi Santo & Crocifissione e morte di nostro signore Gesù Cristo*

Easter 1708 in Rome was book-ended by two oratorios: the present *Passiontide* oratorio by Alessandro Scarlatti on the Wednesday, and Handel's *Resurrezione* on Easter Sunday. Both, by all accounts, were impressive showings, involving the finest musicians in Rome and in the case of *La Colpa*, a magnificent stage set. Yet only Handel's has been widely performed in recent years. Scarlatti's work is fascinating yet immensely problematical: adventurous in its harmonic exploration and *galant* in much of its gesture, its form harks back to Monteverdi, cast in the mould of a discourse between the allegorical figures of Guilt, Repentance and Grace. Its mostly gentle accompanimental gesture sits rather uneasily with the high drama and intense soul-searching of Cardinal Pietro Ottoboni's libretto. I've a hunch that the blame for this breach can be apportioned equally between Scarlatti and director, Michael Schneider. Petra Geitner, as Grace, sings in track 7: 'The gloomy wings of night spread out horrifyingly and wondrously against the sun, and it seems that light no longer shines in the sky. The whole world is covered in a veil of darkness and languishes, enveloped in anguish and mourning'. I read the libretto with relish, fully expecting my blood to be curdled with horror, but instead found much of the performance rather polite. Holy Week in many of the Mediterranean countries today is redder-blooded than this. Nonetheless, there are few rival recordings, and the work is well worth discovering.

Catherine Groom

Schütz *Zwölf geistliche Gesänge* Dresdener Kammerchor, Irene Klein gamba, Sebastian Knebel organ, Hans-Christoph Rademann
Carus 83.239 60' 01"

I was very impressed by this team's *Musikalisches Exequien* (see *EMR* 146 p. 21). This is the fourth in their series. It doesn't have quite the impact of the *Exequien*. These 12 liturgical pieces were

selected by Schütz's organist at the Electoral Saxon Court and published them with the composer's permission in 1657. They and make a coherent musical and is definitely worth buying. The scoring is for choir and organ; the organ may be omitted, but if used, the organist is advised to copy the parts into tablature or score, especially the mass and Magnificat – Schütz favoured the doubling rather than free chordal accompanimental style. The performances are impressive: the choir does all the right things, though after a few tracks I did find myself longing for just a little more excitement. But that's the fault of hearing too many pieces at once: only play all 12 if you are in the mood. Maybe not quite as outstanding as the *Exequien*, but well worth buying. CB

The Choral Music of Thomas Tudway (c.1650-1726) The Choir and Orchestra of Ferdinand's Consort, Stephen Bullamore
Priory PRCD 1034 77' 13"

Is it true? Jubilate, Magnificat, My heart rejoices, Nunc dimittis, Sing O heavens, Te Deum Wimpole
see page 10

Zachow Christmas Cantatas Accademia Amsterdam, Capella Frisiae, Constanze Backes, Ludger Remy
Quintone Q100001
Herr wenn ich nur dich habe, Lobe den Herrn meine Seele, Meine Seel erhebt den Herren, Preiset mit mir den Herren

Well, well! You wait decades for a recording of Zachow cantatas and then two really do come along at once. Following the *Passiontide* and Easter pieces I reviewed for the last issue here are four more cantatas, none of which is actually a Christmas piece – New Year is the closest we get. The singing is all very good, but the most striking feature of this music is the colourful instrumentation. Horns, recorders, viols and even harp are called upon in addition to strings and oboes, all of whom are underpinned by a 'proper' organ, and a Schnitger to boot. Last time I invoked BWV4 as a point of comparison. Here BWV71 more readily springs to mind, the general message being the same – if you enjoy early JSB you'll enjoy this. The texts of the cantatas are given in German only and the notes are in Dutch and intermittently lumpy English. David Hansell

Alte Meister in arrangements of Karl Straube Andreas Sieling (Sauer organ in the Berliner Dom, 1905) 75' 35"

MDG Scene MDG 946 1740-6

J S Bach In dulci júbilo BWV751 Buxtehude: Ciaconna, Passacaglia, Präludium & Fuge in F# minor; Kerll Passacaglia; Muffat: Passacaglia, Toccata Sexta; Pachelbel Ciaconna, Toccata in F, Vater unser; Strungk

Lass mich dein sein; Walther Meinen Jesum lass ich nicht

This is the sort of CD that might send *EMR* readers scurrying behind the settee. An almost grotesquely massive late-romantic organ (dating from 1905), and works of the ancient masters giving the full romantic treatment, covering an enormous dynamic and tonal range. But it can be argued that it is because of organists like Karl Straube (organist of Bach's Leipzig Thomaskirche, which houses a very similar Straube organ to that in Berlin Cathedral) that much of this early repertoire came to light after having been ignored for generations. His 1904 publication *Alte Meister* included 14 works (12 included on this CD) by the likes of Muffat, Kerll, Pachelbel, Strungk et al arranged for the German romantic organ. In the 1930s he turned away from this romantic rethinking and became something a pioneer of period performance, reducing the Thomaskirche choir numbers down to 60 for Bach choruses. His pupils passed on his quote that "Now we play more correctly, but earlier everything was more beautiful." Given the context, Andreas Sieling plays in a remarkable historically informed way, adhering to every one of Straube's complex instructions on registration, phrasing, articulation and agogics. Andrew Benson-Wilson

Die Orgeln der Marienkirche zu Lübeck Johannes Under (1723 Schwartz 'Barockorgel', 1968 Kemper 'GroßOrgel' and 1986 Alfred Führer 'Totentanzorgel') 77' 04" VKJK 1122

After winning three major competitions, Johannes Under became assistant organist in Bach's church in Leipzig and is now organist of Buxtehude's church in Lübeck. The CD features the three organs in the Marienkirche, starting with music by Buxtehude and his predecessor Tunder, on the Totentanz organ. The latter is the only one of the three to give anything like justice to music of Buxtehude's time although it is a poor replacement for Buxtehude's own organ, which survived until the Royal Air Force destroyed it, along with much of central Lübeck, in their first deliberate raid on German civilian targets of the Second World War. For me, one of the most moving of all war memorials is the sight of the partially melted Marienkirche bells, left where they fell, embedded in the floor below one of the church's towers. Something of the eclectic nature of the current Totentanz organ is shown by the inclusion of two French pieces. Close to the fallen bells is a little chapel which houses an early 18th century chamber, here recorded for the first time. It is not in great condition, but is worth

hearing, as is having the Bach 'harpsichord' Toccata (916) played on an organ. The monstrous west end is given a blast in works by Holst, Karg-Elert and Liszt. The CD comes in book format with information and specifications for all three organs. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

La sacqueboute Les Sacqueboutiers
Flora 2310

Castello Sonatas 3, 4, 16; Falconiero Passacaille and Ciaccona; Merula Ciaccona; Morales *Clamabant autem mulieres*; Ortiz Recercadas; Scheidt Bergamasca; Schein *Banchetto musicale*; Schütz *Es stehe Gott auf*

The original release of this recording in 2002 welcomed Michel Becquet into "les sacqueboutiers", who dropped "de Toulouse" to mark the occasion. As head of brass at Lyon, he takes top billing in this sackbut showcase. His sound is distinguished by a gentle shimmer – just so you know it's him and that he comes from a wider trombone world – as he joins the peerless Daniel Lassalle and Wim Becu to form a sort of sackbut fantasy league. The ensemble, completed by Jean-Pierre Canihac and Marie Garnier-Marzullo, combines complete precision with constant life and excitement. They use the full range of tone and dynamic, using their extraordinary technique to carry off everything from whispering in over a vihuela ground base so that when you hear them, you realise they have already started, to delivering the full thrill that surely must have given the "tromba one" its name: referring as much to the sound as to the design – and so rarely properly used. The disc is topped and tailed by German music, including some fairly unnecessary percussion, finishing with a beautiful motet by Schütz. The meat of the sandwich is Italian, with a focus on the sackbuts in extraordinary duets. Right at the centre of the meat is a real jewel: a motet by Cristobal de Morales, with all five parts decorated by the Spanish cornett player Paco Rubio. Perfectly crafted and balanced this slowly revolving, psychedelic jigsaw is something to behold.

Stephen Cassidy

Music for the French lute Anders Ericson
(11-course lute).
Daphne 1042.

For his first solo CD Anders Ericson explores the *recherché* world of French baroque lute music. You could never guess from his gently expressive performance that he also plays lead guitar for a progressive heavy metal band. First is a group of pieces by François Dufaut (c.1604-c.1670), and with the opening Prelude Ericson establishes a static atmosphere of lovely, soporific sounds, inviting

the listener to relax and concentrate. In her Lute Tutor, Mary Burwell mentions Dufaut, "whose play is very grave and learned", and Ericson's unhurried interpretation reflects this, ending the set with a very slow Sarabande. Second is a group of pieces by Jacques Gallot (c.1625-c.1695), who was one of the last French composers to write for the 11-course lute. In his *Study of the Lute* (1727), Ernst Gottlieb Baron avers "In regard to the lute, the French have not accomplished much in particular" and "Gallot gave his pieces such strange names that one must ponder hard how they connect with the music". I think it was unfair of Baron to dismiss out of hand some of the most beautiful music written for the instrument, but it is certainly puzzling why track 10 should have the title "Allemande Oesope ridicule". Gallot's pieces end with a slow *Volte la Bruegeoise*. Third is a set by Jean Mercure (c.1600-c.1660), beginning with an Allemande and ending with a Gigue. Fortunately the booklet notes list what the different movements are, because although Ericson's playing is kind on the ears, most of the movements are indistinguishable from the unmeasured preludes. Last comes a set by Germain Pinel (c.1600-1661) "whose play", according to Mary Burwell, "was very gay and airy". One might have thought that this should have encouraged a lively performance, yet even the *Branle des Frondeurs* and the final Gigue are played in the same droopy way. Perhaps if Ericson were to inject just a touch of heavy metal rhythm, the dance pieces on this CD might gain some of the oomph they surely deserve. *Stewart McCoy*

O Jesu mi dulcissime Coro, dir Mark Griffiths; Camerata Antiqua, dir Matthew Manchester 62' 37"
Dal Segno DSPRCD602
Corradini, A & G Gabrieli, Monteverdi, Schütz

I was quite impressed by the first track, Schütz's *Wie lieblich*, with the chords well-shaped. But the overall effect is rather heavy and tempi are on the slow side. The programme contains mostly well-known pieces, but Griffiths needs to do a lot more investigation of the repertoire and learn from the specialist ensembles rather than jump on a bandwagon without more research. For a start, Giovanni Gabrieli died in 1612 (which is why he is being commemorated this year), not 1615, the date of two large posthumous publications. It's good to hear Corradini's *O Jesu mi dulcissime*, but a let-down that the climax of the disc is the 1597 GG setting, not the amazing 1615 one (whose written-out ornaments drop a very big hint that such pieces are probably for solo voices, not a choir). The musician's hearts are clearly in the right

place, but why stick your neck out in *Beatus vir* a6 and ignore the specified instrumentation – trombones or lower strings are standard alternatives, but cornetts are not named for this or any other pieces in *Selva morale*. It wouldn't matter much at a live concert, but not in a recording. I don't know if the cornetts were responsible for the slow tempo, but I suspect it would have been sung at the slow speed anyway. One consequence of that is the need for much more subtle organ playing than detached chords. The index calls for 6 *voci concertato*, which probably means six soloists, not a choir. So, Coro, do carry on with this music, but get a bit more subtle, believe the specific evidence at least until you are completely within the style, and be sure that what you sing really needs a choir. Start by thinking about the 1610 Vespers, for which it can be argued that Monteverdi had around ten singers at Mantua. If there is a choir, it supplements the soloists, not vice versa – a good rule for Bach as well! *CB*

LATE BAROQUE

JE Bach Passionsoratorium Barbara Schlick, David Cordier, Christoph Prégardien, Stephen Varcoe SATB, Rheinische Kantorei, Das Kleine Konzert, Hermann Max 122' 05" (2 CDs)
Capriccio C 5122 (1989)
+ *Das Vertrauen der Christen auf Gott & Meine Seele erhebt den Herrn*

This is a fresh and tuneful group of works by JSB's nephew and godson, dating from 1764. His approach to the passion story is entirely different from JSB: there is no Evangelist with the Gospel narrative and no turba choruses. The seven 'scenes' include chorales, simply set; but the descriptive narrative is carried by accompanied arioso rather than straight recitative, and the choruses and arias belong in a more operatic 'empfindsame' style – a word that is hard to translate but is rendered 'sensitive style' here. Quite unlike the more gallant, pre-classical style of CPE Bach, this feels more like a precursor of Haydn, writing serious music, coloured by an evolving orchestra rather than using the range of obligato instruments of the JSB passions. The scoring is imaginative – a pair of bassoons play with a solo violin in one duet, and pairs of flutes, oboes, and even horns make the 'Harmonie' with the string band.

All the soloists are good, and this recording, made by Hermann Max for the Westdeutscher Rundfunk in 1989, certainly justifies its reissue. It comes from that middle stage in the revival of period instruments, and it would have been very interesting to have the details of the instruments copied, the exact pitch

at which they play, the tuning scheme of the keyboards etc in the slightly sparse booklet. The text itself sounds as if it has an interesting history: a signed score was still to be found in St Augustine's church at Gotha at the beginning of the last century, but is now lost. However, the Passionatorium was transcribed for DDT in 1914 so has survived, though without our having the source to check the details.

This is coherent, sensitive performance; the recording is slightly woollier than we would expect these days, and it would be well worth someone exploring the music of this genre and subjecting it to the scrutiny of a new edition and current performance practice. It is well worth a new version, but in the meantime, let's hope this reissue will prompt further interest in this underrated composer.

David Stancliffe

Bach Cantatas vol.50 Hana Blazíková, Robin Blaze, Gerd Türk, Peter Kooij ScTTB, Bach Collegium Japan, Masaaki Suzuki 74' 57"

BIS SACD-1941

BWV 49, 145, 149 & 174 (1726-29)

As Suzuki's Bach Cantata series draws towards the end, he seems to have settled on a group of twelve singers as the ideal: four to sing the arias and a further eight ripienists. This marries well with his 4.3.2.2.1 strings and in these diverse and richly scored cantatas to texts by Picander (except for the anonymous 49) from the 1728-9 cycle, of which few seem to have survived. They are characterized by sparse use of 'the choir' – why should that be if the choir was only ever the four single voices used in the arias? – so one of the cantatas (145) starts straight in with an aria and two others with opening sinfonias in place of the customary chorus. At the same time there is a rich use of instruments: a trio of horns and of oboes and ripieni strings in the sinfonia in 174 (based on Brandenburg 3/1) to add to the 3.3.3.1 solo strings of its original; a splendid bassoon obligato in the duet in 149/6, and a wonderful Oboe d'Amore and Violoncello Piccolo (played by Ryo Terakado, the leader, on a violoncello da spalla) counterpoint to the soprano in 49/4 – Ich bin herrlich. The only discordant note is the shrill and unregulated 2' stop in the organ obligato in the sinfonia to 49. Surely an alternative register could have been found, or the organ tuner (named in the booklet) could have tamed those few notes that shriek? The organ part in the aria that follows (49/2) sings melodiously. (Bach's organ part is notated in D, not E – and that would make a difference to the tuning in most temperaments: at which pitch is the Garnier organ?) That apart, this is a testimony to

Suzuki's meticulous preparation and execution of some of the finest corpus of music that exists.

David Stancliffe

Wouldn't an organ at high pitch regularly used with instruments a tone lower have been tuned to match them?

CB

Bach Cantatas BWV 54 & 170, Concerto BWV 1060 Suite BWV 1067 Daniel Taylor cT, John Abberger ob, Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra, Jeanne Lamon
Analekta AN 2 9878

This is a well-prepared and beautifully sung/played CD, with two solo cantatas for Alto with Daniel Taylor (who has made his name singing opera) and the excellent Tafelmusik from Toronto under their long-time director, the violinist Jeanne Lamon. Mixed programmes are not for everyone, but this disc with two cantatas, Joshua Rifkin's adaption of the second suite (for flute and strings) in a for violin and strings and the concerto for oboe and violin in c reconstructed from the two klavier concerto (BWV 1060) showcases Tafelmusik splendidly.

Not everyone likes Daniel Taylor's rather operatic voice, but the Weimar Cantata 54 with its five part (single) string ensemble has a splendid fugato final movement that displays his prowess. In 170, the 2 manual obligato organ part is played on a small instrument, so the contrast between the parts is lost and a change of registration employed for the central section; but this is a small detail. The Suite and Concerto are rich, fluent and very convincing; neither soloist puts a whisker out of place, and the French Overture style opening to the Suite is particularly elegant. The Contrabass player is especially poised. If you don't know this band, you will be impressed.

David Stancliffe

Bach Drama BWV 201, 205, 213 Céline Scheen, Clint Van der Linde, Fabio Trümper, Makoto Sakurada, Christian Immeler, Alejandro Meerapfel, Chœur de Chambre de Namur, Les Agrémens, Leonardo García Alarcón 81' 33" (2 CDs) + 42' 54"
Ambronay AMY031 DVD

The conductor's contention in these infrequently performed pieces that we know as 'secular cantatas' is that they are the real Bach – dramas, as he called them, or one-act operas as we have come to classify them. Certainly Alarcon is a passionate advocate of these three dramas of which two are on conventional CDs recorded in the pretty resonant Espace Culturelle d'Harscamp in Namur – the former church of Notre Dame – while the third, a DVD, was taken live during the Festival d'Ambronay from the abbey there a few days later last September.

They are an interesting mix: 201, The

Contest between Phoebus and Pan, was given first in Zimmermann's coffee house (or its garden) in 1729, perhaps as a signal that Leipzig's cantor had taken on – and could inhabit equally freely – another role. Although opening and closing with a five-part chorus, the voices are those of the dramatis personae – SATTBB, and the two basses occasionally sing in different octaves. I found it strange that in this performance a chorus of 23 singers should be used. Combine that with the very resonant acoustic of the church and the frequent use of a substantial contrabass, and the overall effect is of a homogenised accompanying orchestra in a pit. You get little sense of the windy conflict, and details of the marvelous scoring are hard to make out, though, as the DVD shows, they are playing period instruments.

205 is the most obviously dramatic of the three. The opening chorus – a proper chorus here – tests their ability, and they rise to it. The soloists perform their roles well, and sing tunefully, fluidly and dramatically: a bass recit accompanied by three trumpets, timps, two horns, two flutes, two oboes and strings is quite something, and a later bass aria has a similar backing. But there are lyrical moments too – oboe d'amore with the alto, viola d'amore and gamba with the tenor and a wonderful concerto-like violin with the soprano. The sound-pattern given to each wind in turn is richly inventive, and so are the recitatives, with instruments colouring the drama from time to time, as if the interchange was almost Mozartian.

213 is a revelation: much of it – except the recits, a fast Handelian-style aria and the jolly last chorus – were re-used shortly afterwards in the *Weinachts-oratorium*. Here the lullaby at the crib turns out to be a love-duet with two violas rather than oboes da caccia; familiar numbers appear in transposed keys with different voices and changed instrumentation and seem fresh and convincing.

In spite of that, I am not wholly sold on the very operatic style of performance, with the continuo instruments sounding almost as if they'd been scored by Raymond Leppard; but the music is fabulous, and I suspect you may know it as little as I do. Here's a welcome introduction.

David Stancliffe

Apocryphal Bach Masses II Masses, Magnificat, Cantata 150, Sanctus Gesualdo Consort Amsterdam, Alsfelder Vokalensemble, Hannoversche Hofkapelle, Wolfgang Helbich 58' 17"

cpo 777 561-2

BWV 150, 237, 239, 240, Anh. 24, 30, 167

This is the sixth CD in a series of works

that exist in J.S.Bach's hand, copied out for study or performance, and which live a shadowy existence in the appendix of the BWV. The works represented here range from the massive 23 voice Missa in G (for 2 four-part vocal groups, 2 five-part bands of strings and wind and a ripieno chorus reminiscent of Valls' *Missa Scala Aretina* in its sonorities) to Cantata 150, a composition which has much in common with some of Bach's early cantatas like 131 and 4, and may well date from the Mulhausen period. Only the C major Sanctus (BWV 237) dating from 1723 and autographed and Cantata 150 seem to me to be plausible as authentic works. Others are clearly not: the Magnificat Bach copied out in 1742 is in a post-Carissimi style; the Missa in A is by J.C.Pez and was published in 1706.

The performances are mixed. The large vocal forces give sonority to the G major Mass and provide contrasts in the Magnificat; but for Cantata 150, with 2 violins, bassoon and continuo, they seem overwhelming: surely here if nowhere else we need the single voices of the Gesualdo Consort – as splendid in ensemble as in arias. No details are given of the players or their instruments, nor where the recordings were made; all is under the direction of Wolfgang Helbich, organist of Bremen Cathedral for over 30 years and known for his championing of 'lost' and unpublished music.

David Stancliffe

Bach Johannes-Passion Gerlinde Samann, Petra Noskalova, Christoph Genz, Jens Hamann, SATB, La Petite Bande, Sigiswald Kuijken 105' 14" (2 CDs)
Challenge Classics CC72545

Kuijken argues for a very small-scale performance of a sort-of early 1724 version for his John Passion. He leads a 2.2.1.2.0 band of strings (and plays the gamba himself, so that the violins are reduced by one in the central section of "Es ist vollbracht", to team up with four solo singers and four ripienists. The most unusual feature is that he eschews not only a bassoon, but also a violone. The absence of any 16' sound makes the (very fast) turba choruses seem more lightweight than we are used to but gives a persuasive clarity to the arias, especially "Eilt, eilt". The playing is flexible and crystal-clear, and the singing matches it, even though I am always conscious that it's a group of soloists singing together for the choruses rather than a vocal ensemble who individually take the vocal lines in the arias. The evangelist's voice seems pitched a fourth higher than most tenors, so he sings with enormous fluency. The bass is the star for me.

The recording is of high quality in a

full but not resonant acoustic; the booklet is full of biographies of Kuijken and his singers in English, German and French but gives the text only in German. Nor are we given any information about the instruments and their makers or the size of the organ. The clarity and ease of this performance will win it many friends, especially among those who want to learn the piece from a recording, but the almost throw-away feel of the chorales and the apparent insouciance of some of the arias like "Es ist vollbracht" and "Mein teurer Heiland" make it hard for me to place this top among the (many) small-scale John Passions I have heard this year.

David Stancliffe

Bach for Japan Bach Collegium Japan, Masaaki Suzuki 82' 20"
BIS-CD-2011

This is a CD put together by Suzuki and his BIS recording team to offer to the distressed and bereaved some healing music by Bach. All royalties are donated to TOHOKU HELP, the Sendai Christian Alliance Disaster Relief Network set up to support the victims devastated by the tsunami that swept that area. It contains a number of excerpts (largely arias) from the Bach Cantata project together with three brief organ chorale preludes and the motet *Komm, Jesu, komm*. The compilation is designed to be soothing, and offer Bach as a companion in grief. The performances are of the usual high standard, and the soprano aria in cantata 115, *Bete aber auch dabei*, with Oboe d'Amore and Violoncello Piccolo obbligati, is quite wonderful.

David Stancliffe

Bach Organ Music Vol VIII Margaret Phillips (1727 Christian Müller organ, Grote of Jacobijnerkerk, Leeuwarden). Regent REGCD328 152' 29" (2 CDs)
Neumeister Chorales BWV 1090-1120, Preludes and Fugues BWV 532, 539, 543, Trio Sonatas BWV 528, Trios BWV 583, 585, Preludes etc 569, 578, 562, 563, 571.

Margaret Phillips continues her exploration of Bach's organ works with two CDs devoted to the Neumeister Chorales interspersed with a selection of Bach's free work, all in the context of two well-balanced programmes on each of the two CDs. These 38 preludes (2 are also in the *Orgelbüchlein* and are not included on these CDs), along with 44 pieces by other composers, were found in 1984 within the Lowell Mason library at Yale University and are named after their original copyist. The Bach works are youthful, and demonstrate his fascinating explorations of a wide range of musical styles, from simple harmonisations to elaborate, if miniature, chorale fantasias. Despite their

diminutive length, several hold real power – try the mini-opera that is *Aus tiefer Not*, for example (BWV 1099). Margaret Phillips opens with one of the most flamboyant of all Bach's free works, a particularly scary piece when played at the start of a recital, its terrifying opening pedal solo being just the start of a work that demands (and, in this case, gets) an excellent technique. The darkly mysterious Fantasia in G (BWV 562) is given added pathos by being played at 16' pitch. The other free works are generally also early works, making for a very compelling pair of CDs, Margaret Phillips' playing with her usual exquisite musical insight, composure and technical prowess.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Bach Frühe Orgel Werke Harald Vogel (Schnitger Organ, St Peter & Paul, Cappel)
MDG GOLD 914 1743-6 74'

This CD of some of the many early works of Bach is revealing in more ways than just giving an opportunity to hear some fascinating, but little heard, works. Harald Vogel is still hard at work on his studies of interpretation and there are several times when a single note or two sent me scurrying to find my scores. Some are the result of recent research by other scholars, and some are just his own take on a particular work, for example, as in the opening pedal solo where he echoes some sections on the Hauptwerk, using a similar 16' registration. His insight into the North German organ also goes unabated, and the choice of the 1680 Arp Schnitger Cappel organ is a good one. It used to be in a large Hamburg church and was almost certainly played by Bach when he visited Hamburg around 1701 and again in 1728. It is also the organ which introduced many people to the works of Bach, played on original instruments, when it was used for the influential Helmut Walcha recordings in the 1950s. Although, as a distinctively North German organ (with a large amount of pre-1680 pipework in it), it gave a false impression of the sound world that most of Bach's organ works would have been intended for (something that is only fairly recently being remedied), these early pieces work well on this instrument. Listen, for example, to the opening of track 6, *Herzlich lieb hab ich dich* with the distinctive contrast between the Trumpet and the Tertian stops. Full registrations are included in the notes. Recommended, for the organ, playing and programme.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Bach Das Wohltemperierte Klavier - Teil II Sébastien Guillot 156' 33" (2 CDs)
Saphir Productions LVC 1136

The versions of WTC II in the British Library autograph, in the hand of JS and Anna Magdalena Bach, are usually trumped by those in a later, 1744, copy by Bach's pupil JC Altnickol, which are seen as representing Bach's final thoughts. In fact the differences are mostly minor, apart from the E minor fugue which is 17 bars shorter in the version played here. Guillot is a fine Bach player who gives a stylish and energetic account of the music. He uses a Blanchet harpsichord copy by Fadini, which is not my favourite type of harpsichord for this music: it can be a bit fuzzy and over resonant, affecting clarity in some of the fugues and in preludes like that in D major prelude. On the other hand it does provide options for varying registration which Guillot uses well. He has a good choice of tempi and generally gives the music a sympathetic and exhilarating reading. *Noel O'Regan*

Bach Keyboard works Jovanka Marville
clavichord 56' 33"

passacaille 970
BWV 914, 964, 972 & 1006

This recording is a good advertisement for what the clavichord can do with Bach's music – especially in his arrangements of Vivaldi's D major Concerto and of his own E major violin partita. Echo effects are used to advantage and there's a surprisingly wide range of colours. Marville plays with confidence and flair and her articulation is excellent. She plays on a Hubert copy by Thomas Steiner and the recording quality is admirable, giving both brightness and depth to the sound. *Noel O'Regan*

Bach Sonates pour clavecin obligé et violon BWV 1014-1019 Chiara Banchini
vln, Jörg-Andreas Bötticher hpscd 2 CDs
Zig-Zag Territoires ZZT302

I hesitate to write what I truly thought while listening to this, yet feel compelled to do so. For someone with such a fine reputation as Chiara Banchini, I was very surprised not only by some of the artistic decisions taken, but actually that she was happy with the sound quality – the tone of her violin is not the nicest I've ever heard. To be honest, I've often wondered quite how "natural" some previous recordings have been; this is fiendishly difficult music and having the ability not only to play the notes, but to give them consistently high degrees of shading throughout such long, demanding movements is astonishing. Here there are, of course, moments of beauty, but there are equally some frankly rather ugly sounds that would have needed a re-take, not an engineering tweak. As an example of strange artistic choices, let's take the third movement of the fifth sonata (BWV

1018); essentially the violin plays a chordal accompaniment to the harpsichordist's duetting hands (here magnified through the choice of a 16' instrument – I'll leave that particular debate for another day) – Banchini opts to play the chords rather louder than one might expect, and with an accent but then, when Bach throws a spanner in the works by having a long held note over three changing ones, the accents no longer work so a change of tack is required; the accents return not long afterwards, more or less to the end of the movement where, of course, the harpsichord's final open chord dies very quickly and the violin holds on for the full semibreve of the bar. It's all a little bizarre – but surely a thought-out approach, which makes it even stranger. I've written in these pages before that anyone recording such well-known repertoire needs to have something fresh to say about it; in this case, I'm afraid I was disappointed. *BC*

Bach Reconstructions & transcriptions for strings Furor musicus, Antoinette Lohmann vln/dir 72' 54"
Edition Lilac 110910-2

There are four works transcribed here, starting with the Suite 2 (BWV 1067) transposed from B to A minor; the leader takes the flute part, with presumably some fudging in the comparatively few places where the flute and violin I differ. The fugue from the solo violin sonata BWV 1001/2 in D minor or 539/2 in G minor is arranged for strings a6 – fun to play, but not revelatory. Then comes a viola concerto in E flat arranged from the harpsichord concerto in E BWV 1053, itself based on BWV 169 and 49: it sounds plausible. The disc finishes with the Overture, 4 variations and the aria from the Goldberg Variations: I can't see the point, since the music is so specifically for harpsichord. The rest is, however, enjoyable and well played – though the dances of the ex-flute suite are a bit over the top, and the double-bass completely superfluous in a single-strung ensemble. Certainly worth hearing. *CB*

JS, CPE, JC Bach Three keyboard concertos Musica Amphion, Pieter-Jan Belder
Quintone Q 06001 62' 28"
JSB: BWV 1052 (in d); CPEB: Wq. 34 (in G);
JCB: Concerto for pianoforte (1770)

Three different Bachs, three different instruments. This is a well-conceived recording showing three facets of the Bach family. The authorship of the third concerto is disputed and it may have been by Johann Christoph Friedrich; it comes across as a bit formulaic. The CPE Bach organ concerto is a particularly attractive piece with something of Telemann about

it, but with CPE Bach's idiosyncracies and imagination. It comes off best of the three, with Belder sensitive to its lyricism and quirkiness and achieving an excellent ensemble. The same tight ensemble is evident in the JS Bach concerto though here the harpsichord (a Ruckers copy) does not sparkle enough. The recording is geared more for ensemble than for the soloist but the result is a somewhat dull sound, only partly redeemed in the final movement. Playing here is tight and there is a good sense of drive. The Walter pianoforte copy used in the JC Bach concerto fares better and again there is excellent ensemble playing. Certainly worth having for the CPE Bach (recorded on an organ by Henk Klop).

Noel O'Regan

Benda Violin Concertos Ivan Ženaty,
Prague Philharmonic 72' 01"
Supraphon SU 4064-2
In C, D, a & B flat (Lee II: 1, 2, 16 & 18)

Being played on modern instruments, this CD would not normally feature in these pages, but for several reasons, omitting it would have been unreasonable. Firstly, the "Prague Philharmonic" noted on the cover is, for the present project, reduced to a string quartet with harpsichord and double bass. Secondly, these are four fine violin concertos, displaying both Benda's gift for composition and his undoubted virtuosity – though playing a 1740 Guerneri "del Gesù", Ženaty is very much a modern violinist, with supreme mastery of his instrument. If some of the outer movements are a little more speedy than I suspect period players would have chosen, there is plenty of air between the notes and none of the horrid plodding bass lines or omnipresent vibrato that mar so many similar recordings. I thoroughly enjoyed hearing these four excellent works. *BC*

Bourgeois Cantates Carolyn Sampson, Le Concert Lorrain Anne-Catherine Bucher
Carus 83.374 72' 38"

The two books of cantatas from which these works are drawn enjoyed a published life of more than 40 years in the first half the 18th century, a sure sign of their composer's skill in catching the taste of his time in poetic, dramatic and musical terms. It has taken until now, however, for them to enjoy a modern revival – all five works are first recordings. Carolyn Sampson is a consummate artist and she gives herself completely to these mini-dramas. Yes, she sings with an almost constant vibrato, but there is always a strong core to the note which is in tune and she enjoys well-characterised support from the instrumental ensemble. In the booklet there are

useful essays on the composer, the French cantata in general and these pieces in particular. The texts have the German translations printed in parallel but the English follows as a separate block. Despite this irritant however, this release is well worth exploring. *David Hansell*

Couperin *Nouveaux Concerts Complete*
Thomas Indermühle *ob*, Henk de Wit,
Ursula Dütschler *hpscd* 136' (2 CDs)
camerata CM-15045-6

These recordings date from the early 1990s and are played on modern instruments with the occasional use of technical trickery to allow the oboist to duet with himself. But at bargain price this is a good buy. The music is marvellous, the players are very sound stylistically save for short passages of *inégalité* that sound a little self-conscious and the performances are given with an obvious sense of love for the task. *David Hansell*

Fasch *Orchestral Suites* Capella Savaria,
Pál Németh 72' 50"
Dynamic DM8029
Suites in D, F & A minor [FWV K: D22, F7 & a3; references not given in booklet]

This repackaging of a 1999 recording is most welcome – Pál Németh and Capella Savaria were among the pioneers of HIP performances of Fasch's vast "orchestral" output and the present three suites (two of which use pairs of oboes and bassoons, and survive both among the extensive Darmstadt and Dresden collections, testifying to the works' popularity during the composer's life time) are typically tuneful and memorable. All three include a movement called *Plaisanterie*, which just about sums up the CD. *BC*

Pietro Gnocchi *Musica Sacra per le chiese di Brescia* Zara Dimitrova, Anna Bessi, Gianluca Ferranini, Gianluca Buratto *SATB*, Coro Claudio Monteverdi, Ensemble Pian & Forte. 65' 37"

La Bottega Discantica 234
Masses in D & F, 2 *Ave maris stella* settings, 2 *Magnificats*, Concerto Secondo

While I was sitting on the train in Brescia railway station last week, I had absolutely no idea who Pietro Gnocchi was (I would have expected to see his name on a menu rather than a CD). When I listened to the disc for the first of many times since my return home, I was captivated by his ability to combine graceful melodies and counterpoint in the same movement. Indeed, the more I have listened, the greater is my wonder that his music is not much better known – as a violinist, the concerto (called *secondo* here, though the booklet notes mention only one) immediately caught my attention, especi-

ally the final *Pastorale* played with mutes. His vocal and choral music is every bit as strong – there are two *missa brevis* settings (one a Kyrie-Gloria pairing, the other ending at the Crucifixus), two marvellous *Magnificats* for eight voices, and a solo soprano *Ave maris stella* with violins. The chorus is for the most part well drilled (the sopranos are occasionally lazy about hitting the middle of higher notes, especially after leaps) and the accompanying band is very good – nice to hear rustic horns in this context. *BC*

J. G. Graun *Trios* Les Récréations 70' 29"
Raumklang RK 3008
Trios in C minor and G; Quartet in G; Sonata for Cembalo and Viola in C minor

I was very excited when I first saw this disc announced. Though I had not previously encountered the group, I associate the CD firm Raumklang with quality on all levels, and I have long been enthusiastic for Gottlieb Graun's chamber music, so it promised to be a real treat. In actual fact, however, it turned into a slight disappointment. With all the unrecorded works to choose from, why did they opt to duplicate repertoire from the first of cpo's outstanding CDs of Graun trio sonatas with the peerless *Les Amis de Philippe*? I might even have forgiven them, had these been somehow more exciting, but actually, their tempos are a little languorous and the two violinists don't, I'm afraid to say, always seem 100% confident in the higher ranges – and Graun, a virtuoso fiddler (who possibly played these works with Franz Benda), was not shy at showing off his abilities in that department. The other two works are more successful – the C minor sonata with viola should appeal to players of that instrument – and the recording is redeemed, of course, by the quality of the recorded sound, but I'm afraid I can't be terribly enthusiastic about the project as a whole. *BC*

Handel *Heroic Arias* James Bowman *sings*. The King's Consort, Robert King 77' 19"
Hyperion Helios CDH55370 (rec. 1990)
Arias from *Alcina*, *Amadigi*, *Ariodante*, *Giulio Cesare*, *Giustino*, *Ottone & Rinaldo* + *Ov. to Serse*

It's commonly alleged of the output of a certain woodstain manufacturer that 'it does exactly what it says on the tin'; this statement, of course, is equally true of any disc entitled 'James Bowman sings Handel Heroic Arias'. A review by me here is almost redundant, particularly since this is a re-release by Helios of a 1991 Hyperion disc. It was apparently recorded at Bowman's request to mark his 25-year career milestone, and I imagine that its re-issue now, following

fairly hot on the heels of his final London concert at the Wigmore Hall in 2011, is in the nature of a golden send-off from Helios. It's an apposite choice; these arias are, of course, vintage Bowman, even though to many minds Bowman's voice was best showcased as Britten's Oberon. This recording today sounds somewhat *sui temporis* (I suspect a recording of the same repertoire by the same players today would be fleet of foot). It was revelatory in the early 1990s, however: it's the first recording of *Giulio Cesare's* great showcase aria *Va tacito e nascosto* with the *obbligato* played on a baroque horn. To my mind, the fast arias come off best, with *Or la tromba* supported by some splendid trumpet-playing from the usual suspects. *Catherine Groom*

Reviews of Alceste and Esther are held over until the next issue

Hasse *Messe in D* [recte: D minor], *Miserere* Rheinische Kantorei, Das Kleine Konzert, Hermann Max
Capriccio C5125 (1993/95)

Labelled as 'Messe in D', the principal work on this disc is in fact Hasse's Mass setting in D minor, not D major – and although it's undoubtedly charming, it isn't, for me, the real draw of this disc. That is the *Miserere* setting, a still relatively little-known gem (though a search of ArkivMusic yields several previous recordings) and it's well worth investigating if you haven't discovered it. There's something fascinatingly curious about Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment treatments of the penitential *Miserere* text, there being so few of them (can any reader get further than those by J.C. Bach, J.M. Kraus, Pergolesi – perhaps – and the Mozart setting in K.243?) and this puts me in mind rather of Haydn's choral *Seven Last Words* setting in the sweetness of its intensity. Das Kleine Konzert's playing throughout is crystalline in the clarity of its expression and articulation, with some superb playing from its (disgracefully, uncredited) oboists. But *caveat emptor*, these recordings of both works have been issued previously and separately by Capriccio in the 1990s, so do check your shelves before you spend. *Catherine Groom*

Hochreither *Requiem* (1712/17) *Missa Jubilus sacer* (1731) Ars Antiqua Austria, St. Florianer Sängerknaben, Gunar Letzbor
Pan Classics PC 10264 58' 58"

It is only when you read the notes that you realise that these performances are the work of a group of choirboy sopranos and altos (three of each at any given time), four soloists (one of them a choirboy), with consorts of string players (the same individuals on violins in the

mass, viols in the Requiem), four trumpeters with a timpanist, three trombonists and a trio of continuo players (cello, violone and organ) – it's all a little Holy Trinity-ish. The source material for the Requiem is incomplete, and the different dates on folders containing what *has* survived would tend to suggest that not all of it belongs as an entity; that said, the music is impressive – the muted brass and muffled tamps add an extra layer of colour. Its one unique feature is the requirement in the bass part to sing the *Tuba mirum* "through a pipe": having tried various solutions to this enigmatic direction, the final result was achieved by singing through drainpipes removed from Letzbor's summer house! The mass was written in the last year of the composer's life – by then he was working as one of the organists in Salzburg Cathedral, but the work was dedicated to the abbot of his home town of Lambach. With all Ars Antiqua Austria recordings, one is guaranteed music of real quality; according to a note in the booklet, special efforts are now made to reproduce the actual sound of the performances on disc (meaning that the digital sound should be as close as possible to what Letzbor heard from the podium). BC

[Benedetto] Marcello *Sonatas for flute & basso continuo* Trio Legrenzi 97' 20"
Newton Classics 8802123 (2 CDs, 1990)

I played several of these pieces during my last year at school, when I took up the recorder as part of my only "academic" musical studies (in actual fact, a timetable filler around the "much more important" sciences and languages). Trio Legrenzi (a slightly odd choice of name for an ensemble of transverse flute and continuo) opt to use John Walsh's 1732 adaptation of the Op. 2 sonatas, "for a German Flute or Violin".* Much of the music came back to me within a few bars, such is Marcello's easy melodic style. I would have preferred a little more restraint from the cello, however – the supporting role does not seem to come easily to him – and perhaps a little more in the way of melodic accompaniment from the keyboard player, rather than just chords. All in all, a pleasant listen, but there is still plenty of scope for a more HIP version with an assortment of continuo line-ups and even melody instruments! BC

The Walsh edition is an adaptation of the edition for recorder published in Venice in 1712 and reprinted in Amsterdam a few years later; the designation op. 2 is that of the recorder edition: Walsh called this traverso adaptation op. 1. CB

Scarlatti *Sonatas* Carole Cerasi *hpscd*
Metronome MET CD 1087 70' 40"

K 8, 25, 30, 84, 87, 113, 115, 175, 213, 217, 247, 429, 474, 516-7

Playing Scarlatti sonatas in pairs seems to have gone out of fashion. Carole Cerasi makes her own selection here, loosely grouped according to key. There is a mixture of well-known and less-frequently performed sonatas, including a spirited performance of the so-called Cat's Fugue, K30. Cerasi plays on a Goujon copy by Andrew Garlick which has a bright tone and has been recorded with the right amount of resonance to warm the sound while keeping it clear; it suits Scarlatti admirably. Cerasi's easy virtuosity is always at the service of the music and this recording stands up very well in what is a now a crowded field of Scarlatti recordings. Noel O'Regan

Telemann *Wind Concertos Vol. 7* La Stagione Frankfurt, Michael Schneider
cpo 999 907-2 67' 02"
TWV 43: d1, F2; 51: c2, D8; 52: F1; 53: A1

Yet more evidence, if such is needed, that Telemann had one of the most fertile musical imaginations ever; no two movements in over an hour of music are quite the same. Even the varying scoring from piece to piece is remarkable – think how limited in comparison Messrs. Handel and Bach seem! There are solo concertos on this CD for horn and oboe, duet concertos for recorder and bassoon, as well as a pair of delightfully reedy chalumeaux, and a work for two flutes and bassoon with strings. In each and every one of them, Schneider and his seasoned Telemänner bring verve and style in equal measure – since they get no mention on the cover, I would like to draw attention to the particularly outstanding contributions of oboist Luise Baumgartl and Jörg Schulteß, the solo horn player in TWV 51: D8. A special word, too, for those chalumeau players – they have such a limited repertoire, it is lovely to hear them, especially in one of Mr T's most original openings (TWV 43: F2). I shall be sad when this series ends: each volume has brought new delights. BC

Vinci *Fileno – Soprano Cantatas* Emanuela Galli, Francesca Cassinari, Stile Galante, Stefano Aresi 66' 54"
Pan Classics PC 10266

Amor di Citeria, Mesta oh Dio tra questa selve, Mi costa tante lacrime, Parto ma con qual core, recorder sonata in A minor; A. Scarlatti: Fille tu parte? (formerly attrib. Vinci)

It is difficult to decide how seriously this CD deserves to be taken. The rather good notes are much exercised with explaining how the nature of the Neapolitan chamber cantata "offers the opportunity to be immersed in the intimate sound world of private music", even drawing

our attention to a painting (reproduced in the booklet) of such an event, where the music being performed can be identified as a cantata by Porpora. Imagine, then, the extreme surprise when it is obvious from the opening bars that the recording has been made in the spacious acoustic of an apparently large and highly reverberant church. Emanuela Galli in particular responds to the aberrant location with singing that sounds as if she attempting to fill the Albert Hall, a grotesque stylistic travesty of what is required in this music. Francesca Cassinari is better, largely because the cantatas allotted to her have less potential for operatic bawling, although they do introduce a severe outbreak of "silly plucker" syndrome. All this is a great pity, because there is some fine music here and Vinci remains an underrated composer. But this project, which can only be described as having been planned and executed with a wilful lack of musical intelligence, ill serves his cause. Brian Robins

Vivaldi *Concerti per violino IV 'L'imperatore'* Riccardo Minasi, Il pomo d'oro 77'
naïve OP 30533
RV 171, 181, 263a, 271, 327, 331 & 391

The YouTube promotional video for this disc is very entertaining. Minasi is one of the bright young things of the baroque fiddle scene, a dangerous mix of extreme talent and a slightly maverick approach. He is accompanied by Il pomo d'oro, who I have never heard before; the URL given in the booklet does not exist, so I am none the wiser than knowing that they were formed only last year and named after Cesti's 10-hour epic; for this project, harp adorns the continuo line. Minasi enjoys (and conceals) the technical demands, as much as he relishes the scrunchy lines in some of the slower movements. This is Vivaldi with attitude – strong articulations are super-imposed on the music, without compromising its essential Vivaldiness. The *Red Priests* and Mathias Mautes of this world, please note! BC

Vivaldi *Concertos* New Trinity Baroque, Predrag Gosta 69' 17"
Edition Lilac 181219-2
RV 95, 141, 157, 273, 497, 522, 531

I like this disc, with its pleasing variety of concertos (violin, 2 violins, lute, cello, 2 cellos and two without soloists), one of those performances that doesn't make everything tense but allowing relaxed enjoyment. I've been playing it as background, but can't find the notes I made when listening more seriously a few weeks ago. As with the Bach disc I reviewed above from the same company, I'm not sure that a violone (from the

pictures clearly a 16' foot instrument) is necessary, but it's nice to see the picture of a well-known name, Martha Bishop. It puzzles me why the four-part pieces without soloists are not performed more. Michael Fields is the soloist in the lute concerto. CB

Vivaldi *Sonate da camera a tre, opus 1*
L'Estravagante 64'
naïve OP 30535

Unlike the performances of Galuppi trios I review below, this recording is played not only by first-rate HIPsters but by a group who have been performing as a line-up for over 12 years and who have already recorded some of the works before. It therefore goes without saying that they know each movement inside out, and that allows them the freedom of expression that only comes from familiarity, not only with the music itself but also with each other – knowing how your colleagues will react if you suddenly throw a casual ornament into the mix, or hold a note back a fraction of a second longer than you ever dared before. This set introduced Vivaldi to the world and demonstrates his mastery of trio sonata writing, both in the dances and the more abstract movements. I have owned other sets in the past, but this breath of fresh air will definitely replace those! BC

Zelenka *Responsoria pro hebdomada sancta Lamentatio Jeremiae Prophetarum*
Collegium 1704 & Collegium Vocale 1704,
Václav Luks 158' 17" (2 CDs)
Accent ACC 24259

Much as I love this group and its long-time advocacy of their countryman's fabulous music, there is something odd about the programme of this recording. Perhaps this is due to its origins in an extended festival. It includes only one of the composer's Lamentations, but not other music for Holy Week. Of course, maybe having three CDs of such repertoire (even given such intense and beautifully crafted performances as these) would be an excess of riches. Still, given that the remainder of the double CD consists of plainchant and *stile antico* polyphony (some, if not all, doubled by brass players who go unacknowledged in the booklet), an occasional shift in the soundscape would not have gone amiss. Zelenka fans should definitely not be without this recording, but I earnestly hope Luks and his wonderful group will rethink the "packaging" – Zelenka never intended the music to be heard like this, did he? BC

A Sunday in Leipzig Sophie Karthäuser,
Marianne Vliegen, Stephan Van Dyck,
Lieven Termont STBar, Ex Tempore,

Florian Heyerick 61' 31"

Ricercar RIC317

J. Bach *Missa brevis super "Allein Gott..."*
Goldberg *Durch die herzliche Barmherzigkeit,
Herr die Heiligen Krebs Meine Seele erhebt*

This is a wonderful CD on all scores – the music is gorgeous; one can only wonder that it has taken so long for this disc to appear – the Goldberg pieces were recorded in 2002, while the other pieces are from two sessions in 2011. The cast list may vary from piece to piece, but Florian Heyerick's plentiful experience of German church music guarantees a constant quality – even from the seven girls (including three little Heyericks) who sing the *cantus firmus* in Ludwig Bach's arrestingly tuneful mass. There is clearly no denying that Goldberg and Krebs never quite shook themselves free of their teachers' influence, though, in fairness, the former did not have much time to assert his own personality, and these two works do seem to date from his mid to late teens. Featuring some excellent singing (both solo and choral) and equally fine playing, and a director who clearly knows how he wants the music to sound, this disc was always going to be among my favourites this month. Anyone interested in broadening their understanding of Bach's world in the safe knowledge that the master did, indeed, deem this music worth performing in his Leipzig churches should not hesitate! BC

Amour, viens animer ma voix! French Bass
Cantatas Hugo Oliveira, Ludovice Ensemble
Ramée RAM 1107 76' 46"
Campra *La Jaloux*; Clérambault *Pigmalion*;
Courbois *Orphée*; Dornel *Concerts en Trio 2, 5, 6*

During the first half of the 18th century French composers penned approximately 800 cantatas, mostly for soprano voice but including 100 or so for baritone and *haute-contre*. Here we have three fine examples of these by Campra, Clérambault and Courbois, the last of these being an extended *Orphée* which includes that rarest of chamber music events – an aria with *obbligato* trumpet. The successions of recitatives and arias never become formulaic and make creative use of instruments beyond the continuo. Hugo Oliveira sings with even tone throughout the range and with great sympathy for the idiom. He even takes on the challenges of period pronunciation which will require even fluent French speakers to follow the booklet texts/translations from time to time. Equally interesting, though lacking any mention in the notes, are the three *concerts* by Dornel that complete the programme. These are works which sound more interesting than they sometimes look and the performances do them every favour. David Hansell

German Baroque Oboe Sonatas Benoît
Laurent, Lingua Franca 58' 30"

Ricercar RIC321

CPE Bach *Sonata in g*; Heinichen *Sonata XXXIII*; Kirnberger *Sonata in B flat*; Matthes *Sonata in C*; Telemann *Fantasias 4 & 6*, *Sonata in B flat TWV41:B6*

Before I start being critical, let me state at the outset that I thoroughly enjoyed this on a purely musical level; the oboist draws a beautiful, mellifluous tone from his instrument and the two-man continuo team he "directs" provides a sound harmonic backdrop, although the cellist might occasionally have gone for a lighter bow stroke; for my taste, there is a little too much growling in the lower range. In the booklet note, Laurent tries to justify employing two of Telemann's *Fantasias* as preludes "in the French style" – like him, I imagine it unlikely that musicians *never* did such things in Germany at the time, though I hardly think I'd choose the example of church organists playing a chorale prelude before a cantata as a supporting argument (is it even true?) and surely, if they did so, it would not be a multi-movement piece! So ignore most of the accompanying notes and just enjoy the extremely attractive music. BC

**Music for Hautbois Band J. Ph. Krieger &
J. C. Schieferdecker** *Toutes Suites*, Mari-
anne R. Pfau dir. 69' 12"
Genuin GEN 12536

Krieger *Lustige Feld-Music Parties 1 in F, 2 in C & 3 in F*; Schieferdecker *Concerts III in c, V in d & IX in g*

This is the latest in a series of exploratory recordings initiated by oboe band specialist, Marianne Pfau. As my recent review of the book "Music at German Courts, 1715-1760" showed, such ensembles featured in the musical establishment of many aristocratic seats, and it is always excellent and informative to have the musicology reinforced by real music. While Krieger's music was definitely intended for outdoor performance (and therefore perhaps by a great many more instruments than *Toutes Suites* muster on this occasion), Schieferdecker's might be viewed as more artistic, in the sense of showing a domestic side to double-reed bands. The group is well balanced, producing a lovely, focussed sound. I'm not sure I would like my *Tafelmusik* exclusively played this way (but, as we now know, oboists of the time often also doubled on strings as well as the more expected recorders and flutes), but this is another fine example of beautiful music lurking in unexpected places. BC

Solo for the King Jana Semerádová fl,
[Lenka Torgersen vln, Hana Fleková vlc,

Bertrand Cuiller *hpscd*] 58' 25"

Supraphon Su 4087-2

JS Bach Sonata in b BWV1030, 2 canons from *Musikalisches Opfer*; CPE Bach Duetto in e for fl & vln; F Benda Sonata in e; Kirnberger Sonata a tre in g; Quantz Gigue in g, Minuetto in e, Sarabande in G

It was one of the biggest disappointments of the last Fasch Festival that I attended that I had mixed up my travel dates and was unable to hear Jana Semerádová and her Prague-based group playing live in Zerbst. She is a marvellous flautist, coaxing the most sensuous sounds from her instruments (especially in the lower ranges), but with all the virtuoso technique required for the most intricate passage work demanding of her. Here she is joined by a small group of equally gifted and nicely balanced colleagues in a recital of music intended for the recreation or entertainment of this year's other jubilee-celebrating monarch, Frederick the Great, starting with all the contrapuntal ingenuity one expects from Bach and his pupil Kirnberger, before more gallant ideas take the fore in the form of three pieces by Quantz (the first played by unaccompanied flute, the others with cello accompaniment), a duo with violin by CPE Bach, long Frederick's principle accompanist, and a sonata by Benda, who might have been the violinist in some of the original performances. If you only buy one Berlin-related CD this year, this should be it. BC

Italian Love Cantatas Silvia Vajente, Epoca Barocca 73'

cpo 777 583-2

A. M. Bononcini *Idol mio, mio bel tesoro*; Lotti *Ti sento, o dio bendato*; Mancini *Quanto dolce è quell' ardore*; D. Scarlatti *Di Fille vendicarmi*; Steffani *Spezza, Amor, l'arco*; Vivaldi *All' ombra di sospetto*

With the exception of Domenico Scarlatti's continuo cantata *Di Fille vendicarmi* (for some odd reason here performed with only harpsichord accompaniment), the link between this attractive and varied group of late 17th and early 18th century secular Italian cantatas is that all have obbligato parts for either oboe or flute. This is my first encounter with the singing of the Italian soprano Silvia Vajente, by coincidence herself a sometime oboe player (though not a Baroque one) in addition to holding a degree in musicology. The principal attraction of her singing of these cantatas is the degree of understated intimacy she brings to them, thereby avoiding the kind of operatic projection that so frequently mars performances of this repertoire. There is, too, at times an unaffected sweetness to her singing that can be touching, as for example in the surprising chromatic arioso passage in Lotti's *Ti*

sento, o dio bendato, a fine piece throughout. But overall the voice itself lacks colour and expression, while Vajente's imprecise *passaggi* and ornaments coupled frequently with poor diction detract seriously from her ability to project *affetti* and stamp a clear sense of personality on the performances. That is left rather to some outstanding oboe and bassoon playing from Epoca Barocca. In sum, this is an agreeable enough CD that only rarely quickens the pulse. Brian Robins

Ladies sing Baroque Anna Caterina Antonacci, Gemma Bertagnoli, Veronica Cangemi, Lucy Crowe, Karina Gauvin, Roberta Invernizzi, Angela Kazimierczuk, Magdalena Kozena, Marie-Nicole Lemieux, Julia Lezhneva, Sara Mingardo, Patricia Petebon, Sandrine Piau, Sonia Prina, Nathalie Stutzmann, Deborah York *Naïve* 5294 (2 CDs)

This is a one of a two-disc series of compilation of mainly 18th century music. Monteverdi (once), Strozzi (twice) and Purcell (once) sneak in from the 17th century, but otherwise it's mainly Handel and Vivaldi, with two pieces of Bach and a special guest appearance from Porpora. Among the singers Magdalena Kozena makes the strongest overall impression, though Julia Lezhneva dazzles in her passagework, courtesy of Vivaldi in both cases. All the ladies may irritate from time to time with excess vibrato in relation to their accompanying ensembles but there is a lot of fine, relatively unknown music here as compensation. The essay can never quite decide whether to write about the singers or the music and has to skirt around the fact that Bach was not writing for ladies. The last sentence of the English text should never have made it into print in this garbled version. David Hansell

The Historical Trombone: The Baroque Trombone Ercole Nisini, Instrumenta Musica 48' 40"

Querstand VKJK 1204

Albinoni *Concerto a cinque* No. 2; Gabrielli *Ricercar* 2; B. Marcello: *Sonatas* 2 & 3; Telemann *Sonata* I, "Sonate", "aus der Sonata 4."

To ensure there are no gaps in his series of discs exploring the repertoire of the trombone from 1553 to 1837, Ercole Nisini has included this intriguing project – music of the late 17th and early 18th centuries, for which there is no trombone repertoire! The notes explore interesting combinations of reasons for this, and undaunted, he launches into the well practiced art of repertoire appropriation. He has an expressive, open-throated sound, and the lip dexterity to match for example, even the cello of Dominico Gabrielli. He tackles Telemann too with

the duets more usually for flutes or recorders performed on trombone and bassoon. The effect is less flighty, but nevertheless works very successfully – the result having more of the allure of the agile gambolling of big cats. The harmonic tensions are about shifting weight and the holding of tense poses, as opposed to the varying astringency of recorders in duet. The playing never has the feeling of labour without resorting to mannered frivolity. We also hear Albinoni, with a small orchestra, and Marcello. An enterprising disc and well measured virtuoso playing – I'd be interested to hear the others. Stephen Cassidy

18th-Century Flemish Harpsichord Music Ewald Demeyere 74' 20"

Challenge Classics CC72528

Music by de Boeck, Vander Borch, Boutmy, van Helmont, Raick, Staes & anon.

Flanders was a centre of the best harpsichord making in the 18th century, but we know little or nothing about the local music being played on the instruments. This generously-timed CD, recorded on the Dulcken harpsichord at the Vleeshuis in Antwerp, seeks to remedy this by including music by six composers who were all unknown to me, as well as some attractive anonymous character pieces. The music ranges from the strongly French-influenced suites of Josse Boutmy, Charles-Joseph Van Helmont and Dieudonné Raick, through definite Handelian touches in some pieces by F. I. de Boeck, to a pre-Classical Sonata by Ferdinand Staes. Demeyere is a highly persuasive advocate for this music which he plays with energy and finesse. There are comprehensive booklet notes and the CD provides an attractive survey of a little-known corner of the repertoire, beautifully recorded on a historically important harpsichord. Noel O'Regan

CLASSICAL

CPE Bach *Oboe Concertos* Wq 164 & 165, *Sinfonia* Wq 177 Il Fondamento, Paul Dombrecht 55' 13"

Passacaille 982 (rec. 1996)

I thoroughly enjoyed listening to this disc; none of the exaggerated accentuations we are so used to hearing in renditions of this repertoire – even in the most *Sturm und Drang* unison passages of the *Sinfonia*'s last movement, Dombrecht engages with the spirit of the music without reducing it to a caricature. In the two concertos, he is (as always) an eloquent soloist. This might be 16 years old and a little on the short side for modern expectations, but you won't feel short-changed after you've heard it a few times. BC

Duport 6 Sonates pour violoncelle et basse Raphaël Pidoux vlc, Kay Ueyama hpscd, Pascale Jaupart vlc 80' 42"
Integral Classic INT 221 189

Jean-Pierre Duport was well-connected. He was cellist to the King of Prussia from 1773, gave the first performance of Beethoven's Op. 5 sonatas, advised the composer on possible routes for the development of the cello's repertoire and 'loaned' Mozart a theme for a set of variations. In our own times his cello, though not quite in the form in which he played it, was owned by Rostropovich. Duport's playing was described in the *Mercure de France* as 'precise and astonishingly brilliant', a phrase equally applicable to Raphaël Pidoux in this recital. The cello lines are technically challenging but he is more than equal to the issues of range and rapidity that they contain. There are also passages of harmonics and multiple stopping. So there is much for connoisseurs of string technique to savour but also much elegant writing and playing to appeal to everyone. I enjoyed, as well as admired, this.

David Hansell

Galuppi Trio Sonatas Accademia Vivaldiana di Venezia 56' 53"
Newton Classics 8802121

The six sonatas on this recording survive as a set of manuscript parts in the Uppsala University library. I know this, as I have copies and have played from them. The music is attractive and, in one movement, highly original in that the two violins indulge in a duet recitative. Though not exactly without their technical demands, they are hardly virtuoso pieces. Accademia Vivaldiana di Venezia play modern instruments, but in this chamber line-up they are far more successful than the full ensemble I found on the Internet making a meal of the Mozart *Requiem*. As usual, it is the bass line that needs most attention for this repertoire not to sound leaden footed. Given that there are no recordings with period instruments, this is an adequate stop-gap.

BC

Gluck *Il trionfo di Clelia* Hélène Le Corre Clelia, Mary-Ellen Nesi Orazio, Irini Karainni Tarquinio, Burcu Uyar Larissa, Vassilis Kavayas Porsenna, Florin Cezar Ouatu Marinio, Armonia Atenea, Giuseppe Sigismondi de Risio 195' 29"
MDG 609 1733-2 (3 CDs in box)

Composed less than a year after the Viennese premiere of *Orfeo ed Eurydice*, *Il trionfo de Clelia* was written for the opening of the Teatro Comunale in Bologna in May 1763. As may be supposed from a libretto by Metastasio, *Il trionfo* is a very different opera from *Orfeo*, marking a return to heroic opera seria

with a plot derived from Roman history and the occupation of the city by the Etruscan forces of King Porsenna. Nevertheless, there are sufficient hints of the 'reform' directions in which Gluck was moving for the opera to be thought of in terms of being a transitional work, particular in the central section of act 2, where the heroic efforts of Orazio and his beloved Clelia to thwart an attack on Rome by the treacherous Tarquinio are treated to an impressive sequence of accompanied recitatives and orchestral sinfonias. *Il trionfo* is in fact such a fine piece, with many noble or gracious arias that deploy a particularly rich orchestral palette, that its previous neglect is surprising.

The present performance is of an edition prepared by the conductor from a hitherto overlooked handwritten score. De Risio's direction clearly evinces the love he expresses for the opera in his notes, being by turns dynamic and sympathetic, if not always totally idiomatic. It is perhaps unfortunate that his cast is totally dominated by the Orazio of mezzo Mary-Ellen Nesi, the one familiar name among the singers, whose commanding performance reaches a magnificent climax in the big heroic act 3 aria 'De' folgori di Giove'. The remaining singers struggle in varying degrees with some of Gluck's sterner demands, though none is without his or her moment, particularly Turkish soprano Burcu Uyar, whose singing of the role of the gentle daughter of Porsenna, Larissa, often has great charm. Rather less laudable is a keyboard player whose tiresomely indiscreet contribution marks him out as a member of the René Jacobs school of continuo players. Furthermore, nobody will convince me that the Bologna opera house would have used fortepiano – rather than harpsichord – continuo in 1763, any more than that MDG are going to maximise sales by failing to provide a translation of the libretto. In an ideal world we would regard this as a stopgap; but since it is not we, will doubtless have to make do with this decent if unexceptional recording. And there's always the wonderful Nesi.

Brian Robins

J. W. Hässler Harpsichord music Michele Benuzzi 67' 43"
Brilliant Classics 94293

Johann Wilhelm Hässler's Fantasia in C minor provides an arresting opening to this CD of music by an eclectic composer who learned both from his uncle, JS Bach's pupil Johann Kittel, and later from CPE Bach. He was much travelled and widely praised for his playing. The C minor Fantasia and a C major Prelude could be by JS Bach, but a later Fantasia in E minor has much more of CPE Bach or

even Haydn about it. In between is a collection of pre-Classical-style sonatas, a variation set, a Rondeau and two further short fantasias. Some pieces demand considerable virtuosity, allowing Benuzzi to display his abilities; the programme is sympathetically played on the Russell Collection's Falkener 1773 harpsichord, an instrument which works exceedingly well for this music. An excellent introduction to a composer who deserves to be better known.

Noel O'Regan

Kraus Viola Concertos David Aaron Carpenter, Tapiola Sinfonietta 61' 28"
Ondine ODE 1193-2
VB153a in G (with cello solo [Riitta Pesola]), 153b in C, 153c in E flat

This CD should have viola players everywhere very excited – the relatively recent discovery of a score in Kraus's hand of one of the three concertos on it have "proved" that these are *not* the work of the Benedictine monk, Peter Romanus Hoffstetter. Attributed to an obscurity, they had no chance of being performed, let alone recorded, although it seems that Hoffstetter might be the actual composer of what is known as Haydn's Op. 3 string quartets. Is there not a parallel probability that Kraus compiled the score from the parts he (or someone else) obtained from Breitkopf (who advertised the three works under Hoffstetter's name)? Whoever wrote them, though, the three concerti (including a duo work for the unusual combination of viola and cello) are very enjoyable, if slightly treble-dominated pieces. The bass line bobs along with very occasional contributions from the instruments in the middle of the texture. The Tapiola Sinfonietta are a stylish modern band with only slightly too much double bass (perhaps more the fault of the recording than the performers?) and soloist, whose name is twice as large on the cover as that of the supposed composer, very much the master of his instrument.

BC

Mozart "Coronation" Mass, Ave verum corpus, Exsultate jubilate Susan Gritton S, [Frances Bourne mS, Sam Furness T, George Humphreys Bar,] Choir of St John's College, Cambridge, St John's Sinfonia, Andrew Nethsingha 70' 35"
Chandos Chaconne CHAN 0786
+ Missa brevis K 192, Church Sonatas K 67 & 224

Since I wrote a review a few issues ago of another recording of this very repertoire, I thought that I would write about this version, too, to give the magazine some consistency. The first thing to notice is that there is more of the "them and us" of this reading – the soloists are the equivalent, if you like, of the Archbishop of Salzburg hiring in some opera singers

for what was originally an Easter mass. There is nothing wrong with this approach, of course, although the very different sound that English choirboys bring when compared to their continental counterparts means that the contrast between solo and tutti is more marked than it perhaps needs to be. I liked the use of instrumental sonatas at strategic points, and they are beautifully played one-to-a-part by the St John's Sinfonia, which is led by Margaret Faultless. The other major works on the disc are the 18-year-old composer's F major *Missa brevis* (a whole three and a half minutes shorter than the *Coronation Mass*!) which, like the majority of Mozart's church music, is pitifully neglected these days, and the soprano motet, *Exsultate jubilate*. Anyone who records this piece will for ever have to compete with Emma Kirkby's groundbreaking recordings from the 1980s. Much as I love Susan Gritton's voice (she has been utterly heavenly in Chandos's previous recordings of Hummel masses, for example), I feel (with all due respect) that this is not her repertoire – it's rather like entering a thoroughbred into the local donkey derby – Kirkby's appoggiatura in recitatives are here missing completely, and her trills are replaced by mordents in the arias. She's not alone, though – the same is actually true of the other soloists, though there are some lovely solo moments (especially from the tenor) in the *Missa brevis*. The choir is very good, though ever-so-slightly treble-heavy, and they are not always quite in tune. Overall, though, this is a very fine recording, and the choice will probably just come down to repertoire. BC

Soler Keyboard Sonatas Nos. 16-27 Vestard Shimkus piano 59' 43"
Naxos 8.572516

The Latvian pianist Shimkus has used his recording prize, gained for winning the Maria Canals competition, for this CD of Soler sonatas for Naxos. It includes the second half of the 27 sonatas found in the Fitzwilliam museum, complementing the first fifteen already recorded for Naxos on piano by Martina Filjak. These are wholly convincing performances which invest Soler's music with a seriousness of purpose and a substance I haven't been so aware of before, with pre-echoes of early Beethoven. Shimkus uses a beautifully-modulated piano tone to point up all the music's contrasts. There is a great sense of drive in the faster sonatas and of poise in the slower ones. Highly recommended.

Noel O'Regan

19th CENTURY

Berlioz *Symphonie Fantastique* Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Robin Ticciati 63' 12"
Linn CKD 400

Overture: *Béatrice et Bénédicte*

One of my mentors didn't rate Berlioz – 'couldn't write a decent bass line' was a regular comment. But Hector did have an astonishing musical imagination and an equally remarkable ear for colour. This isn't an ostensibly HIP performance though there are many features that will appeal to EMR readers. There is no self-indulgence here – ensemble is really tight and the crisp dotted rhythms in the *Marche au supplice* would satisfy Lully at even his most tyrannical. The final movement is perhaps a little too controlled but as a whole the performance is very exciting. The only place where I really missed the sound of Norrington's notable period instrument recording was the entry of the relatively tubby sounding modern harps in *Un bal*. The little-known but enjoyable filler also has the basic virtues of clarity and drive and David Cairns's notes are authoritative and interesting (though in English only).

David Hansell

Schubert *Die Schöne Müllerin* Hans Jörg Mammel T, Arthur Schoonderwoerd pf
Raumklang RK 3104 64' 42"

Whereas *Der Winterreise* speaks overwhelmingly of rejection and man's ultimate universal tragedy, *Die Schöne Müllerin* tells of the lonely, premature death of a young man who has taken his life for love. We are here sympathetic observers, not involved personally, as we are (or should be) in *Der Winterreise*. To enter fully into its spirit both performers and listener must re-enter a world of youthful, impetuous love without self-mockery or self-consciousness. And it is precisely this quality of unaffected innocence that I find perhaps the most attractive quality of this performance. That, I would quickly add, does not mean there is anything naïve about it. Hans Jörg Mammel is far too experienced an artist for that and it is necessary only to note his command of phrasing and vocal control (he is, we might recall, a distinguished Bach singer) in performances that tend to slowish tempos, thus putting more pressure on sustaining line. One need listen only to *Tränenregen*, which for Mammel is obviously (and rightly, I think) the pivotal point of the cycle. Taken daringly slowly (4' 55" as opposed to Christoph Prégardien's 3' 53") the magic of young love on a moonlit night is entrancingly evoked, making the chilling portent of the final lines the more telling. Just occasionally Mammel is

extended by some of the more extrovert songs, the misplaced ecstasy of *Mein!* sounding a little strained, as it so often does. Throughout the singer is splendidly supported by Arthur Schoonderwoerd, whose round-toned Nanette Streicher fortepiano of 1814 is especially ideally suited to Schubert's bass arpeggios. An intelligently conceived and executed performance that will take an honoured place alongside Prégardien, my long-standing favourite version. Brian Robins

Schubert *Sonaten für Violine und Klavier* Gernot Süßmuth vln, Frank-Immo Zichner piano 73' 04"
Querstand VKJK 1128

This CD was not requested for review, and as a modern instruments performance does not fall under our normal remit, but we would be remiss not to lavish praise on both the performances and the recording; as someone who does not listen to much chamber music from the Romantic era (mercifully long gone are the days of my attending live performances of such repertoire and having to stand in a freezing cold telephone box and dictate my review for the next morning's papers!) I have to say that never in all the time I did have I heard anything quite so marvellous! The balance between the two instruments is exemplary – the pianist never appears to be "playing down", nor does his partner have to push his violin beyond its natural limits; and its a violin with a peculiarly viola-like lower register, which gives the more melancholy passages (a favourite of the composer) more colour. I expect this recording will go on to be in the running for many awards. BC

VARIOUS

Old Gaelic Laments Simon Chadwick
Medieval clàrsach, Ealasaid Gilfillan Gaelic poetry 58' 52"
www.earlygaelicharp.info

This is for the experts or for those who want something Gaelic without caring what. The back cover of the booklet has a list of 13 titles with names and dates attached. The booklet has texts and translations of four pieces, but the list doesn't make clear whether the names refer to poets or composers – presumably the latter, unless the instrumental pieces were originally songs; the poems are spoken, not sung, but perhaps the tunes do survive as well. The music is very pretty, and there's plenty of space in the booklet for some information. But of the eight pages of pictures, only one shows anything specifically relevant, though the front

cover's statue is memorable. It does seem a pity that Sassenachs are excluded. CB

Our usual reviewer of early Scottish music didn't want to review this.

Travels with My Lute Ryosuke Sakamoto
Musica Rediviva MRCD 013

All the music on this CD is played on an 8-course renaissance lute, although few of the pieces were originally intended for it. It was recorded in 2005. It is mainly a collection of lollipops, and begins with a group of pieces for vihuela from the first half of the 16th century, including Luis Milan's Pavana "La bella franceschina", Alonso Mudarra's Fantasia in the style of Ludovico, and Luys de Narvaez's setting of Josquin's *Mille regretz*. Still travelling in Spain, Sakamoto continues with an interesting set of divisions by Cabezón based on "Belle qui tiens ma vie".

From Italy he plays a short Recercare by Spinacino, a couple of Ricercari by Francesco da Milano [Ness no. 16 (repeated with a few of Sakamoto's own variations) and no. 81], and two Fantasias (nos 15 and 1) by Molinaro which were composed for the 8-course lute. No. 15, with a chromatic theme, uses the full range of the instrument (up to the 10th fret).

Sakamoto's travels take him next to England, with three pieces by Dowland [Poulton & Lam nos 79, 42a, and 1a]. Also from England [or Denmark?] comes Brade's *Des Rotschenken Tanz*, which was set for five instruments (presumably violins), and arranged by Sakamoto for solo lute. [Its alternative title *Cuperaree*, for the 2-part setting in Lbl Add 10444, suggests the piece may have been composed by Coprario.] We return to Italy for Toccata 6 and Gagliarda 3 by Kapsberger. The five minim chords at the start of the Toccata Sakamoto embellishes freely in keeping with Kapsberger's quirky semi-improvisatory style. He decorates the repeats of the Gagliarda.

The next stage of Sakamoto's journey is Germany, where he plays Bach's Preludium BWV 998 and Gavotte en Rondeau BWV 1006. Some may query the anachronism of using an 8-course lute for Bach, but not I. Even if it were clear which instrument Bach had in mind for his lute music – baroque lute, archlute, or Lautenwerk – there is still no reason why other instruments should not be used – piano, classical guitar, or even an 8-course renaissance lute. Less convincing is its use for Weiss's *Passacaille*, where the *vieil ton* tuning and lack of bass notes lose the resonance and characteristic grandeur one associates with Weiss.

The CD ends with Burgmüller's extravagant *Chevaleresque*, Debussy's dreamy *Fille aux cheveux de lin* (very nicely

played), a couple of Swedish folk tunes set by Sven Berger, and Marizapalos after Gaspar Sanz and Santiago de Murcia.

Stewart McCoy

Northlands The Early Folk Band 62' 44"
Ahalani Records 0014

I was surprised to receive a German CD of British folk music, and put it into the car's disc socket without paying any attention to the cover. I was pleasantly surprised by the singing, and even more so by the instrumental backing – most of the music was of the sort that Playford published, and the arrangers knew that the implied harmonies often related to the standard renaissance bass patterns. This has been known for several decades: I first heard this demonstrated at a lecture by Jeremy Barlow 30+ years ago and it made immediate sense. Furthermore, the rhythms were vibrant but not over percussioned. I then looked at the cast list. All five both played and sang. None had biogs. One might guess that the three ladies – Miriam Andersén, Gesine Bänfer and Susanne Ansorg – might have been Scandinavian; then came two very familiar names. I've come across Ian Harrison occasionally over the decades, and appeared in two of the most memorable concerts I've heard. The other, Steve Player, is rhythm personified. The whole ensemble (using the word to mean the performers and the way the performed together) is impressive. So many folk performances feel phoney in some way or other, however well sung: this convinced. Buy it. CB

Garth Knox Saltarello Garth Knox viola,
viola d'amore, fiddle, Agnès Vesterman vlc,
Sylvain Lemètre perc 59' 59"
ECM New Series 2157 (476 4501)
Dowland, Hildegard, Knox, Machaut, Purcell,
Saariaho, Vivaldi, trad.

This issue's reviews begin and end with typical ECM recordings, both including Hildegard. A glance at the list of titles and players made me wonder whether it was relevant. But the impeccable and imaginative playing and the Knox's skilful arrangements justify it, even if it seems a bit big-headed for five of the dozen pages of the booklet to be devoted to pictures of the three players. CB

Indoors Dapper's Delight (Susanna Norsc
rec, Adrian Brown anglo concertina, &
voice) 62'00
Karnati Lab KLR 025

This has a similar repertoire to the previous disc. It was perhaps unfortunate that we played it immediately after *Northlands*, which made even more obvious its lack of panache. I can see that there is some

point in avoiding elaborate instrumentations or coarse imitation-rural accents. But it seems so dull! Perhaps the characteristic of some older folk-singers of not projecting was too faithfully adopted. And why, for much earlier music, choose the concertina, developed during the 1850s? The booklet is of top quality: a pity the recording doesn't inspire. But I may, have missed something – the producers are two of our earlier reviewers, Robin Bigwood and Annabel Knight. CB

Le Serpent Imaginaire Volny Hostiou serp,
Francois Ménessier org, Eva Godard cnt,
Thomas van Essen B
Hybrid Music H1827

The virtuosity of playing on this recording poses the question: is the serpent taken seriously enough? Leaving that question to hang there, we are treated on this disc to an extraordinary display, the high point of which, to cut a long story short, is Boeddecker's set of divisions on La Monica, originally for virtuoso dulcian. In truth, the serpent's less crowded harmonic content and the nature of lip-reed articulation means that the most divided divisions are in many ways more successful on the serpent than on the dulcian – so long as it is played unbelievably well. The sound of the serpent of course has the additional property of appearing to come from everywhere except the instrument itself, and a good deal of it from a distant grotto. This means that it can never quite work as a solo instrument. A solo instrument needs to be present, foreshadowed, in a specific location, to act as a focus for our attention. It is this very characteristic of the serpent, however, that suits it perfectly for the main purpose for which it was invented: to underpin the bass of sizeable vocal ensembles performing in large churches. In these circumstances, the serpent's well as port is for the whole ensemble, and the sound should indeed not be traceable to a specific culprit. The one track that would have perfected this disc therefore, and which I would still love to hear, is of a player of this quality being used in exactly this way. How unique and spacious this would have been. However, one can still truly marvel at Ortiz, Cabezón, Arrau, Frescobaldi, Bassano... as well as the most superb, and recently restored, muscular organ of Sainte-Thomas de Cantorbéry a Mont-Saint-Aignan. Stephen Cassidy

Around 30 CDs have already been sent to reviewers, so the August issue shouldn't have any summer lull.

THE RIAS BACH CANTATAS PROJECT, BERLIN, 1949-1952

Beresford King-Smith

On the strength of an enthusiastic BBC Radio 3 review by the much respected Nicholas Anderson, I lashed out and bought this 'Audite' boxed set: 9 CDs (29 Cantatas in all) for around £50 (Audite 21.415). If you're interested in this repertoire – or, indeed, in the post-war development of "Early Music" performance – you'll find this set a real eye-opener, I think.

I did already have a few 'historic' Bach Cantata recordings, including some fascinating (if incomplete) performances recorded in Leipzig's Thomaskirche under the direction of Karl Straube in 1931 (the year when I was born!) The style may sound a bit quaint to us, now, but it affords an interesting glimpse into the past. I also have some recordings made by the Thomanerchor in the early 1950s under its post-war Kantor, Günther Ramin, but they too seem of little more than historical interest today. So – it was a big surprise to put on these newly-issued Berlin CDs, remastered from tapes which date from around 1950, and to discover how "modern" and thoroughly enjoyable many of the performances sound.

Following Berlin's almost total destruction at the end of the war, its radio stations had to start from scratch. RIAS stands for 'Radio in the American Sector'; the RIAS-Symphonie Orchester was formed in 1946, the RIAS-Kammerchor two years later. From 1946 onwards, Karl Ristenpart started directing regular Sunday broadcasts of Bach Cantatas, using a chamber orchestra drawn from the RSO. Recordings of his very earliest performances no longer exist, but from the end of 1949 until the Project ran out of steam in 1952, we have tapes of 29 Cantata performances, now superbly transferred to CD in this boxed set.

The overall quality of performance is truly remarkable, with some first-class vocal soloists, outstanding amongst whom are Helmut Krebs (as good and incisive as any Bach tenor I know) and a young baritone then just making his mark: Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau. In 1950, when the majority of these recordings were made, he would have been just 25. In May 2012, of course, we were all saddened to learn of his death at the age of 86. To hear him in the superb opening aria of Cantata 88 (*Siehe, ich will viel Fischer aussenden*) is an absolute delight, and the orchestral accompaniment is of admirable quality, too. In Cantata 52 (*Falsche Welt, dir traue ich nicht*), soprano Agnes Giebel is very stylish, the high horns sounding fine in the opening Sinfonia (borrowed from *Brandenburg 1*). But the real hero of the hour is unquestionably Karl Ristenpart himself; he has a happy knack of finding, nine times out of ten, what Bach calls the *tempo giusto*.

There are some infelicities, of course. Most of the female soloists (Giebel apart) do favour the use of a fairly heavy vibrato – that was the accepted style at that time. The choir is enthusiastic, but not very subtle – it's at its best in high-energy numbers like the opening chorus of *Wachet auf*, which fairly dances along in a most enjoyable way; occasionally, though, it goes well over the top (try Cantata 176: *Es ist ein trotzig und verzagt Ding* – the text does suggest desperation and obstinacy, but the oft-repeated word *tro-o-o-o-otzig* still sounds pretty laughable). The four-part Chorales are sung with great gusto, but JSB will [may CB] have expected his congregation to join in, so he probably wouldn't have been too dismayed by that.

The keyboard continuo instrument used is a harpsichord, whose tone-quality does sometimes remind one of Sir Thomas Beecham's unkind description: 'two skeletons copulating on a tin roof!' Fortunately, it's kept well back from the microphones. No 'shortened' continuo accompaniment, of course – the cello is often left sustaining very long notes on its own, as was normal up until the 1960s or thereabouts. But, overall, the instrumentalists are extremely good – for example, some superb violin *obligati*, a terrific first trumpeter, some lovely flute-playing in *Schmücke dich, o liebe Seele* and delightful recorders in *Brich dem Hungrigen dein Brot*. The oboes do sound a bit under-nourished (as they often did, in those pre-Helmut-Winschermann days) but that's a small price to pay for some revelatory recordings from a vanished era. Strongly recommended

DISASTER!

We had a disaster just as I was printing off the final corrections to the CD reviews. The automatic pagination wasn't working, and after half an hour of failure in following the instructions, I thought it would be simpler to copy the contents of the file onto a previous issue, then delete the superfluous text and change the running heading. Alas, the wrong numbering travelled with the copy. Eventually, I managed to make it work using an older file. However, the line layout differed, for reasons I couldn't see with the enlarged font on screen. Redoing that took several hours. I'm quite careful at avoiding lines that look empty, lining up the bottoms of the pages, and avoiding breaks in the headings of the reviews, especially between pages. The shock came when I realised that the new version was a whole page shorter. When I ran the copies off, the answer was obvious – the older EMR had less leading between lines. And the line under the page heading has disappeared!

We hope that UK readers will get their copies before the holiday weekend: apologies if some are later.

CB

William Byrd & Funny Voices

Simon Ravens

Yesterday in church, after a presentation about an aid project in rural Sierra Leone, we were invited to say the Lord's Prayer in Krio. I declined. The text was there in front of us ('Papa God we de na evin mek olman respekt yu...') but I couldn't bring myself to join in. I'd like to say, as I sat there listening, that I imagined myself transported to western Africa, but the truth is that I felt quite unmoved. My ears felt firmly planted amongst my white English middle-class tribe. What I heard was voices phonetically intoning syllables, understandably without much understanding. Actually, it was worse when we occasionally understood what was being said ('padin wi fo wi bad trik...') and a small moment of recognition was shared. Pardon us indeed!

As I sat there cringing, I did wonder why I am so averse to this kind of cultural gesture. After all, I've sung plenty of *Pater Nosters* in my time. The obvious difference, though, is that when I sing a Palestrina *Pater Noster*, for instance, I make every effort to sound, not like my English middle-class self, but like a Roman Renaissance man. Now, when I do this, it would seem as if I am quite literally not being myself. My approach might put a tick in the box marked 'historical authenticity', but by the same token it must surely put a cross in the box marked 'personal authenticity'. What else could 'not being myself' be but personally inauthentic? And this, for me, would be a terrible admission of failure, because experience tells me that the early music performances I most love seem to tick both boxes, and not one or the other. Is this possible, and if so, how? This apparent paradox may have only crystallised in my mind yesterday, but before I come to my tentative conclusions I must trawl back twenty-five years.

I fell in love with William Byrd's 'Great' Service in a recording by the Tallis Scholars. My memory of it is that whilst I suspected that Byrd's grand design was being undersold, I loved every moment. In other words, the music's essential beauty was illuminated by the personal authenticity of the performers, even if the lack of historical authenticity left me in the dark as far as the scope of Byrd's conception was concerned. Vocal scoring, instrumentation, temperament and pitch aside, one feature of historical authenticity I was becoming aware of at the time, and which was obviously missing from this recording, was that of pronunciation. Whereas singing in a foreign language involved at least a nominal shift away from our own speech patterns, Cranmer's 'comfortable words' from the Elizabethan Prayer Book had previously seemed to me just that. These were words that had been on my lips since I was a child, and seemed to find me just where I was,

requiring me to move not an inch from my self.

It was just before I encountered the Byrd Great that I had my first exposure to the possibilities of Tudor pronunciation, and it brought me up with a start. I was living in New Zealand then, and a singer friend who was also a Middle English specialist, Robert Easting, hazarded a pronunciation of some early Tudor carols texts for me. What I heard was direct, pungent and tangy. Granted, this pronunciation was from the early end of the Tudor period, and when I asked about Tallis and Byrd, Robert stressed that much changed in the following hundred years. But Robert also pointed out that Elizabethan English would have sounded more like early Tudor pronunciation than it would our own. Cranmer's words suddenly felt far from comfortable. I had to admit that our muted modern pronunciation, like the post-Victorian stereotype of 'English restraint', would have had no place in Tudor England.

Since then, whenever I have directed late Tudor English music I have attempted to do so in an Elizabethan pronunciation. 'Attempted' is a key word here. At the theoretical level there is the impossibility of ever having knowledge of something for which there can be no proof. Nor should we should even talk of 'something' in the singular, since dialects were far more varied than they are today. More significantly, though, at a practical level my attempts at Elizabethan pronunciation with singers were hampered by time constraints, and more fundamentally, by the fact that I am not myself an expert: we were essentially playing Chinese whispers, with all the tentative shrugging of shoulders that that implies.

Last year, after a decade of experimentation in live performances, my chance came to direct a recording of Byrd's Great Service. There was still no question in my mind that Elizabethan pronunciation was a necessity, but there was also no question that this time we had to make a proper effort with it. My first action was to contact Robert Easting again. His response suggested that someone was smiling on this venture: yes, he just so happened to be over in England on the recording dates, with no particular plans in place. From then on, technology was our friend. Robert was able to email audio files of himself pronouncing all the texts, which went out to all the singers. I soon had emails from singers telling me that they were running, or sitting on trains, listening to Robert's voice: I liked the sound of this slow infusion. Another great aid was underlaying our edition of the Byrd with a customised phonetic version of the text. It was one of the singers who first suggested this, and although I was

initially reluctant, I have to admit that in the heat of the recording it paid huge dividends: confronted with 'haaRtilüy' rather than 'heartily', singers were never likely to lapse into their RP Cranmer. The final part of the equation, though, was having Robert present in person: a mind of authority, and a matching ability to communicate.

And the end result? Well, I am in no position to say whether any time-travelling Elizabethan would recognise our efforts. Nor, come to that, can I say what the response of our modern listeners will be. But I can say that I've never heard us sound less like us. And yet – here comes that paradox again – I've never felt us singing with greater integrity. Somehow, the singers all seem to be inside our conjectured Elizabethan voice.

As for dealing with the paradox, it now strikes me that it is more apparent than real. Music aside, part of 'being myself' is obviously expressing my own instincts and predilections. If I want to function as a social human being, though, I know I must spend a good deal of time and energy in trying to see the world not from my perspective, but from that of others. Ideally, I would step inside them to see their view. I also know that the more wholeheartedly I attempt this (again, the word is 'attempt' and not 'achieve') the happier my interactions with the world. In other words, part of 'being myself' is 'being like someone else' – or at least making the attempt. Whether they be foreign to me geographically, like the Sierra Leonese villager, or historically, like the Elizabethan chorister, simply pouring my own identity into their moulds will bring me no closer to their distant culture. Doing my best to pour their identities into mine just might.

William Byrd *The Great Service in the Chapel Royal*
Musica Contexta, Simon Ravens dir; The English Cornett and
Sackbut Ensemble 67' 24"

Chandos Chaconne CHAN 0789

Sorry: no review in this issue. The disc arrived on May 23rd along with seven others so will have to wait till August

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LETTER

Dear Clifford,

I would like to react to what you wrote about Latin pronunciation in the April editorial. You write that 'Latin pronunciation is regular'. I used to think this, but about the implications about singing Latin in French music, my eyes and ears were opened years ago by Jeffrey Skidmore. Your statement that 'the stress rules are simple...' couldn't be further from the truth.

The stress rules when singing French are very complicated. As a rule the stress is on the last syllable: Dominúm, Mariá, Amén, etc – just as the word stress in the French language is usually on the last syllable.

A lot of the French music with Latin texts only starts making sense when the right word stress is used, because the composer would compose the music stress to go with the word stress.

But around 1700 the Italian style started moving into France and Italianate pronunciations crept in. I say crept in, because often one finds a mixture of the two pronunciations in one piece. This is like when the French and the English speak each other's language and put the word stress wrongly. They can't quite believe that the speaker of the other language has understood the word stress. As a famous English conductor, who shall not be named, once exclaimed with exasperation after I had pointed out to him that the word stress was Sanctús and not Sántus in French and that, in the piece of music that we were performing, 'San' was written on the weak beat of the bar and 'ctus' on the strong beat: 'they are mad, these French'. Maybe we still have a way to go in appreciating our differences!

I would like to argue things further: In order to understand French instrumental music one also has to have a good understanding of the spoken language, as the same rules of word stress apply to instrumental music. But that subject needs an article of its own.

Nicolette Moonen

I should have omitted French from my short list of languages. Apart from specifically French pronunciations, there is the influence of ecclesiastical Latin as spoken in Rome; the Charpentier piece reviewed on p. 3, for instance, seems to have Italian stress and there must have been some tension between those who learn Latin with regard to the various theories of classical pronunciation that have existed over the last century or so. I first encountered the problem in the Poulenc Christmas Motets – accent on the second syllable of Christus, for instance, and some singers in Britain do now try to sing French Latin as they do German and English Latin

CB

OBITUARIES

ALAN HACKER 30 Sept 1938 – 16 April 2012

Alan Hacker and I were contemporaries at Dulwich College: we were at the extremities of the year's age-range, Alan being eleven months older than me. My first encounter with him was probably a fight between two adjacent classes on a wet lunch hour (normally we were not allowed indoors) and, more seriously, in the school orchestra, where his clarinet playing was outstanding. Not for him the striving for Oxbridge entrance. Instead, he went to the RAM, won a scholarship to study abroad, then (on Reginald Kell's recommendation) became a member of the RAM staff while still 19 and also joined the London Philharmonic Orchestra.

His life changed in 1966 when he suffered a spinal thrombosis, which paralysed him from his neck down. The orchestra wouldn't keep him – that would be illegal now. This forced him to change his manner of breathing, which gave his playing a unique sound. I next saw him (though didn't meet him, apart from anonymously helping to carry his wheelchair up the RAM steps) in 1967 as a member of the Pierrot Players, later The Fires of London. This was a period when contemporary and early music had a lot in common.¹ Alan was a pioneer in using the bassett clarinet for Mozart's late clarinet music. According to Christopher Waters²: "Hacker argued that the bassett was a notoriously difficult instrument to play standing up, making it eminently suitable for a wheelchair user... Whether on the bassett or the normal clarinet, Hacker's sound was unmistakable. Perhaps it was because his paralysis included the diaphragm and abdominal area – parts of the body normally considered vital for playing a wind instrument. In fact, scientists and doctors never discovered how Hacker was able to play at all."

In 1976, Alan became a lecturer at York University and was involved in early as well as modern music, setting up a classical orchestra along with Peter Seymour. He also extended his activity into conducting. One day, a car pulled up at our house and Alan's son asked me to come out at talk to Alan. He had been at Dartington Summer School when Monteverdi *Vespers* had been performed, liked my edition, and asked me to prepare a version of *Il ritorno d'Ulisse* for the opera house at Stuttgart.³ This wasn't quite the Urtext edition that I usually prepare. Alan

wanted distinctive instrumentation for some of the characters, including a wood-wind trio for the rural Eumete. The ensemble was mostly modern, including a dozen strings from the opera orchestra – but Alan got a decent sound from them, sometimes doubling the top line on a soprano saxophone, making a sound remarkably like a cornetto. I got on very well with Alan, and I even got a mention on his Desert Island Discs (which included a snatch of *Il ritorno*). I had been invited over to meet the management (where I caught Alan conducting a fine *Così fan tutte*). The director scorned the idea that the lighting plot should imply the Aristotelian 24-hours, but musical ideas were accepted. They again paid for me to attend the premiere, which (considering the hybrid edition) worked very well. The next project was *King Arthur*, which I didn't see; it was rather hacked around, and began with a tactless dance of people on wheel-chairs knocking each other over (not the only opera in which directors have chosen to make fun of the disabled).

I kept in touch with Alan for a while, but hadn't heard from him for some years. He seemed to be an amazingly cheerful man, considering his physical problems. He was remarkable musician.

CB

MICHAEL PROCTER 1 April 1950 – 3 May 2012

I suspect that for many of our readers, Michael Procter will be a more familiar name than Alan Hacker, thanks to the large number of choral courses for amateurs that he has directed. I first met him in the 1970s when, in addition to singing professionally as a counter-tenor, he undertook various administrative jobs. I remember him organising a *Spem in alium* at St Augustine's, Kilburn with Martindale Sidwell (at which I played organ continuo) and he sang at our wedding in August 1975. Peter Holman remembers that he took part in a programme on the *Commedia del Arte*, whose nine singers were the first visitors to our first house in autumn 1975. Earlier, he had been at university in Bristol when Hugh Keyte was a lecturer there. His recollection is that Michael was not in the music faculty but was involved in a performance of Orff's *Carmina burana*, in which he sung the Dying Swan and may also have been the conductor (that memory is vaguer).

He studied at the Royal Academy of Music as one of the first countertenors there. An RAM internal concert programme of Music for Male Voices shows Michael as countertenor and Simon Rattle as pianist: this is reproduced on an on-line slide-show which sadly has few captions. He held several administrative posts for John Eliot Gardiner and others.

1. As I've probably written before, Musica Reservata concerts had a strong following from contemporary enthusiasts, and of the six basic members of The Fires of London, three were also early instrument experts – Duncan Druce, the violinist (who wrote the obituary in *The Guardian*) and Jenny Ward-Clarke, cellist, as well as Alan, while the pianist sometimes played harpsichord.

2. *Classical Music* 19 May, p. 7

3. The score is dated 1992, but I don't know which year the Summer School performed the *Vespers*.

In 1977 he started *Early Music News*, initially a 4 or 6 page monthly newsletter with information on concerts and short articles; from issue 2, I reported on new editions. After a couple of years, it was taken over by the Early Music Centre, and was edited for over a decade by Peter Williamson. He upgraded it to an A5 glossy, became its printer. I had rather more space to expand on my reviews, and the tradition of including a cartoon began. The Early Music Centre eventually abandoned *News*, which was succeeded by *Early Music Review* – so Michael was indirectly the creator of what you are reading now.

In 1983, he took over the running of what was then The Rural Music Schools Association in Hitchin. Founded by Mary Ibberson in 1929, it had been primarily devoted to residential courses for chamber music. Michael expanded it (under the new name Benslow Music Trust – now Benslow Music) to many other musical activities, with considerable emphasis on early music as well as jazz and Indian music. One specific feature that has continued is the annual baroque opera week after Easter, with a staged performance or two at the end of the course. He made the image of the organisation much more positive, being a dynamic publicist and having excellent administrative skills as well as far-sighted vision which, sadly, was not always recognised by the board of trustees. As well as introducing many new courses and increasing the number of people attending, he put on regular concerts, mostly in the Peter Morrison Recital Room which was built under his directorship. He also regularly directed weekends of Renaissance vocal music at Benslow, and in due course expanded these to weeks in Venice. These became the annual Accademia Internazionale di Musica Sacra in Venice – as I write, the course he should have taken in the last week of May is happening in his memory.

During his period at Benslow he was treated for (I think) lymphoma in his shoulder, mainly at the Royal Marsden Hospital, where the doctors told him that he would never be able to raise his arms above waist level again. Typically for Michael, he eventually made a full recovery and proceeded to a successful career in conducting. As far as I know the cancer never recurred: his sudden death was from a heart attack, the result of a heart condition of which he had recently been made aware but had not had time to get investigated.

For many years he ran weekend courses in Cambridge on music in the liturgy, initially for the Eastern Early Music Forum and later independently. These gave singers a rare opportunity to sing Renaissance music liturgically. Church ritual was intensely important to him and these weekends enabled him to share that particular enthusiasm with others, as part of the regular worship in churches and college chapels. He also conducted an amateur choral society in Hitchin and played a full part in the local community and parish.



I don't know details of his movements, but at one stage he was organising courses at Highnam for (I think) April Cantelo. Perhaps through the geographical proximity, he joined with Alan Lumsden (in nearby Churcham) to run a summer school at Alan's home, Beauchamp House. Michael's skills as a choir conductor were allied with Alan's as a teacher of early brass. He conducted choral workshops throughout Britain, many in collaboration with Keith Bennett, then abroad (chiefly in Germany).

His third wife, Claudia, was German, so he moved to Karlsruhe and his workshop activities expanded in a country where courses like those common in England were not available. He founded the male a cappella group Hofkapelle, which was the greatest joy of his musical life: details for their four CDs can be found at <http://www.hofkapelle.de/katalog.htm>.

In connection with his courses, he initiated publication of a large quantity of music. He was involved in Jon Dixon's *Byrd Gradualia* and a vast quantity of polychoral music in particular was set by Alan Lumsden as The Beauchamp Press (now available from The Early Music Company). In Germany, Michael was his own editor/publisher, and also embarked on the complete works of Giovanni Croce: I hope someone will continue the task. His current catalogue is large: google "Michael Procter Editions".

Details of a memorial fund for Michael's son Benedict to provide for his university education in five years time are on Michael's website – michael-procter.com. It also offers a "Giant used music sale": 700 sets of used choral music – about 12,000 individual copies – for sale at knock-down prices. I hope that some person or organisation involved in choral singing can buy these and make them available.

I am grateful to Selene Mills for her input.

CB

HELENA BROWN 19 Oct 1947 – 4 April 2012

Helena Brown was one of those people with whom I have had quite a lot of phone conversations, mostly with regard to repertoire for Isleworth Baroque, much of which she bought from me. She was evidently enthusiastic about the work she did with the local amateur performers, some of it standard repertoire, others more obscure. Their current project is Lampe's *The Dragon of Wantley* – perhaps this parodistic comedy will be an original way to remember her: performances in the autumn!

She was primarily a keyboard player, so in sympathy with my belief that baroque works rarely need vocal scores, which often need to be no cheaper than complete scores – not, at least, the way we do them. She studied at Dartington from 1965 – it's quite likely that we met there if she became a trog during the summer school. I doubt if she learnt much about baroque playing from Helen Glatz, who didn't impress me as an accompanist, but Roy Truby would have been more helpful. She concentrated on accompaniment at the RCM then joined the staff of the Royal Ballet. Another "might have met" situation was at the Chiswick Music Centre, where I went to the viol class. (How many local authorities ever ran such an evening class?) She also became an Associated Board examiner and taught at St Paul's Girls School, the junior department of the RCM and Morley College.

She suffered from bad health, with Hodgkinson's Disease in her teens and various cancers throughout her life. In the 1970s, she concentrated on the harpsichord, since it required less physical effort than the piano. She was a

member of Musica Dolce, the Telemann Players and, with Penelope Cave, For Two to Play, and played continuo for several professional orchestras.

CB

There is a musical celebration of her life on July 8th at 7.00 pm at the Turk's Head Function Room, 28 Winchester Rd. St Margaret's, Twickenham TW1 1LF. £8.00, including a buffet meal and music check www.isleworthbaroque.co.uk

Philip Thorby and CB trying out a passage of *Poppea*

The illustration shows very similar harpsichords by Colin Booth. The one that Philip Thorby is playing belongs to Roxana Gundry, the one I am playing was kindly lent for the *Poppea* weekend (see p. 1) and is enjoying its first outing. We left behind my Tony Chinnery harpsichord for repair – it was damaged some years ago putting it into the car in the dark after a performance of *Poppea* in the atmospheric St Magnus Cathedral. The picture was taken in Roxy's house. Colin writes: "Neither instrument is really very closely derived from the early Pisaensis of 1533 (Leipzig Museum) which inspired me to start making this model in 1981. I have made a few more authentic copies of the original, but a major departure on my standard model is the use of a solid wrestplank. Many dozens have been sold worldwide since then, and one of the earliest customers was Colin Tilney. As it happens, I am just completing a set of four, one of which is for a Danish organist. The instrument Clifford is playing in the photo is one of these."

