

Early Music

REVIEW

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Part I

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We are delighted to offer such a substantial issue, so large that it is split into two sections. The practical reason for this is that 52 is the maximum number of pages (13 sheets) that the photocopier can staple. We have Andrew Benson-Wilson and others to thank for their reviews of festivals and concerts during the summer. Far more performances deserve reviews, so we would welcome samples from prospective writers.

And talking of photocopiers, BBC 1's Panorama on 25 September was devoted to computer and photocopier fraud in schools – a topic which is far less publicised than it ought to be. We were ruined by one such scam – there will be TV programme about it in the series “You've been scammed” on daytime BBC1 in the Autumn. We are featured in half of one of the 15 programmes in the series. It concentrates on how people can be so easily be taken in rather than details of the legal consequences. Panorama had three main focusses: (1) the absence of skills now that schools have so much financial autonomy: (2) getting the criminals dealt with by the police and the criminal courts; (3) highlighting that the banks should have some responsibility for making loans of sums grossly in excess of the value of the goods, which may or may not exist. The Clydesdale Bank cancelled the debts of a number of schools. How that might apply to the mortgage we were forced to take on our house remains to be seen.

We had intended to offer to list new editions by small specialist publishers who cannot afford to send out review copies. There wasn't room for the sample column of BC's “Prima la musica” in this issue, but if any are interested, please make contact. No charge, apart from subscribing to *EMR*. A condition will be that lists are sent every two months at the right time in what will be the agreed format so that we have a minimum of copy-editing. CB

REVIEWS OF MUSIC

Clifford Bartlett

VECCHI'S FOREST

Vecchi Selva di varia ricreations (1590) Edited by Paul Schleuse (*Recent Research in the Music of the Renaissance*, 157). A-R Editions, 2012. xxxix + 6 pp facs + 245pp, \$200.00 + Lute tablature (R157S) vi + 25pp, \$20.00. Parts for nos. 11 & 24 \$8.00.

I first encountered Vecchi's *Selva* in Oscar Chilesotti's *Biblioteca di Rarità Musicali*, vol. V, which managed to contain 12 pieces in 41 pages, including some of the lute tablatures and with compact layout, which reduced note-values facilitate (though there is no reason why unreduced values should take so much more space) – and this was published in 1892! My copy has been used quite a bit over the last few decades, but I'm not saying that this new edition isn't a great improvement, and not just for being almost complete.

There had been nothing like this varied collection of 37 pieces before, with all sorts of secular music ranging from three to ten parts, 12 with lute "continuo" (to anticipate the term) and two for instruments only. The title "Forest" derived ultimately from the first-century Roman poet Statius, and was popularised by a collection of humanistic knowledge by Pedro Mezia (1497-1551) published in Spain in 1540 with over 100 editions in various languages over the next century. Vecchi's introduction justifies his use of the word, claiming that "the variety of diverse harmonies in these songs of mine must resemble a forest".

It's excellent that the publication is transcribed complete – except for one piece, *Battaglia d'Amore e Dispette*, which is already available in RMR 72.¹ A complete facsimile is available via "Petrucci Vecchi", and is particularly clear – rather more so than the facsimiles in the edition, in fact. Those used to performing from parts might like to try some of the pieces – easier if the conductor has a score! The edition itself is clear to read; it preserves original note values, and retains (as far as possible) original accidentals rather than using modern conventions of omitting accidentals repeated within a bar. Ambiguities are clarified editorially.

Both Chilesotti and Schleuse assume that pieces with lute are sung at the notated pitch with lutes tuned in a variety of keys. That's a topic that I went into when retyping and adding a few suggestions to Andrew Parrott's article on transposing chiavetti in Monteverdi's 1610 *Vespers*.² The

introduction includes a table of pieces, showing clefs, signatures, final and mode, but ignoring the lute keys. There are four lute pitches (in the usual tuning) in A G E and C. These do not seem to match standard chiavette. No 10 has low clefs, no 11 has high ones, but both are accompanied by a lute in A, a tone above the vocal parts. I found slipped into my Chilesotti an email on the subject (dated 1 Oct 2006) from Richard Carter,³ one of our subscribers, presumably replying to some comments of mine: his conclusion was that "at the moment it looks as though lutenists will be on their own to find a way to fit together – I cannot find compromise transpositions which work with lute in g for all the pieces". The editor transposes the transcriptions of the lute part. Curiously, he doesn't mention chiavetti at all, though there seems no reason why the normal conventions shouldn't apply. The trios look odd. The G₂ G₂ F₃ of no 13, for instance, would be more plausible down a fourth, and would work for a male trio if the top two parts were sung down the octave. Both instrumental pieces are in high clefs (G₂ C₁ C₃ C₄ F₃ and G₂, C₂, C₃, F₃).

A great asset of the volume is the inclusion of separate texts and translations – especially for the less respectable texts. This is particularly useful for No 32 *O Messir: diversi linguaggi* 9, which coincidentally was alluded to in our last two issues in connection with Michael Procter's obituary, since its rehearsal just after we moved into our first house dated the concert to November 1975. It's an intriguing piece, thoroughly studied by Warren Kirkendale, who published it in *Das Chorwerk* 125 in 1975.⁴ The availability of a part for lute (tablature and transcription) with the top voice part is useful. This is a fine edition of a work that deserves active attention. I hope it is used.⁵

MORLEY FOR THREE BASS VIOLS

Thomas Morley Nineteen Canzonets for Three Bass Viols Edited by Richard Carter & Johanna Valencia Oriana Music (OM123), 2012. v + 22 pp + 3 parts, €28.00.

The starting point of this is a trio of MSS at the Bodleian Library (GB-Ob Mss. Mus. Sch D.245-247) containing some 450 pieces for one, two and three viols that John Merro had copied. He included nine of Morley's *Canzonets or Little Short*

than needing a variety of tunings, it seemed more likely that they were all played in the same pitch (G or whatever) and the singer "transposed" (if that's how he thought of it).

3. Editor of the Morley reviewed below.

4. He also published an extensive article on the piece in *Acta Musicologica* 44 (1972), pp. 181-235.

5. There's a slip in the numbering of the footnotes at the end of the introduction.

1. It would be useful if that were available on A-R's website, either under R 72 or 157 or both.

2. Andrew Parrott "Transposition in Monteverdi's *Vespers* of 1610: an 'aberration' defended", *Early Music*, vol. 12 no. 4, November 1984, pp. 490-516, in which I checked a variety of arrangements of music for solo voice and lute: the notation of the voice part was retained, but rather

Songs to Three Voices (1593), and it seemed a good idea to Richard to transcribe the other 11. No. 9 *Deep lamenting*, doesn't work on three basses, so is omitted, though sensibly the original numbering is retained. I would have included it, despite its wide compass: most viol players have more than one instrument. The score has rather small print, but that's OK for sorting out if the ensemble collapses or for acting as coach. But despite the "authentic" absence of texts, apart from providing a repertoire for a male vocal trio, it would help to shape the music: musicians of the time may well have had at least some of the texts in their mind anyway. But adding underlay would have meant spreading the notes a bit, complicating layout and probably requiring more pages.

JONES II

Robert Jones *The Second Book of Songs & Aires for Soprano & Bass Voices, Lute & Lyra Viol* Edited by Ted Connor (*Viol Consort Series* no. 80) PRB Productions, 2012. viii + 69pp, + 4 parts, \$53.00.

This is one of the more unusual songbooks of its time, since the 21 songs can be sung by soprano with an optional bass, and accompanied by lute or lyra viol, with a bass viol as alternative for the bass voice. Not many of the songs are well-known, but the poems are of surprisingly high quality. I think I'd rather have had all the verses underlaid in the score but the lute and lyra tablatures printed only as parts – players are unlikely to read the transcriptions from the score. The lute and lyra parts could have usefully had the soprano part and text added, though in smaller print – page-turns could still be avoided. But I'm too often tempted to criticise another publisher's decision! It is certainly excellent to have this book available, and all options are available for the performer.

DARIO CASTELLO

Dario Castello 2 *Sonatas: Sonata VII & Sonata VIII (1644)*. edited by Friedrich Cerha *Diletto musicale* (DM 1375), 2012. 20pp + 3 parts, £17.75.

In addition to the activities as a composer and as the creative editor responsible for completing Alban Berg's *Lulu*, Friedrich Cerha seems to have been publishing Castello, Fontana, Frescobaldi and other early 17th-century music for almost as long as I can remember. The Castello is particularly valuable, since he is the archetypical composer in the *stylus fantasticus*. Identifying his two publications by date is a bit confusing, since the first editions of neither survive, but the original dates (1621 and 1629) are more useful for placing them in the appropriate chronological context. The SPES facsimiles were published thirty years ago, and serious performers prefer to use them, but they are quite hard going for non-specialists. The music requires considerable skill, not just technical but in shaping transitions. These two sonatas are indexed as being for *Sopran e Fagoto overo Viola*, and are described as being A 2. The treble part ranges from the D above middle C to the

A an octave and a half above, the fagotto has two octaves from middle C. Both have a solo break for each instrument, but No. VII is more elaborate. Neither are among the most extrovert of his sonatas, but they are useful for learning how to make them expressive in terms of the period. The continuo part shouldn't be played by another melodic bass, and since the bass figures are not given on the separate *Basso* part, it's no use for keyboard or theorbo players unless they can relate to other parts by ear: including the figures in the original would help a bit, though they are not systematic. There are obvious advantages in not having any page-turns!

GEISTLICHE CHOR-MUSIC

Schütz Geistliche Chor-Musik... The five-part motets, Nos. 1-12. SWV 369-380 Bärenreiter (BA 5901), xiii + 105pp, £11.50. set of 5 partbooks £8.50.

I'm quite well-off for editions of Schütz's opus 11: *Musicalia ad Chorum Sacrum, Das ist: Geistliche Chor-Music mit 5. 6. und 7. Stimmen beides vocaliter und Instrumentaliter... Erster Theil...* M. DC. XLVIII... Much to my surprise, I've got a photocopy of the 1648 original and a bound Breitkopf score of 1930 edited by Kurt Thomas, in modern clefs but with Mensurstrich, a few dynamics and gothic text. Bärenreiter first published the set in 1935, edited by Wilhelm Kamisch as vol. 5 of the *Neue Ausgabe sämtlicher Werke*, with transpositions and Mensurstrich: this is available piece-by-piece by googling *Petrucci Schutz*. Hänssler (later Carus) worked towards a Collected Works by starting with individual pieces, with German and English texts and introductions. All of op. 11 have been published, but not as a volume. Bärenreiter produced a new edition by Werner Breig in 2003 in two volumes (BA 5959 & 5960) with German text only. The volume here is based on the first of these, at a rather lower price than the €87.00 of the bound edition, with a preface in German and English on performance practice by Manfred Cordes, but no editorial information. The edition is strongly recommended, and small ensembles who gather together to sing madrigals etc. might welcome having a set at hand. The divided voice is either soprano or tenor. One piece (*Also hat Gott*, probably the best known) is in *chiavetti* and has been transposed down a fourth. The price is very good value if singers can manage from single parts (though I haven't actually seen a set). The leaflet with the review copy also offers different transpositions as "Print on Demand". I hope that automatic transpositions from e.g. D minor with no flat up a tone to E minor with two sharps are adjusted to avoid the ungrammatical and confusing notation.

Personally, I think I'd prefer a general introduction rather than one so specific. I'm puzzled about the exact meaning of *Chor* in 17th-century Germany. I'm well aware that it doesn't necessarily mean "choir" in the modern sense, and in a Gabrielian context, nearly everything I write stresses that *coro* has no implication of voices for more than one voice to a part. However, are we sure that *coro* or *Chor* explicitly excludes larger groups? I'm not objecting to performing

these motets with five singers, but surely people who sing in choirs should be encouraged to sing such amazing music. I know very well that the current specialist view of the number of voices required for the 1610 Vespers or the B-minor Mass is respectively 10 and 8, but I also believe that the more people who have sung the works, in whatever size choir, the better. On the whole, the bigger the choir, the less temperament! It is a pity that there are so many frustrating references to pieces not in this volume – later pieces have different problems from those a5. Cordes needs to be a little more broad-minded about avoiding note=note at mensuration changes. There's a nice example by Praetorius (*Puer natus: Ein Kind geboren* from *Polyhymnia* no. 12) where "aurum, thus, myrrham" (bar 61 in my edition) is notated in C in phrase groups of three crotchets. The same music to "Deo dicamus" in Part II is notated in minims in 3/2. The two passages must surely go at the same speed.

Schütz's Preface is printed in German only. Luckily, the first Carus piece I picked up included a translation of it – Carus is very good at filling blank pages with such documentation. I had always been puzzled by its content, and wondered whether it wasn't intended specifically for the 1648 publication at all but was a plug for a future publication – an ambition which, like Monteverdi, he failed to achieve. Or perhaps the figured bass part was added by the publisher, knowing that that the market would expect it.

FROBERGER FOR VIOLS

Froberger Ricercars & Capriccios from the Livres de 1656 & 1658 arranged for viol quartet by Toby Szuts (Viol Consort Series, 82) PRB Productions, 2012. 25pp + 5 parts, \$26.00.

This contains Ricercar IV from the 1656 autograph and Ricercar V from the 1658 volume and Capriccio II, IV & V from 1656 and III & IV from 1658. The score sets them out in Tr A A B clefs, but the parts also have a treble-clef alternative for part 2. They are an obvious source to call on for later consort music, and they look as if they should work well, though the two-octave semiquaver scale might surprise the sight-reader. It would be interesting to play them to the organ, like English fantasies.

LOCKE FOR Tr B B

Locke Suites for Treble and Two Basses Edited by Alice Brin Renken (Viol Consort Series, 81) PRB Productions, 2012. ix + 26pp + 3 parts, \$28.00.

It's odd that, except once in passing, the editor avoids the title given in the autograph score "The Flatt Consort for My Cousin Kemble" The scoring is for treble and two division viols – at least, that's the editorial specification of *Musica Britannica* 31. Each suite comprises Fantazie, Galliard, Fantazie and Saraband leading to a short conclusion. The range of the treble part goes from the A below middle C to the C two

octaves and a third above – possible favouring a violin rather than viol, which anyway is more easily obscured by the basses. The lack of harmonic extremes which abound in the four-part consorts is compensated here by the liveliness of the writing.

RESTORATION TRIO SONATAS

Restoration Trio Sonatas edited... by Peter Holman and John Cunningham (Purcell Society Edition, Companion Series 4) Stainer & Bell, 2012. xxxi + 63pp, £55.00.

There's almost a vacuum in mid-17th-century English chamber music, with the decline of the substantial collection of consorts that were copied up to, and to some extent during the Commonwealth. It was some decades before new sets of instrumental pieces appeared, and the trio-sonata ensemble that had developed in Europe was perhaps superfluous in England since the fantasy-suites were still in use until at least the 1660s. Charles II's influence at first encouraged French dances, but by around 1670 Roger North mentions sonatas by Cazzati, Vitali and Becker and Evelyn records the presence of Matteis in his diary on 17 November 1674. The small harvest of trios, other than the two Purcell sets, are individual pieces surviving in MS. Since there are so few, I've listed the contents.

1. G.B. Draghi *Sonata in g* (2 vln, bc)
2. John Blow *Sonata in A 2* (2 vlms, b viol & bc fig)
3. John Blow *Ground in g* (2 vlms, B/bc)
4. J.G. Keller *Sonata & Suite in g* (2 vln, b viol & bc fig)
5. J.G. Keller *Sonata in A* (2 vln, bc fig)
6. N. Matteis sen *Sonata in A* (2 vln, bc fig)
7. G. Diesineer *Sonata in g* (2 vln, b viol/theorbo, bc fig)
8. R. King *Sonata in A* (2 vln, bc fig)
9. [N. Matteis sen] *Sonata in D* (2 vln. bc fig)
10. I. Blackwell *Sonata in f* (vln 1 & 2 bc missing)
11. S. Eastwick *Sonata in a* (only vln I extant)
12. N. Matteis sen *Sonata in E* (only fig. Bass extant)

The musical quality is a bit variable, but there is also a problem of a variety of unfamiliar styles that might delay appreciation, especially since the composers come from different places abroad and were not writing the sort of French music fashionable at Charles II's court. These sonatas are mostly quite short, and should be treated as running on from one section to another rather than with breaks to blow your nose, sip your water and retune. The introduction is extremely thorough, with each work placed in its context. Separate scores and parts are available at £20 for nos. 1, 3 & 4, £20.00 for 2, 7, & 6 and £15 for 5, 8 & 9. Assuming that these scores don't include all the material in the bound volume, it's a bit extravagant if scholar-performers who need the whole volume can't buy the parts more cheaply without another score. The critical commentary of Blow's *Sonata in A* is ludicrously lengthy: as I think I suggested in a recent issue, such information could be much more easily expressed as a pdf file with the variants superimposed in colour.

SALVE MISERERE MAGNIFICAT REQUIEM

Alessandro Scarlatti Selected Sacred Music Edited by Luca Della Libera (*Recent Researches in the Music of the Baroque Era*, 181). A-R Edition 2012. [xxii] + 116pp, \$124.00.

These four pieces have nothing specific in common, but the editor has chosen them as examples of the mixture of Palestrinian *stile antico* polyphony and more up-to-date styles. The *Salve Regina* (1703) would have been perceived as being in the *stile di cappella* despite the devices the editor demonstrates. The opening theme is essentially an elaboration of the "lamenting" minor descending fourth (though not used as a ground), with the more normal chant incipit AGAD present but not dominating. It's for the standard SATB with no continuo – though the composer may well not have bothered to waste a stave for a basso seguente which could be copied separately if needed. There's only one extant source. Edward Dent's 1905 *Alessandro Scarlatti* states that the MS resided with W. Barclay Squire. Dent himself bought it in 1918 and it is now in the Fitzwilliam Museum. It's a fine piece and could well be squashed up a bit and published as a cheap eight-page choral score. The introduction conveniently lists Scarlatti's other settings, but are there no modern editions?

One associates the *Miserere* (in its Holy Week format at the end of Tenebrae without a concluding Gloria) with Allegri (or Bai) and the Sistine Chapel. Scarlatti's setting has the same format as Allegri's, but replaces the faburden style by independent parts moving within a chordal structure. It was sung on Maundy Thursday 1708, but there was no MS available in 1711: the source of the edition was copied by a Chapel scribe later that year, but there is no evidence of its use, and it was Bai's setting (first performed in 1711) that became the alternative for Allegri because similar ornamentation could be applied to both. The 1708 performance went wrong: the alternating chant was sung a tone too low, for which the singers were fined. (The tradition was that the polyphonic verses were sung one-to-a-part, the chant by the remaining singers.) The edition does not give the source of the chant. Allegri's setting may imply the *tonus peregrinus*, but the usual simple version so familiar from recordings fits the Scarlatti. Perhaps the pitch mistake in 1708 might have been caused by his verses ending on G rather than Allegri's D.

The Magnificat has a much freer mix of styles, and is scored for SATB soli and SSATB chorus with figured continuo (but not using the 17th-century sharp=major, flat=minor convention). The source is, in fact, very late, copied by Santini in 1835. There is no evidence for the location for which it was written, so it isn't necessarily for more than five singers – indications like *solo* and *a 3* can merely be warnings of what is happening to singers using separate parts. Conductors will need to consider whether ideas of an over-arching tactus survived from the composer's youth. The solo sections have shorter note-values in the same mensuration C, and on page 31 there is a section in 3/2. I assume the signatures are

original: the edition doesn't say, and the omission of original clefs and indication of the compass of each part suggests a casualness over musicological and performance expectations. The 3/2 section from bar 99–115 needs to be sung entirely to the rhythm of the text, ignoring the bar lines just as in music a century or so earlier. The first solo is marked *Largo*, but one never knows whether that is a tempo or a stylistic indication or both.

The remaining piece, however, does have markings that seem to be temporal. This is a *Missa defunctorum* for SATB and figured bass dated 1717 and partially autograph, which was bought by John Stanley and was sold at Christie's after his death in 1786.⁶ It stayed in England but eventually found its way to Bergamo. The editor also lists eight 19th-century MSS, three 19th-century editions and one from the 1980s "not for sale". These, except perhaps for the 1980s one, all lack the Sequence. My guess is that it would work better as a recording than a live concert – however good it might be, there's not enough variety, whereas at home it's easy to have it running and focus on different sections – then perhaps later you realise that the whole work is worth attention. But good luck to any choir that does fancy it. The introit is headed *A battuta giusta* and the Sequence *A battuta moderato, di due tempi sì, ma non stretta*. The barlines occur every four minims, which would imply quite quick, though *battuta* might not mean the same as the beat of a modern conductor. The score omits the heading *attacca subb[ito]* in the composer's hand, though it is shown in facsimile and quoted in the critical notes.

This is a valuable edition of some fine music: choir conductors should certainly have a look at it and then check with A-R over copying permission. (But what happened to the suggestion a few years ago that Urtext editions were not covered by US copyright?) Copying the *Miserere* requires permission from the Vatican. I wonder if any microfilms or MS editions exist from far enough back to undermine any copyright claim under European Union law.

CALDARA STABAT MATER

Caldara Stabat Mater Score. Bärenreiter (BA 8955), 2012. 25pp, £8.50. **Vocal score** (BA 8955-90), 25pp, £8.95.

Caldara was working in Rome at the same time as Alessandro Scarlatti. When this edition arrived, I was hoping to find more information about the work. King's Music issued one in 1991 – I can't remember why – based on DTO 26, but neither the full nor the vocal Bärenreiter score has any information, except that the reviewers info sheet admits that the source is the same 1906 edition as mine! It's also odd for both full and vocal scores to have the same price: one expects a full score on larger pages to be a bit (sometimes a lot!) more expensive. Actually, since the instruments double the chorus, an all-purpose score could easily be produced, omitting the instrumental parts except for the solo passages.

6. Yes: it's the same firm, already some 20 years old.

The scoring is for two violins, in unison with the sopranos when doubling the chorus, a viola and alto trombone doubling the altos, a tenor trombone doubling the tenors and continuo of organo and basso (whatever that means). I wonder, particularly if the piece was written for Vienna (where Caldara worked for his last 20 years), whether there should also be a trombone or curtal/bassoon doubling the bass voice. I don't have DTO volume to hand: the score is available via Petrucci, but not the commentary. Bärenreiter places rests in the continuo part when the DTO and KM scores double the upper two parts, as at the opening. There are some very odd progressions when melodic bass starts a tenor lead then jumps to the bass. I suspect that the original continuo line used S A & T clefs to indicate the voice being doubled, whereas DTO has a two-stave realisation in treble and bass clefs, which clarifies the difference between tenor and bass parts.⁷ It would be good to see if the source is a score or parts, and if the latter, whether there was more than one bass part and if they differed. I would guess that the MS source doesn't survive, so it would have been sensible to print any information the DTO editor gave us.

I played the work once at a private study day at the house of an enthusiastic pair of singers and was impressed: it deserves the wider circulation the new edition will give it. It would make a good pairing with Biber's marvellous F-minor Requiem. The Bärenreiter score is usable, though if the parts are only on hire, the KM/EMC ones at £2.00 each are compatible. Unless there's some commentary available, I'm not convinced that the BA score is any better than ours at £6.00: the differences I have spotted are trivial.

COURBOIS

Philippe Courbois *Cantatas of One and Two Voices...*
 Edited by Michele Cabrini (*Recent Researches in the Music of the Baroque Era*, 180) A-R Editions, 2012. [xxxii] + 125pp, \$140.00.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. <i>Apollon et Daphné</i> | Soprano (C1) & Bc |
| 2. <i>Zéphire et Flore</i> | Soprano (C1) & Bc |
| 3. <i>L'Amant timide</i> | Alto (C3) & Bc |
| 4. <i>Orphée</i> | Bass (F4), 2 vlms, tpt, Bc |
| 5. <i>Ariane</i> | Soprano (C1), vln, fl, Bc |
| 6. <i>Jason et Médée</i> | Soprano (C1), Bass (F4), Bc |
| 7. <i>Dom Quichote</i> | Tenor (C4), vln, Bc |

An alternative version of no. 7 was published c.1728 with vln, fl, bsn, tpt, & vielle is also edited here, but is not in the Garland volume.,

I'm so unaware of Courbois that I didn't realise that his *Cantates Françaises à I, et II. Voix sans Symphonie et avec Symphonie...* (Paris 1710) was included in the Garland French Cantata facsimile series, vol. 14. Indeed, I don't think I have

opened that volume before. There seem to have been four editions, with minimal changes and price rises. This new edition is based on version 4, whereas the facsimile is of version 3. The contents are listed below the heading.

I wish that somehow modern editions of this repertoire could create an image nearer the original prints: they feel so inappropriate. But I can no longer read the clefs as well as I used to, and some performers will never have been able to do so. So there's no alternative. At least there's the advantage of having more on a page, with narrower margins, more compact type and no realisation. But there is more that can be done to make the layout playable. For instance, one more bar needs to be squashed on p. 53 so that there is half a bar for a page turn. Putting the bass figures above the notes works fine in early prints, but using that system with a neat layout that doesn't overlap with the staves requires a larger gap than between the other staves, and also has a text size that is too small for comfort, whereas if the figures are below, there's more space since even if the figures occupy some of it, the visual impression of the larger gap between systems remains. I'm glad to see that major chords are figured sharp and not sometimes adjusted to natural.

I'm riding a hobby horse again, and haven't said anything about the music. Although more difficult and expensive to perform, I guess that the two cantatas with trumpet may be more appealing than the others. The editor suspects that the larger version of No. 7 shouldn't be expanded like the short score of opera editions; I would, however, want to try it, particularly since Graham Sadler is a persuasive advocate of *parties de remplissage*. The first three voice-and-Bc cantatas look interesting, and at least they only need two (or maybe three) performers – you can sing them from the harpsichord.

TITUS'S CLEMENCY

Mozart *La clemenza di Tito* K 621... Edited by Franz Giegling. Bärenreiter (TP321), 2012. xxii + 332pp, £32.00.

Another of the updated study scores of Mozart operas, this is based on the Neue Ausgabe Serie II, Werkgruppe 5, Band 20 (BA4554), originally published in 1970 with some modifications in 1997; the introduction has been updated and is in English as well as German, and information has been incorporated from the 2008 facsimile. Metastasio's libretto had been set about 40 times before Mozart used it, with many changes. Mozart's opera remained popular till about 1830, then fell quickly into decline. It has only slightly returned to favour recently, though his other mature opera seria *Idomeneo*, written a decade earlier, has had greater success.

CORNETTO

I was worried about some problems with a recent batch, and wrote to it publisher, Wolfgang Schaefer; but by the time he replied I had written the reviews. I'm a bit worried that these performing editions don't match the quality and care of his earlier facsimiles.

7. But congratulations to Eusebius Mandyczewski for producing such a sensible organ part in 1906: the only improvement would be to have anticipated the Hänssler/Carus Schütz edition by having soprano and tenor parts stems up with alto and bass stems down. The alternative for an unrealised single-line part is to retain C clefs, which makes it easy for melodic basses to double only the bass part.

Mornable Chansons imprimées: 1538-1553 herausgegeben von Jean-Marie Poirier. Cornetto (CP 1093), 2011. vii + 116, 2 vols.

Antoine Mornable published a collection of Latin motets and another of French Psalms in 1546⁸ and chansons of the Sermisy manner appeared in the anthologies of Attaignant from 1538-1553; he either died young, retired, or perhaps became a cleric. The 43 chansons are split into two volumes. All are in four parts, but lute settings and bicinia are added when available. Most are transcribed with both middle parts in octave-treble clefs, but why are neither the original clefs nor ranges indicated? The chansons vary from an imitative motet style to more homophonic settings, though rarely as chordal as the better-known examples from around 1530. The music is easy to read, and most pieces fit onto an opening, but the underlay is quite small and surely the page-numbers should be in the outside, not the inside corner of the page? It would have been helpful if the contents list had also been included in vol. 2. The first bar of p. 20 is nonsense! There's a two-page introduction in French, German and English: the penultimate line of the first English page is:

published an larget collection of latin motets... quite typicla (three misprints + not capitalising Latin). I don't think that even I can be as careless, even when proof-reading French!

Anonymus (1686) Sonata Solo Fagotto für Fagott und b.c. Cornetto (CP1111), 2012. 4pp + 2 parts.

Anonymus (1686) Sonata Cornettino Solo für Cornettino und b.c. Cornetto (CP1112), 2012. 4pp + 2 parts.

These two lively pieces come from the Biblioteca Estense in Bologna, MS E.316. Demisemiquaver passages abound and the continuo part is definitely an accompaniment – and doesn't need more than chords. The cornetto piece does have four bars of Bc solo but not enough to merit a melodic bass. Both need some panache to bring off at concerts, and should be fun to play. Rehearsals would be easier if bar numbers had been added to the parts – they are only in the score.

Eberlin Divertimento für 2 Violinen und Bass herausgegeben von P. Altman Pötsch OSB. Cornetto (CP1098), 2012. 27pp + 3 parts,

Berlin Sinfonia für Cornetto, 3 Violinen, Viola, Violoncello und b.c. Cornetto (CP1063), 2011. 15 pp + 7 parts.

These look as if they could be part of a series, with similarly designed covers which include a reproduction of the original title page. Johann Ernst Eberlin (1702-62) spent his working life in Salzburg, becoming Kapellmeister at the court and cathedral in 1749. The Divertimento has four movements, with Italian tempo marks and Latin inscriptions: [1] *Cave, ne titubes* (beware, don't stagger) [2] *Divide, et numera, si sapis*, (Divide and count if you know how) [3] *Omnia in pondere, et mensura* (everything in number and time) [4] *Punctum satis* (a point/dot is enough); the first three movements are also headed *Andante*. I haven't worked out the full significance of

the Latin phrases yet. The first movement has hemidemi-semiquavers (a challenge to readers who only speak American!), the second movement is splattered with groups of four demisemiquavers (and a few hemis). The third movement is mostly in 12/16, but opens in 4/8, 8/16 and 2/4, also using 12/16, 2/1, 8/4, 4/2, 12/4 and 4/2. The last movement uses old mensural notation requiring the need to add dots to perfect notes without them: these are modernised in the printed edition, but can be seen in the facsimiles – all three parts are reproduced. An intriguing piece!

Johann Daniel Berlin (c.1717-1787) studied in Copenhagen, then worked in Trondheim from 1737 until his death. In terms of numbers of pages, movements two & three take as much space as the first. All three have two repeated sections. The cornetto has, I suppose, the role of soloist, though it isn't dominating. Its stave in the score is in C1 clef, changed in the part to treble. The original part is written as for central European organ pitch (a tone above chamber pitch); the typeset part has it both at that pitch and a tone lower to match the others, but with some odd automatic computer transpositions. How many other cornetto pieces are there from the mid 18th-century? There are six bars missing at the end of the score of the first movement, which you can correct from the parts or an on-line edition. The violin III part is probably an alternative to the viola (or vice versa).

EDITION WALHALL

This batch arrived just about in time for the August issue, but I was away at the Beauchamp Summer School for the last week of July and hoped I'd have a chance of playing some of them in the afternoons' free time. Alas, members of the course prevailed upon me for music more relevant to the Gabrieli theme of the week, and I came back home with them unplayed. So I'm writing from visual rather than aural input, in chronological order. Most of the items here come in series. I follow the practice from my cataloguing days at London University Library of only listing a series if the items are numbered.

Bollius Quarta Symphonia... herausgegeben von Klaus Hofmann. Edition Walhall (EW 868), 2012. 13pp + 4 parts, €14.90.

Daniel Bollius was born around 1590, was an organist for most of his life and died c. 1638 according to Grove Online or c.1642 according to the editor. Little of his music survives, the main exception being his *Rappresentazione* on the conception and birth of St John the Baptist. The MS was at Breslau until 1945, was then thought lost, but is now in the Berlin Staatsbibliothek (Sammlung Bohn Ms mus. 129). This is one of the instrumental interludes. It is scored for *corneto*, *violino* and *fiauto* (presumably treble/alto recorder, notated an octave below pitch) and Bc (for which a melodic bass is probably superfluous). The three treble instruments tend to imitate each other in alternation rather than mix in counterpoint, coming together at the end of sections. I would question the minor chord at

8. according to *Grove*; but the editor claims they were both French psalms.

the beginning of bar 23 – major changing to minor on the last note is more idiomatic and follows what the editor has done in the previous cadences. He seems happy to make a full bar major, but keeps it minor if the chord changes before the end of the bar, which can hardly be a valid principle since half of the barlines are editorial additions. There's some advantage in halving bar lengths and triple note-lengths: I don't think anything valuable is lost and it's easier for non-experts to read. It is certainly worth making this attractive piece available.

Young Division in g sopra "La Monica" für Viola da gamba & B. c. (Hamburger Ratsmusik 5). Edition Walhall (EW 837), 2011. 8pp + 2 parts, €8.50.

William Young Sonata 29 a 2, Durham MS D.2, für für Violin, Viola (da gamba) & B. c. (Hamburger Ratsmusik 6). Edition Walhall (EW 837), 2011. 8pp + 3 parts, €12.50.

William Young (d. 1662) is best known for his 1653 set of Sonatas, available in score in DTO 135 and in facsimile from KM/EMC. I was initially puzzled by the series title – Young was based at Innsbruck, not Hamburg, but the music is part of the repertoire of a group based there: their recording of Young was reviewed by Robert Oliver in our last issue (159, p. 34). No editor's name is given, but the prefaces are signed by the group's leader, Simone Eckert. The Divisions are on one of the pervasive melody/bass themes of the early 17th century. It's a virtuoso piece, well worth studying, and the familiarity of the tune makes it easier for the listener to keep it in mind. The placing of editorial accidentals above the solo part without relating them to a specific note looks odd, but probably works OK. "Sonata 29" doesn't imply that there are at least 28 other such works by Young: in fact, there are only three, the other two (in d and C) being published by Dove House; there's an earlier Schott edition of No. 29. It's labelled "a 2" because the bass part is harmonic rather than melodic – the separate copy of the part should have been figured. The VdaG Society's Index also lists a source in the Bodleian. Unlike the Bollius Symphonia, this is closely imitative, except when the gamba has full chords. It's comprised of short sections (only two stretch to 30 bars): players should take the hint of the continuous bar numbering and not break between sections. It is not quite as challenging as the Divisions, but should sound impressive when performed.

Poglietti Partita in a für cembalo (Harmonia Coelestis, 4), Edition Walhall (EW 856), 2011. 8 pp, €7.50.

Alessandro Poglietti was Leopold I's court organist from 1661 till his death in 1683. A facsimile of this piece appears in Garland's 17th Century Keyboard Music vol. 23. It has four movements (Allemande, Corrente, Sarabanda and Gigue): only the last of these causes problems. The editor Markus Eberhardt carefully preserves the vertical alignment that implies that quavers and semiquavers sound simultaneously, but he doesn't comment on the less obvious rhythmic clashes, eg bar 8: the bass has triplets, while one

upper part has dotted-quaver + semiquaver and the other equal quavers: the obvious solution is to triple the quavers, but it would be good practice at hand independence to try it as written. It's enjoyable to play, and teachers might recommend it as a good introduction to the (mostly) French style.

Rosier Acht Solosonaten für Altbloßflöte und Basso Continuo Band 1. Herausgegeben... von Anne Kräft Edition Walhall (855), 2012. 27 pp + 3 parts, €24.80.

... Band 2. Herausgegeben... von Anne Kräft Edition Walhall (884), 2012. 21 pp + 3 parts, €21.50.

Carl Rosier was born in Liège in 1640, was a violinist at the Bonn court from 1650-88 and emerged in 1701 as Domkapellmeister in Cologne, where he remained until his death in 1725. These eight pieces are taken from a collection by Charles Babel (Sibley Library, Eastmann School of Music, Rochester NY, US-R-M1490.B1113) dated 1698. The eight pieces are nos. 4, 7, 11, 12 and 14, 16, 19, 21; judging by the facsimiles of the opening pages of nos. 4 & 14, they are numbered in French. The provision of three parts (treble/alto recorder, bass and a second score without cover but with realisation) is a luxury – at the time, players of solo sonatas were expected to read one score! The main score does have quite large print. There is no consistent pattern of movements and most are fairly short. They are not particularly difficult to play, but are worth doing so.

Telemann 12 Opernarien für Tenor. Klavierauszug Herausgegeben von Peter Huth Edition Walhall (EW 420), 2012. 46pp, €19.80.

This contains arias from *Der geduldige Socrates*, *Sieg der Schöneheit*, *Der wunderbare Beständigkeit der Liebe oder Orpheus*, *Die Last tragende Liebe oder Emma und Eginhard* and *Flavius Bertaridus König der Longobarden*, of which I must confess that I recognise only one title. Telemann is only gradually being recognised as an opera composer. He began writing operas when he was twelve, but the bulk of his dramatic output came in Hamburg in the 1720s, and all the music here is from that period. The introduction gives some indication of the dramatic context, and in passing translates the texts. What is missing is an indication of instrumentation (performing operatic arias with keyboard is hardly satisfying), and if I was publishing this volume, I'd have produced score and parts as well: on the whole, publishers of complete operas don't issue separate arias. Otherwise, this volume is most welcome: good and mostly unknown music, and good tenor opera arias, as well as "heroic" tenors, were rare at this period. The leading exponent in Hamburg, both in church and on stage, was Johann Heinrich Möhring, who performed the most significant Handel tenor role (Bajazet in *Tamerlano*) in 1725: all the arias here were probably composed for him. Tenors do investigate this exciting anthology, but don't commit yourself until you know that you can get the orchestral parts from somewhere.

Handel *Mi palpita il cor* (HWV 132b) Herausgegeben von Marius Schwemmer Edition Walhall (EW 864), 2011. €14.50, 12pp + 3 parts. .

HWV numbers are superfluous for most of Handel's works: I find titles like *Messiah* HWV 56 ludicrously pedantic, but not here! There are three versions, though HWV confuses the issue by including a variant of HWV 106 as HWV 132a. For clarity, I'll list them.

HWV 132a. In G for soprano & Bc: only the first section relates to the other versions and the rest is a second version of HWV 106: *Dimmi, o mio cor*. (HG 50 p. 161)

HWV 132b (Version I). In G for soprano, oboe & Bc (HG 52 B p. 152) Edition by Grancino, 1986, and more recently by Green Man Press.

HWV 132c (Version II). In D for alto, traverso and Bc (HG 50 p. 153) Editions by Musica Rara (MR 2246, now Breitkopf) and Kings Music/EMC.

HWV 132d (Version III). In D with a different setting of "Ho tanti".

Publishers should be a little more cautious about declaring first editions: the Grancino edition is available in Europe from Grahl & Nicklas, in the UK from Jacks, Pipes & Hammers and in the USA from www.grancinoeditions.com There's not much to choose between the Grancino and Walhall editions with regard to accuracy (if I ever had the The Green Man Press score, it isn't where it ought to be!), but the continuo realisations are different: Timothy Roberts produces something much nearer what an imaginative performer might play, but it may not work so well for everyone.

Porpora *Lezzione 2.a: Giovedì Santo: Passionsmotette für Alt & B.c.* (Voce Divina xvii, edited by Jolando Scarpa) Edition Walhall (EW 876), 2012. vi + 11pp with 2 extra copies for Bc, €14.90

... *Lezzione 3.a: Mercoledì Santo: Passionsmotette für Sopran & B.c.* (Voce Divina xviii, edited by Jolando Scarpa) Edition Walhall (EW 879), 2012. vi + 14pp with 2 extra copies for Bc, €16.50

Nicola Porpora (1686-1768) has for long been a name that crops up in various contexts, but whose music isn't widely published or performed – yet! But recordings are emerging, and these two Lamentations are well worth singing. The music is completely different from the sombre renaissance style, and is often much more vigorous. The first letter (*Jod*) on Wednesday is particularly lively! The usual assumption is that in Holy Week the organs are silent. The get-out casuistry is that, since organs were banned before harpsichords and spinets existed, there was no objection to their use, though the ban wasn't always observed anyway. Were this a transalpine composition, one might argue that the absence of figuring would

preclude the use of a keyboard, but down south, players were used to unfigured basses. Now organs are primarily holy instruments, I imagine there is no problem, but in fact, on musical grounds, I wonder if a cello alone might be enough. They are fine concert pieces, but might stick out in a liturgical context unless other music was equally extrovert. Those who find cantatas tedious with incessant *da capo* arias may find these refreshing! I am particularly sorry that I haven't had a chance to play them. Having heard Clare Wilkinson sing a Hasse lamentation, it would be interesting if she tried Porpora's Wednesday setting.

Books to be reviewed in the December issue

Mary Tiffany Ferer *Music and Ceremony at the Choir of Charles V: The Capilla Flamenca and The Art of Politcal Promotion* The Boydell Press, 2012 xii + 304pp, £60.00 ISBN 978 1 84383 699 5

***The Ashgate Research Companion to Henry Purcell* Edited by Rebecca Herissone** Ashgate, 2012 xviii + 420pp, £85.00. ISBN 978 0 7546 6645 5

This completely disappeared, and it only emerged in mid-September – far too late for me to have time to read and write about it. Apologies to the publisher, but it must be deferred till the next issue.

CB

Stanley Ritchie *Before the Chinrest: a Violinist's Guide to the Myteries of Pre-Chinrest Technique and Style* Indiana UP, 2012. xviii + 147pp, £23.99. ISBN 978 0 253 22318 0

Judy Tarling

Judy was about to go abroad when I asked her to review this, so it will appear in the December issue.

James B. Kopp *The Bassoon* Yale UP, 2012. xviii + 297pp, £30.00. ISBN 978 0 300 11820 2

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REVIEWS OF BOOKS

Linda Marie Zaerr *Performance and the Middle English Romance* D. S. Brewer, (Boydell & Brewer), 2012. x + 284pp, £50.00 ISBN 978 1 84384 323 8

This is a fascinating book, a sort of dialogue between scholar and performer, both being the same person: it would, in fact, have been even more fascinating if the author had written it in dialogue form, and I was tempted to write the review as an interview with an academic expert and a singer of the repertoire. Perhaps it could become a dramatic presentation +to enliven a medieval conference. "There is no means of specifying the basis of performance choices: which features are grounded in historical evidence, and which features are simply made up because they have to be in one way or another. In performance, the missing pieces must be filled in, and it is not possible to tag features with relevant degrees of certainty. We may not know how minstrels used facial expressions, but a performer's face must carry some expression, even if the expression is blank" (p. 175). There are many other such quotable passages.

The basis of the book is Appendix A: "Minstrel Reference in the Middle English Verse Romances". Performances of romances occur within some of the romances themselves, and they are presumably not too far removed from reality or the validity of the genre itself would be undermined. The jargon word is "metaperformance":¹ "the text describes a performance analogue to the vehicle [more jargon, or dead metaphor] by which the text is being communicated" (p. 27). The Middle English Romance wasn't a form I engaged with as a student – though I did have the good fortune to be a pupil and later friend of John Stevens, who is quoted extensively here; I think he must have been in the position of one lesson ahead of his pupils when we sampled French romances of the period. I was interested that the first music discussed in any detail was *Edi beo thu*, which was among the English songs I transcribed for a student essay in 1961, at a time when everything was pushed into the Notre-Dame rhythmic modes.² Footnote 43 on page 40 raises the question of the meaning of the overlapping meanings of the French *canter/conteer*, German *singen/sagen* and Latin *modulatio/pronuntiatio* & *concentus/accentus*. Perhaps even more fundamental is the overlap of *dico* and *canto* in liturgical contexts. Zaerr moves on from there, though I'm not sure if some of the detail, and in context the variant of

lines 7 & 8 of *Edi beo thu* (ex 4.6) which is compared with the "standard" transcription by Frank Harrison on p. 117 is hardly significant. If one is singing a poem of several hundred lines (not a short, stanzaic piece like *Edi beo thu*), one expects something nearer the variety of speech, but too much variation in each line of a long poem is likely to irritate.

Staid academics avoid metaphors, but Zaerr uses them as stimulation. There's a pair on p. 127, introduced by a quotation from Leonard Meyer: "A score which contained *all* of the information communicated by a particular performance – every nuance of duration, pitch, dynamics, timbre, etc – would not only be unreadable, but would take years to write down and months to decipher". (One thinks of 20th-century composers who tried to do this – the great freedom of most early music is the absence of such notated information!) She illustrates the point by making a chain of wild rose hips and madrone berries³ and "A Middle English verse design propagates a wave function of verse lines, and this function predicts where a metrical beat particle is likely to be found, two metrical particles suspended in each hemistich waves."⁴

I'm puzzled that Benjamin Bagby's Beowulf performances "would be effective with modern audiences" (p. 148): has she not heard and seen him in front of a non-specialist audience? My experience was hearing him in the crypt of a church in Utrecht with minimal light, and the only text available (for those with excellent eyesight) was in Dutch. Once I could read, if not recognise aurally, the Anglo-Saxon text, but all I recognised then was the first word *Whaet!*⁵ and a few names. It was, however, an outstanding performance.

This is a stimulating book. It would have been improved by a few facsimiles of manuscripts and a CD (or at least direct www access to some of her performances). The second appendix is a thorough discussion of medieval fiddle tuning and its implications, and there is a good index. I have one problem with the book itself. I had not realised that a corollary of the neat binding and illustrated cover was that the pages were perfect bound. That term isn't such a misnomer as it used to be – we bind our operas and Monteverdi Vespers, thus and have had no complaint of loose pages. But pages in my copy have begun the falling-out process around p.117 – I probably rested a book on it to keep the page open while I looked up my edition and Dobson & Harrison's *Medieval English Songs*; readers should beware of opening such books too roughly. CB

1. I don't know if the scientific committee for creating new terms still exists, but it used to make a point of not accepting words that mixed Greek and Latin (though they failed to stop *television*). Greek particles (prepositions) are so slippery in their meaning anyway that it's dangerous to deduce the meaning of such words from their constituent parts.

2. I first became aware of Christopher Page when he published that repertoire; and he too features largely in the book. Both John and Christopher were involved in the performance process: John sang the musical examples required in his lectures, and Christopher created Gothic Voices.

3. Not entirely successful, since she has to explain what madrones are, though she does it very well.

4. The complete paragraph makes more sense than the bit quoted! I am, however, puzzled why metrical analysts prefer *hemistich* to *half-line*.

5. Curiously, I once switched on the radio when driving across Belgium and heard that very word, spoken obviously by Christopher Page.

PERFORMING 17TH-CENTURY MUSIC

A Performer's Guide to Seventeenth-Century Music
 edited by Stewart Carter, revised and expanded by Jeffery
 Kite-Powell. Indiana UP, 2012, xvii + 536pp, \$49.95. ISBN
 978 0 253 35706 9

This contains 22 topics/chapters by different authors; the only double contributor is Herbert Myers on the inter-linked topics of Tuning & Temperament and Pitch & Transposition, balanced by two chapters by pairs of writers. Chapters 1-4 deal with "Vocal/Choral Issues", 5-15 with "Wind, String, and Percussion Instruments" (the second comma isn't mine!) 16-20 with "Performance Practice and Practical Considerations" (Ornamentation, Basso Continuo,⁶ Meter and Tempo, Tuning... and Pitch) and "The Seventeenth-Century Stage". These are followed with a list of names and dates (to save clogging text or index with them), contents lists of the Medieval and Renaissance volumes in the series, 44 pages of bibliography, with no segregation between early and modern publications, information about the contributors (all USA based except for Bruce Dickey), and a thorough index.

The first edition was published in 1997: I don't have a copy, so can't compare it with this new volume. At times I wondered how updated some of the chapters were, and one author does hint that his contribution is a revision rather than freshly written. There is some overlap between chapters, which is valuable. Singers need to read both Sally Sanford AND Julianne Baird, both of whom are stimulating, but in different ways. David Douglass and Julie Andrijeski on the violin are similarly complementary – I welcome David's contention that the baroque instrument and style came in much later than most players assume: he suggests, for instance, that in Austria the change came between Schmelzer and Biber, which perhaps helps to decide on ascriptions for pieces ascribed to both!

Guidebooks to historical performance began around a century ago (Dannreuther in 1893-5, Dolmetsch in 1915). Early discussions tended to cover the whole early-music range, but with periodisation, there were specific studies on renaissance, baroque and classical. 17th-century music suffered from this, since most performances until about 20 years ago failed to be aware that you can't pick up your "baroque" violin and play Purcell with the expertise acquired from Quantz, CPE Bach and Leopold Mozart. The 1995 anniversary of Purcell's death was fascinating, with Baroque orchestras tending to sound 18th-century. The most important feature of this book is to lay out a marker that 17th-century music is different, and that even a book on the whole period is an oversimplification.

I was least impressed by James Middleton on Theatrical Productions, with each section headed by a quote from

Dido and Aeneas, whose ubiquity he rightly questions. But apart from its accessibility, there are good reasons why it is so useful – most operas are too long for fitting into an academic course or a weekend workshop (though I must confess that a concentrated bank-holiday weekend on *Poppea* in May was one of the most intense and stimulating musical activities I can remember). *Dido* has the advantage of concision within a three-act structure and can be performed with only four strings and continuo (harpsichord and theorbo doubling guitar). But are there really "a great multitude of fairly satisfactory (but equally unsatisfactory) editions" of it. I'm only aware of three that are likely to be used in England – Novello (with Dart's infuriating realisation), Oxford UP (with Dent's pre-war piano part which OUP wasn't allowed to replace) and mine (with no realisation)⁷. Middleton seems very casual about choice of editions, and is happy with ones that have a clutter of superfluous additions: surely the basis of the musical aspect of the performance is an edition that represents what the composer wrote, and learning the conventions of the period is part of the experience, especially in college productions. Middleton's timetable for a production omits "choice of edition" from the earliest stage. In an academic surrounding, it should be possible to turn it into an editorial project and get a young scholar edit a new piece (in Sibelius or Finale) so that there is no dependency on the availability of a good and affordable edition (though make sure that the editor takes seriously the need for sensible page-layout for performers). I don't understand how Middleton can say that Grove is helpful for finding editions: it rarely goes beyond Collected Works. There are many good points in Middleton's article, but it feels rather out of touch with my particular interest – producing editions that balance musicology with practical use and keeping in touch with the development of performing skills.⁸

Performers should absorb chapters 16-20. It is inevitable that there are matters that individuals will disagree with – string bowings of triple-time, for instance, and the questionable influence of French "down bow after a bar-line" simplicity. Often triple time dances full of hemiolas work better starting with an up bow. On the other hand, bowings are rarely marked: did players have clear-cut principles or did uniformity not matter? I expected that when baroque orchestras started, there would be no need for the leader to bow the parts – the players should know the principles. But parts are still bowed before the rehearsal.⁹

7. Accompanying *Dido* is complex and figuring Purcell is always tricky, but Monteverdi is (at an elementary level at least) dead easy – you just play simple chords and let them clash with the voices. Despite its length, *Poppea* is easy to rehearse, since the instrumentation is virtually entirely continuo. The idea of putting on a 17th-century opera with keyboard players who can't read a figured (or unfigured) bass is ludicrous!

8. I've edited and published about 30 early operas over the last quarter-century, many commissioned by opera-houses and festivals.

9. I've checked a set of *Acis and Galatea* used for the performance reviewed in our last issue, pp. 16-17, and that has very few pencil marks – but it was a single-string performance.

6. I find the italicising of *continuo* irritating: it's an international word now.

A few specific points that I noted:--

p. 10. I don't have the original, but guessing from the continuo part alone, there seem to be too many minor-chord cadences – see chapter 17.

p. 21. Punctuation is important if underlaid in the source with care, but that is not always the case.

p. 56. I'm not convinced at the description of how Gabrieli's music worked, which is expressed entirely in terms of singers rather than assuming that only the *cappella* is entirely vocal (but probably not a large choir) and that other groups are mixed voices and instruments: parts going up to top A are probably for cornetto, low parts down to bottom B flat are for sackbuts, and once the idea of at least one part in a "choir" isn't vocal, it's reasonable to accept a corollary that only one part might on occasion be vocal. The San Rocco accounts specify two "choirs" in the modern sense.

P. 113. Thanks, Bruce, for the mention of our G. Gabrieli editions – virtually everything except selections only of the 1615 *Sacrae Cantiones* II – but both King's Music and The Beauchamp Press are now available from The Early Music Company: use the Early Music Review address.

p. 114. *Polyhymnia Caduceatrix et Panegyrica* is now online – it was useful for checking a point made in the Schütz review on p. 3 above.

p. 123. Is the total of 76 trombones surviving from the 17th century rigged?

P. 205-5. Don't miss the long footnote on bow-length.¹⁰

p. 240. "In most performance situations in which the standard instrumentation was one to a part, a sixteen-foot transposing double bass was virtually never used in the 17th century, and it was still a rarity during most of the first half of the 18th century." Read, mark, learn and inwardly digest! [The use of the term 16' register in, for instance, p. 324 is confusing: what is meant is dropping down to the compass of low pluckers for occasional notes, but not playing a bass line consistently down an octave.]

p. 392. The clefs of the infernal Sinfonias and Choruses in *Orfeo* are sufficient indication for transposition, so did not need any instruction (though it did take a long time for anyone to notice them – unless anyone knows better, I was the first, when I was working on Andrew Parrott's article on transpositions in the 1610 Vespers in 1984).

There's a vast amount of information here, and considerable wisdom. Those exploring 17th-century music should buy a copy, and there is plenty of information that will keep the more experienced alert (and critical!) Don't believe everything you read, and it is worth being suspicious that not all the content may have been updated. References to early sources abound, and the footnotes usefully quote passages in the original language. CB

¹⁰ But that's nowhere near the record, which by tradition is said to be Hastings Rashdall rev. F. M. Powicke and A. B. Emden: *The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages*, 3 vols. Oxford, 1936; as far as I can remember, it begins with one line to which a footnote of some 70 pages is attached.

VIOLIN ARTICULATION & BOWING

Constance Frei *L'Arco Sonoro – articulation et ornementation: les différentes pratiques d'exécution pour violon en Italie au XVIIe siècle*. LIM 2011. xxii+636pp €40.00. ISBN 978 88 7096 649

The textual portion of this encyclopedic volume occupies the first 415 pages, and the various appendices, bibliography and index the rest. Because practically every page of the text contains photographic reproductions of music (from single movable characters to entire pages of music), the book is printed on glossy paper. The author's aim is to provide a complete discussion of the often ambiguous terminology and musical symbols used for bowings, ornamentation, performing instructions and styles, as well as catalogues of the occurrences of these *effetti* and *affetti* in the Italian 17th-century violin repertoire. There are sporadic examples and definitions from later and/or non-Italian works (e.g. Geminiani, Quantz, Brossard) to confirm trends or underline differences in the context of the discussion.

Frei's excellent plan is to begin by explaining the only method of printing violin music used in the 17th century (in fact prior to Corelli's Op. 5 of 1700): bulky, unbeamable and often unalignable movable characters, each on its own little portion of staff. This 80-page "premise" is so logical and necessary that I am amazed how other books omit it! It enables readers, familiar or not with facsimile editions, to read the musical examples, understand the limitations of notations thus printed and, consequently, the purpose of most of the historical instructions on performance practice. It shows differences between the musical fonts used by different publishers, or even in one and the same print. For example, hooks equate to "beams", of course, but a novelty of Dalla Casa's is a surprise: a quaver has one hook; for a sq (1/16) the hook sprouts a base (i.e. forming a tiny numeral "2"); a triplet sq (1/24) gets a double hook, forming a "3" attached to the stem – which other houses and modern 3-beam notation use for a dsq (1/32) -- whereas a *figura* with a "4" attached to the stem, the *quadruplicata* is his dsq (1/32). In other fonts the hooks look less like numerals and the little 3 in fact indicates a sq (1/16). This is one tantalizing bit of information: I cannot possibly summarize how many there are in the first 400 pages. So I will generalize:

Original Italian instructions, prescriptions, or descriptions are given only in Italian, but the discussion is in French, and together with the exhaustive musical examples, the sense is very clear. I would say that musicians will have no trouble understanding the text if they have a basic knowledge of any Romance language: perhaps the book was written in a deliberately straightforward manner, with non-French readers in mind.

The second section, "articulation", regards specifics of bowing (*legato*, *portato*, *sciolto*, *spiccato*, *staccato*). The third

section, "ornamentation", involves overlapping categories (*tremolos*, *affetti*, *ritmo puntato*, *groppo*, *trillo* and *ribattuta*). For each term there is an introduction, a history or discussion of sources, terminology or origin, notation, execution and/or expression, interspersed with examples from the repertoire, or summed up in tables, or concluding with a summary. The fourth section is on other performance practices (polyphony, *scordatura*, dynamics and echo effects, imitations of animals and instruments such as viols, flutes, drums, Spanish guitar, and variously designated trumpets), and here engravings as well as manuscripts appear in the discussion.

The "catalogues" of manuscripts and prints in the Appendices dedicate up to a whole page per item, with detailed contents, quotations from prefaces, and remarks on the presence of all types of indications. My ONLY complaint is that the LIM did not use lighter paper where photographic quality was not required – at least for these appendices (pp. 417-636)! Barbara Sachs

LUDOVICO BALBI

Balbi e il suo tempo ed. by Alberto Da Ros and Stefano Lorenzetti LIM 2011. i-xix + 87pp ISBN 978 88 7096 650 3 €15.00

This very tiny book presents an introduction by Giulio Cattin and four papers that were delivered at the Convegno Internazionale di Studi in Feltre, June 4, 2005, to commemorate the Venetian friar and composer Ludovico Balbi (who only spent one year of his career in Feltre) and analyze a large MS (76 ff. recto and verso) conserved in the archives of the Duomo of Feltre containing psalms and magnificats attributed to Balbi along with motets probably added later (on the last 3 folios). All five discussions are followed by an abstracts in English.

The introduction traces the history of psalmody from ancient times, prior to Constantine, up to the time of Balbi (1545-1604), who left his *Psalmi ad Vesperas* of 1597 to the cathedral of Feltre, and then slightly beyond to Monteverdi, Schütz and G. Gabrieli.

Paolo Da Col traces the practice of polyphony in Feltre and nearby Belluno, where records from 1407 indicate that music was directed and taught by a priest cantor in educational structures connected to the cathedral, of which one was Balbi, as *magister musicalis* in 1593, whom they were extremely proud to have "imported" from Padua.

Stefano Lorenzetti covers Balbi's career in the attempt to underline what duly warrants attention and rescue him from the neglect due to his not being at all an *avant-garde* figure. A pupil of Costanzo Porta, who did everything possible to advance his career, he was a friar at the monumental church of S. Maria Gloriosa dei Frari in Venice before becoming *maestro di cappella* in Padua (by

1585 and until 1591), where he enriched the instrumental accompaniment that doubled the *a cappella* voices, introducing a violin and a trombone for the outer parts, in addition to the cornett and three trombones already in use. Balbi's whereabouts between 1591 and 1593 are unknown. While "missing", he collaborated with A. Gabrieli and O. Vecchi in the revision and publication (A. Gardano) of *Il Graduale*...in 1591, and also had a madrigal included in the prestigious *Il trionfo di Dori* (Gardano, 1592). His appointment in Feltre was brief due to poor health, if that wasn't just his excuse to leave. Other years are only accounted for by a few publications, one as *maestro di cappella* in 1597 in Treviso, and some 4-part antiphonies appearing along with works by C. Porta and by other anonymous *eccellentissimis auctoribus* in 1601.

Vittorio Bolcato finally discusses Balbi's music, as in the tradition of the school of C. Porta, but freer in its counterpoint. Graziani and Viadana were fellow pupils and friars at the Frari, and their liberties and madrigalisms were comparable. Four psalms and two magnificats are included in the appendix, with examples of his expressive writing circled. Another conclusion is that the Venetian school of polychorality had this counterpart, and Feltre was then as now a bridge from the Laguna to northern Europe.

Barbara Sachs

PRINCE RUSPOLI

Studi sulla musica dell' età barocca (Miscellanea Ruspoli I-2011) ed. Giorgio Monari LIM, 2012 pp. xxv + 224 ISBN 9788709666671 €35

This volume is the first of a new series dedicated to Prince Francesco Maria Ruspoli (1672-1731), Roman architect and patron of the arts (especially of musicians, such as Hotteterre, Händel, and Caldara, and literati of the Arcadian Academy). Since 2009, the city of Vignanello (VT), which owes its urban plan to him, hosts an annual international competition, giving prizes for musical performance and musicological writings. For information on this admirable initiative see www.centrostudisgm.it and click on "PRIZE" (€2000 in the instrumental section, €500 for the winning study). That study and three others from the 2010 competition form the main section of the volume, following a preface by Giada Maria Ruspoli, an introduction on the "baroque" in music by the editor (relating the ideas of both Vincenzo and Galileo Galilei to the development from *musica antica* to *musica moderna*) and a short tribute to the Prince by Warren Kirkendale.

The winner of the musicological section was Giulia Giovani, for "*Un capitale vivo e morto ad uso di stamparia*", presenting documentation about printers of music in Bologna in the 16th and 17th centuries. The "capital" which changed hands included the music itself, editions we often know about only from inventories. Thus the details to be gleaned from contracts, letters, inventories

(36 pages of transcriptions supplement lists and quotations inside the article) illustrate a small part of what might be found out by such studies.

Ilaria Grippaudo's article about the prestige-serving and consensus-inspiring ceremonial use of outside urban spaces in Palermo in the 16th and 17th centuries, in which music was a key element, is followed by 14 mono plates: a view of the city from 1759, a procession with music through the streets of Messina and the transformation of its cathedral into a theatre in 1591, other religious or royal festivities and cavalcades – scenes occurring up to 1724.

Ugo Piovano has done a great service – to musicians and wind-players generally, flautists and recorder players in particular – in finding and discussing the didactic materials and repertory of the flute from the Baroque to the Classical period. On the one hand he could be so thorough because flute-teaching got off the ground relatively late, but each of his informative four “paragraphs” (on treatises/methods; exercises/studies; anthologies of solos; duets) is 3 to 14 pages long, and the bibliographical appendices covering three centuries (15th–18th) include the respective prefaces (in French, English and Italian) and the contents of each work.

Alessia Silvaggi's contribution, *Cantate da camera del Settecento romano nel manoscritto 471 della Biblioteca Angelica*, showing the first page of each cantata, comments that the overwhelming interest in the Italian cantata was started by musicians, while scholars have lagged behind in their research, even if much is being studied now. She discusses a culturally and musically fascinating Roman manuscript of 14 cantatas for solo voice and continuo attributed to six well-known composers of the early 1700s active in Rome (Foschi, Giorgi, Boni, Campana, Antinori, Negri). At least seven of them have texts by Padre Francesco Feroci (1673–1750), who was born 10 km. from where I live in Tuscany. He was himself a composer of sacred music, a concertizing organist/harpsichordist, and a writer of Tuscan burlesque poetry. There are some copying dates, apparently 1718–20. Not all the cantatas are amorous, pastoral or “Arcadian”: one, *La cantante smorfiosa* (by Luigi Antinori) reverses the usual *affetti* by satirizing the singer and singing itself, and may have some autobiographical content. *Barbara Sachs*

MISERERE a34

Donald Greig *Time will tell* Thames River Press, 2012. 197pp, £xx.xx ISBN 978 0 85278 624 6

It had not occurred to me before that the names in the text of Josquin's *Nymphes des boys*, his lamentation on the death of Ockeghem, might be those of the first people to sing it, nor was I aware how unpopular Josquin was. Sadly, I never got a review copy of David Fallows's recent book on Josquin, so I can't check whether the comment by the fifth singer, the barely-known protégé of Ockeghem and, in one of his positions, successor Geoffroy Chiron, is plausible: he

introduces Josquin as “the greatest of all the new composers and the biggest arsehole you could hope to meet”.

Donald Greig is a singer of much music of the period, as a member of The Tallis Scholars and The Orlando Consort, which is a good basis for a novel with three strands: the Ockeghem/Josquin relationship, a minor musicologist, and a successful early-music octet. The story, set round the 600th anniversary of Ockeghem's death (6 Feb. 1497) and mostly describing travelling to Tours and the memorial conference and concert there, is interweaved with the imaginary account of Ockeghem by Chiron. The main modern characters are Emma, the leader, the singers of her neatly named octet “Beyond Compère” (has that been copyrighted?), and Andrew Eiger, who managed by good fortune to come across a canonic *Miserere* in 34 parts by Ockeghem during his unique and fumbling attempt to study original archives. Andrew's problem was to make any sense of a 34-voice canon derived from three statements of the music. He was obsessively secretive about his discovery, and told no-one. Even on the flight to Tours, he was still wrestling with how to make sense of the notation of the canons, trying to hide what he was doing from his conversationally-intent neighbour, who seemed to be snooping over the music and, amazingly, was humming it – the chance that anyone else on the plane could read 15th-century music was pretty implausible!

The relationship between Andrew and Beyond Compère starts badly, and they only reach some form of understanding at the booze-up after the show. I am not very convinced by the characterisation of the group's members, other than the leader, Emma. The attempt to give them some individuality isn't very successful, and their philistinism seems to be exaggerated – at least on my limited acquaintance with touring groups I've mixed with at early-music festivals. But whether authentic or not, their presence doesn't add much to the story. I won't reveal what happened.

The problem is that the background (indeed, foreground) requires considerable knowledge, and the subplot of Josquin's unpopularity is less interesting if you have no image of him – not that there is any reason to assume that a great composer is a nice man. I found the sound of “Josquin, Brumel, Pierchon, Compère” running through my head frequently as I read, a sound whose power Chiron and Eiger recognise despite their antipathy to Josquin himself. My guess is that readers who don't feel strongly about the music will not last the course. But I hope *EMR* readers won't have such problems.

Incidentally, did the author compose a 34-voice canon to get into the mood of his story? I left it as a challenge for Hugh Keyte after his success in turning 10 into 33, 14 into 22 and 8 into 28 – Hugh was tending our two rabbits over the August bank-holiday weekend while we visited BC in Arbroath. But he reckoned that 0 into 34 would be too difficult. Solutions welcome!

CB

THE SCHOLAR, THE PERFORMER AND THE CRITIC

Simon Ravens

I remember once standing outside the music department in Aberystwyth during a break in a rehearsal. The professor, David Wulstan, came outside for a smoke, and I, ever the unctuous undergraduate, remarked that I had just read a review of a *Spem* recording of his in *Gramophone*. "Oh yes, and what did he say?" he asked, feigning only polite interest. "The reviewer liked it, but he said that your transposition of everything up a minor-third was controversial." "He can say that", he said, drawing sideways on his cigarette to give a little pause for dramatic effect, "but the thing is, he's wrong and I'm right".

I may be doing him a disservice here. I suspect that he genuinely wasn't that interested in what a critic had to say. And he was knowingly being provocative (to his credit he knew no other way) in the way he dismissed the criticism so baldly. As a reader of ancient runes, even David Wulstan accepted that in academic areas where we interpret incomplete evidence, rather than obtain proofs from empirical data, not even the most brilliant of scholars can ever hope to have the 'right' answer. The most we can hope for is to hold the fullest current understanding of an issue.

So what is my response, thirty years on, to read in *Gramophone* that an older recording of Byrd's Great Service is to be preferred to my own partly because in it the music is performed "appropriately transposed up by a minor third"? Perhaps it would help if I smoked. It might at least stop me fuming.

Scholarship, performance and criticism operate in curiously unsynchronised gyrations. The minor-third theory was first advanced by Ouseley in 1873. Over a century later, at least as applied to music with a treble part, the theory was the province of only one performing group – Wulstan's *Clerkes of Oxenford*. Their *Gramophone* critic would, I assume, have known the 1965 at-pitch King's recording of *Spem*: to him, century-old scholarship was a performance novelty. Gradually, other performers bought into the high-pitch scholarly consensus, so that in the later 80s recordings at high pitches were embraced by critics with fewer reservations.

Yet even before this time, scholarship on the issue had already begun to turn back on itself. Dominic Gwynn had begun researching early English organs, and since the early 70s Andrew Parrott had been identifying various fallacies in the high-pitch theory. Their conclusions tallied with my own researches on the Tudor voice, and when I published about this in 1994 I was happy to go along with Gwynn's pitch band of 'one to two semitones' above our own – although I offered the significant caveat that if we wanted to recreate falsetto-less actuality of Tudor performance with modern (taller but deeper-voiced) men, modern pitch

(or perhaps a semitone higher) is likely to be the upper limit. If there has been serious scholarly dissent (particularly to Gwynn's methodology) I am unaware of it.

It certainly never occurred to me that it was necessary to exhume the question of pitch when I wrote the notes to my Byrd recording. What I had not taken into account is that to Richard Lawrence (who may be a highly-experienced reviewer but in this case is evidently peering through the mists of time from the performing standpoint of yesteryear) our stance on pitch would appear plain wrong.

Lawrence preferred Westminster Abbey's recording over our own for other reasons as well pitch, and these I can briefly summarise. Acknowledging that the Great Service was most likely written with the Chapel Royal in mind (but perhaps unaware that the Chapel's regular venue in Whitehall Palace was miniscule – about 100 by 40 feet) Lawrence says that our ensemble of 24 adult singers, cornetts, sackbuts and organ is insufficient to offer the "full effect" of Byrd's "spaciously laid out" music. And, whilst noting that we vary our scoring significantly between verse and tutti sections, he comments that there is a "sameness about the sound, splendid... but undifferentiated" – compared to the Abbey's recording with larger choir but with a uniform organ accompaniment.

Now, I'm happy to acknowledge (and did so in my notes to our CD) that Byrd probably also knew his Great Service in a variety of different performing contexts: ours is only one solution. And even when modern performances step outside Byrd's possible conceptions (by singing in modern English, for instance, or in equal temperament), so what? The Tallis Scholars do all these things and I have written in these pages that I love their recording. So I have no problem with another listener preferring the modern Anglican context provided by Westminster Abbey – a fantastic choir – over my own. But to fluff up an instinctive response with a fancy dress of ill-fitting musicology and clashing premises and conclusions, is to invite... well, this article for starters. The problem is that if we take away the fancy dress, we are left with a reviewer telling us in one naked sentence that he prefers *x* over *y*. End of review. And that, of course, would lay bare the truth that certain reviewers have no more authority to pronounce judgement than any other listener.

I have opened a can of worms here, and I look forward to dragging more out in the next issue of *EMR*. In the meantime, aware that provocation can be a great spur to new thinking, perhaps I can address some words to any impressionable young performer of Tudor choral music who is reading this. Regarding the issue of transposition mentioned by the *Gramophone* reviewer, my understanding of the current scholarly consensus suggests this: he's wrong and I'm right.

THE CALDWELL COLLECTION OF VIOLS

Mark Caudle

Catharina Meints Caldwell *The Caldwell Collection of Viols: A Life Together in the Pursuit of Beauty, with notes on the instruments by John Pringle and notes on the makers by Thomas G. MacCracken Photos by Roger Mastroianni*. Custos (NY) Media, 2012. 160pp, with 217 mostly colour photos & 2 audio CDs. \$54.00 ISBN 978 19373 3018 7

also available as app for Apple mobile devices

There is a video at <https://vimeo.com/41504020>

There are very few illustrated books about viols, so it's good to have one about the important collection assembled by James Caldwell and his wife Catherina Meints Caldwell over the period from the 1960s to the 1980s. The biographical story of their musical life is complemented by information about how and why successive viols and cellos were acquired. Each of 23 instruments and 1 portrait painting is presented in the format: personal reflections, brief description of the instrument and information about the maker all supported by colour photography of the instruments and facsimile correspondence with dealers and restorers. There are 2 CDs which contain short examples to illustrate performances by James and Catherina Caldwell as distinguished soloists on modern oboe and cello and as violists, followed by recorded music samples of each instrument described in the book, with repertoire chosen to suit the style of the instrument. An identical scale was recorded on each instrument and recording conditions are standardized. Catherina Meints Caldwell writes a commentary on the recordings and discusses the sound and character of the instruments of the collection. Appendices give dates of purchase, a list of instruments formerly in the collection, discography, a general bibliography of works relevant to the collection and there is an index.

It is unusual to be given access to the whole process of the assemblage of a large collection and much is revealed about the way that dealers and restorers work, their self-protective tactics and sometimes the high level of their knowledge and expertise. Facsimiles of letters from such as Gunter Hellwig, Desmond Hill, Micheal Heale and many others give insight into the attributions and the condition in which old viols tend to emerge, (much altered!). Catherine Meints Caldwell is refreshingly open about the whole of this rather cloak and dagger world: also about the psychology of collectors – their obsessive character which may be relieved by a generous wish to share and promote their enthusiasm as widely as possible. There is no question that the Caudwells and their collection based at Oberlin have had an enormous influence in promoting viols and viol playing in the USA and beyond. Never having met them personally I have

been aware since the 70's of American violists coming to Britain speaking of the support they have received from them. There is the argument that such collections should be in public institutions but in my view, private and public collections can complement each other. Access for enthusiasts to the instruments in public collections is often difficult or impossible. The instruments are sometimes poorly displayed and conserved and documentation is sometimes out of date, not accessible or non-existent. On the other hand, private collections are sometimes secretive and possessive. The Caldwell collection is lovingly conserved, displayed and shared.

The highlight of the presentation of the instruments is the series of short essays by Thomas MacCracken. His work on the "Violist" provides him with unique comparative data about viols and their makers. For example on William Turner (pp.35/36), he compares sizes of all examples by this maker and others, compares dates, quotes archival bibliography, condition and alterations, ownership and location of other instruments and gives informed speculation about the importance and output of the maker.

Some of the attributions of viols to makers are not entirely convincing. The two Rose viols are an example. Despite an awareness in the text of current controversies and alternatives, circular arguments are invoked to confirm Rose's authorship, linking features with some of the instruments attributed to Rose, almost all of which are themselves doubtful. Some of the instruments, however, are magnificent. My favourites are the 1685 Tielke bass, the festooned Rose (?), the Bertrand (pity about the short neck and head) and the N. Amati cello. Some of the restorations seem to go a bit far with highly ornate inlaid fingerboards and tailpieces, especially when applied to instruments that were probably originally quite plain and functional (eg. No8, anon, German). The current trend in restoration is to supply stylistically minimalist replacements where needed. But restoration is subject to fashions and probably 20 years into the future decisions made in our time will be completely unacceptable.

The attractive painting from the collection on the cover portraying an English violist from the 1760's is thankfully no longer attributed to Gainsborough but continues to be described in the text as a portrait of Abel. This it is quite obviously not. Comparison with the portraits of Abel by Gainsborough show that it cannot represent the same person. The painting is, however, even more important in supporting the fact that there were other professional players of the viola da gamba active in England at this

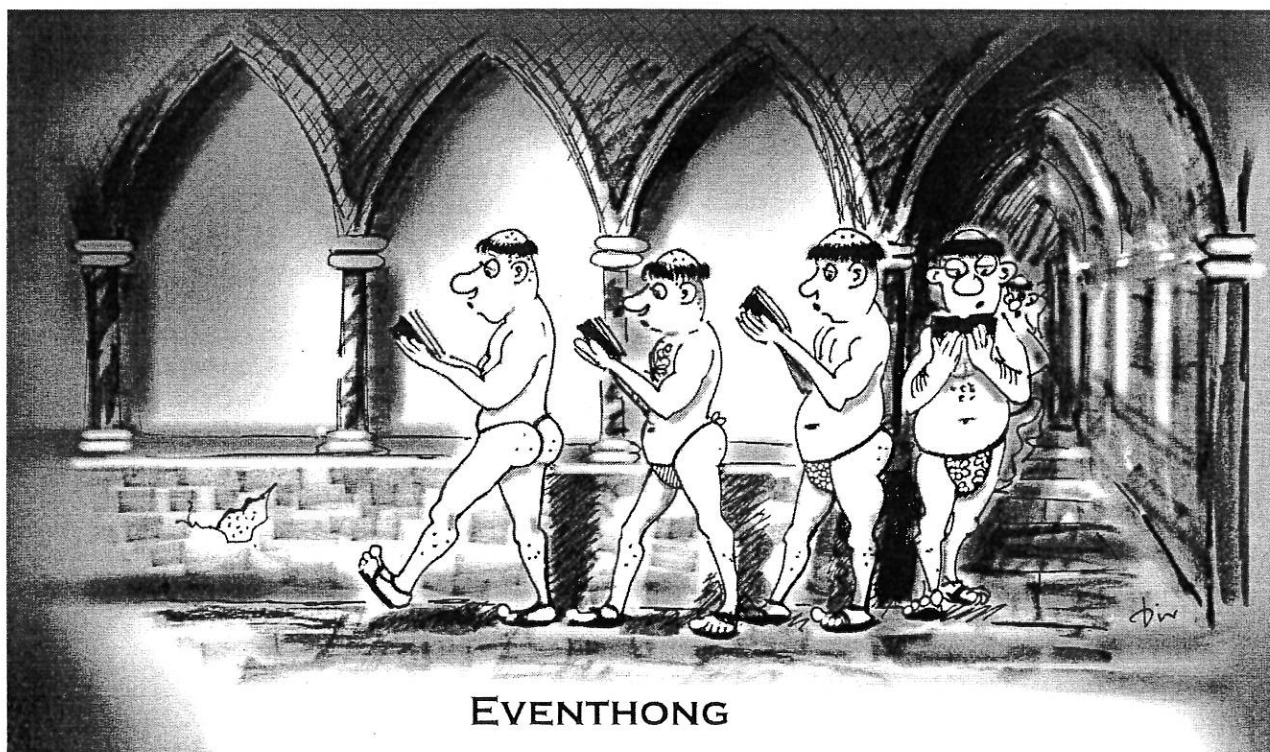
period apart from Abel. Peter Holman suggests Walter Clagget or Stephen Paxton as candidates. (*Life after Death*, Boydell, Woodbridge, 2010).

John Pringle's descriptions of the viols are concise and restrict themselves to analyses of their state as found. In general, but not always, a distinction is made between original and replaced parts. Basic dimensions are given. However, information about alterations and restorations is supplemented by the narrative text and also by letters from restorers and some interesting before, after and during, black and white and colour snapshots of the restoration/conservation process. I understand the financial constraints on this book, but there is a welcome tendency in similar books today about violin family collections to include more truly useful information such as plate thicknesses and detailed condition reports. An admirable example is *Masterpieces of Violin-Making, The Collection of Bowed Stringed Instruments of the Oesterreichische Nationalbank*, Rudolf Hopfner, Wien, 2002, but I suppose the resources of the bank were behind that publication!

The photographs are generally rather disappointing in

quality (comparing again with the above cited book). Archival material is selected according to relevance to the biographical narrative or the information it provides about the restoration of the instruments or documents their use in performances, so the quality is not important. There are some fascinating photos of instrument parts in black and white and colour. But in the more formal photographs of the instruments, the details are sometimes obscured in darkness, and the lighting and support of the viols is inadequate leading to glare and poor alignment, particularly of the side-views. Many of the photos of details reveal much more, but these are less technically demanding than good photos of whole instruments.

The recordings of the viols in the collection are of good quality and revealing. The playing is fine and spirited. It is a pity that the stringing and set up of the instruments tends towards a "modern" standard in all cases (Pirastro strings and a uniform bridge design) so the tendency is to minimize the differences between the instruments of different periods and schools. But the quality and condition is clearly revealed together with the special magic of the sound of old viols which I try hard to deny, but have to admit.



EVENTHONG

(Fifty Shades of Gregorian)

PERGOLESI IN SYRIA

Brian Robins

Pergolesi *Adriano in Siria*

Marina Comparito (*Adriano*), Lucia Cirillo (*Emirena*), Annamaria dell'Oste (*Farnaspe*), Nicole Heaston (*Sabina*), Osroa (*Stefano Ferrari*), Farnacesca Lombardi (*Aquilio Trinuno*)

Livietta e Tracollo Monica Bacelli (*Livietta*), Carlo Leppore (*Tracollo*)

Accademia Bizantina, Ottavio Dantone

Opus Arte OA 1065 D (2 DVDs)

To most music lovers the name Giovanni Battista Pergolesi will conjure up the name of a composer whose death occurred tragically early – he was 26 when he died in 1736 – but who nevertheless left us with two enduring masterworks: the hugely influential intermezzo *La serva padrona* and the bitter-sweet *Stabat Mater*. Yet there was far more to Pergolesi, including a body of sacred works and four *opera serie*, of which *Adriano in Siria* was the third.

First performed at Teatro S Bartolomeo in Naples on 25 October 1734, *Adriano in Siria* was commissioned for the birthday celebrations of the Bourbon queen mother Elizabeth Farnese. In keeping with his love of theatrical splendour, Charles Bourbon of Spain, newly restored to the throne of Naples after defeating the Austrians, bankrolled a glittering cast headed by the famous castrato Caffarelli in the role of the Parthian prince Farnaspe. Metastasio's 1732 libretto, already set twice previously, involves a fictional plot based on an invented victory by the Emperor Hadrian – Adriano – over King Osroa of Antioch. Given Hadrian's supposed Spanish ancestry, the choice of such a subject may have had particular expediency at that particular moment in the history of Naples, although until his predictable act of clemency at the end of the opera, Adriano is not an especially admirable character. Despite being betrothed to the Roman noblewoman Sabina, he has fallen in love with Emirena, the daughter of Osroa, who is betrothed to Farnaspe. Adriano's pursuit of Emirena is encouraged and aided by Aquilio, his confidante, who has an agenda of his own – his desire for Sabina. Thus a scenario is established for the usual complexities, misunderstandings and intrigue that are the stock in trade of *opera seria* in general and Metastasian librettos in particular.

The performance stems from a production mounted in Pergolesi's birthplace Jesi in 2010 to mark the tercentenary of the composer's birth. It forms part of a wider project to make all Pergolesi's operas available on DVD. While not attempting a historical staging, the production (by Ignacio Garcíá) has the inestimable merit of sensitive handling and simplicity. Thus while the curtain does not open with the

'grand piazza in Antioch magnificently adorned with trophies' called for in the libretto, the single set consisting of ruined classical columns may be even more appropriate, given that historically Antioch was destroyed by an earthquake two years before 117 AD, the supposed date of the events that unfold in the opera. But why, one wonders, does the set have to be so dark throughout the course of the opera, which takes place in a variety of places? This is a common and inexplicable failing in modern opera production. By and large the singers are allowed to deliver arias straightforwardly and without the extraneous distraction that is such a curse of modern staging. Costumes, too, are notable for their classical simplicity, Romans being garbed in cream outfits of elegant long coats over a suggestion of tunics, while the Parthians are also colour co-ordinated, with suitably exotic eastern dress in greens and browns. There is an interesting gesture toward authenticity in the inclusion of Pergolesi's intermezzo *Livietta e Tracollo* between the acts, thus allowing us to experience a typical evening in a Neapolitan opera house during the early part of the 18th century. But we'll return to that later. *Adriano in Siria* is given complete but for the omission of Aquilio's act I 'Vuoi punir l'ingrato amante?' and Osroa's 'Ti perdi e confondi' from act 4, and some cuts from the plain recitative. As would be expected arias are all cast in *da capo* form, with opening sections often incorporating tonal ambiguity and chromaticism in those that express conflicting emotions or confusion. Otherwise there is a single passage of accompanied recitative for the tormented Osroa in the highly charged situation that prevails after he believes his daughter to have perished in the palace fire he has instigated (act 1, scene 12), and a final duet for the re-united lovers, Emirena and Farnaspe.

The cast is in general terms excellent. My only query is soprano Annamaria dell'Oste in the *primo uomo* role of Farnaspe originally created for Caffarelli, who was a mezzo castrato. The voice lacks weight and body, being simply too bright to convey convincingly the masculine nobility of the character, any more than does her very feminine appearance and a particularly unconvincing moustache. Nevertheless dell'Oste copes well with the contrasting demands of Farnaspe's three big arias, the florid divisions and wide range of 'Sul mio cor' (act I, scene 5) are confidently met, as are the cantabile lines of the end of act 'Lieto così talvolta', a long, loving duet with a beautifully played obbligato oboe. Caffarelli was also given the final number in act II, 'Torbido in volto e nero', another virtuoso aria evoking the image of restless, sullen sea before the outbreak of a storm, a metaphor for the dire situation in which the imprisoned Emirena, Osroa and Farnaspe find themselves. The part of Adriano was

originally sung, not by a castrato, but a woman soprano, and Marina Comparato, tall, slim and elegant, cuts an impressive figure. Her singing is marginally less authoritative, but she conveys well the thwarted emperor's guilty petulance in 'Dal labbro' (act I), although the ornamentation in the repeat is here unstylish, happily not a general feature of the singing, and manages to convey even a certain dignity in 'Fra poco assiso in trono' (act IV), a final outburst of frustration, perhaps conveying more resignation than anger.

Sabina and Emirena are beautifully drawn, sympathetic characters. The former is proud, dignified in the face of the hurt inflicted upon her by Adriano, but generous-hearted once she realises Emirena's love is only for Farnaspe. Although ostensibly the *seconda donna*, the role was written for another virtuoso singer, Caterina Fumagelli. Here it is sympathetically and splendidly sung by the imposing American soprano Nicole Heaston. All four of Sabina's arias not only tell us something new about her, but also make varied and considerable technical demands: the ambiguity between major and minor in her act I 'Chi soffre' conveying her emotional turbulence, her confrontation with Adriano 'Ah, ingrato, m'inganni' (II, 2), angry and scornful, but never for a moment relinquishing natural dignity, while her 'Splenda per voi sereno' (II, 5) addressed to the lovers she has just re-united, conveys a warmth and truly noble generosity of spirit. This big demanding aria, with its elaborate coloratura over a wide range, is here superbly carried off by Heaston. Quite different again is 'Digli ch'è un infedele' (III, 1), where Sabina, tortured by false news from the scheming Aquilio that Adriano wishes to send her away, expresses her violently conflicting emotions in music that now breaks off in silence, now surges forward. The much put-upon Emirena is an altogether different character, a gentle loving daughter and devoted lover, but sufficiently innocent to be easily manipulated by Aquilio. 'Prigionera abbandonata' (act I, scene 9) is possibly the loveliest aria in the opera, an exquisite outflow of emotion and reminder of Pergolesi's rich lyrical gift. Like all Emirena's music, it is beautifully and stylishly sung by mezzo Lucia Cirillo. Scarcely less affecting is act II's 'Quell'amplesso', with its gently throbbing strings supporting the anguish she feels for father's predicament. Her other act I aria 'Sola mi lascia' (scene 16) is more animated, Emirena's despair being punctuated by fierce chords, here aggressively over articulated by the strings of Accademia Bizantina. It was, too, a rare error on the part of the production to introduce into the aria business with a noose and birdcage, the latter a none too subtle metaphor for Emirena's status as a prisoner.

Her father Osroa is revealed as a Bajazet-like figure, heroically impetuous and impulsive. His first aria 'Sprezza il furor' (I, 3) is a fast and furious 'simile' aria evoking the image of a sturdy oak withstanding the storm. It is supported by a full orchestral panoply including oboes and

horns, its coloratura demands well met by tenor Stefano Ferrari, as are those of the accompanied recitative already mentioned above and the following aria 'A un semplice istante', another florid aria in which the stricken king's confused emotions are given full vent. His act II 'Leon piagato a morte' is another fully scored 'simile' aria in which the now-imprisoned Osroa compares himself to a fatally wounded lion as he awaits expected death. Aquilio is a scheming, wily customer. The loss of one of his three numbers (the cut aria is an appeal to Sabina not to reject his love for her) prevents a full portrait. His act II 'Saggio guerriero antico' is a fairly conventional soldier's aria with a bold military strut, while 'Contento forse vivere' (act III) is a fine aria with Lombardy rhythms that has him fondly imagining the successful outcome of his wooing in the opening section, darkening only briefly to doubts in the B section.

Throughout Ottavio Dantone draws characteristically accomplished and incisive playing from Accademia Bizantina, though just occasionally tempos are pressed a little too hard and the staccato style of his orchestra can at times become a mannerism. Nonetheless, he shapes slower arias with an admirable sense of line and much affection, giving full reign to one of Pergolesi's greatest strengths.

As noted above, the incorporation of the intermezzo *Livietta e Tracollo* between acts gives a true flavour of an 18th-century Neapolitan opera performance. Inserted intermezzos always ran the risk of upstaging the main serious opera, their popularity eventually leading to the establishment of full-length *opera buffa*. Given the brilliant panache with which *Livietta e Tracollo* is carried off here, it still remains a risk. It was a stroke of genius to stage the intermezzo in the auditorium and on the apron of the stage, thus reminding us that intermezzos were for and about ordinary people, with whom the actors here mingle. This is of course in direct contrast to the elevated, out-of-reach noble characters on the stage in the main opera, whose extreme emotions are frequently parodied, as they indeed are by both *Livietta* and *Tracollo*. The verve and energy with which Monica Bacelli and Carlo Lepore carry off the intermezzo is beyond reproach, the former in particular displaying comic genius in consummate *commedia dell'arte* style.

The set is completed by a short introductory talk by a rather fidgety Dantone, whose observation that the sound in the Teatro G.B. Pergolesi is a little dry is borne out by sound that is otherwise fine. Although not without its faults, this is overall an immensely satisfying performance of an exceptional opera, reminding us again of the severe loss sustained by music with the premature death of Pergolesi.

I was amused by the translation of an Italian preface that was reported by one of our readers: *sol re (G D) became "Sun King"*. CB

JEPHTHA AT BUXTON

Clifford Bartlett

Jephtha, Handel's last English oratorio¹ has a background that runs through most of his Old Testament oratorios, starting with *Esther* (John Butt's recording is reviewed in *EMR* 149, p. 37) – fighting between Israelites and their neighbours and behaviour that hardly presents their God as a person of significant virtues. Strangely, *Jephtha* has no villain. The problem of it as a dramatic work is that the story is not complex enough for the usual three-hour performance. With only one interval, after Act I, Acts II & III combined were rather long, and Handel knew what he was doing in having a break after “How dark O Lord are thy decrees”. The “solution” of the happy end, as argued in the first of the three introductory essays in the lavish Buxton Festival programme, didn't come over clearly in this performance (as it never has in previous ones). But we expect happy ends, and I imagine that Handel added the quintet to give it musical substance.

Unlike most baroque operas and oratorios, this has one main character. Iphis, Jephtha's daughter (Gillian Keith) wasn't quite as convincing as her boyfriend, Hamor (William Purefoy), not being quite in control of her vibrato, but “Brighter scenes I seek above” showed her at her best. Hamor had a less significant part, but sung particularly stylishly. Storgè, Jephtha's wife (Susan Bickley) had more presence in Act I than later, and her “Scenes of horror” was probably the outstanding aria in that act, the only competition being her “In gentle murmurs” (with flute on-stage with her). Zebul, Jephtha's half-brother (Jonathan Best), was required for bits of recit and the quartet and quintet. Elizabeth Karani had one aria as *dea ex machina*. (though no baroque stage apparatus). Jephtha (James Gilchrist) dominated the performance, as the drama requires. His tenor voice seemed to encompass the body of tone of a bass as well, and when needed was extremely powerful (but not forced). His reaction to his vow to kill the first person he saw after God had giving him victory over his foes, the Ammonites, was heartfelt but skilfully controlled, as was the reaction of the young lovers. Harry Christophers shaped the work well and the orchestra played brilliantly, though sounded a bit underpowered.² Only in Jephtha's “Virtue my soul shall still embrace” did the speed run a bit faster than the singer could manage (or perhaps James Gilchrist ran away with it a fraction). I remember the band sounding fuller at *Samson*, which may have been the difference between sitting in the second row of the grand circle then and a few rows further back for *Jephtha*. I could also just about see to write a few notes about *Samson*, but not this time.

There remains the chorus – both as a performing group and as a problem for the director. At least there is no question of multi-voices – Handel's oratorios did have choruses. 16 singers are a plausible number; they were, however, not *the* Sixteen (which, when I've counted them, are more likely to be 18) and suffered from weak higher voices and excess vibrato among the lower ones. But what can be done to make them dramatically credible? There was less of a problem in *Samson*, since (with Gaza so much in the news then) the chorus representing two groups fighting for Palestinian territory linked three thousand years of conflict. *Jephtha* has little that was dramatic in Act I, so the staging played with performing an oratorio. It began with five chairs and a music stand with score on stage during the Overture, and for much of the first act the singers came forwards and read or fumbled with the score. The first choral appearance, revealed when the back curtain rose, showed a static choir. That would have worked if they stayed there throughout as observers, half-way to being the audience. But subsequent choruses had actions imposed on them that were, to me at least, inexplicable. After the interval, the soloists more-or-less gave up the business of the score and reacted in a normal operatic way, but at least avoiding the usual cliché of turning each solo into a visual duet, and the acting wasn't overdone. But the failure to dramatise the chorus meaningfully was disappointing.³ A pity. It's a strongly-focussed work, with some of Handel's most powerful music at the end of Act II and the beginning of Act III (all the more moving for Handel's comment on his blindness at the end of the chorus: “Whatever is, is right!”).

Staging oratorios is very difficult: unless the director is aware of how the works themselves function, and that they are revived primarily because of the music, not the libretto – though Morell produced what Handel required, with some memorable phrases (not all his own). There has to be serious collaboration in the planning between director and conductor – that, I gather, rarely happens. Nevertheless, I hope Buxton continues this tradition. Several oratorios have entered the opera repertoire: *Semele*, and *Theodora* in particular – the first two oratorios staged by the Handel Opera Society in 1958 and 1959 – and *Jephtha* was the third in 1962.⁴ Then as now, the choruses take the production beyond baroque conventions but need to be imagined in a way compatible with baroque opera style.

3. I don't normally have any contact with stage directors, but in the interval I fell into conversation with a stranger over opera and perverse stagings of Monteverdi, and he introduced me to his son, the producer Frederic Wake-Walter. I, like his father, tactfully said very little!

4. I can't specifically remember the chorus detail, but my impression is that they tended towards the embarrassing. Nevertheless, the staging showed that oratorios could be powerful stage works.

1. passing over the third version of *The Triumph of Time and Truth*, which was performed in Edinburgh and will be recorded by *Ludus Baroque*.

2. I wonder, though, whether Vivaldi's internally-directed *L'Olimpiade* produced a different style of playing: I wish I could have been there.

ESPRIT D'ARMÉNIE,

Haig Utidjian

Hespèrion XXI, Jordi Savall *dir*, Georgi Minassyan, Haig Sarikouyoumdjian *duduks*, Gaguik Mouradian *kamantcha*, Armen Badalyan *dap* 76'55"
AliaVox AVSA 9892

In the aftermath of their surveys of music associated with the cities of Jerusalem and Constantinople – both cities boasting culturally prominent Armenian communities of long standing – an Armenian music CD must have been an almost inevitable choice for Jordi Savall and Hespèrion XXI, who have already been collaborating with exponents of traditional Armenian instruments for some time. What music might be held to embody “the Armenian spirit”? Some might choose hauntingly beautiful medieval hymns – although their extant melodies, their stark beauty notwithstanding, are unlikely in their present form to be of the same vintage as the verbal texts. At the opposite extreme, some might even wish to consider Khachaturian's ballets – although in that case I would urge them rather to explore the music of the much less well-known Anushavan Ter-Ghevondian (1887-1961). The present anthology sensibly limits itself to Armenian monody (although a drone bass and all manner of improvised accompaniments are provided) and aims to encompass a fairly wide spectrum, chronologically and stylistically, embracing as it does a single medieval church ode, several folk songs (collected by the monk Komitas at the turn of the century), as well as some celebrated early examples of Armenian art music composed in mid-19th century Constantinople'. This beautifully-illustrated CD is dedicated at once to the memory of Monserrat Figueras and to the victims of the Armenian Genocide.

Little is known of Armenian music prior to 301 AD, when Armenia as a state accepted Christianity. With the invention of the Armenian Alphabet a century later, a sudden blossoming of literature and the arts ensued, and there are some colourful historical accounts of music-making and of composition, particularly in connection with church music. Thus, one reads of an occasion (on the Feast of the Transfiguration sometime between 641 and 645) when, in the presence of the head of the church, the choristers were unable to find a hymn of which the music might be known by both Decani and Cantoris; the singers on one side of the chancel repeatedly started hymns of which the next stanza was unfamiliar to those on the other side, and this disaster led to the reform of the hymnal¹. There are

descriptions of Sahakdukht, sister of Stephen, bishop of Siwnik; she was a famous musician and composer (in the late seventh and early eighth century), and used to teach her pupils from behind a veil, for propriety's sake. One of her compositions is extant and still sung today². There are also accounts of the respected 13th-century singer, Gregory the “Deaf”, so named as he plugged his ears with wax, to prevent himself from being carried away by the scandalous, new-fangled tunes that were increasingly gaining currency in the Cilician city of Sis.⁴

The main difficulty is that church music and secular odes alike were recorded over the centuries through a neumatic system of musical notation of which the decipherment has hitherto proved tantalizingly elusive; a very substantial body of codices thus encompasses a rich musical legacy which, however, perforce remains locked in silence. The earliest surviving codices so notated date back to the end of the 12th century, and although the neumes continued to be dutifully copied out by scribes well after the first Armenian musically-notated hymnal was published by Archimandrite Oskan's press in Amsterdam in 1665, reading the neumes was already a lost art. The reasons for this are not clear. Certainly, political upheavals and *en masse* relocations will have played a role, as will a misguided secrecy on the part of the system's practitioners, coupled with the complete absence of any written tutors. But it is also possible that the system grew in sophistication to such an extent that it may have collapsed under its own weight; and the connection between the notation and what was actually performed will have grown increasingly tenuous as musicians increasingly gave vent to their creativity, devising ever more melismatic variants, as well as melodies that increasingly violated the bounds of the traditional eight-mode system, whilst still ostensibly following the faithfully-reproduced notation of previous centuries. Curiously enough, the time durations associated with the neumes were apparently preserved and observed, but otherwise melodies appear to have been freely improvised, so long as they remained within the bounds of an eight-mode tonal system – which may, however, have been subject to evolution itself, as a result of increasing contacts with neighbours, from the West as well as from the East.

Vardan Areveltsi.

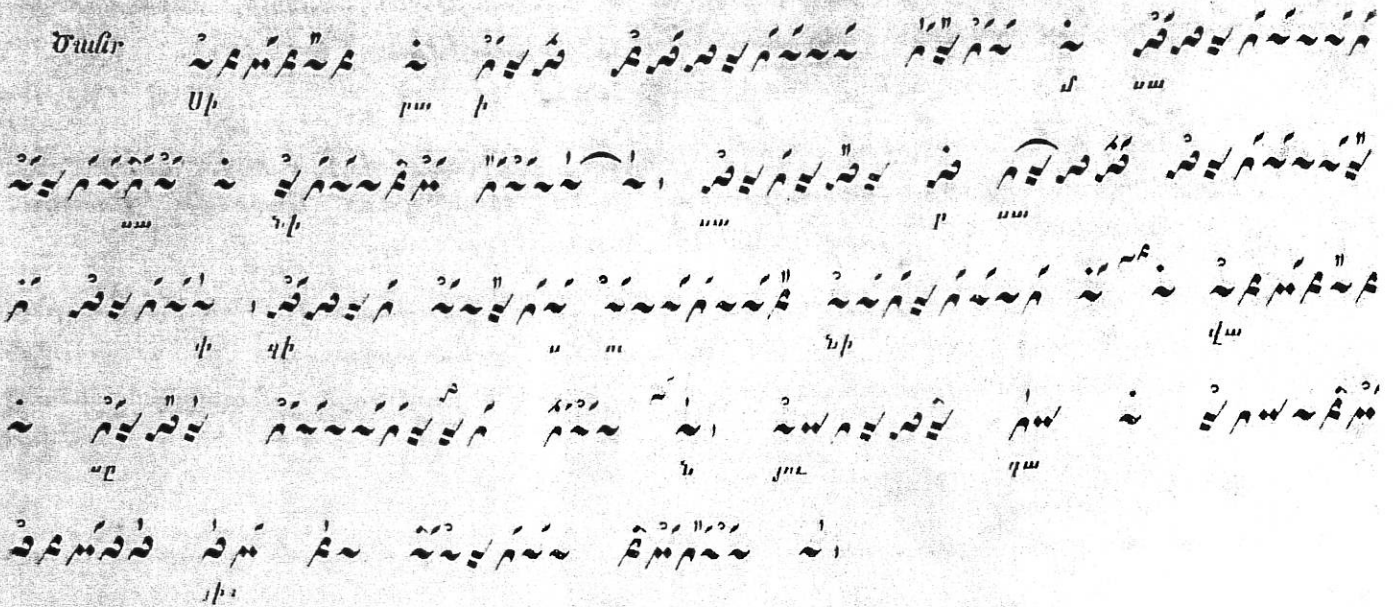
3- Her hymn *Srbuhi Mariam* is still performed during Compline services on Wednesdays in the second half of Lent.

4 See ԱՋՆԱԲՈՐԵԱՆ, Զարեհ Արք., “Հայ եկեղեցական երգիչի ծագումն ու զարգացումը [The origin and development of Armenian ecclesiastical chant]”, in: ԶԱՐԵՀ Արք. ԱՋՆԱԲՈՐԵԱՆ, *Հայ եկեղեցին 20-րդ դարում և 21-րդ դարի շեմին [The Armenian church in the twentieth century and at the threshold of the twenty-first century]*, Nicosia 2005, p. 175.

1 Though Constantinople itself was outside the traditional boundaries of Armenia, it had attracted the Armenian elite in literature, music and the fine arts, and was home to an Armenian community of long standing – including ethnically Armenian Byzantine emperors

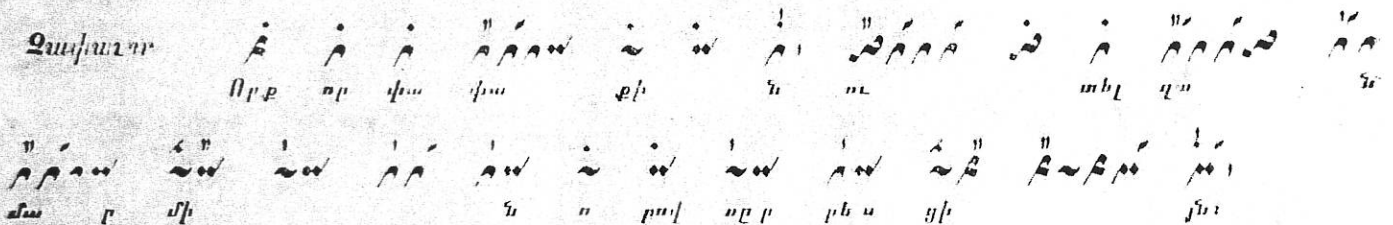
2 The incident is described by the historians Kirakos Gandzaketsi and

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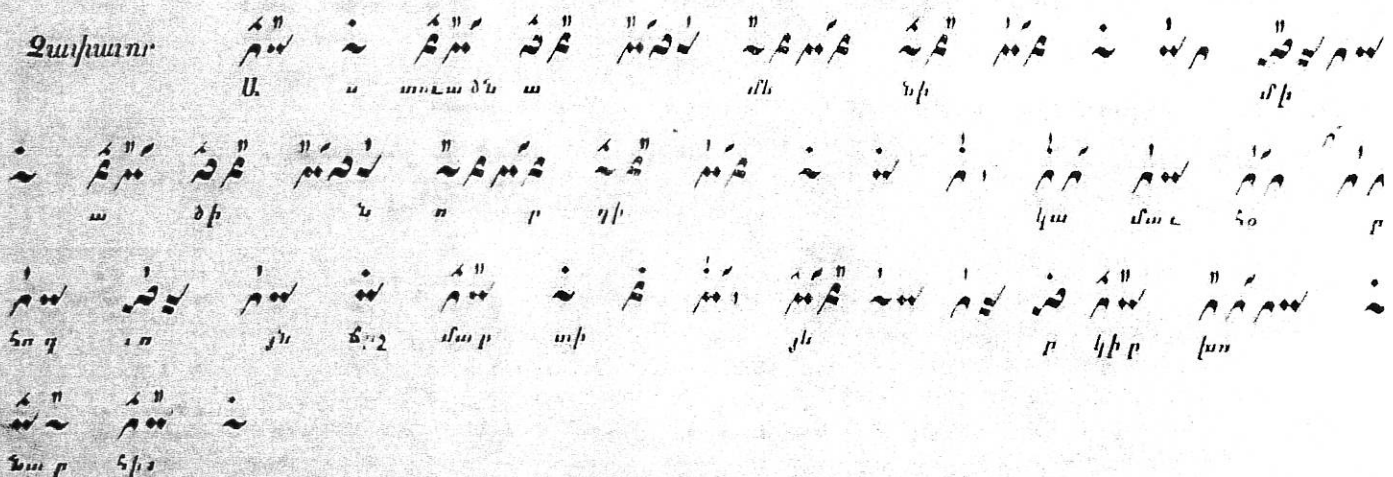
Նոր սեղան զընի. և հաց բաղարձի. 'Լ անասակ զինի:
 Զգինին արիւնի. նոր նըշան ուխտի. և տայ ամենի:
 Տէր իմ արժանի. Ահա ազատեա. ևն. (որպէս ի վերոյ).

Զախաւոր



Ապաշխարողին. որ սիրով սըրտին. բոլորն ջընջին:
 Այս խորհուրդ յայտնին. եղեալ կանոնին. մարդկան սահմանին:
 Իսկ աստուածային ևն. (որպէս "Տէր քոյին",) և՛ Ահա ազատեա. Լուր տէր

Զախաւոր



Տէր Յիսուս խօսէր. Պետրոսի ձայնէր. դու այժմ ոչ գիտես զայս խորհուրդ:
 Իմոյս թէ վասն էր:

Յընծասցուք հոգևով. զնոյն ճաշակելով. փառք Հօրն տացուք և Հոգւոյն, Միա-
 ձնին մարմնով:



Virtually the whole of the repertoire on this disc has been preserved thanks to the “modern” system of Armenian musical notation devised by Hambartsum Limondjian (1768-1839) early in the 19th century in Constantinople.⁵ This system re-defined seven of the earlier neumes, but the resulting system was no longer neumatic, since now each note corresponded to a particular symbol. In the second half of the 19th century, Armenian musicologists started transcribing melodies hitherto transmitted through a combination of an oral tradition with the by now only partly comprehensible neumes. The invention of a precise and reliable system of notation also served to stimulate a flurry of compositional activity, exemplified by some of the items on the present disc.

The playing is often of considerable subtlety and refinement, and it can be enjoyed with hardly any reservation. For instance, track 5, where Savall and colleagues play Chouhajian’s song, *Oh inĉ anuġ*, offers one of the most affecting versions I have ever heard of this song (known in countless arrangements). The interpretations are, perhaps, slightly cautious and reverential, rather than full-blooded. Most of the items chosen are themselves rather slow, but the choice of particularly expansive tempi also conduces to that impression. Just once or twice, I might have preferred Hespèrion to throw all caution to the winds and really enjoy themselves. Incidentally, nearly all the items on the disc are arrangements of vocal music, performed here on various string instruments, or on the cylindrical, double-reed wind instrument constructed from apricot wood, the *duduk*, with its characteristic and highly evocative, mellow sound⁶. Thus, with the tempi as expansive as they are, one is often led to think that they could not possibly have been sustained by singers. The flirtatious *Aylugh*s (track 10) is rendered in a manner that sounds decidedly rueful, especially in the opening introduction, whilst the playful wedding games (track 9) sound very restrained. In Armenian music, a minor modality need not necessarily be redolent of sadness. The case of *Hov arek* (track 16) is interesting, as there exists a historic recording sung by Komitas, who himself transcribed it during his field trips (c. 1912). Savall again favours a broader tempo; but the tension is allowed to build up to great effect, and the way the music gathers momentum, growing in tempo and volume, and thanks to the addition of percussion, is very well judged. Indeed, the musicianship and sensitivity of the music-making are impeccable, and this fact alone is itself sufficient reason warmly to recommend this issue.

If from time to time the nature of the accompaniment seems to be more Savall-esque than idiomatically

Armenian (favouring as it does open fifths and double-stopping, and the introduction of various counter-melodies), one has to remind oneself that we have been conditioned by many decades of Soviet-era “folk” ensembles, whose practices are often unattested in early sources to no less a degree than those of Savall and his players. Thus, for example, the first track starts with an initial, slow improvised passage with triadic harmonies formed by the strings (not, to my knowledge, encountered within the Armenian folk or minstrel traditions); but they are tastefully realised, and whether stylistically appropriate or not, seem to work well in purely musical terms. As a matter of fact (though this is not mentioned in the booklet), the theme is taken from an operetta by Tigran Chouhadjian, *Leblebiji hor-hor agha*, which indeed we find harmonised and orchestrated in the original version by the author himself.⁷ This number became so popular with the general public that by 1900 the musicologist Komitas⁸ dismissed the song as being Turkish and not Armenian! There are likewise reports of the theme being popularly sung in the remoter corners of the Ottoman Empire, including Greece and in Egypt – being believed by their respective denizens to be of local origin.⁹

I do regret the fact that the very rich and ancient heritage of Armenian church music is not represented, with the exception of the ode *Sirt im sasani* – played here on the ubiquitous *duduk*. A pity another precedent of this very piece being played in an instrumental arrangement has not been noted in the booklet: Fr. Aristakes Hisarlean¹⁰ records that the Constantinople Armenian fiddler “Blind Sebuġ” was often invited by Sultan Aziz (1830-1876) to his palace to play this very ode (used on Maundy Thursday by the Armenian church in connection with the afternoon ceremony of the Ablution of the feet), the Sultan being partial to compositions in the “Hijaz” mode (the equivalent of the Armenian “Third Authentic Mode”).

My main reservation concerns not the performances, but with aspects of the presentation and the level of musicology underpinning the project. It appears that the performers were exclusively reliant on Soviet-era musicology, drawing the melodies as well as background information from a single source – an anthology published by the late Nikoghos Tahmizian – a Soviet-era musico-

7 First staged and premiered in Constantinople, at the “Théâtre Français” in Péra, Constantinople on November 17, 1875. For this information I am indebted to Mr Gerald Papasian, who has recently staged a highly successful revival of the operetta in Paris.

8 Komitas stated this in his review, published in the journal *Ararat* in Ejmiatsin in 1900 (p. 367-68) of a collection of songs published in Paris in the same year (*Recueil des Chants Populaires Arméniennes*, no. 1, Paris, 1900); for an English translation see Komitas: *Armenian Sacred and Folk Music*, transl. E. Gulbekian, Curzon, 1998.

9 I am once again, indebted to Mr Gerald Papasian for this information.

10 See S. ՇԻՍԱՐԼԵԱՆ Ա., *Պատմություն հայ ձայնագրությունների և կենսագրությունը երաժիշտ ազգային 1768-1909* [History of Armenian musical notation and biographies of musician nationals, 1768-1909], Constantinople, 1914, p. 171.

5 Incidentally, the Limonjian system was enthusiastically adopted by the Turks also, and has enabled the survival of much Ottoman classical music.

6 For a perceptive recent study of the instrument and of its social and national associations, see Andy Nercessian’s *The Duduk and National Identity in Armenia*, Lanham, Maryland: Scarecrow Press, 2001.

logist, known as one of very few courageous enough to carry out research on Armenian church music (albeit under the umbrella name of "medieval music") at a time when this was not officially encouraged. Unfortunately, not all of his work has stood the test of time, and especially in later years he became notorious for his increasingly dogmatic views on various matters¹¹. Tahmizian also claimed, in the face of considerable evidence to the contrary, that the extant melodies of various odes have been preserved unaltered from the tenth century. The booklet does include attractive illustrations, and well-written essays of a general cultural and historical nature, but many musicological details that could be of considerable interest to non-Armenian listeners have been left unacknowledged or merely glossed over. Thus, for instance, references to matters of notation, modality, performance practice (including the deployment of microtones) have been completely eschewed, and nor has there been any attempt to place the music in an international context – which is disappointing, given the Hespèrian's undoubted interest in exploring links and connections between cultures and religions.

This disc is a most welcome addition to the catalogue, and despite the minor niggles expounded above, it has given unfailing pleasure to the present listener. I have certainly found it to be far more idiomatic than the in some ways comparable but rather more adventurous forays made by the Hilliard Ensemble into Armenian church music (most recently including saxophone to boot!), and in some ways more refreshing and illuminating than many Armenian recordings. I do hope that the project will prosper and possibly continue with a second volume, perhaps featuring a more representative choice of items, and presented in a musicologically more erudite manner. Yet of all the recordings known to me, the finest introduction to Armenian music for a Western listener, combining Armenian sources with an approach that, to my mind, transcends any categorisation as merely Eastern or Western, is Zareh Sahakeants's now historic recording of extracts from Komitas' choral arrangements of parts of the Divine Liturgy and Hymnal, arranged for strings and recorded for Melodiya¹² in 1971, long since deleted and richly deserving reissue.

Nice though it be to have a page of Armenian music, we had problems with email communication and in working out how to get a clear copy of it, and by the time we had realised that we had space to include it, it was too late to write anything about it. So I hope that Haig Utdjian will offer a short explanation in the December issue.

CB

¹¹ Sadly, his name is also associated with a bitter campaign against a staging of the original version of a Chouhajian's opera *Arshak II* in the US that used the new critical edition of the work produced by Diasporan specialists; Tahmizian defiantly insisted that the Soviet-era reorchestration ought to be used instead of the composer's own version. The eventual consequence was that plans for staging such a "controversial" work in other US theatres were eventually abandoned.

¹² Melodiya Mono LP, D031 503-04, released in 1975.

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TESS KNIGHTON & GESUALDO

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. Tess regretted that there is only a single recording of the complete 5-part *Cantiones sacrae*, the excellent one by the Hilliards, but Jeremy Summerly has also recorded all twenty motets of this book with his Oxford Camerata. These are soon to be joined by a CD of the 20 six-part motets of *Cantiones sacrae II* directed by James Wood, who has spent two years restoring the two missing parts to each motet – a real labour of love.

Hugh Keyte

CD REVIEWS

CHANT

Knights & Damsels: Minstrels music from the Age of Chivalry 60' 45"

River productions RRCD553

Music by D'Arras, de Blaye, Landini, Machaut, de Naverre, D'Oisy, de Ventadord, Trad & anon

The compilation is copyrighted 1998 and 2010, but I suspect the recordings go back rather further. Martin Best was, when I encountered him at a conference, an impressive performer, and it's good to hear him in the troubadour repertoire. The other main contributor is the St George's Canzona, who go for the jollier side of the music; they sound better than I remember. There are also three tracks from Estampie directed by John Bryan. No 18 (*Novus miles sequitur*) is particularly pleasing – who was the singer? The booklet has a general introduction, but there's nothing to place the music in any specific context. I can't find any reference to the CD on the www, which is a pity: if not too expensive, it's got some good things on it. CB

MEDIÉVAL

The Earliest Songbook in England Gothic Voices, Christopher Page 64' 40" (rec 1999) Hyperion Helios CDH55297

Very nostalgic, linking John Stevens (editor of what remains of pages of a songbook from about 1200) with Christopher Page and his group turning it into sound. Both are scholars I greatly admire – they are mentioned together on p. 10. Wherever it came from, the scribes had access to a wide range of European music, so a selection from it is inevitably an anthology of music of the period, mostly religious but not liturgical. Beautiful music and singing, especially from Catherine King – try track 10 with its extraordinary text! If you didn't buy it first time, get it now. CB

Royal Manuscripts, the Genius of Illumination: medieval and renaissance music The Sixteen & The Hilliard Ensemble* Coro COR16098 74' 26"

13th cent: *Christus surrexit* (conductus)*, *Regina sovrana* (lauda)*; Brown *Salve Regina*; Cornysh *Ave Maria mater Dei*; Davy *Stabat mater*; Dufay *Agnus Dei* (Missa *Se le face ay pale*)*; Pygott *Quid petis o fili*; Tallis *Spem in alium*; Wyllinson *Jesus autem transiens*; anon: *Hail Mary full of grace*, *This day day dawes*.

This review is sadly belated and now irrelevant to the Autumn 2011 exhibition at the British Library after which it is named. My apologies: the disc got separated from the box and booklet and they only came together recently. It's available from www.thesixteen.com), and is worth having as an anthology if you don't want (at least initially) to buy all the Eton Choirbook. The Wyllinson 13-part round sounds rather too congested, but otherwise the singing is fine. CB

15th CENTURY

Josquin Desprez *Missa Ave maris stella*, *Marian Motets** Weser Renaissance, Manfred Cordes 68' 13"

cpo 777 590-2

Alma redemptoris mater / *Ave regina* a4, *Ave Maria* a4, *Illibata Dei* a5, *Salve regina* a5, *Virgo prudentissima* a4, *Virgo salutiferi* a5

It is fascinating to hear this superb ensemble, more generally associated with music for voices and instruments from the later 16th and 17th centuries, in the slightly unfamiliar territory of vocal music from the early 16th century. Glancing at the programme, I wondered whether they might be exploring the role of instruments in Josquin's sacred music, but these are thoroughly conventional a capella renditions of this great repertoire. What is striking is not any new approach to the music but simply the consummate mastery of the singers and the completely convincing direction of Cordes. These are beautifully expressive and technically stunning accounts of very familiar masterpieces. The Marian motets are generally sung with one voice to a part, whereas the four part Mass setting involves all eight voices, allowing for episodes for reduced forces. D. James Ross

16th CENTURY

Cabezón *Complete Tientos and Variations* Glen Wilson hpscd 141' 23" (2 CDs) Naxos 8.572475-76

In his extensive and informative booklet notes Glen Wilson discusses the issues surrounding the transmission of Cabezón's music: the limitations of the tablature and the many errors which the blind Cabezón could not himself control. While there is a sense that we will always hear this music through a glass darkly, Wilson has clearly

worked hard to produce versions which are as good as he can. He does then play these pretty literally and at times one misses the flexibility and improvisatory quality which must have been there in Cabezón's own playing. That said, this has clearly been a labour of love and it gives us a chance to grasp the sheer scale of Cabezón's achievement and the variety of his influences. Wilson plays on a harpsichord by Donatella Santoliquido which attempts to reconstruct the sort of Flemish instrument known in Spain in Cabezón's day. It works extremely well for the music and is nicely recorded. There are some good false relations in the tientos and some exciting playing in the variation sets where Wilson lets himself go rather more. Noel O'Regan

Ludford *Missa Regnum mundi* Richard Pygott *Salve regina* Music from the Peterhouse Partbooks, volume 2 Blue Heron, Scott Metcalfe 79' 40"

BHCD1003

see also p. 40

+ Pygott *Salve regina*

This is the second volume of a five-CD set of music reconstructed by Nick Sandon from the incomplete Peterhouse partbooks. The extensive chant is business-like (that's a compliment!), and the polyphony feels relaxed without losing momentum. I don't have scores, so can't make detailed comments, but I have confidence in the editor and the performers match any other Ludford recordings I have heard. The booklet note (by the director) has 12 pages on the music, three of which are about pitch: he reckons that to be near enough to the central-European church pitch of around A=465, but the mass is notated in *chiavette* clefs so needs to be sung a fourth below that pitch. It's refreshing hearing 13 such fine choristers, none of whose names I recognise (though I met Scott when I used to go to the Boston EM Festival and have kept in touch). As a baroque violinist, he makes a very good choir director. CB

The Word Unspoken Sacred Music by William Byrd and Philippe de Monte Gallicantus, Gabriel Crouch 69' 17" Signum records SIGCD295

Byrd *Ne irascaris*, *Tribulationes civitatum*, *Tristitia et anxietas*, *Vide Domine afflictionem*, *Vigilate* Monte *Domine quid multiplicati sunt*, *Miserere mei Deus*, *O suavis et dulcedo*, *Quomodo cantabimus*, *Super flumina Babylonis*, *Voce mea ad Dominum clamavi*

The contents of this disc may be easily summed up in the title of the opening motet by Byrd, 'Tristitia et anxietas'. While, as Sally Dunkley points out in her programme note, "only a handful of the 1589 and 1591 *Cantiones Sacrae* present cheerful texts", and these are studiously avoided in this programme built upon the sufferings of the believer in a hostile land. Culminating in beautiful performances of Byrd and Monte's famous collaboration (one might almost say commiseration) *Super flumina Babylonis/Quomodo cantabimus*, this CD brings together some of Byrd's most agonized musical utterances with some surprisingly melancholy works by Monte. While it is easy to understand Byrd's anguish as a recusant catholic trapped in a hostile religious climate, it is harder to understand the source of Monte's suffering, blessed as he seemed to be as a catholic in a catholic empire, bent on the conquest of Europe. But Byrd's religious alienation found a direct counterpart in Monte's exile from his beloved Flanders. Both men it seems were 'singing the Lord's song in a foreign land', and what powerful music this feeling gave rise to! *Galicantu* give highly charged, heart-rending accounts of this work, and the final coming together in psalm 137 is almost unbearably poignant. *D. James Ross*

Die Baldachin-Orgel auf der Churburg (1559) Peter Waldner 79'10"

Tastenfreuden 9120021953951

Bruna, Buchner, Byrd, Farnaby, HL Hassler, Scheidemann, Scheidt, Sweelinck, Valente, Weck & anon

In the Southern Tyrolian castle of Churburg bei Schluderns, home of the Trapp family, there sits a little table organ (also known as a Baldachin Organ) dating from 1559. The work of Michael Stobl from Ammergau, it has survived in more-or-less original condition in the Jacobszimmer of the castle. Clearly intended for purely secular use, the beautifully decorated little organ is both a visual and an aural delight. It has nine stops, including a tiny Regal, plus a tremulant. These 37 little pieces are chosen to demonstrate the wide colour palette as well as the pieces that might have been played on such tiny Renaissance domestic organs. Instruments like this are not easy to play, but Peter Waldner makes an excellent job of projecting the organ's tone through careful articulation and touch and a very sure technique. This is a fascinating insight into a little known corner of the organ world – and one that is almost entirely lost. The programme

notes are in German, with a very short translation of brief details into English and Italian. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

Die Italienische Renaissance-Orgel in der Silbernen Kapelle der Innsbrucker Hofkirche Peter Waldner (c1580 Anon organ) 73'28"

Musikmuseum II CD13010

Antegnati, Antico, Cavazzoni, Cima, Frescobaldi, Gabrieli, HL Hassler Luython, Merula, Padovano, Pasquini, Pellegrini, Picchi, Rossi, Salvatore, Storace, Valente, Ximenez

Amongst the splendour of the vast monument to Maximilian I and the famous 1561 Ebert organ it is easy to overlook the little Italian organ in a side chapel of Innsbruck's Hofkirche. But it is one of the most important surviving examples of the Renaissance Italian *organo di legno*. It still contains practically all of its original pipes, and has been carefully restored to produce an approximate sound and playing experience to that of the original. Surprisingly, this is the first recording of the instrument. Peter Waldner has chosen a wide-ranging programme of music from around the time and geographical location of the organ. He demonstrates the wide range of sounds that can be produced from the seven stops. Although it is in a small space, the acoustic enhances the gentle sounds of the organ well. Waldner is clearly very much at home with this repertoire and this instrument. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

Fa una canzone: Italian dance music and love songs of the renaissance. The Playfords 57'10"

Coviello Classics COV 21116

This is a pleasing collection of renaissance standards – *Gran Duca, Italian Ground, Chi se passa, La gamba* etc – along with similar but less-pervasive songs. The music is well played and appealing, but strikes me as being just a little precious. The ensemble comprises a singer, a recorderist, a plucker, a gamba and percussion. The recorder doesn't have the rhythmic vitality of a violin and much as I enjoyed the individual tracks, with their fluent improvisation, I'd prefer more vigour. I could occupy myself with detailed comments on each of the 16 tracks, but they would mostly be issues of taste, not musicology. The performances are excellent on their own terms, but I find them too fussy. *CB*

La Bella Minuta Florid Songs for Cornetto around 1600 Bruce Dickey, Liuw Tamminga with 1565 Antegnati organ, Mantua)

Passacaille 979 70'36"

Barbarino, Brunelli, Guami, Josquin, Luzzaschi, Mayone, Palestrina, Rore, Trabaci

Having heard a beautiful concert by Bruce Dickey (playing alongside the Ebert organ) in the Innsbruck festival, I was very pleased to receive this CD for review. This time the addition of three violas da gamba and harp as well as another important historic organ expands the evocative sound-world of the cornet, one of the most vocal of all instruments. The organ is the fabulous 16' 1565 Antegnati organ in the Basilica Palatina of Santa Barbara in the Ducal Palace in Mantua played with characteristic sensitivity by Liuw Tamminga. One of the loveliest moments is Trabaci's solo organ *Durezza e Ligature*, a work intended to be played during the Elevation on one of the most beautiful sounds of the whole organ repertoire, the gently undulating combination of Principale and Vox Humana (in the Italian organ, a principal rank tuned slightly out of tune with the main Principale). The choice of an Italian organ is deliberate, the vocal style of voicing of such instruments being at one with the sound of the cornet. Bruce Dickey's playing is, as ever, sensitive and musical with a fine sense of the flow of melodic lines and the ability to blend the virtuosic divisions into the melodic line, rather than making them too prominent.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

17th CENTURY

Castello & Co. Venetian sonatas for winds and strings from the 17th century Caecilia-Concert 71' 21"

Challenge Classics CC72547

Bertoli Sonata Ottava; Castello Sonate Quarta, Sesta, Ottava, Undecima, Duodecima, Decimaterza, Decimaquarta, Decimaquinta; Frescobaldi Chromatic Ricercada; Marini Sonate Ottava & Nona; Picchi Canzon Seconda; Scarani Sonata 13

The start is bold and ear-catching: Frescobaldi's Chromatic Ricercada, which starts starkly before evolving into overlapping ripples. Now we are caught, our attention is held by the first Castello piece which tumbles headlong down the diverse passageways Castello creates. It is wonderful to hear such a fresh and carefree rendition of these pieces. Some area well known, but the disc also includes less familiar ones. The sense of fun, and complete lack of the sense, present in many performances of this repertoire, of the players looking over their shoulder to check all is well with the others. Instead,

the diverse melody instruments (violins, cornett, sackbut and dulcian) focus the opportunities to create effect, and yet speak with such similar intent – unbound by the idiosyncrasies of their different techniques. The high Venetian pitch helps with voicing, making particular difference to the tone of the bass dulcian, which gets its chin out of its beard and speaks clearly on a range of interesting topics. Its frequent interlocutor is the sackbut which has a levity and a wonderful ability to make unimportant notes unimportant; and along they skip, often confusing the ear as to which is which. The violins occasionally interestingly bridge to the sound world of Vivaldi with some of their *effetti*, which hadn't struck me before. A wonderful disc from this group of growing reputation, and if you thought you were pretty familiar with these pieces, try this one.

Stephen Cassidy

Dowland Sorrow Stay Justin Burwood T, Rosenmary Hodgson lute 60' 32"
ABC Classics 476 4998

This is a delightful anthology of some of the very best of Dowland's songs, beautifully sung by a newcomer, the Canadian tenor Justin Burwood, who has chosen a selection of some of the type of songs probably most readily associated with the composer of songs of tears and mourning. Of course, as all readers of *EMR* will be well aware, the tears and mourning songs of Dowland are not necessarily about 'woe is me, my mistress doth disdain me, alas I must die'; rather these songs of melancholy provide Dowland's 'starting point' for each piece. They are too famous to describe in detail; all the usual suspects are here: *Sorrow stay, Go Crystal Tears, I saw my Lady Weep* – if it were marketed by one of the crass major labels it would probably be titled *'The Only Dowland Album You'll Ever Need'*, but it really is very much better than that. The songs are all beautifully sung – the nearest comparison I can make is to the excellent discs of Dowland songs by Paul Agnew (on the Metronome label), whom Burwood closely resembles in sound (but without the Scottish tenor's slightly irritating Violet Elizabeth Bott-type lisp on almost every sibilant!) and his diction is as clear as a crystal fountain. I wasn't that keen on some of the 'rubber band' flexi-tempo in 'In darkness let me dwell', however. I realise that they were trying to inject a sense of 'quasi recitative' movement to the performance, but it somehow sounds a bit odd on a recording

intended for repeated listening. Nevertheless, this is an excellent disc. Burwood isn't quite on Agnew's level yet, but he probably will be before very long, and he's one to keep an eye on in the future. Special mention must be given to the lutenist, Rosemary Hodgson. This is some of the best lute accompaniment I've ever heard, providing a firm foundation for the singer to 'sit' upon. So often in recordings the oh-so important lute part is pushed right into the background by the recording engineers, to the point of virtual inaudibility (as was frequently the case on the classic Rooley/CoM Decca recordings of the 70s), but here her confident playing is given exactly the correct balance to support Burwood. Described, quite rightly by our Lute Society's Journal as 'the lute world's new star', she's definitely another one to watch. If only all Dowland discs were as good as this one!

David Hill

Dulichius Sacred Motets Weser-Renaissance, Manfred Cordes 64' 46"
cpo 777 352-2

This recording presents 18 motets by the "Pommeranian Lassus" (from a total of over 200) for five, seven and eight voices. Seven singers and nine instrumentalists (winds and strings) take the various lines, high voices with low instruments, the other way around, or a broader mix. They are grouped in threes according to various modal complexities (Dulichius explored all the modes in his works), and – in keeping with his output as a whole – only two of them set German texts. The texts tend to be rather sombre and the music, with its contrapuntal complexity, is well suited to expressing them. As we have come to expect from Weser-Renaissance, both the singing and the playing are balanced and beautifully crafted by Manfred Cordes. None of the voices dominates the texture; instead, wave after wave of wonderful sound washes over us. I shall listen to this often in the coming months.

BC

Frescobaldi Capricci (1624) Liuwe Tamminga org/hpcsd 77' 04"
Passacaille 975

Instruments: Bologna 1471/75+1531 da Prato and Facchetti 'Epistolae' organ plus the 1596 Malamini 'Evangelii' organ, San Petronio; 1556 Cipri organ, San Martino; 1679 Giusti harpsichord, Tagliavini collection, Museo San Colombano)

Liuwe Tamminga continues with his exploration of the Italian organ repertoire on his own two famous organs in the

Basilica of San Petronio, Bologna, along with four works on one of Bologna's other historic organs and one on a 17th century harpsichord. Tamminga CDs usually group works in types, and a whole CD of Ricercars, for example, can be a little much for the lay listener. But this CD is far more approachable; given the very wide range of music encompassed by the generic title of *Capricci* and the sheer inventiveness of Frescobaldi's writing – all wonderful examples of his 'ingenious jesting with art'. They include such delights as *Il Cuccu*, *la Spagnoletta* and the *Capriccio obbligo di cantare la quinta parte* with two singers alternating with the optional upper voice. The organs are fabulous, the distinctively vocal quality of their sound and the delicate nicety of the different speech patterns that a sensitive player like Tamminga can generate through careful touch both shine through. The sonorous sounds of the 16' Principale on track 4 is worth buying the CD for alone. The fine harpsichord is from the fabulous collection of Luigi Ferdinando Tagliavini, which I was lucky enough to explore in his own home, but is now housed in the new Museo San Colombano. The warm acoustic adds much to the rich sound of the instrument.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Frescobaldi, Toccatas and Partitas Fabio Bonizzoni hpcsd/organ 156' 27" (2CDs)
Glossa GCD 921514

These two CDs contain all of the toccatas and partitas from Books 1 and 2, as well as three of the canzonas from Book 2. They provide an opportunity to compare the more expansive toccatas of the first book with the generally tighter and more structured ones of Book 2. The playing is convincing throughout and follows Bonizzoni's own description of the toccatas in the booklet notes as madrigals without words. Each section is carefully characterised and not rushed. I particularly liked the large-scale partitas on the Romanesca and Ruggiero which have a well-judged mixture of reflection and virtuosic flourish. He plays mainly on a Willem Kroesbergen copy of a Stephanini harpsichord of 1694 which sounds just right for this music and is beautifully recorded. For the 'organ' toccatas he uses the instrument built by Graziadio Antegnati in 1565 for the Basilica of Santa Barbara in Mantua and recorded in situ. I was fascinated to hear this recently restored organ which was commissioned by Dujke Guglielmo Gonzaga for Cavazzoni. It has a very satisfying full organ sound, heard here effectively on the toccatas with

pedals, an effective *voce humana* and some nice flutes which are used on one of the canzonas. Bonizzoni has worked out from its disposition that it was intended as a 12' organ to allow for transposition and demonstrates this effectively here. Altogether an impressive recording. *Noel O'Regan*

Gesualdo *Madrigals Book 4* *Delitiae Musicae*, Marco Longhini 68' 59"
Naxos 8.572137

In advance of next year's 400th anniversary of his death, Carlo Gesualdo da Venosa's six books of madrigals have been the focus of considerable attention from record labels. Their musical eccentricity and emotional anguish appeal to modern audiences, and it is interesting to see these qualities prominently featured in promotional material. Fresh from reviewing the complete recording by the Kassiopeia Quintet on the Globe label and having already reviewed previous volumes in the present projected complete account by *Delitiae Musicae*. I was again struck by the daringly close recording of the voices, making you feel as if you are part of the line-up. Fortunately the singing is extraordinarily controlled and beautifully pitched, and the overall impression is intensely expressive. I found the occasional inclusion of harpsichord and organ accompaniment unnecessary and annoying, although the organ Toccata by Luzzaschi provided a pleasant break from Gesualdo's unrelenting anguish. The voices of *Delitiae Musicae* blend beautifully, and if Alessandro Carmignani's alto voice is to my mind rather fluty and lacking in character, the overall sound is pleasing. The crucial decision on acoustic when recording Gesualdo is an interesting one: both *Delitiae Musicae* and The Kassiopeia Quintet choose an intimate acoustic with very little reverb, whereas the Hilliard Ensemble on ECM have gone for a more resonant acoustic. The price of even this small amount of bloom is a slight smudging of Gesualdo's rapidly changing harmonies. *D. James Ross*

Conrad Höffler *Suites for viola da gamba*
Guido Balestracci *division viol*, Nicolo dal Maso *vln*, Rafael Bonavita *archlute*, Massimiliano Roschietti *kbd* 65' 34"
Pan Classics PC10275

This reissue of a recording made in 2001 of 6 of the 12 suites of Höffler's sole publication, *Primitiae Chelicae* (1695) is very welcome to those who, like me, missed it first time round. Along with Schenk, he

was clearly a considerable player, if these suites are any indication. He writes in a chordal style, more influenced by the French school than the Italianate Schenk, (apart from a very Corellian fugue in the F major suite) but like him exploiting the full range of the 6-string instrument. The music is very attractive, and has been available for many years in the series *Das Erbe Deutscher Musik* in a volume which also includes Schenk's *L'Echo du Danube*. The suites are all made up of dance movements, mostly preceded by a prelude, some of which are in a florid style such as that of the 6th suite in G major, the opening track of the recording. Rapid scale passages in hemi-demi-semiquavers up to the top g' lead to an adagio section of 3- and 4-note chords, to a semiquaver allegro with rapid string-crossing, concluding with more chords. Balestracci plays it brilliantly, with all the flair, freedom and virtuosity without which the music can seem formulaic, but with it is exciting and engaging. The archlute contributes a Pachelbel Prelude to the 3rd Suite in D major, which lacks one, beginning with an Allemande. The suites are full of variety, testament to Höffler's creativity, and his understanding of the expressive nature of the viol. The D minor 5th suite, with the dark colour of its prelude and its lovely saraband, is particularly fine, and very expressively played here. The 2nd suite also lacks a prelude so one for harpsichord by J. Krieger is beautifully played. The brief booklet notes mistakenly state that Nicola Dal Maso, the excellent second viol player, is playing a violin, which she clearly is not! I presume there is a second volume with the remaining suites, and hope it also is reissued – well worth having both. *Robert Oliver*

Marazzoli *Oratorio di Santa Caterina*
Katherine Wilson, Nadine Balbeisi, Emily Van Evera, Steve Dugardin, Juan Sancho, Christian Immler, Atalante, Erin Headley
Destino Classics NI6185 62' 33"
+ Pasquini *Lamento di Cain* from "Cain e Abel"

I still have very fond memories of the harmonia mundi recordings of Luigi Rossi oratorios with Les arts florissants. The director of Atalante, Erin Headley, played lirone on those recordings, and helped give them that special HIP sound. 20 years have past since then, and this recording, though it perhaps grew out of Erin's love for the repertoire she enjoyed then, is technically streets ahead: the rich diversity of continuo instruments creates more of a kaleidoscopic soundscape for the excellent

singers. In her informative note, Headley says that one of her main reasons for this recording is the striking writing for lirone, but – striking, and undoubtedly moving as that is – there is much, much more here to enjoy. Anyone interested in 17th-century music should own this, and *Lamentarium* reviewed below. *BC*

Monteverdi *Selva morale e spirituale* The Sixteen, Harry Christophers 70' 32
Coro COR16101

I try to avoid reviewing too much Monteverdi – I tend to be hypercritical, or perhaps I have too narrow an idea of how to perform his music. Qualms were removed even before I heard a note – the list of performers showed one voice per part for every item except the four-part mass. I have, for several decades, assumed that most of Monteverdi's concertato-style music (ie, everything here except the mass) was intended for soloists, and everything here convinces me that I (and Harry) are right, and I can relax and enjoy the music. The mass is a different thing: it's in old-fashioned polyphony (though Monteverdi is subtly up to date) and it would have been sung by the "choir", as were the century-old Magnificats by Morales bought at his request. The sound of the Mass is, compared with the concertato pieces, just a bit too smooth for my taste. The intended pitch of the Mass is unclear: the three lower parts (C2, C3, F3 clefs) imply downward transposition but the top part has C1, which doesn't. The recording leaves it high, which sounds fine – at least the sopranos don't have to sing high; but I suspect that it would work better as a male-voice piece – the top note is A, so not even countertenors are needed! One slight disappointment: I'm normally a fan of Joseph Cornwell, but his *Laudate Dominum* solo seemed a bit subdued, not really exploiting the variety of Psalm 150 and its setting. But that's perhaps because I'm brainwashed by accompanying a soprano for several performances a decade ago, including my mother's funeral, and that has stuck in my mind as right for it. The rapid changes of characterisation of the other psalms is brilliant, and the music has more vitality than most performers. Highly recommended: I'm waiting for vol.3. *CB*

Moulinié, Boësset *L'air italien au temps de Louis XIII* Dagmar Saskova, Il Festino, Manuel de Grange 57' 04"
Musica Ficta MF8014
Music by Ballard, Bataille, Boësset, Frescobaldi, Moulinié & Sanz

The music of Dowland's French more-or-less contemporaries remains a relatively shadowy area. I have reviewed some really fine discs but also others in which the music's essential characteristics (and sometimes even the notes) have been obscured by over-elaboration. This recital falls somewhere between those two extremes. The singing by both soprano and tenor is very good – engaged, engaging and stylish. The instrumentalists are also play very well. I just feel that from time to time their realisations/arrangements are more complex than the music either needs or can stand. It's a very good programme however, supported by a lengthy and detailed essay (French and English). There is, unfortunately, no English translation of the sung texts.

David Hansell

Purcell Music for the Chapel Royal, Verse Anthems, Te Deum laudamus, Funeral Sentences Choir of St John's Cambridge, George Guest 150' 43" (2 CDs)
Decca Eloquence 480 5003

This well-filled anthology of Purcell's church music is an interesting historical document, tracing the development of performance styles in the 1660s and '70s. It's a period I passed through, and I was reasonably happy in the '60s before I got involved in the next stage with early instruments and cleaner vocal sounds. The first six tracks (from 1964) are in a way the most interesting: some sections (mostly the slower ones) just don't work now, while a lot is still enjoyable – these must be among the earliest ASMF recordings around. There is a degree of "authenticity" here: it's the style of the period. In the 1970s, things were changing, but the early-performance approach developed far earlier in Oxford than Cambridge, and the HIP-aware listener senses that the expected developments weren't happening at St John's (or King's). Cambridge didn't take full advantage of Christopher Hogwood & The Academy of Ancient Music, and here the all-purpose English Chamber Orchestra (which, like the ASMF, had taken early music on modern instruments seriously in the 1960s) was favoured. If you're less concerned with history, welcome a cheap and characteristic collection of 16 anthems, and if you listen carefully, you might hear the sound of a treble Robert King. CB

Purcell / Handel Miriam Allan, Ironwood
ABC Classics 476 4997 77' 52"
Purcell Music from *King Arthur*, *The Indian*

Queen, *Timon of Athens*, *The Fairy Queen*, *Oedipus*, etc. **Handel** *Silete venti*, *Sonata in G*, op. 5/4
ABC Classics 476 4997

The 'classic' combination of a few Purcell and Handel songs with a nice Handel trio sonata offers little temptation to me, but having heard this disc, I must admit that my natural prejudice would in this case do me out of a lovely listen. The Purcell offerings are a combination of songs and instrumental numbers selected for the most part from *King Arthur*, *The Fairy Queen*, *The Indian Queen*, *Timon of Athens* and *Oedipus*. Almost a 'greatest hits' compilation, the selection is in fact none the worse for that. After all, even the most avid Purcell fan must admit to the odd moment of tedium? One of my least favourite elements of discs that combine instrumental and vocal genres is that the listening experience lacks continuity as one's ear adjusts from dramatic arias to intimate chamber music. However, Ironwood's choice of Handel's trio sonata in G (HWV 399, 1739) avoids this – though perhaps unintentionally – for the dramatic element is maintained in HWV 399 by its re-use of material from *Athalia*, *Alcina*, *Parnasso in Festa*, *Radamisto* and *Terpsichore*. The disc concludes with a slightly underwhelming *Silete Venti*. Allen's singing is beautifully accomplished throughout, though at times it could do with a little more excitement. The playing of the Australian ensemble Ironwood is pleasingly well-executed and their polished attention to detail adds to what is a refreshing approach to some well-known repertoire. Violet Greene

Schein *Fontana d'Israel* Sagittarius, Michel Laplénie
Hortus 090 60' 53"

This completes the set reviewed by James Ross in *EMR* 137 p. 28 (Hortus 175) and appeared around the same time as a two-disc recording from Dresdener Kammerchor and Hans-Christoph Rademann which incorporated an earlier selection. Sagittarius included some of *Fontana d'Israel* [aka *Israelsbrunnlein*] with pieces from Opella Nova. I was impressed by the Dresden choir, though felt that many of the items would have been better with one to a part. It mostly works with Sagittarius's single voices. The sopranos obtrude a bit when their vibrato fills a long note rather than is treated more subtly as a form of embellishment. It is good to have a full-size organ playing continuo, even though it is on a gallery and the choir is below. Only the wealthy are likely to buy two versions

within a couple of months, so if you have the Dresden set, Sagittarius would be a luxury. If you've neither, I'd favour Sagittarius, but make sure you have bought the Dresden choir's Schütz that I've reviewed this year. CB

Arp-Schnitger–Orgel Norden Vol 3 Agnes Luchterhandt and Thiemo Jansen 78' 55"
MDG 906 1753-6

Bach, Böhm, Buxtehude, Mozart & "Susanne von Soldt's Clavierbuch"

These two organists share the post of organist of the prestigious 1686/92 Arp Schnitger organ in Norden's Ludgerikirche. I have admired their two previous CDs in this series and have equal admiration for this offering. The Norden organ is one of Schnitger's best known and most accomplished, but most curious, instruments. He retained a great deal of earlier pipework, so this organ speaks over the generations. The programme is wide ranging, and includes a couple of Mozart pieces arranged for organ as well as the more musically appropriate Buxtehude and Böhm – the former including his monumental *Te Deum*, one of my favourite organ works. The playing is exemplary, their obvious knowledge of this rather complex instrument shines through, as does their sensitive use of touch and articulation to bring the music alive.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Baroque Chamber Works Fantasticus (Rie Kimura vln, Robert Smith vdg & vlc, Guillermo Brachetta hpscd) 66' 38"
Resonus Classics RES10112

Download www.resonusclassics.com
(EAN 5060262790113)

Bertali Sonata a2 in d Buxtehude BuxWV272 & 273 Jenkins Fantasia in d attr. Kertzingen Sonatina in d Pandolfi Mealli Sonata La Castella Muffat Passacaglia in g Schmelzer Sonata a2 in a Stradella Sinfonia 22 in d

This is an absolutely outstanding recording of a wide range of 17-century music, ranging from the well-known (the pair of Buxtehude pieces) to what I would consider obscure (Kertzingen) via some seldom visited byways (Bertali, Schmelzer and Jenkins). Throughout the recital, the playing is top-notch – the individual musicians are superb and they blend so naturally in consort. I wondered initially if the harpsichord would be able to sustain the the continuo line alone, but need not have worried; the gamba and cello spend much of the time in the tenor register, and there is sufficient distinctiveness of timbre for the two lines to be heard clearly. This is an

interesting release, too, in that you can choose your own version to download from the website, as well as the full booklet. I hope Fantasticus will go on to make more recordings (Legrenzi for their combination being an obvious way to go) and maybe also find another brilliant fiddler to explore the still much-neglected 17th-century trio sonata repertoire! BC

Les goûts accordés Esteban La Rotta theorbo, Jivko Georgiev vlc, Margaret Little gamba, Katelyn Clark org
Atma Classique ACD2 2623
M.Barrière, Braun, Hotman, Lully, de Visée

Les Goûts Accordés refers to the fusion of the Italian and French styles of music in the first half of the 18th century. The distinctive French style had evolved, ironically under the influence of an Italian, Jean-Baptiste Lully, in the latter part of the 17th century.

Jean-Baptiste Barrière (1707-47) was a French viol player who took up the cello, and went to Italy to study with the cellist Francesco Alborea, nick-named Franciscello. 24 of his sonatas for cello and continuo were published in four books between 1733 and 1739, and three of them, nos 2 (Bk 3), 3 (Bk 2) and 6 (Bk 2), are performed on the present CD. According to Jivko Georgiev's contribution to the booklet notes, Barrière's music for the cello is very demanding, with "multiple stops, arpeggiated chords and other acrobatics", so he plays a five-string cello tuned to C, G, d, a, d'. To me, Barrière's music sounds more Italian than French, although the names of the movements, Adagio, Allegro, Aria Largo, Giga, for Sonata 2 (Bk 3), and Adagio, Allemande, Sarabande and Menuet, for Sonata 3 (Bk 2), show that he has a foot in each camp. The performance benefits from having three continuo instruments, viola da gamba, theorbo and organ – each with its distinctive sound, but which blend well together.

Robert de Visée (c.1655-1732/3) was a guitarist and theorbo player at the court of Louis XIV. (I am puzzled that the notes say that the Sun King appointed De Visée as his personal guitar teacher in 1719, when he had been dead for four years.) De Visée's style is quintessentially French, with notes inégales, a profusion of ornaments, and dissonance from appoggiaturas, brought to life with the deep resonant notes of the theorbo. Estaban La Rotta gives a good account of De Visée's pièces de théorbe in D major from the Saizenay manuscript: Prélude, Allemande, Courante and Sarabande. The

Suite in A minor includes the evergreen Chaconne, a favourite amongst present-day theorbo men. La Rotta plays it with poise, and rounds the suite off with an energetic rondeau, Mascarada. La Rotta also plays arrangements made by De Visée of music composed by Lully, including "Que devant vous tout s'abaisse et tout tremble" and "Entrée d'Apollon".

The notes may be seen at http://www.atmaclassique.com/pdf/Livret/3cab6af7-680c47f1-8812-ae8cd557eadd_2673_livret_F.pdf.

Extracts may be heard and tracks downloaded at <http://www.classicsonline.com/catalogue/product.aspx?pid=1504869>

Stewart McCoy

The Jacobean lutenists Karl Nyhlin 54' 22"
dB Productions dBCD147
Bacheler, Danyel, Dowland, Johnson, Rosseter, Sturt

This is a well-balanced compilation of lute music from the Jacobean period, with pieces by six English composers, together with nine anonymous pieces, some of which seem to have a Scottish provenance. These include the charming little piece at the bottom of folio 15r of the Pickeringe lute book (track 1), "Shoes Rare And Good In All", all 30 seconds of "A Daunce", and the infamous "Gypsy's Lilt", which contains a most hideous chord: d1 b2 a3 d6 (b flat, e' flat, a, B flat). I see from the internet that in 2003 I described it as "a load of chordswallow". I have always assumed that two of the tablature letters are on the wrong line, and it should really be a simple chord of B flat (d1 a2 b3 d6, or possibly d1 b3 a4 d6 without the major third). However, some lutenists accept its authenticity, including Nyhlin, who plays the chord nine times with conviction. His interpretation of "Home Again, Market Is Done" from the Board lute book, is incorrect: the last strain should have a sequence of dotted quaver + semiquaver + crotchet, not triplets. However, to dwell on these minutiae would be unfair. He plays well, and I did enjoy listening to the CD. He plays thumb-outside – correct for the period – and produces an ever-changing variety of tone colours, presumably by moving his hand along the strings. The overall mood is introspective with subdued virtuosity: it would be impossible to guess from his playing that the *King of Denmark's Galliard* was also known as the *Battle Galliard*. Substantial pieces such as Daniel Bacheler's variations on *En Me Reverant* (he means *En Me Revenant*) and John Dowland's *Farewell* are handled with apparent ease. Pleasant to the ears are a Prelude and Almain by John Sturt, a Pavan

by John Danyel, and a Prelude, Pavan and Gallard by Philip Rosseter.

That awful chord in the Gypsy's Lilt (from the Rowallan lute book) caused a lot of controversy on Wayne Cripps' lute list back in 2003. To show how easy it is to get letters in the wrong order I wrote the following spoonerism.

If you're into lutes and you want some tips,
Sog on the light of our friend Crane Whips.
If you think the Rowallan Book looks a fraud,
You'll change those notes to a flea bat chord.
"Keep your boot in lead," says Thomas Mace,
But a wise lute player keeps it in a cute lace.

Stewart McCoy

Lamentarium Tears of Artemisia, Helen of Troy, Mary Magdalene, The Blessed Virgin Atalante, Erin Headley 67' 17"
Destino Classics NI6152

Marazzoli Elena *invecchiata*, Lamento d'Arianna Mazzocchi *Piangete occhi piangete Pasqualini* *Perché dolce Bambino Rossi* *Oratorio per la Settimana Santa* (conclusion), Passacaglia, *Pianto della Maddalena*, *Peccantem me quotidie*, *Spargete sospiri*

This is a marvellous recording, combining voices with viol consort (sometimes added by the performers, or simply playing vocal music without the words) with a variety of continuo instruments. As the booklet note says, this music has been neglected, most likely because of the moral texts and the inaccessibility of editions (in terms of their location, legibility and seemingly endless recitative). With Atalante, Erin Headley has brought them very much to life – the singers are anything but boyish "early music voices", and the texts are more acted than declaimed, so that what may look dry on paper really comes alive. The juxtaposition of religious laments with more worldly ones demonstrates the common language of church and chamber at the time. BC

LATE BAROQUE

Bach Orgelwerke 3 Herbert Collum and Hans Otto (1731 Silbermann organ, Reinhardtsgrimma & 1711/14 Silbermann organ, Freiberg Dom) 76' 29"

Berlin Classics 0300373BC

BWV 542, 565, 590, 595, 767 + 651-668, 655, 658, 661, 666, 667, 668 (Hans Otto, Große Orgel in Freiberg Cathedral)

These recordings date from 1960, 1965 and 1970, and it shows. Although only Collum's playing on the Reinhardtsgrimma is mentioned on the cover, half of the CD is Hans Otto playing the much larger Silbermann organ in Freiberg Dom. Collum's playing is correct in many ways, but there are a number of interpretations that would be

frowned upon nowadays, not least a lack of sensitivity to the way that touch can affect the sound of the organ. For example, he lifts his hands off the keys too quickly, letting the pallet push a final spurt of air through the pipes resulting in a nasty spit at the end of chords. And there is little sense of articulation or phrasing, in the way that we would think of it today. Otto's playing is better, as is the sound of the Freiberg organ. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

Bach [Organ music] Barry Jordan (Glatter-Götz/Rosales-organ in refectory of Magdeburg Cathedral) 72' 47"
 Querstand VKJK1218
 BWV540, 547, 607, 611, 615, 618, 641, 645-650 & 767

This CD is intended to show off the new organ in the Remter (or Winter Chapel) in Magdeburg Dom. Judging from the photograph, it seems to be some sort of undercroft. It was built as a Bach organ in contrast to the equally new large symphonic west end organ. On this hearing, it doesn't sound a particularly distinguished instrument, although the playing and the recording may well be partly to blame for that. The latter gives a rather muffled and distant sound. Sadly, the former, just adds to the overall impression of dullness. The playing is methodical, with little sign of such things as articulation that can turn the notes into music. A number of the pieces are rather rushed, helping to achieve unnecessary aural confusion and rhythmic unsteadiness. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

Bach Das Wohltemperierte Clavier Andrés Schiff piano (4 CDs)
 ECM New Series 476 4827

I found it really interesting to read Andrés Schiff's notes on playing these pieces, and how he hears colours in the different keys. As I was listening to the discs (before reading the booklet), the whole notion of tonal colour had gone through my mind – on an even-tempered grand piano, how can keys sound different? With such flawless technique (to my ears, at least), despite even knowing the keys he was playing in, I found it very difficult to hear different colours. I wonder if, despite his absolute assurance at the keyboard, he feels keys differently and that converts itself into colours? Or, as listeners, are we aware of the *tessitura* of a piece and it's that that colours the music? People who describe Bach's music as mathematical or lacking personality (yes, they exist!) will find little solace in Schiff's accounts of the 48 – of course there is some interpretation,

and he uses all his piano wiles to draw one melody out from the middle of a texture (the fugal entries are all clear but never exaggerated), but essentially this is Bach at his most pure and, goodness, is there a lot to take in! I am not a great fan of the piano, but I have listened to this again and again, as much to wonder at Schiff's gifts as to wallow in Bach's ingenuity! *BC*

Bach Goldberg Variations, 15 Sinfonias The Art of Transcription Dmitry Sitkovetsky, Yuri Zhislin, Luigi Piovano 73' 52"
 Nimbus Alliance NI 6199
Bach Variazioni Goldberg Parnassi musici MV Cremona MVC 005-012

How interesting to have two such different takes on the same idea in one issue! Where Parnassi musici embrace all sorts of latent possibilities in the keyboard original, Sitkovetsky and co. prefer to stick to a fairly literal re-distribution of the parts to three stringed instruments. The latter approach has obvious advantages for concert performance, but the judicious addition of a flute and a gamba to the HIP version enriches the palette. The fillers are also interesting: where Parnassi musici opt to insert the nine canons and the quodlibet within the framework, Sitkovetsky (logically enough – and certainly successfully!) chooses to follow his Goldbergs with the 15 Sinfonias (or three-part inventions). Both versions have their merits, but for me the outstanding movement from either CD is the first half of the Parnassi musici take on the Overture – nicely orchestrated and beautifully played. The fugal section somehow lacks the weight that Bach himself would surely have brought to it – which is where all transcriptions face their biggest challenge: when to go *beyond* the notes in the keyboard version... *BC*

Bach's Lautenclavier Peter Waldner (1999 Keith Hill Lautenclavier, after Hildebrandt) ORF CD 3020 73'30"
 BWV 995, 997, 998, 1006a + a bonus DVD video *Bach's Lautenclavier*

The purpose of this CD is firstly to introduce the sound of the Lautenclavier to contemporary ears, a sound that may not have been heard since shortly after Bach's time (there are no surviving instruments) and, secondly, to reclaim a lost repertoire for the instrument. The thesis is that what is generally now thought as Bach's lute repertoire was in fact intended for the Lautenclavier, the designation "pour la luth" or "al Liuto" being merely shorthand for the keyboard

instrument. Peter Waldner makes a very convincing case in his programme notes but also, perhaps more importantly, in his compelling playing. The sound of the instrument is extraordinary – the length of the (nowadays synthetic) gut strings are based on a theorbo and their dimensions are taken from the bass lute. The upper 4' register is in brass and adds a twangy brilliance to the sound. It is not damped, giving a distinctive resonance. As well as the compelling arguments and sound, Peter Waldner's sensitive and musical playing is sufficient an ambassador for this repertoire to be returned to its original owner. See also my review of an Innsbruck concert on this instrument.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Bach Sei Solo a Violino senza Basso accompagnato François Fernandez vn
 Flora FLORA 0402

BWV 1001-3 (presumably vol. 1)

Bach Sonatas & Partitas BWV1001-1003
 Isabelle Faust 60' 22"

harmonia mundi HMC 902124

Bach Sonatas & Partitas BWV1001-1006
 Cecylia Arzewski 116' 39" (2 CDs)
 Bridhe 9358A/B

Three very different takes on Bach's solo violin music, ranging from Fernandez's HIP version where note-colouring is an embellishment not a pre-requisite, through Faust's fresh reading of the originals (including some notes that will genuinely shock those familiar with the music) to Arzewski's slightly more gutsy approach, though with a nod and a wink to HIPsters. If you were placed in a sound booth with these three descriptions, you would very easily be able to identify which you were listening to, but which you prefer will be a matter of taste. Faust is perhaps the outstanding violinist of the three (not to demean the others!) and her fugues are monumental achievements, but Fernandez is rather better at allowing the music to breathe and his account rivals any other HIP versions I have heard (and there have been quite a few!) Arzewski is a fine musician, and her version cannot be discounted merely for being on modern violin – she certainly negotiates the filigree of the opening movement very neatly. I recommend listening to any of them and deciding which is for you. *BC*

Bach 6 Suites for Solo Cello Pieter Wispelwey 133' 43" (2 CDs + 52' DVD documentary)
 Evil Penguin Records Classic EPRC 012

This is Wispelwey's *third* recording of the Bach cello suites, but it is VERY different from the others, not least of all because of his choice of pitch. Looser, thicker strings, makes tuning more difficult but also gives the instrument a sound that is not very far removed from the *violoncello da spalla*, so recently espoused by Sigiswald Kuijken in his Bach cantata recordings (and elsewhere). The closest I have come to a description of that sound is like a deep grumble that an ancient teddy bear I was given as a very young child used to make; not quite rasping, but something of that sort. Important as the dramatic shift in timbre is, Wispelwey's new reading of the music is every bit as impressively different from what went before; the preludes in G and E flat (which regular readers will know are my benchmarks for any performance of these works) are nothing like his previous versions – partly a compliment to him as performer but also, of course, to Bach for writing such amazing music within such strictly self-imposed limitations that can easily allow for many, many variant readings. I feel there is no point in highlighting any specific movements, or even to suggest trying before you buy – it is quite simple: this is a must-have set. And for so many reasons!

BC

A. M. Bononcini *Messa, Stabat mater*
Silvia Frigato, Raffaella Milanese, Andrea Arrivabene, Elena Biscuola, Sara Mingardo, Valerio Contaldo, Raffaele Giordani, Salvo Vitale – SscTAATTB, Concerto Italiano, Rinaldo Alessandrini 80' naïve OP 30537

I surely cannot be alone in associating the name of Bononcini with recorder music of reasonable quality, if slightly lacking in originality. This recording of two major church pieces (a G minor *Messa a Cinque* Concertata in a world premiere recording, and a C minor setting of the *Stabat mater* for four soloists, choir and orchestra) will force a rethink: most likely written after the composer returned to Modena after 12 years as Kapellmeister in Vienna, both works are arresting in their melodic writing, rich use of dissonance as a driving force, and contrapuntal ingenuity. The mass (a full setting of all the movements of the Ordinary) has no solo movements, but rather employs a range of soloists in ensembles. The *Stabat mater*, on the other hand, has five solos and two duets in addition to the tutti movements. The performances are first rate – the voices are warm without losing any of their focus,

and the string band (with organ and two theorbos) complements them beautifully. The recording does a fabulous job of capturing the live performances in the Wiener Konzerthaus. Congratulations to Alessandrini for uncovering these works – may there be many more such discoveries! BC

Campra / Dandrieu *Jesu amantissime*
Jean-François Lombard, Jean-François Novelli, Marc Labonnette H-CTB, Les folies françaises 64' 38" Cypres CYP1665

Campra *Beati omnes, Immensus es Domine, O Jesu amantissime, Quam dilecta, Salvum me fac deus*
Dandrieu Extracts from Magnificat settings & Trio sonata in d

This is a strong and satisfying programme of strong and satisfying music in strong and satisfying performances. *Les folies françaises* really commit themselves to the music and each other and there is a great sense of co-operation in the various contrapuntal comings and goings. Campra was a prolific composer of *petits motets* and he really knew what he was doing with the genre, creating attractive melodies and textures within convincing structures. The organ music is played on a fine historic instrument which is also used for the continuo, making this a less anonymous element in the sound than is sometimes the case. All of this is complemented by an interesting essay and translations of the sung texts into French and English. Very strongly recommended.

David Hansell

Fasch *Orchestral Works, Volume 3*
Tempesta di Mare Philadelphia Baroque Orchestra, dir. Gwyn Roberts & Richard Stone, Emlyn Ngai *concertmaster* 66' 20" Chandos Chaconne CHAN0791
FWV K: D2* & F1, FWV L: D8, d1, F3* & Recorder Concerto in F

Anyone expecting a rave review can relax. I heard Tempesta di Mare play some of this programme live at the Fasch Festtage in Zerbst last year, so I knew that the recording (the third and final of a series for Chandos) would be something special. I am totally delighted with the finished product – two fabulous suites and four concertos (including the quite recently rediscovered recorder concerto, which has already appeared on a cpo disc) make up a rich and varied programme that show the wide range of the composer's "orchestral" output; if the recorder concerto (deftly played by Gwyn Roberts) seems quite an early work, the lute concerto (in a splendidly limpid reading from the

group's other director, Richard Stone) is ground-cutting rococo, with its so *not* plodding bass, sumptuous chords and intricate ornamentation (some of it tastefully improvised by the performer). Each of the movements of the suites has its own individual character and the dance movements really do dance. The instrumental palette is a rich one – three trumpets with timps, pairs of horns, flutes, oboes and bassoons, combined with a modest string ensemble (pretty much the *Hofkapelle* in Dresden for whom most of the works were surely written, and that in Darmstadt where some of the source material survives). I cannot deny that I am sad that there will be no more recordings – I envy those of you lucky enough to be within travelling distance of Philadelphia, where Fasch will continue to feature in TdM programmes, I am sure. One point for cataloguers out there: at the time of going to press, FWV L: D8 would have been a world première recording, except that it featured on Johannes Pramsohler's recent "Pisendel" recording for Raumklang. The world is none the worse for having two wonderful (but quite different) readings of a fine work.

BC

Handel *Rinaldo* Sonia Prina *Rinaldo*, Anett Fritsch *Almirena*, Brenda Rae *Armida*, Luca Pisaroni *Argante*, Varduhi Abrahamyan *Goffredo*, Tim Mead *Eustazio*, William Towers *Christian Magus*, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Ottavio Dantone 190' Opus Arte OA 1081 D (DVD)

Glyndebourne's 2011 production of *Rodelinda* divided audiences with its setting of the plot as a dream sequence in the mind of a teenage boy, bullied in a public school setting. Audience members who 'got it' unfortunately did nothing to relieve the perception of Glyndebourne as a socially exclusive entertainment, being for the most part ex-public school attendees. At the opposite end of the scale, however, were jibes about 'dumbing down' and Harry Potter. All modern productions of Handel face the same dilemmas of how to 'update' operas whose libretti make often-complex references that would have been well known to 18th-century audiences but risk being lost on modern ones. Some are more successful than others and the original libretto and/or music usually suffers some sacrifices in the process.

However, this production is far from the worst offender. Admittedly, I am neither a Harry Potter fan nor did I go to

public school and I am familiar with the plot of Rinaldo, so perhaps not so affected as some by the chosen setting. But the choice of a dream sequence allows for a plausible inclusion of all of the fantastical elements of Hill's libretto (based on Tasso's already fantastical *Gerusalemme Liberata*). The only weaker element is the undeniably adolescent love of 'school-children' Rinaldo and Almirena. Handel's writing of their duet material is just too mature, even for a schoolboy dream (surely?). The school analogy (and bike shed set) works admirably, however, for the abduction of Almirena, and Rinaldo's subsequent lament shows Prina at her most affecting.

The counter tenor vs. mezzo debate will continue forever in all probability and in my opinion must be affected to a large extent by individual singers. Anyone who doubts Prina's ability to project a masculine enough persona (and there were plenty in the Glyndebourne audience who did) need only witness her command in 'Venti, turbini'. Even suspension mid-air on a bicycle proves no obstacle. Some of the male 'knights', on the other hand, appear to struggle just to ride their bicycles. Joking aside, Abrahamyan also excels in the other trouser role (Goffredo), and Mead (Eustazio) and Towers (Christian Magus) provide counter tenor enough. Fritsch (Almirena) and Pisaroni (Argante) are well matched and Almirena's tight pvc costume (and Goth followers) provide a hint of the lighthearted approach of director Robert Carsen. This too incurred the wrath of several audience members but I think adds to what can be a slightly tedious plot. The flying bicycle raises an audience laugh but I think the schoolgirl sirens' routine à la Britney Spears to 'Il vostro maggio' is the most inspired moment.

The frankly amazing cast are well matched by the OAE, an orchestra that under uninspiring hands can slide into a slightly lazy self-drive mode but who under Dantone perform to the extremely high standard of which they are capable. Well worth buying.

Violet Greene

Handel Saul Christopher Purves *Saul*, Sarah Connolly *David*, Robert Murray *Jonathan*, Elizabeth Atherton *Merab*, Joelle Harvey *Michel*, Mark Dobell *High Priest*, Jeremy Budd *Witch of Endor*, Stuart Young *Ghost of Samuel*, The Sixteen, Harry Christophers 162' 39" (3 CDs in box) Coro COR16103

This is, for me, the most powerful of Handel Old Testament oratorios, passing

over *Messiah*, since that has a completely unique libretto. I'd seen it staged by the Handel Opera Society at Sadlers Wells in 1965, with Geraint Evans as Saul; the drama came over powerfully despite many problems. But what really made it stand out was a Third Programme performance under Charles Mackerras in the late 1960s. We were still in the period before early instruments, but his understanding of many aspects of performance practice, and his expertise as an opera conductor was already apparent as a regular Sadlers Wells conductor, especially in Mozart (an amazing Figaro) and Janacek. I taped his *Saul*, and played it over and over again.

This performance is as convincing as any I have heard. There is overall a fine cast, with the leading characters singing with great musicality, expressing their roles without distorting the sound in extremity. I made a series of notes, but it would be boring to repeat which alternative was used – e.g. that organ solo was preferred for the third movement of the Sinfonia instead of the oboe of the autograph. I was somewhat relieved that Abathar's 100-bar aria before the last chorus was replaced by nine bars of recit! There are so many ways in which Handel's inspiration is interlocked with form and use of instruments. The Dead March is well-enough known: the sound of trombones and strings alternating with flutes and organs (in the plural!) is extraordinary, but only one example of the many scene-setting sinfonias. Indication of the continuo organs are particularly plentiful (though not in the Bärenreiter score); if there's one problem with the recording it is that they should have a bit more umph when playing continuo. "Oh fatal day!" has the choruses accompanied by *Organo pieno*: the instrument needs to have some weight and the singers shouldn't start piano.

The drama begins a bit slowly, typical in opera and oratorio of the period, when singers required an aria to introduce themselves. But from the middle of the second scene, there's nothing worth cutting. The recording is complete, using an edition by Tony Hicks. Other reviews have concentrated on the singers, so I'll praise the orchestra and conductor, whose tempi are fine and who get most things right. Do buy it.

CB

Handel/Caldara Carmelite Vespers 1709 Roberta Invernizzi, Robin Johannsen, Martin Oro, Markus Brutscher, Antonio Abete *SScTTB*, Academia Montis Regalis, Alessandro de Marchi (2 CDs) deutsche harmonia mundi 88691926042

Caldara Haec est regina virginum, Laetatus sum, Te decus virginum Handel Dixit Dominus, Saeviat tellus + Salve regina (Handel/Caldara), Deus in adiutorium, Ora pro nobis & Protege Domine

This is a lovely recording. The soloists are all first rate, the choir makes a glorious sound and the orchestra plays beautifully. The combination of works by Handel and Caldara works well – both are masters of the art of melody and equally of the human voice. Whether or not all of the music was ever performed as part of a single Vespers service is irrelevant; it all sits together very comfortably. Caldara's early trademark use of cello duet obbligati gives the music a certain richness. My only slight complaint about the release is the presentation; the English booklet note seems not quite to have been based on either of the others (though they are not always entirely in agreement), and does not give quite enough information about some of the pieces. Just ignore it and relish the wonderful music.

BC

Handel's Memories: A selection from Grand Concertos op. 6 Al Ayre Español, Eduardo López Banzo 94' 26" (2 CDs) Challenge Classics CC72548

Don't let the title put you off. As a selection of concerti grosso from Handel's Op. 6 collection, this is a good buy. As fresh and exciting a recording as you would expect from Al Ayre Español, the chosen concerti are nos. 1, 5, 6, 10 and 11. The booklet notes from Banzo make no attempt to justify his choice of concerti but instead consist of engaging personal opinions of each. A must-have recording of these works even for Op. 6 devotees.

Violet Greene

Michel Leçons de Ténèbres Hervé Lamy T, Huguette Gremy-Chaillac *hpscd*, Mundo Corde 71' 59"

Psalmus PSAL 012

Joseph Michel 3 Leçons + Miserere; Rameau Suite in A minor

I admit to having had a bit of a struggle with this. To my ears the solo singer's tone is not sufficiently attractive to withstand this sustained exposure and, while I am all in favour of putting something between the *leçons* I did not find the separated movements of a Rameau suite convincing, either on their own or in the context. (The connection between the composers is that they were near-contemporaries at the choir school in Dijon.) Michel's music is of interest – he was con-

sidered for one of the chapel music posts at Versailles – but it does need more persuasive advocacy than this. *David Hansell*

Montéclair *Six Concerts à deux Flûtes Traversières sans Basses* Marie-Céline Labbé, Marion Teupel-Franck 106' 41" (2 CDs) Ramée RAM1102

Michel Pignolet was born 1667 in the Haute-Marne department of north-east France and educated in the choir school of Langres cathedral. He left for Paris in 1687, where he took the name of Montéclair from a ruined fortress near his home town. He stayed there for a few years, working as a dancing and instrumental teacher and starting to have some of his compositions published, moved to Milan to work for the French governor there, and finally returned to Paris in 1699 where he became a basse de violon player in the orchestra of the Académie Royale de Musique, a post he held for almost forty years. François Couperin's daughter was one of his pupils. The pieces on this recording were published between 1721 and 1724 and are described as "concertos for two transverse flutes without bass... of which some are in the French style, and others in the Italian style... no less suitable for Violins, Viols and other instruments, than for the Transverse Flute". This last comment was probably just an attempt to sell them to a wider market because they sound so perfectly suited to the flute. The two flautists have been playing together for twenty years and their beautifully coordinated performance on a matching pair of flutes at A=392 by Tutz, copies of a Rottenburgh flute of 1730, bears evidence of this. Montéclair's attractive and varied music is played with great elegance and awareness of the appropriate style, and this is certainly a recording I can recommend and will listen to again with pleasure. *Victoria Helby*

Pergolesi *Adriano in Siria* [+ intermezzo, *Livietta e Tracollo*] Accademia Bizantina, Ottavio Dantone 190' (2 DVDs) Opus Arte OA 1065 D *see p.18*

Rameau *Symphonies à deux clavecins* Pierre Hantaï, Skip Sempé 75' Mirare MIR164

Rameau arranged his operatic music for harpsichord and orchestrated his harpsichord music for use in his operas, and two harpsichords as a chamber medium was mentioned as an option by several of his contemporaries, notably Couperin. So

there can be no objection to the underlying principle of these transcriptions and this recital. In any case, even the most hardened Ramellian fundamentalist will be knocked sideways by this playing and seduced by the variety of textures and timbres employed. Yes, there were times when I missed the orchestral colours – Rameau was, after all, a master orchestrator – but this playing nonetheless succeeds in conveying his grandeur, elegance and wit. There is also a welcome sense of fun about it all. *David Hansell*

Vivaldi *La Cetra op. 9* Holland Baroque Society, Rachel Podger 137' 25" (2 CDs) Channel Classics CCS SA 33412
RV 181a, 345, 334, 263a, 358, 348; 359, 238, 530, 300, 198a, 391

One cannot expect anything but an inspired performance by Rachel Podger, and this is what we have in this two-disc set of the collection of 12 violin concertos – or more accurately 11 solo concertos and one for two violins. Surprisingly, the concertos – if one ignores the repeated trademarks of Vivaldi's style – are remarkably varied. I found the concertos on the second disc perhaps more interesting than those on the first, and maybe more suited to hearing at one sitting. RV530 is for two violins; RV300 has some surprising arpeggio figuration in the first movement, reaching heights almost off the end of the fingerboard; and RV391 in B Minor, makes use of *scordatura* tuning as exotic as the earlier Biber Rosary Sonatas, giving an unusual richness of sonority in that key.

Holland Baroque Society uses an array of continuo instruments: 2 plucked (guitar and lute/archlute), harpsichord and organ, in different movements as appropriate, with the pluckers to the fore in the recording. Rachel Podger's playing is of course impeccable, and it was gratifying to hear some real pianissimo on many occasions.

Ian Graham-Jones

Vivaldi *La Cetra II* – Vol. 2 L'Arte dell'Arco, Giovanni Guglielmo 60' 33" Dynamic *Delizie Musicali* Vol. 31 DM8031
RV 380, 526, 183, 327, 171, 520 (rec 1995)

Expecting to find that I had been given two recordings of the same set for a direct comparison, I was surprised that none of the RV numbers coincided. The title *La Cetra* is a bit of a puzzler. It appears that there were two sets of twelve concertos given this title; Rachel Podger played the published by La Cène in 1727 as Op. 9, while this recording of the second half of

a further set of twelve was assembled by the composer the following year but not published. There are two concertos for two violins (RV526 and 520), both being impressive works; the opening movement of the first is in fugal style over a running bass, and both are concerto grosso-like. There is more incision to the playing in this band than in the Holland Baroque Society, perhaps because they are playing at 'modern' (A=440) pitch rather than the traditional Baroque pitch of A=415 as on the Podger recording. Harpsichord and theorbo are used for the continuo, though they are less prominent than on the HBS records. Both will appeal to Vivaldi fans, though if I had to choose, I would prefer to have the HBS one in my library.

Ian Graham-Jones

Vivaldi *Concertos for two Violins, Strings and Continuo* Angelo Cicillini, Luca Venturi, "L'Orfeo Ensemble" di Spoleto, dir Fabrizio Ammetto 63' 56" Tactus TC 672253
RV 513, 520, 521, 526, 528, 764 & 765

This fine CD features performances of seven of Vivaldi's concertos for two violins, three of them (RV528, 764 & 765) for the first time, and three of them in new completions by Fabrizio Ammetto, the group's director. The performances are lively and the recorded sound focussed. While I was duly impressed by the soloists' virtuosity (especially in the upper reaches of the instrument), if I'm ruthlessly honest, I found some of the ornamentation lacking in subtlety. On the other hand, the phrasing of the upper ripieno strings in accompanying them was very nicely shaped; sometimes the cellos were just a little too forceful. Overall, something of a curate's egg. *BC*

Vivaldi *Six Violin Sonatas Op. 2* Elizabeth Wallfisch, Richard Tunnidiffe, Malcolm Proud 59' 03" Hyperion helios CDH55404

This re-released CD features lively performances of the first six sonatas from Vivaldi's Op. 2 print. The first four have four movements (the second amplified here by Chédeville's *pastorale*) while the next two have three, and they alternate major and minor keys, but follow no strict order of movements – most have dance origins. These works were immensely popular in their day, and it is obvious from these performances why. *BC*

Vivaldi *The Pisendel Sonatas* Annette Unger vln, Michael Pfaender vlc, Ludger Rémy hpscd 63' 25"
Genuine GEN 12248
RV2, 6, 19, 25 & 29

The Vivaldi-Pisendel connection is well documented. In total, autograph scores of six concertos and five sonatas survive (all but one in Dresden, where Pisendel directed the court orchestra); the dedications make it clear that these were not written for a student (as, of course, the German had been in Venice) but for a master of the instrument. The technical demands are considerable, but Annette Unger is easily their master. Her continuo colleagues provide support without being invasive – the cello might perhaps have lent more shape to some notes, but that is a very minor criticism. Will they now expand the ensemble and record the concerti? BC

Zelenka *Sonatas* Ensemble Marsyas with Monica Huggett 49' 43"
Linn Classics CKD415
Sonatas 3, 5 & 6, Andante from ZWV189

This is hopefully the first of two discs devoted to Zelenka! The Edinburgh-based Ensemble Marsyas was formed in 2011 by an international group of young players, and this is the first of what I'd expect to be many recordings. Previous recordings of Zelenka's awesomely demanding sonatas have all but highlighted the daunting technical requirements (for players of modern instruments as well!); here, there is not the slightest hint of superhuman endeavour – the emphasis is very much on beauty of sound and elegance; even the 32nd note tirades have a shape that drives the music forward. Inevitably, I fear, the disc will be criticised for the lack of duration; engaging a singer to sing one of the Lamentations would easily have solved that. As it is, the Andante from ZWV189 is a neat complementary piece and ends with a rather pregnant cadence, making one long for more. Which I very definitely do! BC

Conversation Galante Ansambl Symblema Aulos CDGVo145

Bach Violin Sonata in G BWV 1021, Gamba Sonata BWV 1028, Leclair Sonata in D, Rameau 5th Concert in d

I first heard Ansambl Symblema at their debut concert in a small room in Croatia when I was on the jury of the 2010 Varaždin Baroque Evenings festival. Their concert won them the Ivan Lukačić Prize for the best performance of the festival.

This CD, produced in conjunction with the festival, stems from that award. Incidentally, the organ recital by their harpsichordist, Pavao Masić won him the other two festival prizes, for the best solo concert and the best Bach performance. This CD recalled the spirited and musical playing that so captivated me when I heard them in concert. Much is down to the extraordinarily sensitive and musical playing of their violinist, Bojan Čičić, and the recording allows him quite a bit of prominence. But the harpsichord and viola da gamba (Nika Zlatarić) are no mere supporters. As well as excellent contributions to the violin-dominated pieces, they have their own chance to shine in Bach's Sonata for gamba and obbligato harpsichord. These three talented musicians are fine representatives of a generation of younger Croatian performers who have gained from the enormous benefit of studying outside their home country. In the CD I was given, the programme notes have a missing page that is provided as a loose insert.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Dramma Simone Kermes, La magnifica Comunità 77' 08"
Sony Classics 88691963952

Music by Handel, Hasse, Leo, de Majo, Pergolesi & Porpora

Anyone who has heard Simone Kermes live in concert will know that such occasions are more manifestation than recital, events at which the singer uses a powerful vocal instrument and personality to alternately thrill and seduce her audience. It can all be immensely exciting, at times more like a pop than a classical concert. I suspect, too, there is a degree of authenticity in that the fervent response Kermes evokes from an audience is probably not so far removed from the reaction some of the great 18th century sopranos and castrati inspired.

The cover of the present CD seeks to perpetuate such an image, with an extravagantly bewigged Kermes apparently entertaining a naked young man at a banquet. In truth, of course, shorn of the live interaction a record must stand alone in the glare of the naked truth. Kermes sets out her stall in the first two items. The first is a staggeringly virtuosic trumpet aria from De Majo's *Arianna e Teseo* (1747), providing an ample demonstration of Kermes' command of glittering coloratura and incisive trumpet-like tones. In complete contrast, the aria for Acì from Porpora's *Polifemo* (1735) opens with a perfect *messa di voce* and continues with a

lesson in control of line and *mezza voce* singing, especially striking in the higher registers. Porpora gets the lion's share of the programme, demonstrating yet again how cruelly neglected his operas remain, but one of the highlights is Kermes' delightfully insouciant singing of an aria from Leo's *Zenobia in Palmira* (1725).

There are caveats. For all her formidable technical command, Kermes has no trill, and other ornamental turns are not always elegant. Her chest register is comparatively weak, and her Italian diction is by no means as precise as it might be. The instrumental support is efficient, if at times over-aggressive in the style fashionable in some quarters, and tempos are also fashionable in that they tend to excessive speed or the funereally slow. It is surprising that nobody involved with the recording noticed the absurdity of the extremes of tempo between the A and B sections of the aria from Pergolesi's *Adriano in Siria* (1734). Notwithstanding, there is far more here to admire than criticize and the inclusion of no fewer than eight previously unrecorded arias makes the disc an essential acquisition for all lovers of 18th century opera. Brian Robins

A French Soirée Trio Settecento (Rachel Barton Pine vln, John Mark Rozendaal gamba, David Schrader hpscd) 78' 55"
Cedille CDR 90000 129

Couperin Troisième Concert, Allemande, Sarabande; Marais Guitare, Prelude, Chaconne; Leclair Sonata in G; Rebel Sonate Huitième; Lully Extracts from *Ballet Royal de Flore*

This complements the ensemble's previous Italian and German anthologies, both of which were well received. (An English programme is imminent.) All the big names of French Baroque chamber music are here and the programme ends with masterpieces by Rameau and Leclair, which prompts me to observe that they will both have anniversaries in 2014. Start practising! Pitch is A392 and the combination of this and a relatively close recording sometimes gives the sound a not unattractive gruffness. This is an ensemble that plays with attention to detail but still creates performances that have a strong sense of overall direction. *La Rameau* is absolutely splendid and the following Leclair sonata an object lesson in how to combine taste and virtuosity. The enthusiastic notes are in English only.

David Hansell

Let the bright seraphim Armonico Consort, Elin Manahan Thomas S, Crispian Steele-Perkins tpt, Christopher Monks dir 59' 07" SIGCD289

Bach *Cantata 51, Handel Deidamia Lentement, Eternal source of light divine* HWV 74.1, *Foridante Sinfonia, Judas Maccabaeus March Samson Let the bright Seraphim, Scipione March* (Act I), *Water Music Overture; A. Scarlatti Su le sponde del Tebro; Telemann Tpt Concerto in D*

The singing on this release is never less than good and often much better than that, though I was never really knocked sideways. We're probably meant to be wowed by the obviously virtuosic moments but I enjoyed the reflective arias (track 3, for example) more and another take of track 5 (Bach's admittedly demanding *Alleluia*) might have been wise. To me the faster music feels just a bit safe and the speed changes in the title track (actually last on the disc) were unsettling. I also miss what Handel did instead of a *da capo* although I can also understand why sopranos claim it as a recital item in this form. I also question, in HIP terms, the use of the organ for keyboard continuo throughout the programme and, on a similar note I missed the sound of a body of strings and a 16 foot bass in some movements. The vocal line in Handel's *Eternal source* is transposed up an octave to put the vocal duet with trumpet at the unison rather than the octave. The instrumental items are all very capably played – plausibly evoking the 18th century pleasure gardens in the Handel items. The booklet includes translations into English of the sung texts though the notes are in English only, and I do find it odd that the valiant one-to-a part string players are not named.

David Hansell

Much as I dislike the alto Eternal source hiked up an octave from the alto version, its surprising appearance in the paralympic final show really did impress us. CB

Music from the age of Louis XV John Kitchen (1769 Tasking harpsichord from the Raymond Russell Collection) 66' 26" Delphian DCD34112

F Couperin *Ordre 6 in Bb + character pieces* by Duphy (2), Forqueray (attr./4) & Rameau (5)

Every harpsichord-lover must have this recording of 'the world's most famous harpsichord'. The Edinburgh Taskin is just sumptuous and it and the player are on top form in this recital, perfectly chosen to show the instrument and its repertoire at its best. There is much display of the velvet lower register (*Les Baricades Misterieuses*, among others) but also ample

opportunity to savour the many other colours. John Kitchen's playing of the instruments in Edinburgh's extraordinary collections has won consistent praise and here's some more. Had this been an LP I'd have worn it out in a week and it would be a serious contender in any 'best harpsichord recording ever' contest. The only disappointment is the mediocre production of the booklet which in the review copy featured use of both guillotine and stapler significantly less accurate than the player's fingers.

David Hansell

The profound, the sublime... and the frivolous The Denner Ensemble (Mark Baigent ob, Rebecca Prosser rec, Ben Sansom vln, Nathaniel Harrison bsn, Karen Glen + David Hatcher b.viol) 58' 55"

DEN 212 (contact: bensansom@mac.com) Boismortier, Fasch, Lalande, Lully, Philidor, Rebel, Telemann

The Denner Ensemble was formed in 2001 by a group of experienced professional period instrumentalists, but this is their first CD. Its title derives from the German lutenist Ernst Gottlieb Baron's 1756 comparison of Italian music (profound, splendid, lyrical, serious and flowing) with French (free, lively, playful and frivolous and appealing to ladies rather than those of a more serious disposition!) In fact, the Ensemble has chosen to play some of their favourite works by French and German rather than Italian composers writing in the French and Italian styles. The first five pieces from Philidor's 1712 *Premier Livre de Pièces* for solo instrument with continuo (tracks 3 and 4 are reversed in the list in the booklet) are followed by Fasch's quartet sonata in B flat for recorder, violin and oboe in a lively performance enhanced by the bassoon continuo. Rebel's *Les Caractères de la Dance* is a succession of fourteen short movements mostly less than a minute long, leaving the listener wanting more as it breathlessly moves from one dance to the next. There are two sonatas by Telemann and one by Boismortier, and the programme ends with Lalande's *Symphonie des Soupers du Roi*, a suite of excerpts from ballets to accompany the king at dinner, and the gorgeous Chaconne from Lully's *Cadmus et Hermione*. In both of these Mark Baigent's lovely oboe tone is heard to particular advantage. These are technically assured and stylish performances of really enjoyable and mostly well-known music.

Victoria Helby

Un dolce affanno Fux – Caldara – Ariosti

Calamus Consort, Michaela Riener S 54' 05" passacaille 986

+ music by G. B. Bononcini, F. B. Conti, Georg Muffat, Leopold I & anon

This is a most interesting CD. It features both chalumeaux (in various sizes) and early clarinets in music from the Viennese court in the 18th century. Some of the music is written specifically for one or other (sometimes in conjunction with voice and / or gamba), sometimes in duet and sometimes as a substitute trumpet (though sounding an octave lower, surely, and – as conceded by the booklet notes – with only the scantest suggestion that it actually represents 18th-century practice). Whatever the arguments (the confusion runs around the interpretation of clarinet as a diminutive of clarino...), the music is gorgeous and very nicely performed by all concerned. Joseph I's insertion aria for his wife's birthday opera in 1709 (*Tutto in pianto*) is a definite winner! BC

CLASSICAL

C.P.E. Bach *The Complete Keyboard Concertos Volume 18* Miklós Spányi hpcd, Concerto Armonico Budapest, Márta Ábráham 68' 12"

BIS-CD-1787

Wq43/1-4 (H. 471-4)

This is Vol. 18 of the complete keyboard concertos begun by this group back in 1995 and part of the BIS recording of the complete works of C.P.E. Bach (begun in 1987). It contains the first four of the *Sei Concerti* published in 1771, shortly after Bach moved to Hamburg. Billed by the composer as 'easy' concertos, these are deliberately written to appeal to a mixed public and lack the extravagance and volatility of some of C.P.E. Bach's music. That said, the music is uplifting and attractive in its use of pre-classical structures and motivic unity, and there are some interesting harmonies. No. 4 in C minor is the most satisfying, both structurally and melodically. Spányi argues that these concertos were written for the big late-18th century English harpsichords with machine stop and swell box. In the absence of one of these he has used a Dulcken copy by Michael Walker to which he has fitted a swell box. He uses its variety of registrations effectively. With the occasional exception of the pair of horns which double in the outer movements there is a good balance between harpsichord and small period instrument orchestra. A very satisfying recording.

Martines *Il primo amore* Nuria Rial, La Floridiana, Nicoletta Paraschivescu
deutsche harmonia mundi 88697885792

Ouverture in C,* Cembalo concerto in B flat,*
Cembalo sonata in A, four arias, cantata *Il primo amore** [=première recordings]

Here is a lady who boasts quite some CV. Marianna Martines (or Marianne Martínez as she is more usually known) was born in Vienna of Spanish descent in 1744. While a young girl, Metastasio, who lived in the same house, took her under his wing, giving her a thorough literary education, while at the same time ensuring that she was taught singing and the keyboard by Porpora and Haydn. In 1772 her singing and keyboard playing so enchanted the visiting Charles Burney that he declared her 'the most perfect lady singer that I ever heard'. The following year she was afforded the rare distinction of honorary membership of the prestigious Accademia Filharmonia of Bologna. In the 1770s and 80s her salons were attended by the musical elite of Vienna, leading the tenor Michael Kelly to the delightful observation that Marianne was 'reckoned a deep blue'. But Kelly also recalled that she retained the 'gaiety and vivacity of a girl', doubtless just the qualities that attracted Mozart; if Kelly is to be believed, the two frequently played keyboard duets together.

As if that were not sufficient, Martinez left a body of both sacred and secular compositions that includes an oratorio, *Isacco*. The present CD is devoted to a cross-section of her secular music, including a bustling Italianate overture (or symphony) in three movements, a recently discovered harpsichord concerto in C dating from 1766 and much in the style of those of Schobert, and a *galant* keyboard sonata in A, with an expressive, fetching central adagio. These works suggest a more than competent composer, but it is the two vocal pieces that most impinge on the senses. As one might hope from a composer/singer taught by Porpora, both are beautifully written for the voice, eschewing all extraneous virtuoso effect in the cause of expressiveness. The later work, the cantata *Il primo amore* (1770), is a charming, mildly sentimental pastorale that alternates *accompagnato* with two arias reminiscent of Hasse, a composer Martinez is known to have admired, while the earlier scena, *Berenice, ah che fai* (1767), is centred around a highly dramatic accompanied recitative and a thrusting, urgent aria. The text (Metastasio, of course – oddly not credited in the booklet) is the same as Haydn's great scena composed in

1795. Both vocal works are splendidly done by Nuria Rial, while the instrumental pieces are played with engaging spirit if not consistent polish. Brian Robins

Philidor *Sancho Pança* Darren Perry
Sancho, Elizabeth Calleo *Thérèse*, Karim Sulayman *Lope Tocho*, etc., Meghan McCall *Juliette*, etc., Tony Boutté *Don Crispino*, etc., Eric Christopher Black *Torillos*, etc., Andrew Sauvageau *Un paysan*, Opera Lafayette, Ryan Brown 57' 11"
Naxos 8.660274

For some reason, this release has gone unreviewed for months. We apologise to performers and record company alike, if for no other reason than that it deserves all the plaudits it can get. The story is amusing (albeit rather simple, and presumably visually more entertaining in the theatre), the music is well written for voices and instruments, and it seems that the performers had a ball with it! For those not in the know, Opera Lafayette specialise in period performances of little-known works. On this evidence, they do a first-rate job – every one of the soloists' contributions is excellent, and they work well in ensemble. I must confess that I have never been much of an opera fan – if there were more like this, I might be converted! BC

19th CENTURY

Beethoven *Cello Sonatas op. 5* Rainer Zipperling, Boyan Vodenitcharov
Accent ACC 24237

+ Variations on "Ein Mädchen oder Weibchen" and "See the conqu'ring hero comes"

Much as I enjoyed Accent's three volume series of violin sonatas, I have found this disc something of a revelation. The balance of cello and piano is always an interesting one; these sonatas are really for keyboard with the stringed instrument in a guest role. Boyan Vodenitcharov is a fabulous pianist and Rainer Zipperling throws off his habitual mantel as Michael Schneider's continuo player of choice and relishes the freedom Beethoven affords him, and the challenges the music poses. Not the least of these are the huge opening movements of both sonatas, both of which last over quarter of an hour! The two sets of variations that conclude the disc are testaments to the composer's fertile imagination and to the performers' techniques – I do not think I have heard these works played by a better-suited duo. BC

Mendelssohn *Elijah* (1846) Wrocław Philharmonic Choir, Gabrieli Young Singers Scheme, Gabrieli Consort & Players 135' 58" (2 CDs)
SIGCD300

It probably doesn't need me to say so, but despite a couple of minor misprints and the tricky-to-read orange print in the book this release is an absolutely tremendous achievement. It's easy to criticise Mendelssohn for his sugary side, but whatever doubts he expressed he really knew what he was doing when he stepped into the post-Handel oratorio tradition and produced music for which choral singers continue to be grateful. And it is the choir that is the heart of the piece and the performance. All ages, joyful, uninhibited yet unanimous, they carry all before them. Was this the best tenor section ever? Has unison singing ever been so thrilling? The starry soloists also give their best, with Simon Keenlyside a magisterial Elijah to whom future performers of the role will surely look for inspiration. The huge period instrument orchestra incorporates rasping brass and full-throated organ, but also a rich-toned and subtle string section and delicate (when required) woodwind. These vast forces are based on those used for the first performance but I bet that didn't sound as good as this. The best comes at the end where the soloists combine to form a remarkably homogenous quartet (so many *Elijahs* fail here) and then the chorus is let off the leash for a final flourish. They clearly knew that this moment would not come again and made the most of it. Go out, buy it, set an evening aside and prepare to be uplifted with the prophet. You'll feel that you're in his fiery chariot. David Hansell

Mendelssohn *Violin Concertos* + *The Hebrides* Alina Ibragimova, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Vladimir Jurowski. 56'22"

Hyperion CDA67795

We have two reviews of this; one went astray, so we will print them both in the next issue.

Fanny Hensel-Mendelssohn *Das Jahr* Els Biesemans (1851 Ignace Pleyel fortepiano, restored Christoph Kern, Staifen im Breisgau, Germany)
Genuin GEN 12244

Andante cantabile D, Allegro molto c, Das Jahr (Zwölf Charakterstücke für Fortepiano, 1841), Il Saltarello Romano, Abschied von Rom

Despite being his elder sister and a musical equal, Fanny Hensel-Mendelssohn never

achieved the fame of her brother. But her music is of exceptional quality and well deserves greater appreciation. The focus for this CD is one of her most accomplished works, the piano cycle *Das Jahr*. The 14 pieces (June gets two shots and there is a concluding *Nachspiel*) were intended for private rather than public performance. They form an intimate musical souvenir that she presented the MS to her husband who then decorated it with drawings and poems. There is enormous depth in this music, ranging from the quotations from Lutheran chorales and Bach works to the possible reflection of a romantic encounter (in June) – which the programme note writer describes as a combination of “a Chopinesque nocturne with a serenade-like accompaniment (*imitando la chitarra*)”. The four contrasting miniatures that encase *Das Jahr* are further examples of Fanny’s talents. The interpreter on this CD is Els Biesemans, a musician perhaps better known as a rising star in the organ world, with success in several competitions, including the recent prestigious Arp-Schniter Competition where she took the First Prize. But her studies in Belgium and Basel included the fortepiano, and she is an extremely compelling advocate, both of Fanny Hensel’s music and of the fortepiano itself. She plays with a passion, musical sensitivity, virtuosity and emotional intensity that would surely have impressed Fanny, of whom Gounod wrote that she “was a woman of excellent intellect and full of energy that could be read in her deep, fiery eyes. Along with all this she was an extremely talented pianist”. The choice of a Pleyel piano is apposite. Fanny Hensel’s rather trenchant views on instruments (amongst other things) is a matter of legend, and she is known to have preferred the “full, heavy, gruff” sound of the “English” pianos (developed in England and France), although she could never afford the high cost of these over the lighter Viennese fortepianos. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

Schubert Concert Overtures, Symphony 5
L'Orfeo Barockorchester, Michi Gaigg 62'03"
deutsche harmonia mundi 88697911382
D. 470, 485, 556, 590, 591 & 648

Those who still doubt the efficacy of playing this repertoire on period instruments (surely not readers of *EMR*) should hear the mellifluous wind playing on this disc, at once full of colour and character. Rarely, for example, have the exchanges between flute and oboe at the opening of the development of the Allegro (i) of the B

flat symphony conveyed such innocent enchantment as they do here. Otherwise those who like me were brought up on Beecham’s famous recording may find Gaigg’s approach to this movement a little brusque, but in fact it is admirably straightforward and not without moments of grace and charm, as is the performance as a whole. The tempo set for the Andante con moto (ii) is to my mind spot on, with splendid balance between wind and strings, while the stormy interludes carry admirable weight and punch. The trio section of the Menuetto, which is again ideally paced, has an irresistible lilt that perhaps only Austrian players could bring to it. And of course, unlike Beecham, Gaigg gives us every repeat.

The eight concert overtures Schubert composed between 1816 and 1819 tend to be quickly passed over by his biographers. Five are included here, among them the two “in the Italian style”, works reputedly dashed off by Schubert in response to hearing endless praise for Rossini’s operas. In keeping with their genesis, both are appealing works with lots of sparkling writing for wind instruments, though the slow introduction to that in D (D 590) may remind listeners more of Weber’s Romantic world than of Rossini. Otherwise, there is little of special significance about these overtures, though the last of them, in E minor (D 648, 1819) makes bolder, more confident gestures that look forward to the orchestral writing of the last two symphonies. They are all agreeably played, making the CD as a whole an excellent proposition for anyone interested in the collection. *Brian Robins*

Spohr / Onslow Piano Sonatas Howard Shelley piano 78' 16"
Hyperion CDA67947
Spohr Rondoletto in G, op. 149 Onslow Six Pièces, Toccata in C, op. 6

Although not played on period piano, I asked for this CD as the music is otherwise unavailable and Howard Shelley is definitely HIP-aware. As a violinist, I have long rated Spohr’s music, and his keyboard music did not disappoint – flowing melodies, harmonic drive, and lots to entertain the ears. The same can be said of Onslow, whose C minor sonata lasts over half an hour. His *Six Pièces* run through a number of oddly unrelated keys but are nonetheless utterly charming. *BC*

Weber Wind Concertos Maximiliano Martin cl, Peter Whelan bsn, Alex Frank-Gemmill hn, Scottish Chamber Orchestra,

dir. Alexander Janiczek 64' 31"
Linn CKD 409

It feels slightly mean to limit myself to mentioning this recording only briefly, but the only real justification for inclusion is the fact that the three soloists (principals with the SCO) have gone back to the original sources in a quest for more accurate readings of the composer’s original intentions. But forget all of that, and sit back and enjoy a little over an hour’s worth of fabulous music played by one of the hottest chamber orchestras around, beautifully recorded by the label of the moment. *BC*

Musikalische Morgenunterhaltung Chamber Music of the Romantic Era on Period Instruments Leipziger Consort and guests, Raumklang RK3107 77' 28"
Music by Bach/Moscheles, Backofen, Becker, Gade, Kummer, Marschner, Mendelssohn, Romberg, C & R Schumann, Tromlitz & Weber

I like the concept of this recording – it’s as if a group of musical friends have gathered in someone’s drawing room to entertain one another, much as one sees in BBC Jane Austen series. The music and the performers here are, though, I would imagine, rather better than the mid 19th-century amateurs they pretend to imitate! I think my favourite pieces were works with clarinet by Gade (a much underrated composer) and Schumann; Moscheles’s added cello part to a Bach prelude is also very well done. Just as important as the excellent performances, however, are the instruments and the wonderful booklet that accompanies the recording, which includes guides to them and photographs. These include the ophicleide and the orpica (a kind of portable piano!) All in all a very neat way of getting lots of quality music by some not so well-known composers on to a CD to help contextualize their more prominent contemporaries. *BC*

Orgelkonzert Matthias Süß (1883/4 Walcker-Orgel, St Annenkirche, Annaberg-Buchholz)
VKJK 1207

Although this CD will be out of the normal remit of most *EMR* readers, it is worth a mention as an example of the right repertoire for the right instrument, albeit, in this case, one built on 1883/4. The organs built by the Ludwigsburg firm of Walcker represent the German answer to France’s Cavaillé-Coll organs in their symphonic tonal structure. Like organs

of the same period in England, these German instruments include many of the tonal ideas of Cavallé-Coll and are suitable for both the French and German repertoire of the period, here represented by the giants of the genre, the French Guilmant (with his sparkling Organ Sonata) and César Franck and the Germans Rheinberger and Reger. The sound and playing are both superb. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

Walzer Revolution: From Mozart's Dances to Lanner and Strauss Concentus Musicus WIEN, Nikolaus Harnoncourt (2 CDs)

Sony Classical 88697914112

Lanner Woo, Opp. 82, 89, 148a, 189, 194, 200, 203 & Marsch (from the ballet *Corso Donati*) Mozart K571, 603/1, 609/1 & 4; J. Strauss Snr. Opp. 4, 11, 100, 218 & 217

First, let me confess that I have never been a great fan of either the waltz in general, or of Strauss in particular. I remember being dragged around a ballroom at a summer school many moons ago, making up for my complete self-conscious lack of ability with overly balletic twists and turns while my slightly prim German partner tried to keep her rather errant "gentleman" under control. I was inspired to listen to the discs, however, when I had a conversation about them with a friend who had played for Harnoncourt and was assured that he would very definitely have something to say about the repertoire that would be worth hearing. True enough, I found myself, if not exactly dancing around the living room, well, at least sensing some urge to do so. The historical instruments and the HIP approach mean that one feels a genuine progression from dances in Mozart operas through to Johann senior. The oft-cited clarity of texture means that there is a great deal more subtlety than the ever-popular Mr Rieu's ever-smiling, heavily oompah-loompah, three-in-a-bar renditions. Whether or not the likes of Sean Rafferty and classic fm are in a position to give these far superior versions some airtime and educate the Great British Public remains to be seen. Our readers should not be put off by the idea that somehow this material is beneath us. *BC*

VARIOUS

Sacrum Mysterium A Celtic Christmas Vespers Apollo's Fire, Meredith Hall S, Jeannette Sorrell dir, Ensemble La Nef & Sylvain Bergeron 69' 04" (+ DVD, 21') Avie AV2269

Jeannette Sorrell and Apollo's Fire are at the forefront of many a cross-over project; not only do they mix and match repertoires, but they commission new works for old instruments (often from within their own number), and I find most of their projects exciting and worthwhile, if only in the way they make one think about music and its possible contexts and functions. We only reviewed a pre-release version of this Celtic Christmas project, and I have to say that I genuinely struggled to think of someone who could write knowledgeably about it. I am Scottish, sure, and I like Capercaillie and Karen Matheson (a Gaelic singer with apparently strong religious beliefs), but that does not qualify me to judge. Of course, critics in these pages are not expected to pass any sort of judgment – what we write is quite simply our opinion of what we hear *in the moment* – a sunnier day, a more relaxing drive home after work, or a beautiful bottle of Chablis could all impact on what appears on the printed page; and each reader will take different things from each sequence of words... Anyway, I enjoyed the two discs, though without – I confess – much connection to either the performances or the contexts in which the wide variety of music was placed. I wonder how much that actually matters? Is enjoyment not enough? *BC*

Arte Mandoline 61' 26"

K617 K617238

dall' Abaco Concerto op 5/6 Arrigoni Sonata for mandolin Castello Sonata 2da a soprano solo Fasch Sonata in d Matteis Ayre D. Scarlatti Sonata K.89 Uccellini La Bergamasca Vivaldi Concerto da ripieno in C Weiss Concerto in d

Since we do not have a mandolin specialist, it fell to me to review this, mostly because the instrument is tuned like a violin. This means that music for *that* instrument is easily adaptable for its plucked cousin. Some of the music I knew, and some of it I did not. Inevitably perhaps, it was the unfamiliar material that was most successful. Obviously unable to sustain longer notes, the mandolinist must compensate by quickly repeating notes with a plectrum, producing a result not a million miles away from a fast vocal vibrato. I will not deny the virtuosity of the performers here, but I don't think I ever want to hear them play Fasch again. And while I am aware of guitar and mandolin orchestras during the latter part of the 19th and early part of the 20th centuries, I feel sure that the mandolin is better suited to being an occasional colour

in a larger score than be the focus of attention for a whole CD. *BC*

I suspect that the problem is trying to achieve respectability by mis-appropriating music that doesn't suite it: there are other contexts where it's fine. *CB*

Shipwrecked Music from the stage show

Heresy 001

Ecstasy Dúlra

Heresy 002

Motion of the Heart / Viva Frida! The Dublin Drag Orchestra (2 CDs)

Heresy 003

1. Music by Dowland, Henry & William Lawes, Ward, anon & Hank Williams

2. Music by Durón, Fernandes, de Salazar & Clara Sanabras/Frida Kahlo

Possibly best to review these three releases as a job lot, since they all come from the same stable and feature, broadly speaking, many of the same musicians. Also worth pointing out that some of the music is a little off the *EMR* beaten track. The CDs are none the worse for that, though, because everything about them is done with integrity and a palpable sense of damned good fun. The renditions of the "straight" music would compete with the very best available recordings – the William Lawes on *Motion of the Heart* for example is exemplary, with just the right amount of give and take to allow it time to breathe. Some of the more earthy pieces (there is some pretty coarse Irish singing – my partner thought I was listening to The Cranberries at one stage, but that says more about his ignorance than these performers) will, perhaps, be more of a challenge for hard-line HIPsters, and although I feel quite sure that *Shipwrecked* and *Ecstasy* would work better live than as purely aural entertainment, I enjoyed having them on in the car a lot – a constantly changing musical kaleidoscope. Highly entertaining. *BC*

LATE ARRIVALS

L'Italie Renaissance (6 CD boxed set)

Doulce Mémoire, Denis Raisin Dadre

Baldassar Castiglione: Il libro del cortegiano Venezia 1528 67'34" E 8604

Lorenzo Il Magnifico: Trionfo di Bacco

Chants de carnaval 1449 - 1492 54' 21" E 8626

Cristóbal de Morales Office des ténèbres, Lamentations pour samedi saint E 8878

Le siècle du titien – Musique a Venise 1490-1576 65'39" E 8847

Viva napoli: Canzioni villanesche E 8648

Leonard de Vinci 1452 – 1519: L'harmonie du monde 60'19" E 8883

This boxed set brings together six CDs by the French ensemble Douce Mémoire presenting music from throughout the Renaissance in Italy. I will focus first on the exception within the set, devoted mainly to one work by one composer, the Spaniard Cristóbal de Morales, who earns a place in this Italian compilation by virtue of his employment at the Sistine Chapel. This CD presents Morales' setting of the Lamentations in a partial reconstruction of the Office of Tenebrae for Holy Saturday. As the performance note makes clear, only a certain proportion of the relevant plainchant is included, but this is enough to create a real impression of a liturgical context. More controversially, room is found for a performance on low recorders of a Morales motet, designed to provide textural variety but which would certainly never have been tolerated in the Sistine Chapel at the time! Some listeners may feel it interrupts the integrity of the *a cappella* service, but it is an undeniably haunting sound. I was more disturbed by the rather theatrical huffing out of candles during the sequence (in the Neapolitan disc we are lulled at the start by lapping waves!). However the singing is beautiful throughout, and the evocation of a historical event ultimately very successful – and lovely to hear the sort of faburden Miserere which must have graced the majority of such services, rather than the nowadays ubiquitous and largely spurious Allegri setting. This CD is exceptional in the set for the fact that it is mainly devoted to choral music – the others are more standard selections of short instrumental works with the addition of a variety of solo voices.

Three of the CDs attempt with some success to relate their musical content to painting and literature, and Padre's inventive if occasionally rather purple prose draws some interesting interdisciplinary parallels. However, the main virtues of this set are musical and are evident in all the CDs. Firstly there is a stunning level of instrumental virtuosity and sensitive musicality, and in the presentation of some of the material long versions with several verses, accumulating divisions and decorations as they unfold, allow the music to be thoroughly and fruitfully explored. Another virtue is the eclectic assemblage of little-known works from a wide range of sources, which rub together very creatively and create a very convincing snapshot of period, place and social context. Finally, the group has allowed a variety of traditional performance practices to influence their modes

of presentation, bringing the music dramatically to life and investing the singing with highly individual vigour and character. As the title suggests, this set aims to provide a cross-section of music in Renaissance Italy, and these six vivid snapshots certainly go a long way to providing a memorable musical overview.

D. James Ross

Ludford *Missa Regnum mundi* Richard Pygott *Salve regina* Music from the Peterhouse Partbooks, volume 2 Blue Heron, Scott Metcalfe 79' 40"

BHCD1003

see also p.25

I wrote a stop-gap review (see p. 35), but this has arrived just in time to offer the praise and enthusiasm it deserves.

CB

I was hugely impressed with the first CD in this admirable series exploring the neglected choral music of the Peterhouse Partbooks, and this second volume has been well worth waiting for. The random loss of one of the Tenor partbooks from the set and damage to a Treble book has meant that the composers, whose work was uniquely preserved here, were equally randomly consigned to a 'second division' in many minds simply due to the fact that their music missed out on the early stages of the rediscovery of English Renaissance choral music. Reconstruction work by Nick Sandon has now restored most of the contents, and composers such as Pygott and Ludford are beginning to be compared favourably in stature to their established contemporaries.

Ludford received a boost when several of his masses were recorded by The Cardinal's Musick and revealed as considerable masterpieces, and this process continues with the present performance of his hitherto unrecorded *Missa Regnum mundi*. Based in Boston (USA), Blue Heron has specialised for over a decade in the music of this period and produces a spectacularly rich and accurate sound, with beautifully delineated articulation. Presenting the polyphony in the context of a partial liturgical reconstruction of a Sarum rite celebration of a Mass for St Margaret, the singers perform the chant with great assurance, negotiating even the treacherous contours of the Sarum Kyrie Conditor and the Alleluya with an engaging degree of familiarity such as their Renaissance counterparts would have enjoyed, so that the polyphony seems to rise organically from these strong roots. A lengthy dissertation on performance pitch in the notes seems in practice to boil down

to an upward transposition of a semitone from modern A440, so no interstellar high trebles here. However, if anything it is the lower voices which carry much of the argument in Ludford's polyphony and which are given rightful prominence here.

But what polyphony this is! Even as a hardened reviewer and performer/director of polyphony (including several mass settings by Ludford), I was transported by the exquisite beauty of this Mass, and found myself sitting in semi-darkness luxuriating in the genius of Ludford's intertwining vocal lines. Pygott's enormous *Salve Regina*, running in this recording to almost 23 minutes of intricate polyphony, is in the more conservative idiom of the Eton Choirbook and is given an equally intelligent and exquisitely unhurried performance. I cannot recommend this superb CD highly enough – it is the sort of recording to listen to in awe at the sustained and unerring skill of the performers and the burgeoning brilliance of the composers (and their unobtrusive editor), and to shed a quiet tear for the untold treasures that have been lost.

D. James Ross

Michael Procter

Memorial Service

2 November 2012

6.00 pm

St Sepulchre-without-Newgate
EC1A 2DQ

No flowers, please, but small donations for Benedict's university education will be very welcome. Further details will be available from

www.michael-procter.com

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