

Early Music

REVIEW

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Are we too kind to singers? The Harmonia Mundi CDs of Handel's *Giustino* (see p. 21) raised the question in my mind again. We have reached some sort of consensus on how a baroque orchestra sounds, even if Reinhard Goebel produces something very different from Trevor Pinnock. But most singers of baroque opera inhabit a different world. For a start, unlike the players, they are not early-music specialists. In the 1970s, players like Duncan Druce, Jenny Ward Clark and Alan Hacker could play for The Fires of London as well as in baroque orchestras. By the 1980s, such 'crossover' had become rare. This had the advantage in convincing promoters and managements that the baroque orchestra really was something different. Now the gap is closing, as some modern orchestras make the effort to play stylishly and a few players (notably the brilliant Dutch cellist Wispelwey) play both early and modern.

The problem with opera is the lack of awareness by management and critics that the demands of Monteverdi and Handel are fundamentally different from Puccini and Strauss. Baroque sounds in the pit are acceptable, but there is no concept of period-style performance for all elements of a production. Whatever other merits a modern opera-singer must have, sheer volume is now crucially important. Early writings on singers, however, are absolutely silent on that; for them, the most important part of vocal technique is being able to trill (something few modern singers can do – listen to the substitutes on any Handel recording). We know the volume a baroque orchestra makes; many of our opera houses are not significantly larger than 250 years ago. So why do we need singers who perform at a different dynamic level from the band? The instruments also have a far higher standard of intonation and rhythmic accuracy: why can so few singers hit the precise note (without disguising it by vibrato) at the precise time – I'm not saying don't use vibrato or rubato, but they are only meaningful if done by choice, not by habit. We now train baroque instrumentalists: should we not be training baroque opera singers? And if more volume is needed, use microphones. CB

BOOKS AND MUSIC

Clifford Bartlett

CANTUS FIRMUS

Welcome to a new publisher, Cantus Firmus Music, Tudor (and early Stuart) church music edited, typeset and published by Timothy Symons, 2 Cathedral Cottages, Ridgemount, Guildford GU2 5TN; tel & fax +44 (0)1483 63917. The first batch is devoted to service music, a repertoire which a major publisher in this area informed me was particularly difficult to sell, so I wish him luck. The editions have a pleasing appearance. Careful attention is given to layout, though (judging by my own experience) I suspect that later issues will have fewer pages with large expanses of white on them.

It is good to have cheap editions of the Taverner Magnificats (£3.50 each for the four- and five-part settings, £3.85 for the six-part). All have note-values halved, rather than quartered as in EECM 30. Editing the four-part setting (TTBarB) presents few problems: there is only one source and it is complete. The five-voice setting also comes from a single source, but lacks the tenor. There is competition from Antico (RCM121), which keeps original note-values and has more ancillary matter. I can't find a current catalogue, but it is no doubt also more expensive. The added tenors are at times very similar. Both editions transpose up a fourth for SATTB, while EECM retains the original low pitch. The six-voice setting lacks its top part for all except 43 bars; the version here often reads like a correction of that in EECM, though one place where improvement is required, the closing octave F#s between the top two parts, remains.

The Taverner are A4 format: the other items are traditional octavo. There are English Mags and Nuncs from Sheppard's Second Service (£4.25) and Parsons' First (£4.25), both with four-flat signatures and the conventional transposition up a minor third. (The other editions I know, by David Wulstan and Sally Dunkley, do the same.) This does not achieve the presumed aim of suiting them to SATB, while if left untransposed they fit ATBarB perfectly. The original clefs are C2C3C4F4, and both settings require decani and cantoris. They are both very early for Anglican services: Sheppard died in December 1558 and the editor suggests that both services were composed in anticipation of the introduction of English services at Elizabeth's court (which began on 12 May 1559). The Sheppard has an organ part dated 1638/9 which is surely unlikely to go back to the composer. Sheppard's *Lord's Prayer* (£2.25) for SAATB (clefs G2C3C3C4F4) is perversely transposed up a semitone to give four-flats again: can't singers transpose by a semitone? The major source is the solfainge-song anthology BL Add. 31390 and only a tenor part has words, which are here

extrapolated into the other parts. This is quite an elaborate setting, more suited for use as an anthem than in any liturgical position.

The Jubilate from Tomkins' Third Service (£4.25) is a magnificent piece, opening (to quote Denis Stevens) with 'joyful waves of sound'. The editor has done some touching up to improve the layout of *Musica Deo sacra*. The scoring is SAATB verse and full for both *dec* & *can*; the minor third transposition is again applied, though (if one forgets theories about the pitch of a 2.5' organ pipe) performance untransposed at A=440 lies more comfortably for ATBarB than the transposed version. Perhaps Henry's Eight (see CD Review p. 18) are right in singing Tudor repertoire without trebles, though as a publishing solution it is less viable.

One tiny point on notation. The absence of slurs with instrumental beaming produces an oddity when the syllable of a long note is moved forward to the upbeat so that there is the pattern of beamed dotted quaver and semiquaver followed by minim or semibreve, with syllables under notes 1 & 2 (and not note 3). It looks like a misprint and jolts the reader. I can't think of any way of improving it without a fundamental change of policy: adding slurs, not reducing note-values or beaming by syllable-division.

These editions are good value, seem to be accurate and make excellent music more readily available than before. But this is an area in which other small publishers are operating, as well as Oxford UP, so I hope they keep in touch to prevent accidental duplication.

ROYALL CONSORT

William Lawes *The Royall Consort (old version)* edited by David Pinto. Fretwork (FE12), 1995. xvii + 107pp, £26.00. ISBN 1 898131 08 2

(*new version*). Fretwork (FE11), 1995. xix + 135pp, £27.00. ISBN 1 898131 06 6.

(Both volumes together £49.00. Prices exclude post.)

The New Version is what one normally means by *The Royall Consort*: 66 movements in ten setts (suites) scored for two violins and two bass viols with a continuo bass for two theorbos. The *Fantasy* of Sett 1 is exceptional in having two independent theorbo part. The Old Version is for a more conventional consort of two trebles, tenor and bass without independent theorbo parts. Among the perspicacious remarks of the editor's introduction (the same in both volumes) are indications that the differences between versions are more complicated than was thought; the time-scale of the change is anyway quite close.

Fretwork has been in the forefront of the campaign to divert some of the commemorative energy from Purcell to the 350th anniversary of the death of Lawes, who was killed in the Siege of Chester on 24 September 1645: they have been playing his music, have recorded *The Royall Consort*, have organised a conference and have even been selling a Lawes T-shirt. This edition comes at present only in score, though parts may be produced if there is a demand for them – so players, make your demands!

This arrived a week too late to help me write a note to accompany vol. 2 of the rival recording by Monica Huggett and the Greate Consort. Curiously, one comment I made as a result of listening to the Fretwork recording is not backed by looking at the score itself: the music sounds much more polarised to treble and bass than it looks, despite the contemporary comment by Edward Lowe that the new version was made to remedy that. But I am sure that I will find other uses for these scores. The editor and publishers are to be congratulated on so fine an achievement. I look forward to a book on Lawes from the same team, which should be ready before our next issue.

ENGLISH COURT

Records of English Court Music. Volume VIII (1485-1714) calendared and edited by Andrew Ashbee. Scolar Press, 1995. xxiii + 393pp, £35.00. ISBN 1 85928 234 2

This volume contains additional material related to the whole period covered by vols. 1-7. The introduction explains the categories of document covered. Only someone who has worked on the records can make specific comment on the accuracy or comprehensiveness of this invaluable series; but those I know who have researched in this area have been in touch with Andrew Ashbee, a sign of the best sort of co-operation that can exist among researchers and musicologists. The series is difficult for the non-expert to use, partly because information is scattered, but chiefly because one needs to understand of the type of document and its context to interpret exactly what it says. But there are many interesting snippets.

The book happens to have fallen open at page 107 and my eye fell upon the statement that Lewis Richard received a pension of £100 a year 'for breeding and bringing up of boys for her Majesty's Chapel'. The preceding item gives the cost of tuning the organ in Queen Henrietta Maria's abode, Denmark House. The standard fee (including cost of materials) seems to have been £1 5s 0d about three times a year, though do we presume that the organ was not tuned in between or that it was touched up as required by the player between these more thorough tunings?

Purcell appears on page 276 with a complaint that the Chapel Royal organ was so out of repair in 1688 that 'to cleanse, tune and put in good order will cost £40 and then to keep it so will cost £20 *per an[um]* at the least'. The next sentence is fascinating: 'For the loan of a harpsichord,

portage and tuning to three practices and performances of each song to the King at £4 per song for four several songs at least £16. 0s. 0d.' 'Songs' are what we call 'Odes' (my attempts to restore the early terminology have been unsuccessful: I think that Ode is a poetic, not a musical form). So this implies that a harpsichord took part in performances of them but not an organ, since there is no mention of moving or tuning one, and that there were at least three rehearsals for each. Information on the amount of rehearsal required for any 17th-century music is so minimal that this is valuable information.

A memorandum of 1697 (p. 290) states that all of six oboists 'play upon the flute [recorder], and most upon the violin'.

Andrew Ashbee writes that this is his last trawl through the archives at the Public Record Office: its move from central London to Kew makes access too time-consuming. But there are to follow two additions which will make his work much more accessible to non-specialists: an index to the series and, more important, *A Biographical Dictionary of English Court Musicians (1485-1714)* in which he will collaborate with Peter Holman, David Lasocki, Fiona Kisby and others. That is a publication which I eagerly await.

CAMBRIDGE RECORDER

The Cambridge Companion to the Recorder edited by John Mansfield Thomson, associate editor Anthony Rowland-Jones. Cambridge UP, 1995. xxiii + 238pp, £ 37.50 ISBN 0 521 35269 X (Paperback ISBN 0 521 35716 7; £13.95)

There are 14 chapters here, but with rather fewer authors. The major contributor is Anthony Rowland-Jones, who writes most of the chapters on recorder repertoire and a Guide to Further Reading. David Lasocki contributes on the 18th-century concerto, instruction books and early professional players, Eve O'Kelly deals with the 20th century and education. The late Howard Mayer Brown gets the book off to a fine start with his chapter on the recorder in the middle ages and the renaissance. Other chapters are contributed by Adrienne Simpson (on the orchestral recorder), the editor (on G. B. Shaw and Arnold Dolmetsch) and myself (a rather general chapter on facsimiles to conceal my ignorance of the recorder). The book benefits (as estate agents say) from a large number of illustrations of works of art showing the recorder in performance, some with extensive annotations. My involvement makes it better that I do not add any evaluative comment. So this is more in the nature of an announcement (in time to draw the attention of relatives of recorder players to a possible Christmas present) and we will print an independent review by John Turner in our next issue.

VIVALDI

The Istituto Italiano Antonio Vivaldi has now completed its task of editing the works of Vivaldi, with the exception of the 19 operas and serenades. There is a division between

those issued between 1947 and 1972, which we know and curse for their old-fashioned editorial techniques (though once you are used to their conventions – e.g. of inventing double-bass parts – they are quite serviceable) and often-unavailable parts for purchase, and the newer *edizione critica* of the last few years, which covers the church and vocal chamber music and newly-discovered instrumental works. The next stage will be the re-editing of some of the earlier instrumental volumes.

Three new editions have appeared. A concerto in D for traversa and strings was numbered by Ryom (RV 783) on the strength of a catalogue entry; fortunately, it enabled an anonymous work in Schwerin to be identified. Although this is the third edition to appear in the 1990s, there is no doubt that it deserves a place in the collected works (PR 1339; £27.95 for score only). However, the Bärenreiter edition (Hortus Musicus HM 265) is far cheaper (£9.95 for score and parts was the price when I was sent a copy two years ago) and has a more compact layout which I prefer. The Ricordi continuo realisation is preferable, though the notation of sustained broken chords in the last movement looks odd on the page, sensible though it is in practice.

Vivaldi makes quite a substantial work of the short opening item of *Vespers Domine ad adjuvandum me festina* RV 593 (PR 1340; £39.50). The main text is set for double choirs SATB and strings, with a pair of oboes in chorus I. The first half of the Gloria is sung by a soprano solo with both groups of strings. The two choirs have identical music for the concluding 'Sicut erat'. Michael Talbot calls it 'perhaps the most perfect of his choral works'; listeners can judge from the Ex Cathedra recording. *Laudate pueri Dominum* RV 602/602a (PR 1341; £79.50) is for one choir of S solo, SATB and strings with another choir of S solo and strings without chorus. That, at least, is the scoring for RV 602; for 602a the chorus is duplicated in choir II. This edition shows the other differences between the two versions (two movements are printed in different settings and there are smaller changes). RV 603 is a cut-down version with only one soprano solo; it is not going to be included in the series. The thorough critical notes sort out the complex superimposition of versions in the autograph. There is an interesting comment by the editor, Michael Talbot again, on the problems of writing a continuo realisation: 'once one sets down a theoretically "improvised" part in notation, one inevitably and justifiably becomes influenced by the conventions of notated music'. The music looks attractive, but how can any amateur ensemble afford to perform it: the prices quoted are just for scores!

Two technical points. Bar numbers should be printed often enough for there always to be one visible on each opening; on several occasions that does not happen in RV 593. And volumes as thick as these need a title on the spine.

Ricordi are quick off the mark to use International Standard Music Numbers. They may catch on; but they share the enormous defect of ISBNs that the final check digit makes it

impossible to abbreviate a consecutive series of numbers. So the only way to order orchestral parts (unless there is a separate number for a complete set and that is what you want) is to write out each number in full, and the only way to list them in a catalogue is to do the same, which is incredibly wasteful of space and expense.

Informazioni e Studi Vivaldiana vol. 16 (1995) is quite cheap at £14.95 for 180 pages. The most substantial article, by Livia Pancino, compares the different versions of four operas. Carlo Vitali investigates the nine *Principi di altezza* with whom Vivaldi claimed to correspond, and also the dedicatee of RV 574 (not 754, as printed in the *indice*). Gastone Vio throws indirect light on Vivaldi's life by describing clerical organisation in Venice. There are notes on the year's Vivaldian activity by Michael Talbot and a discography by R. C. Travers. The article which interested me most was Kees Vlaardingerbroek on Vivaldi's music in Amsterdam. Careful readers of our October issue will have noticed that I 'fleetingly visited Amsterdam in search of a few missing bars of Vivaldi'. In fact, the object was to produce an edition of RV 562, which lacks nine bars of treble instrument in its sole source, a Pisendel MS in Dresden. I had edited the work from a film of that source for a recording, but wondered whether the MS of RV 562A might throw any light on the subject. We had ordered a film of it from Amsterdam University Library a couple of months earlier, but it had not arrived (it still hasn't).

Not having done any homework, I was surprised by what I saw: a MS history of the 100th anniversary celebrations of the Schouwburg Theatre on 7 January 1738. There were delightful colour illustrations of the theatre and the text of the play, and also MS parts of the ten instrumental works played then. RV 562A is the first, and it is preceded by a list of performers, headed by Vivaldi as composer. The MS did not solve the problem, since the relevant passage is somewhat different, with a brief tutti interjection and a few bars of oboe solo. In many respects, the oboe parts of RV 562A are suspicious. I assume the score was transmitted in reduced format and that for the ripienos the oboe parts were concocted locally. RV 562A lacks the dubious cadenza of the Dresden MS, but does have the irrelevant final five bars. If (when) the microfilm comes, we will be producing an edition of RV 562A; meanwhile, King's Music has a version of RV 562 which papers the crack in the first movement from RV 562A. It has been recorded for Naxos by the City of London Sinfonia.

It is a coincidence to find that another account of this material by someone who understands the backgrounds and can read the language was ready for publication while I was looking at the MS. I would probably have spent my time in front of the MS differently had I seen this. Vlaardingerbroek mentions the missing treble in RV 562 in his note 20, but does not comment on what RV 562A has at the point. The rest of his article concerns a carillon version of RV 310; why not set out the facsimile so that the blank *volti* pages are printed as *rectos*?)

BACH MOTETS

Daniel R. Melamed *J. S. Bach and the German motet*. Cambridge UP, 1995. xv + 229pp, £35.00. ISBN 0 521 41864 X

For most of us, Bach's motets are isolated phenomena, with no context except perhaps those of older members of Bach's family. One of the topics Melamed deals with is the *Altbachisches Archiv*, which he plausibly suggests came into Bach's hands as late as the 1740s. Melamed's contention that *Ich lasse dich nicht* (BWV Anh. 159) is an early work of J. S., not by Johann Christoph, has already been circulated (JAMS 1989, 491-526). The demonstration that Bach was writing motets so early (perhaps 1713) undermines the assumption that the other motets must date from the early Leipzig years, so their placement in Bach's oeuvre and their function is reconsidered. He also shows that Bach's motets fall squarely into what contemporary writers describe a motet to be. Instrumental doubling was expected, and works with some independent instrumental parts like Cantata 118 nevertheless qualify as motets. If Bach's examples are original, it is because of their quality, not their basic procedures. His list of possible meanings of the word motet is a little vague with regard to foreign usage; Quantz's definition of the Italian-type solo motet is not irrelevant since Cantata 51, despite a different title in the sources, is an Italian-style motet, complete with closing Alleluia, though with the characteristic addition of a chorale. I'm not entirely convinced that *Jesu meine Freude* must be a compilation. Is it surprising, for instance, that the opening and closing chorales are in four parts? Surely one expects simple settings to be thus. One preoccupation of Bach scholars is to see behind surviving works to earlier versions; this is a game that Melamed plays with intelligence, but it can easily become an obsession.

Many statements that I and others have presented as facts in programme notes turn out to be unconfirmed hypotheses, and Melamed offers his own, generally more plausible ones. He presents his arguments clearly, and anyone writing on the motets or wishing to understand their context and will need to read this.

EARLY PIANO

Stewart Pollard *The Early Pianoforte* Cambridge UP, 1995. xx + 297pp, £55.00. ISBN 0 521 41729 5

Since I am incapable even of assembling a prepacked bookcase, I am probably not the best person to evaluate any discussion of Arnaut de Zwolle's 15th-century instructions on building a keyboard instrument, let alone deciding whether it has anything to do with the piano. A chapter entitled *The pianoforte in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Italy* is a challenge to our preconceptions. I'm not sure if I believe it. Just because Cristofori used the words *piano* and *forte* for an instrument with graduated dynamics there is no reason to assume this usage a century earlier; without the familiar later usage to confuse us, the obvious meaning of

an *istromento pian et forte* is an instrument that can play soft and loud, but with no implication concerning any intermediate dynamics. It is not just a matter of two different registers, since the instrument has that anyway; but it could easily be some sort of lute stop. The only other evidence is a spinettino of 1587 which was given a striking action at some undated renovation; but its history seems too complicated to bear much weight.

But after these two tangential chapters, the book continues with thorough surveys of Cristofori and the instruments by the first generations of his successors in Florence, Spain and Portugal, Germany and France. (England is touched on in the Conclusion, but the cut-off date of the book is 1763, too early for English pianos.) It is a little frustrating for non-technicians that the relationship between instrument and what was played on it is barely mentioned; but that needs another book, preferably with a CD of performances on the few instruments that are playable (at least three of those mentioned here) and on copies of some of the others.

INSTRUMENTAL

The latest batch from Amadeus (Schott in the UK) has some interesting music. The six attractive sonatas op. 2 by Finger (c.1705) for two 'flutes' (treble recorders) without bass are edited by Yvonne Morgan (BP202; £8.50). Handel's Trio in F for two recorders & continuo HWV 405 (BP 2358; £7.45) looks in the autograph as if it too is a piece for two trebles, but it doesn't really work thus and a MS in the Library of Congress which emerged a few years ago provides a bass part. The first edition (Christopher Hogwood/Faber) is out of print. The new one by Grete Zahn (BP 2358; £7.45) doesn't seem to have any merits over the Bärenreiter version by Terence Best (HM 263), and the latter has a little more editorial information – it may affect the way you play it if you know that it is an early Italian work.

I can welcome more enthusiastically further issues of the Amadeus series of Telemann trio sonatas. Number 1-6, these come from a set *6 Trii a Violini e Basso* at Darmstadt. Nos. 2-6 were published in Paris as *Six Sonates en trio dans le gout italien, Qui peuvent se jouer aisément sur la flute allemande et sur toutes sortes d'instruments*, thus justifying the instrumentation given on the cover of flutes or violins; other MS sources confirm the alternative for no. 1 as well. The Paris edition was pirated, so is not necessarily authoritative, though the editor seems to follow it rather than the MS (BP 2281-6; £7.45 each). I hope enough copies are sold to justify publication of this valuable enterprise.

It is perhaps a sad reflection on the viola repertoire that the most significant classical concertos for the instrument are by Carl Stamitz rather than by Mozart. He wrote three of them, of which the one in D, misleadingly called op. 1, is probably the latest, written between 1770 and 1774. There are several editions available, but if the others are like the two samples I have at hand (a Kalmus MS full score and an IMC viola-piano version) there is clearly room for a

properly-edited version. This is what Ulrich Drüner has provided. But I don't understand his criticism that previous editions have an unnatural seventh skip downwards after the end of bar 163 of the finale: his does as well. The other editions ignore the strange circles above some notes in the *minore* section of this movement, but the editor finds authority in Baillot that Stamitz used left-hand pizzicato, anticipating Paganini, and suggests that is what they mean. (BP 750; score £18.00, viola & piano £9.55).

Haydn: Sechs Sonaten für Clavier is an innocent enough title. Each sonata bears L[andon] numbers ranging, not consecutively, from 21-26. The title page states that they are edited and completed by Winfried Michel. We are not told that only 16 bars of the whole volume are unequivocally by Haydn: i.e. the joke which caught out all the Haydn experts a couple of years ago continues. Our regular readers will probably be more aware than Haydn scholars of Michel's track record in completing fragmentary compositions: this is a *tour de force*, the *ne plus ultra* of reconstruction. Amadeus has kept up the joke; how will library cataloguers respond? (BP 2557; £13.80)

Finally, one piece from a different publisher, Corda Music, 183 Beech Rd, St. Albans, AL3 5AN; £3.50. Ian Gammie's covering letter reminds us 'JCF Bach bicentenary? hmmm not a lot of people know that'. Perhaps he is being heard more in Bückeburg (a place, incidentally, well worth a detour if you find yourself driving to Berlin, with a fine church and country house). His Trio Sonata in A for flute, violin or keyboard right hand and continuo, comes from his brother C. P. E. Bach's *Musikalisches Vielerley* of 1770 (facsimile edition by Alamire). Derek McCulloch's introduction seems to confuse the composition date (1763) with the publication date of the anthology. The violin part is subordinate to the flute, so the accompanied sonata alternative is probably more satisfactory. The edition provides score, parts and a separate score with keyboard realisation, answering one faction of our correspondents on this issue; this makes the price remarkably good value.

RECENT ARTICLES

In view of the considerable controversy over when and why *Dido and Aeneas* was written, attention must be paid to the latest *Music and Letters*, (vol. 76/4, Nov. 1995) in which Andrew R. Walkling argues that the political allegory of some subtlety relates to the latter part of James II's reign. I don't know enough about the history to evaluate it but am sceptical of an interpretation that was so obscure that Josias Priest, with such close court connections, was insensitive to its meaning. Also in this issue Michael Burden extracts as much as can be found in the exiguous details of Lady Rhoda Cavendish's music lessons with Purcell.

The Autumn/Winter 1995 issue of *Brio*, the magazine for UK music librarians which I edited for about 10 years in the 1970s and 1980s, has an account, covering slightly different ground from the two by Curtis Price, on the new Purcell

keyboard MS by Chris Banks. Its number, MS.Mus.1, begins a new numbering series at the British Library to celebrate the removal of music manuscripts to the care of the Music Library when it moves to St Pancras. There are also several tributes to Alec Hyatt King, who was in charge of what was then called the Music Room there from 1944 until his retirement in the 1970s. My dealings with him were more as a colleague in running the organisation of UK music librarians than as a Mozart scholar or librarian; he always seemed to be pleasantly and devastatingly efficient.

The international librarianship journal, *Fontes*, has a rather sledge-hammer-to-nut article which reattributes two Fux oratorios to Carlo Agostino Badia and also contains a list of British 18th-century editions surviving at the Belgian Benedictine Abbey of Maredsous in Dence.

As I said last month, the belated 1994 *Chelys* has an article duplicated by the introduction to *Musica Britannica* 67. The Viola da Gamba Society's latest newsletter includes an attack on an unpublished paper by Roger Bowers on which Ian Payne relied for Ward's Canterbury background. It will be curious if Bowers publishes his defence of his research before the research itself is published.

LES CAHIERS DU TOURDION

I am embarrassed that some music that we had been given to review at the Paris exhibition a year ago has just emerged from a suitcase. So, with apologies to subscriber Martin Gester, I hasten to mention the publications of a firm that was then new to me, Les Cahiers du Tourdion, 111 Grand' rue, F- 67000 Strasbourg, tel +33 88 32 52 72, fax 88 21 02 94. Their output is a mixture of old and new; I'll mention here briefly the samples I received and hope to be more expansive another time. All are nicely produced, if a bit expensive at the present exchange rate.

We enjoyed Le Parlement de Musique's recording of music by Samuel Capricornus (*EMR* 6) so it is nice to see his *Jesu nostra redeptio* for soprano, gamba and continuo in print (FFR80,00 for score + voice and gamba parts). Three suites for gamba solo by Stöeffken/Steffkins which survive in the Goëss MS in tablature are printed in facsimile (in standard notation) from New York Public Library Drexel 3551, where they are appended to Simpson's *Division Viol*; we reviewed the CD by the editor, Jonathan Dunford, in *EMR* 4 (FFR70,00). The first trio from Jean-Ferry Rebel's *Recueil de douze Sonates* has a nicely printed score, without realisation, and facsimile parts, the two trebles being in C1 clef (FFR80,00); note is also taken of a MS source which gives the work a title, *La Flore*. There is also an edition of Loulié's *Méthode pour apprendre à jouer de la flûte douce* by Nicolas Stroesser (FFR100,00).

Apologies: I managed to write a long paragraph in October (p. 7) on Asclepius's edition of duets for two viols without stating the name of the composer, Carl Friedrich Abel. The original treble clef is replaced by the alto, not the tenor.

PURCELL

Clifford Bartlett and others

Some readers may think that we have been concentrating too much on Purcell this year. But he has been dominating our lives, thanks to the orders from all over the world that have been reaching us for our editions of his music, and it is difficult to keep our preoccupation with his music away from *EMR*. There have been plenty of publications to review as well, with the 1993 Performing Purcell conference essays still to come; we haven't yet received a copy of Jonathan Keates' biography, and if the British Library Purcell Exhibition has a catalogue, that will also have to wait till our next issue.

The biggest disappointment of the year is that there has not been an adequate performance of any of the semi-operas. I must confess that I have simple expectations of an opera production. For a concert or CD the performers must make sure that they are performing the right notes on the right instruments in the right style (using 'right' to mean 'right, to the best extent of our current knowledge'). I don't understand why that principle vanishes as soon as anything theatrical is added to the music. Why should we respect every note of the composer and completely ignore his collaborators? Or put another way, why should long-dead composers be turned into material for modern directors to exercise their own imagination on? Just as, despite all the constraints of historical awareness, musicians have plenty of room to use their individual imaginations, so there is plenty of scope for good direction within the disciplines of reconstructing distant performance styles.

Many modern directors are extremely creative. But surely they should be working with modern composers on works of art that are all contemporary, not trying to drag earlier works into the 1990s? The theatrical world in general seems to be way behind the musical in realising that culture and life in the past were different from the present and do not benefit from modernisation. There is a vast industry in recreating the past in all sorts of ways; but one still cannot easily see a Shakespeare play performed according to our knowledge of the original circumstances – and from what I have heard about the reconstructed Globe, that seems unlikely to improve matters. Apart from that, what the composer wanted, or at least expected, is surely important. (I was interested a few hours after writing this to hear Anthony Payne on the radio making very similar comments on the Covent Garden production of Hindemith's *Mathis der Maler*: it is not just a problem for early music.)

There is a widespread belief that 1690s operas don't work. Surely this year was the time to test it. We have discovered that they don't take five hours to perform: with one interval, *King Arthur* is no longer than a complete *Figaro*. It

can't be done on a shoe-string, since one essential element, the spectacle, cannot be done on the cheap. The work I have seen most is *King Arthur* – three stage productions, all done on the cheap. (I didn't see Les Arts Florissants at Covent Garden, but gather that it was not in a 1690s style.) Musically, Boston was outstanding, but there was little money for staging and the acting was less good than that of the one-night-stand with actors reading from scripts at Croydon. (Some of our writers were involved – Kah-Ming Ng as conductor and keyboard, Lynda Sayce as theorboist and Rosemary Druce as organiser, promoter and singer.) What was needed was the resources of a major company, and that was not available – a severe lack of imagination from the British musical establishment.

KING ARTHUR

This was a joint production between The Guildhall School of Music and Drama and The Royal Conservatory at The Hague, conducted by Ton Koopman. I attended with Rosemary Druce; since she knows the work, especially the text, far more intimately than I do, she has written the following remarks.

It is rather difficult to take a supposed great magician such as Merlin seriously when he is dressed in nothing but a scanty Tarzan loincloth and dashing-applied blue body make-up. Likewise you rather lose the dramatic sense of the heroine's disgust at the monstrous appearance of Merlin's Saxon counterpart, the conjuror Osmond, when his equally-scanty clothing reveals nothing but a fine body and a first class set of buttocks that would do all the tempting of young virgins that Philidel (dressed in a skirt, though the text identifies the character as male) could ever imagine for Grimbald.

Osmond's attempted 'seduction' of Emmeline was not the only place where the dramatic sense seemed sacrificed in this production. Odd cuts in dialogue served to confuse the action at several points: after the on-stage battle scene (which is anyway 'supposed to be given behind the Scenes') Arthur and his friends are left unconscious upon the stage; so how is Grimbald supposed to be leading them into a bog? His dialogue is cut and he is not on stage at the beginning of the scene, which all makes Philidel's *Hither this way* song seem rather pointless when, at the beginning, the British are not going anywhere. And if Philidel's spirits can appear on stage at the end of the scene, why weren't they there at the beginning as left by Merlin? Also, why cut Matilda's dialogue that introduces the Kentish lads and lasses who come to entertain Emmeline? Having a shepherd creep in and caress her while she slept in her beautifully-stitched late-medieval gown was inconsistent

with the etiquette of behaviour established at the outset of the production.

On the subject of the text, a more worrying point was the change of emphasis at the end of the work. *King Arthur* is generally agreed to be about reconciliation. Not only were Merlin's words on the coming together of the Britons and the Saxons cut, but the last pose of the two armies was that of aggression towards each other, undermining the point of the text. Arthur's last speech, the closing lines of the play, was also cut. Earlier in the Act 5 masque, we had three white clowns substituted for three peasants, though I was unsure what was funny about *For folded flocks?*

In general, the musical episodes were more successful than the dramatic ones, and there were some very good performances from Emmeline, Matilda, Oswald and Merlin in particular. The Frost Scene, which projected a snow storm onto a back drop, worked particularly well, though Cupid's female charms were somewhat over-apparent in what looked more like a voluptuous bikini than a cherubic outfit.

There were some odd choices in instrumentation, perhaps a result of having a Dutch conductor less familiar with English practices of the time. It was rather strange to hear a tambourine jingling along during the most solemn part of Act 1, scene 2 Sacrifice Ode (but then we also had two very jolly dancers while the on-stage chorus were singing about dying). Recorders were also used extensively, right from the first movement, though it is generally assumed that they were reserved at the time for moments where they could make a special, often symbolic, effect.

The chorus work was good and there was a varied range of voice types among the singers. Perhaps the most impressive among the large cast was Dewi Williams, whose beautifully lyric tenor was heard to advantage throughout the piece, and Julian Snape's gravelly bass was extremely effective in the role of the Cold Genius.

Rosemary Druce

I too was puzzled by much that came from the pit. There was excessive use of recorders and percussion, and the best-known song, *Fairest Isle*, was a disaster: the voice was unstylish, the continuo-playing, in both the instrumental and solo sections, was unconvincing (with a completely wrong chord, which came twice so must have been deliberate, in the verses), and the instrumental statement between verses was ruined by irrelevant recorder warblings. Ton Koopman may be a brilliant player and conductor of some repertoires, but he seems not to have taken the trouble to learn the English style of the 1690s.



THE QUEEN OF THE COLISEUM

The Fairy Queen as presented by the English National Opera had mixed reviews, but has been a success in terms of getting the audience in. It was certainly a memorable event. The play was abandoned altogether, being replaced with dance (but not with extra music), and many of the songs were assigned to the main characters – something that does not happen in semi-opera. This was certainly the most enjoyable operatic event to which I have been able to entice my wife, beating *Elektra* with Solti and Nilsson hands down. I enjoyed it too, but would have felt happier had it been in reaction to and parody of a more authentic staging. Marvellous that so many people will have enjoyed a Purcell opera, but a shame that they will have a false conception of how Purcell's music really works. (Far more distorting than, say, doing a Handel opera without any recitatives.)

Purcell's music was given complete – even with extra repeats (see p. 26). I was impressed by what came from the pit: basically the normal ENO orchestra but with baroque trumpets, recorders, cello, lutes (including Lynda Sayce again) and harpsichord, ably conducted by Nicholas Kok. The singing was less convincing. Given the style of production, I wondered whether smaller, cleaner voices with subtle electronic assistance (as is rumoured to be the practice in some opera-houses) might have been more effective than ones trained to fill the theatre. There was a particularly weedy batch of counter-tenors and Yvonne Kenny's presentation of the *Plaint* was less moving than that of the sign-interpreter. She almost managed to keep up with the cracking pace of *Hark the echoing air*, one of the few miscalculated tempi in the performance, and delivered it with tremendous panache. But it is rather odd to come out of an production from a leading opera company feeling that the dance was better than the singing.

It was, however, immensely impressive to see how well everyone, not just the dancers, could move. None of the staid movement of opera-singers I remember from my youth (though Sadlers Wells was always better than Covent Garden in this respect). Thomas Randle as Oberon was outstanding in this respect.

The whole work was turned into what was virtually a pantomime, with visual gags, cross-dressing, a most elegant horse (or rather ass) and three, not just two, ugly sisters. The problem with this sort of approach is that it is unlikely that any director will come up with brilliant ideas for every single movement. David Pountney did pretty well, and some scenes were almost like a Breughel picture, with such a variety of action that one didn't know where to focus on. But there were a few misses. In particular, the Masque of the Four Seasons ran out of steam and did not make its musical effect to the full. I wonder, though, whether the idea of performing Purcell's music as stylishly as possible is the wrong approach. If the staging is updated, shouldn't the music be as well? Earlier this century, the work would have been re-orchestrated; now it might benefit from some witty

arrangement for a contemporary ensemble, in the spirit of the rehashes Peter Maxwell Davies did of some of Purcell's shorter pieces in the 1970s. Pountney should have the courage of his own creativity and commission a young composer to interpret Purcell the way he has interpreted the story.

I have already mentioned the sign-interpreter, Wendy Ebsworth. We were extremely lucky to have chosen the night she was in action. We had not seen her before and were enormously impressed. She was not just using sign language but making her whole body interpret words and emotion in a way we found most moving. Once people get used to it, this will avoid the problems of cold and distant surtitles, since audiences can easily pick up the meaning of the signs (indeed, with integration in schools, more and more people will understand them anyway); then even the English National Opera can perform opera in the original language. But singers will have to look to their laurels: the moment they fell below standard, our eyes turned to the signer.

THE QUEEN OF ADELAIDE

Jack Edwards, who directed King Arthur at Boston, produced an Australian Fairy Queen very different from the one described above. They had one thing in common: both used our edition.



Purcell celebrations in Adelaide included a full performance (minus some incidental music and very small dialogue cuts) of *The Fairy Queen*, put on in September by students of the Elder Conservatorium of Music (University of Adelaide) in conjunction with the Centre for Performing Arts (actors) and dancers also from the University, led by David Roche. Our intention from the outset was to reproduce this long work as faithfully as possible. All of the vocal roles were preserved intact. Scene changes were swift and very cleverly devised by our director, who not only inspired the cast thoroughly, but, in the end, produced an event of quality and integrity rarely seen in Australia in this genre. He also gave valuable guidance on gesture and movement which had the students clamouring for more.

All too often Purcell's operas are produced in heavily cut productions which give little indication of their dramatic concept. This production was one of the first in Australia which made serious use of the inclusion of dialogue and dance. The actors from the CPA had never worked in a semi-opera before and they rapidly absorbed from Jack Edwards not only new acting techniques, but also how their work fitted into the overall context of the opera. The style of the dancers cannot be said to have been truly baroque; nevertheless, David Roche captured essential elements which, when combined with crisp and refined orchestral playing, produced some magical effects. The orchestra had been drilled in baroque techniques by the Musical Director since March, so by the time September came around, they were thoroughly ready. The singers came from a curriculum which included limited baroque repertoire, so it was an intense process of producing as many baroque ideas as possible in a short period. As in all institutions, the standard of soloists varied, but most absorbed stylistic elements very well and the chorus was generally good in movement and ensemble singing. All in all it took three hours (with one interval between acts three and four) but at no time did anybody – including the audience – seem fatigued. We were indebted to Clifford Bartlett for his excellent performing material. *Peter Leech*

With a singing cast of forty-four plus fourteen dancers and fifteen actors, not to mention a technical staff of fifty, I was reminded of a review of this production in the Adelaide Gay Times: 'This is the time of the year when all good fairies head for the bottom of the garden'. But Purcell's excellent music gave me most of the magic I needed in contemplating this huge work with its complement of Shakespeare's original text from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Australians never were to be daunted in undertaking this most curious of art forms, the semi-opera, and brought there own national characteristics to bear on many areas of the text and score. Dances for swans, monkeys, green men and fairies resulted in some curious marsupial choreography – yet none the worse for that. Gesture was developed over a long rehearsal period, four weeks with 10 hour sessions each day, plus a lot of voice classes, helped largely by the fact that all performers came totally prepared and in many cases 100% off the book!

Baroque staging is almost unknown in Australia, and yet our designers devised a setting not very far removed from the original Dorset Garden theatre scale, painted backcloths and gauzes being very much in evidence. It took a 300th anniversary to bring this about and it is to be hoped that the repertoire of late 17th and 18th century works will be recognised and established in the southern hemisphere.

Jack Edwards

BEHIND THE BARBICAN

Apart from the Westminster Abbey commemoration of the death-day (which I found curious for its emphasis on that minimally-Purcellian voice, the counter-tenor – it is high tenors who are the stars now – and for the misleading emphasis in the reading of the inscription on his memorial), London's last major event was the weekend at The Barbican (Nov. 17-19) devised by Christopher Hogwood and entitled *Behind the Masque*. There were three concerts in the main hall, enabling us to hear *Dioclesian*, *The Fairy Queen* and *The Indian Queen*. (In fact, all Purcell's operas could be heard within a week, since *King Arthur* had been played at the Guildhall School and there was a *Dido* a couple of days later.) I missed *The Fairy Queen* from Harry Christophers and The Sixteen, since I went to Oxford for the Plainsong and Mediaeval Music Society's AGM; I heard that it was an impressive performance, emotionally-charged but with a narration that may have been a bit too jokey. Somebody told me that it was very slow, someone else that it was very quick. The other two main concerts were given by the AAM and Christopher Hogwood.

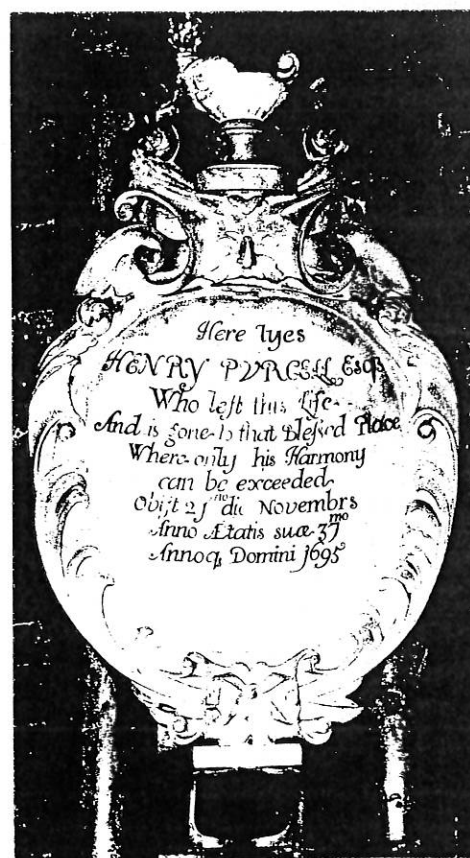
The first, *The Indian Queen* preceded by *Come ye sons of art* puzzled me. I am not a frequent visitor to the Barbican and don't know the acoustics of the hall. But from where I was sitting (just inside the door at the back of the stalls – presumably one of those seats allocated to critics so that they can make a hasty exit to the bar or phone) most of the music sounded strangely distant. I have never thought of Catherine Bott as having a particularly tiny voice (though she has a magnificent pianissimo), but she sounded as if she needed a microphone. All the musicians were squashed at the back of the stage to allow space for dancers, who not only danced but mimed to the script. Roger Savage let us see the work through the eyes of an aging Thomas Betterton, effectively played by Simon Russell Beale. By creating a character, not just a narrator, he was able to convey a considerable amount of information about the work and its theatrical circumstances without being too didactic, as well as explain as much of the story as was necessary. It was refreshing to see the New York Baroque Dance Company, dancers who were confident in the style.

A different technique was used for *Dioclesian*. Here Roger Savage took the two title-characters (the original title was *The Prophetess; or, The History of Dioclesian*) and constructed a script in which Delphia (Janet Suzman) was given a part that was part narration, part speech from the play while Michael Maloney played Dioclesian. This generally worked,

though it would have been nice to have heard the stage directions from the masque to make clear what was visually missing. I was surprised that the dancers were not taking part in this work also: the Chair Dance in particular provides scope for imaginative choreography. But there were enormous musical advantages in moving the musicians forward. Most of the audibility problems diminished, though I suspect that it was the acoustics rather than the playing that made middle parts difficult to hear. As concert presentations, both were effective; but *Dioclesian* came over as a stronger work, perhaps because it received a far stronger performance.

I was phoned by Christopher Hogwood while proof-reading this, and he mentioned that some people had found the sound better with the musicians at the back of the stage; so perhaps the difference I perceived was because I sat in a different place for *Dioclesian*.

There were four concerts at St. Giles' Cripplegate – a unique phenomenon for an old English church in being warm. I caught the first, the Consort of Musick in a programme of Purcell's sacred music. The outstanding performance was Evelyn Tubb's expressive and confident *Blessed Virgin's Expostulation*. The shape of the concert was odd, presumably because of the substitution of singers through Emma Kirkby's illness. I missed the conference organised by The Royal Musical Association, with two mornings of papers and a public round-table. I was very disappointed not to see the Z of the Purcell numbering



system; I wondered whether, if OJS manages to copyright his initials, future cataloguers should use their full initials and claim a fee every time they are quoted. That might stop the pedantic and superfluous quoting of catalogue numbers for works like *The Fairy Queen* which are unique.

The Sunday afternoon had two simultaneous events, a showing of Tony Palmer's Purcell film *England, my England* (which was sold out) and free informal shows by The City Waits, The York Waits and The Broadside Band in the foyer. The last of these was not entirely successful since they played sitting in an alcove, to the detriment of both sound and atmosphere. The other two groups were more outgoing (literally as well as stylistically) and were much more successful. I am in two minds about such events. There is a certain degree of phoniness in dressing up in antique garb and trying to present a slice of Olde England to a passive audience. But we need a corrective to the refined sort of music-making that the main concerts gave, and shows like this give a glimpse of a musical culture where the arty and the popular were closer together than they subsequently became. I must, incidentally, say that the York Waits were far more impressive in the Playford repertoire here than they were at the York Festival.

Further comment on the Sunday afternoon.

The whole family had trekked to London for this show, so I was amazed to find that so few Londoners or tourists had bothered to make the effort. Even without advertising for any particular event, such a major cultural location would, in Paris for example, have people taking in the atmosphere and checking whether there was anything happening. The children and I have considerable experience of exploring similar developments to the Barbican in towns in Europe and America while Clifford is attending concerts and the like – the lack of vitality of this area on a bright Sunday afternoon (albeit in November) in our capital city will now become the baseline (zero) for comparing the success of similar developments elsewhere. The lack of newcomers just dropping in to see what was happening meant that the audience was almost completely static: I expected a flow of people coming and going, different groups chatting to each other and to the musicians, and much more informal activity. It nearly worked. The ingredients were there – entertaining performers, spectacle (costume and antique instruments), with food and drink easily accessible – all that was needed to make a convivial afternoon was a crowd rather than a hundred or two well-ordered people sitting quietly as if at a concert.

Elaine Bartlett

Nema National Early Music Association

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QUIXOTIC PURCELL

Eric Van Tassel

Purcell *Don Quixote: the musical* Consort of Musicke, City Waites, Purcell Simfony, et al. 128' 13"
Musica Oscura 970973 (2 CDs)

Don Quixote began life as a vulgar and rather fatuous play by Thomas Durfey, embellished with a variety of music, much of it good and some of it brilliant. Anthony Rooley has now collected a variety of music, much of it good and some of it brilliant, and embellished it with a vulgar and rather fatuous play by Don Taylor.

Lacking any instrumental music definitely ascribed to Don Quixote, Rooley (helped by Blaise Compton) mines the works of Eccles, Lenton, Tollet and Anon for the instrumental pieces required by Taylor's scenario (Rooley's notes identify a few of the originals, but more detail of sources would have been welcomed.) The show also features seven of Purcell's vocal pieces (*Since times are so bad* is cut) and twice that number by Eccles, Courtville, Anon, and others. (Oddly, though, Rooley declines to lift instrumental music from other works of Purcell, he does adapt two important vocal movements from *The Indian Queen*.) The resulting gallimaufry is one that a 1690s audience would, I fancy, feel right at home with.

In creating a new play, as a bold attempt to transcend the fragmentary state of the surviving music, Rooley and Taylor recognize that *Don Quixote* resembles a modern musical – or an English pantomime – more than it does an ideal opera. In Taylor's piece a new *Don Quixote* romance, replacing Durfey's farrago, becomes a play-within-a-play framed by scenes in which Durfey, Betterton and Purcell prepare a production of their *Don Quixote*; both plays thus end with illness and death (the Don's and, only slightly mawkishly, Purcell's). Musica Oscura prints the full play text in the booklet, and each musical movement is introduced by or interwoven with a chunk of the spoken play, so that we get at least a hint of how it all hangs together. The tone of Taylor's dialogue chimes surprisingly well with Durfey's song lyrics; less to my liking are Taylor's own added lyrics, at times apposite or divertingly vulgar but too often merely coarse and (to me) unappetizing.

Originally prepared for radio, the production draws a fine speaking cast from the BBC's radio repertory company, among whom Paul Scofield (*Don Quixote*), Roy Hudd (*Sancho Panza*), Bill Wallis (*Durfey*), and Peter Woodward (*Ambrosio/Merlin*) stand out but by no means stand alone. Play and music mesh imperfectly: the characteristic intimacy of BBC radio drama suddenly shifts to a far more resonant acoustic for the musical numbers. In Eccles' *I burn*, when Evelyn Tubb stops speaking and begins to sing, she suddenly leaps away from the microphone and into the resonant middle distance with the impossible agility of the star of a low-budget kung-fu movie.

Roy Hudd's knockabout singing style vividly evokes Betterton's clown Thomas Doggett, and the demotic voices of Doug Wootton and Lucy Skeaping (of the City Waites) are lively foils to the more conventional vocal style(s) of the Consort of Musicke regulars. Among the latter are Emma Kirkby and David Thomas (their *From rosy bowers* and *Let the dreadful engines* are both lifted bodily from another Consort recording on Musica Oscura), who join forces with Evelyn Tubb in Courtville's very fine little masque of Hymen. Especially refreshing are the diverse instrumental colours and stylistic gifts of trumpets (the English Trumpet Virtuosi), strings (the Purcell Simfony), street instruments (the City Waites), recorders, bass viols, drums and an armoury of chordal instruments.

Rooley and Peter Holman are almost alone today in performing Purcell in the company of other composers of his time, an idea which this production, for all its faults, amply validates. Eccles/Durfey's *Sleep, poor youth* (Tubb and Thomas) is no less worthy an elegy at Purcell's deathbed than the Purcell/Taylor threnody that ends the recording.

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John Broderip – A Hymn for Christmas Day

St. Luke Chap 2d

Tr. [Solo] Be - hold, be - hold I bring you glad ti - dings, I

B. [Solo] Be - hold, be - hold,

8 bring you glad ti - dings, glad ti - dings, glad ti - dings of great Joy

I bring you glad ti - dings, glad ti - dings, glad ti - dings of

14 which shall be un-to all peo - ple, glad ti - dings of great

great Joy which shall be un-to all peo - ple, glad ti - dings of great

20 **CHORUS**

Joy. Glad ti - dings, glad ti - dings, glad ti - dings of great Joy, glad ti - dings of great Joy.

Glad ti - dings, glad ti - dings, glad ti - dings of great Joy, glad ti - dings of great Joy.

Glad ti - dings, glad ti - dings, glad ti - dings of great Joy, of great Joy.

Joy, glad ti - dings, glad ti - dings, glad ti - dings of great Joy, glad ti - dings of great Joy.

27 **VERSE [Tr]**

For un - to you this Day is born a Sa - viour, which is Christ the

For un - to you this Day is born, is born a Sa -

34 Lord, which is Christ the Lord, which is Christ the Lord.

viour, which is Christ the Lord, which is Christ the Lord.

John Broderip (1719-77) was a member of an extensive West-country musical dynasty. He was organist at Minehead and vicar-choral, then organist, at Wells Cathedral. Although he was obviously a 'learned' musician, his *A New set of Anthems and Psalm Tunes in Four Parts for the use of Parish Churches* (c. 1747), from which this comes, throws more than a glance at the style of untrained country psalmody like that of William Knapp of Poole. With its unaccompanied solo sections in the gallery style, he was envisaging a parochial performance without organ, though some of his other works have basses figured by later hands.

This may be performed with sopranos and tenors both singing the treble and tenor parts. Instruments may double the voice parts, with the alto and tenor played up an octave. The treble part might have its lower notes up an octave, leaving higher ones at pitch (i.e. a violin stays in first position, though the little finger can be stretched to reach C). The bass should be played at 8' pitch, but with some notes down the octave. Evidence for tutti singing of the solo parts is provided by James Newton who in his *Psalmody improved* (1775) specifically inveighed against the practice in Broderip's 'Awake up my glory', implying that it was a common practice.

CHORUS

CHORUS

The musical score for the chorus is written for four voices: Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are: "Glad ti - dings of great Joy, glad ti - dings, glad ti - dings of great Joy, glad ti - dings of great Joy, glad ti - dings of great Joy, glad ti -". The melody is simple and repetitive, with the lyrics "Glad ti - dings" and "of great Joy" repeated throughout. The Soprano part starts with a whole rest, followed by a half note G4, a quarter note A4, and a half note B4. The Alto part starts with a whole rest, followed by a half note G4, a quarter note A4, and a half note B4. The Tenor part starts with a whole rest, followed by a half note G4, a quarter note A4, and a half note B4. The Bass part starts with a whole rest, followed by a half note G4, a quarter note A4, and a half note B4.

Glad ti - dings of great Joy, glad ti -

Glad ti - dings, glad ti - dings of great Joy, glad

Glad ti - dings, glad ti - dings of great Joy, glad ti -

Glad ti - dings, glad ti - dings of great Joy, of great Joy, glad ti -

49

The musical score is written for four voices: Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass. It is in the key of D major (two sharps) and 4/4 time. The melody is simple and repetitive, with a focus on the lyrics. The lyrics are: 'dings, glad ti - dings, glad ti-dings of great Joy, of great Joy.' The score is divided into four systems, each corresponding to one of the voice parts. The Soprano part is on the top staff, Alto on the second, Tenor on the third, and Bass on the bottom. The lyrics are written below each staff, with hyphens indicating that a single syllable is spread across multiple notes.

dings, glad ti - dings, glad ti-dings of great Joy, of great Joy.

ti - dings, glad ti dings, glad ti-dings, glad ti-dings of great Joy, of great Joy.

- dings, glad ti - dings, glad ti-dings of great Joy, of great Joy.

- dings, glad ti - dings, glad ti-dings of great Joy, of great Joy.

59 SOLO *Slow*

59 **SOLO** *Slow*

And sud-den-ly, there was with the An-gel a mul - - ti-tude of the Heav'n - ly host,

63

prai - - - - - sing God, prai - - - - - sing God, and say -

CHORUS

70

CHORUS

SOLO

Glo - - - - - ry,

-ing:

Glo - ry to god in the High'st,

Glo - ry to God in the High'st.

Glo - ry to God in the High'st.

Glo - ry to God in the High'st.

[CHORUS]

77

The musical score is written for four staves. The first staff is a vocal line with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). It begins with a whole rest for four measures, followed by a half note G4, a quarter note A4, and a half note B4. The lyrics "Glo - ry to God in the High'st." are written below. The second staff is a vocal line with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp. It begins with a half note G4, followed by a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, a quarter note C5, a quarter note B4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note G4, and a quarter rest. The lyrics "Glo - - - - - ry, glo - ry to God in the High'st." are written below. The third staff is a vocal line with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp. It begins with a whole rest for four measures, followed by a half note G4, a quarter note A4, and a half note B4. The lyrics "Glo - ry to God in the High'st." are written below. The fourth staff is a vocal line with a bass clef and a key signature of one sharp. It begins with a whole rest for four measures, followed by a half note G3, a quarter note A3, and a half note B3. The lyrics "Glo - ry to God in the High'st." are written below. The section is labeled "[SOLO]" and "[CHORUS]".

[SOLO]

Glo - - - - - ry, glo - ry to God in the High'st.

[CHORUS]

Glo - ry to God in the High'st.

Glo - ry to God in the High'st.

Glo - ry to God in the High'st.

VERSE SLOW

84 And on Earth peace, good will to-wards men.

And on earth peace, good will to-wards

And on earth peace, good will to-wards men.

And on earth peace, good

88 **CHORUS**

Glo-ry to God in the High'st,

[SOLO]

men, good will to-wards men. Glo - - - - - ry, glo-ry to God in the High'st.

Glo-ry to God in the High'st.

will, good will to-wards men. [CHORUS] Glo-ry to God in the High'st.

[SOLO]

Glo - - - - - ry, glo-ry to God in the High'st. Hal-le - lu-jah, Hal-le-lu-jah, Hal-le-

Glo-ry to God in the High'st. Hal-le - lu-jah, Hal-le-lu-jah, Hal-le-

Glo-ry to God in the High'st. Hal-le - lu-jah, Hal-le-lu-jah, Hal-le-

105 Glo-ry to God in the High'st. Hal-le - lu-jah, Hal-le-lu-jah, Hal-le-

-lu-jah, Hal-le - lu-jah, Hal-le-lu-jah, Hal - - - le-lu-jah, Hal - - - le - lu - jah, Hal-le-

-lu-jah, Hal-le - lu-jah, Hal-le - lu-jah, Hal-le-lu-jah, Hal-le-lu-jah, Hal - - - le - lu - jah, Hal-le-

-lu-jah, Hal-le - lu-jah, Hal-le - lu-jah, Hal-le-lu-jah, Hal-le-lu-jah, Hal-le-

110 -lu-jah, Hal-le - lu-jah, Hal-le - lu-jah, Hal-le - lu-jah. Glo-ry to god in the High'st.

-lu-jah, Hal-le - lu-jah, Hal-le - lu-jah, Hal-le - lu-jah. Glo-ry to god in the High'st.

-lu-jah, Hal-le - lu-jah, Hal-le - lu-jah, Hal-le - lu-jah. Glo-ry to God in the High'st.

-lu-jah, Hal-le - lu-jah, Hal-le - lu-jah, Hal-le - lu-jah. Glo-ry to God in the High'st.



wassail



The wassail well spiced about shall go round (1661)

This spiced ale was drunk on Christmas Eve and Twelfth Night. It is a salutation meaning 'Good Health'. The name also refers to the communal wooden bowl it was served in, often decorated with flowers, ribbons or even silver, and to the custom of wassailing the trees to ensure a good crop.

*Wassail the trees that they might beare
You many a plum and many a pear;
Foe more or lesse fruits they will bring
As you do give them wassailing*

(Robert Herrick, 1648)

The wassailers would go from door to door, singing carols and drinking a toast to the householder, his fruit trees and animals to bring plenty of health and plenty (and hopefully a refilling of the bowl for themselves!)

Jennie Cassidy

(ingredients for 8)

2 pints ale
1½ pints apple juice
¼ pint of sherry
2½ -3oz soft brown sugar
1 tsp. ground cinnamon
½ tsp. ground ginger
a grating of nutmeg
10 whole cloves

*Synament and ginger,
nutmeg and cloves,
and that gave thee thy jolly red nose.*
(T. Ravenscroft, 1609)

Put all this into a cauldron and heat over an open fire.
Beware it is very drinkable!

*Let us conclude as we began
And toss the pot from man to man
And drink as much now as we can*

*And ever toss the pot.
Let us be merry
And drink till our cheeks be as red as a cherry.*

(T. Ravenscroft, 1614)



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Happy Christmas to all our readers, friends and customers.

JOSEPH WOELFL

Robin Freeman

Joseph Woelfl 3 *Fortepiano Sonatas*, op. 6; 3 *Fortepiano Sonatas*, op. 28. Laure Colladant, *fortepiano*
Molitor ADDA 202852-AD690; ADDA 581036-AD184

When Joseph Woelfl died in Marylebone Lane on May 21st, 1812 at the age of 38, he was on his way to joining Clementi, Cramer and Dussek as a member of the London Pianoforte School. As it was, his fame, which had extended to covered Warsaw, Paris and Vienna as well as London, soon faded away. His works fell into obscurity, and are only now being located and catalogued by Laure Colladant's husband, Johannes Carda.

Born in Salzburg in 1773, Woelfl was a pupil of Leopold Mozart and Michael Haydn. On arrival in Vienna he was befriended by Mozart himself and became Beethoven's rival and partner in improvisation in the palace of Baron von Wetzlar. The six sonatas on these recordings are of the quality and interest one would expect from such credentials. That music of this value could be so thoroughly forgotten is due in part to Woelfl's publishers, who dropped him from their catalogues when he was no longer there to promote his scores thorough concert performances, and in part to the biased account of him by Tomasek in his 1845 autobiography, where Woelfl is brought in merely to enhance an uncritical adulation of Beethoven. The coarse weave of 19th and early 20th century music history did the rest, with those who wrote the manuals content to pass on superficial judgements without bothering to look at the pieces themselves. Even Richard Baum, Reznicek's friend, who wrote a monograph on Woelfl in 1920, contends that the later sonatas are facile salon music which do not fulfil the promise of the earlier ones, and that none of them, early or late, sufficiently transcend what he takes to be the classical conventions to enter the romantic era. Do these recordings confirm this opinion?

The three sonatas op. 6 were published in 1798 with a dedication to Beethoven. In addition to impeccable *Satztechnik* they are marked by an unfailingly structural and expressive use of passage work and of transitional material in general, something that, together with a comparatively unrhetorical use of motivic development, brings Woelfl closer to Mozart than to Haydn. But Woelfl's moments of harmonic vagueness, creating an atmosphere not unlike that of the hauntingly moonlit landscapes in Eichendorff's lyrics, place at least the third of these sonatas squarely in the *frühromantik* world. The mood of gentle yearning that ripples through the Largo spills over into the episodes of the Rondo that follows. Only Vorisek comes as close as this to the young Schubert. No doubt that such

music written when Schubert was only one year old, would have spoken to the boy composer as Austrian to Austrian.

According to Baum, the music Woelfl wrote in Paris and London grew more and more predictable, written as it was, to satisfy the tastes of a superficial salon audience. A clear exception to this is the d minor sonata for cello and piano op. 31, published in Paris in 1805. Together with the Beethoven cello sonata opus 5, it is one of the very few from this period that place the keyboard on an equal footing with the solo instrument. The sonatas op. 28, dedicated to the Comtesse de Borosdin, were also composed in Paris. Each of them goes beyond op. 6 in its approach to form. Thus the Allegro of the G major sonata incorporates a *ronde de vaches* at the end of the exposition, which persists into the development until the first idea arrives to sweep it away. The corresponding movement of the b minor sonata adopts an even more interesting strategy. Here, the retransition that prepares the repeat of the exposition introduces an essential element of the counterpoint already familiar material. A further twist, if you like, to what Mozart had learned from Padre Martini about species counterpoint in a sonata context. But the most curious is the D major sonata which consists of a set of variations followed by a rondo. The variations are not quite selfstanding since Woelfl chooses to introduce his *minore* late and then to give a strong major colouring to the closing D major cadence. This refreshes the ear for the straightforward D major of the rondo tune that follows. As for the rondo itself, the last entry is presented in an apparently guileless way, virtually without dominant preparation, only to be interrupted by an outbreak of minor sevenths, from which the coda duly emerges.

The instrument chosen by Laure Colladant for her two recordings is the only one of its kind so far discovered, a late 18th-century Molitor from Naples which had been early imported to Marseilles by the dealer Jean Genoyen. Its maker, so far unidentified, seems well acquainted with the Viennese workshops of Andreas Stein and Anton Walter. Though the nameplate bears the number 200, and though the name Molitor (=Baumeister) is not unknown in German lands, none of the other 199 or more instruments has thus far come to light. A shame, because the present one has exceptional refinement of tone responding splendidly to that early music equivalent of *le jeu perlé* (abundantly implied in any case by the 1804 *Méthode* of Louis Adam) with which Colladant plays it – not in the least inappropriate now that the magnificent fortepiano sonatas of Adam's contemporary Hyacinthe Jadin seem destined to find a place in the repertoire.

RECORD REVIEWS

MEDIEVAL

Hildegard of Bingen Voice of the Blood
Sequentia 76' 55"
Deutsche Harmonia Mundi 05472 77346 2

This is the fourth recording Sequentia has made of Hildegard, and it shows: the poise and confidence of their singing is most impressive. Doubts are more over general style than individual performances. I don't know whether Hildegard herself envisaged so much instrumental participation, but an effect of it (and of the use of vocal drones) is that performers are tempted to linger, giving the music a greater weight than the words. For an audience not understanding Latin (even if it can follow the texts and translations) that is perhaps helpful, even though someone who thought in Latin may have expected something different. But this is not a serious obstacle to a strong recommendation. CB

Cantigas from the Court of Dom Dinis
Theatre of Voices, Paul Hillier 69' 35"
Harmonia Mundi HMU 907129

Why is so much medieval music sung by women? When we do hear a man, it is usually a high one. So it is refreshing to hear Paul Hillier in the seven *cantigas* by Dom Dinis, (1261-1325) King of Portugal from 1279, which survive with music. I heard Sinfonies perform them last year (*EMR* 3 p. 9); Paul Hillier's version achieves the simplicity I then felt they needed, but it demands keen attention and concentration from the listener. These are preceded by another seven songs of the period. I'm not entirely convinced by the unison chorus, though men must have sung something together other than plainsong. CB

On the Way to Bethlehem (Music of the Medieval Pilgrim). Ensemble Oni Wytars, Ensemble Unicorn 72' 56"
Naxos 8.553132

Nearly half of this disc is devoted to three tracks of traditional Syrian, Bulgarian and Sofi music, and that sets the style for the rest. It is possible that pilgrims to the Holy Land reacted favourably to the strange music they heard in the east so that there was some cross-fertilisation. (They may, though, have found it incomprehensible: has anyone sifted the surviving travel literature?) I cannot comment on the plausibility of the Arabic and Croatian music, but I am worried that the performers do not distinguish between the types of Western music. *Edi be thu* is a plausible case for free treatment (though why break up the flowing rhythm of the instrumental version when it is sung?) In contrast, Power's *Beata progenies* belongs to the cathedral or chapel and is unlikely to have migrated to a folk environment. Words don't seem to matter;

none are printed or translated, and we hear the same verse of *Angelus ad virginem* twice rather than all five: the pilgrim may not have understood Arabic, but would have had more Latin than most modern CD-buyers. Naxos has a problem in providing adequate documentation while keeping prices to their attractively-low level. The performances themselves are impressive, but this is a CD that works best as background music. CB

The Spirits of England and France 3: Binchois and his Contemporaries Gothic Voices, Christopher Page 66' 42"
Hyperion CDA66783

Binchois made a fine impression at the concert Gothic Voices gave at the Cambridge Medieval Festival (see *EMR* 9 p.9) and it is his songs which open this anthology so entrancingly and which stay most in the mind. Other composers featured include Velut, Johannes le Grant, Johannes de Lymburgia, Power, Dunstable, Fontaine, Machaut and Bittering. As with previous issue in this series, the repertoire is mixed, but with a general movement from secular to sacred. Lute trios, in which Page is joined by Shirley Rumsey and Christopher Wilson, contrast with the purely vocal sound of the rest of the CD. As always, marvellous entertainment. Am I the only listener who can't remember what is on which Gothic Voices record? We need a promotional booklet that has an alphabetic index to their recorded repertoire. CB

RENAISSANCE

Fayrfax Vol. 2. Missa Tecum principium, Maria plena virtute The Cardinal's Music, Andrew Carwood 70' 52"
ASV Gaudeamus CD GAU 145

This begins with the eponymous plainsong antiphon and concludes with what is plausibly stated in the informative booklet to be Fayrfax's most accomplished work, *Maria plena virtute*. There are also three short instrumental pieces, *Mese tenor*, *O lux beata trinitas* & *Paramese tenor* played on recorders by the Frideswide Consort. As I said recently to the editor of the series, David Skinner, it is difficult in a short review to write anything except general enthusiasm for the recording that is very different from the review of their Ludford (*EMR* 15 p.12) and Fayrfax vol. 1 (*EMR* 12, p. 16). I listened to that while travelling along some dreary roads in Indiana and first heard the new CD on a bunk bed in a motel at Rostock, so can confirm that the music works under a variety of listening conditions. More seriously, a distinctive feature of the Cardinal sound is the way the singers feel more relaxed than some other groups yet maintain a good speed and make as firm a sound as is appropriate. CB

Janequin Masses Ensemble Clément Janequin dir Dominique Visse, Les Sacqueboutiers de Toulouse, Jan Willem Jansen organ 50' 10"
Harmonia Mundi HMC 901536
Includes Masses *La Bataille*, *L'aveuglé Dieu*; motet *Congregati sunt*

This comprises the complete church music of Janequin (unless a lost book of motets reappears). The two masses are based on his own chansons. Enjoyment of parody masses depends considerably on ones knowledge of the source work. Fortunately, I know the *Battle* almost by heart (the result of rehearsing it for a week in a big choir under David Munrow). Much of the melodic material survives in the mass, but in an emasculated form. The excitement and vocal virtuosity is missing and trying to beef it up by adding sackbuts to the voices perversely makes it even more disappointing. Ironically, I enjoyed more the mass whose chanson I do not have in my head. This is sung just with organ; the notes say nothing about performance practice, and I wonder whether, if an organ had been used around 1550, it would have alternated with rather than doubled the voices. Apart from some sentimental slow-downs, it is an agreeable performance, and introduces us to an unfamiliar side of Janequin. Coincidentally, an edition of the *Missa La Bataille* mass has just appeared from Fazer (£5.60) edited by Frank Dobbins. This is more normal in its ficta (there are a couple of very odd Ebs on the CD), but has a misprint (or fails to correct a mistake in the source) in the first bar of the Benedictus. CB

Claudio Merulo Missa in dominicis diebus Frédéric Muñoz org, Grupo Vocal Grégor, dir. Dante Andreo 78' 54" Naxos 8.553334
Merulo Missa apostolorum (1568) Frédéric Muñoz org, Grupo Vocal Grégor, dir. Dante Andreo 94' 12" Naxos 8.553420-1 (2 discs)
Merulo Missa Virginis Mariae (1568) Frédéric Muñoz org, Schola of the Benedictine Abbey of Santa Cruz, Laurentino Sáenz de Buruago 87' 32" Naxos 8.553335-6 (2 discs)

Naxos are increasing their range of organ CDs with some interesting explorations of the lesser-known regions of the repertoire. This set is a good example, recording the whole of Claudio Merulo's 1568 *Messe d'Inatvolutura d'Organo* (three complete alternatim mass settings, including the Credo). Each CD set (two are double CDs) includes one of the masses together with a magnificent setting and a toccata from the 1598 or 1604 books. The three instruments used are a 1617 Spinola organ originally in Bastia and now in Piedicroce, Corsica (*Missa Virginis Mariae*), an 1847 Lingiardi organ in Saorge, Nice (*Missa Apostolorum*) and a 1980 Tamburini organ in Toulouse (*Missa in dominicis diebus*). The chant on two sets is sung by the Grupo Vocal Grégor in some very musical and tonally rich performances.

Less effective is the rather erratic intonation of the boys of the Abbey of Santa Cruz, Madrid on the *Missa Virginis Mariae* CD. The chant on all CDs (sadly recorded months apart from the organ versets, and even in a different country) uses the liting notation of the 1991 CEKM edition, based on a 1551 Venetian Graduale. Merulo's organ music is a real find, for those not familiar with it. The mass versets are simple and generally fugal, using the relevant chant as their foundation but with some lovely harmonic and thematic twists. The toccatas are powerful and virtuosic and show the early use of the multi-sectional form that was so influential in the early Baroque. Muñoz has a distinctive approach to ornamentation and musical pulse which, I am afraid, began to pall on me after over four hours listening. Speeds are remarkably slow, with the semiquaver often taken as the note to savour and linger over (the *toccata seconda del 1° tono*, for example, takes nearly 6 minutes longer than the 8 minutes of a CD reviewed a few months ago). Because of the characteristic break-back of the higher ranks of Italian organs, registrations in the fugal versets sometimes lead to confusion over the pitch of the voices. Also, bearing in mind Diruta's praise of Merulo's use of ornamentation, I would have expected rather more tremoli in the Messe and Magnificat versets. So full marks for the idea; but, as with some other Naxos CDs, questions remain about performance style, choice of instruments and recording quality.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Ockeghem *Missa prolationum* The Clerks' Group, dir. Edward Wickham 65' 20"
ASV CD GAU 143

Busnois *Gaude coelestis domina, In hydraulis*; Josquin *Illibata dei virgo nutrix*; Obrecht *humilius decus*; Pullois *Flos de spina*

This latest release in the Clerk's Group's projected Ockeghem series has a great deal to recommend it. Ockeghem's *Missa Prolationum*, a complex feat of mathematical symbolism, is juxtaposed with a selection of fine pieces by his near contemporaries, all given precise and intelligent performances by the Clerks. The singers consistently bring out every detail of the ornamentation, and if we occasionally crave a little more passion in the mass itself, we certainly find it in abundance in the Pullois and Josquin. I have two minor reservations – the acoustic lacks some bloom, contributing to a rather clinical impression, and Rob Wegman's programme note sacrifices the opportunity to enlighten us with the intricacies of Ockeghem's compositional technique (even if we disregard them anyway when listening to the music) in favour of a rather rambling diatribe on the perception of polyphonic music.

D. James Ross

White *The Greatest Glory of our Muse* Henry's Eight 69' 09"
Meridian CDE 84313

Ad te levavi, Appropinquet deprecatio mea, Deus misereatur, Domine quis habitabit I & III, Exaudi te, Libera me Domine, Miserere mei Deus, Regina caeli

This disc was a very pleasant surprise.

Despite living near Cambridge, I don't get to many concerts there so have not heard Henry's Eight, former choral scholars of Trinity College (whose founder was Henry VIII). This anthology of music by one of their predecessors is most impressive. I'm not sure that it is generally accepted that this repertoire is for ATB voices, but it solves the problem of whether to have boys or women and, more importantly, somehow makes the middle parts much clearer than on nearly any recording I know: with that bonus, I can put up with the bass being at times just a little too low to register properly. Apart from a few places where White isn't quite sure how to continue a melody, the music is fine and the singing only lets it down by occasionally drawing too much attention to a cadence or by imposing dynamic contrasts that do not arise from the music. A palpable hit. CB

Canzoni e Danze: wind music from Renaissance Italy Piffaro: the Renaissance Band 62' 29"
DGG Archiv 445 883-4

The repertoire is mostly from the first half of the 16th century, but with a few canzonas by Gussago and Bonelli from a century later. The list of contents makes it look as if the music is grouped primarily by instrument, but the various sections are also musically coherent, so this is less of a rag-bag than might seem at first. The list also makes it appear at first glance as if some pieces have durations of 0' 00". A final grouse, the definite article in the groups name is over-pretentious. That said, this is in fact an entertaining and well-played recording in a genre that has recently been scorned. There is good music by Isaac, jolly music by Azzaiolo and many of the favourites from Munrow and Musica Reservata records dished up (to use Grainger's term) in a slightly different manner for the 1990s. An essential buy for renaissance wind enthusiasts. CB

Portuguese Polyphony Ars Nova, dir. Bo Holten 63' 20"
Naxos 8.553310
Cardoso *Lamentatio, Magnificat secundi toni*; Escobar *Clamabat autem mulier*; Duarte Lobo *Audiivi vocem de caelo, Pater peccavi*; Fonseca *Beata viscera*; Magalhães *Vidi aquam, Missa O Soberanza luz, Commissa mea pavesco*; Trosylho *Circumdederunt me*

Why, oh why, do editors of this repertoire insist on strict barring? This and other recordings would have been improved so much without the temptation to move from strong beat to strong beat instead of phrasing each voice as the melody demands. Here the relentless beat dominates, runs tend to be over-pointed, the basses in particular lacking elegance, and, although the tuning is faultless and the lower voices sing with a glorious tone, not all entries are unanimous and basically the choir sounds uninvolved. Take, for example, Lobo's *Pater peccavi*, where their attempts to lighten up by using a bouncy staccato sounds merely effortful. The Mass requires more attention to the words and more emotional use of dynamics would certainly help. The sound

is too harsh to allow one simply to sit back and revel at the ethereal singing which other choirs manage so easily. Angela Bell

EARLY BAROQUE

Banchieri & Striggio *Madrigal comedies* Concerto Italiano, dir. Rinaldo Alessandrini
Opus 111 OPS 30-137 60' 23"
Banchieri *Festino nella sera del giovedì grasso*
Striggio *Il ciclamento delle donne, La caccia*

There is no doubt that half the impact of these pieces is lost in these sound-only performances. Yet there is enough wit in the music (not only the silly animal noises, which are rather well done) to sustain the interest. Nor is the music always as slight as one might imagine. The Concerto Italiano are well-known from their Monteverdi recordings and this is yet another fine disc. Some may find it an attraction that the texts of some sections are rather risqué. BC

Blow Anthems Robin Blaze, Joseph Cornwell, William Kendall, Stephen Varcoe, Stephen Alder ATTBB, Parley of Instruments, Winchester Cathedral Choir, David Hill 116' 28"
Hyperion CDA67031/2 (2 discs)

God spake sometime in visions has always (or at least, for the 30 years I've had *Musica Britannica* 7) seemed to me a magnificent title and much of Blow's music matches it, though the eight-voice choral writing is less impressive than the overture. The only other anthem that is at all well known is *The Lord is my shepherd*, with its delightful triple-time music used by Blow himself in a trio sonata and in this century by Arthur Bliss. This box gives us 12 other anthems, some with strings, some for voices and continuo. There has been much written of late comparing Blow with Purcell; I would recommend listening to this without such comparisons in mind and enjoying some fine, idiomatic performances of music that is enjoyable in itself without need for praise as influence on or criticism for not being as good as Purcell. It is a pity that, with so much Blow to record, this set has less than 58 minutes per disc. CB

Charpentier *Vespers of the Blessed Virgin* Le Concert Spirituel, Hervé Niquet 61' 18"
Naxos 8.55314
Psalms H221, 149, 216, 150, 210 Ave Maria Stella H60 Magnificat H72 Salve Regina H24

This issue exhibits much the same virtues and vices as the previous Charpentier disc from these forces. The performances are well-prepared and respond well to the texts: the reflective nature of the *Nisi Dominus*, following the cheerful ebullience of *Beatus Vir* and *Laudate Pueri*, is well captured, for example. Within the vespers sequence it is good to hear the plainchant antiphons sung (by the ladies) à la 1690's with measured rhythms and ornaments! But it is here that the first of the giggles arises. The note tells us that each antiphon precedes and follows its psalm: the recording omits the repeat, and it has to be said that a plainchant buffer

between *Magnificat* and *Salve Regina* is sorely needed. Having started on the negatives, let's get them over with! It is disappointing to hear so many of the composer's solo/tutti distinctions ignored and the prominence of the harpsichord in the continuo team is questionable. The editing of the supporting material needs more thought and sharper eyes. Why on earth are the texts and translations not presented in parallel rather than as separate entities? And it does seem eccentric to offer the notes in French though not the translations. There are four sponsors' logos on the cover: would they not expect better presentation than this? The entry of Naxos into the early music world is welcome, particularly when they expand the recorded repertoire. But they must be prepared to offer a little more help to the first-time buyers whom they may well attract. But it is only fair to end on an up! The *Salve Regina* (H24) for three choirs has long been regarded as a fine work and here it receives a well-controlled and appropriately devotional reading to conclude the 'service'. *Deo gratias.* David Hansell

John Dowland *Flow my Teares: Songs from the Firste Booke of Songs & The Second Booke of Songs* Paul Agnew T, Christopher Wilson lute 58' 36"
Metronome MET CD 1010

Everything about this disc is beautiful. The sleeve that houses both the disc and the accompanying booklet of texts along with historical background and facsimiles (as opposed to the notes, which are in the CD case) are delightful. The performances are of the very highest quality. Having been rather disappointed by Paul Agnew's contribution to the inaugural concert for Ton Koopman's Bach Cantata cycle, this restored my considerable admiration for a truly gifted singer, whose every note is turned with such care, and Christopher Wilson is an ideal partner. BC

Locke *Psyche* Catherine Bott, Christopher Robson, Andrew King, Paul Agnew, Michael George, Simon Grant SATTB, New London Consort, Philip Pickett 76' 57"
L'Oiseau Lyre 444 336-2

Locke's vocal music was published at the time (1675) but the instrumental music by Draghi is lost, unless it lurks behind his keyboard music. This includes convincing reconstructions by Peter Holman and Philip Pickett, so the work can be heard as a whole – apart from Shadwell's play. Since that is difficult of access, the serious listener might have welcomed a reference to the facsimile (*Five Restoration theatrical adaptations*, ed. E. A. Langhans, Garland, 1980). I prepared to listen to this by surrounding myself with photocopies of the 1675 score and libretto and the CD booklet, and was thoroughly bored. But just listening to the music again while driving to the Barbican Purcell I was absolutely entranced. Forget about its history, forget about the editorial problems, just enjoy the music, so idiomatically sung and played here. CB

Henry Purcell *Harpsichord Suites* Olivier Baumont plays a Hatley virginals (1664) and a Kirkman harpsichord (1752) 69' 39"
Erato 0630-106950-2

This is the third set of Purcell Suites that I have heard recently and I am afraid I found Baumont's performance a little disappointing, particularly after his successful Couperin. The Purcell Suites look deceptively simple and this recording doesn't convey the hidden drama. The grounds, airs and tuneful pieces are very enjoyable, but some pieces are played too fast for us to feel the tensions of the syncopations in the music. The harpsichord has a very mellifluous gentle tone with upper partials and the virginals has a lovely sound too. Both instruments are from the Fenton House collection. Michael Thomas

Purcell *Musick's Hand-maid* The Harp Consort, dir Andrew Lawrence-King 75' 29"
Astrée Auvidis E 8564

The consort comprises four singers, five pluckers (on lute, guitar, theorbo, cittern and bandora), violin, flute/recorder and two bass viols directed by Andrew Lawrence-King playing harps, harpsichord or organ. They play keyboard pieces (many of them reductions of orchestral pieces or songs) orchestrated in ways for which there may be no direct evidence but which are historically completely plausible. This last is not really an issue when you listen, because the results are delightful, exuberant, full of flair and virtuosity, and often very beautiful. The pieces are grouped in suites, by key. There is a solo song in each group, without exception beautifully sung, but none more so than the opening one *Music for a while*, performed (I must guess because the booklet is annoyingly reticent on such details) by the high tenor, Rodrigo del Pozo. Its ground is dealt with in a novel but effective way: the rising scale is played in minims by the bass viol, while the quaver chromatic leaps are played on plucked instruments. This freedom of approach is typical of a recording full of surprises which will delight you. The famous Ground in A sounds fabulous, beautifully played on solo harp, as does the Rondo from *Abdelazar*. The whole band launches into *Lilibrulero*, sounding just like the Chieftains. A lute plays a Scotch Tune, preceded by the original hauntingly sung by Ellen Hargis, and the four singers combine to conclude the disc with a moving performance of *Thou knowest Lord*. There's no space to mention more; it is a wonderful record, highly recommended. Robert Oliver

Purcell *Sweeter than roses* Britten *Winter Words* Ian Partridge, George Malcolm *hpscd*, Jennifer Partridge *pf* 72' 08"
ASV CD QS 6172 (rec 1978 & 1977)

This coupling of Purcell with Britten's most appealing song-cycle is extremely attractive. Britten is not our concern here, though having recently drawn attention to his skill at cantus-firmus setting, I cannot resist noting the skilful way the hymn tune

named in the text provides the accompaniment through *The Choir-master's Burial*. Ian Partridge gives, as one would expect, fine performances of the Purcell songs, mostly well-known ones, with perfect clarity of diction and just the right degree of expressiveness. Apart from some triple-times now feeling a little slow, tempi are spot-on. George Malcolm is a fine and imaginative accompanist, despite occasionally straying a little out of style; *Man is for the woman made* (the cover adds an extra 'that' as second word) is marvellously overdone, I hope with tongue in cheek. It is refreshing to hear these songs just with harpsichord and no string bass, though the instrument itself is a bit dead. If you want a basic collection of favourite songs, including some sacred ones, look no further. CB

Purcell *England, my England: the story of Henry Purcell* Music from the original soundtrack of Tony Palmer's film. Various performers, dir John Eliot Gardiner. 76' 04"
Erato 0630-10700-2

I hoped to write this after seeing the film, but the showing at the Barbican was sold out. As an anthology in its own right it is a nice mixture of favourite excerpts and less familiar pieces, more cohesively arranged than such collections usually are so that a short piece from *The Indian Queen* that one could not imagine standing by itself actually makes sense in its new context. One of the more substantial items is a powerful performance of *In guilty night* by Jennifer Smith, Paul Agnew and David Thomas: the opening trio is so emotionally sung that it detracts from what is to come. Generally, the tendency to draw attention to too many details becomes counterproductive. Maybe it works in the context of the film. CB

Purcell *Don Quixote the Musical*
see page 12

Ruiz de Ribayaz *Luz y Norte* The Harp Consort, Andrew Lawrence-King 71' 45"
Deutsche Harmonia Mundi 05472 77340 2

Ruiz de Ribayaz is probably new to most readers; he published this collection of music for harp and guitar in Madrid in 1677. It contains basically dance music drawn from Spain, South America, Italy and Africa, performed here by a distinguished group of eight playing on a colourful collection of harps, keyboards, lutes, guitars and viols with percussion. The result is exotic, colourful fun with plenty of rhythmic verve, and enough rounds of each dance for this to be of practical use to dancers. By and large the titles are more interesting than the music, for example a *baile* for those bitten by spiders! As is often the case, most dances are based on primitive grounds which provide a basis for improvisation. The performers have risen to the challenge with stylish virtuosity, providing a fascinating insight into the world of everyday dance music, but I felt the musical substance was too thin to succeed in anything more than small doses without the visual impact of the dance itself. Lynda Sayce

Schein Fontana d'Israel (selection)
Dresdner Kreuzchor, Capella Fidinicia, dir.
Martin Fläming 55' 51" (rec. 1986)
Berlin Classics 0090782BC

There is no denying that the Dresdner Kreuzchor is an important historical institution and that it represents the highest levels of boys' singing in Germany. This re-released disc will, if anything, enhance their reputation. 14 of the 26 pieces published as Fontana d'Israel in 1623 are performed with the accompaniment of various instrumental ensembles (violins or recorders with viols or dulcians, brass), some with vocal solos, others performed tutti throughout. There are a few moments of instability in the middle voices, but overall this is an enjoyable recording of music that is at times extremely expressive. It is odd that it is rarely recorded and is so unfamiliar to British small choirs. BC

Schütz Musikalische Exequien Schütz-Akademie, dir. Howard Arman 60' 35"
Berlin Classics 0010622BC
Also contains funeral music by Michael Praetorius, J H Schein and J C Demantius

This is a new ensemble to me and one which I hope we hear more from. Their style is direct, with lovely clear voices, well sustained by the continuo group of violone, theorbo and organ. With an ear for the overall shape of the pieces, Howard Arman phrases the music with great insight. It is interesting to hear the movements of the *Musikalische Exequien* alongside the more simple Praetorius settings from twenty years earlier of the chorale texts stipulated for Heinrich Posthumus' funeral. *Das ist je gewißlich war* was composed at the request of Johann Herman Schein, whose *Threnus* is also recorded here. I look forward to the group's next offering. BC

Musik im barocken Wien Wiener Akademie, dir. Martin Haselböck 71' 39"
Novalis 150 124-2

Biber *Sonata a 6* die Pauernkirchfahrt genandt, *Sonata a 5*, *Batalia*, *Serenada* Der Nachwächter; Poglietti *Canzon e capriccio sopra das Henner und Hannegeschrey*; Schmelzer *Sonata con arie in C*, *Musikalische Fechtschul'*, *Lamento per la morte Ferdinandi III*, *Serenata con altre arie*; Vejvanovsky *Sonata la posta*, *Sonata tribus quadrantibus*, *Sonata a 8 Sancti Petri et Pauli*

Much of the music here survives in the archives of Kromeriz Castle, home of the influential prince-bishop Karl von Lichtenstein-Castelcorn. It is thanks to his correspondence with Schmelzer and his employment of Biber and Vejvanovsky that we have any of this richly-scored, sometimes functional, sometimes extremely expressive music. The selection of pieces, from the graphic *Batalia* and *Fechtschul'* to small-scale sonatas, gives an impression of music of the period but once again is rather a 'greatest hits' compilation, where there are ample opportunities to explore new repertoire — what about Bertali, the Ebners, the Reutters, Draghi and the Zianis? One regrets it the more as the ensemble is on such good form here. BC

150 years of Italian music Vol. III Organ, Cembalo Rinaldo Alessandrini 65' 26"
Opus 111 OPS 30-125

This is the third and final volume of a series which takes us through the many styles of seventeenth century Italian keyboard music. This has a well-chosen selection of pieces played on historic instruments, an organ from the end of the 16th century and an 18th century Italian harpsichord. We have some lively canzonas contrasting with the slower-moving *Benedictus et elevatio simul* of Fasolo or the *Pastorale* of Pasquini and some free toccatas and well-constructed ricercars. I particularly enjoyed the Strozzi Toccata and the complex *ricercare* of salvatore which reminds me of Bach's C# minor fugue from Book I. Alessandrini describes himself as self-taught and he certainly comes across as a natural musician who communicates his enthusiasm for this music. Michael Thomas

Musiques à Danser à l'opéra Les Talens Lyriques, dir. Christophe Rousset 52' 04"
Musiques à Danser à la cour La Simphonie du Marais, dir. Hugo Reyne 54' 04"
Erato 0630 10702 2

These two discs are packaged together. They contain dance music by Lully, Campra, Marais, Destouches, Lalande and others from the time of Louis XIV for which original choreographies have survived. They were recorded under the supervision of the French expert on dance of this period, Francine Lancelot, who advised on tempi, and rehearsed the music with the dance group Ris & Danceries. It is therefore an important resource for dancers working in this field, and the authority of the performances in this respect is beyond dispute. As a purely listening experience, it is variable, but there is a great wealth and variety in the music. The larger of the two ensembles, Les Talens Lyriques, sounds almost like a modern group at first, until you take note of the oboe sound or check the pitch, which is a tone below a = 440. Rousset's performance of D'Anglebert's arrangements of some of the dances for harpsichord is very stylish, and the rhythms throughout are light and eminently danceable, which makes them good to listen to as well. I preferred the stylistic approach of La Simphonie du Marais, single strings and more articulate. The music is occasionally less interesting, particularly when the repeats required by the choreography are not supported by musical invention. A Purcell dance from *The Virtuous Wife* finds itself described in the booklet as *La Furstembourg* and is outstanding, but does not overshadow Lully, Marais, Campra and Lalande. Robert Oliver

Jennie Cassidy *sop*, Robert Oliver *tenor voice, bass viol* and Michael Fields *lute* present *A Day in the Life of Cupid: Ayres to the Lute and Viol* in the Old Library, Emmanuel College, Cambridge, on the evening of Sunday Jan. 28th. Further information from 01487 832963.

LATE BAROQUE

Couperin Pièces de Clavecin Olivier Baumont 59' 46"
Erato 0630-11471-2

This is an attractive invitation to Baumont's complete recording of Couperin's harpsichord music. In his review of Book II (*EMR* 7), Michael Thomas praised his elegant performance with clear articulation and phrasing. The disc has 12 pieces, including the *Mxxnstrnndxx* and the *Folies françoises*, put together as a sort of multi-keyed *ordre*, and concludes with a portrait of the composer; three pieces named after Couperin by Dagincour, Caix d'Hervelois & Forqueray are fresh recordings. CB

Couperin Treizième Livre de Pièces de Clavecin, 1722 Robert Kohnen on Dulcener 1755 hpscd, Barthold Kuijken fl. 64' 51"
Accent ACC 9399D
Contains Prélude 6 & ordres 13-15.

Many years ago Robert Kohnen with the Kuijken brothers, as members of the Alarius ensemble, did much to make Couperin and other baroque composers known in England by their concerts and radio broadcasts. So Robert Kohnen is no stranger to Couperin, whom he plays with conviction and well-formed ornaments. This is really a very good example of careful playing, showing all the detail of phrasing, where the harpsichord becomes an expressive singing instrument. The highlight is the wonderful performance of *Le rossignol en amour* where Barthold Kuijken plays the melody on a rich, deep-toned flute. This is beautiful and expressive playing, totally together. *La Juliet* and the two *Musettes* are also played on the flute. Michael Thomas

Willem Defesch Concerti grossi and violin concertos Arie van Beek *vl*, Orchestre d'Auvergne, Gordan Nikolitch 72' 13"
Olympia OCD 450

Although we publish a couple of items by De Fesch, I have no clear concept of his style, so it was interesting to hear this CD, which contains op. 2 nos 2, 5 & 6, op. 3 nos 2, 3, 4 & 6, op. 5 no 5 and op. 10 no 5. They are fairly standard north-European late baroque, but with considerable touches of individuality and interest. Ideally, one would like to hear them on a good period band, but the performances here are not unstylish and draw attention to music that is well worth cultivating. Performance material is available from Donemus. CB

Handel Giustino Michael Chance *Giustino*, Dorothea Röschmann *Arianna*, Dawn Kotoski *Anastasio*, Juliana Gondek *Fortuna*, Dean Ely *Polidarte*, Jennifer Lane *Leocasta*, Mark Padmore *Vitaliano*, Drew Minter *Amanzio*; Freiburger Barockorchester, Nicholas McGegan 173' 17" (3 discs)
Harmonia Mundi HMU 907 130.32

Not one of Handel's best-known operas, but it has plenty of original music and a plot that has some unusual features; perhaps the

mixture of genres led to its lack of contemporary success. It is, however, well worth having on CD. The Overture is interesting, for a start – despite the French form, virtually an oboe concerto. Orchestrally, this recording is fine; but I'm not entirely happy about the singers, Michael Chance excepted. This is based on a stage production at Göttingen last year. On the whole, voices and orchestra inhabit different musical worlds. This is less noticeable with the middle voices, but Polidarte's aria at the beginning of Act II is too loud and the marvellous soprano duet is ruined by excessive vibrato. By current standards of Handelian operatic performance, this is perfectly acceptable; but we should not be complacent about the compromises made to satisfy those running opera houses. (See also our editorial.) CB

Handel Twenty Sonatas 'Opus 1' Rachel Beckett *rec*, Lisa Beznosiuk *fl*, Paul Goodwin *ob*, Elizabeth Wallfisch *vl*, Paul Nicholson *hpcd*, Richard Tunncliffe *vlc*
Hyperion CDA66921/3 (3 discs) 171' 34"
HWV 357, 358, 359a, 359b, 360, 361, 362, 363b, 364a, 365, 366, 367a, 367b 369, 371, 374, 375, 376, 377, 379

This set contains most of Handel's sonatas for solo treble instrument and continuo. The mention of Opus 1 is not particularly helpful, since the four spurious violin sonatas from that set are omitted while various additional sonatas which have in the last few years been included in the standard editions (e.g. those from Faber Music) have been added; HWV 378 is mentioned in Peter Holman's note but not included. Not every single performance may be the best available, but the set as a whole is well worth having, with the individual sonatas nicely contrasting. I suppose the set might be repackaged so that those dull people who only want to hear their own instrument can be more economically satisfied; but part of the interest is hearing the way quite similar (sometimes identical) music is treated differently on different instruments and played so idiomatically by such experts. CB

Handel Israel in Egypt; 2 Coronation Anthems Monteverdi Choir, English Baroque Soloists, dir John Eliot Gardiner
Philips 432 110-2 (2 discs)

Israel in Egypt is given here in its shorter form without the opening *Funeral Anthem*, so the second disc has room for *Zadok the Priest* and the almost as well known *The King shall rejoice*. The performances are predictably brilliant, and Gardiner fans will not be disappointed. I am curious about the choice of soloists in the oratorio: five tenors in succession, and three altos are used, for no reason that I could see. Michael Chance is the pick of all of them, with a beautiful performance of 'Thou shalt bring them in', but I also liked Philip Salmon, of the tenors, and the soprano duet 'The Lord is my strength' sung by Ruth Holton and Elisabeth Priday. There is no dramatic shape, therefore no reason to not use all

different soloists in this way, but to not have done so might have helped to give some coherence to the performance. It is a succession of glorious movements, which perhaps need something more than the display of superb, even arrogant mastery with which it is despatched, to give it a satisfying unity. Robert Oliver

Locatelli 6 Sonate a 3, op. 5 Musica ad Rhenum 62' 48"
Vanguard Classics 99087

These six sonatas are played here on two flutes (Nos. 2, 3 & 5) or flute and violin (1, 4 & 6). No. 6 has double continuo (the original edition prescribes two *cimbali*) and a bassoon is added to the cello which plays in the other trios. The music is relatively straightforward, with well-crafted melodies and strong harmonic drive. The playing is accomplished and recorded balance fine. Anyone dismissing Locatelli as a superficial virtuoso-composer should take note of the sixth sonata – both the melody instruments and the double continuo are written in canon: quite a feat. BC

Rebel Les Eléments Telemann Sonata (Septett) in e Gluck Alessandro Musica Antiqua Köln, Reinhard Goebel 62' 50"
DGG Archiv 445 824 2

This begins with a really fiery performance of the Rebel. From its notorious first chord (figured 6b 5 4 3 2 7#) this comes over as a bold, impressive and stylish interpretation of a piece which looks somewhat bare on the page once *Le Cahos* is over and we reach the dances of *Les Eléments*. In some places barer than necessary, since the edition seems to be based on the cut-down score published c.1738 rather than the more informative MS parts (cf the *Musica Gallica* edition). My ears don't tell me that the Telemann must have been written at about the same time on his Paris visit: it doesn't sound particularly French. Goebel's notes on the Gluck have a lot on the political background but little specific, giving neither performance date (4 Oct. 1764) or summary of the plot. *Les Amours d'Alexandre et de Roxane* is little-known and less noteworthy than *Don Juan*. But it is nice to hear it. The Parisian linking is forced, but this is a stimulating collection of three very different works enjoyably played. CB

Carlo Seixas Concerto in A, Sinfonia in B flat, 10 keyboard sonatas Ketil Haugsand, Norwegian Baroque Orchestra 68' 04"
Virgin Classics 7243 5 45114 2 4

This is a very enjoyable record with excellent playing by the Norwegian Baroque Orchestra and their director and soloist Ketil Haugsand. The harpsichord concerto is full of energy and life with perfectly matched phrasing between the soloist and orchestra. The Sinfonia is followed by twelve sonatas played on a harpsichord by Joach Antunes in the Lisbon Museum. Here we can fully appreciate Seixas' genius for melodic invention both in spirited fast movements and melancholic

slow ones. The harmony is often rich in sound; this may be because the up-beats are played with more stress than the down beats with the resolution; at any rate, the music is most convincing. Michael Thomas

Vivaldi Gloria RV589, Nisi Dominus RV608, Domine ad adiuvandum RV593 Marta Filova S, Marta Benackova MS, Virtuosi di Praga, Prague Chamber Choir, dir. Tadeusz Strugala 63' 05"
Discover International DICD 920295

This is one of two Vivaldi sets from Discover this month (see Haydn *Missa in tempore belli* below). It is marginally less successful than the other as there are several excellent recordings in the catalogue already. The major point in its favour, just like the other disc, is the voice of Marta Benackova. It's full and rounded and yet at the same time clear and focussed. When she needs to, she can also demonstrate considerable agility. The low price should prove attractive, too. BC

Zelenka Sonates pour deux hautbois et basse avec basse continue obligée Ensemble Zefiro 52' 13"
Astrée Audivis E 8563

With this disc, the Ensemble Zefiro (Paolo Grazi and Alfredo Bernardini, oboes, Alberto Grazi, bassoon, Rinaldo Alessandrini, keyboard, Manfred Kraemer, violin, Lorenz Duftschmid, violone and Gian Carlo Rado, theorbo) complete their Zelenka sonatas set. The playing, like the first issue (Astrée Audivis E 8511 - different violone and theorbo players), is absolutely magnificent. The dexterity of the three woodwind players is phenomenal. Sonata III is scored for violin and oboe on the top lines, rather than the standard pair of oboes. The scoring of Sonatas I and III is slightly problematic in that only three parts are shown in the composer's autograph score and, unlike the others in the set, there is no surviving set of parts with a separate continuo line. Ensemble Zefiro have opted to follow the model of Sonata II where the autograph continuo part is a mere simplification of the bassoon part. For my tastes, the resulting harmonic support is sometimes absent for too long, but that is a minor quibble with a very welcome disc. Let's hear the group move on to the Fasch quartets now! BC

Zelenka Missa Dei Patris ZWV 19 Venceslava Hruha-Freiberger S, René Jacobs A, Reinhart Ginzel T, Olaf Bär B, Thüringischer Akademischer Singkreis, Virtuose Saxoniae, dir. Ludwig Güttler 69' 59" (rec. 1988)
Berlin Classics BC 1078-2

This is a re-release of a mass setting from 1740, written for four soloists, choir and an orchestra of strings with woodwind trio. It shows all the hallmarks of Zelenka's quirky style. There are expressive homophonic choruses, with contrasting string writing, expansive fugues, which the choir carry well and expressive arias and ensembles.

This is a valuable disc, if only because it further demonstrates Zelenka's skill in the field of large-scale church music. BC

18th Century Women Composers: Music for Solo Harpsichord, Vol. 1 Barbara Harbach
Gasparo GSCD-272 66' 02"

Marianna d'Auenbrugg *Sonata in E flat*; Cecilia Barthélemon *Sonata in E, Op. 1 No. 3*; Elisabetta de Gambarini *Pièces Op. 2*; Marianne Martinez *Sonata in E (1756)*; A. Hester Park *Sonata in F*

Most of the women composers performed on this recording were well-known in their time and were musically well-connected. Cecilia Barthélemon was the daughter of leading figures in London's musical scene, Elisabeth de Bambarini sang in Handel's operas and Marianne Martinez studied the piano with Haydn and Porpora. Haydn and Mozart attended her weekly salons, where she was known to play duets with Mozart. Apart from the music of de Gambarini, I feel a lot of this music would have been more successfully played on the fortepiano. In general the slow movements seemed to allow more space for answering short phrases and declamatory statements than the faster movements, which are often very simple child-like themes (scales or arpeggios). For example the *Larghetto* of the Barthélemon Sonata in E major would have been very beautiful if played on a piano. With the need to store up tension by repeated notes, would one play the first movement of Beethoven's *Appassionata* sonata on a harpsichord? Shaw said that sexual differences were only slight and mattered only on very special occasions. I doubt if he meant composition. Macbeth said he dared do all that becomes a man, who dares do more, and, he omitted, needs a piano with a sustaining pedal!

Michael Thomas

Harpsichord Music in Paris, Madrid and El Escorial in the 18th century Motoko Nabeshima 50' 00"

Discover International DICD 920311

A-L Couperin *Les Tendres Sentiments, La de Croissy*; F Couperin *La Visionnaire, La Mystérieuse, La Monflambert, La Muse victorieuse, Les Ombres errantes*; D Scarlatti *Sonatas in D K.199, E K 216, A K 208, K 209*; A Soler *Sonata in C minor, Fandango*

In her interesting notes, Ms Nabeshima points out the parallels between the two French composers and the two Spanish, Francois Couperin and Scarlatti representing the height of the golden age of harpsichord music while Armand-Louis Couperin and Soler exemplify the decline of the era. The music of Armand-Louis Couperin resembles in some respects that of that of François 'Le grand' but it lacks its sophistication and tends towards the decadent. Soler and Scarlatti share such characteristics as Spanish features but Soler's harmonic plan and melodic line are far more primitive. This is an interestingly constructed programme and is impeccably played by Ms Nabeshima. Michael Thomas

CLASSICAL

Haydn 12 Songs with piano, Arianna a Naxos Andrea Folin S, Tom Beghin fp
Bridge Records BCD 9059 60' 51"

This delightful disc is Andrea Folin's first solo recording and it reveals a voice of quality, intelligently used. Tom Beghin's accompaniment on a 1790 Walter reproduction fortepiano by Chris Maene is no less skilled. In his excellent notes he explains how the performers have embellished the musical text of these fairly short strophic songs in a manner compatible with 18th-century performance practice in order to interpret the words. Haydn thought highly of his songs and there are moments when one is reminded of Schubert. The cantata *Arianna a Naxos* has expressive accompanied recitatives and arias with a passionate ending.

Margaret Cranmer

Haydn Missa in tempore belli Vivaldi Stabat mater Ingrid Habermann, Marta Benackova, Kurt Azesberger, Peter Mikulas SATB, Virtuosi di Praga, dir. Martin Sieghart 61'06"
Discover International DICD 920266

This is among the best CDs I have heard in this series. In fact, featuring the outstanding alto voice of Marta Benackova as it does, this was one of the discs I listened to several times over purely for pleasure. The other soloists enjoy their part in the proceedings, the choir is bright and focused and the orchestral playing, supportive rather than actively taking part in the music-making, is rarely obtrusive. At such a low price, this is an excellent deal – if you've never heard Benackova, I recommend it!

BC

Mozart Coronation Mass, Solemn Vespers Barbara Schlick, Elisabeth von Magnus, Paul Agnew, Matthijs Mesdag SATB, The Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra & Choir, dir. Ton Koopman 71' 52"
Erato 0630-10705-2

With the exception of an excessively slow tempo for K339's *Laudate Dominum*, these are splendid performances, arguably the best Mozart I've heard from Koopman. Beautifully weighted and balanced, they are enhanced not only by the outstanding contribution made by the chorus but a fine solo quartet, of whom Schlick and Agnew deserve particular praise (they do, of course, have the most work to do). The former also provides a positively angelic performance of *Exultate jubilate*, singing with an assured radiance which for once allows for concentration on the music rather than the singer's technique. Erato's recording is possibly a little over-resonant, but still allows for textural detail to emerge clearly. Full texts and translations are included with an issue which is strongly recommended.

Brian Robins

Naumann Gustaf Vasa Anders Andersson, Nicolai Gedda, Tord Wallström, Lena Nordin, Dorrit Kleimert, Eva Pilat, Inger Blom, Staffan Sandlund, Henrik Westberg, Marie Dimpker, Orchestra and Chorus of

the Royal Swedish Opera, dir. Philip Brunelle 136' (2 CDs)
Virgin Classics 7243 5 45148 2 1

This opera was performed in Stockholm and Dresden in 1991/92 to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the composer's birth. Now, 200 years after his death, a Stockholm radio recording has been released. Although it is doubtless to be welcomed as an example of Johann Gottlieb Naumann's important work, the historical plot and the language (it is sung in Swedish) are difficult to cope with, despite the provision of text and translation. The music is well-written, with a diversity of aria styles and some idiomatic voice writing. The orchestra is used not only to introduce vocal numbers but also to set scenes. The choruses are vivid and often energetic. There are fine performances from various soloists, my favourite being Marie Dimpker as Sweden's Guardian Angel.

BC

19th CENTURY

Beethoven Missa solennis Rosa Mannion, Birgit Remmert, James Taylor, Cornelius Hauptmann SATB, La Chapelle Royale, Collegium Vocale, Orchestre des Champs Elysées, Philippe Herreweghe 77' 23"
Harmonia Mundi HMC 901557
Box includes sampler (62' 15") of 19th & 20th cent. music recorded by Herreweghe.

Recorded live at performances earlier this year in Montreux, this issue has much to commend it. The two upper soloists project well and give the words a passionate delivery, and there are some wonderful sounds from the orchestra, including still string tone at the opening of the whole work, gritty sound from the horns playing low in their range, and some fine woodwind solos too. The choir manages Beethoven's stratospheric writing with ease but they sound rather lightweight despite the fact that there are nearly fifty of them. This is partially a problem of the recording, which places the choir along way away; the loud Amen at the end of the *Gloria* is softer than the solo quartet's – and in Beethoven's day, choirs were often placed in front of the orchestras! Another problem is a lack of momentum; the *Dona nobis pacem* at the end, for instance, is very tired and stodgy and elsewhere *allegretto* sections just do not dance as they should. An interesting rather than definitive issue.

Shane Fletcher

Beethoven The Sonatas for Pianoforte, Op. 31 Paul Komen (Salvatore la Grassa fortepiano of c. 1815) 64' 19"
Globe GLO 5136

Paul Komen plays highly competently, but rather makes the piano stand to attention – there are some forced fortissimos but also pleasing pianissimos where the sound is well phrased and not rushed. There is a wonderful turn of speed and zest in the last movement of the E flat major sonata. However the slightly fast tempi in the first two movements of the G major sonata in particular seem to rob the music of some of

its eloquence. The adagio lasts a minute less than Kempff's more poetic recording on a modern piano. The fortepiano, which has a Viennese action, is not by a well-known maker but has a pleasing depth of sound and is well recorded. *Margaret Cranmer*

Mendelssohn String Symphonies The Hanover Band, Roy Goodman 225' 07" RCA Victor Red Seal 09026 68069 2 (3 CDs)

I don't remember seeing a 3-CD set with so much music on it before. That's not the only reason for buying it. One might expect a series of works written in 1819-21 by a boy born in 1809 to be primarily of curiosity value. But lay aside preconceptions: the music here is well worth uncondescending adult attention. Particularly interesting is the way Mendelssohn can be heard trying to interpret the late-Baroque style of Bach and Handel in sonata form. We can also hear, if we listen chronologically, the enormous impact Mozart's late symphonies had on him. Much of the music is very powerful, though I find the slow movements, which lack the tension between present and past, less interesting. No. 8 is performed in the version with wind. All are marvellously played. There is an excellent note by the conductor, which among other things justifies the use of piano continuo. CB

Pinto Four Sonatas Riko Fukuda (on Broadwood 1807) 77' 55" Olympia Explorer OCD 494 op. 3/1 & 2, *Grand Sonata inscribed to Field in c; Fantasia & Sonata in c*

It is splendid that there is a disc solely devoted to Pinto's piano music at last. When he died in 1806 at the age of 20, England lost a fine composer. He makes us realise that it is dissonance not consonance that makes music expressive. The Broadwood fortepiano is well recorded and the playing competent, but Riko Fukuda fails to exploit the expressive qualities of the different registers of the piano fully. In the first movement of the fine E flat minor sonata a number of dynamic markings are ignored and the sound rarely drops below mezzo-piano. The use of the pedals at varying depths, on their own and at times together, would give the subtleties of tone that the music needs; as Salomon remarked, had he lived Pinto could have become a second Mozart. *Margaret Cranmer*

Rossini William Tell and other overtures The Hanover Band, Roy Goodman 63' 48" RCA Victor 09026 68139 2 Also includes *Il barbiere di Siviglia, La gazza ladra, La scala di seta, Le siège de Corinthe, L'italiana in Algeri, Semiramide*

If you see this in the shops, do not be put off by the shamelessly populist cover – it's an apple with a crossbow bolt sticking out and the disc itself is the cross section of the apple. I thought the Beatles had done the same thing twenty-five years ago. Like the Beatles' recordings, this was made in Abbey Road, so the orchestral sound has a good deal of bloom; but it would be marvellous to hear these overtures in a much less

resonant acoustic, like that of a full, small, Italian opera house waiting for the curtain to go up. Roy Goodman has done some research into the manuscripts, so that not all the orchestration will be exactly what you expect; but the resulting sound is marvellous. The pastoral interlude in the William Tell overture with cor anglais and flute is a delight, but there are six other overtures as well. Each phrase is carefully shaped, even the pizzicato phrases that open *L'italiana in Algeri*, and Goodman is never tempted to drive the crescendos too hard or fast. With over an hour of music, this is a well-filled and highly enjoyable disc, especially if you do not want your Rossini pulled around too much. *Shane Fletcher*

Schubert Sonata in a, D845; 4 Impromptus D89 Jan Vermeulen (1825 Tröndlin pf) Vanguard Classics 99704 67' 30"

The fortepiano, built in the same year as the Op. 42 (D845) sonata was composed, has a lovely tone, slightly better than either the copy of the 1814 Nannette Streicher grand used by Melvyn Tan or the c. 1824 Conrad Graf instrument played by Paul Badura-Skoda in their Schubert recordings. Jan Vermeulen is a very good, musical player; he copes with the need to accommodate the different moods in the first movement of the sonata by treating the opening wistful theme as though it is a fantasia. The quicker speed adopted for the military theme enables him to rap out the chords in the final outburst. The only point where the recordings on modern pianos win hands down is in the G flat major impromptu where Jan Vermeulen allows the accompaniment to be a little too obtrusive. He is fonder of rallentandos at the ends of all sections than other players, but he understands the music and so gets away with it. *Margaret Cranmer*

Schubert Piano Trio in Eb, op. 100 (D. 929) Mozartean Players (Steven Lubin, Stanley Ritchie, Myron Lutzke) 59' 23" Harmonia Mundi HMU 907095

Knowing readers will doubtless raise an eyebrow at the timing given above, for although we know the E flat trio to be a long work, even the slowest performance is not likely to take an hour. The answer is that this is one of those discs that gives an alternative, in this instance of the final *Allegro moderato*. The version we normally hear omits two 50-bar passages originally included in the development section but later cut by the composer, so the Mozartean Players have decided to let us hear both the composer's original and revised ideas. For this reason alone the disc should command the attention of Schubertians, particularly those who cannot have enough of the heavenly lengths. Whilst the performance as a whole does not displace that of the Castle Trio on Virgin Classics, it is nevertheless a fine one, amply demonstrating again the considerable benefits to balance gained by using a fortepiano in keyboard-based chamber works of this period. *Brian Robins*

Schubert Die schöne Müllerin Richard Edgar-Wilson ten, Joanna Leach 1832 Athene ATH CD6 63' 55"

This aims to recreate the intimate atmosphere of the first performance of this cycle. It is recorded in a Georgian drawing room, with a Clementi square piano dated 1832, giving a lighter, less focussed bass, not so far in sound from a modern piano, and with a sharp and immediate forte and very clear piano. The singer has a youthful sound, with all the necessary ardour and a hint of recklessness, together with lovely control of line and dynamics. He has a very verbal approach and excellent diction, yet sings most musically. My only complaint is that he produces a diffuse vibrato in some of his fortes, but this becomes a minor distraction in a performance which becomes more commanding as it progresses. The accompaniment is excellent, shaping and imitating the words with the singer. Although I prefer Prégardien's voice in this cycle I was more moved by this performance. It is rare that a singer can cope with the technical demands, and yet still sound so convincingly surprised by the turn of events. This is beautifully expressed at all points, for example, the ardour of *Mein and Am Feierabend*, and the confused and powerless fury of *Der Jäger*, making the tragedy of the final part entirely believable and very moving. *Robert Oliver*

Our apologies for two slips last month.

Sinfonie's disc is entitled *Three Sisters on the Shore*, not 'on the beach' (a concept not invented in the 13th century).

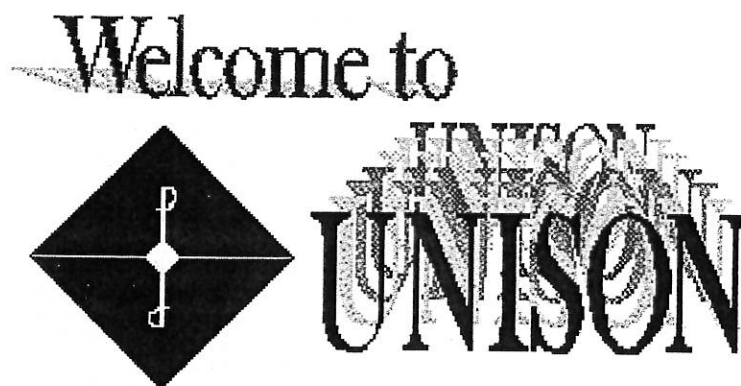
We omitted the number of *Voices of Christmas*. It is Isis CDO15

We hope we rescued before posting last month some envelopes that were stuffed with the October rather than November issue. Also we found a few issues with missing pages. So far only our subscriber in the Philippines has reported receiving one of these: if others are suffering in silence, please speak up.

The November issue was slightly late, since we were away when copies should have been sent out. We decided at the last minute to go to the Berlin exhibition then drove north to see some Hanseatic towns – we had been intrigued by Greifswald since working on the New Oxford Book of Carols (Piae cantiones was published there in 1582). We enjoyed the trip, despite the strong discouragement from one German subscriber, who insisted that there was nothing worth seeing north of Berlin. We returned via Rostock, Lübeck, Hamburg and Amsterdam, where Saul Groen reminded us that his shop was happy to supply music all over the world.

This month was delayed to include a report of the Barbican performances rather than have too much of a Purcell hangover next year (though there are still books on him to come).

The February issue may also be slightly late if we decide to go to the exhibition in Vienna.



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LETTERS

Dear Clifford,

My education in Icelandic having been shamefully neglected, I could not but rise to your Monteverdi translation challenge. One can assume that *og* means *and*, as I believe it does in modern Danish, that *...st* is a verbal suffix, and that *min*, *minn* and *minum* are cognate with our *my* and *mine*. As the last word in the sentence is *minum*, these pronouns therefore follow the noun they qualify. We thus know that not all nouns have an initial capital letter as they do in German, so *Drottin* and *Guði* must be proper nouns, or more likely references to the divinity; indeed, *Guði* suggests an inflected case of a noun meaning God, making *i* a preposition, probably *in*. And having been brought up in a rectory in silly Suffolk, I have just enough Anglo-Saxon to know that *sælig*, *blessed*, is cognate with *soul*. We thus have *My soul ... [God] and my ...[verb] in God, my ...*, which suggest beyond peradventure the first verse of the Magnificat.

Andrew van der Beek

Magnificent: let those who deny the importance of basic grammar in the English National Curriculum take note of how useful it can be in understanding other languages as well.

Dear Clifford,

I have been meaning to write to you to thank you for your very kind reference to my Berlioz book in *Early Music Review*, and am now spurred to do so by the experience of hearing and seeing *The Fairy Queen* at the Coliseum, which – rather against my expectations – I enjoyed enormously! In an eccentric way it seems to me to have got nearer to Purcell by the drastic expedient of omitting the entire spoken text than most performances of the original that I have seen. The music is paramount. The reviews were presumably based on the first night. I saw the third performance and liked Nicholas Kok's direction much more than most of my colleagues did. Which brings me to the second point of this letter: your edition of the score (which gave me great pleasure) and in particular *If love's a sweet passion*. I have always insisted that this incomparable song could last five times as long (a common experience with Purcell of course, but especially intense in this case). This time it did. Can you tell me the source of the duet version of the tune? Or have I heard it before and simply been inattentive?

David Cairns

For our reaction to the performance, see page 8. I too was particularly impressed that what is often abridged on the grounds of being intolerably repetitive was so movingly extended. The duet version was adapted for the production.

Dear Fenella Bazin,

I suggest that the MS paper would have normally been used the other way up, with the four line stave for chant, the lower five line stave for chords and the middle two lines for the words. I am sure examples of this will be revealed elsewhere – it would have followed the enthusiasm for accompanied chant. The composer of this pleasant but somewhat artless and craftless hymn, needing MS paper, simply turned it upside down, using the combined two + four-line staves for the left hand.

As for the reversed stems. I can only guess and say that the scribe either didn't know any better or was a music engraver by trade and so was used to putting stems on the wrong side. There are several inaccuracies in the bass, notably second system bar 4, where the BAB in the bass should be DCD, and system 1 bar 4, where there is a general mess including the use of sharp signs for flats. I can't find the hymn in any hymn-book I have, so perhaps it was local.

Albert Chatterly

Dear Clifford,

John Catch's letter rang many bells in my mind: his views on what the editor sells to the reader/performer are, I think, absolutely right. The bottom line of an edition is surely that the work makes musical sense; the second requirement is that the editor make the necessary decisions – it is dishonest to offer an edition for sale otherwise; and the third requirement (which varies with the source and in certain circumstances may be unnecessary) is to say what the alternative solutions could be.

I therefore accept his statement that it is the editor's duty to help the reader/performer. However, the needs of the reader/performer change with time. Twenty years ago all editions of pre-1600 music had to use the crochet as the beat; by now we have educated many of our performers to use the original note-values, with the minim or the semibreve as the beat. This is of course a continuous process: there are still some who prefer the crochet beat, some who now abhor it, and many in an intermediate position. On the whole, editors are in the forefront of this process, which is where they should be. The use of facsimiles has greatly helped the process; so has the musicological training available in institutions of higher education, which has filtered through to schools and elsewhere, and the kind of enlightened information-giving that has characterised the whole early-music movement (in which I include journals, the early-music fora and many other phenomena).

It is important to see all this as an issue not just of *knowledge*, but of *approach*. The days are gone, thank goodness, when 'editing' often meant covering the music with fingering, phrasing, articulation-marks and the like – the incidentals of music that were designed to bring 'early music' into the nineteenth century. Nowadays we tend to work from the inside of the music outwards, itself an approach made possible only by the kind of education just mentioned. You were probably right to reject all the fingering on your Grade IV pieces, therefore: the acceptable alternatives are (1) to use the original fingering, where it is known and known to work well, and (2) to offer *minimal* fingering as a guide to the performer, who can now be assumed not to need spoon-feeding. What constitutes minimal help of any kind is of course a matter for the editor's judgement, and may vary with the readership/performership expected to buy the product. That is, I think, one of the issues that divides merely competent editors from good ones (I leave incompetent ones out of account!)

Richard Rastall

Dear Clifford,

I write on behalf of Beauchamp Press to register our serious objections to your review (page 2 of your November issue) of our editions. We consider the review unfair and inaccurate, and not worthy of your paper. Unfortunately, many of your dismissive and offhand comments will be taken as true by your readers, even though there are considerable inaccuracies. For example:

1a. You say that our Lassus 'seems mostly to be edited from the *Magnum opus musicum*' and go on to suggest that the work commissioned by NFMS/LAB was not 'being done to the highest standard'. This is destructive, misleading and possibly libellous: the *Magnum opus* (1604) is the only printed source for *Bone Jesu*, *Inclina Domine*, *Mira loquor an Domine quid multiplicati*. Of the other works in our catalogue, the *Laudes Domini* are edited from the original print of 1584, *Iustorum animae* and *Christus resurgens* from 1582 and *Laudate Dominum* from 1573. We also have three Magnificats in the pipeline, all edited from original prints.

1b. I am not interested in scoring points off other publishers, but you comment that when repertoire is duplicated there should be some differences between the editions: the last-named work, *Laudate Dominum*, is for a single 12-part choir, but in the other current edition it is arbitrarily scored for two choirs. See also my point 4 below.

1c. Not only are the comments inaccurate: they are potentially damaging to our business. Ex Cathedra are currently recording a new CD of Lassus using our editions. This represents one of the few opportunities we have to see any return on the considerable effort invested in the edition by Alan Lumsden and myself, and your comments seriously compromise such opportunities.

2. Having insinuated that my editorial work was not being properly done, you then display an astonishingly casual attitude to you own reviewing, having lost the score we sent you of the Dufay *Missa Ave Regina celorum* (sic), writing that you can 'only remember it from an initial glance'. Pointing out the difficulty of achieving a satisfactory text, you fail completely to mention that John Milne, our editor for the work, has done exactly that, or that he and I have recreated a plausible text for the companion antiphon.

3. In connection with the Dufay you suggest that these editions are 'distinguished from other Beauchamp publications by presentation in a more musicologically-aware manner, with ligatures and coloration marked'. This is also completely inaccurate: from our first edition, the *Palestrina Missa Papae Marcelli*, we have consistently shown ligatures and coloration, in comparison, for example, with the CMM Complete Edition of Giovanni Gabrieli, where Denis Arnold dismissed the ligature as superfluous.

4a. You draw a comparison between our editions and those of JOED Music, for whom I earlier produced a series of Byrd editions and with whose work I am also very familiar as a user. We have not deliberately duplicated JOED's catalogue; but where editions have been produced for our own use, this has been an economic decision. The price difference between our editions and those from JOED is considerable, and results from our conviction that the market requires sound, dependable, clear editions on good-quality paper at the lowest price possible.

4b. If you read our catalogue you will see that we offer critical notes and introductions for all our editions, but have decided not to add to the cost by printing these in each copy.

4c. We produce editions either at the original written pitch or at the pitch indicated by the standard clef combinations. Other publishers make compromises to suit 'standard' and 'SATB' choirs: we aim at those who wish to learn and/or present the music in ways appropriate to the music rather than their choirs. For example, many alto lines lie unusually low, but we do not transpose them except on request. Neither do we present 16th-century music with soprano and tenor lines full of top Gs which are historically compromised.

I am sorry to read such comments in a paper which is widely read, and expect that you will seek to make redress at the earliest opportunity.

Michael Procter

I'll try to be brief, taking your points as numbered.

1a. I am glad to hear that you have used other Lassus sources, but how is the user to know that if you only quote the *Magnum opus musicum*?

1b. Agreed in this case; but you also have *Resonet in laudibus* and *Timor et tremor*, of which there are two editions available.

1c. Exaggerated: the forthcoming *Ex Cathedra* CD has only 11 minutes of Beauchamp music.

2. There was some point behind my attempt to be light-hearted about the loss of the Mass. I saw enough of the edition to realise that it was well-done but that the penetrating (if arrogant) article by Wegman may well have made the editor have second thoughts about some aspects of it. So I was in fact being tactful by not availing myself of Alan's offer to send me another copy. I had intended to discuss the article in relationship with the edition; but the impression that would have made on the reader would probably have been far more negative than the edition deserved. The Planchart article made suggestions on the text of the motet which also were not available for consideration for the edition. But congratulations on making a version which looks as if it will sing well.

3. My mistake. In the older repertoire, such editorial signs are much more prominent than in Lassus, and I was reacting to the immediate impression received by turning from Lassus to Dufay. I turned back to some of Alan's older Gabrieli editions and failed to find coloration signs in likely places; they, however, were in a different series.

4b. I'm not suggesting that you need vast critical commentaries. But you do need to mention your source, to avoid know-alls like me assuming that you haven't done your homework. (We often manage to squash this on the copyright line so that it wastes no space.) It is essential that singers understand the text, so non-standard texts need to be translated and, if necessary, explained. Whatever does a singer, even one who knows Latin, make of *Mirar loquar*? I quote the first half in the sort of rough translation I might have in mind while singing it. It is a dialogue.

I speak wonderful things, but worthy through faith. Bernard, what's this? Are you still alive? I'm alive. So you're not dead? Yes. And what are you doing? Resting. Are you silent or talking? Both. Why are you silent? Because I'm asleep. Why are you speaking? Because I'm alive. What are you talking about? Sacred mysteries. For whom? For someone reading my words. Not for everyone? No. So for whom? Those who seek sweet things. What's your name? This. What? Bernard, that is 'bonus nardus' [good nard]. Why nard? Because I smell. With what fragrance? A sweet one....

That is about half the motet. What can any singer or conductor make of it? It is good that the elegaic couplets of Quo properas are set out in verse as well as translated, but what is missing is a reference to the fascinating and varied suggestions Praetorius gives for mixed vocal and instrumental performance; only the most specialist conductor is likely to have a copy of *Syntagma musicum* sitting on his shelves, and there is no guarantee that he will be aware of his table of seven different combinations for the motet. Your critical commentary may give this information, but a reviewer must comment on what he receives and at least a sentence should be included in the main score, even if there isn't room for the full details. I'm not concerned at the listing of every minor correction of self-evident misprints in the source, but do feel that information of importance to performance should be included.

4c. We discussed this in connection with your Palestrina mass (*EMR* 1, p. 7). It seems to me that you confuse two issues: the pitch at which the music was probably originally sung and the importance of suiting the music to the voices available. These may conflict, and there is no way an editor can decide the correct pitch for an unknown body of singers. I don't think we should embark on that again. I am, however, extremely pleased to see a publisher taking the implications of the *chiavette* seriously. I agree about soprano top Gs, but in an ideal world prefer high tenors to altos.

More generally, I thought my opening paragraph was reasonably fair. The bundle of music received was too extensive to work through piece by piece without exhausting the patience of the reader, so I immediately drew attention to your catalogue and address, later focussing on the Dufay, which is outside the period people expect to find in your catalogue. The end of the first paragraph about rival editions is fairly general: hope for the future rather than barbed comment on the past. With regard to subsidy, helping a choir to buy music is entirely laudable, but I think there are problems of principle if a publisher receives public money and uses it to publish editions at below what similar publishers find to be a viable rate.

Dear Clifford,

I was interested to read Colin Booth's suggestion (Letters, November) that editorial continuo realisations should be printed 'at the back for reference'. The first realised edition of Purcell's songs, Joseph Corfe's *The Beauties of Purcell* of 1805, decorously consisted of two volumes, one containing the voice and figured bass, the other the 'piano accompaniments'. Oxford UP originally intended to publish my recent Purcell anthology in a comparable way: the bound score with realisations, plus a pull-out voice and bass score without realisations; the singer would have read from whichever part the accompanist did not require. Alas, the idea proved too expensive.

I too have taught amateurs to play from figured bass, and agree that they can 'have a lot of fun'. But aren't there dangers in implying that anyone can do it, if they try? How many – professionals included – can accompany, from the figured bass alone and in four correct parts, the *Confitebor* from the B minor Mass? – or, if that's too extreme an example, the trio from the Musical Offering?

The late Walter Bergmann requested in one of his editions that players should not alter his work, on the grounds that it contains 'many hidden ideas'. We may now smile at such an attitude, but for two centuries figured bass was the root not only of improvisation, but of composition too.

Why is figured bass seen as the concern of continuo players alone? One of Blow's duties at the Chapel Royal was to teach theorbo to choirboys. Perhaps if today's soloists were

more often initiated into the alchemical mysteries of figured bass, the humble continuist would more often feel the genteel goodwill of a C.P.E. Bach:

With extreme modesty he tries to assist those whom he accompanies to win coveted honours, even though his powers may at times outstrip theirs. He exhibits this modesty especially toward amateur performers.

and be less incline to echo François Couperin:

But what injustice! We are the last to be praised at concerts. On such occasions the accompanist is regarded merely as the foundation of an edifice, which, although it supports everything, is almost never mentioned.

Tim Roberts

A nice coincidence: I have just sent Alan Lumsden a note about the continuo playing sessions I am taking at his summer school next July suggesting that it would be a good idea if singers with a modicum of keyboard technique come both to sing and to accompany. I certainly don't expect any amateur to be able to manage to play Bach with ease; one of my most embarrassing musical experiences resulted a few years ago from agreeing to play for a Cambridge student St John Passion, assuming a woolly amateur orchestra, and found a string quartet and an organ that wouldn't play quietly enough, so that every note I played was distinctly audible. I doubt if Julian Podger will want me to accompany him again! One problem in understanding how to play thoroughbass is the dual-purpose nature of many instruction books and our doubts over the extent to which the compositional element was actually carried through into performance.

We welcome the announcement of Lindum Records. They will be keeping in touch with us and can supply anywhere in the world all CDs reviewed here. We wish Peter Berg success in his new venture, and hope that music-lovers will phone him at more civilised hours than his patients used to. (Though don't be too optimistic – we have had calls at some odd times!)

Readers who have difficulty obtaining books and editions which we review may contact us direct. We are not primarily a shop, but we do have dealings with some publishers, and in other cases will pass your order on elsewhere.

While not intending to provide a systematic survey of events, we are happy to fill empty spaces with announcements relating to the activities of contributors and subscribers.

We were visited recently by Martin Elliott, brother of the networking tenor. He left an advert for a summer school for young singers of baroque, classical and romantic music at Lucca from 30 Aug. to 8 Sept. Cost: £1,000,000 (lire, not pounds!) Tel. 01243 604281. He and Wren Music are also involved in the first performance of a new translation of Bach's *St Matthew Passion* by Neil Jenkins at the Barbican on 8 March; Neil sings the Evangelist, Martin sings Christ. English performances are out of fashion, despite strong arguments for them.

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NB There is no January issue: the next one is February 1996.

It will include an article by the writer and broadcaster Micheline Wandor on practising and hero worship.