

# Early Music REVIEW

Number 161

August 2014

ISSN 1355-3437

Price £2.50

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Early Music Review is published in  
alternate months

The International Diary is published every month  
except January

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Annual subscription  
UK: £22.50 Europe £27.50

Rest of World: £40.00 (air) £27.50 (surface)  
(foreign rates £5 cheaper without Concert Diary)

Sterling cheques payable to  
The Early Music Company Ltd  
Subscribers from abroad:  
Payment information on renewal invoices

I don't get to London concerts very often, but I try not to miss Buskaid – a small organisation that began in 1992 based round Rosemary Nalden. She was born in England, educated in New Zealand, and studied the viola and singing, then worked for 30 years in early-instrument ensembles and orchestras.

The beginning of Buskaid was when she organised a busk in 16 railway stations in 1992, and the Buskaid Trust was established. The musicians have flourished in a small building in Soweto intended for 35 but now 115 children are enrolled there. Periodically they make visits round the world, their musical ability being such that audiences find their concerts enthralling. Much of their music is "early" – Biber is among their favourites. I suspect that most of our readers will know about UK visits from our concert diary and reviews.

In 2009 the Buskaid Ensemble was listed in *Gramophone* as one of the world's ten most inspirational orchestras, along with the LSO, the New York Philharmonic and the Simon Bolivar Youth Orchestra. Sadly, South Africa doesn't treat music in the way Venezuela does. Fortunately, Rosemary is good at fund raising as well as conducting and teaching, with a manner of inspiring the players by means I can't understand.

I hope that the recent concerts at Cheltenham, Bristol etc. were well attended. I was at a full Queen Elizabeth Hall on 16<sup>th</sup> July, where everyone was amazingly enthusiastic. There were 14 violins, 6 violas, 4 cellos and 4 double basses. The orchestra sang as well and three percussionists doubled as string players, with others percussing as well. I'm pretty certain that the lead viola player – Tiisetso Mashishi, who can't be missed because he's 6' 6" – did some drumming.

*continued on p. 29*

*see also picture on back page*

## MUSIC REVIEWS

Clifford Bartlett (unless signed otherwise)

## MAGNUM OPUS MUSICUM VII

Orlando di Lasso *Sämtliche Werke... Band 13. Mottetten VII (Magnum Opus Musicum, Teil VII): Motetten für 6 Stimmen neu herausgegeben von Bernhold Schmid*. Breitkopf & Härtel (SON 343), 2013. xcvi + 193 pp, €228.00

The previous issue (VI, completing the five-voice motets with the first 20 for six voices) appeared, like this one, a year behind the date the review copies were sent out – this was only ready in July. It contains 38 motets (nos 336–373), all religious and nearly all liturgical texts, unlike the previous volume, which has a considerable number of non-ecclesiastical texts as, including classical Latin formal verses. The editorial material is thorough: if presented as a normal-sized book, it would be substantial. I was wondering if three singers could read from my copy and another copy from Cambridge University or Faculty Library for another three – the print is large and clear though they would need two firm music stands. I've recently been presented with a choir (the first for 50 years), but I'm not sure whether the singers (who have only met once) will be up to old clefs... yet! Most motets use four clefs, either high or low, with the two additional parts doubling in a less standard manner: did choristers move around, or were singers capable of singing beyond their range? There is very little triple time here, but the seven bars in No. 362 (*Salve, regina misericordiae*) adds a surprise to a rather simple but effective piece; I was also pleased to see from a facsimile of the opening of it on p. xciv and there was a critical commentary lasting four columns. It would be interesting to go through texts that are familiar from other composers. A shame that Lassus is still obscure!

## CARUS 1610 VESPERS

Monteverdi *Vespro della Beata Vergine... 1610 SV 206...* edited by Uwe Wolf. Full score. Carus (27.801), 2013. xxxiv 158pp, €49.00; study score €24.00, vocal score €18.90, complete parts €141.00 (fuller details with prices at <http://www.carus-verlag.com/2780100.en.htm>).

When I first asked about the edition at the end of last year, the editor mentioned that, in addition to being a scholar, he had played cornetto a hundred times. (I've only played continuo organ for about a tenth of that.) I wrote extensively for my review of the Bärenreiter edition (*EMR* 156, Oct. 2013, pp. 3–7 – abbreviated as Bär) but haven't the energy to go into such details again. I don't want to make too much fuss again over transposition of *Lauda Jerusalem* and *Magnificat*, since down-a-fourth is available as an extra (though at extra cost) – we just sell complete copies by colour coding. A simple way to draw attention to chiavette is by checking the Lassus volume reviewed above. Almost invariably, the clefs (hence compass) are C1 C3 C4 F4 or G2

C2 C3 C4/F3. It would be odd if one choir fitted the low clefs, another the high clefs. If the same singers could manage both, there would be no reason why the music wasn't written for a wider range. I suspect that instrumental players were perfectly capable of transposition, and probably not just for purposes of chiavette. There is a serious problem getting amateur cornetts to reach top D confidently and the poor violinist beginning the second half of *Deposuit* on a top D has problems. (Yes, amateurs do play the Vespers!) Where else are there top Ds so early? The editor argues that Cornetto 3 goes below its range. I've always assumed that the A below middle C was the standard cornett range, and that is the lowest note in the transposed sections, i. e. the *Magnificat*. However, there's no reason why the player shouldn't move down to the tenor cornett.

My first complaint of Bär was the vertical barring with all instruments grouped with full bars covering eight staves with unbroken bar-lines in the *Sonata sopra Santa Maria*. The grouping could be more easier to read. Carus & CB separate the two cornetts and two violins. But I placed with the 2 violins what Carus calls violoncello 2, making a group of three. The remaining three instruments are a trio of trombones, one of which can be a cello instead of the middle trombone. My layout is 2 cornetti, 2 violins + cello and 3 trombones. Of the voice positions in the editions in front of me, Wolters places the voice above the Bg and realisation, mine has the voice at the top and the Bg below with figures but no realisation, Bär has the voice at the top and a Bg at the bottom below which there is a two-stave realisation, and Carus has the voice between the parts with two tenor clefs and the two parts in bass clef, with a Bg at the bottom. In fact, apart from the layout of the barlines, Bär and Carus are basically the same, though Carus is distorted by setting out the instruments in pairs rather than in accord with the inner groups. With no abbreviated instrument names, I think that Carus is inconvenient.<sup>1</sup>

Incidentally, *violoncino* was the term used before *violoncello*. Fontana's posthumous 1641 and Cavalli's massive church music collection of 1656 used *violoncino*, but the modern term appeared within a decade of that. The term *Violone* is very ambiguous, and there is a strong faction that assumes the instrument may have gone only half-way to a real 16' instrument: it would normally play 8' but bend down cadences. It is notable that *Domine ad adjuvandum* goes to the G at the bottom of the bass clef, which can go down the octave, but there is no D notated below that, which would be the obvious piece for that note if available.

I only mentioned the possible number of voices in a footnote of my review. While there is no certainty when and if Monteverdi performed anything like the printed

1. I didn't go into details about the Kurtzman edition of 1999, but I know that a distinguished choir bought it, but next time it bought mine.

volume, it is interesting that his choir probably had only ten singers, according to Roger Bowers.<sup>2</sup> However, the Vespers has usually been presented as a choral work (in the sense of using a choir) – and I don't object: it's too favourite a work for choirs to be banned!

A possible cause of awkwardness is if the organist prefers to play from the score. For instance, the cadences at bars 84, 168 & 222 of *Laetatus sum* are treated in different ways in the Carus realisation: 84 is major, 168 and 222 are minor.<sup>3</sup> My edition (which has bass figures added) has all three marked # (ie major), though I now prefer to play unison. I haven't seen the vocal score, but the complete score (large or small) should be figured so that, in performances with, for example, two organs and theorbo, organists often prefer the score and theorbos prefer a bass part, and the vocal score should match the figuring. A friend once invited me to be rehearsal accompanist for the Vespers, because the skilful regular accompanist (who taught the subject at one of the London music colleges) wasn't very helpful: he played every note perfectly, but a chordal background was much more helpful. Playing continuo chords with the opportunity to bang out awkward phrases when necessary works much better, and I was invited back the next time they played the work. Bär goes too far, figuring the Bc and below that printing a two-stave realisation.

I like the idea of the psalm verses being numbered: apart from showing the structure, they can act as the equivalent of rehearsal letters. It is, however, a pity that the ranges are not shown at the beginning of each movement. It would, for instance, immediately show that viola III has a note below its bottom C in bar 88 of the Sonata.<sup>4</sup> I'm not sure if the variety of options for doubling parts is quite as flexible as ours – we provide each psalm (except *Dixit Dominus* but with *Audi coelum*) with a bundle of parts, including a variety of parts for each line that is plausible in modern or alto/tenor clefs.

The facsimile pages are better than most, and reasons for printing them are shown on the page. There are substantial introductions in German and English – 8 pages in double columns and 16 pages in rather smaller print of critical commentary – I have a fear that the section might not appear in the study score or alternatively in minute print. Resetting it for the study score could usefully be supplemented with a font that comes out on the smaller page with the same size as the large score and translation of the German commentary, though managing the last six pages might be difficult – perhaps the could be put on a web site.

Pricewise, both Carus and Bär are comparable for vocal scores, whereas we sell complete scores in A4 format for around the same price. Personally, I find the vocal score superfluous for most 17th-century music – I reckoned that the cost of including separate lines for instruments adds not

2. Roger Bowers "Claudio Monteverdi and sacred music in the household of the Gonzaga Dukes of Mantua, 1590-1612", *Music and Letters* 90 (2009) 331-371.

3. Bär has 84 major, 168 minor and 224 major.

4. Carelessly, I wasn't consistent in my edition – but I didn't suggest that part was for viola.

much more than a pound. I haven't made a note-for-note comparison for our 2010 revision, though have picked up slips over the previous 20 years. But most of what we publish is cheaper than Carus, though we probably need to tidy up the instrumental parts – the parts doubling voices seem a bit awkward. There's a balance to be chosen between beauty and economy!

This has been a somewhat erratic review. I haven't gone through the facsimile against the Carus edition or done a close comparison with the previous editions. I presume that it will be popular in Germany. In England, we sell more than any other work we publish, and most of the early players have grown up on our parts, though Novello still sells Denis Stevens edition – strangely, he followed a lot of original ideas but rejected chiavetti and other less controversial matters vigorously. We also provide a hybrid version of the chiavetti items – *Lauda* down a tone and *Magnificat* down a minor third (the key is better than down a tone) – entirely for convenience. I don't think there's an obviously favoured edition in the USA. I did discuss a Vespers when Carus was interested in us, but we didn't solve the pitch problem. It's useful to be aware that cornets and trombones of the period now often play (and played then) up a semitone, which at least makes it easier to sing, unless there are awkward perfect pitchers who have to mentally transpose. It does, however, make it a strain on untransposed *Lauda Jerusalem* at a semitone higher.

Congratulations to Carus. I think it will be good to sing from, though the layout is distorted with the alto part(s) needing more space below the stave than other parts – we have found that most contraltos manage to read in the octave-tenor clef with very little problem.

#### THE LEFT-OVERS

*English Keyboard Music c.1600—1625* edited by Alan Brown (*Musica Britannica* 96). Stainer and Bell, 2014. xli + 197pp, £93.00

MB has gradually been working through British keyboard music of a century or so following 1520. The major composers are covered – Byrd, Philips, Bull, the Farnabies, Gibbons and Tomkins. This vol. 96 contains anonymous pieces, attributions and lesser names. To follow there will bemusic in MB from the Fitzwilliam Virginal Book and the smaller Tisdale Book in the same library.

A frustrating feature is the lack of awareness for page-turns. Take, for example, no. 29a & b, a Pavan and Galliard maybe by Byrd. Recitalists may call on a page-turner, but it's frustrating for anyone playing for amusement or study. In this piece, in itself there's no problem with the *rep* of the first from spreading to the right-hand page – but in the Galliard, which begins on a right page, there are now two bars over the page. There is also a problem with the second page of the Pavan, since the second *Rep* has a whole new line over the page. At least there isn't the problem of having three turns for a repeat! Some players read music that is nearer than others, so I don't think there would be any problem in having a slightly smaller font so that a seventh system can

be included if necessary. So a better alternative would be to give the second page seven systems as well so that the page turn would be at the beginning of the third section, which would complete the Pavan in another seven systems. 29b would then begin on the fourth page (I'm avoiding page numbers), and be either squashed to six or expanded to seven systems. Rep 2 and the unembellished 3 would take another page, with a concluding page for Rep 3. That only has four systems, so it could be filled with a useful adornment of part of the MS. No 30, however, has two pages each for Pavan and Galliard, each with a page turn, though swapping 30 & 31 would avoid that. Personally, I put a lot of effort into page turns.

I was intrigued by Appendix II, called Didactic Works in the contents list and the critical commentary but only individual titles in the music. Woodson's *Twenty Ways (canons 2 in 1) on "Miserere"* has some complexity, but it is *Pretty ways for young beginner to look on* (anon) with 16 sections seems from a different world. It's largely built on a bass beginning

d d f d d d | cfgaaa | gcdcc bagaaa | cbagfe | d

What is interesting is playing above the bass some useful practice on simultaneous conflicting rhythms.

The volume is well worth playing for a variety of music, some of which is known, some which isn't. There is, however, a problem of resting the score (1.680 kg) on a flimsy keyboard. I wouldn't, for instance, try to use it on mine. But I don't want to complain. One doesn't want the library shelves saturated with minor composers, but the repertoire is good enough for all that survives to be available. Fortunately, second rate music from the later 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards can be circulated more easily in facsimile.

#### 40 VARIATIONS on OUR FATHER

*Johann Ulrich Steigleder Vierzig Variationen über "Vater unser in Himmelreich" (1626/7)* ed. Ulrich Siegle Cornetto-Verlag Stuttgart (CP903). 3 vols, €35.00 commentary (CP1106) €45.00

Steigleder (1593-1635) was born in Schwäbisch Hall, the third generation of a musical family. He became organist of the Abbey church in Stuttgart and Organist to the Ducal Court of Württemberg. He may have been a teacher of Froberger. His surviving works are two volumes of organ music, the 1624 *Ricercar tabulatora* and the 1627 *Tabulaturbuch* with its 40 variations on the Lutheran chorale *Vater unser in Himmelreich*. The variations range in length from about seven minutes down to less than one, with many only taking up a couple of pages. It covers a wide range of styles of the period, from the Sweelinck-style *bicinia* to some pieces that consist almost entirely of trills in one or more voices. This edition updates earlier editions of *Vater unser* such as Willi Apel's version published by the American Institute of Musicology in 1968. The original uses the notation introduced three years earlier by Scheidt in his *Tabulatura nova* (1624), so we can be pretty certain of the text. This edition is published in four volumes, the fourth of which is an extensive (and apparently very complex) critical commentary in German which I am not reviewing. The variations

are in the first two volumes (divided 1-20 and 21-40) and the third volume includes the chorale lines that can, if so wished, be sung or played on another instrument. The chorale melodies are also present in the keyboard scores so the addition of another musician is not essential. But having this separate volume is, of course, useful if the work is performed with company. There are two pages of introduction, only in German, and the headings on several of the pieces are not translated into English. The text is clear, and page turns are reduced to a minimum by the addition of pages from the original edition. Andrew Benson-Wilson

#### VOICES & SACKBUTS 1600-1640

*Seventeenth-Century Italian Motets with Trombones*  
Edited by D. Linda Pearse (Collegium Musicum Yale University, Second Series: Vol. 19). xxxiv + 163pp, \$225.00,

This is the result of a scholar at Indiana with all the normal skills but with the advantage of being a sackbutter himself. The volume varies between trombone and sackbut, but I'll stick with the latter – the term is the one I am accustomed to when playing organ with them. There are 19 items of whom Usper is the only one that non-experts (or, for that matter, most experts) might recognise, though I did edit Amante Franzoni's *Santa Maria*.<sup>5</sup>

The introduction is thorough. I'm not sure that the description (analysis is a bit strong) of the music couldn't be observed by any intelligent user, though there are some points worthy of note. More interesting is the section on the sackbut, especially on how to play it. There's a brief paragraph on basso continuo, mostly sensible, though I'm less worried in doubling the top line on an organ than on a harpsichord, and in contrapuntal music the organist may well just play the parts. The editor explains how players can manage three pitch-levels. (466, 440 & 415), among other matters. Mensuration and tactus was more flexible in this period with as ample a description as you'll find in any edition, and phrasing and articulation are discussed. The final section is on balance and acoustics. I am, however, in two minds: much of this is general and doesn't need restriction to works of eight or fewer voices/instruments. More useful would be a short (and cheap) book expanding some of the material that isn't explicit to the music here.

The first piece discussed at length in the introduction is Usper's *Vulnerasti cor meum* for soprano (G2) and five trombones.<sup>6</sup> The presence of underlay with the trombone parts isn't clearly explained in the commentary. The other Usper piece also has underlay for instruments: it is presumably a practice of his so that the music can be sung if there are no trombones or for the words to show the shaping of the music on them – though that seems a modern practice. The work is treated as *chiavette*, but this isn't explained adequately in the critical report.

5. Originally by hand around 1975, but later typeset for publication in *EMR* 15, pp. 10-11. Page 9 had some introduction to the music and an advert for using the www via Indiana University's facilities. Set out in six systems on two pages, the music can be read from score with no page-turns. It is also included in a Monteverdi 1650 *Vespers* collection.

6. The Italian root is retained for instrument headings.

## CALDERÓN and HIDALGO

Juan Hidalgo *Celos aun del aire matan: Fiesta cantada* (*Opera in Three Acts*) with text by Pedro Calderón de la Barca Edited by Louise K. Stein (RRMBE, 187) A-R Editions, cvii + 280pp. \$350.00

Opera was rare in 17th-century Spain. The librettist and composer were leading figures around 1660, when the work was written. The editor is remarkably withdrawn in translating the title: even in the text and translation in opposite columns, there is a gap opposite the Spanish title: indeed, it appears only (I think) in the second column of p. xii, at the beginning of the second complete paragraph. The editor offers two translations:

Jealousy, even of the air, kills  
or      Jealousy, even unfounded, can prove fatal  
Neither of these would look appealing in lights outside the a theatre or fall impressively from the tongue!

There are four 17th-century editions of the text, two of which are the basis of the edition – Madrid publications in 1663 and 1683. There are two musical MSS, neither ideal. The more reliable is from Madrid (MS Caja 174-21) and dates towards the end of Hidalgo's lifetime (1614-85) but only contains Act I. The other MS (Évora Bibl. Púb. COD CLI 2-1) has the three Acts copied in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. Both MSS seem to be based on copies intended for singers, with basso continuo. At first glance, it looks a bit like late Monteverdi or Cavalli, but it doesn't seem very powerful in comparison with the Venetian Bc of the period. It may sound better with skilfully-played harps and guitars than with harpsichords: if the latter are used, the bass lines might need a more Monteverdian harmonic shape – or perhaps the singers were brilliant and the accompaniment didn't matter! The singers were sopranos (and not falsettists), apart from a rustic tenor. The edition modernises the notation rather more than one expects from music of c.1660, but coloured notation was still alive then. Another archaic feature is the use of chiavette.

I don't know whether it is intentional to leave a wide gap between the voice stave and Bc – it might be convenient to leave space for writing in a translation. Horizontal spacing in triple time is unnecessarily spread, a common fault. The edition is, however, a tremendous achievement of 35 years during a period when scholarship has been rapidly improving. The introduction is extensive and the bilingual text with end-notes runs to 70 pages. My guess is that few readers will pay attention to the congested critical commentary. Much must have been covered by general principles, but the specific points would be more accessible if presented as footnotes – most pages had systems that could be a bit closer together so that the editorial comments could be in two columns (like the texts).

The snippet of the work I noticed on You Tube was acceptable, but didn't feel very Spanish: the main soloist here was Angeles Blancas as Pocris (a Spanish version of the classical Procris!), but in 4' 14" there were two instrumental interruptions. Stage directors and conductors do seem to extend early operas by their own ideas then cut bits of

genuine music because it takes too long! There could be short instrumental sections between scenes, but not consistently: it is interesting how often *Poppea* changes scene by dramatic vocal transition.

At the time I'm writing this, the US dollar is at a favourable rate, though not enough to make a substantial difference! I suspect that performance will be difficult, first because of the expense – there can't be a "vocal" score since there are no instruments except continuo. Students could not afford to buy copies for the main singers, which are too heavy to manoeuvre in rehearsal. The bilingual text is probably more useful if issued separately so that singers can see the original text for its shape and the translation for its understanding, though a better alternative is to print the English version in as close to the word order as possible at the bottom of each music page: it can then also be used for surtitles. How the performance material is to be created needs to be considered before the main score is set.

## ZENOBLA E RADAMISTO

Giovanni Legrenzi, *Zenobia e Radamisto: Dramma in Musica in Tre Atti*. Critical edition by Stefano Faglia and Franca Maria Saini (Italian Academy of Musical Research). LIM Editrice, 2013. cxiv + 224pp, €40.00

This is the critically edited libretto and musical score, with structural analysis of the plot and musical setting, of a potentially audience-pleasing and varied opera. According to the introduction by Eduardo Rescigno, Legrenzi's third opera (1665) takes its rightful place after Monteverdi's *Orfeo* and *Incoronazione di Poppea* of 1607 and 1643 and Cavalli's *Giasone* (1649). It is a beautiful edition, exceptionally so for the presentation of the score (up to seven systems per page where possible, the size of the notes varying to optimize the pagination), except that one cannot put it on a music stand without assistants on either side to hold it open.

The 104 pages of non-musical material to consult, including the libretto, are in Italian. But there is a powerful complimentary resource: [www.iamr.eu/giovanni-legrenzi/zanobia-e-radamisto/](http://www.iamr.eu/giovanni-legrenzi/zanobia-e-radamisto/). Open that page (also in Facebook, Google+ or Facebook) to find the history, plot, and sources of the libretto and the structure of the opera. Do not click on the button for "English" because it will only take you to the homepage about the IAMR! You could instead use google-translate for sections you cannot follow in Italian. There are also two colour images not present in the volume itself: a statue of the Assyrian-Armenian tyrant Tiridate and a painting of the discovery of Zenobia alive, just pulled from the river after having been stabbed and losing her baby.

It would be an exciting adventure to perform this enticing, spectacular opera, which shows parallel worlds, love and war, heroes and buffoons, a plot which ends happily after defeats and betrayals, thanks to faithfulness and a bit of magic. Even the attempted assassination of the tyrant fails, and the numerous confusing disguises make the triumph of love a cliff-hanger. Of course Legrenzi needs no words of

praise, and there are instrumental sinfonias, introductions, ritornelli and sometimes accompaniments in arias for the two violins.

The score will also be somewhat harder than usual to photocopy, if necessary for the purpose of performing it, because the print extends into the binding itself. If only LIM offered this score in a spiral binding as well! It would also have been helpful to include the vocal registers of the characters and the page-numbers where each appears. The entire MS score, I-Nc, Rari: 33.6, 8, is freely viewable at [www.internetculturale.it](http://www.internetculturale.it), where the forces required are listed as SSSSS, AA, TTTTTT, BB, Chorus (S A T B), 2 strings (violin), bass (cello), and bc.

Barbara Sachs

*I'm puzzled that a copyright edition is assumed to be accessible for photocopying. There are rumours that some countries ignore copyright laws more than others. €40 is an amazing bargain compared with most other such publications: one wonders if the size of the score and the close margins were intended to make copying difficult. We (BC and I) have edited and computer-set some 30 operas from Monteverdi to Handel, and they have never been impossible to print on A4 paper, with the possibility of B4 if a larger copy is needed and sensible page turns whenever possible. We don't expect them to be photocopied. Our Poppea is a good example: just over 200 pp @ £30.00. I'd be interested to see this edition – and BC is a Legrenzi enthusiast.*

CB

#### HACQUART CHELYS

**Carolus Hacquart Chelys: 12 Suites for Viola da Gamba and Basso Continuo** Edition Güntersberg, 2013. 4 vols

Carolus Hacquart, viol player, teacher and composer, was born in Bruges about 1640 and lived for much of his professional life in Amsterdam. He published music for voices, composed an opera in Dutch, played the organ in The Hague, and in 1686 published this collection. Apparently he was still alive in 1701, making him more or less contemporary with Sainte Colombe.

Unfortunately, only the solo part of the publication survives, but there are a number of manuscript sources of some of the suites in which the bass part survives. This edition's introduction includes a facsimile of the Prelude for the suite in G major, very elegantly engraved, and the frontispiece serves as the illustration for the front and back covers of this excellent publication.

It is reproduced in the standard Güntersberg format – A3 folded to A4 booklets on good quality paper, with a generous introduction, each volume containing three of the suites. There is a full score with continuo realisation, a score with the figured bass and solo part, and separate parts for the solo and the continuo player, thus catering for all performance preferences. The layout is elegant and clear, free of editorial interventions save where an accidental is suggested. Where the sources lack a surviving bass line, one is provided, and the critical notes specify where this is the case. The four volumes are very reasonably priced: three of them at €21.00 and one at €19.80.

So what of the music itself? It is all eminently playable, lying easily under a good hand, and using the range of the 6-string viol occasionally up to d', but no higher. Each suite has either four or five movements, mostly Prelude, Allemande, Courante, Sarabande, Gigue, and are indeed French in style if you compare them to the music of Hotman or Dubuisson, but not if you compare them to that of De Machy or Marais. They are generously chordal, and one can see how Schenk's music developed from this. They are not as technically ambitious as his music nor do they have his melodic charm, but they have their own beauties which make them well worth playing. The chords lie nicely under the hand and bow and he has a particular predilection for string crossing, which makes them excellent studies, if a bit predictable. Of the 12 suites, 3 are in D major, 3 in d minor, and one each in G, e, F, a, g and C.

Several of the Preludes have a grave-vivace-grave format, and the e-minor suite in Volume 3 opens with an extended Fantasia with a succession of slow-fast-slow sections, strikingly original: some beautiful slow chordal passages, followed by a 'vivace' with rapid string crossings. It is very satisfying to play and well worth performing. There is no source for the bass part for this movement, but there is for the remainder of the suite, and one can see that they could work unaccompanied, as the solo part includes most of the harmonic bass. Indeed Schenk's *Scherzi Musicali*, published in 1701, states that the basso continuo is optional, and, as is well known, Marais published the bass part for his first book three years after the appearance of the solo book.

This publication is important as it fills out our knowledge of the development of the viol technique later in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. It is in considerable contrast to Marais' 1<sup>st</sup> book (1686) and De Machy's (1685) both of which need the low AAA string, and utterly different (as is everything) from Sainte Colombe's. Shem Mackey's recent article in *Early Music* about the 1683 Collichon 7-string bass viol demonstrates a possible connection with St. Colombe's invention, news of which seems to have travelled only slowly outside France. This music shows yet again that English divisions had a stronger influence in the Netherlands and Germany.

But more significantly it adds repertoire which offers interesting challenges to aspiring players of the solo repertoire of the bass viol, beautiful music which demands good playing: yet another gap filled by these enterprising publishers.

Robert Oliver

#### A BAROQUE ORGAN BOOK

**Ein barockes Orgelbuch (Österreich, 1690-1731)...** edited by Rudolf Scholz Diletto Musicale (DM 1474), 2013. 90pp, €27.95.

The collection was assembled between 1690 and 1731 at the Hall convent, which had been founded in 1569: according to the founding charter, music was to be performed and enlarged in scale "for ever". The MS was almost certainly copied by Elias de Silva, who was musician and tutor to

the choir boys from 1712. The writer of the introduction, Helga Scholz-Michelitsch (presumably a relative of the editor, who died in 2012), doesn't comment on the relationship between de Silva and the Convent between 1690 and 1712.

The music is set out in order of the eight tones, with most of the content liturgical: they could be material for beginners to practise, though eventually they would probably learn how to improvise them. There are also a few less-obviously church pieces, especially seven by Georg Muffat. DA Silva was the main composer with 23 pieces, followed by Johann Jacob Walther (12), J. C. F. Fischer (4) and Carissimi, Johann Caspar and Schwaighofer (1 each). The music is on two staves, with minimal requirement of pedal. It hardly compares with the Bach reviewed in the next column, but short pieces are sometimes useful

I'd have welcomed a little more information about the omitted items at the end of the MS, particularly the continuo guide.

#### VOCAL ZELENKA

**Zelenka Missa Dei Patris ZWV19** Edited by Reinhold Kublik, Continuo Realization by Paul Horn Breitkopf & Härtel (PB 5556). vi+214pp, £89.00

This is an off print of the 1985 edition in Volume 93 of the *Erbe deutscher Musik* series. The preliminaries are dated "Spring 1982" and there is a note after the original to the effect that more recent information on Zelenka may be found in the 1989 *Zelenka-Dokumentation*. Out of date as that may appear, there is nothing to criticise about the edition, which is very thorough although, as the English-speaking world's leading authority on the composer and his music, Jan Stockigt, has suggested on several occasions, in the absence of original performing materials, an edition can only represent "work in progress" as the compositional input of copyists (who would have to deal with *colla parte* instruments whose ranges were not suited to the task, for example) cannot be reflected, and thus the final version of the work. While the introduction is given in both German and English, the critical notes at the end of the volume are only in the former, not that there are huge numbers of difficulties with the source material. A vocal score is available to buy (EB 8051), while the instrumental material must be hired. It is a very fine work, whose duration the editor estimated to be 70 minutes (confirmed by two CDs that I have), with lots to keep choruses on their toes. BC

**Zelenka Miserere in C minor ZWV57** Edited by Matthias Hutzler, Thomas Kohlhase; piano reduction by Matthias Grünert Breitkopf (EB 8049).32pp, £9.00

This is another of Zelenka's most popular choral works, so a compact, easily legible vocal score is most welcome. Mostly choral (with doubling or supporting instruments), the only solo is the first section of the *Gloria*, which is a bold harmonic shift too, from the home key of C minor into E minor. The chorus that follows modulates from G

to D, preparing for a fugal *Sicut erat* which, in typical Zelenka style slips and slides through a series of keys before the suspension-rich textures of the opening return for the closing *Miserere mei Deus*. At an estimated 18 minutes, this would get any choral concert off to an angst-filled start. Performance material again available for hire. BC

#### LES FÊTES DE L'HYMEN ET DE L'AMOUR

**Rameau Les fêtes de l'Hymen et de l'Amour: ballet héroïque...** livret de Louis de Cahusac, édition de Thomas Soury, rédaction clavier-chant de François Saint-Yves. *Opera omnia Rameau, série IV, volume 14*. Société Jean-Philippe Rameau & Bärenreiter (BA 8858-90). xiv + 250pp, £41.50.

I must confess that I have not encountered this work – surprising when, in various formats, some 150 performances were given in over 220 years. Its première was on 15 March 1747 for the Dauphin's second wife, Marie-Josèphe de Saxe. Rameau had waited to perform a three-act *ballet héroïque* – *Osiris, Canope & Aruésis*, so a suitable prologue was added. There were more changes later. Unfortunately, it's difficult to get much idea of how the orchestra might have sounded. The Rameau performed by Buskaid a few days ago (see p. 29) had such a range of colour and variety that it would be possible to have any plausible effect. What I can invariably praise in Rameau's dramatic music is its clarity of the music and a distinct house-style. I may find it more useful if I ever hear it. If you want to get some sponsorship, try the Masons.

#### BACH PRELUDES & FUGUES

**Bach Complete Organ Works... Preludes and Fugues I** edited by David Schulenberg Breitkopf & Härtel (EB8801), 2013. 139pp, £24.80

**Bach Complete Organ Works... Preludes and Fugues II** edited by David Schulenberg Breitkopf & Härtel (EB8802), 2014. 148pp, £24.80

The publisher suggested that it might be sensible to review this and the imminent vol. 2 together, hence the delay. Since the arrangement of this and the earlier NBA IV vols. 5 & 6 (I'll subsequently omit "IV" for this review), it is worth mentioning the differences between the two major editions.

NBA 5 & 6 were both edited by Dietrich Kilian. Vol. 5, published in 1972, covers 21 substantial Preludes/Fantasias/Toccatas and Fugues. Vol. 6 (1964) comprises pieces that are (or were) not quite within the pale, with 13 items (including the fragmentary BWV 573) and nine early versions and variants referring to vols. 5 & 6. These editions are 42 and 50 years old.

The Breitkopf series (subsequently abbreviated Br) more or less divides NBA 5 into Br vols. 1 & 2: Br 1 has music in C and D, Br 2 has the rest of the preludes and fugues. The main principle that the editor follows is to be suspicious of accepting detailed analysis of secondary material (including music that has no primary source) – not that the

information is thrown out. Schulenberg cleans the text and rejects sources that were accepted as authoritative. There is a substantial critical commentary in German, with an English translation (together with additional pieces) in a CD slipped inside each back cover.

The use of two or three staves is relaxed – it's better to have the parts clarified and when there are doubts, the bass has its own stave. I'm starting with the B-minor *Praeludium et Fuga* since I've got the facsimile at hand; Bach used two staves, but it is set out in three staves in NBA, Br and no doubt every other edition. The autograph is hard work to read; the complexity is not the pedal line but the density of the middle parts. One aspect of Bach's notation (normal practice of the time) is the repetition of accidentals within the bar. I've used that convention, slightly standardized, in some of my Monteverdi editions, but not in Bach and Handel. I suspect, though, that Bach's method is easier to read, providing that the player can exercise some common sense. In bar 8 of the Prelude, for instance, the absence of a natural for the 8<sup>th</sup> demisemiquaver is sensible, since it isn't repeated and anyway is at a different octave. Bach beams the ascending scale with six notes, followed by another four notes in the second half of the bar. NBA 5 & Br 1 both have five notes on the middle stave up to C with the sixth note on the top stave, all in one ligature. This just looks silly! In bar 11, Bach writes sharps on the second as well as the first D, but no naturals in the second half of the bar. Bach's use of accidentals is irregular, but (assuming I could read it with ease) it has a lot to be said for preserving it. It's up to the player to consider ambiguities.

Br is obviously preferable if you're buying new copies. The English-speaking player will prefer access to the English detailed editorial commentary, and on the whole, the 50-years gap between NBA and Br for the most used pieces is likely to be preferable. My first meeting with David Schulenberg was at a conference at the Boston Early-Music Festival in the mid-1990s which I was invited to chair at the last minute. Byrd was the topic, and he was one of five distinguished talkers. By coincidence, I have just finished reading his 42-page contribution to *Networks of Music...* (see p. 22), with a discussion of "What is a Composer" in connection with Philips and Sweelinck. I'm afraid that my review of that, though I did read every word. It is refreshing if a scholar doesn't make his home in one burrow! He was certainly a good choice, but the Bach series is, sensibly, shared. I presume that there is an overall committee of the wise and good who can keep editors on the right track. No such names are given, but the series so far has been most impressive.

#### HANDEL CHAMBER DUETS

*Händel Chamber Duets for Soprano, Alto and Basso continuo HWV 178, 181, 185, 186, 190, 197.* Edited by Konstanze Musketa, continuo realisation by Christoph Harer. Bärenreiter (BA10257) 2013. vi + 74pp+bc. £25.00 (including bass part)

This contains three duets from Hanover between 1710 and 1712 (HWV 178, 185 & 197) and three from London in

1740/45 (181, 190 & 186): this is the order of the duets, not that of the cover and title page. I don't have HHA V: 7 so have no source for comparison. I have the unrevised and revised Chrysander vol. 32, the latter being an Urtext edition (which doesn't imply perfection) of 1880, which is not one of his best editions. Going back, there are several prints from the latter half of the 18th century. The Handel Society (1852) edited by Henry Smart is difficult to use now, since the individual pages have come apart and are too brittle to hold together, but some of his continuo realisations are better than Chrysander's.

An obvious error occurs at the opening of *A mirarvi io son intento* (HWV 178). Older editions and the HWV catalogue begin with two bars of continuo, whereas it is only played at the end of the A and B sections. I would have checked the Fitzwilliam MS had my microfilm been accessible. In bar 32 the main chord is A minor with C on top. It is sensible to have that chord – it allows more possibilities for the first chord of the B section. But it would sound odd if the cantata ended the same way: A major with the A at the top is then preferable. The alternative is labelled *ossia*, whereas it should be marked *Fine* on the treble as well as the bass.

*Conserve raddoppiate* (HWV 185) is one of the duets with realised piano part by Brahms in Chrysander's edition. It begins with nine bars for alto only. It strikes me as odd that Christoph Harer has chords above the alto part while the soprano is silent, and even odder that the first line (8 bars) has 11 D's a ninth above middle C, 3 C sharps, and 2 Es: how boring! In the first movement, the cello has to be aware in hemiolas whether the third minim of the bar is positively emphasised or merely kept going until the second beat of the next bar. The cellist doesn't get any help if playing the part provided.

The edition does not provide enough for performance. The cantatas can be played by a harpsichordist and a singer either side, with the Bc separate. However, that doesn't work for concerts unless the harpsichord's sharp end is facing the audience. It might be better to add a score with no realisation but with an editorial figured bass, and figures added to the cello as well. That would allow more flexibility, while singers happy to sing round a keyboard wouldn't need the extra score. The latter copy might also be a bit smaller. But it's excellent that this is available. The Italian texts are translated (HWV 181 is a translation from Horace, Epode 2).

#### SIGN. HENDELL

*Concerto a quadro del Sign: Hendell* edited by Christopher Hogwood. Edition HH (24 369), 2014. vii + 11pp & 4 parts, £14.75

The piece is a bit of a mystery – at least the attribution to Handel: the first syllable with a letter "e" isn't implausible, but "e" for "a" as the second letter is less so. The scoring is for flute, violin, viola and cello, which leaves bare sections when violin and viola are omitted. The edition is fully figured, but that is editorial. The editor assumes that the MS is a later version. The attribution is "del Sign. Hendell" with the final line prefaced by an abbreviation I can't read,

then "E. Wettringh". Of the two possible Wettringhs, the elder Elias (1716-81), a lawyer and judge, is the most likely to have copied the piece and made some changes, and that would probably have been done before 1769, when he was knighted and had an altered surname. The style seems too early for Enoch (1746-1811). It is possible that the original was for two violins and no viola – that would account for the highish range, though nothing is higher than a fifth above the top string, and there's only one note below the violin range. The scribe isn't a meticulous copyist. It's an attractive piece, but hardly Handel.

#### SONATAS FOR SELF-TAUGHT MUSICIANS

**Franz Anton Maichelbeck** *Acht Sonaten (Die auf dem Clavier spielende und das Gehör vergnügende Caecilia, 1736)* Editor Alfred Reichling Edition Merseburger (EM 896). 86pp. €24.00

Franz Anton Maichelbeck was born in 1702 in Reichenau, an island just on the German side of Lake Constance. He studied theology in Freiburg and church music in Rome, returning to Freiburg as Chapelmaster and Organist of Freiburg Minster. He later became Hofkapellmeister to the Prince-Bishop of Augsburg and died in 1750 in Freiburg. This set of eight Sonatas was published in 1736 (as his Opus 1) with didactic intent for self-taught musicians. In the preface, he encourages the performer to *ad lib* with additional ornamentation and harmonic in-filling. None of the sonatas fit the normal Italian definition of that term, most being collections of dances in the French suite style. The music is attractive with enough harmonic twists and turns to lift it slightly above the commonplace. It is very much in the Italian style that Handel introduced to England. Although some of the pieces can be played on the organ, issues of style, texture and tuning suggest harpsichord as the principal instrument. This edition was first published in 1978, but has now been reissued. It includes four of the original introductory pages and the first page of the music.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

#### HAYDN – VIOLIN CONCERTO IN C

**Haydn** *Concerto in C major for violin and orchestra Hob. VIIa: 1* Bärenreiter (BA 4678), 2014. iv + 31pp, £15.00. Also available: strings each £3.50, vln/pf (BA 4678-90), £10.50

There is often a long period between publishing Collected Works volumes and making them playable, in particular orchestral works. Henle, who publish the Joseph Haydn Complete Edition, have passed on music that doesn't belong with their main activity of providing well-presented (unless you dislike editorial fingering) editions for piano and small-scale ensembles. This concerto was published with Haydn's other violin concertos in 1969, according to the copyright statement. The score and parts issued by Bärenreiter are published this year, 45 years since the edition was completed – or has it been updated? The 2014 preface doesn't draw attention if there are any later changes. It is too late to consider the research by Richard Maunder (of the CPE Bach review below): the upper three staves are correct, but the fourth is *Viola oblig.*, and the fifth is *Violone*, which

by this period is a 16' instrument. That leaves two octaves between the bottom two parts: the gap would probably have been filled by the harpsichordist's left hand. It was written for Haydn's leading violinist at Esterhazy. The string parts are unlikely to have been doubled. Good that it is easy to get hold of now!

#### HAYDN – SYMPHONY 46

**Haydn** *Symphony in B major Hob. I:46* edited by C.-G. Stellan Mörner Bärenreiter (BA 10974), 2013. iv + 22pp, £21.00, strings each £5.00, wind set £16.00.

Haydn hit a new level with his Symphonies in the 40s – not that the numbers are exactly chronological, but they are late 1760s and early 1770s. Symphonies with titles were (and probably still are) more popular: 45 is the *Farewell*, but 46 has merely a number, so sadly is less heard. Haydn was experimenting. No. 46 is in B major, unusual enough for a string group, but revolutionary if horns are involved – it was possible only because a semitone crook was added to a C crook to enable an instrument basically in F to play in B. This took even longer to circulate than the violin concerto, having been published by Henle in 1966. Robbins Landon published all the symphonies, but orchestras felt a degree of amateurism in the new presentation. No such problems with the Henle/Bärenreiter versions. Also available are 45 *The Farewell*, 48 *Maria Theresia* and 49 *La Passione*. No. 46 doesn't have a farewell like no. 45, but the end is as imaginative as no. 45.extraordinary. The last movement is in sonata form, but stops with a bar and a half rest, leading to some sort of surprise. This turns out to be a reformatting of the second half of the Menuet which peters out, to be followed by extensions of the fourth movement, but is mostly pianissimo – ending with two sudden loud chords. The second half is again repeated, which seems a pity!

#### HAYDN op. 42, 77 & 103

**Haydn** *4 String Quartets Opus 42, 77 & 103, Hob III: 43, 81-83* edited by Simon Roland-Jones... Peters (EP 7620), £37.50, xxiii + 67 pp + 4 parts.

So ends this fine edition – certainly more useful than any others in that it is a thorough critical edition with score and parts. It contains his last two completed quartets, op. 77, which Haydn had written for Prince Lobkowitz. A contract was agreed in 1798, but he was very busy and two may have been performed in Esterhazy castle at Eisenstadt on 13 October 1799: they were published in 1802. An attempt at a third quartet was begun, but in mid 1803 his health was poor and by January 1804 he had only produced the two middle movements. His apology: "Gone is all my strength, old and weak am I." The remaining piece is much earlier: a single quartet of 1785 that was less difficult for players and marketed as a single quartet. There are certainly no doubts on op. 77, and op. 103 should occasionally be played. Op. 42 is a bit short (8 pp instead of over twenty for each of op. 77) but has suffered from not being one of a set. The English introduction occupies pages, the French version occupies an extra half-page. The footnotes are rather small, but the critical commentary is very clear (if you can read English).

Congratulations to editor, the editorial consultant David Ledbetter, and Peters Edition. And our belated thanks to a subscriber who phoned me to talk about the Haydn editions that he appreciated so much.

#### EDITION WALHALL

*Catena Sammlung (Mus. ms. Landsberg 122-Berlin) mit Werken von Frescobaldi, Tarditi u.a. für Orgel (oder Cembalo).* Vol. 1 (Frutti Musicali xix). Edition Walhall, (EW919), 2013. [vi] + 50pp, €18.50.

The pieces are mostly short – 30 items in 49 pages – and all except the first four pieces are anonymous. The separate groups of versetti are not numbered separately. There is a group of four pieces that are incomplete. The first (p. 29) is a canzona, the other three have no heading except [...], which for obvious reasons are not mentioned in the contents list. Their presence does confirm that this (with a second volume) will include all the music of the MS. If so, it would be sensible to number the pieces and also to give the page or folio number of the MS – it hardly wastes any space!<sup>7</sup> For the Frescobaldi expert, games can be played in guessing whether the two Elevations that begin the book are plausibly ascribed to him, and whether any of the other items might be among the “countless other volumes, because he is such an eminent composer that he creates marvellous impromptu pieces, as all Rome can attest; but the bother and cost of printing prevent them from reaching a wide public”.<sup>8</sup> The shorter pieces may well be intended as examples for students to imitate, and longer works might also have been improvised. But the latter are well worth playing, and have the advantage of fitting harpsichord as well as organ.

*Schmelzer Sonata Lantely für 2 Violinen, Viola da Gamba und Basso continuo (Harmonia Coelestis 7), herausgeben von Markus Eberhardt.* Edition Walhall (EW 763), 2013. 14pp + parts, €16.50

*Schmelzer Ciaccona für Violine und Basso continuo (Harmonia Coelestis 11), herausgeben von Markus Eberhardt.* Edition Walhall (EW 648), 2014. 5 pp + parts, €10.00

Schmelzer's music reached me through continental recordings from the late 1960s. He never had the reputation of Biber, but his music is enjoyable to play and hear, and the more it circulates to players, the better. I must confess that I never knew what *Lantely* meant! I assumed it had something to do with lanterns at night, but it is in fact related to *Landerlich* and was probably based on a vagrant's song. It's lively piece with three movements (breaks not required!) and coda. The Bc is printed as a separate part: I wondered whether it would have been sensible to figure it a bit more fully than the source, but it seems to work with what is in the MS, Uppsala Instr. mus.i hs. 8:9. The source is well worth buying.

Both editions leave blank staves for a player to add realisations, preferably in pencil to allow for improvements.

7. I haven't seen Jeanneret Ch[r]istine's recent study of the MS, *[L'] Oeuvre en Filigrane*, Leo Olschki, 2009.

8. Quoted by Grassi, pupil and publisher of Frescobaldi, in the introduction.

Writing at a desk tends to produce unnecessarily complicated accompaniments, which is one reason for reading from the bass. Pieces like the *Ciaccona* often have the bass written only once: it isn't stated whether the MS is in score or parts (in the latter case, the bass would only have eight bars + the number of repeats). The violin part needs to have each variation numbered: that is enough – they are much easier to locate than bar numbers. The part (and score if printed, which isn't necessary) would be easier to shape if the notation were smaller, so that most eight-bar variations would fit a line – with occasionally longer variations (eg bars 40-48) spread over two lines. The cost of publishing so short a piece thus would be proportionally expensive, especially since it isn't particularly exciting, but a group of regular grounds (ie no variations in the bass) might be good value.

*Georg Muffat Sonata Violino Solo (Prag 1677) für Violine und Basso continuo (Harmonia Coelestis 10), herausgeben von Markus Eberhardt.* Edition Walhall (EW 874), 2014. iv + 16pp + parts, €13.80

*Georg Muffat Vier Partiten für Cembalo... (Harmonia Coelestis 9), herausgeben von Markus Eberhardt.* Edition Walhall (769), 2014. 36pp, €17.50

I first heard this Sonata on Radio 3 played by John Holloway about 20 years ago and was hooked by it, not least by its length. We got hold of the MS (I think direct from Kremsier rather than from the 1992 facsimile) and Brian Clark edited it, preserving the “archaic” repetition of accidentals (see also p. x). Some players might be slightly surprised by a change from E sharp to F natural in bar 118 and similar notations at 123/4 and 129/30! This is the elder Muffat's earliest known work: every early fiddler should master it. The technical problem is the placing of plausible page-turns, which are not possible for either the violin. We had turns at bar 66-7 (rests) and 176 (one rest), and there's just a chance to have a break at 121, though we left 121 visible as a cue. Walhall has six pages (2-7), with turns at 75 & 137 plus a separate sheet with 75-104 and 137-163, which doesn't really help unless there's a spare player at hand to turn (in which case, there's no point in the loose sheets). Both editions have the bass numbered 2-3 then turn for 4-5, neither with a plausible turn. I'd be interested to see the original. Apart from a pause at bar 37, the piece runs on without break to 199 (Walhall doesn't divide the closing two minims and semibreve). The editor suggests different sections, though the piece moves well with few breaks. If you can't play the work, at least hear it! The only snag is the absence of the usual English translation of the introduction.

The four Partitas (in C, F, E and e) are from the Berlin Sing-Akademie SA 4581, which probably reached Berlin via Muffat's son whose godfather was J. G. G. Lehmann. The introduction isn't entirely clear when Zelter received the MS. The elder Muffat was born Mégève in the Haute Savoie in 1653 and from 1663-9 studied music as a choirboy in Paris. He then worked as organist of the Jesuit monastery in Molsheim, where the Strasbourg cathedral was exiled. He thus acquired considerable musical skill, and also in 1674 was a student of jurisprudence at Ingolstadt. His earliest known work is the Violin sonata

Ingolstadt. His earliest known work is the Violin sonata reviewed above. The MS pieces here come from a harpsichord collection from the 1730s. Three of them are new, and the one in F has three movements not in the previously-known source. The editor assumes that the ornamentation was probably added after Georg's death in 1704, probably by Gottlieb: it would certainly take some consultation to remind me of some of the signs. I think the balance of notes and signs needs to be a little more subtle – some movements work better than others.

**Nicolas Clérambault *Symphonia V: Chaconne für Violino und Basso Continuo herausgegeben von Jolando Scarpa*** (Frutti Musicali, 21) Edition Walhall (EW 943), 2014. [vi] + 6 pp + parts, €11.50

Clérambault's instrumental music survives in only one source, Paris: Bibl. Nat, département Musique, VM7-1157. The editor follows a different and more economic principle to the chamber pieces above, in that no realisations are given, so the three players are equipped with a solo violin part, a single-line continuo part for cello or gamba, and a two stave score for violin and bass. It strikes me as a much more interesting chaconne than Schmelzer's, though simpler than the Muffat.

**Johann Ulich *Sechs Sonaten für Blockflöte und Cembalo, Band 1***. Herausgegeben... von Paul Wählberg (Kölner Reihe Alter Musik). Edition Walhall (EW 921), 2014. 31pp, €19.50

I must confess to complete ignorance of Ulich. He was born in Wittenberg in 1677; he worked from 1708 till his death at Zerbst as organist and court musician, dying in 1742. The only complete copy is in the Russian State Library. The set of six sonatas is split between 1-3 and 4-6; this volume contains nos 1-3 in C, F & g. The two-stave score is printed twice, once with a facsimile of the *flauto* [i.e. recorder] part, another with the *cembalo*, published in Cöthen in 1716, the year Bach moved there. There does seem to be some inconsistency in Edition Walhall about which music needs a realisation, which doesn't, but I would have thought it easier to find the chords in the earlier music than late baroque. Presumably, the choice is made by the editors. These are well worth playing.

**C.P.E. Bach *Konzert A-Dur Wq 172 – H 439 für Violoncello Solo, 2 Violinen, Viola & B.c.*** Herausgegeben von Markus Möllenbeck. (Il Violoncello Concertato) Edition Walhall (EW 793), 2014. [xi] + 43pp, €29.80 Klavierauszug with solo cello and sollo cello with Bc (EW 812). Stimmenset (EW 490).

CPE Bach strangely wrote three concertos, each for cello or flute or keyboard with string accompaniment. The A minor (Wq 170) dates from 1750, the B flat (Wq 171) from 1751 and the A major from 1753. Until recently, the keyboard was considered to be the original version, but the editor of The Complete Works (vol. III/6) is fairly sure that in each case, the cello version came first. The Eulenburg miniature scores were useful for comparing the solos, but three solo lines, only one of which is needed at

a time, is distracting for conducting. This is a clear score, with thorough critical commentary, which is repeated in the piano reduction, which also includes two cello parts, one with and one without the continuo bass. I haven't seen the parts, but Richard Maunder's recent *The Scoring of Early Classical Concertos 1750-1780* states generally for Berlin of the period that the accompaniment was with single instruments, but unlike other concertos of the period, the cello concerto was accompanied by a double-bass. I have no worries about single instruments, but it seems a bit odd if the double bass is playing in unison two octaves below the unison upper strings (mov 1, bars 25 & 27). This is a fine edition, with a substantial introduction.

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#### BOOK REVIEWS FOR NEXT ISSUE

**Martin Erhardt *Upon a Ground: Improvisation on ostinato basses from the 16th to the 18th centuries*** Translated by Milo Machover. Walhall (EW 905), 2013. 148pp + 2 CDs, €29.80. Also available in German (EW 905)

**Tessa Murray Thomas Morley: Elizabethan Music Publisher** The Boydell Press, 2014. xviii + 265pp, ISBN 978 1 84383 960 6

**Ross W. Duffin The Music Treatises of Thomas Ravenscroft: 'Treatise of Practicall Musicke' and A Briefe Discourse** Ashgate, 2014. xii + 244pp, £60.00. ISBN 978 0 7546 6730 8

**Robert L. Kendrick Singing Jeremiah: Music and Meaning in Holy Week** Indiana UP, 2014. x + 337pp, \$50.00 ISBN 978 0 253 01156 5

**Lauri Suurpää Death in Winterreise: Musico-poetic Associations in Schubert's Song Cycle** Indiana UP, 2014. [xviii] + 224pp, \$45.00 ISBN 978 0 253 01100 8

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#### LETTER

Dear Clifford,

I love the gently rolling controversies in *EMR* – Bach's 'Choir', chiavette, the pitch of Charpentier's 'flutes' and the Simon Ravens/Roger Bray/David Hill falsetto discussions. As a purely subjective contribution to the last of these I'd like to offer two thoughts. First of all, as a falsettist Choral Scholar and Lay Clerk myself I never especially enjoyed being a soloist in Tudor verse anthems, even when transposed by the magic minor third; and the most suitable sound I've ever heard for the Tallis *Lamentations I* was tenors, baritones and basses at the written pitch with unbroken boys voices on the top line.

Best wishes

David (Hansell)

## REVIEWS OF BOOKS

Clifford Bartlett, Barbara Sachs, Brian Clark

## PETER PHILIPS'S @ 450 [+ 3 or 4]

*Networks of Music and Culture in the Late Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries: A Collection of Essays in Celebration of Peter Philips's 450<sup>th</sup> Anniversary*. Edited by David J. Smith & Rachelle Taylor. Ashgate, 2013. xxviii + 298, £70.00

There is a general assumption that Philips wrote his keyboard music in England and his church music on the continent. The situation is, however, more complicated. This isn't a book that will conveniently lay down place and date for all his works (mostly for keyboard), but the information here will eventually help a more accurate listing by date. This isn't just to make the oeuvre have an ordered place, but to have a fair idea of what was written when. The problem is the lack of evidence.

"Network" is a confusing word in this context. Some compositions have no context (the ultimate is a unique anonymous piece),<sup>1</sup> but even a handful of comparable pieces needs lots of thought; sometimes there are consistencies between two MSS and not with a third, sometimes matching, sometimes not. Chapter 10 attempts to relate three composers by keyboarding short single lines of ornamental repetition in descending order of Philips, Bull and Browne. After a lots of labour, it can separate Philips from Bull and Browne, though other features can be tried.

Another area of networking is linking which composer related with which for biographical and musical criteria. If two pieces look a bit like each other and are found in a group of the same composer, there is strong evidence of them being by the same composer – and eventually there might be enough overlaps to pin down the likelihood to near-certainty. The value of this book is the linking of composers from different countries. Most are catholic, and the English keyboard repertoire has strong links with the faith – Byrd, Bull, Philips, possibly Gibbons and non-composing musicians such as the Pastons. The main continental keyboard composer, however, was Sweelinck, a catholic, who had probably the widest reach of fellow-keyboarders, even though he didn't travel widely.

I was surprised near the end by the development of William Brade, c.1560-1630. His was basically dance and entertainment music, but he organised and composed his repertoire with distinction, and achieved a reasonable salary, chiefly by moving frequently in Denmark and North Germany.<sup>2</sup> This is a fascinating, if sometimes heavy tome, but c.1600 keyboard players should find it useful. CB

1. I think the term "piece" is less formal in such circumstances, and anyway *opus* is, within the period, applicable to volumes, not individual items.

2. Also instrumental is John Bryan on five-part consort pavans.

## MUSICAL PHILOLOGY III

Maria Caraci Vela *La filologia musicale. Istituzioni, storia, strumenti critici*. Vol III *Antologia di contributi filologici*. LIM, 2013. pp. xii+698 ISBN 978 88 7096 732 6 €60.00

Volumes I and II were reviewed in *EMR* 137 and 138 (Aug. and Oct. 2010). Volume I (2005) covered the historical foundations and methods of the specific areas of "musicology" the Italians call "musical philology", those dealing with textual and editorial matters, including the transmission of sources (written or oral), the techniques developed to do this critically, and the respective terminology. Volume II (2009) went into greater depth, with specific examples discussed. The first volume was for the general reader or musician, the second for students of musicology and studious musicians, and both are used as texts in Italian universities.

Volume III is completely different. It is an enormous anthology of exemplary past and recent studies. Where necessary, Caraci Vela has updated or translated them into Italian, and in the case of three "classical" studies she has provided substantial new footnotes. She invites readers to read those of interest to them, and perhaps a few more for the sake of curiosity. I think the titles alone will give a precise idea of how her choice and editing of these papers round out her whole project. The following are their original titles, with dates only for ones previously published. Visit [www.lim.it](http://www.lim.it) to see the actual titles in Italian. Some go beyond the limits of "early" music, but several complement each other regarding the very concept of critical editions, and one, on piano-vocal reductions, opens an entirely new chapter of musicology.

Otto von Jahn *Beethoven und die Ausgaben seiner Werke*. 1867 [on the challenge and accomplishment of the 'new' Breitkopf und Härtel edition of Beethoven's complete works]

Georg Feder – Hubert Unverricht *Urtext und Urtextausgaben*. 1959 [how *urtext* editions, to be considered such, have to differ from facsimile or diplomatic editions]

Carl Dahlhaus *Zur Ideengeschichte musicalischer Editionsprinzipien*. 1978

Massimiliano Locanto *Le origini del canto gregoriano tra memoria, oralità, scrittura e discipline del discorso* [On how a repertory of formulas was, perhaps, elaborated and recycled into new compositions, especially in the Carolingian period; the function of neumes not as notation for performance, but as mnemonic devices refreshing the memory of the composer, who had to adapt them to the

requirements of form, grammar, and “punctuation”, with reflections on how later music was written on paper to be communicated, whereas notation began as an index to already memorized, performed music.]

Daniele Sabaino «*Ecdotica gregoriana*: qualche riflessione sulla *restitutio textus* della monodia liturgica medievale.

Maria Sofia Lannutti *Intertestualità, imitazione metrica e melodia nella lirica romanza delle origini*. 2008 [Kalenda maya, *Leys d'Amors, chanson genres, contrafacta...*]

Jan Herlinger *Marchetto's Influence: The manuscript evidence*. 1990 [His theoretical tracts of 1317 and 1319 contained many “firsts” and one lesson is that diatonic semitones are much smaller than chromatic semitones.]

Rodobaldo Tibaldi *Bibliografia testuale e critica del testo: appunti e osservazioni sui libri di intavolature per canto e liuto di Francesco Bossinensis* editi da Ottaviano Petrucci.

Antonio Delfino *Osservazioni preliminari ad uno studio del mottetto Benedicta es celorum regina 12 voci di Josquin/ Guyot [Castileti] (1568) e della relativa intavolatura di Jacob Paix (1589)* [exhaustive description of versions with annotated tables comparing ranges, modes, alterations, note values, errors, etc.]

Marina Toffetti *L'impiego delle melodie liturgiche tradizionali nella polifonia del tardo Rinascimento: il caso degli inni di Marcantonio Ingegneri (Venezia, 1606)*. 1998 [A case of seeking a composer's “baggage” of sources, and how he used them, and the philological problems of ascertaining the composer's intentions and analyzing his polyphonic use of chant.]

Andrea Massimo Grassi «*Il Quintetto è un capolavoro*. *Osservazioni sul testo e sull'interpretazione del Quintetto per clarinetto e archi di Carl Maria von Weber*.

Joachim Veit – Frank Ziegler *Webers Klavierauszüge aus Quellen für die Partituredition von Bühnenwerken?* 2002 [with an excursus on the history of piano vocal reductions]

Fabrizio Della Seta *Il processo compositivo di Verdi: La traviata* [abbreviated and updated from version of 2002]

Marco Beghelli *Per fedeltà a una nota* [enlarged and updated from 2001 version; on Manrico's improbable high C; in defense of Verdi - who in fact forgot to write a note there; and in Muti's words, against “the road al barocco e al falso” with the author's less dogmatic opinion]

Stefano Campagnolo, *Storia di un tracciato incompiuto: Gaetano Cesari e Claudio Monteverdi* 1993 [enlarged and updated, this includes very instructive illustrative comparative examples from the *primo libro di Madrigali* of editorial decisions made by editors of Monteverdi, especially Cesari's well-intentioned transcriptions, Malipiero's anti-musicological edition, and the two truly critical editions (Monterosso and de Surcy). The discussion also attributes

Italy's slow awakening to a true appreciation of early music to its being impeded by the likes of Malipiero, who had a different agenda and idiosyncratic ideas about its supposed “flavour”.

Marco Mangani *Dal musical ai Beatles e ritorno: il ruolo della citazione in How High The Moon di Ella Fitzgerald*.

Pascal Decroupet – Elena Ungeheuer *Through the Sensory Looking-Glass: The Aesthetic and Serial Foundations of Gesang der Jünglinge* 1998 [Stockhausen]

Angela Ida De Benedictis *Intolleranza 1960 von Luigi Nono: Wandlungen eines Librettos* 2009 [translated and updated by the author] Barbara Sachs

#### FASCH CONFERENCE 2013

*Fasch und Dresden: Bericht über die Internationale Wissenschaftliche Konferenz am 19. und 20. April 2013 im Rahmen der 12. Internationalen Fasch-Festtage in Zerbst/Anhalt* (Fasch-Studien, 12) ortus verlag (om177). 236pp, ISBN 978-3-937788-34-0 €34.50 + post

Despite the tightening of belts throughout Germany, the local authorities in the Sachsen-Anhalt city of Zerbst successfully hosted a festival to celebrate the music of one of its most famous former inhabitants, Johann Friedrich Fasch (the other being no less a personage than Catherine the Great). As with all previous events, this one had a theme, namely his relationship with the not so distant court of August the Strong (as English speakers know him) at Dresden, with its renowned orchestra and all the associated composers.

Gerhard Poppe (probably the foremost expert on the Dresden musical establishment nowadays) opened with a general summary of what had already been established, and set the scene for the unveiling of new insights and information. Manfred Fechner argued that a genre was needed to categorize some of Fasch's “Ouvertures” which, due to their three movement form, more closely resembled sinfonias, should be called “ouverture sinfonias” – although I agree that their current place in the FWV catalogue (lumped in with the orchestral suites) is unfortunate, and the fact that the sources can be dated to Fasch's maturity points to this being a new development for him. I would have thought that a distinction between ouverture and ouverture-suite would be more sensible, since the opening movements are in French overture style, and surely their similarity to many operatic overtures in three movements is sufficient not to have to muddy the waters with a new label.

Julia Schäfer's essay on the composer's sinfonias (i. e. those works identified as such by him) compared sources in Dresden with those in Darmstadt. Steffen Voss's paper on “an unknown source for Fasch's chalumeau concerto” was interesting if slightly unfortunate, in that several Fasch/Dresden specialists had already been aware of it; it transpires that every recording of the work has actually been of Pisendel's revised version. Sadly, the score only

contains the first pair of movements. My own paper began life as an exposé of the composer's frequent re-use of material (even complete cantatas were recycled with only small changes to recitatives), but became more of a re-consideration of what sources do and do not tell us, especially as regards performing practice in Dresden. I was most surprised by a movement in an overture suite for 2 horns, 2 oboes and strings; simplifying things a little, two parts in one of the movements were headed "flute and oboe", which suggested to me that the oboe player put down that instrument and took up a flute (Quantz, remember, had started out as an oboist in the Dresden band), but in the last two lines of *both* oboe parts, there was music for two instruments – the flutes' music had the stems upwards and the oboes' music stems down. So clearly four players were expected. Andrew Parrott, please take note.

The next two papers related to other composers. Rashid-S. Pegah documented Dresden Kapellmeister Heinichen's life between 1705 and 1718, including his trip to Italy, while Ute Poetzsch discussed the Telemann source material that survives in Dresden today. Marc-Roderich Pfau's talk had two distinct subjects; in the first part, he revealed that he had discovered a textbook that almost certainly related to a cantata attributed to Fasch that was found when the Sing-Akademie library was returned to Berlin, *Die mit Tränen säen*. Contact between the composer, the poet and the family who commissioned it all point to Fasch's authorship. In the other part, Pfau tentatively suggested composers for the cantatas printed in a textbook called the "Dresdner Jahrgang", which he posited Fasch had compiled before he left Zerbst for his extended visit to the Saxon capital, in order that the services at the court chapel were furnished with suitable music during his absence.

The 1743 list of the Zerbst court library was the focus for Stephan Blaut's investigation of connections between the court and Dresden, possibly as part of the music exchange network which Fasch seems to have established in the late 1720s. Amongst other evidence, he identified music by composers with no direct contact to Zerbst that had been copied by Fasch's copyists on paper that had been made for his use. In the final musicological paper Barbara Reul discussed a 1728 court mandate (based on much older similar edicts) which confirmed the rights and privileges of officially recognised trumpeters, as well as discussing the roles they played in musical life in Zerbst. Her thunder had almost been stolen the previous evening at the Mayor's reception because new research in the city archives (which have finally been shown to contain a lot more material that has previously been acknowledged, though sadly from the 18<sup>th</sup> century) had found a second copy of the very document that stood at the centre of her talk, but fortunately ythe Mayor's take on the role of civic musicians was slightly more tongue-in-cheek.

Gottfried Gille, who also received the 2013 Fasch-Preis der Stadt Zerbst, closed the conference with details of his Fasch-Repertorium, the first phase of a new (thematic) catalogue of the composer's work, which will ultimately be made available online, which included his welcoming

into the fold two cantatas in the Staatsbibliothek in Berlin which had previously escaped notice, and the autograph cantata fragment which I had found hidden inside a manuscript of an entirely different piece in Copenhagen.

The 2015 festival is set to concentrate on Zerbst as a "muse's court" - apparently "Musenhof" is one of the current buzzwords in Germany. The remainder of Sachsen-Anhalt will be going Luther mad, of course – and there are very strong links to Zerbst on that score, too. It can only be hoped that ortus verlag, whose exemplary printing with crisp fonts and beautiful illustrations makes this volume a joy to use, will wish to continue their association with the Internationale Fasch-Gesellschaft and publish the proceedings of that conference as well. BC

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## Falsetto sopranos, falsetto altos and falsetto countertenors in Restoration England: a response to Simon Ravens' letter on the falsetto voice

Trevor Selwood

I am delighted that Simon Ravens has found a publisher for his book: "The Supernatural Voice – a history of high male singing". I know I will disagree with a great deal of what he has to say about the countertenor voice but it is important that his ideas, however controversial, should be published, carefully considered and challenged when necessary.

I was, however, disappointed that in his letter<sup>1</sup> he did not address Roger Bowers' criticisms<sup>2</sup> directly in *Early Music Review* but instead referred Roger Bowers and *EMR* readers to his forthcoming book. He should have given us the gist of his arguments and referred us to his book for the details, which would have been both reasonable and understandable. Roger Bowers had taken the trouble to provide a detailed eight-page response to Simon Ravens' first challenge concerning post-Reformation vocal scoring and post-Reformation pitch.<sup>3</sup> Simon Ravens should have answered Roger Bowers' points first before issuing him a second challenge concerning early 16th-century documentary sources referring to the falsetto alto.

It also seems a bit rich to criticise Roger Bowers for an anachronistic use of the term "falsetto alto" in the context of early 16th-century England when he himself uses the term "soprano" anachronistically regarding the falsetto voice he refers to as "a first clear sighting (singing soprano in the Chapel Royal) in 1673". Of course we all know what both Roger Bowers and Simon Ravens mean, even though a close reading reveals that their choice of terms was a little injudicious.<sup>4</sup>

But more to the point is that Simon Ravens' use of the word "soprano" is misleading. It gives the impression that the falsettists he is referring to sang a modern soprano or treble range or that they employed a soprano or treble voice. They did neither. The context of Simon Ravens' "singing soprano in the Chapel Royal" is Matthew Locke's

remarks<sup>5</sup> on the use of "Mens feigned voices" singing the top part in the music performed in the Chapel Royal in the first year or so of its opening on the 17th June 1660.<sup>6</sup> In this context the "feigned voices" did not sing soprano, they sang mean, i.e. the mean part which was the standard top part in post-Reformation and pre-Restoration church music, and they did so with a falsetto mean voice. The core range for the pre-1660 post-Reformation mean was notated c'-d". In other words the "feigned voices" were high countertenors or what we would call today falsetto altos, or more exactly they were falsetto countertenors who employed upper falsetto in addition to lower falsetto.

See annex below

The standard post-Reformation and pre-Restoration 5-part vocal scoring in church music was originally written for boy mean, countertenor, countertenor, tenor and bass voices and this pre-Restoration repertoire would have formed the bulk of the music performed by the Chapel Royal on a daily basis in its first year of operation under Charles II. The realisation of this vocal scoring in terms of voice types in 1660-61 by the Chapel Royal as envisaged by Simon Ravens is falsettist ("soprano"), tenor, tenor, baritone and bass. This is very different from the realisation of the vocal scoring as envisaged by myself, which in simple terms is falsetto mean or high countertenor, countertenor, countertenor, tenor and bass but which is more precisely expressed as countertenor employing upper and lower falsetto, countertenor employing lower falsetto (with the option of very low falsetto, lower mixed voice or full chest voice on the very low notes e.g. notated d-g), countertenor employing lower falsetto etc, tenor and bass. These are very different sound worlds and this is one reason why a resolution to the longstanding falsettist countertenor and tenor countertenor debate is so important.

No doubt Simon Ravens' book will be illuminating on this and many other issues that fascinate me concerning the countertenor voice and it will be good to hear his views resulting from over 15 years of research, deliberation and the practical implementation of his ideas in early music choral performances.

1. Simon Ravens: letter, *Early Music Review*, [hereafter *EMR*] No 160, June 2014, page 44.

2. Roger Bowers: "Chains of (Rehabilitated) Gold", *EMR*, No 159, April 2014, pages 10-17, significantly pages 15-16.

3. Simon Ravens: "Chains of Gold – Cambridge verse anthem conference, 1-2 March 2013", *EMR* No 153, April 2013, page 20.

4. Essentially the terms "soprano", "alto" and "falsetto" established themselves in the English language in the early 18th century with the arrival of Italian opera, soprano and alto castrati and Italian female soprano singers and also a little later with John Galliard's *Observations on the Florid Son* (1743), a popular translation of Tosi's *Opinioni de' cantori antichi e moderni* (1723). The English words "treble", "countertenor", and "feigned voice" were at that time the English equivalents of the Italian terms "soprano", "alto" and "falsetto", and "treble" and "countertenor" were used for female singers as well as male singers. The word "alto" was first used in the late sixteenth century but it referred to a part and not a voice type.

5. Matthew Locke: *The Present Practice of Musick Vindicated against the Exceptions and New Way of Attaining Musick Lately Publish'd by Thomas Salmon* (1673), page 19.

6. Pepys attended the Chapel Royal a few weeks later on Sunday 8th July 1660 and records in his diary that he "heard very good Musique, the first time I remember ever to have heard the Organs and singing-men in Surplices in my life": see R. Latham and W. Matthews (eds) *The Diary of Samuel Pepys* (1970), vol. I, page 185. Pepys makes no reference to singing-boys in surplices and the diary entry would seem to record one of the first occasions when "feigned voices" were deployed on the top part in the Chapel Royal in place of boys.

I will be particularly interested to hear what Simon Ravens has to say about John Abell (1653 – after 1724) and other countertenors who are nowadays often referred to as high countertenors and who flourished in the time of Purcell.

In his diary for 27<sup>th</sup> January 1682 John Evelyn referred to Abell as “the famous Treble” and compared his voice to that of a woman<sup>7</sup> and it is on the basis of this incontrovertible documentary evidence that even the most uncompromising advocates of the tenor countertenor voice have no choice but to admit that John Abell was a falsettist. However it does not necessarily mean that he was a falsetto soprano or male soprano or a falsetto treble or male treble.

Abell was admitted to the Chapel Royal on 1<sup>st</sup> May 1679 as a Gentleman extraordinary (i.e. on a temporary basis) and in January 1680 as a Gentleman ordinary (i.e. on a permanent basis). He was not admitted as a treble (nor as a mean for that matter). He was admitted as a countertenor and sang the countertenor part. Although Simon Ravens does not believe a falsetto countertenor existed before the start of the nineteenth century,<sup>8</sup> the example of John Abell disproves this. John Abell sang in the Chapel Royal as a falsetto countertenor or what we would term nowadays as a falsetto alto.

Abell’s probable falsetto range in the Chapel Royal was notated g – b' but in his capacity as a Chapel Royal countertenor he would have been required to sing down to notated d and for the very low notes he would have used chest voice (most likely low tenor or possibly baritone) or low mixed voice or very low falsetto voice according to the dictates of the music or the particular ensemble of countertenor voices singing the countertenor line. He would have used falsetto for all or the greater part of every choral piece he sang in the Chapel Royal. It is usually agreed that Abell sang up to d" in secular music but as Andrew Parrot points out, the highest note in court music which we know Purcell wrote for Abell was b'.<sup>9</sup> Abell’s range is clearly not that which we normally associate with the treble or soprano voice and clearly he did not sing in Evelyn’s presence in a tenor voice or in a high tenor voice or in a haute-contre-like voice or any permutation of the tenor voice that advocates of the tenor countertenor put forward. He was also not a castrato as he was married and would seem to have had a family. Abell was a falsetto countertenor or falsetto alto (whichever term you prefer). I do not see how Simon Ravens could say otherwise.

Abell probably employed upper falsetto over a wider area of his voice than Evelyn was accustomed to hearing from the falsetto countertenors he heard at religious services whose voices were essentially restricted to the employment of lower falsetto and were predominately alto in tone. The timbre of the upper falsetto is characterised by a treble-like rather than an alto-like

quality and this gives the impression that the falsetto voice is sounding at a higher pitch than it actually is. Hence Evelyn’s reference to Abell as the “famous Treble”.

I also have concerns about how Simon Ravens may approach the voices of the countertenors John Howell (c.1670-1708) and William Turner (1651-1740). John Howell is generally regarded to be a falsettist as is William Turner (Andrew Parrot dissenting in the latter case<sup>10</sup>). In his article “A sweet shrill voice”<sup>11</sup> Simon Ravens believes the status of Purcell’s high countertenors as falsettists needs to be readdressed in the light of laryngological and anthropometric evidence concerning the male singing voice, intimating that the high countertenor may have been a tenor voice just as in his opinion the low countertenor was. I do not agree with his theories<sup>12</sup> and it will be interesting to read where he currently stands on this issue.

Several high-profile advocates of the tenor-voiced countertenor refer to Locke’s quotation concerning “feigned voices” e.g. Andrew Parrott, Simon Ravens etc.<sup>13</sup> A couple of questions I have always wanted to ask them are: how do they account for the existence of trained falsetto singers with fully developed falsetto voices able to sing the top part of pre-Restoration and very early Restoration church music in the Chapel Royal in the year 1660-1661 when according to them there was no tradition of falsetto singing in England and never had been neither in religious nor non-religious contexts and when all countertenors were tenors and not falsettists? Did the falsettists really emerge suddenly from nowhere?

Of course not! There has always been a long tradition of falsetto singing in England (at least as far back as the 12th century if not earlier despite doubts voiced by Christopher Page, Andrew Parrott and Simon Ravens himself,<sup>14</sup> and long may this tradition continue!

10. Andrew Parrott: op. cit., page 420.

11. Simon Ravens: “A sweet shrill voice”: The countertenor and vocal scoring in Tudor England”, *Early Music*: Vol 26, Feb 1998, page 131.

12. Trevor Selwood: “Contradistinctions and contra-indications”, *Early Music*: Vol 26, May 1998, pages 381-382 & his “Counterarguments”, *Early Music*: Vol 27, May 1999, pages 349-350. Bill Hunt in his letter (*EMR* No 160, page 44) aligns himself with Simon Ravens’ view of the Tudor countertenor as a tenor voice. He essentially conceives the Tudor countertenor as a young light high tenor voice (a slightly different voice, one suspects, from the tenor voice as envisaged by Simon Ravens in 1998) and he remarks citing Charles Butler’s *The Principles of Musik in Singing and Setting* (1636), page 42, that this voice was “too rare”. I would have thought that in Butler’s Oxford there would have been no shortage of “young light tenor voices of the right quality” as there were plenty of young male students there just as Bill Hunt acknowledges there are in the Cambridge and Oxford of today. Moreover, according to Simon Ravens’ anthropometric and laryngological theories, providing you accept their validity, there was no shortage of short statured men in the 16th and 17th centuries who could sing tenor in the countertenor range (“A sweet shrill voice”, op. cit., pages 123-134, *passim*). In other words, the light tenor voice was not “too rare”. The real point, however, is that Charles Butler’s “a sweet shrill voice” refers to a pure falsetto voice and not a light tenor chest voice with extended tenor head voice or mixed voice.

13. Andrew Parrott: “Performing Purcell” op.cit., pages 422 and 442; Simon Ravens: “A sweet shrill voice”, op. cit., page 131 and Simon Ravens: letter: *EMR* No 160, page 44.

14. Christopher Page, Andrew Parrott “False Voices” *Early Music* Vol 9,

7. E. S. de Beer (ed) *The Diary of John Evelyn*, 1955, vol. iv, page 270

8. Simon Ravens: letter, *EMR*, No 160, page 44

9. Andrew Parrott: “Performing Purcell”, page 420 in Michael Burden (ed) *The Purcell Companion* (1995).

The falsetto voice is not "a remarkably recent phenomenon in England" as Simon Ravens says in his letter; it did not suddenly appear with the advent of Alfred Deller at the time of the Second World War<sup>15</sup> nor did it first appear at the start of the 19th century: on the contrary, the falsetto voice in England shares the same "antiquity" as that of the falsetto voice on the Continent and a promising and exciting future awaits it in early music, baroque and modern opera, the classic song repertoire and contemporary music both religious and non-religious!

**Annexe** *This arrived after the original article: I wasn't quite sure where to put it, but it seems better for it not to be inserted as a very long footnote but read separately.*

The note e" occasionally occurs in the post-Reformation mean part. However, there was ample music with d" as the top note to cover all the daily needs of the Chapel Royal and no need to select music going up to e". Nevertheless, I am willing to accept for the sake of argument that works containing e" were sung on an occasional basis.

At present there is no consensus regarding pitch for this period. In my lifetime three different pitches or pitch bands have been advanced for post-Reformation church music as well as three different practical realisations in addition to modern pitch. I am cautious about all pitches and about arguments that rely too heavily on pitch. For those who have confidence in a particular church pitch, I hope the following will be helpful.

The standard range of today's falsetto alto is (f)g-e"(f") at today's pitch. This range embraces both that of the falsetto mean or male mean and the standard falsetto range of the low countertenor. At flexible pitch unaccompanied or with organs, the d" and e" present no problems to the falsetto alto voice. Regarding the e" repertoire, if the e" (sounding f" or f"(+)) does not come easily to the falsettist, then the e" will be sung loudly and will need strong support. The e" is usually a climactic note in a phrase or in a work, and such an approach is not always inappropriate. At a'=+2 there will be no problem with the d" repertoire but the e" repertoire is not within the compass of the standard falsetto alto. At a'+3 both the d" and e" repertoires fall within the compass and tessitura of the falsetto soprano or the falsetto mezzo-soprano and not the falsetto alto.

#### Annexe

The note e" occasionally occurs in the post-Reformation mean part. However there was ample music with d" as the top note to cover all the daily needs of the Chapel Royal and no need to select music going up to e". Nevertheless I am willing to accept for the sake of argument that works containing e" were sung on an occasional basis.

January 1981, pages 71-72; Simon Ravens: "A sweet shrill voice", op. cit., page 130 and Simon Ravens: letter: *EMR* No 160, page 44.

15. Simon Ravens: "A sweet shrill voice", op. cit., page 131.

At present there is no consensus regarding pitch for this period. In my lifetime three different pitches or pitch bands have been advanced for post-Reformation church music as well as three different practical realisations in addition to modern pitch. I am cautious about all pitches and about arguments that rely too heavily on pitch. For those who have confidence in a particular church pitch, I hope the following will be helpful.

The standard falsetto range of today's falsetto alto is (f)g-e"(f") at today's pitch. This falsetto range embraces both that of the falsetto mean or male mean and the standard falsetto range of the low countertenor. At flexible pitch unaccompanied; flexible pitch with suitable organ transpositions; cornett and/or sackbutt pitch (a' = 0(+)) e.g. 448 approx); a' = 0; (a' = -1; a' = -2), the mean d" and e" repertoires present no problem for the falsetto alto voice. (I have excluded accompaniment with strings as there is currently no evidence of strings being used in the Chapel Royal in 1660-1). At a' = +1 or a' = +1(+) (e.g. Johnstone's church pitch, a' = 475 approx) the d" repertoire presents no problems. Regarding the e" repertoire, if the e" (sounding f" or f"(+)) does not come easily to the falsettist, then the e" will be sung loudly and need strong support. The e" is usually a climactic note in a phrase or in a work and such an approach is not always inappropriate. At a' = +2 there will be no problem with the d" repertoire but the e" repertoire is not within the compass of the standard falsetto alto. At a' = +3 both the d" and e" repertoires fall within the compass and tessitura of the falsetto soprano or the falsetto mezzo-soprano and not the falsetto alto.

At present there is insufficient evidence for the existence of falsetto sopranos and falsetto mezzo-sopranos in Restoration England but there is considerable evidence for the existence of falsetto altos or falsetto countertenors. The latter view is not shared by Simon Ravens.

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*It struck me as odd that so much should be so tied to the first year of the Restoration. The old singers may well have adjusted their ranges in the interregnum, and classifications of voices may have taken a year or two to get sorted out. As for instruments, their 1661 pitch could well be French down a tone (which would help countertenors out of practice, provided that the organ could be transposed). Cornetts and sackbuts were normally pitched a semitone above A=440 (and professional players now use that pitch), but that would not be helpful to falsettists. I am disappointed that top ranges are not based on bass ranges. I tried to spot-check the bass compasses in EECM 3, Gibbons verse anthems. But the range shown at the beginning of each piece isn't relevant, since Wulstan doesn't distinguish between voice and instrument – I checked three of my favourite anthems, and the bottom note for the voice is a tone or minor third above the bottom note of the instrument, so there was no point in including it! I'd check further if the magazine didn't have to be run today. Needless to say, instruments would not have played in a multitude of flats.*

CB

## PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

Andrew Benson-Wilson David Hansell (p. 28) Maria-Lisa Geyer (p.30)

### LONDON CONCERTS Andrew Benson-Wilson

#### More Passion from Pinnock (11 May)

The latest in the 'Pinnock's Passions' series of concerts at the new Wanamaker Playhouse, part of the Globe Theatre, was 'The Queen's Command', an evening of words and music with Emma Kirkby and Stuart Jackson singing, Roger Allam speaking and Phantasm and Trevor Pinnock playing. A programme essay by Jonathan Keates set the scene of the world of Elizabeth I. The programme was divided into sections reflecting different aspects of Elizabeth and Elizabethan life. 'The predicament of Man', contrasted with 'A Frolic' (with a lovely version of Byrd's 'Amarylis' from Stuart Jackson) and 'Love and Loss', the latter with a touching reading by Roger Allam of the last letter of Lord Leicester to Elizabeth (found by his deathbed) and Byrd's 'My Mistress had a little dog', again sung by Stuart Jackson. Highlights of Emma Kirkby's contribution came with Ariel's song "Where the bee sucks", with Trevor Pinnock playing the virginals and the closing anonymous Anne Boleyn's song "O death rock me asleep". There can be no better venue for an evening like this – in a room, the design of which all the presented protagonists would have recognised.

#### The Power of Love

France and America joined forces to explore "The Power of Love" when Apollo's Fire (aka The Cleveland Baroque Orchestra) and the French soprano Sandrine Piau came to St John's, Smith Square (8 May). They intended the concert to be a tale of three cities, although in practice Paris only got a slight look in with two short Rameau arias, the lively "Anacreon" and the tender "Viens Hymen" from *Les Indes Galantes*, the latter with some delightful flute playing from Kathie Stewart. There was one vocal contribution from Vivaldi, the somnolent "Sonno, se pur sei sonno" from the opera *Tito Manlio*, with its long-held opening note beautifully controlled by Sandrine Piau, her ability to switch from barely audible floated high notes to a mezzoishly rich lower range with evident ease being just one of her strong points. She is a persuasive communicator, engaging with the audience to stunning effect. The rest of her part of the programme was Handel, including the fireworks of "Il primo ardor" (*Ariodante*). Apollo's Fire are a lively and (dare I say?) very American bunch. They have no qualms about rearranging pieces, as they did here with the opening Allegro from Vivaldi's Concerto in D (RV511), re-worked as a concerto grosso so that it could serve "as a kind of party, in which we introduce ourselves". Vivaldi's concertos for two cellos (RV 531) and two violins (RV 522) were both described as examples of

Vivaldi's "driving rock-and-roll rhythm" and his *La Folia* was also re-arranged as a concerto grosso. They play flamboyantly, wringing every ounce of expression out of the music. The personality of their director, harpsichordist Jeannette Sorrell, who made the various arrangements, is very much to the fore. The contrasts in style and the manner of performance between them and Sandrine Piau were fascinating to watch.

#### A Coney Island *Cosi*

We had another bit of America at The Coliseum with English National Opera's new production of Mozart's *Cosi fan tutte* (first night, 16 May) – a co-production with New York's Metropolitan Opera. The English National Opera Chorus and Orchestra were conducted by Ryan Wigglesworth. The relatively young singing cast were Kate Valentine and Christine Rice as Fiordiligi and Dorabella, Randall Bills and Marcus Farnsworth as Ferrando and Guglielmo with Roderick Williams as the Don Alfonso and Mary Bevan as a delightful Despina – always a good role. All the singing was of a high standard. I preferred the two men over the women, but thought that Roderick Williams and Mary Bevan were the real stars. I know the Don is generally assumed to be an older role, but Williams's more youthful interpretation worked well, particularly given the staging. That was down to the theatre director Phelim McDermott (of *Improbable*), whose previous ENO experience had been with two Philip Glass operas. His setting was 1950s Coney Island, the Skyline Motel, a nearby Pleasure Garden and a collection of what can only be described with the very non-PC term "circus freaks". (cf p. xx)

From the very start of the overture, the tension between theatre and opera became apparent. The 12 odd-ball circus performers (aka Skills ensemble) emerged from a box, spelling out the plot on story boards amongst other antics, leading to the first time I have experienced an opera audience laughing and applauding during an overture. Throughout the evening the stage action dominated the playing and singing. This is not the first time this has resulted when a theatre director has a go at opera, but was the most extreme example I have seen. It turned *Cosi* into an extravagant musical-theatre entertainment, combining a Brian Rix Whitehall Farce, an Alan Ayckbourn play, elements of Monty Python's Terry Gilliam and the endless *Les Mis*-style musicals that dominate London's stages. As such it raised questions. Entertaining it certainly was, but it frequently meant that the emotional depth of Mozart's music was bypassed. The English translation (by Jeremy Sams) was good, the failure of the usual surtitles on the first night removing what is sometimes a distraction. That said, it is certainly worth seeing. I loved it, my concerns only really emerging in the days afterwards.

### A Pocket Alcina

Musica Poetica London presented an attractively small-scale production of Handel's *Alcina* in St. Dunstans-in-the-West (18 May). With the briefest synopsis of a Handel opera I have ever seen, and few other clues as to who was doing what to whom, this was either an evening for those very familiar with *Alcina*, or for those willing to sit back and just let the music flow. I guess that the fact that it took me (and my musician companion) most of the first half to work out who places me in the second category. One confusion for me was the fact that one of the male singers was in military uniform, but turned out not to be the army commander but Bradamante's tutor – the soldier wore a suit and tie! St. Dunstans-in-the-West is a curious church, its tall octagonal shape generating a very generous acoustic. The young cast were Esther Brazil (Alcina), Eleanor Minney (Ruggiero), Claire Williams (Bradamante), Robyn Allegra Parton (Morgana), Philippa Murray (Oberto), Nick Pritchard (Oronte) and Chris Webb (Melirosso). The standard of singing was high although, for my taste, there was rather too much vibrato and operatic style from some voices. This is still a serious issue with young singers emanating from UK conservatories, particularly given the increase in professional opportunities for 'early music' singers. Most of them sang from scores, but I liked the fact that there was sufficient interaction between the characters to make this a bit more than just a concert performance. The similarly youthful musicians of Musica Poetica London sounded very effective, with notable contributions from Kate Conway (continuo and solo cello), Olwen Foulkes, recorder, and George Clifford, violin. They were directed by Oliver-John Ruthven.

### The last "Lufthansa" Festival – and welcome to the "London Festival of Baroque Music"

This year's Lufthansa Festival (the 30<sup>th</sup>) marked the end of an era. It was the last to benefit from the 30-year sponsorship of Lufthansa (and, for the past 12 years, Rolls-Royce plc), one of the most remarkable musical/financial partnerships in the modern history of music. The Festival will continue with the same wealth of performers and performances under the name of the London Festival of Baroque Music, and is seeking funding to help with this. This year's theme was "The Year 1714", reflecting far more than the start of the Georgian period. I couldn't get to the opening concert by The Sixteen<sup>16</sup>, so the festival started for me with the afternoon recital by Dorothee Oberlinger, recorder, and Peter Kofler, harpsichord, at St Peter's Eaton Sq (17 May). Their programme (The Pleasant Companion – English and German Baroque Music for the Recorder in London) featured examples of the music that recorder enthusiasts (and there were apparently many in the early years of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, usually of the middle-class gentleman ilk) would have known in London. Composers included Andrew Parcham (his Solo in G), Finger, Corelli, Purcell, Schickhardt and Telemann, all presented with light-touch virtuosity and flowing ornamentation. Peter

Kofler gave a compelling solo performance of Babell's spectacular version of Handel's *Rinaldo*. As Annabel Knight mentioned in her programme note, the year 1714 also marked the death of Thomas Britten, whose Clerkenwell concerts ran for 36 years (from 1678) and would have enthralled many London music lovers who were not necessarily of the highest class.

Before the Saturday evening concert, Tess Knighton, the founding Artistic Director of the Festival, gave the annual Lufthansa Lecture. Her talk, with its fascinating reminiscences of the early days of the festival, can be found at [http://www.lufthansafestival.org.uk/index.php?id=lecture-archive#.U7p\\_pZRdWSo](http://www.lufthansafestival.org.uk/index.php?id=lecture-archive#.U7p_pZRdWSo). The evening concert (St John's, Smith Square, 17 May) was given by the very impressive 13-strong Polish orchestra Arte dei Suonatori, directed by violinist Aurelisz Goliński. They performed music from the years around 1714, including a violin sonata by the well-travelled violinist, Franscesca Maria Veracini, who according to Burney had "formed a style of playing peculiar to himself". That was evident from this piece (played by Rachel Podger), with its curious little echoes in the final *Giga*, played by a second violinist off-stage. *Arte dei Suonatori* played Concerti Grossi by Corelli, Geminiani and Handel and an instrumental suite made up from pieces from *Rinaldo*. Rachel Podger closed the evening with Vivaldi's Concert in D minor (RV 249).

The following day's concerts included a tour of the principal cities of Saxony and Thuringia in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, when Italian music and the Lutheran Church combined to produce a strong musical force well before the days of Bach and Handel. QuintEssential Sackbut and Cornett Ensemble led the tour, with tenor Daniel Auchincloss in attendance. Instrumental pieces included Scheidt's opening *Canzon ad imitationem Bergamasca* (with its triad-based opening section and runaway-train passages), Krieger's imposing harpsichord *Giaonna* (the 'G' is not a misprint), very well played by Kathryn Cok, and Vierdanck's rather unusual *Sonata Als ich einmal Lust bekam*. The vocal works included the powerful and sonorous *Gehe aus auf die Landstrassen* by Johann Ahle and Hammerschmidt's *Schaffe in mire, Gott, ein reines Herz*, its dying-away ending bring the concert to a nice end. This was fascinating music, although the performance seemed a little under-rehearsed and/or under-directed. More than once, the organist came to the rescue.

L'Avventura London explored the musical world of the theatre around 1714 with their concert (20 May, St John's, Smith Sq), ranging from the so called "high art" of opera to less elevated traditional songs. With Mary Bevan and Anthony Gregory providing the vocal input, this was a fascinating peep into a relatively unknown musical world. The songs ranged from Henry Carey's "Reveille, or Morning Call to the Bride and Bridegroom" (with its indication that the couple might have jumped the gun as far as bridal chastity goes), Carey's mocking "Tragical Story of a Mare, Compos'd in the High Style by Signr. Carini", via the doggerel verse of the anonymous "On the death of Queen Anne" to an English arrangement of Handel's *Bel piacere* to the words "The Rover" and some

16. Hugh Keyte had heard their 2014 programme live, but reviewed it from the York Festival broadcast, see page 44. CB

attractive pieces by Marc'Antonio Ziani. Amongst the instrumental pieces, we also heard another Violin Sonata by Veracini, this time the fourth of his Opus 1 set, and another clearly intended to show off his "peculiar to himself" style of playing.

The CPE Bach anniversary was recognised in the concert given by the Helsinki Baroque Orchestra with its artistic director Aapo Häkkinen and Pierre Hantai playing harpsichord (21 May, St John's, Smith Sq). Alongside the three concertos for two harpsichords written by JS Bach, we heard CPE Bach's Harpsichord Concerto in G minor (Wq6). It is worth noting that CPE Bach's concerto was written in 1740, the same year as the latest concerto of his father (although those were all based on earlier models). CPE Bach had just moved from Leipzig to Berlin, so his father's sound world would have been still very much in his mind. But the new direction was obvious, notably in the increased textural variety that was to become the hallmark of CPE Bach's later style. The central *Largo* has an ethereal and lush sound as muted violins interact with the harpsichord before its cadenza. One aural aspect of this performance of the JSB works was the clear distinction between the two manuals of each harpsichord, and between the two harpsichords, which were positioned on either side of the stage rather than nestling into each other. So, in effect, we had four distinct sounds from the two instruments.

The showpiece Lufthansa concert (at least for the well-heeled sponsors, who traditionally turn out in droves) is their annual visit to Westminster Abbey. This year the Abbey Choir and St James's Baroque gave them a rousing farewell with Handel's *Dettingen Te Deum*, preceded by his *Ode for the Birthday of Queen Anne*, 1713, Handel's first English Ode, with more than a nod towards his English predecessors, Blow and Purcell. Boyce's Symphony 5 in D was adapted from his overture to the 1739 Ode to St Cecilia's Day. It was particularly good to hear the Boyce piece – English composers of his time and ilk are often overlooked in favour of Handel. The fanfare-like opening led to a flamboyant fugue which was followed by two dance movements – a *Gavotta* and *Minuetto*, the former with a clever use of the trumpets to colour the ends of phrases. As David Vickers' programme indicated, neither of the Handel works were first performed as intended – and the *Birthday Ode* possibly not at all. And rather than the grand thanksgiving service in St Paul's Cathedral that Handel clearly intended for his *Te Deum*, it was first performed in the comparatively tiny space of the Chapel Royal in St James's Palace. The soloists in the Handel works were something of a dream-team, with Ruby Hughes, Iestyn Davies and Matthew Brook all on excellent form. Even the most hardened Lufthansa executive's heart must have melt "Eternal source of light divine".

The concert given by La Risonanza (St John's, Smith Square, 23 May) compared the composers most closely connected with the Elector of Hanover's court before he came to England to become George I; he retained his duties as the Elector and was often abroad. Handel opened the programme with his Trio Sonata Op. 5 no. 4, with its fine

*Passacaille*. We then moved to a lesser-known, but fascinating composer from an earlier generation, Agostino Steffani, Handel's predecessor as Kappelmeister in Hanover. His extraordinary career started in Padua before a move to the Munich Court as a singer, keyboard player and director of chamber music, where he wrote several operas, became a priest and started activities as a diplomat. As advancement seemed limited there, he moved to Hanover in 1688 as Kapellmeister – and diplomat. He moved further away from music, becoming in quick succession President of the Palatine government, rector of Heidelberg University, Bishop of Spiga, mediator between the Pope and the Holy Roman Emperor, Apostolic Vicar to Northern Germany, the first honorary president of London's Academy of Ancient Music. His musical life was represented by a pair of duets and the vocal *Scherzo Guardati, o core*, all reflecting on the perils of love. As is so often the case, the following pair of Handel duets were in an entirely different musical league. The evening finished with a slight musical decline with a couple of pieces by Pepusch, another German who made his home in England. The two singers both suffered rather operatic touches but, more seriously, made no real effort to reflect the nature of the words, singing as two separate individuals rather than reacting to each other in any way. This considerably weakened any possible dramatic effect, particularly with texts such as 'I love to gaze upon you'.

The late evening concert proved to be one of the highlights of the festival. It marked the first appearance there of the Hilliard Ensemble (in their 40<sup>th</sup> and 'retirement year'), but the spotlight was on violinist Kati Debretzeni. The programme was based on the Hilliard's CD *Morimur* and the arguable proposition that the famous *Chaconne* from Bach's Violin D minor Partita (No 2) was written in memory of his first wife Maria Barbara and is full of musical references to chorales related to death. The first part of the concert consisted of Kati Debretzeni playing the whole of the Partita with the movements interspersed with the relevant sung chorales. She had a brief rest while another sequence of chorales was sung, before the climax came with her repeat performance of the *Chaconne* with the chorale melodies picked out by members of the Hilliard Ensemble. Whether or not you buy Helga Thoene's premise (and the fragmented nature of most of the apparent chorale quotations meant that one could probably find all sorts of melodic fragments in such a complex work), this was firstly an evocative reading of no fewer than 14 Lutheran chorales. Kati Debretzeni gave a staggering performance of the Partita, with a repeat of the *Chaconne*. It cannot have been easy to play alongside the chorale interpolations, but her sense of spacing and overall architecture was exemplary.

The final day of the festival started with an afternoon concert (in St Peter's Eaton Square, 24 May) by Carole Cerasi, playing works by CPE and JS Bach on fortepiano and harpsichord. Sensibly, she started on the fortepiano with CPE's Sonata in G (Wq65/45) and Fantasia in F sharp minor (Wq67), works from the last five years of his life. The Sonata was written for a Bogenklavier – one of many attempted new keyboard instruments of that period, in

this case with strings that were bowed and therefore capable of gradations of tone, something the fortepiano used in this performance was obviously also capable of. The extraordinary F sharp minor Fantasia was written just before CPE's death, and sums up a lifetime of musical exploration and innovation, in this case, represented by his improvisatory fantasia style. The subsequent move from fortepiano to harpsichord for CPE's Sonata in G (H47) and JSB's 'English' Suite, made it immediately apparent why the former instrument eventually took over from the latter. Although explained as merely a means of aiding the aural drop of a quarter-tone from fortepiano to harpsichord, Carole Cerasi's verbal explanations of the music became an integral and welcome part of the concert. One of her quotes was that the sign of a good teacher is that the students do not play like their teacher. This was reflected in Carole Cerasi's own playing, which was clearly aimed to bring out the best in the music, without attempting to force a personal agenda or style or to merely show off a virtuosic technique. The latter was certainly there, but it was worn lightly. An excellent and informative concert.

Lufthansa and the Festival that has born its name for the past 30 years disembarked from each other's company with something of a coup (St John's, Smith Sq 24 May) – the Göttingen International Handel Festival's production of Handel's *Joshua* (the 1748 version), the first such collaboration with the FestspielOrchester Göttingen, the NDR Choir (Hamburg) directed by the Göttingen Festival's director Laurence Cummings. The pairing of Göttingen and London was apt, because Göttingen also owes a lot to their Hanover rulers, not least for their university, founded by the Elector Georg-August (Britain's George II). The last of Handel's four 'victory' oratorios, *Joshua* celebrates the final skirmish between the Hanovers and the 'Young Pretender'. It became one of his most popular oratorios, although I doubt if many would now give it that accolade. It appeals to jingoistic sentiments not generally thought acceptable nowadays other than, perhaps, to UKIP supporters.

Although it includes drama aplenty, and some exquisite moments of contrasting musical repose, there was no real sense of plot or emotional undercurrents to test the intellect. The love interest between Achsah and Othniel is a slight and rather awkward intrusion, at odds with a work that includes the first incarnation of "See the conqu'ring hero comes". The first section refers back to the "wondrous passage" over the "wat'ry heaps" of River Jordan before an angel appears to announce the latest of God's regular bouts of slaying. After what seems to be a bit of a gay crush on the angel, Othniel turns to Achsah for the oratorio's love interest, the most musically appealing moment of their tryst being Achsah's "Hark, 'tis the linnet and the thrush", beautifully sung by Anna Dennis with the dulcet tones of Kate Clark's flute in attendance. In the end the hitherto rather soppy Othniel (the Croatian mezzo Renata Pokupić) turns out to be the "conquering hero". On her first UK appearance ten years ago, I praised Renata Pokupić as "a true Handelian singer" noting that "Her enunciation and intonation are absolutely perfect, and she can cope with the most demanding

of Handel's florid vocal lines and ornaments with remarkable control of articulation and breath". Although still an outstanding singer with an innate ability to portray character through her singing and acting, I am finding her vibrato increasingly problematic. Kenneth Tarver took the tricky role of Joshua, demonstrating the ability to deliver a proper trill – a surprisingly rare occurrence from even the most experienced of baroque singers. His "O thou bright orb" was one of the highlights of the evening, and of the work. The Hamburg choir and Göttingen orchestra were both excellent. Laurence Cummings conducted with his usual attention to detail and generally brisk tempos, although there were several moments when he allowed himself a bit of a wallow.

#### Correction

My review in the last *EMR* of the concert by New Century Baroque gave the wrong name for the bassoon player. The relevant sentence should have read – "His Concerto for violin and bassoon was beautifully demonstrated by Irma Niskanen, violin, and Zoë Matthews, bassoon, the former making a very effective leader of this otherwise cooperative orchestra, the latter also making a very distinctive contribution as a bird in the Rossignolo from Telemann's *Don Quixote*."

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### Tage Alter Musik Regensburg, 6-9 June "Celebrate this Festival" Andrew Benson-Wilson

The tag-line from Purcell's fifth Birthday Ode to Queen Mary celebrated the fact that this was the 30th anniversary of Tage Alter Musik, Regensburg. One of the most intense and compact of all music festivals, this year they managed to cram 16 concerts (one repeated) into just four days – with five concerts each on the Saturday and Sunday. The weekend opened in the newly restored Dreieinigkeitskirche (Trinity Church, 6 June) with the Czech choir Collegium Vocale 1704 and the associated period instrumentalists of Collegium 1704, conducted by their founder Václav Luks, in a performance of the B minor Mass. The choir sang with clear, pure and unforced voices, with a careful sense of articulation and phrasing. The four soloists (Hana Blažíková, Kamila Mazalova, Václav Čížek and Tobias Berndt) were impressive, although some of them struggled to make themselves heard over the orchestra – but that was not their fault. Almost throughout, the violins played far too loudly, notably in their upper registers. There are many passages where the violins do not have the dominant role, but are accompanying other instruments or singers – but this was not apparent from their playing. Václav Luks was conducting with very large gestures, regardless of the volume or mood, and I did wonder if this was encouraging the violinists to overdo it. But whatever the reason, it was an irritation. The conductor's position was also rather curious, standing just behind, but very close to the soloists so that when he turned towards them he ended up

gesturing in their faces. Although the opening Kyrie included some well controlled crescendos, the pulse was rather relentless – the following Christe was also rather ponderous. There were also a number of neo-baroque moments, for example, the distinctive separation of staccato and slurs. However, the central core of the Credo was very well controlled, particularly the all-important link between *et sepultus est* and *Et resurrexit*.

The late night Friday concert (starting at 10.45 in the Dominican Church) was by the UK group Voces8 with a programme of Renaissance vocal music – “A Choral Tapestry”. This was very clearly not based on their CD of the same name, which includes works by Bruckner, Reger, Brahms and Tippett. Alongside Magnificat settings by Palestrina and Hieronymus Praetorius, and motets and hymns by Tallis, Orlando Gibbons, Byrd, Weelkes and Tomkins, we had a rare chance to hear music by the Scottish composer Robert Ramsey – the English-texted *Jubilate*, *Te Deum*, *Magnificat primi toni* and *Nunc dimittis* from his ‘Service of four parts’. Ramsey was organist at Trinity College Cambridge and was possibly connected to the Court of James I. Unusually given the text, Ramsey’s *Jubilate* is relaxed and contemplative, in complete contrast to the immediately following energetic *Gloria in excelsis Deo* by Thomas Weelkes. Ramsey’s *Te Deum* is in conservative style and included many passages of homophony, with a tiny bit of wordplay coming with the little bounce at ‘let thy mercy lighten upon us’. Voces8 opened the concert by processing to the stage to their rather new-age take on Tallis. Although very clearly not a specialist ‘early music’ group, they had a reasonable grasp of style. However, given the experience of some members of the group as former choristers at Westminster Abbey, I would have thought they would have coped rather better with the enormous acoustic of the Dominikanerkirche – the lower voices were occasionally rather muddled, and the upper voices slightly shrill.

The marathon round of Saturday concerts started in Regensburg’s historic Reichssaal (11am, 7 June) with the German instrumental group Instrumenta Musica. Their programme of “Motets, Diminuzioni & Ostinati” included pieces by Ortiz, Schein, Scheidt, Schütz, Falconieri, Bovicelli and Rognoni-Taeggio. It was based on the reputation of Erhardus Borussus, the trombone virtuoso that Michael Praetorius heard in Dresden who was “capable of the fast coloratura divisions that are played on a viola bastarda or a cornett” and apparently had a range of nearly four octaves. Instrumenta Musica was founded in 2004 by their trombonist, and it was clear from the start that the programme was designed to showcase his own talents. Unfortunately, his trombone playing was not likely to impress a modern day Praetorius. Although the player used exaggerated facial expressions to make it clear to the audience just how hard the music was to play, that oft-used gambit really doesn’t make up for a less than virtuosic performance. But I was impressed with the recorder playing of Uta Schmidt and Monika Fischaleck (who also played dulcian) and, particularly, Zita Mikijanska’s performance on the continuo organ of Scheidt’s *Fantasia super “Ich ruf zu Dir, Herr Jesu Christ”* – a complex piece.

The early afternoon concert in the Reichssaal featured the young players of the Jugendbarockorchester Michaelstein playing Bach, Gluck (appropriately, his ‘Regensburger’ Sinfonie in A, the manuscript of which is in the library of the nearby Thurn und Taxis palace) and two anonymous works that were given their first modern performances. The first of these, an Overture in F for two horns and strings, was in a rather bucolic early classical style and included as its second movement an aptly-named *Paysan* – a rumbustuous country dance seemingly based on of *Ah vous dirai-je, Maman* (aka ‘Twinkle, twinkle little star’). The heroic horn players (in this and the Gluck) were Lars Bausch and Clemen Alpermann. The second modern premiere was a Concerto in A minor for two violins and strings that was in a more Vivaldian style. After the Gluck symphony, with its sumptuous central *Andante*, the concert ended with Brandenburg IV, with impressive recorder playing by Laura Kießkalt and Tabea Seibert. This was an excellent performance from the young players. It was good to see them perform without a conductor, although their leader suffered from frequent lapses of intonation, perhaps caused by the unpleasantly hot and humid atmosphere of the airless room.

The 4pm Saturday concert (in the Trinity church) was the Canadian Montreal Baroque Band performing the late Bruce Haynes’s “New Brandenburg Concertos 7-12” – arrangements of various Bach works into three-movement suites. Apart from two movements from the Mass in G minor, all the rest came from cantatas, and were arranged for a wide variety of solo instruments. For example, the first concerto (No 7 in D minor) is transcribed (and part-transposed) for oboe, horn and trumpet from the rather bombastic opening movements of cantatas BWV 34 and BWV 31 (both originally for three trumpets and oboes) with the little opening *Adagio Sinfonia* from cantata (transcribed from bassoon to oboe solo) sandwiched between. Other concertos featured:–

recorder, flute, oboe da caccia and violin;

four recorders (replacing the two oboes and two violins of the Mass in G minor);

oboe and harpsichord (the latter playing the obbligato organ parts from two movements of BWV 35);

two violas da gamba and 2 cellos.

This was a feast of orchestral colour. The premise – that Bach rearranged many of his own pieces for other groups of instruments – is certainly sound, and the result is compelling. Rather attractively, the concert started powerfully and ended with the subtle tones of pairs of gambas and cellos. The playing was generally acceptable, albeit with rather exaggerated articulation, although the principal violin was frequently far too loud, a particular annoyance when what was clearly merely supporting figuration drowned out the solo line.

The seven singers, three cornetists and five trombonists (plus theorbo and organ) of Concerto Palatino transported us to Venice in 1592 and the consecration of Palladio’s masterpiece, the *Il Redentore* church – built as a votive church after the plague that killed off nearly a third of the population in 1576. Concerto Palatino’s programme (of six to 12-part polychoral motets by A. and

G. Gabrieli's and Canzons by Grillo) bore the title '*O crux, splendidior cunctis astris*' after the opening piece by Andrea Gabrieli that was, according to the programme note, believed to have been composed specifically for the occasion – despite his death seven years before the event.<sup>17</sup> That, and the other Andrea pieces, came from the 1583 Psalms and 1587 Concerti collections. Giovanni was represented by his 12-part *Exaudi Deus*, 10-part *Jubilate Deo* and his Canzon XII a 8 – the latter demonstrating his more rhythmically and harmonically adventurous style as compared to the three Canzons by Giovanni Battista Grillo. Although the vast Gothic space of the Dominican Church is architecturally very different from the Renaissance Chiesa del Redentore, the challenge of singing and playing into a large acoustic is comparable. In comparison with the previous evening's late night concert of vocal music in the same church, this was an object lesson in how to sing (and play) into such an acoustic. The many notable moments included the extended duet between Alex Potter and Charles Daniels in Andrea Gabrieli's *Quoniam ergo in flagella* (the last section of his Psalm 37 *Domine ne in furore tuo*) and Giovanni Gabrieli's exuberant 12-part *Exaudi Deus*. An excellent concert.

Saturday wasn't over yet – we still had the late night (10.45) concert by the seemingly ubiquitous Belgian group Vox Luminis in the Schottenkirche St. Jakob (the rather stark interior in sharp contrast to the extraordinary sculptures and images in the porch). Their programme "Heinrich Schütz and the Bach family" was centred on the *Musical Exequien*, written in 1635 for the funeral of the Thuringian Prince Henry II of Reuss-Gera ('the posthumous'). This was preceded by two verses of the Lutheran hymn *Mit Fried und Freud* sung from the rear corners of the church. The evening was completed by funerary works by members of the Bach family – Johann Michael (his lovely *Unser Leben währet siebenzig Jahr*), Johann Christoph, Johann Ludwig and Johann Sebastian. Vox Luminis really are an outstanding choir. They sing with beautifully pure intonation, the sopranos in particular having clear and focussed voices with an excellent control of volume at higher pitches. I liked Masato Suzuki's little organ preludes played as the group re-formed between pieces – a nice touch. But given the late hour, I could have done without the very long talk given by one of the choir who, I gather, had once been a member of the Regensburger Domspatzen, the boys choir of the cathedral.

Canadians were quite a presence during the weekend, another of their incarnations being the Les Vois humaines Consort of Viols. Their Sunday morning concert 'Fantasy, Fugue, Capriccio, Ricercar' (in the Reichsaal) covered, as the title suggests, a very wide range of musical styles and composers from the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century, interspersed between extracts from *The Art of Fugue*. This was a jovial affair, with added bird noises and getting the audience to sing the One Note of Purcell's Fantasia. They used the expressive qualities of their gambas to the full,

albeit with a rather individual take on performance practice. Many phrases started quietly, increased in volume (and occasionally, speed), and then declined – giving a rather oozing effect to the music. A similar crescendo effect also happened on individual notes. Key notes of a phrase were often lingered upon, and each player gave their own articulation of the contrapuntal lines of the Bach fugues.

Sunday afternoon saw the British group The Harmonious Society of Tickle-Fiddle Gentlemen exploring the world of London concerts between 1695-1750 (at St Oswald Church). They featured the composer Pepusch, playing his Overture to "The Beggars Opera", the Concerto grosso in B, the G minor oboe concerto and the Concerto grosso for cello and bassoon. John Stanley's Concerto 2 in B minor was musically rather better, with prominent roles for the cello and violin. Roman's Concerto grosso in B flat (a harpsichord concerto in all but name) was rather formulaic in style. The structure of the many multi-movement works could have done with shorter gaps between the movements, and the players could have allowed a little more applause before turning to sort out the music for their next piece – a common habit with youngish groups. The highlight came at the end when harpsichordist David Wright completely stole the show with the continuo harpsichord player's revenge – William Babel's version of Handel's *Vo far Guerra* with its extraordinary virtuosic (and lengthy) harpsichord solos. The other players could do little other than watch in amazement and add their occasional little interjections.

The main Sunday evening concert (in the Trinity Church) was given by Le Concert Spirituel and a celebration of Purcell, with the 1694 Birthday Ode for Queen Mary, "Come, ye Sons of Art", the 1695 Music for the Funeral of Queen Mary "Man that is born of a woman" and the 1692 Ode for St Cecilia's Day "Hail, bright Cecilia!". There is little point in mentioning the niceties of the English accents of French singers singing to a German audience, but suffice it to say that there were rather more vowels than a native English speaker might have used. And not surprisingly, they were very good at ornaments. There was some surprising vibrato from the sopranos, but otherwise the choir was on good form. Hervé Niquet is a larger than life conductor, ranging from wildly extravagant gestures to just standing with his arms folded. Although I was seated some way back, his frequent sniffs were still very audible – and they weren't at the expected up-beat moments. That aside, this was an excellent concert.

Sunday evening saw not one but two late night concerts (both in the fascinating mediaeval Leerer Beutel building), the second one started after midnight! Both featured the entertaining Norwegian group Barokksolistene, the first with the title "The early Joke – humour in music through the ages". Telemann's *Burlesque de Quixotte* Suite and *Die Schulmeister* cantata were suitable introductions to PDQ Bach's Cantata *Iphigenia in Brooklyn* (S 53162) with its evocative ground "Dying, dying, dying, / And yet in death alive. / Die, die, die, die, die, / die-di-die-di-die-di-die-di-die-di-die." and moving concluding aria "Run, run, run,

17. The preparation of the building of Il Redentore was planned long before Andrea died and it's not implausible that Andrea was preparing elaborate music in advance of the church's completion.

running, running, running, running, running knows." They finished by moving from Brooklyn to the Venice Carnival with music by Giorgio Mainerio, Andrea Falconieri and Adrian Willaert underlying a vivid array of masked characters. Demonstrating humour in music is notoriously difficult, but few can carry it off as well as the members of Barokksolistene under Bjarte Eike's vivacious direction. All joined in the fun, with notable contributions from viola player Per Buhre and dancer Steven Player. But the comedic honours must go to the baritone, actor and, it appears, born comedian, Thomas Guthrie. At one point he reduced the capacity audience to fits of laughter just by standing on the stage doing nothing – an amazing performance. Not content with this exhilarating show, the entire Barokksolistene cast then moved to the adjoining bar where, in the early hours of the following day (12.15am), they gave us "Baroque and beer – an Alehouse Session". With music from Purcell, the Scottish fiddler Niel Gow (including his "Lament for the death of his second wife") and the Irish Turlough O'Carolan, this veered from some exquisite music making (again featuring Thomas Guthrie and Steven Player) to an unabashed knees-up. The post-event gathering on the pavement outside turned into another jam session until the bar owner ushered us all back inside for fear of upsetting the neighbours. And so, my Saturday ended at about 2.30am on Sunday!

The final day of the festival weekend started with the American group El Mundo and their programme *Los Reinos de Castill* with Spanish, Italian and Latin American vocal and instrumental music of the 17th and 18th century (St. Oswald's, 11am, 9 June). Sopranos Jennifer Ellis Kampani and Nell Snidas, bass Paul Shipper and the five players produced a wide range of tonal colour in a well-presented concert of pieces by Domenico Scarlatti, Francesco Manelli, Domenico Mazzocchi, Handel, Juan De Arañes, José Marín, Rafael Castellanos, Antonio de Salazar, Andrea Falconieri, Juan Hidalgo and the Peruvian José de Orejón y Aparico. Mazzocchi's *Sdegno campion audace* started with a yell, and continued with a theme based on "No, No, No!". De Arañes's lugubrious *Parten las galeras* (pub 1624) is in the Spanish *villancico* form. The actions of the three singers made the plot clear to those not up to speed with Spanish or German – 'No' also seemed to be a theme, as it was in the *Ojos pues me desdeñais* of Marín. Marín was an acclaimed composer and performer on the harp as well as a convicted thief and possible murderer who was tortured and jailed – an interesting life for an ordained priest. Visible aids in the form of shades, gold chain and cigarette helped the preening Paul Shipper get into character in Hidalgo's *Xacara de Clarin – Noble en Tinacia nacist*. An entertaining and musically fascinating concert.

Sunday's early afternoon concert was of "Music of the Trecento for clavisimbalum and flutes" given by Corina Marti in the Agidienkirche. Drawing on the Faenza and London codices, the music reflected Jacopo da Bologna's *I dilettosi fiori* (search for adorable flowers), the title of the concert. Grouping several pieces was a sensible way of presenting the 15 pieces, even if the join between each

wasn't always clear. The move from the opening Faenza *Cuntipotens* Kyrie into the *Ghaetta*, with its twirling refrain, was certainly clear, not least by the change of instrument. The contrast between the twinkling clavisimbalum and the sound of the flutes (including, in the well-known London *Saltarello*, a double flute) was a delight. Like most of the concerts in the festival, this concert was directly linked to a recent CD release – I've reviewed that elsewhere in *EMR*.

The late afternoon concert (in the O-so-Rococo gold-splattered whitewash of the Alte Kapelle) saw the return of the Montreal Baroque Band and a lengthy programme of no fewer than five Bach cantatas, the length not helped by very long pauses between each for some unnecessarily complex stage management. This might help to explain the noticeably smaller audience after the interval, with even more leaving before the end to get to the following concert. The four singers (SATB) Odéi Bilodeau (Montreal), Elaine Williams (New York), Philippe Gagné (Montreal) and Drew Santini (The Hague) were the winners of the first "Bruce Haynes International Competition for the rhetorical singing of the music of Johann Sebastian Bach". All were impressive in a difficult programme, but on this occasion the soprano and alto Odéi Bilodeau and Elaine Williams were particularly good, their unforced tone being just right for the repertoire.

Unfortunately, I was very much less impressed with the orchestral playing and direction. As with the early appearance by the orchestra, there were many issues, the main one being yet again the overpowering volume of the lead violin with the addition this time of frequently poor intonation. The orchestra's articulation was frequently lumpy, with both violins and cellos adding big accents on the first beat of bars, and the cellos often over-accenting seemingly random notes or playing in an over-staccato manner – and both playing much louder at higher pitches. I am not sure if the persistent and distracting nodding head of the principal cellist was a cause or an effect of this lumpy articulation, but it certainly made for uncomfortable listening. It was clearly something the conductor, Eric Milnes, intended as the singers occasionally adopted the same approach, although mercifully on fewer occasions. Given the title of the singing competition with its special mention of "rhetorical singing" (the judges were all connected with the Montreal Baroque Band) I did wonder if this rather unusual approach to Bach's music is something that the orchestra strives after. But to my taste, helped by my experience of listening to early music groups from round the world, it sounded merely unmusical.

There were two performances of the final festival event, given by the seven-strong La Risonanza, the 18 members of Coro Costanzo Porta and four members of the contemporary dance group E-Motion in the impressive neo-classical Theater am Bismarckplatz. They opened with incidental music from Locke's *Tempest* before a full staging of Purcell's *Dido & Aeneas*, conducted by Fabio Bonizzoni, and directed by Francesca Cava of E-Motion. Although I don't think everybody in the audience would agree with me, I thought this was an excellent and

thought-provoking staging and performance. The lengthy, and completely silent, dance sequence with balloons at the start of Dido might have unsettled many, but I thought it acted as a sort of aural palate-cleaner in preparation for the intensity of the music to come. The staging was stark, with black and dark blues acting as a foil to a few bright red elements. The four dancers acted as *alter egos* to the singers as well as providing (along with the chorus, who also danced) their own commentary as the plot developed. The principal singers were Raffaella Milanesi as Dido, Stefanie True as Belinda, Richard Helm as Aeneas and Iason Marmaras as the Sorcerer, with Michela Antenucci and Anna Bessi sharing the important subsidiary roles – all on excellent form. Fabio Bonizzoni's musical direction was outstanding, with a delicacy of touch and intensity of emotion fully in keeping with the Purcellian style.

Next year's *Tage Alter Musik* is over the weekend of 22–25 May.

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### Bachfest Leipzig 13–22 June "Die wahre Art" Andrew Benson-Wilson

The Leipzig Bachfest is an extraordinary affair. With more than 100 events over 10 days, the hardest thing is deciding what events to miss out. This year's festival motto was *Die wahre Art* from Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach's treatise *Versuch über die wahre Art das Clavier zu spielen*. As well as the concerts reviewed here, there was an extensive programme of 'Bach out and about' visits to places of interest near Leipzig, many related to historic organs – those visits will be reviewed in the next issue of *EMR*.

The festival traditionally opens in the Thomaskirche with a Bach organ piece, on this occasion the Fugue on *Meine Seele erhebt den Herren* played by the St Thomas organist, Ullrich Bohme on the 'Bach' organ, built in 2000 as an instrument that Bach might recognise. There then followed 20 minutes of speeches from the Mayor of Leipzig and the new President of the Bach-Archiv. The following concert consisted of two calling cards and a swan song. The calling-card version of what was to become Bach's Magnificat in D was written a few weeks after he first arrived in Leipzig in 1723, although it reached this form 10 years later. After his father's death, CPE Bach (the focus of this year's Bachfest) twice attempted to apply for the post of cantor of St Thomas's, writing his own Magnificat in D in 1750 with that in mind. He applied again, equally unsuccessfully, in 1755. The two works both display their composer's talents and breadth of musical thought. In CPE's case this included demonstrating his mastery of his father's contrapuntal style with a 246 bar-long fugue on *Sicut erat*. The version performed here by the St Thomas Boys Choir and Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra (the festival's ensemble-in-residence), conducted by Gotthold Schwarz, is from 1779 with added horns, trumpets and timpani making for a rich orchestration. The concert ended with CPE Bach's little known 1776

*Heilig*, an extraordinary work calling for two full orchestras (each with three trumpets) and double choirs (of Angels and People).<sup>18</sup> CPE referred to this as his 'swan song' hoping that it would help him to avoid being forgotten after his death. The Leipzig Baroque Orchestra joined Tafelmusik for this work. The soloists were Julia Sophie Wagner (soprano), Susanne Krumbiegel (mezzo), Benno Schachtner (countertenor), Martin Petzold (tenor), Andreas Scheibner (bass) – all impressive, as was the direction of Gotthold Schwarz. The concert was broadcast live onto a huge screen on the Markt between the Altes Rathaus and the Thomaskirche, the site of many live concerts and events during the first weekend of the festival.

The main Saturday evening concert (14 June) was in the Nikolaikirche with Chorus Musicus Köln and Das Neue Orchester, conducted by Christoph Spering, performing JS Bach's attractive pastoral cantata *Du Hirte Israel, höre* and CPE Bach's monumental oratorio *Die Israeliten in der Wüste*. *Du Hirte Israel* was written for 'Shepherd Sunday' (*Misericordias*) in 1724 as part of the first cycle of Leipzig cantatas, its main feature being the tenor aria *Verbirgt mein Hirte* with the distinctive sound of a pair of oboes d'amore. There couldn't have been a greater contrast between this and the following *Die Israeliten* (1769), not least in the latter's length of about 100 minutes. Based on the Exodus story of the Israelites being saved from dying of thirst in the desert as a result of Moses hitting a rock, it was intended as an all-purpose, two-part "sacred poem to be sung" related to no particular denominational purpose. The 50 minutes first part covers the drama of the story (from the opening air of foreboding of the low strings to the thirst-quenching outpouring of the 'silver stream') while the second part reflects upon it through a debate between Moses and a pair of Israelites. With many large scale *da capo* arias, this is very close to an opera, aided by some word-painting, notably during the rock-hitting-water-gushing moment. Of the four soloists, Anja Petersen and Daniel Johannsen impressed the most. Christoph Spering controlled the large forces well, bringing out the contrast between the two composer's works

One of the most evocative moments of the festival was Saturday's late night concert in the Thomaskirche with Midori Seiler standing alone, surrounded by candles, under the chancel arch of the darkened church playing Bach's solo Partitas in D minor and E major. This was beautifully expressive playing. Midori Seiler started the opening *Allemanda* in meditative, exploratory mood, gently building the tension toward the rapid *Courante* and the dreamy *Sarabande*. The concluding *Ciaconna* was given a powerful but contained reading. The mood relaxed with the suite of dances of second E major Partita. This was a wonderful way to end the day.

18. For some unknown reason, I've got an unused score of the *Heilig* in A3 format from Hänsler (now Carus). The first section has only six staves per system, but turn the page and it expands to 30, very clearly printed, but I've had no opportunity to hear or play it. If an Early Music Forum wants to try it in what's left of CPE Bach's anniversary year, you need SATB, 3 trumpets, timps, 2 oboes and strings, the continuo requiring cello, d/bass, bassoon and organ, then multiply by 2 (more, of course, if the strings and voices are not just more than one player per part). Although intrinsically quite cheap, it tots up a bit! CB

The four Sunday concerts (15 June) that I attended started with music for cello and keyboard given by Beiliang Zhu, first prize winner at the 2012 Leipzig International Bach Competition, with Christopher Berensen accompanying her on harpsichord and pianoforte (at the Alte Handelsbörse). Beiliang Zhu started and finished by playing Bach's solo Suites in G major and D minor, the filling in the musical sandwich being cello sonatas by Johann Christoph and CPE Bach. Beiliang Zhu's playing was beautifully expressive, her tentative opening to the two Bach suites entirely appropriate to Bach's improvisatory style, as was her delicate articulation and lightness of touch in, for example, the G major *Courante*. The two Sonatas allowed for stronger playing, but this was never forced. Christopher Berensen's accompaniments were stylistically appropriate and supportive. An excellent concert by these young musicians, and one that reminded me of a similar event last year when another Bach Competition winner (the flautist Anna Freitag) gave one of the best concerts of the whole festival.

The first of the Sunday afternoon concerts was given in the Thomaskirche by the Deutsch-polnische Orchesterakademie, a 34-strong orchestra of students from Krakow and Leipzig aged from 13 to 21. Although playing with modern instruments and bows, they were clearly well versed in period style. They opened and closed with CPE Bach Sinfonias (in G and D) for pairs of horns, flutes and oboes, bassoon and strings. A Telemann's Concerto in B flat featured a particularly impressive oboe solo from Magdalena Sulkowska. A Sinfonia in G (for 2 horns, 2 oboes and strings) by the Polish composer Jan Engel formed the centre point of the concert. He died the same year as CPE Bach, and this piece showed some early classical moments. The highpoint of the concert came with Brandenburg 5, with an extraordinary performance by the Polish harpsichord player (and 2<sup>nd</sup> prize winner in the 2010 Leipzig Bach Competition) Magdalena Malec. It is rare that the virtuosic harpsichord solos are played note-perfect, but this was one occasion, with the addition of a fine sense of the projection of the complex musical lines thrown in for good measure. Jan Tomasz Adamus conducted with commendably clear gestures.

The late afternoon concert (in the intimidatingly imposing Bundesverwaltungsgericht) was of string quartets by Haydn and Mozart together with the Ricercar a 3 and *Fuga canonica in Epidiapente* from the Musical Offering, played on modern instrument by the Leipziger Streichquartett. The main Sunday evening concert (in the Nikolaikirche) was given by Streicherakademie Bozen. Bassoonist Sergio Azzolini played Mozart's Concerto in B flat (K191) very effectively, but for some reason he decided to stay in soloist mode for the entire concert, dominating the proceedings in every other piece. The orchestra plays without an acknowledged leader, so perhaps there was nobody in a position to quieten him down. Oboist Giovanni De Angeli was far more of a team player, and also gave an excellent performance of CPE Bach's Concerto in E-flat (Wq165). The standard of the orchestral playing wasn't up to the standard of many others in the festival and they struggled in the acoustic of the Nikolaikirche.

After that Sunday evening orchestral concert, the return of the orchestra in residence with a fine soloist on Monday evening (16 June, Nikolaikirche) was very welcome. Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra and Midori Seiler (who gave the fine solo Bach recital two days earlier) joined to give an excellent performance of works by JS and CPE Bach, Telemann and Handel. Led by their principal violinist Jeanne Lamon, the orchestra played with a solid sense of period style and cohesion, and a good balance between instruments. After JS Bach's opening Sinfonia in G from the cantata *Ich liebe den Höchsten* (an enlarged orchestration of Brandenburg 3), we heard the first of two violin concertos played by Midori Seiler. Telemann's B-flat Major (51: B1) concerto is a fascinating work. Its inventive opening Largo has the solo violin emerging from, and blending with, the orchestra, only occasionally being left alone with the continuo. The slow movement has a Vivaldi-like arching melody over gently pulsating muted strings. Later she played Bach's reconstructed Concerto in D minor (BWV 1052R) – outstanding performances, both. Jeanne Lamon joined John Abberger, oboe, for another Bach reconstruction, the Concerto in D minor (BWV 1060R), both soloists fully integrating with the surrounding orchestral texture with a refreshing lack of personal showmanship. A Sinfonia by CPE Bach (Wq51/1) and Handel's lesser-known Concerto grosso (Op6/8) completed the programme.

We returned to the Nikolaikirche on Tuesday (17 June) for double keyboard concertos by JS and CPE Bach and the Jupiter Symphony with the Academy of Ancient Music, with Richard Egarr and Malcolm Bilson. The inclusion of the Mozart might suggest a rather unbalanced programme, but it was written in 1788, the same year as the CPE Bach Concerto in Eb (Wq 47). Mozart said of CPE Bach "He is the father, we are the children", and it was clear that the spirit of CPE Bach pervades the Jupiter, with sharp contrasts of volume heard at the start. My neighbour suggested that we were about to hear the "chamber music" version of the Symphony, but he got a shock when the Academy of Ancient Music started playing. With forces based on 6, 6, 3, 3, 2 strings, this was a powerful performance that completely filled the Nikolaikirche with sound. It is easy to forget just how loud a classical period instrument orchestra can sound in the right acoustic. The keyboard concertos were JSB's Concerto in c (1061) for two harpsichords and CPE's Concerto in Eb for the interesting combination of harpsichord and pianoforte. The difference between the two players (and of the two harpsichords, which were placed head to toe) was apparent from the start of the JSB concerto, with Richard Egarr playing the brighter and louder harpsichord and adopting a more flamboyant and less reverential style than Malcolm Bilson – the latter aspect evidenced by Egarr's little wave to somebody in the audience just before the start of Bach's central *Adagio ovvero Largo*. The CPE Bach concerto was one of his last works. The contrast between the silvery sheen of Malcolm Bilson's fortepiano and the percussive twang of Richard Egarr's harpsichord was emphasised by Egarr's apparent determination to bring out the fun-loving side of this multi-faceted and complex piece, with its wide range

of emotions and musical textures. Incidentally, it says something for the extraordinary breadth of the Bachfest's programming, that the alternative to this 8pm concert was a performance of Bartók, Berg, Webern, Satie, Schönberg and Stravinsky.

Back to the Thomaskirche for the main Wednesday evening concert given, as with the opening concert, by the boys and young men of the Thomanerchor, directed by Gotthold Schwarz, who has taken over leadership of the choir while the Thomaskantor, Georg Christoph Biller, is indisposed. Their programme sandwiched two Bach cantatas around Telemann's *Donner-Ode* (Thunder Ode). The first part of this was written in 1756, a year after the devastating Lisbon earthquake (and subsequent tsunami and fires), for a special service of penance in Hamburg, a Hanseatic city that had strong trading links with Lisbon. It depicts in some graphic orchestrations the catastrophe, based on a text that interprets the devastation of the city and the death of up to 50,000 of God's subject as an expression of God's power and his anger – "He thunders that he may be glorified". With the sort of Christian sense of logic that I have never quite understood, the text praises God's majesty, wisdom and might – "Give thanks ... sound the long, loud song of praise". The *Donner-Ode* was so successful that Telemann added a second part the following year – an unabashed paean of praise and thanksgiving to God as the "saviour of mankind" (unless you happen to have been living in Lisbon). Telemann's word-painting was considered excessive by his contemporaries, although it is relatively modest by later standards. The last three arias and concluding duet of the first part describe the application of God's "wisdom" on the people of Lisbon, the most dramatic being the closely-woven duet between two basses, with a prominent timpani part – although on this occasion the timps sounded surprisingly quiet to the audience in the nave.

The first of the two Bach cantatas was, perhaps appropriately, given the Telemann work that followed, *Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen* (Cantata 12), a rather more realistic portrayal of the Christians' life of "weeping, lamenting, grieving, trembling, anguish and distress". The subdued mood was enhanced by a reduced Thomanerchor, although everybody joined in for the final chorale. The concluding work was Bach's *Wir müssen durch viel Trübsal* (Cantata 146), with its virtuosic obbligato organ solos, played superbly by Daniel Beilschmidt on a single manual continuo organ – a remarkable achievement, given the nature of Bach's writing which clearly assumes two manuals. Throughout this cantata, as is so often the case in Bach cantatas, the interest was frequently in the instrumental lines rather than the vocal. The orchestra was the Gewandhausorchester, unfortunately playing on modern instruments. They accompany the Thomanerchor in normal church services, and it does strike me as a shame that Bach's music is not normally performed on period instruments in his own church. But despite the very different sound worlds they create, they do play with a degree of understanding of period performance practice. As is usual with these concerts, the choir and orchestra sit in the western gallery and, apart from the soloists, are out of sight most of the audience.

So I liked Gotthold Schwarz's habit of bring a few sailor-suited boys to the front of the gallery to take a bow as representatives of the whole boys' choir. I also liked his conducting. It would be good to hear Bach cantatas performed using the boys and young men of the Thomanerchor for the solos, rather than professional soloists.

The Thursday evening concert was back in the Nikolai-kirche and featured the Polish Capella Cracoviensis – Krakow is twinned with Leipzig, and Poland was patron of this year's Bachfest. The theme was "Installation Music with Trumpets and Timpani". One of Bach's duties was to provide provided cantatas for the *Ratswechsel* (ceremonial Council elections), one such being his cantata *Lobe den Herrn, meine Seele* (BWV 69). This is a flamboyant work, befitting its use – as, no doubt, was the fact that Bach borrowed most of it from an earlier cantata, with a rather awkward change of words. CPE Bach's grandiose cantata *Gnädig und barmherzig ist der Herr* was written for the installation in one of the Hamburg churches in 1785 of a deacon – who paid for it himself. CPE's late *empfindsamer Stil* is much in evidence, with its concentration on approachable and simple music. The highlight (of this work, and the whole concert) was the showpiece operatic 'little bird' aria *O seht, wie so harmlos der Morgen*, sung superbly by the excellent young Polish soprano Jolanta Kowalska, her clear as a bell and unaffected voice being the perfect foil for the music. The concluding Bach *Ratswechsel* cantata, *Wir danken dir, Gott, wir danken dir*, also featured some excellent obbligato organ playing in the opening Sinfonia (based on the Preludio of the Partita in E for solo violin), this time from Marcin Świątkiewicz. Other key soloists were Karol Kozłowski, tenor, and the always masterly Peter Harvey, bass. Capella Cracoviensis proved themselves to be a very fine orchestra. They were conducted by Jan Tomasz Adamus, who had also directed the earlier Deutsch-polnische Orchesterakademie.

The late-night Thursday concert (at 10.30 in the Bach Museum's Sommersaal) was a succession of ten three-movement Sonatas, one by CPE Bach, one by Telemann (with four movements) and the rest being eight of the ten Sonatas composed by Carl Friedrich Abel for Lady Elizabeth Herbert (Countess of Pembroke) and her husband to play at their leisure. They were played by Thomas Fritzsch, violas da gamba with Shalev Ad-El, pianoforte and harpsichord. There was just about enough contrast between the pieces to retain interest throughout the sequence of 31 movements, although the CPE Bach and Telemann sonatas did rather outshine Abel's pieces. Shalev Ad-El's accompaniments were very well judged, but I was less convinced by the gamba playing, with its frequent use of portamento and distracting and rather mannered intakes of breaths during the slow movements. I do prefer to hear emotions expressed through the music, rather than from the non-musical noises of a performer.

Friday afternoon saw the awarding of the Bach Medal of the City of Leipzig to the Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin, the first time an orchestra has been so honoured. In the evening concert, they were joined by the Dresden Kammerchor and conductor Hans-Christoph Rademann

for a programme of music based on the times of the day. They started with CPE Bach's evocation of the dawn in his chamber cantata *Klopstocks Morgengesang am Schöpfungsfeste* – the opening *Accompagnamento* started beautifully, just on the bounds of audibility. Telemann's curious sequence of four little cantatas, *Die Tageszeiten*, followed. The opening started in similar manner to *Klopstocks*, but the subdued mood quickly burst into life. The four sections of the work concentrated on Morning, Midday, Evening and Night, sung respectively by soprano, alto, tenor and bass, and with a descending sequence of keys, from A major to C minor. The text compares this diurnal sequence with the inevitable passage of life, the sequence of moods highlighted by Telemann's inventive use of tempo markings, ranging from Joyfully, Pleasantly, Nimbly, Gaily, Drowsily to Very Humbly. The concert ended with JS Bach's 1727 wedding cantata *Dem Gerechten muss das Licht*, an impressive and orchestrally sumptuous work. The late night concert in the Altes Rathaus was Hélène Schmitt, violin, and Jörg-Andreas Bötticher, harpsichord, playing "Mysterious Works" by Bach, under which category they placed his Trio (1025), Fantasie und Fughetta (Anh II 907), Fugue in G minor (1026), Sonate in C minor (Anh II 1024), Fantasie und Fughetta (Anh II 908) and the E minor Sonata (1023). To this they added Bonporti's very Spanish Invention in D. Notwithstanding the comparative lightness of many of the pieces, it seemed to be a rather tense occasion for the performers.

On the penultimate evening of the festival (Saturday 21 June) Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra (the ensemble in residence) returned to the Nikolaikirche in the company of the Zürcher Sing-Akademie for a performance of Handel's 1716 Brockes Passion *Der für die Sünde der Welt gemarterte und sterbende Jesus*, conducted by Paul Goodwin. It is appropriate that this work is usually known by the name of its Hamburg librettist, for Barthold Brockes' 1712 text influenced German Passions for much of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Although Handel had been settled in London for three years, it is possible that this very German work was intended as a possible ticket back to Hamburg, where the post of Kantor of the five city churches looked to be soon up for grabs. For those used to the pared down text of the Bach Passions, the imagery of the Brockes Passion is certainly not for the squeamish. Of the eight vocal soloists, Christina Landshamer was particularly impressive as the Daughter of Zion, notably during the trial of Christ (the emotional and dramatic core of the work) with her *Besinne dich, Pilatus, schweig, halt ein!*, the gently pastorale *Die Rosen krönen sonst* and the gruesome imagery of the following *Verwegner Dom, barbar'sche Spitzen!* Also notable were Yeree Suh (Faithful Soul), Christoph Genz (Evangelist), Andreas Wolf (Jesus) and Elvira Bill (Maria). Christina Mahler deserves a mention for her cello playing. Both choir and orchestra were excellent, as was the direction of Paul Goodwin.

The last Bachfest concert for me came on the final Sunday morning (22 June), the only one of the many Gewandhaus concerts that I had attended. It was a repeat of the previous evening's concert. In an interesting multi-cultural gathering, the Leipzig Gewandhausorchester

orchestra and Leipzig-based MDR Rundfunkchor and three British vocal soloists were directed by Masaaki Suzuki in Haydn's *Die Schöpfung (The Creation)*. Apart from a fortepiano, this was unfortunately a modern instrument performance – a real shame as this is one of the works where the sound, particularly of period woodwind, is crucial – and the modern contra-bassoon doesn't look nearly as funny as its ithyphallic period ancestor. Masaaki Suzuki knew how to encourage a sense of period style from the orchestra and choir (as well as treating the carnival of the animals section with due reverence) and they both gave good performances. But the three stars were the vocal soloists Carolyn Sampson (Gabriel and Eve), James Gilchrist (Uriel) and Christopher Purves (Raphael and Adam). Carolyn Sampson has the ability to fill the hall with unforced sound above a full orchestra, but also to deliver the tiniest of ornaments delicately with superb accuracy. She and Christopher Purves were delightful together in the rather silly second part romance between Adam and Eve – Purves also coming up with a very solid low D. James Gilchrist was at his lyrical best. The MDR Rundfunkchor was one of the most disciplined outfits I have ever seen – their entrances and exits, stands and sits were of military precision. And during the interval, they left their uniformly light blue scores in absolutely perfect alignment on their chairs, something I have never seen before.

The traditional last concert of the Bachfest is a performance of Bach's B minor Mass in the Thomaskirche. On this occasion it was given by the Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra and Choir directed by Ton Koopman. I wasn't able to get there on the not-unreasonable grounds that I had been invited to give an organ recital at the same time. This was on the delightful little organ in Störmthall (just outside Leipzig), built in 1723 by Hildebrandt. As well as being a remarkable organ, one of the first by Bach's most favoured organ builder, it also has the distinction of having Bach himself give the opening recital, a few months after he arrived in Leipzig. It is always a wonderful experience to play an instrument with such resonances.

The full list of all this year's Bachfest events (and, if you scroll down far enough, several of the 2015 events) can be found at <http://www.bachfestleipzig.de/en/bachfest/veranstaltungskalender>. Next year's Bachfest is from 12–21 June 2015, and celebrates the 1000<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first documentary record of the City of Leipzig, and the 850<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Nikolaikirche. Advanced booking opens on 15 October 2014, or two weeks earlier for 'Friends' of the Bach-Archiv.

## Back in England...

### St Giles-in-the-Fields – Andrew Benson-Wilson Organ

London's organs and those who play them may well be one of the capital's – perhaps even the nation's – least known and appreciated cultural resources. This particular instrument contains some of London's oldest in-daily-use pipework, its heart being a 17<sup>th</sup> century chorus around

which the 2007 restoration by William Drake retained the best of the more recent additions whilst re-creating the instrument's original scale and character. Andrew's programme was chosen to highlight the older sounds in music which would have been new then. So we had pieces (probably) by Christopher Gibbons, Locke, Purcell and Blow all played on the 17<sup>th</sup> century stops and the rest of the organ was allowed off the leash in voluntaries by Croft and (possibly) Handel. Throughout, Andrew's crisp articulation and commitment to appropriate ornamentation were in evidence and contributed to a rewarding experience for the audience. The pieces chosen also allowed us to hear the effects of the unusual temperament, the wider modulations and occasional chromatic chords making their presences strongly felt. Details of London recitals and the organs used are available online and are well worth exploring – and not just by organ buffs.

David Hansell

### Hatchlands

Hatchlands Park and the house within it is a National Trust property close to Guildford (GU4 7RT). This is the home of the Cobbe Collection of keyboard instruments, the USP of which is that many of the instruments have strong associations of ownership or were played by notable composers – JC Bach, Beethoven, Chopin, Mahler etc. I attended three of this year's concert series – two evening performances and one at lunchtime. These all used the collection's most reliable harpsichord, a Shudi and Broadwood of 1787, though there are plans to use a wider selection of instruments next year so keep an eye on the EMR Diary. This particular instrument does make a splendid sound, but it was a slight disappointment that no-one was prepared to include – even as a rogue off-theme excursion or encore – a piece that might have allowed use of its machine stop and Venetian swell. The three concerts also prompted musings on the ever-thorny subject of concert dress. For one of the evening concerts traditional evening dress was fine, as was the bright waistcoat with dark shirt and tie at lunchtime. The other evening performers I saw opted, in the case of the gentlemen, for dark suits, no ties and light-coloured department store shirts complete with dangling threads from a buttonhole or two. This was not a good look. Apart from anything else, it left them rather less formally dressed than most of the audience and, indeed, their lady colleague.

But what of the music? One of the joys of concerts at Hatchlands is that one can hear chamber music in a chamber (seating capacity about a hundred – usually sold out so do book in advance) where all the detail is clearly audible as well as visible. And there was detail by the lorry-load in Adrian Butterfield and Laurence Cummings's Leclair/Locatelli anniversary tribute, which also admitted a sonata by their *fons et origo*, Arcangelo Corelli (14 April). This programme was a real work-out for AB, his violin and his bow. The music left him no option but to take risks with the considerable technical challenges and in the live context the very occasional near-misses were of no consequence. Locatelli's sonatas suggest that

Paganini was perhaps not quite as innovative as he is often thought to have been, though the more lasting impression was left by the gravely beautiful music and playing of Leclair's Op5 no. 6 in C minor. All the sonatas benefitted from the rather better and natural balance between the instruments than is apparent on these player's Leclair recordings. The performers' spoken introductions to the pieces increased in effectiveness as they became more concise.

The Florilegium Trio (15 May) also featured Leclair, though this time in the relatively well-known D major trio sonata (Ashley Solomon *flute*, Reiko Ichise *gamba*, Terence Charleston *hpscd*) and a solo sonata. He, however, was rather over-shadowed by the riches of another of this year's composers, the programme being book-ended by two of Rameau's *concerts* in performances that fully explored the music's many facets, especially its nobility. As with Adrian Butterfield, there were also risks that the presence of microphones might have discouraged, most conspicuously in the younger Sainte-Colombe's extraordinary *Tombeau* for solo viol. Completing the evening were a jolly (despite the minor key) trio sonata by Boismortier and keyboard pieces by Forqueray, very well chosen and introduced by Terence Charlston.

Playing from memory, the American harpsichordist Jory Vinikour also included music by Rameau (9 July). He perhaps needed to have given himself longer to become accustomed to the instrument, as the opening of Bach's G major Partita was a little tentative. There was also a slight hitch in the *gigue*, though the *sarabande* was expressively eloquent and the instrument's resources were appropriately deployed. The recitalist seemed more at home in Rameau (he recorded the complete works three years ago) and the final high-speed *Les Cyclopes* made an impressive finale. One weakness of the event was the programme presentation – just a list of titles and a long performer biography and no information about the music, not even a translation of Rameau's titles, let alone an indication of any musical significance these might have. In the absence of spoken introductions from the performer, these were sorely missed.

David Hansell

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### Buskaid QEII

Continued from the editorial

The amount of early music was smaller than usual, but following the increased subtlety of the players. The concert started with excerpts from *Castor et Pollux* and *Les Indes Galantes*. Rameau is so individual, and one expects years of getting into the style. These players have managed it with such sudden changes of effect that feel that she could match any leading baroque orchestra, especially with a conductor (Rosemary Nalden) who looks as if she is just giving the beat. (That's not a barbed compliment: she's doing what does best for the players.) There followed Muffat's famous *Passacaglia* with 25 variations. The playing was less exciting than Rameau, but far more flexible and subtle. Rosemary certainly keeps up with current ideas of flexibility, but somehow she produces it without excess, though with continual

dynamic and expressive behaviour – it reminded me very much of the chamber group playing *Dido and Aeneas* in Cambridge a few months ago. Somehow early and modern repertoire were not fundamentally different.

This was followed by instrumental version of six of Brahms's *Liebeslieder Walzer*. I have some vague memory of playing some of them in the school orchestra, and, again, the style was right, as was an interlocking series of Czardases, with virtuosic fiddling by Simiso Radebe.

The second half began with a *Soweto Suite for Strings*. Some of the orchestra had played in Karl Jenkins's *Stabat Mater* in Johannesburg, and later Rosemary wrote to ask if he could produce some movements from that and *The Armed Man*. His positive response arrived in three days, and the score and parts arrived a few months later. I must confess that I spent the first movement puzzling why I didn't know the tune – how can I forget the various 15th-century masses based on *L'homme armé*. It struck me as more powerful than the other movements – perhaps that's because of the link. Rosemary had a different favourite.

The next section was a group of American popular songs. It's not my musical world, and no titles were given, but Rosemary emailed me four titles which are easily traceable on Wikipedia: *What'll I do* (Irving Berlin, sung by Grace Moore and John Steel, 1923), *My baby just cares for me* (lyrics Gus Kahn, music Walter Donaldson, sung by Eddie Cantor in *Whoopee!*, 1930), *My funny Valentine* (from *Babes in Arms*, Richard Rogers and Lorenz Hart, 1937) and *Ain't no mountain high enough* by Nickolas Ashford & Valerie Simpson (1967). The two busker singers, Mathapelo Matabane (otherwise viola) and Cecilia Manyana (otherwise violin), with the orchestra and virtuosic violin from Simiso Radebe, introduced how the songs could work in a different way. This isn't music that I normally like, but the two singers moved the American style into something that sounds much more "early", with brilliant accuracy of pitch and an ability to make the tunes sound even better if they are not dragged all over the rhythms. Both voices are strong and straight, but don't avoid slides and other effects. Buskaid should (if it hasn't already) record these arrangements by Timothy Kraemer. The concert ended with local music, largely improvised.

One aspect that worries me a bit is how the players can continue their musical activities throughout their future. Already they look older than they used to, but are there players who do not quite want to be full-time musicians? That would be sad. I was wondering what Buskaid is doing in that respect.

CB

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Maria-Lisa Geyer had expressed interest in writing a review, so I suggested she came to Buskaid as an excuse to talk a bit about what was needed before writing about Rinaldo the following night (next night, next column). She's a well-qualified musician, and I enjoyed discussing her various activities, which include producing opera. This is her first review.

## RINALDO AND THE CLOWNS

Handel *Rinaldo*

As I entered the theatre I was completely surprised at the sight before me, the Baroque ensemble dressed up as clowns with painted faces, wigs and little pointed red hats. This somewhat unconventional introduction to the evening definitely set the magical atmosphere to Jenny Miller's take on Handel's *Rinaldo*. The original 1711 production, written for the London stage, had 'flying dragons, erupting volcanos, mermaids, magic'. The magic for the evening came from the world of circus and in particular 'the world of clowns', as Miller states in the programme. She explains that clowns experience life directly without filters, and in an opera where the characters have continuous outbursts of strong and contrasting emotions, the clown idea is very interesting.

Just before the show was about to begin, Jeremy Silver entered through the giant open mouth of a Victorian style clown (what else) dressed as a magician – the great conjuror who would now draw out enchanting music from mouths and instruments. Then the small orchestra started the overture and I have to admit, my senses were shocked; the last thing my ears were expecting to hear was Baroque music from these white and red clowns. Perhaps this incongruity was desired? In any case after the initial shock, like most theatrical conceits, once it was set up, it became totally natural.

The musicians were placed on one half of the stage. This meant that the balance between singers and musicians worked very well, but also it meant that the two groups of performers became as one. This was aided by the decision of having the singers sing the ritornelli of their da capo arie on a little podium in the midst of the instrumental ensemble. This was a very refreshing and creative idea which helped to bring out the concertante ideas between vocal and instrumental lines, particularly effective in the various decorated ritornelli.

Jeremy Silver conducted from the harpsichord, though he did not always play continuo, leaving the theorbo to play alongside the strings. The two oboists doubled as recorder players (of course) while there were two natural trumpets who, though impressed me with a long trill, managed to fluff up most of the little they had to play. The conductor's sprightly tempi brought a good energy and movement to the evening; particularly in the duet of "Vo' far guerra" between Rinaldo and Armida.

Rhiannon Llewellyn was excellently cast as the sorceress Armida, with bold dramatic choices in her acting which portrayed the fiery, passionate and capricious nature of her character, as well as performing some terrific singing. She had an easy agility for the runs and a wonderful control to her voice, able to diminuendo to pianissimo with expression, which was well demonstrated in the second half of Act II. Jake Arditti's Rinaldo was perhaps the nearest of what I could ever imagine a castrato to sound like; a feminine timbre, yet full of masculine power. His "Venti turbini" aria was magnificent in its total

embodiment of the blowing winds, and his many vocal acrobatics were sung with ease. Arditti also sang the famous "Cara sposa" very beautifully, accompanied by hauntingly beautiful strings. I also enjoyed his Italian, the way he used the language to express text. My only criticism would be of his use of "opera singer moves" which I am sure can be ironed out, as he seemed truthful in his portrayal otherwise.

Nicholas Merryweather was confident and energetic as Argante, King of Jerusalem and lover of Armida. I also enjoyed the smooth and expressive voice of Martha Jones' Goffredo – the father of Rinaldo's love interest. The supporting cast also need to be mentioned, in particular the second Sirene as well as Richard Moore as Mago Cristiano: in a stroke of directing genius, Miller had turned this soothsayer into a slot-machine fortune teller. The Chorus and indeed the whole cast threw themselves wholeheartedly into this magical adventure. One criticism is that perhaps the chorus did too much stage business instead of letting instrumental moments have their space. The shoes of the clowns made squeaking noises on the 'grass' floor which distracted from the overture in particular. Perhaps in a larger theatre with the audience further away, this will not be a problem. The costumes and set of Faye Bradley perfectly brought out the circus theme.

Though there was the 'concept' of the circus, Miller made sure her singers were allowed to express their characters through the music; the human relationships and feelings were paramount. For example, the happiness of lovers together, heard in the joyous music "Scherzoso sul tuo volto" was reflected onto the stage: lovers naturalistically flirting, holding hands, desiring one another (unlike an opera I saw last year by a well-known company whose pair of 'lovers' sang of love for each other yet hardly looked at or referred to the said lover throughout the duet). When Almirena (Rinaldo's love) daydreams about her lover to the birds in the sweet and tender music of "Augelletti", the soprano recorder was placed on a platform as if the singer, blissfully alone in her bath, was singing to the bird on a tree. During "Venti turbini", when Rinaldo sings onomatopoeically of strong winds blowing, the cast tried to stop themselves being blown away. All these are examples of making the staging follow the music. There were other examples where this also occurred to strong effect. One example was when Goffredo (Almirena's father) and Rinaldo travel across the sea to rescue Almirena. The characters start Act II rocking gently in a boat with fear on their faces, to the mysterious and melancholic tones of the ensemble. Then just before "Il vostro Maggio", the music became more sensuous, oriental and exotic and three Sirene (mermaids) appeared, though in this version they were sexy clowns to entice the hero to come to the lair of Armina. The 'sexy clowns' had swirls of light on the fronts of their bras/corsets and at first you could only see these lights behind a veiling curtain. This let them magically appear like fireflies before the 'Sirene' came out to dance sensuously for Rinaldo. With the lights dimmed, it seemed like a private lap dance (though more tasteful),

indeed perhaps more fittingly for the piece, like odalisques in a harem, which worked perfectly with the music.

I would argue that one of the most important things for an opera director to do is to have their singers express the text through the music and to create believable relationships with the other characters. That is 'the telling of the story'. With this being the case in this 'Rinaldo', the audience could more easily buy into the clown/circus world with the idea of making accessible, or perhaps understandable, these particular characters, written as almost stereotypes with clear-cut emotion. Armida's violent nature was demonstrated by her being a Knife-thrower, the hero Rinaldo as the Strong man and the Enemy leader was the Tiger-tamer. The characters became personifications of their role in the circus.

I did however find one particular problem with this circus world; that the 'enemy camps' of this Rinaldo story were not, dramatically speaking, strong enough. Although the good clowns with red hats, headed by Goffredo and Rinaldo, fought the battle moments with swords (albeit it foam ones) against the evil clowns with black hats lead by Argante and Armida, the dramatic conflict did not quite work; the stakes were not high enough – for either side. Indeed, keeping with the clown motif, they had to be foam swords, but then there was no danger, no real danger for the audience to believe in. The original setting of Rinaldo, the most heroic of knights fighting with the Christian army against the Muslim army in Medieval Jerusalem where death is a sure possibility, makes for a stronger dramatic conflict.

That said, the production was great fun to watch, engaging to listen to, no moments of boredom (which unfortunately cannot be said for all representations of Handel opera) and inventive and creative use of the famously 'difficult to direct' da capo arie. I hardly looked up at the surtitles, I did not need to; what was happening on stage was clear and exciting storytelling. *Maria-Lisa Geyer*

*Our reviewer went to the performance at the Bernie Grant Arts Centre, N15 4AX on 17 July; further performances in Hastings on the 19<sup>th</sup> and at Longborough Festival Opera on the 24<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup>.*

## Venus and Adonis

*Sunday 17th August: 8pm*

Steiner Theatre, Rudolf Steiner House, 35 Park Road, London, NW1 6XT

Tickets: [www.bit.ly/venusadonislondon](http://www.bit.ly/venusadonislondon)

*Monday 18th August: 7pm*

St Mary in the Castle, 7 Pelham Crescent, Hastings, E. Sussex, TN34 3AF

Tickets: [www.musicglue.com/stmaryinthecastle](http://www.musicglue.com/stmaryinthecastle)

AD PARNASSM

ensemble of L'OFFERTA MUSICALE di Venezia

Music Direction prepared by Riccardo Parravicini

Director: Maria-Lisa Geyer

## CD REVIEWS

## MEDIEVAL

*In praise of Saint Columba: the sound world of the Celtic church* Choir of Gonville & Caius College, Cambridge, George Webber dir, Barnaby Brown triplepipes, lyre 76' 15" Delphian DCD34137

Virtually nothing is known about how religious music of Scotland and Ireland from the 7th to the 14th centuries was sung and, even more of a problem, played by instruments, and particularly difficult to surmise if voices and instruments played together. The simplest solution to the latter is that liturgical music was only sung: that was normal for much of the pre-reformation church. Religious music can be mixed with instruments in non- or semi-liturgical activities. The previous CD I reviewed – David Cizner, a Bohemian boy treble ranging from Monteverdi to Dvorak (see p. 42) – had the unusual benefit of supplying information before each text, rather than the usual practice of separating them. That would have been useful here, though there is plenty of introduction and text. It's worth reading the poetry if you can – at least there are translations too. The long *Altus prosatur* poem has 23 verses beginning with A and ending with Z – track 12, 25'05". The marking of length and stress is perhaps confusing: there is a difference between mensural and rhythmic verse, and (at least when rhythmic) one knows from using any modern congregational singing that accents can vary. It's a bit odd that the text of *Altus prosatur* was believed to be 7th-century yet the refrain was based on music from the 1480s. The vocal Latin songs work, whether "authentic" or not, but there's less certainty how the instruments might have played. This is a substantial demonstration of creative musicology: do listen! CB

15<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

*I dilettosi fiori: 14th-century music for clavisimbalum and flutes* Corina Marti

Ramée RAM 1108 (69' 35")  
Era Venus, Aquila Altera, Indescort, Per Non Far Lietto, (Keine Angaben), Ghaetta, Non After Elso Amante, Saltarello, La Dolce Sere, Un Gentil Fior, Chominiciamento Di Gioia, Rosetta, Ave Maris Stella, Quant Je Suis Mis Au Retour, In Perial Sedento, Puis Que Ma Dolour, Che Pena Questa, Saltarello by Don Paola da Firenze, Gherardello da Firenze, Machaut and Anonymous.

This is a fascinating CD and an ideal introduction for those not used to music of this period, not least in helping to learn and recognise the distinctive little melodic

phrases that recur, for example, in the cadences in the Faenza Codex. The CD includes a discussion on the type of instrument the music might have been intended for, together with a well-written history of the clavisimbalum which, along with flutes (and a double flute), feature on this programme. The 19 tracks are divided into smaller groups – a sensible decision. Most of the pieces are drawn from the Faenza Codex, with other pieces from London's British Library Add.29987, Paris and Firenze. Although it could be argued that the organ should have been included (in portative or positive format), the choice of clavisimbalum and flutes works well. The flute pieces are recorded close enough to the performer for her breaths to be audible – a nice touch, not least by adding to the articulation – track 6, the well-known *Ghaetta* with its distinctive refrain, is a lovely example of this. Corina Marti plays with a captivating and beautifully fluid sense of rhythm and pulse.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

*What's the difference between the clavisimbalum and clavicimbalum in Marti's La Morra below?* CB

*Armoniae Celestes, Carmina Suavissima et Europaische Musik in Basel zur Zeit des Konzils 1431-1449* La Morra, dir. Corina Marti, Michal Gondko 62' 32" Musiques Suisses MGB 6269

*Veni creator spiritus, Puer natus est, V. Cantate Domino, El Gioioso, Kyrie, Adieu mes amours très belles, Aux ce bon youre de la honestren, Gloria, Las comment avoir joye porraye, Cupid Forga, Pange lingua gloriosi, A Florence, la cité ioyeuse / Hélas la fille Guillemin, Speciosa facta it, Lionzello vechio, Sanctus, Christ is risen, Agnus Dei, Veni creator spiritus, Redeunte in ut, Gratulemur cristicole*

It is not just in recent times that the word Basel has been strongly associated with 'early' music. The years 1431–1449 also helped to put Basel on the musical map. Whatever the complex religious and political outcomes of the Council of Basel (they elected the last Antipope) it seems very likely that this 18-year period was a musical and cultural feast, resounding to the "celestial concords" (*armoniae celestes*) and "sweetest songs" (*carmina suavissima*) from the likes of Du Fay, Binchois, Dunstable, Johannes Brassart and Nicolas Merques. This impressive CD, based on MSS linked with Basel, reflects that period. The music ranges from all six singers with instrumental contributions from Corina Marti (flutes and clavisimbalum), Michal Gondko (lutes) and Elizabeth Rumsey (fiddle) to solo singing from the wonderfully evocative countertenor Doron Schieffer. It opens in very familiar territory with the chant *Veni*

*creator spiritus*, sung at the start of all Council sessions. Such was the importance of the English music of Dunstable that (as the writer of the programme note points out) during this time, when confronted by music from another country, copyists would often just label the composer as *Anglicanus* (Englishman). Du Fay and Binchois were acknowledged as followers of Dunstable. All three are represented here, as is Brassart, a composer who moved from the Pope's musical court to that of three successive Holy Roman Emperors. Another composer in Basel was Nicolas Merques, composer of a setting of *Pange lingua gloriosi*. This only obvious omission is an organ – the pieces from the Buxheimer Orgelbuch are played on the clavicimbalum. This is perhaps made up for by the occasional contribution from a little bird – I'm sure they also made their musical presence felt in Basel. This CD was linked to an international symposium on 'Music, Art, and Culture in the Age of the Council of Basel' held in the university's Musicology Department in 2011 and, as well as being available separately, is also included in the subsequent book of papers 'Music and Culture in the Age of the Council of Basel' (edited by Matteo Nanni).

Andrew Benson-Wilson

16<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

*Byrd and Philips Adoramus te: motets, songs and consort music* Clare Wilkinson, Rose Consort of Viols 72' 40" Deux-Elles DXL 1155

This is another fine recording from the musical partnership that brought us the outstanding "Four Gentlemen of the Chapel Royal" on the same label in 2008. The present disc consists of "motets, songs and consort music" by Byrd and his pupil Peter Philips. The selections from Byrd are limited to motets and songs. Of nine such items, six are consort songs, all of the highest quality. It is perhaps invidious to pluck out one particular item, but "How vain the toils", one of two songs from the *Psalmes etc.* of 1611, is notable for its rich texture and stirring dissonances. Just as this combination's previous disc contained a Byrd premiere (the early *Fantasia a6*, still the only version true to the original), its successor here includes the first recording of "Adoramus te Christe" as Byrd intended it. This is a work that has bewildered musicologists, liturgists and performers besides the interested public: it is the only consort song in the entire *Gradualia* which otherwise consists entirely of unaccompanied works. Of the two previous recordings,

The Cardinall's Musick consign the accompaniment to a chamber organ, while Ely Cathedral Girls' Choir performs a two-part arrangement by their conductor. As to the motets, taken from the *Cantiones* of 1575 and 1591, it is not everyone's preference to have them performed by a solo voice plus viols, but if they are to be played in this way, there are no better executants than Clare and the Rose Consort: such is their rapport with one another and their empathy with the music, one can gain further insights into this endlessly entralling music through their interpretations. It is interesting to compare their version of "Domine secundum actum meum" with the hallucinatory rendering (consisting of only the first of the two sections) in the film "Elizabeth" by the New London Consort, the Australian Boys' Choir, and the tenor David Hobson singing *haute contre*.

Philips' motets benefit greatly from the way they are performed on this disc. Invariably on anthologies devoted to them, they are interpreted as Continental products of the Counter-Reformation, with the emphasis on the vertical, or chordal. In the versions on this disc for soloist and viols, their horizontal, or contrapuntal, qualities come to the fore, revealing a greater rhetorical or narrative sweep. There are no songs by Philips, but an excellent cross-section of his consort music, including the relatively well known Passamezzo and Dolorosa Pavans but also a couple of pedagogical trios, which belie their academic origins and proclaim Philips as a pupil of Byrd, plus his only two surviving fantasias, both a6, which turn out to be transcriptions of two sections from one of his madrigals.

The programme and the performances on this disc are superb. In particular the tempi are judicious throughout, allowing all that this fine music has to offer to make its impact. The Latin pieces were as much domestic music as the rest, and could well have been performed just as they are here. Some of the material for Philips' consort music was provided by David Smith, and his forthcoming edition of Philips' (and Dering's) consort music in *Musica Britannica* is eagerly awaited. Meanwhile it remains merely to recommend this disc unreservedly, to applaud the participants, and to hope for more of the same: still awaiting their recorded premieres are songs and consort music even by Byrd, besides his numerous gifted contemporaries.

Richard Turbet

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

Berardi *Sinfonie a violino solo, opus VII*  
Fabrizio Longo vln, Anna Clementi hpscd  
Tactus TC 630201 (45' 49")

Five of the six canzonas in Berardi's set have literary(?) motifs at their head, while the sixth is labelled "Capriccio per Camera, M. S." In his booklet note, Longo tries (not entirely convincing, as far as I am concerned) to relate the sounds of some of these motifs to the themes used. Whether they do or not, Berardi, though friends with Colonna and Corelli, imitated neither – his is a very individual voice, and certainly one worth hearing. A whole CD of just violin and harpsichord may be a little hard going, and I would not like to listen to it all again in one sitting, but I am certain that any of the six pieces, which are very well played by both of the present artists, would be welcome on any recital programme: Berardi's music demands to be listened to intently. BC

Biber *Rosenkranz-Sonaten* Sirkka-Liisa Kaakinen-Pilch vln, Battalia (Annamarie Pöhlö kbd, Eero Palviainen lutes/guitar, Mika Suikonen violone) 124' 56" (2 CDs) Ondine ODE 1243-2D

I have never played these pieces anywhere but in the privacy of my own home; that is not strictly true, actually, as I remember spending an evening in St Andrews untuning my instrument of the time to read through some of them with one of my tutors who was (and is) a real keyboard specialist. Apparently he found following the *scordatura* more difficult than I did playing the music – most likely because, although he was a virtuoso, these pieces were written rather to lie well under the hand. I have come to love some recordings, while not being so keen on others. This version will happily join the former group on my shelves. Even though I am not convinced that Biber would expect one of his continuo players (would he actually expect there to be more than one?) to put down one instrument and pick up another during a single sonata, I like the way the members of Battalia know when to leave the music to its own devices and get out of the way of the soloist, Kaakinen-Pilch, who has all the tricks up Biber's sleeve to a T. For those who like to know such things, she uses a single (anonymous) instrument throughout the set. Recommended. BC

Charpentier *à la Chapelle Royale de Versailles* Montserrat Figueras, Maria Cristina Kiehr, Gérard Lesne, John Elwes, Josep Cabré, La Capella Reial de Catalunya, Le Concert des Nations, Jordi Savall 138' 56" (2 CDs), 91' 47" (1 DVD) Alia Vox AV DVD 9905

*Canticum in honorem Beate Virginis Mariae,\* Concert pour quatre parties de violes,§ Litanies de la vierge,\* Magnificat, Missa assumpta es Maria,\* Nativité de la Vierge, Nuit (from H. 416),\* Pour la conception de la Vierge, Pour la fête de l'Épiphanie, Prelude pour le Magnificat à quatre voix,*

*Prelude pour Salve Regina, Salve Regina à trois voix pareilles, Stabat mater\* & Symphonie devant Regina (\*=CD & DVD, §=recorded in 2013, otherwise 2004)*

This is another in the current cavalcade of glossy Savall re-releases. The CDs are from 1989 and 2004 (with one track from 2013) and the largest work included is the *Missa Assumpta est Maria*. This was a live recording from a concert which can be seen in full on the DVD. The filming is rather pedestrian and sometimes manages to highlight a non-singing soloist: in short, the visuals add little to the purely audio discs. All the music is top drawer Charpentier with his rich harmony and lively counterpoint, and this particular group of pieces includes some very tasty 'Amen' and other final word settings. A few aspects of performance practice raise an eyebrow. The pronunciation of Latin is Italianate rather than French; while viols are often specified in M-AC's 'domestic' sacred music, surely this large scale mass for the Sainte-Chapelle needs a body of violins? shouldn't the flutes be end-blown rather than transverse? is the 16' bass appropriate? But, if you don't have any of the repertoire on your shelves, this is an attractive way to acquire it and might make a good present for someone as yet uninitiated. The booklet contains a number of facsimiles as well as notes, photographs, texts and details of the Savall back catalogue.

David Hansell

A. Ferrabosco II *Aires & lessons for the Lyra Viol* Monique Zanetti S, A Deux Violes Esgales (Jonathan Dunford, Sylvia Abramowicz viols, Thomas Dunford lute) Arion ARN68833

The booklet notes which accompany this recording make extravagant claims for the music of Ferrabosco with which one can only agree. His songs are of the highest quality, quite distinct from those of his immediate contemporaries, not as familiar as they deserve to be to the listening public. Viol players are well aware of the quality of his music for consort of viols, which, by contrast, is more widely available in recordings. His *Lessons for the Lyra Viol*, published in 1609, contains 66 pieces in three separate tunings, for one, two or three viols. The publication was pioneering in its scope, the music is significant, and there are far fewer opportunities to hear it.

The reason for this is the sheer difficulty they present to anyone who wishes to perform them. They present significant challenges. Less showy than the equally demanding Corkine Lessons (published shortly after), all, but a Fancie (for three viols) and some Preludes, are dances: almaines, corantos, pavins and galliards; no nice divisions on popular tunes. They

are nevertheless substantial compositions of great beauty.

So this recording is welcome in that it brings together a programme of his songs and lyra pieces in an attractively assembled programme. However, it is uneven in quality. How much you enjoy it will depend on how much you enjoy the singing of Monique Zanetti. Make no mistake, she is a very good singer, with all the accuracy and nimbleness to cope with the sometimes very florid writing. If she were able to moderate her vibrato, these would be very good performances. And she has the technique to do it, as she often starts notes with no vibrato, but regularly in it comes as she swells into the note. Higher notes are all with vibrato which spoils for me her otherwise intelligent and very musical singing.

I also enjoyed the Lessons for two viols: an Alman, Coranto and Galliard, and the versions for lyra viol transcribed in the 17th century for lute. The solo viol was less successful. The Dovehouse Pavan, here in the version for lyra viol, was laboured, and plucking a coranto on the viol seemed not only an unnecessary change in timbre when the bowed sound is so unusual anyway, but blurred some of the figuration which would have been clearer had it been bowed. The Galliards are taken too slowly, and the booklet notes justify this by quoting Thomas Mace. But I would have thought that Mace's memory in 1676 of music that was written before he was born were less relevant than, for example, the songs written at the same time in the galliard form by Dowland, which require a more dance-like rhythm. Of course this makes Ferrabosco's Galliards very difficult, but then, he was a player, and, one imagines, a virtuoso.

The booklet notes make some interesting points about the size and string length of the instruments that would have played this music, an important aspect as two of the tunings Alfonso uses take the bottom string down to a low A. Tuning a normal catline or high twist gut string down a 4th below its accustomed pitch gives it a much softer sound, very easy to bow out of tune. The bottom notes in this recording sound firm and stable, and it would have been interesting to have more information about the strings used.

Robert Oliver

**Fontana Sonate a violino ed altri strumenti** Stradivaria, Daniel Cuiller 51' Mirare MIR214

This perfectly balanced disc is beautiful. Cuiller and his partners are passionate advocates of Fontana's multi-faceted and skilfully constructed music. By cleverly ordering the pieces and, in two of the pieces, substituting a recorder for the violin, there are no consecutive sonatas

with identical scoring. The continuo is restricted to violone and keyboards (and not always both, or the both you would expect). Do I miss the kaleidoscopic sound world that has come to dominate such performances? Not one bit – how fresh to have the focus back on the melody instruments! That is not to belittle continuo players or their all-important role, but it is nice to hear violinists not having to work their instruments too hard to sing out over a sea of pluckers. There is a definite air of domestic performance here, and the engineers have captured an excellent balance. I might ordinarily have complained that 51' is too short for a 21st century CD, but actually Fontana's music demands concentration, so just under an hour is possibly about as much as the ear can take at one sitting.

BC

**Gesualdo *Sacrarum cantionum quinque vocibus*, 1603** Odhecaton, Ensemble Mare Nostrum, Paolo da Col 63' 30"

Outhere RJC 343

This is a new take on Gesualdo's five-part book, which is notoriously difficult to bring off as an entity – perhaps because, unlike so many madrigal books, it was never intended to be performed complete. Paulo Da Col redistributes the 19 motets into groups (penitential, Maria penitentia) prefaced by *O vos omnes* and concluding with *O Crux benedicta*, and with instrumental items at the four interstices. Three of these are short organ pieces by mannerist contemporaries of Gesualdo, one a cantus firmus setting of a verse of *Ave maris stella*, admirably performed by a solo voice and viols. This, arguably the most successful item on the recording, has been specially edited from a Vatican Library MS and is supposedly by Luzzaschi, but it sounds unlike any Luzzaschi known to me and remarkably like the cantus firmus settings in Francesco Soriano's mammoth 1610 collection of *Canoni et obliqui.. sopra l'Ave maris stella*, three of which I edited for I Fagiolini's 1612 Italian Vespers recording – so I wonder if it is yet another Luzzaschi misattribution. The organ works, one by Trabaci, two by de Macque, are adequately played by Liuwe Tamminge on a mid-18th-century instrument in Molfetta.

As for the motets, Paulo Da Col sees them as *musica reservata*, designed for "private performance before the nobility". So Gesualdo chose "to make use of a variety of combinations of voices and instruments; the instruments are at times required to double the voices and at others to perform the vocal lines alone". This is muddled and misleading, for Gesualdo gives no indication of performance options, and it is Da Col himself who "requires" the varied use of (tenor?)

cornett, harp, lute, theorbo and four viols in many of the motets. But these motets are hardly *musica reservata*, merely paraliturgical church settings, many of them with expressive mannerist touches, certainly, but basically in a free-wheeling version of the prevailing ecclesiastical manner and with nothing like the extravagances of the *Tenebrae responsories* – and even those are manifestly for (solo) voices and presumably intended for Gesualdo's private chapel. I see no reason to assume that the motets did not have a comparable destination. We know nothing about the chapel's personnel, but I simply cannot see why this polyphonic church music should "require" instruments. The proof of the pudding is in the eating, of course, and the sad truth is that, for all Da Col's striving for variety, there is a prevailing sameness – and, I'm afraid, stolidity – of approach which makes the recording quite heavy going. A particular drawback is the line-up of four (Italian) falsettists on the *Cantus* parts. Whether concerted, solo or doubled by cornett, they seem incapable of producing clear, forward vowel sounds – except when the part lies high, when a straightforward lack of technique is evident. Was this the reason for so much cornett doubling?

I'm sorry to be so negative about this recording, to which Da Col has evidently devoted much thought and which gets a great deal right – the two high-clef settings are transposed down, for example. But the performances have a prevailing pedestrian quality – similar tempos and dynamics and hardly a touch of the madrigalian freedom that the more expressive passages demand. These do little for music which, dare one admit it, only intermittently has the freshness and originality of the *Tenebrae responsories* or the madrigals. One final thing: I don't see why it was necessary to go to the single extant set of part books in Naples when there is a reasonably accurate published edition by Glenn Watkins that merely needs to be checked against the print. The Recording Note reads as though Cristina Cassia's edition was a ground-breaking achievement.

Hugh Keyte

See also the downloads section on p. 42 below.

**Captain Tobias Hume A Scottish Soldier**  
Thomas Walker T, Alison McGillivray bass  
viol/lyra d'amore, Concerto Caldonia,  
David McGuinness 57' 22"  
Delphian DCD34140

Hume achieved some degree of popularity when his two publications of 1605 and 1607 were issued in facsimile some 40 years ago and pluckers encouraged singers to try out the music. A major ambition was to compete against the popularity of the lute. I associate his music particularly with our

regular viol reviewer Robert Oliver, whose solo performance of voice and viol in Hume's *Tobacco* was impressive in the mid-1970s. So I was somewhat surprised to hear it performed by five players! The programme is a marvellous display of mostly lighter repertoire. As such I enjoy it hugely. But there's a sneaking suspicion that the arrangements don't relate closely enough to Hume's ethos. The notes by David McGuinness are marvellous. Hume's biography has become somewhat clearer in the last twenty years. Born between 1565 and 1579, some of his military activity must have been as a mercenary. He died after 1642. Do buy it! CB

**Jenkins** *Fantasias, Pavans & Airs in four parts* The Spirit of Gambo 60' 27"  
Musica Ficta MF8019

I love Jenkins' music and I share the booklet note's surprise that it is still so rarely heard. This is the Spirit of Gambo's second CD devoted to his four-part music and I imagine it will most likely emulate its predecessor in winning awards. The recorded sound is beautiful, highlighting the natural blend of the viols (made by one of the group's tenor violists) played with matching bows by a single maker. *Fantasias I, VI, X & XVII* are played without organ, while *XV, XXVI & XXXI* see the group joined by Haru Kitamika. She also plays in *Pavan XXVII, Air II* and *Galliard XXIV*, leaving the viols to play *Airs I & XIII, Pavan IX* and another *Pavan* in D minor. The booklet note is brief, though there is rather more about the performers. In some ways, it seemed better to leave the music to speak for itself, which it did very eloquently indeed. BC

**Purcell** *Dido & Aeneas* Emily van Evera *Dido*, Ben Parry *Aeneas*, Taverner Choir & Players, Andrew Parrott 61' 36" (1994)  
Avie AV2309

Many *EMR* readers will already have this, the Taverners' 1994 recording, on their shelves and those who don't, should. It continues to challenge even the Early Music World's concept of this masterpiece with its unorthodox choices of voice and singing styles for several roles, all underpinned by Andrew Parrot's questing musicianship. I wonder if he now regrets the Christie-esque percussion that makes a mercifully brief appearance and whether or not he would now use an even smaller chorus. This re-release is under the ensemble's own banner, in association with Avie. The excellent booklet is in English only. David Hansell

*My recollection is that the 1981 recording for The Open University was more exciting.* CB

*Lamento* Romina Basso *mS, Latinitas Nostra*, dir. Markellos Chryssicos 64'  
naïve V5390  
*Kapsberger Toccata seconda arpeggiata* Rossi  
*Lamento della regina di Svezia* Carissimi  
*Lamento in morte di Maria Stuarda* Strozzi  
*Lagrime mie* Frescobaldi *Capriccio IX di durezze*  
*Monteverdi Lamento d'Arianna* Provenzale  
*Squarciato appena avea*

Although she has toured and recorded extensively with the usual round of early music groups and directors, this is the first solo CD from the Italian mezzo Romina Basso. It was recorded with the Greek ensemble *Latinitas Nostra* directed by Markellos Chryssicos and explores the dramatic world of the Italian *Lamento* chamber cantata. The opening *Lamento della regina di Svezia* tells of the grief of Christina, Queen of Sweden, on the death in battle of her father King Gustavus Adolphus in 1632, and demonstrates the sheer emotional and dramatic power of Romina Basso's rich mezzo voice – lapsing into speech towards the end is a nice touch. Elements of later style do creep in to Basso's singing, including portamento and slight lifting onto notes, but that is clearly all part of her emotional response to the music. Carissimi's *Lamento in Morte di Maria Stuarda* follows, with its slightly more measured Counter-Reformation elevation of Mary Queen of Scots. A rather Greek sounding cello solo introduces Strozzi's *Lagrime mie*. This is often thought to represent Strozzi's own grief as much as that of the (male) protagonist's weeping over his lost Lidia. The instrumental introductions to two of the laments are improvisatory, with Kapsberger's *Toccata seconda arpeggiata* and Frescobaldi's *Capriccio IX di durezze* both recast in a multi-instrumental format. The latter introduces the originator of this genre, Monteverdi's *Lamento d'Arianna*. The CD ends with a work new to me – Francesco Provenzale's *Squarciato appena avea*, a humorous parody on the *Lamento della regina di Svezia*, incorporating the same action (starting with the messenger appearing to tell of the death) but then, in place of the grief of the weeping Queen, lapsing in to Neapolitan street songs of a dubious nature, sung by additional singers who were clearly relishing the jollity of their contribution.

The accompaniments are generally appropriate, if you accept the slightly contemporary Greek flavour of some of them, although I felt that the harpsichord accompaniment was often intrusive, both in volume and the over-ripe texture of many of the continuo realisations.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

**Meine Seele: German Sacred Music** Matthew White *cT*, Tempo Rubato, Alexander Weinmann

Atma Classique ACD2 2668

**JM Bach** *Auf laßt uns den Herren loben* JS Bach  
*Widerstehe doch der Sünde* Bernhard Was betrübst  
du dich meine Seele Erlebach *Trocknet euch ihr*  
*heissen Zähren*, Ouverture & Suite No. 3 Muffat  
*Passacaglia* Rosenmüller *Ascendit Christus*,  
*Dances* Schütz *Erbarm dich mein o Herre Gott*  
*Tunder Salve mi Jesu* & Sinfonia

This is a pick 'n' mix of some of the most beautiful music from the German baroque. Starting with Bach (albeit with a couple of very unwelcome Scotch snaps in the opening violin parts – echoed later by the singer) sets the bar high. Not a problem, though, as the remainder of the recital has some fine snippets, as well as some complete pieces. The instrumental playing is mostly very good (even for my taste, some of the flashy ornamentation sounds rushed, and the harpsichordist gets a little carried away in the Erlebach "cantata") and the singing is good, though I could forego the "iss" sounds – was the microphone just placed too closely? The group lives up to its name in Bernhard's *Was betrübst du dich?* (mercifully sounding like "dich" and not "dish", so perhaps the other occurrences were a deliberate attempt at a localized accent?), the tempo moving about without any indication from the composer before the *Allegro* at Bar 47. A range of lovely music to be sure, but not a CD I shall return to terribly often, I fear. Always nice to hear some Erlebach in his anniversary year. BC

#### LATE BAROQUE

**Bach** *Lutheran Masses – Vol. II* The Sixteen, Harry Christophers 73' 52"  
Coro COR 16120  
BWV 234, 236 + 79

In this second CD of the *Lutheran Masses*, the Sixteen couple the Masses in G and A with Cantata 79, from which some of the material in both masses is drawn. Like the first Volume (reviewed in the December 2013 *EMR*), this is full of committed, well-balanced singing and playing. There are two points that strike me in relation to this musical and well-integrated recording. One is about the wisdom of using two singers on each line as opposed to one or three. I was more aware than in the previous volume of the difference between the two voices on both upper parts in the choruses. This is more a question of tone than anything: I may be unduly fussy, but Grace Davidson and Julia Doyle are too dissimilar in tone, and have very different ideas about how to use vibrato – Davidson uses it (properly) only as an ornament – for all their musical qualities and their beautiful and intelligent singing. And both the altos use more soloistic-type vibrato in their chorus work than the lower voice parts do. The other is about the balance

between voices and instruments. When I listen to performances – or watch them on YouTube – that re-create the layout of performers surrounding an organ in the west gallery of a church, I am always struck afresh by the importance of the natural balance of players and singers. Surely in a movement like the *Christe* of the A major Mass, an extended *recitativo* where the voice parts build a melismatic series of canonic entries from the bass up, the flute that surprises us by adding a crowning fifth voice should be an absolutely equal partner. I looked for more hushed and surprised singing leading to this moment of incarnational revelation: but perhaps I am over-persuaded that this mass was put together for a Christmas celebration! These are very small caveats in a distinguished performance, but it is invigorating that there are still things to be discovered about how to create the appropriate sound-worlds for music as rich as the Mass in A. These are wonderful and musical performances: hear them if you can.

David Stancliffe

Bach *Six Trio Sonatas* BWV525-530  
Tempesta di Mare 73' 03"  
Chandos Chaconne CHAN 0803

Bach's six Organ Sonatas, apparently written as a teaching aid for William Friedemann, have often been purloined by period instrument groups, but I have not heard one with as many textural amendments as on this recording. Several of the sonatas have been given additional musical lines (in support of the contention in the programme notes that many of them are closer to the concerto than the sonata form of the day) or have been otherwise moved away from their original trio texture. The most curious instrumentation is Sonata IV, here arranged for harpsichord and lute. So perhaps not a CD for purists – and organists saddled with perfect pitch may find the fact that all but one of the Sonatas are transposed disturbing. *Tempesta di Mare* is a period instrument baroque orchestra based in Philadelphia. Although their playing is stylish, their rhythms can occasionally sound a bit lumpy. I am not convinced this rearrangement of Bach works for me, so try before you buy. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

Bach *Sonates pour viole de gambe et clavecin obligé* Emmanuelle Guigues  
gamba, Bruno Procopio hpscd 60' 39"  
paraty 307.112

Sonatas in G, D & G minor (1027-29), Prelude from BWV1011, *Siciliana* from BWV103 + *Italian Concerto* BWV971

It's fantastic to hear the new generation of bass violists playing so brilliantly and with such technical and musical accuracy this familiar, not to say, well-worn repertoire.

She plays a fairly late model bass viol – late in terms of the repertoire that is, made in 1741 by Jean-Baptiste Salomon. Originally 6-string, a 7<sup>th</sup> has been added by Judith Kraft. The photograph shows it to have the profile of a cello, and indeed its sound is very rounded and "cellistic". As far as one can tell from a recording, it is a powerful, full sound, more than matching that of the Couchet-Blanchet-Taskin harpsichord which accompanies it. The performances are marvellous, impulsive and exciting. The fast movements are played very fast, but always controlled, with a spontaneity that sounds very much like a live performance. Indeed the programme resembles a concert programme. She opens with the D major sonata, and this is followed by the *Italian Concerto*, brilliantly played by her Brazilian accompanist. The sonata in G is followed by the prelude of the 5th suite for unaccompanied cello transposed up a tone to D minor. The G minor sonata ends the main programme, and a movement from one of the flute suites (the *Siciliana* from BWV1031) is played as an encore. It's well worth having, however many performances you already have, even including those by her teachers, Jordi Savall and Paolo Pandolfo.

Robert Oliver

Bach *Sonates et Solo pour la flûte traversière* François Lazarevitch, Les Musiciens de Saint-Julien 71' 56"  
Alpha 186  
BWV1113, 1030, 1032, 1034-35

"In the execution of his own pieces he generally took the time very brisk, but contrived, besides this briskness, to introduce so much variety in his performance that under his hand every piece was, as it were, like a discourse." Forkel's description of Bach's playing appears not just at the beginning of François Lazarevitch's notes but actually on the back cover of the CD. One should not, then, be surprised that the programme opens with a decidedly brisk performance of the *andante* from the B minor obbligato sonata, complete with rather snappy ornaments. The other influence on the players' stylistic decisions is that of Quantz, and particularly his *Solfeggi* which are found in a manuscript now in Copenhagen with the composer's own notes on style and technique, particularly with reference to articulation and *inégalité*. Few performers risk playing Bach with unequal note lengths and I am not convinced that the minor rhythmic alterations to the second movement of the first sonata are an improvement, but after that, the rest of the CD is a delight. Not everything is played unequally, but the style is particularly effective in some of the breathtaking fast movements. As well as two sonatas with obbligato harpsichord,

the programme also includes the unaccompanied partita in A minor and the E minor and E major sonatas with basso continuo. Lucile Boulanger's gamba enhances the bass line in both of these, and in the first one Thomas Dunford on archlute adds an extra dimension, particularly to the lovely *andante*. There is indeed great variety in these performances and the combination of apparently effortless fast movements and sensitively played slow movements makes this a CD to be recommended.

Victoria Helby

J. F. Fasch *Quartets and Concertos*  
Ensemble Marsyas, Peter Whelan bsn,  
Pamela Thorby rec 72'  
Linn CKD467  
FWV L:C2, F6, N:B1, B2, d2, F2, F4, g2

Editions and a lively essay by BC – it was immediately clear why this had been sent to someone else to review. As it is, I know one of these works really well as, given what we play, it has become our family signature tune (FWV N:B1). This is a splendid piece and all the other quartets offer the same mix of action-packed counterpoint and graceful melodies with the USP of some spectacular bassoon parts played almost implausibly well by Peter Whelan. His colleagues are no slouches either, which is just as well as their parts are not without their challenges. The only things that jarred in an overwhelmingly joyful listening experience were a few over-scored and over-active continuo moments. But this is a prize-winning ensemble and the release may well bring them yet more glories. The booklet is in English only. *David Hansell*

Handel and his English Contemporaries  
Robert Wooley (1766 Thomas Parker organ,  
St Mary and St Nicholas, Leather-head)  
Regent REGCD382

Boyce Voluntary in D Goodwin, S Voluntary  
VII in D Goodwin, W Voluntary VII in G  
Greene Voluntary VII in E flat, Voluntary in c  
Handel *Ottone* Overture, *Jesu meine Freude*  
HWV480, Air in B flat HWV469, Fugue in g  
HWV605, Fugue in B flat HWV607, [Verse] in F  
(Fitzwilliam, MS 260), Water Music Suite No. 1  
in F HWV348, Air, *Fantaisie* in C HWV490,  
Fugue in a HWV609, A Voluntary on a Flight of  
Angels, James, John Voluntary VI in e Nares  
Voluntary in a Roseingrave Voluntary in g,  
Voluntary in G Stanley A Voluntary for the  
Trumpet Stop Walond Voluntary X in a,  
Voluntary in G.

A fortunate outcome of a fire in Leatherhead Parish Church was that (as well as the destruction of the digital organ) the remains of an important 18th century were discovered within the remnants of the out-of-use Victorian organ housed in an 18th century case. That organ, by Thomas Parker, has now been reinstated, using the original pipework in

the old case, with Parker's large house organ now in Great Packington Church as an example for any missing ingredients. This is the first recording of the result. It clearly demonstrated the reputation of the English 18th-century organ as sounding "sweet", aided on this occasion by the temperament of the organ. The delicate tones suit the rather gentlemanly music of the period in a well-chosen programme. Robert Wooley's playing is methodical and precise and imposes little upon the written notes. He occasionally uses early, and lesser-known, versions of pieces. His choice of registrations follows well-established and appropriate 18th-century practice, as does his ornamentation. This is an ideal introduction to the fascinating world of 18th-century English organ music, and is highly recommended.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

**Hasse Bella, mi parto** Cantatas and Chamber Music Kai Wessel A, Musica Alta Ripa 70' 30" (© 2000)

MDG 309 0944-2

*Ah troppo è ver!, Bella mi parto a Dio, Se il cantor trace*, Sonata in G op. 3/4, Sonata for hpscd in C, mandolin concerto in G

Recorded as far back as 2000, this is presumably a reissue, though I have not previously encountered it. That is my loss, since, particularly for the chamber cantatas, it proves to be something of a treasure. Kai Wessel has long been one of the unsung heroes in the world of countertenors – I checked his website and was surprised to find his career already stretches back some 35 years – and his singing of the three graciously mellifluous chamber cantatas is informed throughout by musical intelligence and an easy, elegant poise that consistently falls gratefully on the ear. Two of the cantatas call for two violins and continuo, Hasse alternating recitative with two arias, the recitatives being unusual for this genre in being accompanied. However, the finest piece here is *Bella, mi parto*, a continuo cantata concerned with the pain of parting and featuring a wonderful C-minor opening aria of real depth and intensity splendidly projected by Wessel. The instrumental pieces (a sonata for 2 violins and continuo, a keyboard sonata and a mandolin chamber concerto) are less impressive, owing to a Rococo character that seeks to fall on the ear like the pleasantries of the chatter of an amiable friend. Nonetheless, they are exceptionally well played by Musica Alta Ripa, which like Wessel has for long been one of the ornaments of the German Baroque scene. The texts of the cantatas are translated only into German, but nevertheless the CD should be snapped up without delay by anyone who missed out on its original issue.

Brian Robins

**Leclair Six sonates en trio, op. IV**  
Ensemble Rosasolis 71' 32"  
Musica Ficta MF8018

I continue to hope that a brave pair of violinists will offer a CD or recital of Leclair's duos to mark his anniversary. In the meantime this recording of the Op. 4 trio sonatas is a most acceptable substitute. Writers have referred to Leclair as 'the French Bach' and 'the French Corelli' and here both camps will find evidence to support their stances. The contrapuntal allegros can be every bit as rigorous as those of JSB (the organ trios came to mind) and the interweaving lines of the slow movements have a clear Italian lineage. But in the end Leclair is himself – an inventive craftsman willing to challenge structural, textural and harmonic conventions – save that in these trios there is little of the virtuosity so assiduously pursued in the solo repertoire. Ensemble RosaSolis commit themselves whole-heartedly to the music, playing with great finesse, especially in the easy gracefulness of their phrasing. The booklet is everything that it should be, the essay being spiced with some colourful and interesting quotations.

David Hansell

**Locatelli 24 Caprices** Gabriel Tchalik, vln  
Evidence EVCD002 (76' 20")

These pieces (lasting between 2' 08" and 4' 13" in these performances) were printed in the composer's Op. 3 set of concertos, to be played *ad libitum* (along with optional cadenzas, which here are the performer's own) before the final ritornelli of the outer movements. Thus the CD consists of a sequence of pairs of virtuosic displays in the same key and very impressive it is, too. Tchalik (who is of French-Russian origin and, as I discovered on his website, part of an amazingly musical family) says that he chose to record these on a modern instrument (almost as if he had considered a period version) because Locatelli pushed his instrument to its limits; to me, though, the virtuosity here lies as much in the bowing arm as in digital dexterity, and I think his already distinguished versions would have gained even more kudos had he opted for a period bow.

BC

**Rameau Pièces de Clavecin en Concerts**  
Les Timbres (Yoko Kawakubo vln, Myriam Rignol vdg, Julien Wolfs hpscd) <TT>  
Flora FLO3113

If I say that these are 'thoroughly sensible' performances that hints at damning with faint praise, it's really an expression of personal relief after hearing a number of performances in this Rameau year that have tried too hard to explore the various performance options (including some that were

not suggested by the composer) or looked for something ever more extreme to do with the Tambourins in the third concert. This trio simply sit down with their instruments and play what's on the page with a strong sense of style and excellent taste. The recording supports them by delivering a natural sound and balance in which all the important detail can be heard, whoever is playing it and in whatever register. It is a shame that the booklet does not offer the same quality. There are a few lumpy translations and the main essay is very basic (no hint of the meaning of Rameau's titles, for instance).

David Hansell

**Rameau Die goldene Gambe** Ensemble Fleury (Karl Kaiser fl, Ulla Bundies vln, Heidi Gröger gamba, Wiebke Weidanz hpscd) 62' 09"

deutsche harmonia mundi 88883702572

Pièces de clavecin en concerts 1-5

The initial point of interest in this recording is the bass viol. It's an 8-string, with a top g' string, and is based on a unique original, built as an 8-string by Benoist Fleury in either 1759 or 1769, now in the Musée de la Musique, Paris. As all bass viol players know, the Rameau *Pièces de clavecin en concerts* pose special challenges, particularly in the second pièce, where the player has to ascend in thirds to an open octave which can only be played if one plays the top d" on the a' string in unison with the open d' string. One likes advance notice if one is to play this piece, and this particular challenge is certainly more easily met with a top g' string: I tried it on a tenor viol.

The booklet notes argue that, since very few players at the time could manage it, Fleury could well have made the instrument especially for this propose. It assembles some circumstantial evidence to show that he knew Rameau well enough to have discussed this possibility. They deduce that the eighth string must have been a g' rather than a low EEE, because the string length on the instrument isn't particularly long, possibly from 67–69cm.

For modern listeners, however, most of whom don't play the bass viol, the point of getting this particular recording depends entirely on the quality of the music making. There is no complaint about this. The ensemble consists of violin, flute, bass viol and harpsichord; the names are all unfamiliar to me, but play beautifully. The flute plays some movements, the violin others, stylishly and with marvellous ensemble. The music, continuously beautiful and beguiling, is, as its title implies and as Rameau specifies in his preface, written for harpsichord to be accompanied by instruments. In fact, Rameau states that all players must play from the score so that they know when they are accompanying,

and when they should predominate.

The viol itself does indeed make a beautiful sound in all registers, nicely matching the violin in tone. Even with a top g' string, you still need to be a good player to manage this part, and Heidi Gröger has all the deftness and agility that's needed. Very much a recording to enjoy, worth having for the sake of the playing and the music. *Robert Oliver*

**A. Scarlatti** *Rosinda ed Emireno: Arias & Duets from the opera "L'Emireno"* (Naples, 1697) Alice Barciani S, Alex Potter cT, Musica Fiorita, Daniela Dolci 60' 44" Pan Classics PC 10303

Buried beneath odd musicology, dubious performance practice and generally muddled presentation, there is an interesting project trying to emerge here. The conductor makes much of her discovery in Vienna of *Rosinda ed Emireno*, an opera purportedly by the Bolognese composer Giacomo Perti. Following much diligent detective work ("an almost criminological puzzle"), the opera was discovered to be the same work as Alessandro Scarlatti's *L'Emireno*, first performed in Naples in 1697. All very exciting, but for the fact that the opera has been correctly listed under Scarlatti in Grove Opera since 1992. Dolci is also excited and puzzled by the presence of several arias with a cornett obbligato part, something of an anachronism by 1697. But had she looked further, Dolci would have discovered that the composer's *Comodo Antonino*, given just ten weeks earlier during the same Carnival season, also includes three arias with cornett obbligato, allowing conjecture that there was a visiting cornett virtuoso in Naples during the winter of 1796-7.

The muddle continues. Dolci's contention that the orchestra of San Bartolomeo, Naples' leading theatre at the time would have fielded only her four strings is dubious, as is the over-active role given to lirone and theorbo. Still more questionable is the allotment of the roles of hero and heroine, which takes gender bending an inexplicable and pointless step too far, undertaken on the spurious pretext that male singers frequently played comic old women in 17th-century opera. So the heroine Rosinda is sung by countertenor Alex Potter and the hero Emireno by Alice Borciani, whose youthful, soubrettish voice sounds totally unsuitable. Both sing Scarlatti's relatively undemanding music well enough, if far from memorably, neither attempting much in the way of vocal or verbal expressiveness. The instrumental playing is fine. There is no English translation of the text and if you can follow the plot synopsis in the garbled booklet give yourself a pat on the back. Scarlatti's music, new to CD, is by turn

sentimental and charming, though near-consistently belying the notes' constant references to the pains of love. The disc is arguably worthy of investigation by specialists. *Brian Robins*

**G. B. Somis** *Violin Sonatas — Op. 1* Kreetz-Maria Kentala vln, Lauri Putakka vlc, Mitzi Meyerson hpscd 73' 46" Glossa GCD 921807

I'm rather surprised that Somis (1686-1763) doesn't appear on our collective radar more often as he is a kind of 'missing link' between the French and Italian violin schools. He was at various times a fellow student of Vivaldi, a pupil of Corelli and the teacher of, among many notable others, Leclair and this is claimed as a world première recording of his first published collection. (Much of the music he is believed to have composed, including 152 violin concertos, is now lost.) The sonatas follow a standard movement pattern of adagio-allegro-allegro, the last movement being a dance, even if not so designated. Actually, the musical variety within this conformity is such that I don't think that the ensemble needed to try as hard as they do to beguile us further. I found their imposed pizzicato passages, for example, rather intrusive and the final track just plain silly — but the disc still rates a 'strongly recommended' because of the repertoire. The violinist plays cleanly with a strong sound (one or two note ends are rather 'modern' in character) and his ornamentation is plentiful but tasteful. The recorded balance between the instruments is good and tempos well chosen. As I said, strongly recommended, but you might be irritated from time to time. *David Hansell*

**Telemann** *Quatuors Parisiens* Les Ombres, dir. Margaux Blanchard, Sylvain Sartre 56' Mirare MIR259 1738/6, 1740/Sonatas 1 & 2, Concerto 1

This is an excellent recording. Telemann's trip to Paris in 1737-38 could hardly have been at a more exciting time — Rameau's *Castor & Pollux* had just been premiered and, as among other musical attractions, Lully's *Atys* was also being revived. That there is much particularly French about the 1740 set of quartets is arguable (the movement titles are in Italian for starters), but there is no denying the Gallic flavour of the 1738 set. Telemann, of course, was a musical chameleon, and could turn his hand to any style with élan. So it is interesting to hear the music played by wonderful French musicians, utterly steeped in the subtleties of their national musical style — in the same way that I loved hearing Bach and Fasch played for

the first time by Italians. That said, I doubt a casual listener would discern anything particular — it is more than likely that the beauty of the sound and the remarkable balance between the voices will overwhelm them. I shall return to this disc again and again for the sheer pleasure of the experience. Listen out for the surprise, though! *BC*

**Vivaldi** *The Four Seasons* Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Kati Debretzeni Signum Records SIGCD377 (41' 22")

So many recordings of 'The Four Seasons' tend to play the notes, often with little regard to the descriptive painting of the text in the music. In this excellent recording not only is the music so vividly portrayed by the players (soloist and OAE alike) that the text is almost implied, but the booklet supplements this by providing the sonnets (in both Italian and English translation). It also gives the timings in the recording of the letters that the composer gives in the score, enabling the listener to follow precisely every line of the poems represented in the music. Kati Debretzeni's playing is both technically impressive and imaginative. I enjoyed her subtly ornamented lines and the tasteful rubato, which always added a subtle point of repose in the music. This is probably one of the noteworthy period-instrument 'Seasons' recordings. *Ian Graham-Jones*

**Baroque Music** The Moscow Chamber Orchestra, dir. Rudolf Barshai 68' 12" Melodiya MEL CD 10 02 191 **Albinoni** Opp. 5/3, 7/3 **Handel** Op. 6/12 **Telemann** Wassermusik **Vivaldi** RV103

These recordings date from the late 50s to the beginning of the 70s and, to be honest, feature some unexpected works — the Vivaldi for flute, oboe, bassoon and continuo, for example. The downsides are the jingly harpsichord, machine-gun trills starting on the note and something of a regimented tone across the string section but there is genuine excitement in some of the movements of the Telemann, and the soloist in the Albinoni concerto at least had an idea of how to shape melodic lines without recourse to the default Romantic style. I don't think most of our readers will buy this unless they are interested in the history of the re-discovery of baroque music by such pioneering groups. *BC*

**Characters** Karlsson Barock 70' 43" Footprint Records FRCD 076 **Avison** Concerto 5 Corelli op. 6/8, 10 Rébel *Les caractères de la danse* Telemann Sinfonia spirituosa Vivaldi RV230, 565

Those wishing for a "normal" period-instrument interpretation of these works —

if there is such a thing – had better look elsewhere. For Karlsson Baroque set out to shock, with their extreme dynamic and tempi changes. As the booklet says, they aim to offer "playful and inspirational interpretations of famous and lesser-known works". The reader can judge from my opening remarks that this disc more than fulfils their own description. I made the mistake of setting the volume up too loud for the opening 'Christmas' concerto, almost resulting in a heart attack. Although dynamics seemed a little extreme in the two Corellis, more acceptable tempi were used in the lesser-known works. It was difficult to follow the different dance sections of the Rebel, where the dances ran into one another without any sense of repose. It would also have been useful to know from which of the nine sets of concerti (if the D. Scarlatti arrangements are counted) the Avison belonged. (The two Vivaldi concertos, by the way, are nos. 9 and 11 of the *L'Estro Armonico* set, op. 3). Some may like the interpretations; if so, one cannot fault the technical skill of these players.

Ian Graham-Jones

**Évora: Portuguese Baroque Villancicos** A Corte Musical, Rogério Gonçalves 57' 34"

Pan Classics PC 10304

Music by Botelho de Oliveira, Marques Lésbio, de Natividade, dos Santos, Vaz Rego, anon and Rogério Gonçalves

A thoroughly enjoyable exploration of some ravishing and little-known repertoire from the rich collections of the equally-ravishing City of Evora. A Corte Musical, under the direction of Rogério Gonçalves, give many of these pieces an almost Latin-American flavour, adding percussion and virtuoso improvised instrumental ritornelli to electrifying effect; try the opening of track 2, *Amante Deus*, and defy your feet not to tap! (The throwaway "espiro" at the end of each *estrebilho* of the same piece is particularly well done.) Other especial pleasures include the moving ground-bass lament *Ameacas o morrer* (track 4) with more than a hint of the Monteverdi's *Lamento della Ninfa*, the lovely *A la villa voy* (track 3) with its bewitching and rhythmically complex refrain, the plangent imitative *Ya las sombras de la noche* (track 8) and the wonderful extended *Suspenda toda a armonia* which brings the disc to an exhilarating contrapuntal close. Performances are exemplary – as a group, the singers blend perfectly, but have suitable character for solo coplas. The players improvise like angels, with the continuo providing dazzling rhythmic drive. Definitely a must for any collection – one hopes that more of this wonderful music will be recorded soon!

Alastair Harper

**A French Baroque Diva: Arias for Marie Fel** Carolyn Sampson, Ex Cathedra, Jeffrey

Skidmore 72' 56"

Hyperion CDA68035

Music by Fiocco, Lacoste, Lalande, Mondonville, Rameau & Rousseau

I have received this for review both as a CD and a download. Hyperion has always set itself high standards and their download procedures maintain these. There is the usual username/password procedure to set up that even a relative Luddite such as me found the whole thing plain sailing. The download itself took about three minutes and includes a PDF of the booklet. This is also of high quality and interest, with a main essay by Graham Sadler and a less formal note by Jeffrey Skidmore. As something of a French Baroque Diva herself (and one time student member of this choir), Carolyn Sampson is the perfect substitute for Marie Fel, a darling of both the Opéra and the Concerts Spirituels. Yes, there were times (especially long notes in slow music) when I felt that her vibrato did not belong with the 'straight' instrumental sounds, but for the most part it is the clarion core of her timbre that dominates. The repertoire of which these performers have always been persuasive advocates is of outstanding interest and both sacred and secular items (nice to have the mix) receive strong and stylish performances. Some may feel that the chorus is a little large and the recorded sound on the 'lush' side, but in the general scheme of things these are side issues. It is inevitable that reviews of this disc will focus on the soloist, so I'd like to end by drawing attention to the brilliant playing of the often colourful orchestral parts.

David Hansell

**Les Grands Eaux Musicales de Versailles** Le Poème Harmonique, Pygmalion, Café Zimmermann, Les Musiciens de Saint-Julien, Capriccio Stravagante Orchestra, Ausonia 75' 42"

Alpha 956

Music by Corrette, Lully, Moulinié & Rameau

This is the soundtrack to the 2014 water displays at Versailles, drawn from the recordings of several ensembles. As such it is a mixed anthology in every sense and less useful as an introduction to the French Baroque than its predecessors. The minimal packaging gives no information about either artists or music.

David Hansell

**Per Monsieur Pisendel 2 La Serenissima**, Adrian Chandler vln, Gareth Deats vlc, Thomas Dunford theorbo, Robert Howarth kbd 68' 43"

Avie AV2308

**Albinoni Sonata in B flat** Montanari Sonata in d Pisendel Solo sonata in a, Sonata in c Vivaldi Sonata in A RV29

This is a stunning collection of sonatas, imaginatively and sensitively played by

Adrian Chandler and excitingly yet equally sensitively accompanied by cello with harpsichord and theorbo. Two Vivaldi sonatas "facto per Monsieur Pisendel" RV 19 and 29 (Pisendel was Vivaldi's pupil for a while) frame this collection. The first of two Pisendel works, a sonata in C Minor, is a fine piece; the second is for unaccompanied violin, with some free improvisatory writing in the opening Grave. The Gigue with variations is a *tour de force*, one variation taking the violin to unusual heights. A *sonata da camera* by Albinoni is an interesting find, as is a sonata by Pisendel's teacher Antonio Montanari with a final movement strangely *senza basso*. This latter is a real find, well worthy of resurrecting. It is pity that so little of Montanari's music exists today; it is a pity, too, that Pisendel's output does not rival that of some of his Dresden contemporaries, as we could do with hearing more of his music.

Ian Graham-Jones

**Venice: The Golden Age** Xenia Löffler oboe, Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin 68' 42" harmonia mundi HMC902185

**A. Marcello ob conc in d** Porta Sinfonia in D Tessarini Overture in D Vivaldi RV134, 364, 450, 576 + Rom (b. 1969) Concerto in C

This disc pretty much recommends itself; Xenia Löffler is "obrist of the minute" and it seems everything she touches turns to gold, the three solo concertos on this recording being no exception, and there's also a very fine duet concerto with violin. I dare listeners to play the CD to their friends and see if any of them does not believe the opening tracks are not kosher – as imitators of Vivaldi go, Uri Rom is in a class of his own. Throughout the string playing is crisp and the solo/tutti and treble/bass balances perfectly managed. As for the star of the show, well it has to be Löffler – I especially love the ways she finds to shape the longer notes in slow movements.

BC

## CLASSICAL

**C. P. E. Bach Sonatas for harpsichord and violin** Roberto Loreggian hpscd, Federico Guglielmo vln 74' 30"

Brilliant Classics 94902

Wq 71-74, 76 (H502-504, 507, 512) + H542.5

And so the C. P. E. Bach celebrations go on apace, here in the more than capable hands of two masters in the shape of Messrs. Loreggian and Guglielmo. The latter's brief booklet note skirts briefly over the composer's life and then goes into slightly deeper discussion, reflecting the opinions of the editor of the music they used for the recordings, of the origins and different styles of the "four phases" which the composer's works for keyboard and violin went through, distinguishing those

that first saw the light of day as trios with flute from those where both instruments are treated as equally. No mention is made of the final work on the recording, which was formerly known as BWV1020. In all six pieces, Guglielmo and Loreggian are perfectly balanced, even if the treble of the Ruckers copy is occasionally a little thin sounding. I hope they might now team up with a flautist (or even another violinist?) for some "proper" trios. BC

C. P. E. Bach *6 organ sonatas* Ton Koopman (Amalia organ, Berlin) 77' 34" Challenge Classics CC72260

The organ was built in 1755 for Princess Amalia (youngest sister of Frederick the Great) in the Berlin Stadtschloss, and CPE Bach wrote four of these sonatas for her and the organ the same year. After a complex history (including an inappropriate rebuilding in 1960), the organ has now been restored. It retains 90% of its original pipework and the original wind-chests and keyboards. The builders were pupils of Joachim Wagner who was, in turn, a pupil of Gottfried Silbermann, and the organ retains characteristics of the organs of JS Bach's homeland in Thuringia and Saxony. Amelia clearly took her music seriously – her extensive library, a major source for JS Bach studies, is now part of the Berlin State Library. It would be fascinating to know how she played these pieces on this organ, but I think I can safely say that she did not play them like this. Ton Koopman is not a great respecter of composer's notes or musical intentions. He brings his own quirky interpretations to all he plays, with notoriously heavy touch, a habit of snatching at notes and mannered articulation being just some of the more irritating aspects. Most organ performance before the mid-19th century were improvised rather than played from a score, so disrespect for the notes is perhaps not an unreasonable approach. But these interpretations are far from what the composer intended. Those who prefer Koopman to CPE Bach will love this – but, generally speaking, I think that composers wrote their notes for a reason, so I prefer the notes and performing indications made by the composer. Andrew Benson-Wilson

Michael Haydn *Divertimenti* Piccolo Concerto Wien 70' 11" Accent ACC 24292 Divertimenti in C (P. 98, 110 & 115) and E flat (P. deest)

If I had spotted this CD in a shop (such things do still exist, right?), I would have thought it was an orchestral set. The younger Haydn had other ideas, clearly – for him, diversion was a chamber activity; essentially what we have here are three trios (one for "principal oboe", viola &

violone MH179, one of "concerted violin, concerted violoncello" & violone MH367, and the third for viola, cello and violone MH unknown?) and a quartet for the unlikely line-up of violin, cor anglais, violoncello piccolo and double bass MH600. As well as giving the now standard catalogue numbers (as opposed to those in the 1907 Perger list used in the booklet notes) I've spelled out the scorings deliberately, as they are so peculiar – what on earth is a "principal oboe"? Why, if the only known source for the recently discovered E flat trio is for the standard string trio, would you transpose it down, taking it in the growly depths? While I generally enjoy Michael Haydn, and the playing is of the highest quality, I just could not get into this recording; perhaps it is music better played? Or heard live, perhaps? BC

**Mozart Piano Concertos Nos. 18 & 22**  
Ronald Brautigam fp, Die Kölner Akademie, Michael Alexander Willens  
BIS BIS-2044 SACD 60' 02"

Mozart's 18th piano Concerto was written for the blind pianist and composer Maria Theresa von Paradis (a patient of Dr Mesmer just before his expulsion from the Vienna University medical facility). Mozart's scoring of the solo part says something of her ability and technique, the central movement's variations being a case in point. Die Kölner Akademie play with modern and period instruments, and it is clear from the woodwind colour that the latter are in use here. In Concerto 22, it is that use of colour that predominates, notably in the final movement with the piano frequently taking the role of an accompanying rather than a solo instrument. Brautigam's cadenzas briefly flirt with rather thicker textures that had hitherto been evident, but otherwise they are period appropriate and a sensible length. The fortepiano is a 1992 Paul McNulty after Anton Walter cr795.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

**Mozart The last three symphonies live from Rotterdam, 2010** Orchestra of the Eighteenth Century, Frans Brüggen  
Glossa GCD 921119 92' 02" (2 CDs)

Although it is not immediately obvious, this is a live recording made in 2010 in Rotterdam's De Doelen, a warm acoustic that sets this recording apart from the less resonant earlier studio recordings from the 1980/90s. Brüggen, and the Orchestra are revisiting these recordings, with a Beethoven series already released. Brüggen sets the tone straight away, enhancing the air of foreboding in the slow introduction to the *Prague* symphony with its irregular heartbeat underlay giving an early introduction to the sound

of the timps, very often an aural clue as to the period authenticity of a performance. In Brüggen's reading, the mood is not immediately dispelled by the start of the *Allegro*, but only slowly lightens. This emotional restraint continues into the *Andante*, but it is in the final bar of the *Finale* that Brüggen really makes his mark with a delightful little fade away. This attention to detail and exploration of the emotional depth of Mozart's music continues in the other two symphonies (notably in the *Andante cantabile* of *Symphony 41*), making these discs worth having, however many you might already own.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

**Mozart's Maestri** Luca Guglielmi, Concerto Madrigalesco 65' 04"  
Accent ACC 24256  
**Mozart Concertos after J. C. Bach** K. 107/1-3  
Rutini Sonatas op 5/5, op 6/2, 5, 6

Mozart's arrangements of J. C. Bach's three keyboard sonatas op. 5 as concertos are simply accompanied on two solo violins with a cello and violone on the bass line. I found the addition of a 16' at times a little too heavy for my taste in view of the softness of the early keyboard copies used. Giovanni Marco Rutini wrote some 60 sonatas for keyboard, all in two or three movements. Guglielmi's selections on this recording show the composer, who was, it is reported, one of the few admired by Mozart who is able to write imaginatively in his use of varied textures and occasional unusual modulations. These works are performed on a copy of a 1749 Silbermann fortepiano and three different harpsichord copies dating from the earlier part of the 18th century, which makes an interesting comparison for harpsichord aficionados.

Ian Graham-Jones

**Richter Genesis 1757: Seven string quartets op. 5** casalQuartett  
SoloMusica SM184

These two discs have been in my player more often than any others since they arrived just too late to be reviewed in the April issue. Not only do I love the music, but the performances are among the best chamber music playing I have ever heard. Some of that may be due to the fact that all four members of the quartet play on instruments by the same maker (they are all Jacobus Stainer originals), but the homogeneity surely has more to do with the wonderful balance of Richter's music and the finely nuanced playing. Subtitled "birth of the string quartet", they make a convincing case for Richter's restoration to the mainstream; six of the seven are in three movements only, so would be ideal to open a programme. As for me, I shall continue to enjoy these for months and months to come. Bravo!

BC

**Vanhal Complete Works for Clarinet and Piano** Ensemble DeNote (Jane Booth cl, John Irving fp) **sfzmusic SFZM0413**  
Three sonatas + Six English Dances & Sonatina in E flat for piano

Johann Baptist Vanhal's three sonatas, all written in the first decade of the 19th century are, as in the 18th-century tradition, all titled as sonatas for *Il Clavicembalo o Piano Forte con Clarinetto o Violino*. They nevertheless give equal weighting to the two instruments with some idiomatic writing for the clarinet. Although charming works with melodic appeal, they do not stretch the listener's imagination with any dramatic modulations or harmonic moves outside the expected, as one might have perhaps hoped for the period in which they were composed. Sonata No. 2 in C is rightly played on a C clarinet with its brighter tonal quality. Both performers play on appropriate copies of period instruments, Jane Booth on 5-keyed clarinets and John Irving on a copy of a 1795 Viennese Walter. The fillers are some English Dances for keyboard, all in simple ternary structure with a minore 'B' section. Some excellent booklet notes by the performers accompany this disc. *Ian Graham-Jones*

**Treasures of the Empfindsamkeit** Carole Cerasi, clavichord 71' 20"  
Metronome MET CD 1091  
C. P. E. Bach Fantasy in f#, Sonata in e, *La Stahl, L'Aly Rupalich* Haydn Sonata in c (XVI/20)  
Mozart Adagio in b (KV540) Müthel Arioso II

This is the first recording of the 1784 clavichord by the Saxon Christian Gottlieb Hoffmann in the Cobbe Collection at Hatchlands Park. It opens with C. P. E. Bach's extraordinary 12 minute multi-section Fantasia in F sharp minor, giving an immediate indication of the musical sensitivity of Carole Cerasi's playing, not least in her subtle inflection in rhythmic pulse and metre. The following Sonata in E minor features extremes of volume (excellently controlled by Cerasi), with a contrastingly eloquent central Adagio, entitled *L'Einschritt*, with its interlinked phrases. After two character pieces, we pass from C. P. E. to his friend Johann Gottfried Müthel (possibly J. S. Bach's last pupil) and the second of his two 1756 Arioso. Although the texture is generally simple two-part, his deconstruction of the theme through the 12 variations is masterly – the last is almost a fantasia of its own. More familiar territory (albeit usually heard on the piano) comes with Mozart's Adagio in B minor (written a year after Bach's F sharp minor Fantasia) and Haydn's 1771 C minor Sonata written, as Tim Roberts' programme note mentions, before Esterházy had a fortepiano.

*EMR* readers probably don't need reminding of the importance of setting the volume correctly for clavichord recordings – my own trick is to first play part of a harpsichord CD and set the volume accordingly, and then swap to the clavichord CD without changing the volume. It always sounds quieter than you think it will, as it did with this CD. But as well as allowing your ears to adjust, if the volume is too high you also hear too much extraneous noise, not least of the player's finger hitting the key-bed. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

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

**Mendelssohn in London: Organ works (original and transcription)** Leo van Doeselaar (Thomas Hill organ, St. Pieterskerk, Leiden) 75' 30"  
**MDG 906 1853-6**

MWV A14, N15, U156, W18, 19, 24–26, 31–33, 47

Mendelssohn's frequent visits to London became part of the foundation of a radical re-think on English organ design, not least with the introduction of pedals and German-influenced choruses. Thomas Hill came from a family of organ builders, his grandfather being one of many English organ builders influenced by Mendelssohn's playing and the style of the German organ that he enthused about. Thomas Hill is best known for his enormous 1890 instrument in Sydney Town Hall – the largest in the world at the time. This 1883 organ was built for St John, Brownswood Park, London but was moved to Leiden when the church was demolished in 1989 – a wonderful contrast to the 1643 Van Hagerbeer organ for which the Leiden church was justly famed. After unfortunate damage to the organ during the restoration of St Pieterskerk, it has recently been fully restored. Although somewhat later in style than the organ the Mendelssohn would have known in England, it works extremely well on this recording. The programme is equally fascinating, with lesser known examples of Mendelssohn's organ works (including early versions of some of his Sonata movements), orchestral transcriptions that became so popular during the 19th century, and a rarity – an arrangement for organ of the piano *Variations sérieuses*. The playing is stylish and musical and the Pieterskerk organist, Leo van Doeselaar clearly has developed an empathy with this very English organ. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

**Onslow Sonates pour violoncelle et piano Opus 16** Emmanuel Jacques vlc, Maude Gratton Broadwood piano (1822) 63'  
Mirare MIR190

The parting shot of the readable and most interesting, though overly brief, booklet note raises the possibility that Onslow's

nickname "the French Beethoven" has prevented his music from being explored on its own terms. His is, of course, a name most readers of *EMR* will know, but I was surprised to learn that this is not even the first recording of these pieces on period instruments, albeit the previous release was of a version for violin (the composer having apparently also released a viola part when the works were first published – by German publishers!) The three works are quite individual and yet share certain characteristics; Onslow's melodies rise and fall in huge spans, often driven from below by subtle shifts of harmony, with short motifs passed from one instrument to the other, and finely nuanced dynamics only adding to the already emotionally charged atmosphere. Having listened to the disc several times, I agree with the opening theory – forget comparisons! This voice is worth hearing in his own right. *BC*

#### VARIOUS

**A Solo** Paolo Pandolfo 77' 13"  
Glossa GCD P30403

Music by Abel, J. S. Bach, Corkine, De Machy, Hume, Marais, Ortiz, St. Colombe, Sumarte & Pandolfo

This is a reissue of a disc originally recorded in 1997. He plays three viols: an early Italian six-string, an early 18th-century tenor (for some of the lyra tunings), and an early 18th-century seven-string attributed to Bertrand. It opens with his own divisions to that achingly beautiful 16th-century tune known variously as *Aria della Monicha*, the song *Ma belle si ton ame* or in England as *The Queen's Almaine*, which sets the tone for the whole disc – brilliant playing, musically compelling. As can be seen from the list of composers, his programme includes English lyra pieces, French and German music all for solo viol, encompassing the history of the instrument. The cover picture shows a bow grip that only he could manage and still play so wonderfully. He is a consummate artist, and his playing illuminates everything he plays, on its own terms, but with such virtuosity and freedom that emphasises the music rather than himself. An essential part of every collection – if you missed it last time get it this time. *Robert Oliver*

**Donaubarock II Claviermusik** Markus Eberhardt, Consortium musicum Passau **Cornetto COR10042**  
Pieces by Ammon, Buchner, Froberger, Hofhaimer, Hugl, Kinigl, Luython Georg & Gottlieb Muffat, Paix, Rheinsperger, Techelmann

A CD exploring the musical heritage of the river Danube is going to cover a very wide range of composers and musical

style and, on this occasion, a similarly wide range of instruments. Some may find the rapid switches twixt organ (a modern Italian-style instrument in a side chapel of the Passauer Dom), two harpsichords, spinet, clavichord and regal a bit of a jolt, but at least all are at the same pitch, even if temperament varies. In fact, it was the rather stark key-changes between pieces that disturbed me more. But despite these qualms, this is a fascinating collection of pieces ranging from Hofhaimer around 1500 to the mid-18th century. The Muffat *Kyrie* (from the *Missa in F*) has interpolated sung chant verses, sung from some distance from the organ.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

**Full Well She Sang: Women's Music from the Middle Ages & Renaissance** The Toronto Consort 72' 45"

Music by Francesca Caccini, Casulana, van Eyck, Robert Johnson, Marenzio, Sermisy, Barbara Strozzi & anon

This is a good quality CD with a nicely printed sleeve insert and booklet with full texts and translations.

The CD is divided into four sections: *The Middle Ages: In Cloister & At court* *The Renaissance: Courtly and Popular tradition & Italian Virtuosity* Each section has a description of the music's context – why it is included in this collection with the link to the CD's title of 'Womens Music' and a little about the composers. The concept is rather good – going on a musical journey through time. I do have several recordings of middle-ages music and attended concerts of this stuff and have to admit that after 40 minutes I find these modes wearing on the brain. But with this there is a variety imposed if the pieces are played in order – which it would be logical to do. It does concentrate on the secular so it isn't entirely representative of the glories of renaissance church music.

Sometimes with a CD I feel I am passing by an open window and hearing a private performance. But this felt well projected with crisp words and the sung line rose in an uninhibited manner as if wanting to communicate, which helped me believe they had the audience in mind while recording at Humbercrest United Church, Toronto. *A Chanter* by Contessa de Dia – one of the courtly songs – is particularly well sung – there are many words addressing an ex lover and the soprano Meredith Hall colours the text beautifully.

Moving on to the Renaissance, *And I were a maiden* woke me up with a multi-part song of some complexity – but is a charming addition to this CD. *St Thomas Wake'* is a set of variations, adapted delightfully for viol and lute. Also of note is the haunting recorder variations *Doen Daphne d'over schoone maeght* (not originally Dutch)

by Jacob van Eyck. Alison Melville's recorder playing is really beautiful with the lightest touch of *inégalité*.

In the Italian Virtuosity section, three polyphonic songs were included by a composer I hadn't come across called Madalena Casulana, who was the first lady to publish madrigals between 1566-86. I really liked *Io d'odorate fronde*.

This CD has plenty for beginners to these musical periods with some representative styles in this selection of pieces and cognoscenti will be pleasantly surprised to discover new pieces of music well-performed. Alexandra Stacey

**Lauda puer Dominum** David Cizner boy treble + SATTB soli & insts.

Arta F10209

Bach, Buxtehude, Dvořák, Handel, Mayr, Merula, Monteverdi, Mozart, Pergolesi, Ryba, anon

Bohemian boy trebles and male altos have only begun to appear in Bohemia after the German then Russian control. David Cizner had the advantage of a mother who was an early-music singer, and from her he gained a technical ability to master the complicated early baroque embellishments in, for instance, Monteverdi's *Laudate Dominum* – though I wouldn't have made so much of playing the organ except when the voice was silent – it's a piece I have often played. Where does the repeat come from? There's no hint of one in *Selva morale*: if I had an address I'd send a copy of my edition. The other outstanding solo is Merula's *Hor ch'e tempo di dormire*, Mary singing an extensive lullaby on two chords (tonic and first inversion of the dominant) that amazed me when I first heard it from a Japanese pair (voice and lute), mostly quiet but intensely expressive. Cizner can't quite make that – it really does need a female voice. The organ is too heavy, in fact superfluous – the theorbo would have been enough. The anon *Ciaccona del Paradiso e dell' Inferno* is based on an energetic ground, with verses alternating between the blessed and the damned. The repertoire continues to Dvořák. The opening tenor solos from *Messiah* were a mistake: I don't think I've ever heard "Comfort ye" sung by a treble (though it may be sung thus in prep schools!) and, for a good opening impression, a Latin piece would have been more convincing. The booklet is useful, split into two halves, each with two introductory pages then brief notes and texts, the first half in Czech, the second in English, each with the original text opposite. David is a good all-round performer, and whatever voice he finishes up with, he will surely make a fine singer. I suspect matters like tempo come from the accompaniments, with a tendency to be slightly too quick, but this is definitely worth hearing.

CB

**Liza Ferschtman** violin 77' 38"

Challenge Classics CC72635

Bach Partita no. 2 in d Bartók Sonata Sz. 117 Berio Sequenza VIII Biber Passacaglia

This recital disc (here used in the literal sense, since this is a programme that the artiste regularly performs) opens and closes with two of the biggest of all solo violin pieces, namely Biber's *Guardian Angel* passacaglia and Bach's D minor sonata with its almighty chaconne close. Ferschtman is a formidable violinist and, by embracing aspects of period style such as refusing to shy away from using open strings and using her bow more than her left hand to articulate melodies, confirms that the music is her focus, not her interpretation of it. There are things modern violinists still do (like turning spread chords into ultralight arpeggios) that rule out an unqualified recommendation of the baroque music. As for Bartók and Berio, I have no hesitation – the former is absolutely amazing fiddling!

BC

**Semiramide** La Signora Regale (mostly world premiere recordings of music for the legendary queen) Anna Bonitatibus mS, Accademia degli Astrusi, La Stagione Armonica, Federico Ferri 91' 12" (2 CDs) deutsche harmonia mundi 88725479862 Music by Bernasconi, Bianchi, Borghi, Caldara, Catel, García, Handel/Vinci, Jommelli, Meyerbeer, Nasolini, Paisiello, Porpora, Rossini & Traetta

Part shadowy reality, part legend, part myth, the Assyrian warrior queen Semiramide has intrigued dramatists and artists throughout history. Metastasio's libretto *Semiramide riconosciuta* alone was set by no fewer than 30 composers, among them Jommelli (four times!), Bernasconi, Traetta and Meyerbeer, excerpts from whose operas are included on this imaginatively conceived set devoted to the queen. The excerpts are presented in chronological order, starting with Caldara's *Semiramide in Ascalona* of 1725 and concluding with Manuel García's *Semiramis*, first staged in Mexico City in 1828. In mischievous mood, one might in fact cite the set as an illustration of the decline of Italian opera after the end of the 18th century. Certainly there is nothing else here to match the dramatic impact of the magnificent accompanied recitative and aria "Barbaro... Tradita, sprezzata" from Jommelli's 1742 setting of *Semiramide riconosciuta*. It is given a positively electrifying performance by Anna Bonitatibus, whose greatest strength is a mastery of vocal acting that should be an object lesson to the many – far too many – early music opera singers who rely too much on technical agility or tonal beauty. Listen, for example, to the commanding power of the opening word "Vanne" (Go) in the act I

aria from Porpora's *Semiramide regina dell'Assiria*, where we find the queen in full Amazonian mode.

Elsewhere not everything is quite so praiseworthy. Bonitatibus' richly characterful mezzo has a fast vibrato that has a tendency to spread to unpleasant effect at cadences, and she seems generally slightly less at ease in cantabile writing than faster dramatic music, where bravura demands are in general very well met. The orchestral playing passes muster, but might have been tighter in matters such as string ensemble. The mid-price set comes with a lavishly illustrated 131-page booklet that includes translations of the texts. It will be an essential acquisition for anyone interested in 18th- and early 19th-century Italian opera, not least because all the items included are new to CD. *Brian Robins*

#### Digital downloads from OUTHERE

(All by BC)

**Gesualdo *Sacrarum Cantionum quinque vocibus, Liber primus* (1603)** Odhecaton, Ensemble Mare Nostrum, Liuwe Tamminga, dir. Paolo Da Col 63' 30" Ricercar RIC343 + Luzzaschi *Ave Maris stella de Macque Consonanze stravaganti, Intrata d'organo Trabaci Consonanze stravaganti*

These performances may not be what you expect or what the composer intended. In the booklet note (read the French original – the “translation” of the director's note is rather wide of the mark here), Da Col says he has felt liberated from any attempt to reproduce any liturgical performance, since Gesualdo held no official position in the church, so he has felt free to try different combinations of voices and instruments. Sensibly, the two high clef pieces in the collection are transposed down, making the whole set singable by male voices; the low pitch chosen (A=398) will also have helped, but I found some of the highest notes in the “countertenor” part forced and uncomfortable. Equally so the shift from ensemble tuning to whatever temperament Tamminga's organ is tuned to – that was a harsh juxtaposition indeed; thankfully they stopped at cornett, viols, harp, lute and theorbo when it came to joining the 12 singers. Much as I enjoyed singing Gesualdo's Holy Week music during a north Italian tour while at university, I regret that this disc will not be a regular listen for me.

**Vivaldi *Cello Sonatas*** Marco Ceccato, Accademia Ottoboni 49' 27" Zig-Zig Territoires ZZT338 RV38-43, 46

Rather than perform the set of six sonatas

published in Paris by Le Clerc and Madame Boivin to capitalise on the new vogue for cello playing, Ceccato and his colleagues have elected to record sonatas from manuscripts in Wiesentheid, Naples and Paris instead, along with a Prelude (RV38) reconstructed by the author of the booklet notes (oddly placed last on the playlist). The opening note from the cellist should be enough to convince anyone that this recording is worth hearing, even if it is frankly more than a little on the short side. Accademia Ottoboni consists of a second cello with double bass, one plucker and one keyboardist, and provides a warm backdrop for Ceccato's rich tone (which I intend as a compliment – vibrato here is a mostly subtly applied ornament) and fiery displays in the quicker movements.

**Platti *Concerti per il clavicembalo obligato: Father of the Classical sonata between Vivaldi and Mozart*** Luca Guglielmi fp, Concerto Madrigalesco 71' 47" Arcana A375 Concertos in c I49, G I55 & A I57, Oboe sonata in G I55, Hpscd sonata op. 4/2 (I109)

I am a great fan of Platti's music – it has a natural logic about it without ever becoming predictable to the extent of boredom, and it is a particular pleasure to hear fresh works from his quill played with such conviction and so very beautifully. The copy of the Cristofori pianoforte of 1726 has an interesting sound, something akin to a cymbalom in that there is a definite delay in the natural decay of the sound that produces an “after ring”. Of course, this is most noticeable in the solo sonata and especially in that work's *Adagio*. The three concertos are delightful three movement affairs (all surviving in MSS today in Berlin), and the balance with the solo string players (no 16' bass) is just spot on. Just knowing that the soloist in the oboe sonata is Paolo Grazzi will be recommendation enough for most of our readers. The informative booklet notes are full of snippets – I had never read that the term *violetta* referred to a three-stringed violin, for example. Highly recommended.

**Haydn *Fortepiano Sonatas, Adagio & Variations*** Bobby Mitchell fp 75' 37" alpha 196 Sonatas in F Hob. XVI:23, Eb XVI:28, C XVI:48, *Adagio* in F XVII:9, *Andante con variazioni* in F XVII:6 with improvised links

Bobby Mitchell won the Outhere Music Prize at the 2014 Bruges Early Music Festival and this is his first recording. Haydn's piano music remains very much the poor cousin of Mozart's and Beethoven's, very rarely played in concert, and much less with such relish as this! Playing on a 1799 Stein instrument, Mitchell's style of playing might not suit

everyone's taste, since he has what unkind critics might call a loose approach to the printed rhythms, but I would argue that he is right to bring the music to life in such a way as to entertain the ear. I might not be so understanding if someone were to take that approach to my beloved Fasch's music, but it would do me no harm to have my views challenged. He is also brave to record his own improvisations, and one might fear that it meant one would have to listen to the entire disc at one sitting, but fear not – there is sufficient silence around each track to allow one simply to take a rest whenever one is required. Playing like this (not to mention the artistic merits of the impressively idiomatic links, which can be as humorous as their inspiration) does rather merit attentive listening, though. I have no hesitation in recommending this disc at all.

**Beethoven *Complete Fortepiano Concertos*** Arthur Schoonderwoerd & Cristofori alpha 820 (210', 3 CDs) CD I: Concertos 4&5 CD II: Concertos 3&6 CD III: Concertos 1&2

These recordings date from 2005 (I) and 2008 (II & III) but this was the first time I have heard them. I love the idea that everyone involved is a soloist – apart from the obviously increase in clarity of texture, it affords the string players in particular far greater artistic input, in that by no longer having to play as a section, they can colour individual notes and actively engage the pianist in dialogue. It also means that the latter can be even more relaxed since, with a band of 21 players, everyone can see and hear everyone else, which makes for an intimacy that is impossible with larger forces. Schoenwoerd's introductions to the pieces and their backgrounds make interesting reading, too. For those who like to know, he plays concertos 1–3 on an 1800 Walter and 4–6 (No. 6 being the piano version of the violin concerto) on a Fritz instrument from 1807–10. If my favourite recordings of these pieces have hitherto been Steven Levin with AAM and Christopher Hogwood, these versions will certainly serve as alternatives to savour, should I find myself in a grown-up mood some Autumn's afternoon. If neither set is in your collection, this should definitely be high amongst your list of candidates.

## THE "16" AT YORK MINSTER

Hugh Keyte

This broadcast concert from York Minster on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> July, the second evening of this year's York Early Music Festival, was part of the choir's 2014 Choral Pilgrimage, and substantially the same as the one I attended in Oxford Cathedral a couple of months ago: packed to the gunwales by appreciative audiences in both cases.

My reaction to the singing was pretty well the same on both occasions. This excellent choir is all the better for Harry Christophers' seeming abandonment of the Wulstonian up-a-minor-third heresy – a brave and difficult decision to make after so many years. (When will Peter Phillips follow suit?) The well-planned programme began with Sheppard's glorious *Gaude, gaude, gaude, Maria* and ended with William Mundy's no less glorious but even lengthier *Vox Patris Caelestis*. Mundy's *Adolescentulus sum ego* and Davy's *O Domine Caeli Terraque Creator* made up the first half, and some smaller-scale items began Part II: Sheppard's *Libera nos I & II* and *In manus tuas III*; and Davy's touching carol of penitence, *Ah, mine heart, remember thee well*. Just two quibbles: if the sections for reduced voices in the big works were done by soli it didn't always sound like it (and this is a vital element in the early-16th-century Latin festal repertory); and I find Harry's heart-on-sleeve expressiveness in Sheppard's small-scale Compline pieces gratingly out-of-period, if arguably acceptable in the Davy carol, which was movingly sung.

No problems with the broadcast sound, but the presentation, by one Adam Tomlinson, was an utter disgrace. He coped perfectly well with his interval interview with Harry (who made graceful tribute to the contribution of singer-musicologist Sally Dunkley) but his introductions to the music were an object lesson in how not to do it: mere translations of the first two or three words of text, with the Latin by no means always correctly pronounced. He found time to enthuse about music and performances in the toe-curling but now-standard Radio 3 manner, but had nothing whatever to say about the works. If this reflects a populist policy of eschewing high-falutin' scholarly disquisition, its effect is, of course, the precise opposite of what

is intended, since only listeners well versed in the repertory would have had a clue as to what a motet beginning 'I am a young man' could conceivably be about. Nor could the length and complexity of *Gaude, gaude, gaude* make sense without some clue to its liturgical context at Magdalen College. And the background to *Vox Patris* – thought to be an outdoor welcome song to recently-acceded Mary Tudor as she made her formal *entraata* into London – would surely help the most adamantly anti-intellectual listener to make sense of what he heard. Sally Dunkley's admirable programme notes dealt with all this, and much more, in her usual crisp and accessible manner, but Mr. Tomlinson chose to ignore them completely. I might have assumed that he was a last-minute stand-in who was doing the best he could had he not introduced the broadcast of Hespérion XXI's concert from York in much the same manner the previous evening. There are, certainly, listeners who prefer to let vocal and choral music wash over them with no regard to text or context (the same ones, I imagine, who used to write in to complain about "all those Lieder"). But if Radio 3 persists in addressing itself to this dumbo element, it will find itself adrift without an educated audience. The drift to Radio 4 is already well established. I have only to mention to a musical stranger that I once produced for Radio 3 to elicit the response, regular as clockwork, 'Oh, I can't bear their dumbing-down. I only listen to Radio 4 these days.' Will Roger Wright's successor reverse the trend? I doubt it.

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Flashmob at The National Gallery, Trafalgar Square on Friday morning 17 July on Buskaid's way home to Soweto.

Concert review begins with editorial (p. 1)  
and continues on pp 29-30.

Photo kindly supplied by Graham de Lacy

