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Early Music Review is published in
alternate months until June 2015

The International Diary is published every month
except January

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Subscription

UK: £11.25 Europe £13.75
Rest of World: £20.00 (air) £13.75 (surface)
(foreign rates £2.50 cheaper without Concert Diary)

We are regretfully announcing that June 2015 will be the last published issue of *EMR*. Most of it will continue free on the net. Brian Clark will be responsible for publishing CD reviews and I will continue to review printed music. We need to find someone to organise books on early music, and we hope to find a group of reviewers who can report from round Britain, and maybe also report on events abroad. I'm ageing now and am slower at meeting deadlines (as demonstrated by this issue). But the main reason is the economics of production, especially the rising post costs, which has meant that over the years, *EMR* has barely broken even.

Our first issue was June 1994, comprising 16 pages. (We now have over 40.) *Early Music News* was started by Michael Procter in 1977: I contributed reviews of printed music, books and concert reviews. Later The Early Music Centre became responsible for it and it was edited by its printer, Peter Williamson. It was ruined by the Centre's committee who wanted something glossy and didn't have any consideration of costs. When it collapsed, I set up a personal magazine with Brian Clark as Associate Editor, primarily for CD reviews, and EB as administrator. EB later expanded the Concert Diary, which for over a decade has been edited by Helen Shabetai. I was flicking through past issues and was particularly struck by the extended review in vol. 7 (Feb 1995) was *Fairest Trial: Julia Craig-McFeely reviews two Purcell collections* which started as if she was sceptical about composer and performers. The two main series were variable, but the one absolute enthusiasm was John Butt's organ disc: I had no expectation that he would now be the best of scholarly directors and I regret that I never followed up the reviewer.

We are pleased to announce that this year we have at last left our personal financial troubles behind us and will at least be able to call our home our own and leave something for our children's future. We are immensely indebted to all who contributed to our Appeal Fund, which raised just over £79,000. We intended to describe what had actually happened to us, but we lacked time and space for this issue: I hope we have time to put it on record. Now we think that our time is best spent plying our trade as music publishers as the Early Music Co. Ltd. We hope to earn enough for our eventual retirement.

REVIEWS OF MUSIC

Clifford Bartlett

FRESCOBALDI a4

Frescobaldi Canzonas a4 for Four-part Instrumental Ensemble and Basso Continuo... Score and Parts... edited by Friedrich Cerha. Diletto Musicale (DM 1451 – D.20 153), 2014. 27pp + 4 parts. €24.95

I'm not in the best position to compare with sources, whether 17th or 20th century. I must have played them on viols (the late 1960s), sometimes with organ continuo, or for solo keyboard. No. 1 (in g to be modern) comes from the well-known 1608 anthology by Alessandro Rauerij, where it is no. 13. No. 2 (also in g) No. 35 *detta l'Alessandrina* was published in 1628 in *partitura*, but the complementary parts have no numbers. The third is also in g from the same two sources; the 1628 parts have 13 bars of tripla with adjustments in the preceding and following bar. For a change, no. 4 is in F and survives in just one of the overlapping publications: the *partitura Canzona 34 detta la Sandoninia*. This is the only one of the four to have high clefs (G₂, C₂, C₃, F₃), but if viols are in your mind, there's serious problem. Part I goes up to a treble-viol top A in G₂, part II doesn't go down to the G string very often, the viola fits the middle two strings and the bass has a range of the tenth from low B flat to the D above middle C. Perhaps you can imagine the music as the first approach, far ahead, towards playing *The Art of Fugue*!¹

HANDEL SAUL

Handel Saul HWV 53... edited by Felix Loy Carus (55.053), 2014. xi + 290 pp, € 139.00.

Saul must be one of the shortest titles ever, but it is one of the longest of Handel's oratorios. I don't keep timings, but I remember that Charles Mackerras produced an LP of the instrumental movements which amply filled the space. Earlier, I got to know the work from his BBC recording which I taped and played frequently. The rare Randall edition (1773) and Arnold's (c. 1792) have the advantage of the bass being figured, and the latter was, at least when I was younger, cheap enough for a poor library assistant to buy some of the series – though not *Saul*. Until now, there were only two usable scores. Chrysander naturally based his on the conducting score, which was conveniently available in Hamburg (H.W. or HG 13, 1862). The other score, by Percy M. Young (HHA I: 13, 1962), was the only score I could acquire (as far as I can remember, the price was £3.00). I played continuo from it for the amateur BBC Staff Choir in 1979, though I can't remember much about it. The only other time was much later in 2009, when I set up a weekend course for the various Early Music Fora (amateur singers and players), with

Laurence Cummings as inspiring conductor, by when I was well aware of the incompetence of Percy Young. By then, Handelian were aware of the HHA edition, to some extent corrected by the commentary volume. Immediately after that weekend, two Dutchmen offered to split the cost of typesetting the parts, which BC produced with his usual speed and accuracy, though the Carus parts will obviously have corrected more mistakes from the two main sources. Sadly, Jennens's libretto is not printed separately, four pages on one as in current HHA editions: it is a significant element in the creation of the work.

The editor of Bach's B-minor Kyrie and Gloria (reviewed in our last issue) seems to have been thinking on the same lines as *Saul*'s editor. Bach kept a score for later use, but Bach never subsequently saw the parts copied by Bach and associates with alterations and taken to Dresden. In the case of *Saul* and most of Handel's operas and oratorios, he tended the pass his "autograph" to his regular amanuensis, J. C. Smith senior, and details were aided and corrected to that. (On the Smiths/Schmidts, see p. 5). Handel isn't awarded the lavish CD appendages that Carus provided for the Bach, but the main surviving parts were copied for the librettist (Jennens), not for performance by Handel – though if the parts may have been based on the lost parts used by Handel's band, they may offer more details. Is there some mystic value of €139.00, the same figure as the bound B-minor Mass and *Saul*? [The current Bärenreiter catalogue quotes the soft-cover *Saul* score at £253.50, and that is, I presume, the 1962 edition!]

The most obvious omissions in HHA are the indications of what the organ played. The very opening of the work, for instance, just has *Organo* at the end of a list of other bass instruments; Chrysander prints *Organo tasto solo, e l'ottava forte*. Carus includes the organ instruction, but abbreviated as *Org t s. e 8^{va}, forte*. These instructions occur frequently through the work. Another cue (no. 57) is the short chorus "Is there a man" with a variety of organ instructions, ignored of course by Young but printed by Chrysander & Carus:

Bar 1: *Organo pieno* (accompanying homophony)

Bar 13: *Org. come stà* (accompanying brief imitation, but no change indicated when homophony returns: bars 18 & 20 could be tacet)

Bar 24: *Organo tasto solo, el'ottava* (sustained G chord)

Bar 28: *Org. come stà in parti*.

Bar 53: *senza Organo*.

I've used the Chrysander rubrics rather than the Carus abbreviations. Leaving aside the inter-war German dramatisations, which were even less acceptable than later staging as far as I can gather, the regular staging of oratorios in London began with the Handel Opera Society from 1955, alternating operas and oratorios. The performances were a bit amateurish, especially the

1. I can find only a few of my books and scores of Frescobaldi, so this isn't a satisfactory review!

chorus, but there were some top singers: the first one I saw was *Alcina* (1957), with Joan Sutherland. 1958 was *Theodora*, which has now caught on as a plausible stage work. *Saul* was played by Geraint Evans in 1965, the most famous British bass at the time. On the whole, some staged oratorios work well, especially if the main characters are suitable as dramatic roles. I've seen *Samson* and *Jephtha* at Buxton in the past few years, the former being more successfully staged than the latter, but blame the director, not Handel! *Saul* needs a big cast and a large orchestra. Carus should be pushing this edition for stage productions at major opera houses or festivals, since they give a prestige that will encourage recordings and also non-stage performances. Currently, it is performed far less than it should be, though a prestigious run is planned for next year.

Coincidentally, Carus has published both *Israel in Egypt* (ed. CB) and *Saul*, the two oratorios with a trio of trombones probably afterthoughts, because of the English presence of a German group. Later performances will have been without them – and perhaps without the carillons as well. The other omission is likely to be the number of arias for lesser characters, which used to be applied to virtually all oratorios and still often is – audiences are probably more happy to sit through a three-hour opera than a concert performance of that length. The number of instrumental pieces, however, is unusual in their variety.

One disappointment: this is an English work and Handel was well anglicised, so it is a pity that the editorial commentary is only in German. It is more thorough, with short variants notated within the commentary as well as extensive independent movements. The underlay is English and German: English singers will not find the German obtrusive. The libretto as provided for the 1738 audience is included in the HHA *Kritischer Bericht*. The author, Jennens, was probably Handel's best librettist, and singers might benefit if soloists read the text before working on each scene. (The Chrysander score is prefaced by 11 pages with English and German in parallel columns: if you want a cheaper score, our A4 version is £40.00.) I hope that the division between scenes should be noticeable in productions. Apart from anything else, it makes places where the orchestra can tune.

HANDEL ARMINIO

Handel Arminio... HWV 36. Piano Reduction based on the Urtext of the Halle Handel Edition by Andreas Köhs. Bärenreiter (BA 4100-90) 2014. xvi + 173pp, £25.00.

I don't know this work and I don't have the full score on which it is based, though the Chrysander score is useful. Tacitus described what might have been history, though Quintillius Varus defeated three Roman legions in AD 15-16, long before Tacitus was born around AD 56. The names of the characters from the history survive, but the minimal Roman history was replaced for an opera written by Antonio Salvi and composed by A. Scarlatti (1703), followed by other composers. Handel's version is a bit incoherent, but if there is a strong cast, it might work –

I've never heard it, and the only pencilling in my Gregg reprint is the date of purchase (June 1973 – probably bought for a pound or two as a remainder at Blackwells) and the names of the first singers.

Two Handel books reviewed on p. 9

MUSIC FROM GERMANY

Telemann Gelobet sei der Herer... Oratorio for St John's Day TWV 1: 602/1216. Piano reduction... by Andreas Köhs. Bärenreiter (BA 5899-90), 2014. ix + 83pp, £15.00

This was first performed on 24th June (the Feast of the Nativity of St John the Baptist) 1731. It is divided into two sizeable cantatas (hence the two TVWV catalogue numbers), one for the part of the service before the sermon, and the second for after it. There are eight solo parts (SSSATBBB), two different choir line-ups (SATB and SAT), and an orchestra with four [!] horns, timpani, three flutes, oboe, strings and continuo. In general, the solo work is more extensive than the choruses, though the latter arguably have some of the most dramatic music – the Israelites (SA) and Egyptians (TB) are pitted against one another in unusually realistic fashion. Elsewhere they punctuate the recitative and aria scheme with chorales and even a couple of ensemble recitatives. This may lack the great choral moments of a Handel or a Bach oratorio, but it is a colourful score and one which choirs might like to explore. Although it was performed at this year's Telemann-Festtage in Magdeburg, I have not been able to locate a recording. A full score is in vol. 58 of Bärenreiter's *Musikalische Werke* series, and performance material is available on hire – so prices are likely to be high. BC

Telemann Ouverturensuite in C major TWV 55:C1... edited by Klaus Hofmann Edition Walhall (EW 949), £16.50. iv + 15 pp + 4 parts

This has no instrumental indication in the source at Darmstadt. The three top lines, however, are most likely to be flutes, with D the lowest note. However, the editor, or maybe publisher, adds recorders, oboes and violins as possibilities. The Bc contains only one figured bass (mov. 1, bar 10), so it is useful for a realisation in the score, though it might be more educational to have just a figured bass. There's a standard opening A-B-A, then La complaisance, L'indignation, Minuets, Loure and Réjouissance.

Zelenka Missa Dei Filii ZWV 20 (for SATB soli and tutti with orchestra) edited by Paul Horn, piano vocal score by Matthias Grünert. Breitkopf (8050), 2014. 79pp, £19.90

This is a Mass comprising Kyrie and Gloria (like Bach's short masses and the first version of the *B Minor Mass*). I won't write much now, except to say that my colleague Brian Clark has heard the Mass and we can recommend choirs to try it when the material is available. A full score is offered for sometime next year, to which we look forward. Meanwhile, choir-masters might well look at the vocal score: there are still too few Brits who have much experience of such a good composer.

Molter *Concertino in e minor* BWV 9:24 edited by Brian Clark. Prima la musica! (MOLO36), 2014. 7 pp + parts £14

This comprises three movements – Allegro, Allegro and alternating Minuet. The key is e minor, except for E major in the “trio”, the instruments Flauto traverso, treble and bass viols, with *Cembalo*, either doubling the bass viol or simplifying it when the viol achieves independence. I'm particularly puzzled that in the Trio the bass viol plays four-note chords: 12 crotchets in E major, 9 in B major and three in A major – how curious!

Carl Friedrich Fasch *Missa a 16 voci* edited by Ryan Michael Kelly Carus 27.083 x+101 ISMN M-007-14521-7 € 56

Carl Fasch is remembered primarily as the founder of the Sing-Akademie in Berlin, and hence the whole idea of mixed choral singing. Starting with a bunch of his pupils and friends, it soon had over 100 members and was tackling all sorts of what might broadly be described as religious music. Gifted a manuscript by one of his pupils, Johann Friedrich Reichardt, which contained a 16-part mass by Benevoli, Fasch was inspired to compose such a work himself. It was not an easy task (though nothing ever seemed to be, since he was a relentless re-writer) and the first rehearsals were reportedly disastrous – the level of virtuosity required in some sections is more than considerable. But he persevered and finally the work was successfully performed and adopted into the repertoire.

Although much of it is written for four equal choirs with organ accompaniment (not absolutely essential), there are movements for smaller numbers of parts (which Kelly suggests need not imply fewer singers), and there are two for more parts – the extraordinary soprano solo of the sixth movement *Laudamus te* (hitting the Queen of the Night's top note in Bar 78), and a less wide-ranging but scarcely less virtuosic “encore principale” in the following *Gratias agimus tibi*.

The edition is (of course) beautifully printed, with two systems where the reduced number of parts allows on quite large pages (the book is approximately 10 x 13 inches in size), and Kelly provides a suitably simple continuo realization. There are some questions. In that bar with the top f, the 2nd, 3rd and 4th notes have lower noteheads too, but there is nothing in the commentary to say why; does one version have any authority over the other? At the very end of the second *Kyrie*, the soprano and alto solos in Choir 4 have two unbeamed notes that are slurred – again, the commentary is silent on what that might imply.

Most of Kelly's introduction reads well and makes sense. There are a couple of slips in the first paragraph, though; Fasch had no need to leave home to study violin with Carl Höckh, since the latter was *Konzermeister* in Zerbst where Fasch's father was *Kapellmeister*. In the same sentence, he perpetuates the myth that the younger Fasch studied with Johann Christian Hertel; it was in fact his son, Johann Wilhelm Hertel (who had earlier studied violin in Zerbst with Höckh!)

This is a work to challenge any choir, and – as explained above – it involves hiring two very good soloists. As the recording I recently reviewed (A Quattro Cori, Es Dur – you can hear samples on Amazon) showed, however, it will be something most choirs will never have experienced before and I doubt they will forget it in a hurry. BC

Mozart *Concerto for Flute, Harp and Orchestra in C, K 299(297c)* edited by András Adorján. Breitkopf & Härtel (PB 15134), 2014. 54pp, €29.90.

Mozart may have felt ill when writing for the flute, but he was happier for the flute and harp concerto – that may, of course, have been his desire to do well in Paris. The *Neue Ausgabe* (V:14, 1983) is virtually the same as this new edition. There are a few minor slips in the autograph, but Breitkopf has the advantage of their being noted as footnotes in small print in German and English. One difference is that Breitkopf, by printing the two oboes on one stave (the autograph is written thus), has three systems rather than the *Neue Ausgabe*'s layout, so requires only two-thirds of the number of pages. It's difficult to compare the clarity, since I only have the reduced Bärenreiter almost-complete works,² not the full size of the Breitkopf, which is about two thirds of the *Neue Ausgabe*... but it seems perfectly legible.

Also available are orchestral parts (OB 15134), edition for flute, harp and piano (Breitkopf EB 10768 or Henle Verlag HN 768), study score OB 15135. Bärenreiter's price is £29.90 + the 4% increase in the summer, whereas the converted Breitkopf price is around £38.50. Euro prices are cheap if you have a euro account, but post from Germany is more expensive than from Britain and rates can change!

Carl Friedrich Abel *Pembroke Connections for gamba and violoncello* see review by Robert Oliver on p. 16

EDITION WALHALL

Franz Biersack visited the Greenwich Early Music Exhibition again this year with a substantial stock and a batch of music to review. If I'm brief, it's so that I can get it in the December issue.

Carissimi *Gaudeat terra, jubilant montes: Christmas motet for 2 sopranos & organ* (Voce Divina XXVII). Edition Walhall (EW 768), 2014. iv + 12 pp + three copies of the music, €17.50.

This is a good piece, except that the repeated two crotchet As ending phrases in bar 4 and many other places is irritating: I think that the last syllable should be on the third beat, not the fourth. There's an ABABA pattern, the B sections related. There are then 60 bars of white tripla. C time returns, but not recapitulating the opening section. There is no realisation, but playing isn't difficult, and adding a melodic bass would be too heavy. It's well worth performing, despite the repeated notes.

2. I took advantage of the study score issued in 1991, as did rather more of our customers than I expected! Each of the introductions are very full with generous facsimiles, but the critical commentaries are not included.

Vivaldi *Concerto per Violoncello in c minor, RV 401* edited by Markus Möllenbeck. Score. Walhall (EW 916), 2014. [20pp], €14.50.

Handelians might call this "The flocks shall leave the mountain", which matches the seven-quaver phrase in the right key. With demisemiquavers for the cello, the heading is a sensible *Allegro non molto*. I worry that modern-style players will drag the *Adagio* to death. The finale has another modified tempo: *Allegro ma non molto*. The score has slipped inside it a useful list of all the cello concertos, with incipits for each movement – very useful. But I puzzle why there are four ways of describing each piece. The numbering 1-28 comes first, following the order of Ryom – RV 398-416; the list ends with a later discovery, RV 531. What's the point of the first set of numbers: it might be more useful if the concertos were indicated by key then number (so RV401 could be Concerto in c no. 1). Are all the violin concertos to be similarly numbered! There's no use now for Fanno or Pincherle, and for most purposes Ryom is standard. Returning to the music again, the four-stave layout is odd. Vln I was in C1 clef (though not stated in the usual place in the score before each opening stave). The second stave is for violin II and viola, which is printed in alto clef. Then follow the solo and the Bc. This section of the introduction lacks clarity and the indication of the clefs and names of parts is rather slap-dash.

Bach *Drei Sonaten für Viola da Gamba und obligates Cembalo, BWV 1027-1029* Facsimile herausgegeben von Hille Perl. Walhall (EW 888), 2014, €29.80. Gamba part slipped in with the kbd part.

This is an elegant publication, clear to read. Only one of the three is in Bach's hand. It's not as neat as the other two, but it is bold and has the authority of the composer. But he does not write each slur according to a pedantic editor – Bach has more flexibility. BWV 1027 in G dates from his last decade, but is based on two flutes and continuo of the same key from around 1725. Bach has given the tempo indications at a slower level for the gamba. The other two Sonatas, BWV 1028 & 1029, were copied by Christian Friedrich Pendel in 1753 and are scores with separate gamba parts. The facsimile is clear and on the whole the player doesn't need complex figured-bass skills.

J. C. Smith *Suites de Pièces pour le Clavecin*. Edition Walhall, 2014.

Vol. 1 c.1732. viii + 44pp, €19.80 (EW 954)

Vol. 2/1 c. 1735 (nos. 1-3). vi + 30pp, €16.00 (EW 872)

Vol. 2/2 c. 1735 (nos. 4-6). vi + 30pp, €18.50 (EW 914)

There are two John Christian Smiths who were connected with Handel. Both began life as Johann Christoph Schmidt at Kitzingen near Würzburg in Bavaria. Smith senior met Handel at the Halle University, then some 15 years later the two men met in 1716 and Schmidt/Smith spent the rest of his time as Handel's musical copyist. His chief role was to copy the composer's score to act as his main reference point. These are

sometimes called "conductor's scores". The importance of Smith's score is stressed in the new Carus edition of *Saul* (see pp. 2-3 above). He died in 1763, and Handel's scores were donated to the younger Smith and when he retired they were given to George III.

Smith Junior was born in Ansbach in 1712 and the family joined Smith Senior in London in 1720. He learnt the copying trade of his father, but was also a composer of some ability. Vol. 1 was published around 1732, vol. 2 around 1735: the latter is here divided into two parts, being rather longer than Vol. 1 – both volumes have six suites, but Vol. 2 is considerably longer and enables the volumes to be stapled rather than folded in sections. They have a very Handelian keyboard style. I've been too busy to play them, so may come back to them if my reaction to looking at the music is confirmed.

HENLE VERLAG

Kuhnau *Sämtliche Werke für Tasteninstrument* Edited by Norbert Müllemann. Henle Verlag (956), 2014. xiv + 222pp, €49.00

There are four sets of keyboard music (harpsichord or clavichord, but less idiomatic for organ), of which the last, the Bible Stories, are best known. The two sets of *Neuer Clavier Übung* (1689 & 1692) are carefully planned. Each has 7 Partie, the first book in an obvious order of C, D, E, F, G, A & B major and the second book in the minor – odd that c, d and g are minus-one signatures, though f minor has the full four. The second book concludes with a Sonata in B flat: the main movement is A, B, Adagio, a short Allegro then A again. The *Frische Clavier Früchte* (1696) has seven sonatas (is there any hidden motive?): these are a step ahead of the B flat Sonata of 1692, in that the three movements don't recapitulate the opening. The *Musicalische Vorstellung Einiger Biblischer Historien* was published in 1700, though the editor has used the 1705 edition, which seems better for the first Sonata. The volume ends with a Toccata in A, a Prelude in G, a Prelude *alla breve* in B flat and a short fugue in g. This is an excellent volume, bringing all Kuhnau's keyboard works together. There is further information in German available free at www.henle.com, but I couldn't find it. Is it like advance copies of CDs when they are not online in advance! This is well worth keeping near your keyboard, though my harpsichord is in the entrance hall and hasn't room for music within reach!

Mozart *Sonaten für Klavier und Violine – Fragmente* Edited by Wolf-Dieter Seiffert, additions by Robert D. Levin. Henle Verlag (1039), 2014. xii + 83pp + Urtext and "edited" part, €26.00.

I was puzzled when this arrived: it looked rather thick for a volume of fragments. I wondered if there were any overlap in Henle's standard violin and piano editions – if I had time, I'd have searched for my copies. The best way to describe this is to list the pieces, though this is very congested whereas the introductions are extremely helpful.

Stadler completed some items by continuing direct from the autograph, with the consent of Constanza, whereas Levin is very much alive – I even interviewed him once.

- 1: K 372 *Allegro* in B flat (Stadler and Levin separately)
- 2: K 402 (385e) *Andante & Fugue* in A (Stadler/Nissen)
- 3: K 396 (385f) *Fantasie* in c (Levin)
- 4: K.Anh 48 (480a/385E) Fragment of 34 bars (Levin)
- 5: K. 403 (385c) *Sonata* in C (Stadler & Levin)
- 6: K 404 (385d) *Andante & Allegretto* in C (Very short!)
- 7: K.Anh 47 (546a) 31 bars of 1st mov. extended by Levin
- 8: K. Anh 50 (527a) just one page of piano only.

My guess is that the best use for these pieces is as encores, with the title ideally to be announced after playing! Only one sonata is complete (no. 5) as are the non-sonatas 2 & 3. This is an excellent publication for scholars and for players who like to experiment, but I don't see why there is any need for fingering of the piano part and adding a duplicate part with bowing etc: these are not pieces for study but for players who can contribute their own ideas and experiments on the non-Mozart sections (which are noted on the pages of both score and violin part). However, the *Fantasie* (no. 3, needing Levin's aid) is an intriguing piece, 16-notes to a crotchet quite common and even a group of 32-notes in bar 4. That can well stand a proper concert: it would probably amaze the audiences, but it is powerful, not just reconstruction.

I happened to open page 53, bars 135-7, where four patterns are repeated with three of the first notes marked with finger 2, but just one with finger 1. The logic is that the odd one out began with a white note but the other three were black. The odd numbering was the third of the four, but I fingered it a few times and reckon that changing the finger pattern disturbed it. The first note has a dash, but is that a stress or a shortening? If the latter, there's absolutely no need to change the pattern. It's not Mozart anyway but Stadler (Levin's version doesn't have the phrase). And surely a player like Levin should decide whether he wants to add fingering or not. This is a fascinating publication, but presented a bit too much.

Mozart Klavierstücke aus dem "Nannerl-Notenbuch" edited by Ullrich Scheideler. Henle (I236) 2014. vi + 25pp. €9.00.

This contains keyboard music by the child Mozart. Dated from 1761-64, they are a mixture of music copied by his father and Wolfgang himself. It was written in a book compiled by his sister Nannerl, born about four and a half years earlier than Wolfgang. Some of the 21 items shown here as for piano were published with a violin part. The added fingering would be acceptable if they were expressing the style of the early 1760s. The order of pieces here has little resemblance with NMA's *Serie IX, Werkgruppe 27, Band 1* of 1982. The later volume could be a bit easier to relate to other early pieces, but the Henle edition is good value for encouraging young children to be able at least to play, if not compose, the young Mozart's efforts – but he started at five, a year ahead of me, and I wasn't very good anyway!

BOOK REVIEWS

(by CB if unstated)

Simon Ravens *The Supernatural Voice: A History of High Male Singing* x + 244pp, £45.00. The Boydell Press, 2014. ISBN 978 1 84383 962 1

See also his article in the previous edition (162), pp. 10-13. It is rare that the publisher's (or author's) blurb mentions only one Journal – *Early Music Review*.

This is a significant book. I have, however, not been able to be systematic in my comments. I started with jotting down a long lists of topics to mention, but they were too numerous and could not be brought together other than by commenting on each! What is essential is an evaluation of what the various terms from high tenor to low soprano mean. I first came across the difference between Alfred Deller and Russell Oberlin around 1960: I heard the former live and the other on disc. Throughout the whole period, there is inconsistency between high tenors, countertenors, altos and falsettists at various levels. A modern, naturally high tenor is often now identified as the Crump-tenor, which Ravens avoids – I'm sure the name of the voice is a compliment, though I've never thought seriously about how his top end really works. But other singers, mostly with not much of a higher range until fairly recently, were falsettists. The compas within individual parts changed several times, from the Eton Choirbook to simple mid-century anthems, a short period of wider ranges, then a wider range as the anglican cathedrals and colleges expanded again.³

There is so much in the book that it can't be summarised. Simon is alert to pitch as relates to the size of the singers, which relates to the pitch as notated. However, there is a problem in relating English to continental pitch ranges, since the latter in the decades around 1600 mostly sang the low pitch (C1, C3, C4, F4) up a semitone and a high pitch (G2, C2, C3, C4 or F3) down a third (or perhaps less if no instruments were involved).⁴ I've usually assumed that pitch can be based on low F – familiar in many hymn books – and the table from 1475-1625 on p. 78 isn't too far out. But not all English choirs regularly sang treble. The more relaxed performances might have gone up a bit, but not enough for the counter-tenors to need to sing "false" voices except perhaps at the very top. There are often four counter-tenor parts required (two each of *can* & *dec*)⁵ singing what we would call tenors.

I'd like to hear a bit more about nonconformist churches – I think Methodists were mentioned just once. The "west gallery" anglicans were, especially in the country, involved

3. Basses did sometimes hop down from, say, F to D, in England in the earlier part of the century and I usually managed to sing the leap, though not when moving more slowly from above. I wish I could remember which Gibbons verse-anthem bass soloist recently failed to reach bottom F recently.

4. There is clear indication of pitch if cornetts and sackbuts were played – the pitch matched at least from Venice around 1600 to Leipzig in Bach's time, though by then Bach had to copy the transposed organ parts.

5. Anglican choirs had the cantor on one side, the deacon on the other, and the "altos" were often divided on each side.

in singing alto parts: both tenor and treble were sung in octaves, without allocating ladies only to the top part and tenors to the tenor part; ladies didn't initially sing soprano or alto, but high men sang the alto at pitch with instruments often playing the part up an octave. Women may later have sung in church, but I was surprised to see so little information in *Musica Britannica* 85. In various sources, there was far more interest in instruments than in female singers! Anglicans seem to have objected to it completely, and I don't know how recently they were acceptable. The Methodist church in which I grew up had mixed singers before the Second World War, and I imagine they went back much further. When I went to the premiere of my edition of *Messiah* at the Huddersfield Town Hall, with its choir going back to 1836, I presumed that there must be some overlapping, especially since their main events were performances of oratorios, which were mostly religious.

I wish I had remembered more about singing in school. In fact, I wasn't allowed to sing in primary school – I had to sit at the back and not get in the way! I kept away from singing when I moved to Dulwich College, but I learnt, thanks not to the College but to our church organist, who gave me all sorts of music instruction, starting each weekly session with piano, then voice, then history of music, and finally fascinating conversation in a way I never spoke at home. I was never a good singer, but started as a tenor in the sixth form, moved up to alto for a few years at the Dartington Summer School in the mid-1960s, but dropped back to tenor to survive in the madrigal course. Once I stopped regular signing, my voice dropped to bass and now can't sing above middle C. It must be common for male voices to vary. I was asked to provide carol services for a few years, and discovered that one bass (whom I didn't know could sing at all) could sing a seventh below the normal bass bottom F. Ravens writes a paragraph on William Savage (p. 139). He sang a treble part in *Athalia* in 1735 aged 14. Three years later he sang the alto Childerico in *Faramondo*, but took the final tenor chorus – though not particularly low. Nine months later, he sang the title role as bass in *Imeneo*. He was a countertenor in *Israel in Egypt*, but not *Saul*.⁶

Robert Oliver had a holiday in Delhi, Agra and Jaipur this November and happened to have Simon's book with him – if I'd known, he could have reviewed it; instead he commented on contemporary traditional music in Delhi.

After reading Simon Ravens' *The Supernatural Voice* on the plane to Delhi, I had the experience of hearing some high male singing by the Qawwali singers at the Nizamuddin Dharga in Delhi. The two singers sat cross-legged at a keyboard each, a sort of piano accordion with the concertina pumps operated by the left hand, while the two-octave keyboard is played by the right hand. The brass reeds were tunable by moving a little clamp-like cross piece. Behind them sat a single drummer with a double-ended drum. Right on time at 6pm, they began, the two singers playing a decorated version of the

pentatonic melody with a simple refrain in which the people sitting round joined. The drummer's complex rhythms would resolve at the refrain and the people round clapped as they sang. In between the two singers took it in turn to improvise, while the drummer went into much more complex rhythms.

The first section was based on F, and they sang full modal voice up to tenor g, and then into falsetto, with a discernible but not obtrusive break up to a high c. A third man, not playing a keyboard but sitting beside them, sometimes took a solo, and he had a higher voice which went into falsetto with no break at all. I wasn't able to judge their heights, as they were sitting down, but I suspect that they weren't particularly small. They sang with a full sound, no amplification but in a small space, full-voiced, clearly well-supported breath but no vibrato and a fairly raw but very resonant sound, and used the vehemence of the tenor g to powerful effect. Sometimes they would do chromatic shifts up a semitone and back down. Later the melody changed to a Phrygian mode. It was mostly quite diatonic, with little evidence of microtones except in the virtuosic improvisations, and even then one felt that the equal temperament of the accordion-like instruments affected the tuning. It was a virtuoso display, with the roulades done in the throat, very rapid and moving to the very high falsetto notes and down again back onto modal voice with great control, and we listened enthralled for an hour. At times people came up and with various degrees of ostentation (I was reminded of the parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector) would put down 10 rupee notes (about £0.10) for the musicians. They changed the team after about 30 minutes, and the two new singers did much more in unison together, but less virtuosic. Then everything stopped for a while at about 7pm, and we left, but presumably another team took over.

Unfortunately, the mood was affected by the presence of a television team, who appeared about half-way through and distracted the second team of singers, and many of the onlookers as well. It effectively negated the sense of holiness that I had felt strongly up to that moment. Once the TV turned up it became a show, still impressive, but now theme-park Sufism, debased as TV seems to debase everything it records, transforming it into a celebrity event.

Robert Oliver

MEDIEVAL NOTATION

Thomas Forrest Kelly *Capturing Music: the Story of Notation* W. W. Norton, 2014. xiii + 209? pages. £30.00 ISBN 978 0 393 06496 4

Anyone who wants to understand medieval notation will find this valuable. It isn't aimed at complete thoroughness, but rather an easy account of the main features – and it reads like the work of a series of talks – “lectures” would seem so strong a word. I found it useful to remind myself of the Notre-Dame repertoire and a century or so later when I had assembled the major sources and played around

6. The latest edition (see p. 2 above) is clear that Savage wasn't performing seriously after 1744, but he did continue as a falsetto alto. Some of Savage's scores (including *Messiah*) survived in the library of R. J. S. Stevens in the Royal Academy of Music.

with them in isolation in the 1960s, until I jumped a few centuries to Peter Holman's young group. The progress is shown by word and carefully selected examples.. There is one annoyance – using “recording” when it already has a different meaning from the normal musical one of hearing sound rather than reading notes. You visit record offices for all sorts of information, but that meaning only minimally provides written musical records. It's as confusing as the different meanings musicologists have to separate the usages of trope, which has a different use from late 20th and 21st-century musicology (who should have used a different word). I hadn't registered that the basic unit was a syllable, though there's no indication in the notation that one syllable might be more important than another – I presume that this developed from a closer study of speaking Latin in the renaissance, first by measure then by stress.

The book is amazingly easy to read, considering the subject. But I do find it awkward to be sent a review copy before completion: no index, no numbers to the footnotes, and monochrome reproductions. I was surprised to see another reviewer mentioning the colour illustrations. I hope the hyphening across lines (semishort) was corrected before the final issue to “semi-short”: the text was followed by the words “which is a dangerous precedent to set”!

SINGING JEREMIAH

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

This is potentially an interesting book, but somehow I failed to grasp it. Too many abbreviations, for a start (see pp. ix & x). It makes the book very awkward if you are using it for peripheral reading, and I found the three chapters I read very hard work, chiefly for the squashed sigla along with academic jargon – though the liturgical language does need to be understood. I found the comment about nuns confusing, and why does the presence of theorbos, harpsichord and harps make performances of lighter timbre (p. 23). Just because the organs were not allowed to play at the Triduum, that doesn't have any relevance to pitch. (It does seem weird that on particularly holy occasions, secular continuo instruments are used rather than organs!) Incidentally, there is another bad hyphen to match the Kelly book, but even worse in that “polyphony” runs from the bottom of p. 23 to the top of p. 24. Is this an automatic separation that the proof-reader isn't supposed to check? I'd be embarrassed if I had perpetrated it! (Surprisingly, both bad hyphens fell into place without having to add or remove words to make them fit!) On p. 30, “prophetic tone” makes one flippantly wonder to which tone it is a subtitle for! I would prefer vocal lines to be indicated by clef rather than SATB (C1, C3, C4, F4) or whatever, particularly in the earlier examples in the book.

The book is very tight, and I suspect that very few will read it. It really needs a lengthy, interpretive review: the book might rather have been published in two independent volumes with more relaxed prose or, preferably, with the music (complete sections if not complete pieces) on line.

Indeed, perhaps they should be offered to IMSLP, unless the author intends to produce an anthology for publication.

I haven't dealt with this as I would have liked: I'm happy to pass it on to anyone who can offer a proper review.

NEAPOLITAN HISTORICAL CHAPELS

Maria Adele Ambrosio *Itinerari storico-musicali a Napoli tra i secoli XVI e XVIII (Girolamini, Tesoro di San Gennaro, Annunziata, Real Cappella di Palazzo)* LIM, 2014. pp. xx+188. ISBN 978 88 7096 779 1 €23.00

This is an undergraduate thesis for the Conservatory S. Cecilia of Rome, and it is prefaced by a short abstract in Italian and in English, saying its purpose is to investigate the structure and activities of Naples' historical chapels, three ecclesiastical institutions, and the Royal Chapel. In doing this, it illuminates much of the musical life in Naples during the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries.

In all four cases Ambrosio found information about the contractual rules, duties and salaries of musicians and *maestri di cappella*, and the liturgical and theatrical functions of the institutions. The study is broad, covering three hundred years quickly. Tables summarize the periods of tenure of chapel directors, musicians, organists, composers and singers. The music itself is not described.

A striking picture emerges, especially, in the final section, thanks to a succinct account of the political events affecting the Royal Chapel: 1) 1443, when Alfonso V of Aragon became Alfonso I of Naples (another “Magnanimous” of the Renaissance), and 1494, when Alfonso II was heralded in by a band of 56 bugles or trumpets (along with trombones, drums, lutes and harps); 2) 1503-1707, the Spanish Viceroyalty of Naples and Sicily, with Ortiz serving as the first *maestro* of the Real Cappella di Palazzo in 1555, passing through such major figures as de Macque, Trabaci, Falconieri, and A. Scarlatti to G. Veneziano; 3) 1707-1734, the ruinous Austrian Habsburg Viceroyalty, which first ousted Veneziano and others in favour of F. Mancini, and then had Scarlatti and eventually Mancini brought back; 4) 1734-1860, the enlightened Spanish Bourbon domination, with brief interruptions, begun under the young Carlo VII of Naples who reigned until his return to Spain in 1759 as Carlo III. This was a progressive anti-clerical period of reforms, art and artisanship, urban development, excavations and the creation of a court opera theatre. He was succeeded by Ferdinando IV, who fled Napoleon's troops just before a short-lived Republic was established in 1799. Restored to the throne in June of that year, he reinstated the musicians who had been destituted, and exiled “republicans” such as Cimarosa, while somehow making an exception for Paisiello, made responsible for opera and sacred music in 1804. The documentation goes a little beyond that, with the second restoration of the Bourbons in 1815.

Ambrosio is writing an Italian thesis, so she doesn't need to say that the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies ended in 1860 with annexation to the Kingdom of Sardinia and both

ended in 1861 when Italy was unified. The book outlines a complex course of events in one the most cosmopolitan city-states of Europe, and makes this introduction quite interesting. The table of contents lists every paragraph of every subsection of every chapter, which is helpful. Some 'paragraphs' go on for pages, and there is no reason for such poor editing. The useful tables, index of names, and full bibliography also guide the reader through such an immense subject.

Barbara Sachs

HANDEL & HIS FRIENDS

Ellen T Harris *George Frideric Handel: A Life with Friends*. Norton, 2014. xxiv + 454pp, £27.99. ISBN 978 0 393 08895 3

I'd read half the book before several friends persuaded me to come to a launch at the Handel House: thank you Emma, Howard and Hugh. I was told that Ellen Harris would be delighted to see me, and we certainly got on very well, from arrival till departure, though I'm normally quite shy with distinguished academics. We deviated from Handel to her edition of *Dido & Aeneas*: she got in before me – Oxford UP 1987 with elements, including copyright, going back to Edward Dent, which must have annoyed Ellen. I was her unnamed copy editor, and I tried to adjust a few specific oddities going back to 1925.⁷

This is one of the most interesting books on Handel I have read (including the author's earlier ones). It is an account of his contacts with friends and neighbours, located on an excerpt of a 1747 map which shows a cluster of his close friends, none of whom were professional musicians. It was appropriate that the UK launch of the book was in Handel's house. The basis of the book came from Ellen (and her husband's) regular visits to London for some 30 years, where she got to know the vast range of archives listed in 19 pages. This could have been intensely boring, both to the author and the reader, but in fact it adds so much to the life of the characters included that it is fascinating to read. Ellen makes a point of giving short descriptions (not analyses) to some of the pieces, for instance HWV 392 (op. 2/3) on pp. 124-5 – one paragraph over a page long which brings the piece to life. Has Ellen written programme notes like that? If not, she should take any opportunity!

The result was not a dense, learned and barely readable account but a series of overlapping themes. Each chapter lists events year by year across the upper part of the pages until they stop and the rest of the chapter uses the full page: it does make reading more useful if you read the annals. The writing itself has a brilliance and readability that one doesn't expect in a study of archives. It's an amazing compilation of tiny snippets into a series of the aspects that surround Handel's London life. I wonder how much of the documentation will be included in whatever the

title of the third edition of the *Documentary Biography* will be called. This should have a wide range of readers who are interested in London of the second quarter of the 18th century as well as Handelians: buy it or entice a present at Christmas.

The appendix on Currency, Living Costs, Wages, and Fees is fascinating. The smallest value, 1d, got you one lobster, a lb of butter 4d, a lb of sugar 5d, a lb of salmon 8d. For a shilling you could buy a London mop, a pound of tobacco, or a libretto to the opera.⁸ A season ticket for the opera cost £20. The total cost for an orchestra of 38 players at the Foundling Hospital *Messiah* performance on May 15, 1754, was £19 8s. 6d. Handel received £600 from the Royal Treasury, irrespective of profits from performance, but the salary for the top male or female opera singer in 1721-21 was £1,500.

There is a misprint on p. 83: the 1724 list is repeated from page 81. This will no doubt have been corrected. As with the Kelly book, this is also an advanced copy, with ooo as the page number for each chapter and various other omissions, especially the index. A pile of complete copies were offered for sale, but the publisher's representative spoke very firmly before I could ask for a complete one, so I thought I'd better not stir things. Kelly's *Capturing music* was similarly a shame, and I only discovered by reading a review that his book had coloured illustrations, so probably the Handel did as well.

HANDEL THE RHETORICIAN

Judy Tarling *Handel's Messiah A Rhetorical Guide* Corda Music, 2014. xvi + 217pp, £30.00 [Available from orders@cordaus.co.uk, Amazon Market & Punnett Press]

I've never been quite so enthusiastic as Judy, but this, as well as her previous books, are always an inspiration. Personally, what she writes in a sans-serif font when explaining the point of the many musical quotes is what impresses me, though I'd welcome more comments on integration between strings and voices: it's so often that players start a piece. And with regards to starting, there should be bar numbers, since the examples don't always begin at the beginning!

But the more I read, the more I suspected that the criteria are narrow. *Messiah* is based almost entirely on Hebrew text: the Koine of first-century Greek New Testament was not particularly sophisticated in Aristotelian rhetoric. Latin is a second-hand language, taking principles from classical Greek, then rhetoricians. What rhetoric did Handel learn? There is evidence of choir-boys learning rhetoric in John Butt's *Music education and the art of performance in the German Baroque* study of German Baroque. Rhetorical principles came from learning how to shape German-texted music as well as Latin: Catholics would not have sung German in church, but Lutherans, although choirs might have sung some Latin, were mainly

7. There is no direct competition with my edition; we only publish score and parts – and ours is 20 pages shorter than the OUP vocal score and it costs less – worked on it over Christmas with proof reading by Robert Oliver on holiday near by with daily phoning to Peter Holman. The performance by Richard Hickox was in early 1995.

8. The lb (pound weight) is normally 0.4536 kg, except for troy weight, which is 0.3732 kg

influenced by Luther's Bible, important linguistically because of the bringing together of high and low German. Handel must have learnt some rhetoric in his youth, but German and English enabled him to react to the Old Testament's parallel statements, for instance.

In general, though, what I saw in the examples seemed obvious, and string players without text can, with good ensembles who pay attention to the sort of shapes singers offer, create the shape of the phrases that matter. Obviously, accents are stressed and, when appropriate, going down is *diminuendo*, going up is *crescendo*, but with flexibility that experienced baroque players will usually instinctively understand (unless there's a conductor who avoids the obvious). The choice of climax for the singers is to decide which stress is the crucial one.

What frustrates me in Judy's book is the way short ideas are offered rather than whole sections. The first appearance of a singer (tenor) in *Messiah* is "Comfort ye". But it begins, not with the singer, but with three bars of strings that hold together the music until the *secco recit* appears.⁹ The tenor begins with a three-note phrase B A #G (the piece is in E major). The phrase comes in after two minims rest on a top E, and the three notes spread further up then drop to the same E, using nine notes. This pair of phrases is repeated, followed by a closing phrase not needing more weight. The first 11 bars have the three-note version of "Comfort ye" five times for the violins, twice for the singer (the first note being elongated the second time); "saith your God" is sung twice (bar 12 & 13), each with three crotchets, moving in an E major scale down a third from #G to E. The strings echo with "comfort ye" twice, which the listener will contrast with the "saith your God", whose firmness isn't taken on by the players. I carried on to the end, but it was too boring to write, though readers might look at the rest for themselves.

I'm puzzled by the index of movements (p. 211). "Comfort ye" is listed for pp. 35, 46, 47, 54, 70, 115, 163.

[11] "The performer (in this case the tenor soloist) should not show excessive ingenuity but merely hint at emotion, not developing it too fully yet. The audience is at the start of a long journey." (cf Quintilian IV I 60)

35 merely tells us that it is an *Oraculum* (quoting God's words or commandments). But the Latin word has a wider range of meanings, and "saith your God" is adequate not to need any more limited meaning of the word.

47 [46 is listed, but I may have missed something]. "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness" – why shouldn't an anonymous figure appear? Does *antinomasia* help?

54 [nothing]

70 [in fact 71]. It is good that Judy explicitly comments that the four beamed quavers with slurs and dots notated in bar one should be repeated whenever appropriate subsequently.

115. The vocal dynamics *f* at the beginning of bars 24 & 25 in my edition are irrelevant. They are thinner than normal

dynamics, and the repetition at the beginning of two consecutive bars is odd. I've checked the two main MSS and a variety of later editions and nothing is visible, nor is it in the vocal score. I guess that it must be a mistaken proof correction.

162-3. The Overture ends with an *aposiopesis* – "a form of speech by which the Orator through some affection, as either of feare, anger, sorrow, bashfulness or such like, breaketh his speech before it be all ended". But there are several ways in which it might be "Handeled". If the repeat is made, precede the B major chord with slow-down and stronger pressure than first time, then go back to strict tempo for bar 95 and the first half of 96, with a slight slow-down for the two crotchets before the final chord. I prefer that to a longer slow-down, but the more familiar the ensemble is with each-other, the more it can be flexible, and if an older-fashioned style of performance with full symphony orchestra is present, then a more imposing pause would be more effective.

I don't understand thinking seriously about this or any early work without a proper score, though vocal scores may be easier to hold on the platform. (But if singers and players can perform the whole work by memory, there are obvious advantages.) My guess is that most of my comments can be expressed in terms of Latin, but not many will recognise the more obscure of them – and I did read Cicero and Quintilian in my youth! Unfortunately, the ancient theorists didn't discuss music in terms of music, and if they had, it wouldn't have related to music of Handel's time anyway. Most of this can fit with classical rhetoric, but as far as I can see, it doesn't need it. Judy is clearly inspired by the ancient and renaissance ideas, and some will benefit from it. I've benefited from the book without worrying about rhetoric – others might get more out of it.

For review next February

Secular Polyphony 1380-1480 edited by David Fallows (*Musica Britannica* 97). Stainer and Bell, 2014. xliii + pp313, £120.00

Tim Shephard *Echoing Helicon: Music, Art and Identity in the Este Studioli, 1440-1530*. Oxford UP, 2014. ix + 170pp, £29.99. ISBN 978 0 19 993613 7

Tim Eggington *The Advancement of Music in Enlightenment England*. The Boydell Press, 2014. xiii + 303pp, £60.00. ISBN 978 1 84383 906 4

Ralph Kirkpatrick *Letter of the American Harpsichordist and Scholar* Ralph Kirkpatrick, edited by Meredith Kirkpatrick xv + 186pp, £xx.xx ISBN 978 1 58046 501 4

9. "Comfort ye..." is a fine example of how the strings can set the shape before the singer appears, but the singer needs to be aware of how he is relating to the orchestra, and the orchestra needs to know when to go its own way!

SOUNDING PITCH IN THOMAS TALLIS, MASS 'PUER NATUS EST NOBIS'

Roger Bowers

Concerning the manner of vocal scoring appropriate for English ecclesiastical music before c.1700, it is gratifying to find Trevor Selwood sharing some of my reservations concerning the views expressed by Simon Ravens.¹⁰ Perhaps further debate may best be postponed until there has been time for comprehensive study and digestion of Mr Ravens' full-length book, now just published. However, it does seem that my presentation of a contrasting case may not have possessed all the clarity it should, since in at least one instance it has already been somewhat misunderstood.

Much as I appreciate the kind remarks made by D. James Ross in the course of his review of the recorded performance by The Cardinal's Music of Thomas Tallis's Mass 'Puer natus est nobis', the ideas which I propounded cannot be used to support any claim that the low pitch and vocal scoring adopted for this recording were those 'intended by the composer'.¹¹ Indeed, any notion that the pitch properly required for modern performance may be merely 'the "correct" untransposed pitch' of the music makes no real sense. The unaccompanied vocal music of this period was indeed furnished with clefs. To the composer the choice of clef-configuration involved absorption and reflection of erudite matters of mode and tonic, but to contemporary performers the role of the clefs was very limited. Just as in plainsong, they prescribed no more than the location on the staff of the diatonic semitones; in no sense did they convey any concept of actual sounding pitch. As mentioned once before, 'Even in

avant-garde Italy, so late as 1610 a theorist and teacher so authoritative as Adriano Banchieri could tell a pupil only that the sole job of the clef was to disclose to the singer whether the part he was looking at lay roughly low, middling or high, and whether *b* was flat or natural'.¹²

Given the nature of contemporary notation, therefore, no issues of a 'transposed' or of an 'untransposed' edition or rendering arise. This music no more had a written pitch than it had a written tempo. It reached its singers without prescription of pitch; for its performance their director identified by inspection its vocal scoring, and then applied the pitch-level conventional at the time. Consequently, while any scholarly edition will always need to present the music as it appeared on the original page,¹³ the job of any modern director in preparing a performing edition or an actual performance is not to 'transpose' or 'leave untransposed', but to identify and then to apply an appropriate sounding pitch for music whose original notation actually conveyed none. Any claim that by means of the simple conversion of the original clefs into modern (as if they were somehow perfect analogues) there is established a sounding pitch that is 'untransposed' and is 'correct' represents quite a bundle of misunderstandings.

In the case of unaccompanied vocal music of this period that was intended for ecclesiastical performance, the sounding pitch that is appropriate is that which replicates – as best we can determine – that produced by the singers by whom the composer envisaged its performance being undertaken. To accomplish this from so great a distance in time, all we can do in the case of any single piece of music is make an educated inference from five bodies of information. These are its overall compass; the differentials of pitch between the component voice-parts; the constitution of the body of singers for whom it was written (if known; if not, the vocal/choral constitution then generally prevalent); the liturgical role (if any) of the text; and any other information that appears to be relevant. In most cases the fusion of the information so obtained determines for the piece a plausible vocal scoring; the identification of an appropriate sounding pitch then results from that (rather than the other way about). This being not an exact science, the result may well incorporate leeway of a semitone or so.

Doubtless performers would be glad if the scholars could offer as the solution to questions of pitch just some simple rules of thumb: 'down a major second' / 'up a minor third' / 'down a perfect fourth' / 'leave it be'.

10 Respectively, Trevor Selwood, 'Falsetto sopranos, falsetto altos and falsetto countertenors in Restoration England', *Early Music Review* [hereafter *EMR*], 161 (June, 2014), pp. 15-17; Roger Bowers, 'Chains of (rehabilitated) gold', *EMR*, 159 (April, 2014), pp. 10-17; Simon Ravens, letter, *EMR*, 160 (June 2014), p. 44. To clear up some earlier possible inclarities: (1) I am concerned with the identification only of sounding pitch and not also of vocal technique; adult male singing up to around modern *c* and *d* can indeed be yielded by several different vocal means, each individually identifiable, but these distinctions are not relevant to my purpose and I use the term 'falsetto alto' loosely (for lack of any better) to advert to any of them. To this extent, therefore, my work does not impinge on that of Mr Ravens, nor (I suspect) his on mine. (2) When writing 'Contemporary documentary sources identified as available the four timbres of boy treble, falsetto alto, tenor, and bass' I had in mind the Chichester Cathedral ordinance of 1526 in the immediate context of which this observation was made, and of which – within the larger context of the manner in which composers had evolved five-voice scoring from three-voice, c.1450-75 – no other interpretation seems plausible. (3) In the context of music for the church service, the compressed four-timbre five-voice scoring prevalent c.1600, with doubling of second timbre down, overall compass of 19-20 notes and differential of a third between the middle two timbres, patently differed radically from that of its more expansive predecessor of c.1500, with doubling of third timbre down, overall compass of 22-23 notes, and differential of a fifth between the middle two timbres. This fact, and its significance, is not compromised by observation that the manner in which the first pattern of scoring evolved out of the second is not yet wholly clear; however, this present article makes some contribution to the elucidation of that evolution.

11 *EMR*, 160 (June 2014), pp. 24-5.

12 Italian text given in *EMR*, 159 (April 2014), p. 10 n. 3.

13 For ease of reading, modern clefs might perhaps be substituted for the original; however, these should be presented in a design different from modern so as to avoid conveying inapposite intimations of sounding pitch.

Unfortunately, the very nature of Renaissance notation precludes the generation of any such short cuts; and although certain broad patterns may be found, each piece really needs to be assessed individually in the light of the criteria discussed above. (Moreover, it may be noted that in the case of music intended for domestic performance only the first two and the last of these criteria are relevant; and these may yield more than one legitimate solution, since the performing resource for domestic music was informal and not institutionally stereotyped as was that for ecclesiastical music.)

voice:	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	overall
	C1	C1	C3	C3	C4	F4	F4	
Loquebantur d'-d"	d'-d"	d'-d"	d-g'	d-g'	f-d'	F-b	F-b	F-d"
	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	F4	F4	
Suscipe ¹⁴	c'-d"	g-c"	d-g'	c-g'	c-dd	F-b	F-a	F-d"
	C1	C2	C3	C4	F3	F4	F4	
Puer natus ¹⁵	c'-d"	g-c"	e-f'	c-f'	c-b	F-b	F-b	F-d"

A determination of the sounding pitch and vocal scoring appropriate for the Mass 'Puer natus' begins by location of the piece in an immediate context. The mass is one of three works by Tallis that share certain uncommon characteristics; the others are the motet 'Suscipe quaeso' and the setting of 'Loquebantur variis linguis', the responsory to the *capitulum* at first vespers of the feast of Pentecost.¹⁶ Thus all stand out from the rest of Tallis's output (and from most composition of their period) by being scored for performance by an ensemble of the very unusual number of seven voices;¹⁷ there is at present a scholarly consensus that each dates from the reign of Queen Mary (1553-58); and all three engage the same overall compass, being of the twenty notes written as F-d". Here, however, the similarities end, since close analysis of their respective vocal scorings discloses features rendering 'Loquebantur' rather different from the other two.

Most particularly, Tallis cast 'Loquebantur' in the predictable post-Edwardian clef-configuration of C1-C1-C3-C3-C4-F4-F4, engaging for each of the pairs of doubled voices not only the same clef but also the same compass (Table 1). Evidently he was composing for a scoring fundamentally of four distinct timbres of voice, of which the first, second and fourth were doubled; and of the identity of these voices there can be little doubt, for perforce they were essentially the same as those which

had been cultivated at the Chapel Royal (as elsewhere) in the time of Henry VIII.¹⁸

This was assured by the manner of Mary's vigorous restoration of the former Latin service. For this enterprise her concern was evident, and extended well beyond her own Chapel Royal. Of Trinity College, Cambridge, founded by Henry VIII but inaugurated during the reign of Edward VI, the initial statutes had made no provision for any chapel choir. Mary made good the omission; having initiated the building of the present chapel she founded and endowed its choir, and in a new set of statutes enshrined its existence so firmly that it survives to the present day.¹⁹ In a similar spirit she appointed her almoner and principal chaplain, Francis Mallett (himself a musical prodigy in his youth), to be both precentor of St George's Chapel, Windsor, with the job of overseeing the restoration of its choir, and Master of the Hospital of St Katherine by the Tower, with intent that he revive in this ancient foundation, prominently located adjacent to the royal castle of London, the endowed and highly reputed choral foundation which this institution had enjoyed prior to 1548.²⁰

Such enterprise was undertaken in no musical vacuum. Mary's intent was to extinguish every theological novelty inaugurated during the reign of Edward VI and to erase all memory of it; and of this objective one cardinal ingredient was the restoration of religious observance in church exactly as it had been undertaken in the time of her father. Thus paragraph 2 of the 'Acte for the Repeale of certayne Statutes made in the time of the Raigne of Kinge Edwarde the Syxthe', enacted at the second session of the parliament of October 1553, directed that with effect at the latest from 20 December 1553 all liturgical service be undertaken just as it had been practised 'in the last yere of the reigne of our late Sovereine Lorde King Henrie theight' (i.e. 29 January 1546 – 28 January 1547).²¹ In any such endeavour Mary could not do other than start with her own Chapel Royal. Following its attenuation under Edward VI she had busily revived and fully reinstated its personnel and practice; and restoration of the conduct there of the liturgy of 1546-7, in accordance with her own statute law, necessarily involved both the restoration of its capacity to sing the complex polyphony of the 1540s, and engagement of the requisite and long-established performing ensemble of boys' treble, male alto, tenor and

14 Momentarily voice V descends once to A.

15 Momentarily voice I descends once to b and once to a.

16 *Breviarium ad Usam Sarum*, ed. Francis Procter and Christopher Wordsworth, 3 vols (Cambridge, 1882-86), vol. 1, col. mii. This was the responsory also to the second lesson at Matins of Monday and of Thursday in the week of Pentecost, and to the *capitulum* at Sext on Pentecost Sunday and daily throughout the week following (*ibid.*, cols mx, mxiii, mxiv, mxv); these further instances (except perhaps for the first) seem unlikely to have attracted performance in elaborate polyphony.

17 Tallis's setting of 'Miserere nostri' was also composed for seven voices; however, its complex canonic structure sets it well apart from the three pieces considered here.

18 Edition consulted: *Thomas Tallis*, ed. P.C. Buck et al., Tudor Church Music, 10 vols (London, 1923-9), vol. 6, p. 272-5; clefs as noted in *Latin Music in British Sources c.1485-c.1610*, comp. May Hofman and John Morehen, Early English Church Music, Supplementary Volume 2 (London, 1987), p. 61.

19 Cambridge, Trinity College, MSS 'Statutes of Edward VI'; 'Statutes of Philip and Mary', p. 88 (ten chaplains, eight lay clerks, twelve choristers).

20 As Dean of Lincoln, in 1563 Mallett gave William Byrd his first adult job. C.S. Knighton, 'Mallett, Francis', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*; Roger Bowers, 'Ecclesiastical or domestic? Criteria for identification of the initial destinations of William Byrd's music to religious vernacular texts', in Richard Turbet, *William Byrd: a Research and Information Guide*, 3rd edition (New York, 2012), 134-60, pp. 151, 160 n.60; Kew, National Archives, MS SP12/7, no. 77. [p.202.]

21 1 Mary, cap. 2: *Statutes of the Realm*, 6 vols (London, 1819), vol. 4,

bass voices. (The existence of the male alto voice may be disputed by a few, but the very music itself – especially the manner in which between c.1450 and c.1475 the composition of polyphony for three voices had been expanded to that for five – appears to leave possible no understanding other than this.)

Thus the four vocal timbres for which Tallis composed 'Loquebantur' early in the reign of Mary were just those four that had constituted the late Henrician ensemble; and so it is for two boy treble, two male alto, tenor and two bass voices that for modern performance it should be scored. The sole difference from Henrician practice arose from Tallis's option largely to deploy text-repetition in preference to melisma. With this, perforce he adopted also the recent Edwardian withdrawal from capacity to render the highest treble and lowest bass pitches (as difficult to produce for syllabic projection), so embracing both a concomitant rise in the pitch-level realised by the basses and a reduction in overall compass from 23 notes to 20.²² Any modern director will need to determine a pitch which best suits such voices; the 20-note overall compass A flat – f' appears satisfactory.

Meanwhile (and unlike 'Loquebantur'), in terms of clef-configuration both 'Suscipe quaeso' and the Mass engage the 'terraced' pattern of C1-C2-C3-C4-C5/F3-F4-F4.²³ These two works are indeed of very different styles; however, so strikingly unusual is this particular number of voices and configuration of clefs that it seems impossible not to associate them closely in terms both of place and of time. Also unlike 'Loquebantur', 'Suscipe' and the mass both engage not four but five (perhaps actually six) timbres of voice. The sixth and seventh parts are identical, each within the written range F – b (clef F4). The third and fourth parts are closely similar, but the fourth, in clef C4 with range c – g', engages a range extending beneath that of the third, in clef C3 and written as d – g'. The two upper parts diverge sufficiently to suggest that each was indeed to be sung by an individual vocal timbre, the top part in the range c' – d" (clef C1) and the second, using a much extended lower register, in the range g – c" (clef C2). It is clear, therefore, that for 'Suscipe' and the Mass 'Puer natus' Tallis was envisaging a performing resource actually unconventional for Mary's Chapel Royal.

It is possible, without departing too far distantly into realms of fantasy, to propose a hypothetical scenario into which these features readily fit. Although to support these claims there lacks the least shred of firm documentary evidence, it has been widely supposed (1) that 'Suscipe' was composed as a private domestic motet apposite to the reconciliation of the English church to Rome pronounced by Cardinal Pole on 30 November 1554;²⁴ and (2) that the

mass was written for performance at Christmas 1554, a year in which the text belonging to the underlying cantus firmus, 'Puer natus est nobis' (the introit at High Mass of the Day on the Feast of the Nativity) was especially apposite, as expressive of hopeful expectancy in the light of the queen's supposed pregnancy with an heir and successor.²⁵ It is equally considered that the expanded vocal scoring common to both pieces arose from their having been written for performance by the combined chapels of Queen Mary and of her consort, King Philip.²⁶

Though undocumented, all of these suppositions do appear perfectly credible. Indeed, it has been noted independently how Philip 'would hear mass either in a private chapel or in one of the chapels royal [sic], with his own party meeting the queen's so that both could process together to hear mass'.²⁷ Philip, as prince of Spain, King of Naples and Duke of Milan (among many other titles), maintained a household at this time largely peripatetic; indeed, when he first reached England in July 1554 he expected to remain for no longer than merely a week or two before departing for the Netherlands.²⁸ Even if his personal chapel at this time had included boys' voices, which seems unlikely, it is probable that they would not have accompanied him to England. It may be supposed, therefore, that this peripatetic Continental chapel probably could offer some permutation from adult male soprano, haute-contre, tenor, and bass voices.

The full manner of the distribution of voices within the two choirs to form a seven-part ensemble, though readily constructible hypothetically,²⁹ is immaterial here. What does matter is that while the basses of both choirs sounded in the same register at the foot of the ensemble (voices VI and VII), it would be the English boy trebles who took the topmost part, written as c' – d" in clef C1 (voice I). There was no cause for the English participants to sing these two items at any pitch other than that usual for their rendering of such a piece as 'Loquebantur'; and so for 'Suscipe' and – most significantly in the present context – for the Mass 'Puer natus', any modern director will likewise identify as the appropriate sounding pitch the compass A flat – f' applicable also to 'Loquebantur'.

penitential psalms, would resonate strongly with the character of the protestant 1570s.

25 'Puer natus est nobis, et filius datus est nobis, cuius imperium super humerum eius; et vocabitur nomen eius magni consilii angelus' ('There has been born to us a boy, there has been given to us a son, whose authority is upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called "messenger of high counsel"').

26 Tallis, *Mass 'Puer natus'*, ed. Dunkley and Wulstan, preface; certain of these proposals are there attributed to Jeremy Noble. For Philip's chapel arrangements in 1554 see Luis Robledo, 'Music under the Spanish Habsburgs', in Richard Schaal *et al.*, 'Habsburg', *New Grove Dictionary*, revised edition.

27 Glyn Redworth, 'Philip, King of England and Ireland', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

28 *Ibid.* In the event, Philip was present in England from 20 July 1554 until the beginning of September 1555, and from 18 March 1557 to 6 July 1557.

29 I: England – boy trebles; II: Spain – male sopranos; III: England – altos; IV: Spain – haute-contres; V: England and Spain – tenors; VI: Spain – basses; VII: England – basses.

22 See Bowers, 'Chains of (rehabilitated) gold', pp. 12–14.

23 Editions consulted: *Thomas Tallis: Suscipe quaeso*, ed. Sarah Cobbold (Oxford Imprint: Oxford, 1981); *Thomas Tallis, Mass 'Puer natus est nobis'*, reconstructed and edited by Sally Dunkley and David Wulstan, revised edition (Oxford Imprint: Oxford, 1982).

24 Tallis published this piece in *Cantiones sacrae* of 1575. Twenty years after its composition, few – if any – would have recalled such origins, and its text, drawing much from the idiom of the seven

been written for forces matching exactly those which could be offered by the English Chapel Royal alone: two trebles, two altos, one tenor, two basses. Clearly Tallis composed this just for his own Chapel Royal singers, adopting a style redolent of the late Henrician (as compatible with royal wish and legislation); and it may be thought possible that it came into being as a 'trial run' at writing in seven parts. In 1554 the feast of Pentecost fell on Sunday 13 May, a date when Philip's arrival in England had not yet occurred but was known to be imminent. It thus fell at a point when Tallis was aware that composition in seven parts for the combined chapels would be required, but before he could become aware of the exact vocal constitution offered by Philip's chapel. His prototype was thus composed for the forces with which he was familiar; and of the particular text that he chose for this endeavour, the first three words – 'They were speaking in diverse languages' – may perhaps represent his privately sardonic response to the prospect of soon having to manage, at least on some occasions, a very diverse ensemble of singers speaking, in addition to English, not only Flemish but a daunting selection of other languages used within the Habsburg Empire. His later compositions for the combined choirs – 'Suscipe' and the Mass – he then undertook after he had gained acquaintance with the singers of Philip's chapel, incorporating their particular manner of ensemble and timbres of voice; and his retention of an overall compass written as F – d" indicates his expectation that the combined choirs would engage a level of sounding pitch no different from that produced by the English Chapel Royal alone for such a piece as 'Loquebantur'.

So the current fad for choice of a far depressed performing pitch for items of English music of the period c.1550-1650 – especially sacred music – seems rather difficult to understand. Certainly it does the music no favours whatever, as is readily disclosed by exposure to the Stygian pitch of this performance by The Cardinal's Music of the Mass 'Puer natus', scored for AATTBarBB. Indeed, right at the very start the strange pitch into which the Gloria intonation is forced appears to be a sure sign that something may be far from right. Nevertheless, it's a free country, and if performing groups wish to present 16th- and 17th-century English sacred music to the public in such a fashion they are, of course, at perfect liberty to do so. But such renderings need to be recognised and presented as the consequence of modern arrangement and modern taste, applied to an original that its composer expected to sound very differently.

BORDER MARCHES EMF

IMPORTANT NOTICE

The course advertised for David Skinner's workshop is NOT now on 7 Feb.

It is now on

31 JANUARY

The HILLIARD ENSEMBLE

The Hilliard Ensemble was founded in 1974, initially with David James, Paul Elliott, Errol Girdlestone and Paul Hillier. By the 1990s David James survived and the other three singers were Rogers Covey-Crump, John Potter and Gordon Jones. In 1998 John Potter moved to York University, to be replaced by Steven Harrold. David has survived the 40 years and I've known Rogers somewhat earlier because a girl in the BBC Music Library watched out to wave to him every morning as he walked to the morning service – that was probably in the late '60s. Initially, the repertoire seemed naturally to be early, but they expanded to a wide repertoire, most notably with the Norwegian saxophonist – it is very difficult to surmise which listeners loved it, which hated it! They have also favoured Arvo Pärt.

This month is their farewell. We've a concert locally in Cambridge – King's College, Dec. 6, 8.15, with Jan Garbarek performing *Officium novum*, the final performance anywhere! But the very final one is at the Wigmore Hall on Dec 20, with Perotin's *Viderunt omnes* (one of the three pieces around 1200 that need four singers) at the beginning, Sherynham's *Ah gentle Jesu* and three late medieval pieces at the end, and contemporary music interspersed. However, both concerts are sold out, though if the weather is atrocious, it might be worth turning up! But for consolation, why not buy *Transeamus*, which seems to have crossed from somewhere in transit and I'm now writing the review for the third time!

Transeamus The Hilliard Ensemble
ECM New Series 2408 (or 481 1106)

This begins with three items in honour of Thomas of Canterbury (martyred 29 Dec 1170), the first also having a simultaneous text for Thomas of Dover. The Latin is full of rhymes, some structural, some perhaps just for the excess of it, but generally related to short musical phrases. Poems and music for Thomas a Becket survived until Britain became non-catholic. *Anna mater Maris Christi* and *O pulcherrima mulierum* are by John Plummer (1410-83): the former is a hymn in honour of Jesus's mother and grandmother, the latter could be an erotic statement from the *Song of Songs* but obviously isn't. *Stella caeli* by Walter Lambe (1450/51-c.1499) is a prayer for safety from war and the plague to Jesus and his mother. William Cornysh (1468-1523) is probably the easiest to hear of the composers except for Sherynham's *Ah gentle Jesu*. The Lambe and Cornysh are included in *The Eton Choirbook*, either in *Musica Britannica*, which now seems to be in very short notes, or in the coloured facsimile, which is about as legible as one can expect. Sherynham seems to be the favourite among the singers at present. There are also simpler carols, mostly in English: *Lullay lullow*, *There is no rose*, *Marvel not Joseph*, *Ah, my dear son* + *Ecce quod natura*. A calm ending to the Hilliard's retirement – though this was recorded in 2012, so they may well be further issues awaiting release. Congratulations! CB

Early Viols, Lyra Viol & Abel Duets

Robert Oliver

A Spagna in the Works Alison Crum viols, Roy Marks lute, guitar 72'18"

Available on most download sites, and on disc from alison@alisoncrum.co.uk

A warm welcome to this recording which presents the sounds of late 15th and early 16th Century music for viols on instruments faithful to the period in every possible detail: construction (bent tops, no sound-posts) and strung in plain gut. The result is a delight, through the eloquence of the music itself, the variety and beauty of the instrumental sounds, and the musicality of the playing.

Alison Crum has been at the forefront of viol playing in England for many years, and has built up a substantial collection of viols appropriate to the period of the music to be played on them. This recording features five instruments, playing music from the very end of the 15th century, the first half of the 16th, and some later 16th century music for viola bastarda. She plays treble, alto, tenor and two different bass viols, one modelled on a mid-16th century Ciciliano bass, the other a slightly later Gaspar de Salo. Roy Marks' delightful accompaniments and two solo pieces are played on a lute copied from a late 16th century example, save one played on a guitar from about the same period.

The music, mostly by Italian and Flemish composers, with some English (Henry VIII, Dunstable) includes instrumental renditions of vocal originals (*Vergine bella* by Tromboncino, *Ancor che col partire* by de Rore) but mostly pieces written for instruments, some familiar, much new to me. *La Spagna* of course figures prominently, with versions by Festa, Ortiz, and Anon, and *Ancor che col partire* recurs in variations by Bassano and Rognoni. There is a perceptible unity in the programming, with pleasing and subtle variety in the styles: from sprightly rhythms in the Ortiz, the *Bassa Danza* and the two anon *La Spagnas* from an early Italian Manuscript, to the beautifully lyrical *In die tribulationis meae* by Francesco Landartitis.

Ortiz provides the largest single number of pieces and perhaps the greatest variety with his *Recercadas* on basses, and *O felici occhi miei*. This recording is a rare, not to say unique opportunity to hear his music on instruments truly contemporary with his publication, and it duly provides the highlights on a disc full of pleasures.

WHAT IS A LYRA VIOL?

The booklet notes and the subtitle for the Tobias Hume recording reviewed in June 2014, p. 35 perpetuate some confusion surrounding the instrument called the "Lyra Viol", stating that "the word 'lyra' indicates the preponderance of chordal textures".

It's a fabulous recording, and I don't think this issue is important enough to detract from anyone's enjoyment of it. However, it is worth pointing out that the early publications seem to make it quite clear that the word "Lyra" is applied to the music written for a viol (usually but not necessarily a bass) tuned to one of three or four tunings at first, and many more as the century progressed. I don't know of it being used to describe tablature music in standard tuning.

Robert Jones' 1601 book of songs offers alternatives for accompaniment, as he puts it, "set out for the lute, the Bass viol the playne way, or the Basse by tablature after the leero fashion." I believe this to be the first time the term appears in print. The accompaniments are in what came to be known as Bandora set.

Hume's First book (1605) *Captain Humes Musically Humors* (usually referred to, annoyingly, as *The First Part of Ayres*) is devoted to music for "Viole de Gambo alone" mostly in tablature, and all, save a few pieces, in standard tuning. He distinguishes those pieces at the end of the book (also in the Bandora set) as for the "Leero Viol".

Ferrabosco calls his pieces in his 1609 publication *Lessons for the Lyra Violl* although the title page just calls them "Viols". He uses three tunings, none of which are standard.

Corkine seems to use the term to distinguish bass viol in standard tuning from lyra viol in the variant tunings: the title of his first book (1610) "Ayres to sing and play to the Lute and Basse Violl. With Pavins, Galliards, Almains and Corantos for the Lyra Viol" – the latter are all in lyra tunings, none in standard tunings. His second book, two years later is even more specific: "... Ayres, some to Sing and Play to the Basse-Violl alone: others to be sung to the Lute and Basse Viol. With new corantos Set to the Lyra viol". Again, these pieces are all in lyra tunings, none in standard tuning.

Playford's 1651 "A Musically Banquet" has its first of three sections devoted to "Excellent new Lessons for the Lira viol, set to severall new tunings". They are what he calls "Lira tuning" (which is the Bandora set) Harpway sharp and Harpway flat. The publication also includes pieces "for one Treble and Basse viol", and he gives those tunings as well.

The Manchester Gamba Book (c1660) describes the standard tuning as "Violl way", but doesn't use the term "Lyra" for the other tunings, it calls them "The Second way" etc.

There is plenty of music for viol in tablature in standard tuning, and as far as I know, none of it is referred to as for Lyra Viol. So the term "Lyra viol" is used in Hume's time

not to mean an instrument, though instruments have recently been made with sympathetic strings (have any survived from the 17th century?), but to describe music, necessarily in tablature, to be played on a viol of any size, in a 'lyra' tuning. By the time of Thomas Mace this could have changed to mean a specific type of instrument, as he, describing the requirements of a good 'store' as he calls it, you need three lyra viols, "lusty smart-speaking viols... which will serve likewise for Division Viols very properly." Although he describes lyra tunings and includes a piece in "Harp-way-tuning-sharp", he doesn't use the term again. And then this fashion moved on, leaving behind a body of music which continues to at least fascinate, and at best, enchant us.

C.F. ABEL – "PEMBROKE DUETS"

Carl Friedrich Abel *Second Pembroke Connection: Four duets for viola da gamba and violoncello. A3:1-4* Edited by Thomas Fritsch Edition Güntersberg (G250), 2014. €17.50

Carl Friedrich Abel *Second Pembroke Connection: Four duets for viola da gamba and violoncello. Vol. 1: Sonatas 3-7 A2:42-46* Edited by Thomas Fritsch Edition Güntersberg (G253), 2014. €21.50

Carl Friedrich Abel *Second Pembroke Connection: Four duets for viola da gamba and violoncello. Vol. 2: Sonatas 8-10, 13-14 A2:47-51* Edited by Thomas Fritsch Edition Güntersberg (G254) 2014. €21.50

These are the sonatas described in Peter Holman's book 'Life after Death', published in 2010, as in a MS belonging 'to the Countess of Pembroke... in a private collection, and... at present inaccessible.' With his typical thoroughness, he describes them as fully as he can from the description in the auctioneer's catalogue, and includes a reproduction from that catalogue of a page of one of the sonatas in Abel's writing. Now, thanks to this publication from Edition Güntersberg, four years later, we can see for ourselves that they are indeed important, not only for completeness, but as a valuable addition to the repertoire.

All the virtues of these publishers are present, with the Gainsborough portrait which also features on the cover of 'Life after Death' on the front cover and the famous 1787 caricature on the back cover – a beautifully exaggerated portrait of the composer, but a carelessly depicted instrument and a bow grip which looks suspiciously over-hand! The ten sonatas are in three volumes: the eight sonatas for gamba and continuo are in volumes one and two; and the third contains the four duets for gamba and cello, presumed to have been written for the Countess, Abel's pupil, and her philandering husband, who played the 'cello, and I'll deal with this volume first.

Of the four duets, two, one with two movements and one with three, are in D major, two in G major, each with three movements, usually Allegro, Andante, Minuet. The music is charming: melodious and at an intermediate technical level, ascending occasionally above the frets (no

higher than d' above the open top string) and with few, very easily fingered chords. They are an excellent introduction to this style, and a further advantage is that they are all playable on the tenor viol as they stand, only once or twice needing to accommodate an occasional F sharp or cadential low D). Tenor viol players looking for music which is very attractive should snap this up. They are genuine duets, with the themes shared between the two instruments, the cello part notated in tenor clef (although that should not be a problem for bass viol players). Gamba parts are supplied in transposing treble clef, as the original, and in alto clef. It is excellent quality and value at €16.50.

The two further volumes in the series are numbered separately. Volume one contains sonatas 3 – 7, volume two 8 – 10 and 13 – 14. Numbers 1 and 2, and 11 and 12 are the four duets in the other volume. Parts are again provided to allow for both clef preferences, adding a realised continuo part. Again, excellent quality and value at €21.50 each.

These sonatas are somewhat more demanding technically, but still presumably written for Lady Pembroke, as there are a number of fingerings added. For those who have Peter Holman's book, *Death after Life*, plate 14 shows a page of the 1st sonata in E major. The following sonatas are in turn E flat major (the adagio of which is in A flat major), g minor, B flat major, F major, G major, two in D major, and the final one in A major. All ten sonatas are in three movements, Allegro, Adagio, Minuet. They are a little more technically demanding than the duets, they stick to the same range, although her Ladyship appears to have been able to manage a high e' in the A major sonata. Since this is the last in the manuscript, and if they appear in the order in which they were composed, perhaps this shows her technical advances. These sonatas could also be played on the tenor viol, and are more interesting musically and technically. The bowings and fingerings are particularly interesting – staccato-marked, repeated semi-quavers under a slur (presumably pulsed rather than spiccato) and some sliding, which perhaps reflects Abel's skills as a cellist. There are still only a few chords as in the duets, and the movements tend to be longer.

There are excellent introductions by the editor, Thomas Fritsch, who considers them late works (there is no external evidence for their date of composition), and cites modernist tendencies in the bowing, fingering, and in the keys employed, to demonstrate this. The power of the music is undeniable, and although not in the same technical league (particularly the chordal demands) as some of his other solo music, it is demanding enough to play well, and certainly worthy of a good player's attention. Peter Holman says that 'even in the simplest piece Abel's craftsmanship is always impeccable'. Teaching pieces these undoubtedly were, and should be again today, but they are still beautiful music, which, thanks to this excellent publication, can now be heard again.

LONDON CONCERTS

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Pleasure garden to-ings & fro-ings

London's early opera-going crowd were treated to two Handel operas and one Purcell semi-opera during the period under review, starting with the return of English National Opera's vintage (1985) production of *Xerxes* after a ten-year hiatus (15 Sept). Nicholas Hytner's staging, which sets the complex romantic to-ings and fro-ings in an 18th century Pleasure Garden, wears its age well. The opening scene has the hapless Persian Emperor Xerxes singing one of Handel's most famous arias (*Ombra mai fù*) to his beloved tree. It was given added pathos by the historic throw-forward of being sung next to Roubiliac's statue of Handel, but inscribed with the name of Timotheus, the Court singer to Alexander the Great, who was the destroyer of the palace of Xerxes' descendent, Darius III some 300 years later. Alice Coote took the title role, her slithering up to notes in *Ombra mai fù* giving due warning that this was not necessarily to be prime Handelian singing – moments of distinct wallowing, possibly against conductor Michael Hofstetter's wishes, reinforced this initial view. But it was certainly prime Handelian acting and character portrayal, as Coote dominated the proceedings. The best singing came from Sarah Tynan as Romilda, Rhian Lois as Atalanta and Neal Davies as Ariodates. The staging reflects the 18th century fascination with curiosities, including things Persian, the ashen faced and black clad flunkies being just one of the other memorable visual aspects. The ENO house band is getting increasingly competent at period performance of Handel operas, although I still find the harpsichord continuo a bit too elaborate for my taste.

Ottone: complexities and twists

The splendid surroundings of the Hackney Empire was the setting for English Touring Opera presentation of Handel's *Ottone* (18 October). The libretto is based on an amalgam of three generations of historic Ottos, descendants of Henry the Fowler, founder of the 10th century Ottonian Saxon Holy Roman Empire. Otto II married a Byzantine princess, Theophanu, who turned out to be niece of a usurper rather than the expected daughter of a legitimate Emperor. Handel's *Ottone* and Teofane are loosely based on these characters, although much of the rest of the plot has even looser historic connections. But it all adds up to the usual Handelian complexities and twists, ending with the inevitable switch from potential collective murder to living happily ever after, as they all seemed to do in the world of 18th century opera. Despite the plot's promise in reflecting an interesting period in European history, Handel provides very little real dramatic action, the emphasis being on the development of the various characters. The set (an imposing decorated apse cleaved into two parts) had a few oddities, not least in being distinctly Byzantine, despite the fact that the Byzantine princess had come to the Saxon

court, not the other way round. In several of its guises, the deconstructed apse restricted the view of the stage and, most curiously, was reformed into what was supposed to be the inside of a cave at night – but here flooded with strong spotlights.

Jonathan Peter Kenny has one of the most bizarre conducting styles I have ever seen; an unattractively manic (and unfortunately spot-lit) whirling of arms with frequent turns towards the audience. It is difficult not to ponder whether this has more to do with self promotion than serious musical direction. Perhaps as a result, there were several unsteady moments, although these will no doubt reduce as the show tours the country, as will the occasional intonation issues from the ETO's own Old Street Band. Vocally the cast was strong, although all three female singers wielded inappropriately unrestrained vibratos. Nonetheless, Louise Kemény was an impressive Teofane, both as an actor and singer – her *Falsa imagine* (sung in English) was lovely. Countertenors Clint van der Linde and Andrew Radley, bass-baritone Grant Doyle had more authentic Handelian voices.

Middle Temple fairies

It is always tricky to know how to perform Purcell's music for *The Fairy Queen*. Glyndebourne's spectacular (and five-hour long) 2009 staging included all the spoken dialogue. It was wonderful watching the bemused faces of the Glyndebourne audience as they endured 45 minutes of rather hack spoken dialogue before the music really got going. Thomas Guthrie's imaginative 2011 production for English Touring Opera set Purcell's music within the life and fanciful Shakespearian paintings of the troubled Victorian artist Richard Dadd. Thomas Guthrie has now had completely different goes at presenting Purcell's music, this time in the Middle Temple Hall, under the auspices of the well-heeled lawyers of Middle Temple and featuring musicians connected with Temple Church, with musical direction by the Temple's associate organist, Greg Morris (30 October). The sequence of Purcell's musical masques was performed by fairies and their ilk, led by Oberon (whose birthday, rather than wedding, it was), played by Guthrie himself, and his Queen Titania. Guthrie/Oberon sets the scene as a master of ceremonies in modern dress, stripping off his tails to reveal a Superman outfit. Shakespeare's Athenian mortals were portrayed by four actors, portraying a theatre director and actor and a hardened opera-goer and his long-suffering wife who hates opera and falls asleep for much of the first half. They soon find themselves within the world of the fairies and supernatural beings, beautifully costumed in broadly Shakespearian style.

Grace Davidson and Amy Wood have the key vocal roles of the four female fairies, with an array of male singers

taking on the other roles, notably Andrew Tortise, Samuel Boden, Gareth John (as Sleep) and Nicholas Merryweather as the Drunken Poet and Coridon to William Towers' Mopsa. Some of Purcell's pieces were relocated, notably the *Plaint*, sung at the opening of the second half to accompany Titania's tortured Isadora Duncan style dance, reflecting the loss of her 'Indian Boy'. When not taking a solo role, the whole cast formed the chorus and also scuttled around the audience, bouncing balloons on M'lud's collected heads and handing out Halloween sweets and openable flowers that completely defeated the abilities of many of my new-found learned friends. The whole thing was done and dusted within two hours, allowing the rather aged black-tied Temple lawyers to stagger off for a formal dinner. Although one of the four fairies didn't have a solo spot, I noticed her lithe acting ability and what seemed to be a fine 'early music' voice in the chorus. As it happened, I later found that I had already praised her in the Proms' *St John Passion* and would also be reviewing her as a solo soprano a few days later.

From fairy to solo

I have reviewed the Orlando Chamber Choir several times before (under several different directors), and have always been impressed. It is their 20th anniversary year, and the amateur singers show no sign of slipping standards. Although not exactly breaking new ground in their choice of repertoire, their latest concert (directed by Will Dawes, otherwise of *Stile Antico*) allowed an interesting comparison between works composed by Bach and Handel in 1707 (*St James, Piccadilly*, 6 Nov). Handel's *Nisi Dominus* and *Dixit Dominus* showed the exuberance of a young man already immersed in the world of opera and flourishing in the absorbing atmosphere of Italy. Bach's *Christ lag in Todesbanden* reflects the young church musician presenting a calling card to the Blasiuskirche in Mülhausen, offering similar dramatic content as Handel but firmly within the church cantata tradition.

Of the four solo singers, countertenor Rory McCleery was particularly good in 'Cum dederit dilectis'. But the soloist that really stood out was soprano Rachel Ambrose Evans (the Fairy Queen's chorus fairy mentioned above). Of her several solo spots, 'Tecum principium' was the most prominent, demonstrating her beautifully clear and stable tone and her ability to deliver an articulate florid vocal line. The 37-strong choir made an impressive sound, notably the female voices. Will Dawes shaped the musical line very effectively and drew out the essential differences in the music of the two composers – he also managed to keep the relatively large choir (by early music standards) together well. The orchestra was the International Baroque Players, one of a few young orchestras spawned by the European Union Baroque Orchestra. Their leader, Johannes Pramsohler was the soloist in a Violin Concerto (Op1/7) by Antonio Montaneri, a contemporary of Handel and probably the concertmaster for the first performance of *Dixit Dominus*.

Decidedly punchy Gardiner

Another choral comparison (and another *Dixit Dominus*) came with the Monteverdi Choir concert of Domenico

Scarlatti, Bach and Handel (25 Sept, Milton Court). As part of their 50th anniversary celebrations, the concert was recorded live and became available for download the following day. The Bach was the anguished 1714 Weimar cantata *Mein Herze schwimmt im Blut*, the Scarlatti his no-less intense *Stabat Mater*, the latter approaching parody in its exaggerated musical gestures, the whole made the more intense by John Eliot Gardiner's decidedly punchy direction, marked contrasts in volume and some enormous crescendos. Esther Brazil was the soloist in the Bach, her tone being just a little too edgy for the penitent mood of the blood-soaked sinner. The men of the choir were good, but there were a surprising number of wobblers amongst the (relatively youthful) female voices.

Voices forty – and a metamorphosis

The BBC Singers opened their season in Milton Court with a programme built around works for 40 singers, including Striggio's *Ecce beatam lucem*, Tallis's *Spem in alium* and contemporary works for the same forces. This was contrasted with works for with Nicolas Altstaedt, cello and choir. Stephen Cleobury conducted. Meanwhile on the other side of town, the Tallis Scholars's programme 'Metamorphosis' contrasted different composers' approach to a series of sacred texts (Cadogan Hall, 23 Oct). They presented *Magnificat* settings from Palestrina, Gibbons and Pärt, *Pater noster* from Sheppard, Tavener, Stravinsky, Palestrina and Gallus, *Ave Marias* from Jean Mouton, Stravinsky and Pärt, and Gibbons, Pärt, Palestrina and Holst's versions of the *Nunc Dimittis*. It was a fascinating programme and was sung extremely well – the Tallis Scholars have lost the vocal edginess of their earlier days, and the generally *sotto voce* mode of this concert made for attractive listening. I have long since given up trying to work out how Peter Phillips manages to express the beat to his singers, his juddering downward arm-movements seeming to bear no relation at all to the beat that the singers eventually adopt. But somehow or other they all seem to come in on time and stay there. But it is visually distracting for anybody not sitting directly in line with the conductor shielding his arms from view.

Georges Onslow revealed

A couple of days after their Royal Festival Hall concert, the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment brought their programme of Berlioz, Onslow and Beethoven to Basingstoke's Anvil concert hall (24 Oct). Nestling between Berlioz's Overture to *Béatrice et Bénédict* and the *Eroica* was the 1831 First Symphony of a composer who once ranked alongside Berlioz as one of France's greatest composers – Georges Onslow, scion of a noble English family whose father had fled to France after a homosexual scandal and married into a French fortune, gaining the château near Clermont-Ferrand where Georges was born (in 1784). Apparently, a street in Clermont-Ferrand still bears the composer's name. Principally known for his chamber works, he was considered one of France's leading composers. An admirer of Haydn and Beethoven, he never quite caught up with the musical revolution that had gripped France through Beethoven's music.

Onslow's First Symphony was first performed just after the premiere of Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique*, but it is stylistically severally decades behind. Nonetheless, it is a fascinating work, with a refined sense of scale and structure. The first movement has the feel of an operatic overture, with a dramatic opening *Largo* that slithers chromatically down to a spirited *Allegro*. The subsequent *Adagio* opens with the feel of a funeral march before adopting a more pastoral mood. An attractive oboe-based *Minuetto* leads to the boisterous and rather flighty *Finale*. Even by OAE's adventurous standards, an entire programme of Onslow would have been pushing things, audience-wise. But it was rather unfair on him to be slotted between Berlioz at his most enjoyable and amusing and Beethoven at his peak. Although Onslow was known as the 'French Beethoven', his music certainly couldn't stand up to the emotional power of the *Eroica*. I was very impressed with the conductor, François-Xavier Roth. Not only was his direction musical spot-on, but I particularly like his lack of self-promotion. He worked with, rather than at, the orchestra, using relaxed and expressive body movements. I assume the earlier RFH concert went well as the Anvil's advertised open rehearsal, originally scheduled to last 3 hours, was first reduced to 90 minutes but, in practice was over after 45 minutes.

O what evil is war!

While the Nation's thoughts were turned to the anniversary of the outbreak of World War I, the Renaissance Singers reflected on earlier conflicts, notably the extraordinarily destructive Thirty Years War (1618/48), with their programme 'O what evil is war: War and Peace in 17th century Germany' (25 Oct. St George's, Bloomsbury). Although there were several international political scores to be settled (not least the French fear of Hapsburg domination on their borders and Swedish expansionism) and despite a brief intervention by the Ottoman Empire, at its heart this was of the many conflicts when one branch of Christianity seems determined to slaughter another branch of the same faith – and the musical outcome was determinedly Christian with each side appealing to the same God for deliverance and victory. In the balance of this imaginative programme, the Protestants seemed to have the louder musical voice, although the musical influence of Catholic Italy was never far away. The youngest composer represented was Johann Erasmus Kindermann from Nuremberg (under Swedish occupation from 1632), who was 32 when the war ended. As well as an appeal to God, his hymn *Fried, wo bist so lang geblieben* includes a rather more sensible appeal to the Hapsburg Emperor Ferdinand III by spelling out the initials of his name at the start of each 11 verses, four of which were sung. The final group of pieces included settings of more celebratory texts, including Luther's battle hymn *Ein feste Burg* (sung by Swedish forces as they entered battle) and *Nun danket alle Gott*. The 21-strong amateur Renaissance Singers were impressively refined, both in the large-scale and more intimate works, and drew some fine soloists from their ranks. They were conducted by guest conductor Gawain Glenton, contributing to

some of the pieces through his normal activity as a cornetto player. His conducting was very effective, not least in controlling the many different permutations of singers and encouraging some very precise consonants in the generally German texts. He also managed to hold silences at the end of pieces. A rather nice concluding touch was the way that the choir enveloped the audience from three sides for their *Da pacem* encore – a sort of musical hug.

Brighton's grand tour shorts

This year's Brighton Early Music Festival focussed on the theme of Cities, with their annual concert event for younger musicians given the title of Grand Tour Shorts. This took place a few yards inland from the beach, in the rather cramped and acoustically dry Latest Music Bar (1 Nov). Four groups were selected for the 2014 'Early Music Live' scheme, during which they were helped with issues such as concert presentation, marketing and promotion, fundraising, working with promoters and educational work. The four groups then joined to share a concert, each having about 30 minutes to show their wares. One common issue for all four groups was the spoken introductions to the pieces, which generally came over as hesitant and uncertain. I was at the afternoon session, which repeated the morning concerts.

Ars Eloquentiae

The first group was Ars Eloquentiae, five men, rather sombrely dressed in black suits and ties and white shirts who could have been waiting for a funeral directors' convention. Their programme was 'Sex, Lies and Violins', and explored the cult of sentimentality, with quotes from Laurence Stern's 'A Sentimental Journey' forming the basis for the spoken interludes. They played extracts from works by Marais, Philidor, Rameau, Leclair, Corelli, Porpora and Vivaldi. László Rózsa was the most impressive of the soloists, demonstrating fine control of his recorder at low volume. Judging from their website, they are a very loose grouping of young players sponsored by a church in Kew, with a repertoire that extends to Dvořák. The 15 or so players on their website photo were reduced to five for this performance. Although they played well, I wasn't convinced that they had spent enough time performing the pieces together to really gel as a musical unity – there were a few puzzled looks around the players, and it all seemed rather intense. The Porpora extract suffered from an overly relentless pulse.

Silverstein & McKean

Harmonia Artificiosa combines the violin playing of Elicia Silverstein with John McKean's harpsichord, both Americans. Their concert, 'The Cosmopolitan Baroque', featured music by Castello, Rognoni, Biber and Corelli's Op 5/1 being the musical highlight. Elicia Silverstein showed a clear understanding of the earlier Baroque idiom in the pieces from the other three composers, and played with a nice sense of articulation. However, I did wonder if she would be better served by expressing rather more emotion in the music, and rather less in her excessive, and distracting, facial expressions. I don't know if this is something encouraged in American musical

teaching, so perhaps I am just being terribly British. The rather full harpsichord continuo was a bit dominant, and John McKean's habit of introducing the next piece while the violinist was tuning wasn't the best idea.

Fieri Consort

The eight singers of the vocal group Fieri Consort met on The Sixteen's Genesis training scheme. They gave us a selection of Cries of London with pieces by Cobb, Gibbons, Purcell, Isaac and Arne. They presented themselves very professionally and sang collaboratively without any obvious leader. Their repertoire covers the whole gamut of vocal music, but for this earlier repertoire I could have done with far less vibrato, particularly from the two sopranos. It was particularly distracting in the many close-harmony passages. Their website has examples of better singing of the early repertoire. One rather nice approach was to sing the viol parts of the Gibbons Cries of London – it sounded very effective.

Torino

Unfortunately for the other three groups in these showcase concerts, the final group featured two players in a completely different league, technically and musically – the violinist Colin Scobie with Tom Foster, harpsichord. Their programme, *Torino*, focussed on three little-known violin composers from 18th century Turin, Giovanni Battista Somis (a pupil of Corelli) and his students Felice Giardini and the eccentric Gaetano Pugnani. Their pieces were clearly written to demonstrate their own virtuosity and took no prisoners. Colin Scobie delivered the flurries of notes with apparent ease, with excellent support from Tom Foster's tastefully appropriate continuo realisations.

Brighton trade roots

The evening concert in Brighton was given by L'Avventura London with a programme of African and Brazilian music found in manuscripts from the Monastery of Santa Cruz in Coimbra, Portugal (St George's Church, 1 Nov). Reflecting the musical traditions of the black population of Spain and Portugal, whether slaves or free-men coming from the new colonies in Africa and South America, these exotic and often erotic pieces were forbidden by church authorities. The various *villancicos* and *romances* were contrasted with popular dances, also from Coimbra. Authenticity of a sort was helped by fielding a quartet of Portuguese singers, one of whom appeared to be leading the show, conducting herself, and anybody else who noticed, as she sang. I have no idea whether strong vocal vibrato was the norm in 17th century performances of this music, but it was certainly a strong feature of this performance, notably from the soprano, as was clapping and yelps. There was some attractive flute playing from Marta Gonçalves and nicely restrained percussion from Natasha Kraemer, alongside her fine cello playing. Extracts from this concert have been broadcast on the Early Music Show, and should still be available on BBC iPlayer.

Latin America in Sherborne

The town of Sherborne is home to a number of musicians, two of whom (the Cuban pianist Ana Laura Manero and

Venezuelan cellist and conductor Arturo Serna) set up a Latin American Music Festival a couple of years ago. Amongst the concerts in their third annual festival was one given by four other local musicians who met at the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis and now collectively form Sherborne Early Music. Under the title 'From the Old World to the New', singer Katharine Hawnt was accompanied by various combinations of instruments played by Gawain Glenton, cornetto/mute cornet/recorder, Uri Smilansky, viola d'arco/recorder, and Kirsty Whatley, triple and Gothic harps, in music from Spain and South America dating from around 1475 to the mid 18th century (9 September, Cheap Street Church, Sherborne). The gradual merging, and subsequent departing, of the Spanish and the indigenous South American styles was apparent from the chosen pieces, which included Urrede's well-known chanson, *Nunca fué pena mayor*, Vincenet's villancico *La pena sin ser sabida*, and the anonymous hymn to the Virgin Mary in the Quechua language, *Hanacpachap cussicuinin*. The mid-afternoon concert finished with the Mexican High Baroque flourishes of Ignacio Jerusalem's ebullient *Es aurora presurosa*, the two specified violins replaced, very attractively, by two tiny recorders. Katharine Hawnt has an ideal voice for the earlier repertoire, but also dealt well with Jerusalem's musical high-jinks. Their choice of instruments and arrangements was imaginative and appropriate – and it was a welcome relief (for me, at least) that there was no percussion. When not performing or teaching, Sherborne Early Music runs a variety of musical courses there.

Moliere's *Malade Imaginaire*

The latest musical event in the Globe's (on this occasion, very cold) Sam Wannamaker Playhouse was based on Moliere's *La Malade Imaginaire*, with Charpentier's incidental music played by seven members of the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, the whole devised and directed by Elizabeth Kenny with text adaption and stage direction by Caroline Williams (3 Nov). Charpentier provided a wide range of attractive character pieces for the spoken text, which was presented in a well-drafted English translation with an emphasis on the comedic. Moliere described the piece as 'a comedy intermingled with music and dance'. Three singers and three actors completed the forces, the singers demonstrating rather more skills at acting than the actors showed at singing. It was a shame that they read from scores/scripts more-or-less throughout. The most successful singer was Sophie Junker, although she only had a limited role. The final scene is the Ceremony of the Doctors, with a lovely mocking of degree ceremonies, including a delightful cod-Latin declamation – it should be performed at every such occasion.

DRAMATIC FRENCH BAROQUE

David Hansell

In its first six issues EMR reviewed just one French opera recording. Now here are six in one issue. Much of the major repertoire is now available in more than one reasonably HIP version and in the case of the real 'pops' (including suites of dances extracted from their context) many more than that. Not enough is on DVD, however. You really need to see any opera, but especially those where the visual spectacle is integral to the overall conception. This inevitably raises issues of production style. Personally, I find that an opera needs to look either like the period of the story or the period of the music – Handel's operas with baroque orchestra but the cast in lounge suits or jeans don't work for me. There have been very few attempts at period staging and not all orchestral dispositions are appropriate even now. In the booklet for *Atys* (2010) Hugo Reyne has a swipe at those who use 'the little recorders that whine on the high notes and tarnish the orchestra's lustre, added drums for want of sufficient energy and pizzicato when one does no longer know what to do with the music'. (To whom can he be referring? We may find out.) He also points out that the chordal continuo instruments should not play in Lully's dances. On the other hand I'm not sure that he's right to use transverse flutes as often as he does. At least there is now general agreement/acceptance that the double bass was not part of French orchestral sound until the 18th century. As many EMR reviews have highlighted, however, singers are steadily becoming more of an issue, with the gulf between their approach to the music and that of the instrumentalists widening by the session. I sometimes wonder if any singer ever modifies their basic personal style for any composer or period. Unwanted and inappropriate vibrato and portamento and questionable trills abound in some performances. Quite often the most suitable singing (in the sense that it matches the sound world of the instruments) comes in the smaller roles taken by singers from the chorus – but, by definition, there isn't much of it.

Lully *Amadis* Cyril Auvity *Amadis*, Judith van Wanroij *Oriane*, Ingrid Perruche *Arcabonne*, Edwin Crossley-Mercer *Arcalaüs*, Benoît Arnould *Florestan*, Bénédicte Tauran *Urgande*, Hasnaa Bannani *Corisande*, Reinoud Van Mechelen, Caroline Weynants, Virginie Thomas in minor roles, Les Talens Lyriques, Chœur de Chambre de Namur, Christophe Rousset 164' 05" (3 CDs) harmonia mundi AP94

This is a luxurious package – a 'limited edition' CD-sized hardback book with the discs in the endpapers. The work is introduced in an authoritative essay by Jean Duron, there is a summary of the notoriously convoluted plot, and the full libretto with English translation and stage directions is also included. The performance has been edited from three recorded at Versailles in 2013 which does contribute towards a real feel of developing drama. Cyril Auvity in the title role is superb but none of the other singers offer anything like consistent aural pleasure. Among the ladies, billowy wobbles abound, especially Arcabonne, and Hugo Reyne would not enjoy the 'recorders that whine' and the 'added drums' (and other percussion). Neither did I. On the other hand, the core orchestral playing is very fine (as is what Lully gives them to play) and the continuo team alert and lively without being silly.

Lully *Atys* Romain Champion *Atys*, Bénédicte Tauran *Sangaride*, Amaya Dominguez *Cybèle*, Aimery Lefèvre *Célénus*, Maud Ryaux

Doris, Mailys de Villoutreys *Mélisse*, Matthieu Heim *Idas*, Vincent Lièvre-Picard *Morphée*, Le Chœur du Marais, La Simphonie du Marais, Hugo Reyne 167' (3 CDs) Musiques à la Chabotterie 605008

This is more conventionally packaged – a triple CD case and a booklet within a cardboard slipcase that has at least survived the reviewing process. The English texts are not well translated from the French originals (though are never completely incomprehensible) and the libretto appears in French only, but is usefully cross-referenced to the track list. There is in addition a bi-lingual plot synopsis. The recording was made in a studio shortly following a pair of live performances in 2010 and as in *Amadis* the title role is outstandingly well sung, this time by Romain Champion. And his colleagues also maintain a high standard, only Cybèle allowing her voice to visit regions that would have been better avoided. The duet singing is consistently good and, as it has to be, the Act III sleep scene (a favourite of Louis XIV) is gorgeous with the male ensemble singing a real highlight. The performance as a whole shows the benefit of careful casting and reveals why Louis loved this piece and Lully's music in general so much. If I had to choose between this and the above *Amadis* this *Atys* would easily come out on top.

Rebel *Ulysse* Guillemette Laurens, Céline Ricci, Stéphanie Révidat, Eugénie Warnier, Vincent Lièvre-Picard, Bertrand Chuberre, Thomas van Essen, Bernard Deletré, Le Chœur du Marais, La Simphonie du Marais, Hugo Reyne 125' 40" (2 CDs) Musiques à la Chabotterie 605003

Again, the booklet with this 2007 recording of Rebel's only opera lacks a translation of the libretto, though with fewer photographs there would have been room for one. We do, however, have a helpful English synopsis. In view of Reyne's strictures quoted above, I was amused to encounter drums and castanets in the prologue – the former plausible in a march, perhaps, the latter quite surreal. If I'm honest, I did not find the level of musical interest in this piece anywhere near that of Lully's *Atys* despite the best efforts of the three principals, especially Stéphanie Révidat as Pénélope. Though both music and performance deserve investigation by those with a special interest in the genre, I fear that *Ulysse* is destined to remain overshadowed by the composer's instrumental music.

Rameau *Les Fêtes de l'Hymen et de l'Amour* Chantal Santon-Jeffrey, Carlyn Sampson, Blandine Staskiewicz, Jennifer Borghi, Mathias Vidal, Reinoud Van Mechelen, Tassis Christoyannis, Alain Buet, Le Concert Spirituel, Hervé Niquet 114' 24" Glossa GCD 921629

And so to the man of the moment, though not one of his better-known pieces. *Les Fêtes* is a *ballet héroïque* first performed at Versailles in 1747 to celebrate the marriage of the then Dauphin. Subsequently it remained in the Parisian repertoire for nearly 30 years in both complete and partial performances. There are three *entrées*, plus the inevitable 'topical' prologue, and the music is a very sophisticated blend of French and Italian styles, aria and arioso and singing and dancing, with vocal ensembles and the chorus unusually prominent. The orchestration is little short of sublime: in the first 30 seconds I fell in love with Rameau all over again. Those tenor register bassoons, that subtle flute entry...

And I continued to enjoy the playing very much, but with the lady singers especially (and sometimes the men) the v-word became a steadily larger issue. Even the top line of the chorus isn't always that unanimous or beautiful. However, I'd love to see an 'authentic' production. At one point the Nile floods! Notes are in English, French and German. Libretto is English/French only with cross-references to the track numbers.

Rameau *Les Indes galantes* Valérie Gaball, Stéphanie Révidat, Reinoud Van Mechelen, François-Nicolas Geslot, Aimery Lefèvre, Sydney Fierro, Le Chœur du Marais, La Simphonie du Marais, Hugo Reyne 202' (3 CDs)
Musiques à la Chabotterie 605013

Yet another variation on presentation here, with Hugo Reyne's January 2013 live recording (with very occasional audience noise including applause) from Vienna embraced in a robust cardboard gatefold into which the booklet is securely glued. This doesn't make for easy handling but at least it stays together. Though a new (and only the second ever) issue of a complete *LIG* on CD has to be welcomed I have to say that I found the singing very disappointing, especially after the above *Atys*. Yes, it's the v-word yet again which is here coupled with multiple small *portamenti* and, as in *Les Fêtes* above, extends to the chorus. When this is reigned in (CD2iii – Phani *Viens, Hymen*) the results can be exquisite but so often they are not. What can be commended warmly, however, are the playing, especially on CD3, and the huge editorial labour behind the project. Generously, the performing material is available free online at nicolas.sceaux.free.fr.

Rameau *Hippolyte et Aricie* Topi Lehtipuu *Hippolyte*, Anne-Catherine Gillet *Aricie*, Stéphane Degout *Thésée*, Sarah Connolly *Phédre*, Le Concert d'Astrée, Emmanuelle Haïm 174' (2 DVDs)
Erato 08256 462291 7 8

And so, finally, to a DVD – filmed at the Palais Garnier Opéra in 2012 with Emmanuelle Haïm conducting. In 2010 a dispute with the orchestra over aesthetic and stylistic issues led to her being sacked from this house but here she is back again – though this time with her own orchestra in a production first seen in Toulouse in 2009 with substantially the same cast. As a conductor, she does have a limited range of gesture but in her comfort zone and given time... I think I should get over the really bad news first – the booklet is a disgrace. We have full credits, a cast list and a synopsis (the last word of which is missing from the English translation – and there are a few slips in the subtitles as well) but no information about the work, the artists or the production and no track list (though that is available as an on-screen menu). Neither is any of this supplied in the form of 'extras'.

Now the good news – almost everything else is wonderful. Though this is not claimed as an 'authentic' production the costumes, gestures, movements, scenery and machines would not, I think, have been out of place in the Académie Royale de Musique in 1733. It looks gorgeous. Occasionally the camera lingers on detail at the expense of the visual whole or the shot selection is a bit fussy but there's nothing too upsetting. The same is true of the music. The vocal ornamentation and the harpsichord part do sound rather self-consciously composed and in intense moments the ladies over-sing, but the male principals have true nobility and the scene in Hades is splendid. The real star is in the pit. Yes, what Rameau gives them to do is inspiring but the large orchestra maintains a remarkable standard. So overall it's not perfect, but it's still fabulous.

At the end of this reviewathon I am left wondering about HIP attitudes towards singing. It is not unknown for instrumentalists

to agonise over string, bow, reed, mouthpiece and temperament choices but for the most part singers seem to simply turn up and sing as they always do. This is disappointing – though Rameau never is.

Brighton Early Music Festival, 7th November

NINE DAIES WONDER

The Society of Strange and Ancient Instruments

Will Kemp's dance from London to Norwich makes for the best sort of early music concert: a strong thematic concept with a splendid mix of less and more well-known music on an interesting array of instruments – and there was something for everyone. On my row, there was me ticking off my train-spotter's list of tunes (when they started with Weelkes' "Strike it up tabor" I knew they'd finish with "Since Robin Hood" – to my smugness, they did), and there was a woman who 'didn't know what to expect' and didn't know much about this period of music but was absolutely charmed. At one point, she turned to me and said 'wouldn't this be brilliant in schools?' In lesser hands, the evening could have been a little rude and mechanical, but the music was top notch and the action (dialogue and dancing) undertaken with just the right amount of gusto. The musicians' versatility was a delight. Stephen Player has all the energy and presence that Will Kemp surely must have had; his was less a performance than an incarnation. A slight grating was Jeremy Avis, who should bear in mind that this is an evening of Will Kemp, not of Jeremy Avis: one's competence shows up better if it's unannounced (and ballads would work better if not sung in such a "musical" style). However, that was a minor gribble; if Kemp dances near you, go and see him. *Katie Hawkes*

Festival d'Ambronay 2014

Brian Robins

Among the losses of moving back to the UK from France, few (not even wine) were more keenly felt than the Ambronay Festival, which for five years became an eagerly anticipated event held throughout weekends in September and faithfully reported in *EMR*. Last year broke the sequence, but the lure of this most hospitable of festivals is not to be gainsaid, so we were delighted to make a return this year for the final weekend (3-5 October). We were generously hosted by the festival and lodged in one of the sympathetically restored 17th century monks' cells (today with mod cons!) attached to what was the Benedictine Abbey. Since our last visit the ever-amenable Alain Brunet has relinquished the general directorship of the Centre Culturel de Rencontre (CCR) in favour of Daniel Bizeray, but since Alain has now become president and is happily as much in evidence at concerts as he ever was, outwardly little has changed.

The first concert took place not in Ambronay Abbey, but a more grandiose ecclesiastical venue, the church of the Monastère Royale de Brou in Bourg-en-Bresse, a sumptuous Gothic edifice built by Margaret of Austria in the early 16th century as a dynastic burial place. An exceptionally generous acoustic turned out to be less than ideal for one-per-part performances of concertos and sinfonias by Locatelli, Leclair, Vivaldi, Corelli and the (deservedly) little-known Antonio Brioschi. It is now some while since I've heard Fabio Biondi and Europa Galante, having formerly found their playing too frequently mannered to often seek them out. Happily the passing years appear to have lessened the temptation to play for Largo of Locatelli's op. 1/5, which was also taken too slowly.

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①
Schlaf wohl, du Himmelskna-be du (Shepherds' Cradle Song)

Anon. Gently flowing; not too fast

Bavarian 1895 arr. Hugh Keyte

1. Schlaf wohl, du Himmelskna - be du, schlaß wohl, du süßes Kind! — Dich
2. Mari - a hat mit Mutterblick dich leise zu - gedeckt, — und

1. mit sanftem Him-melswind.
2. dass er - dich nicht erweckt.

Dich fächeln
und Joseph

fächeln Englein in Ruh' mit sanftem, sanftem Himmelswind. Wir
Joseph hält den Hauch zurück, dass er, dass er dich nicht erweckt. Die

En - hält — — — gelain in Ruh' den Hauch zurück,
armen Hirten singen dir ein herzig's Wie-gen-lichschen für —
Schäflein, die im Stalle sind, ver-stummen vor dir, Himmelskind. —

Schla - fe, — schla - fe, — Himmels söhnchen, schla - fe!
(quasi corni) mp Schlafe, schlafe, P

Segue
v. 3

Schlag wehl

2.

VERSE 3

Impassioned
mp cresc.

S A T I II Bar B

von Gol-gatha herab, —

3. Bald wirst du gross, dann fliesst dein Blut von Gol-gatha herab, ans

3. Bald wirst du gross, dann fliesst dein Blut von Gol-gatha he-rab, herab, ans

5. cresc. ten semplice

Kreuz schlägt dich der Menschen Wut, da legt man dich ins Grab ins Grab. Hab

Kreuz schlägt dich der Menschen Wut, da legt man dich ins Grab ins Grab.

9. poco rit.

im-mer deine Aug-lein zu, denn du bedarfst der süßen Ruh.

Hab immer deine Auglein zu, denn du bedarfst der süßen Ruh.

poco rit.

13. a tempo Echo f meno f espress. 7

S Schla-fe, — schla-fe, — Himmelssöhnchen, Himmelssöhnchen, Himmelssöhnchen, schla — — — fe!

A Scha — fe, schla-fe, Himmelssöhn — — — chen, schla-fe, Himmelssöhnchen, schla — — fe, schla-fe!

T Schla-fe, schlafe, Himmelssöhnchen, Himmelssöhnchen, Himmelssöhnchen, schla — — fe, schla-fe!

Bar B (Quasi corni) Echo f Hini — — nels — söhnchen

Schlafe, schlafe, Himmelssöhnchen, schlafe, schlafe, Himmelssöhnchen, schla — — fe!

VERSE 4 *Semplice* Schlaf wohl (3.)

So schlummert in der Mutter Schoß noch manches Kindlein ein,

So schlummert in der Mutter Schoß noch manches Kindlein ein, *mp* *angushed*

7

7

doch —

doch —

(5)

cresc. poco a poco *ff (ms dolce)* *dim.* *ten.* *P* *So*

wird das er-mte Kindlein gross, so hat er Angst und Pein,

(9) *semplice (but broader than bars 1-3)*

pp

O Je-sulein, durch

hat er Angst und Pein.

So hat er Angst und Pein.

O Je-su, Je-sulein, durch

so hat er Angst und Pein.

O Je-su, Je-sulein, durch

IN MEMORIAM - CHRISTOPHER HOGWOOD

10 September 1941–24 September 2014

Christopher remembered by John, Hilary, and Christopher Birks

We (John, Hilary) first met Christopher Hogwood in the spring of 1972. We were having dinner at Nick and Judith Shackleton's house in 1 Claremont. During coffee Chris, who was then living with Nick and Judith, came in for some food and joined the conversation. Our most lasting memory of that evening was Chris discussing the need for a Volvo estate car to enable him to transport his 1786 Kirkman harpsichord. We had no real idea that evening that he was already an active performer with David Munrow and the Early Music Consort of London and with Neville Marriner and the Academy of Saint Martin-in-the-Fields and also the writer and presenter of *The Young Idea* on BBC Radio 3. We never imagined he would soon found his own Academy of Ancient Music that was to become so important in the development of HIP in the 1970s and 1980s. As an undergraduate at Newnham College in the early 1960s, Hilary had met Chris before as she sang in a performance of Haydn's Nelson Mass with Pembroke College Choir conducted by Chris who was then an undergraduate at Pembroke.

We next encountered Chris in the autumn of 1979. We had been donated two tickets for a concert at West Road given by the AAM. We went along expecting a chamber orchestra but were surprised that the AAM consisted of Chris (harpsichord) and Mark Caudle (cello and viola da gamba) accompanying Emma Kirkby. It was a wonderful evening's music-making. They performed a selection of pieces from *Notenbüchlein für Anna Magdalena* Bach with Chris providing concise and informed introductions to each piece as well as delicately playing a French Suite, Emma in top form, and Mark providing impeccable continuo. In the interval we bought two AAM LPs – CPE Bach Eight Symphonies and JC Bach Six Favourite Overtures. A few weeks later we bought their recordings of Arne Eight Overtures and Stamitz Symphonies and Clarinet Concerto. On reading the sleeve notes for the Stamitz LP, we realised that our scientific colleague Nick Shackleton had not only written some of the notes about the clarinet that Alan Hacker played on the LP but that he had provided Alan with an appropriate 1760 clarinet for the recording. We now understood the close link between Chris and Nick!

We (John, Hilary, Christopher) got to know Chris well through our mutual friend Nick (later Sir Nicholas) Shackleton, attended many AAM concerts between 1979 and 1985, and organised some in Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, before we moved to Norway in 1985. One of the most memorable was Vivaldi's *L'Estro Armonico* played to a totally packed Chapel in Sidney, with people sitting on the floor all around the band. We fondly remember 11-year-old Christopher (Birks) presenting a bouquet to Emma Kirkby at the Queen Elizabeth Hall after Emma sang *Exsultate Jubilate* so brilliantly at the

AAM's 10th anniversary concert. Other musical highlights include Christophe Coin elegantly performing Haydn's Cello Concerto in C major in the Senate House, Christophe's macabre performance of Marais' *Tableau de l'Operation de la Taille* with the AAM in Comberton, and Handel's *Messiah* in Westminster Abbey on a very cold and snowy day just before Christmas in 1981. This performance was subsequently released on video and is now on DVD. We greatly enjoyed the Mostly Mozart and Basically Bach festivals at the Barbican and regularly got lost there. We never imagined then that the AAM would become an Associate Ensemble at the Barbican Centre. The most amusing concerts were Christopher Hogwood's *A New Year's Gifte* at the Wigmore Hall where just about anything could happen and did with Michael Copley playing ocarinas, the newly formed Amsterdam Loeki Stardust Quartet on sparkling form, and Lucy Skeaping and Roddy Skeaping (Sneak's Noyse) playing Holborne on just one bass viol(!), tango music, and music by Stevie Wonder! Another amusing concert was in Colchester when Chris gave a lecture recital about Three Centuries of Keyboard Music. Chris played a harpsichord and one of his beloved clavichords. The different sound levels resulted in many of the older members of the audience trying to adjust rapidly their hearing aids, so we heard a CPE Bach sonata for clavichord accompanied by hearing-aid whines. One day, Chris invited young Christopher and a friend to his Claremont house to play one of his treasured Haas clavichords and the boys were fascinated by its delicate soft sound.

Just before Christmas 1981, we all went to see Chris at 2 Claremont. Christopher (Birks) was amazed to see Chris eating breakfast at 4 pm! Chris explained that he was living on American time as he was back and forth to the USA conducting *Messiah*. John and Hilary then had to try to explain to young Christopher why times were different in Cambridge (Mass) and Cambridge (UK). In 1982, whilst John was working in Minnesota, he heard a wonderful error on National Public Radio when the broadcaster introduced some Vivaldi concertos played by "the Academy of Ancient Musicians"! Between 1982 and 1985 John helped at Heather Jarman's *Amanuensis* business to file the AAM music library. It was great fun to see some of the musician's candid annotations and comments on some of the Mozart symphony scores.

We were able to attend many of Chris's concerts with AAM in London between 1985 and 2013 (e.g. Handel operas at the Barbican, Mozart, Mendelssohn) by arranging John's teaching at University College London to coincide with AAM concerts. John last talked with Chris at 10 Brookside in September 2013 at the 40th anniversary birthday party for the AAM. John and Chris discussed mainly their close but deceased friend Nick Shackleton as John is

preparing a seminar about Nick as a polymath in climate research, palaeoceanography, and clarinets. Chris was very close to Nick and he used extensively the commemorative postage stamp portraying Nick that was produced for the 350th anniversary of the Royal Society in 2010.

We kept in good contact with Chris after we left Cambridge and we always looked forward to his wonderfully original Christmas cards each year. The greetings message always matched the drawing or picture such as “Best wishes for an anonymous Christmas and an incognito New Year” to accompany ‘Anonymous portrait of an unknown boy, mid-18th century, playing an unidentified concerto (? Thomas Arne) on a spinet by an unknown maker (? Thomas Barton)’, or “Best wishes for a harmonious Christmas and concerted New Year”, and “With best wishes for an Amadeus-free Christmas and a Byrd-like New Year”.

Inspired by Chris’s approach to historically-informed performance (HIP), John adopted this philosophy when starting ecological resampling surveys of vegetation on Norwegian mountains to discover what changes have occurred since the original surveys in the 1920s or 1930s. For these resurveys, we used maps, guidebooks, field equipment, and soil analytical procedures of the period to allow a fair comparison of the recent and the historical data. John lectured about this approach to the Centre for the Philosophy of Science in Bergen in a seminar on ‘HIP in Music and Ecology’.

When one looks back at Chris’s life and achievements, his musical breadth is amazing, ranging from Music from the Gothic Era with David Munrow and the Early Music Consort of London to Martinu and the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra. We were very fortunate to have known Chris for over 40 years. He was a loyal, generous, and supportive friend, a complete musician, an amazing scholar, and truly delightful person. Besides our many memories of him and the AAM, he has left a wonderful legacy of recordings, books, editions, articles, interviews, Gresham College lectures, and on-line videos that we will continue to enjoy and treasure. Many of his recordings are well known, others are less well known but are equally wonderful, like his ‘Secret’ clavichord series of Bach, Handel, and Mozart; a video about Haydn at Esterháza introduced by Chris, Melvin Bragg, and HC Robbins Landon; LPs of Music for Petworth, Seventeenth Century Italian Music (Chris’s London Early Music Ensemble with Michael Laird), and Music at Court to accompany his Folio Society book of the same title; the CD of Boyce symphonies; and the LPs and CDs of Couperin’s *Trois Leçons de ténèbres* with Judith Nelson, Emma Kirkby, and Jane Ryan, *Venice Preserv’d*, and Haydn’s Music for England.

continuation of Festival d’Ambronay from p. 22

Otherwise the finely poised, stylish playing was a constant pleasure, particularly in the dramatic account of Locatelli’s imposing *Sinfonia funebre*.

The following day was given over to a remarkable event that saw concerts given in Ambronay’s Salle Monteverdi by four young ensembles enjoying residency at the CCR during 2014. I led of course to inevitable comparisons and the groups were indeed literally playing and singing for future suppers, since it

was a part of a new EU initiative (eemerging) designed to further the progress of two of the four. To this end the great and the good of the early music festivals with which the CCR interacts (they include York) were present to deliberate on the relative merits of the four ensembles. The overall standard was amazingly high, the whole a hugely encouraging and life-affirming experience that renewed faith in the future of early music. Ultimately a final order was not too difficult to determine and although the official opinion of the directors had not been announced at the time of writing, I understand it accords with the general view. Thoroughly deservedly first was the Basel-based ensemble Voces Suaves, whose singing of a group of 5 to 8 part madrigals by Giaches de Wert, Gastoldi, and Monteverdi was so beautifully tuned and sung with such a refined elegance and expressiveness as to utterly belie the youthfulness and presumed inexperience of the performers. This is unquestionably an ensemble to watch closely. As indeed is *Seconda Pratica*, formed in 2012 by a group (here ten-strong) of multinational singers and instrumentalists formed from among students at The Hague and Amsterdam Conservatories. Their programme consisted chiefly of characterful and colourful performances of mostly popular Spanish or Spanish influenced music from 17th and 18th Latin America. What especially impressed was a personality and verve brought to the music at no expense to musicality; it was a real treat to hear this music without a percussion instrument in sight. Slightly less finished, but still impressive was a programme by L’Armonia degli Affetti devoted to *seconda pratica* songs, duets and trios by Monteverdi, Barbara Strozzi, Nicolò Fontei Orcianese and Merula. What especially impressed was the sheer passion and commitment the young Italian singers, especially the rich-voiced soprano Alicio Amo (splendid chest notes), brought to this repertoire. While certainly not negligible, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that La Botta Forte have rather more work to do to fulfil their undoubted promise, and in particular soprano Magali Arnault Stanczak must learn not to sing chamber cantatas (by Francesco Mancini and Handel’s *Mi palpiti il cor*) as if she is trying to fill the Albert Hall.

Progressing from bountiful youthful promise to ripe maturity, the evening concert brought a programme of *grands motets* by Rameau and Mondonville from Les Arts Florissants under William Christie, long an Ambronay favourite. Although still only a little shy of 69, recent illness has imparted to Christie an appearance of increasing frailty. But there was absolutely nothing frail about these broadly conceived performances, majestic in the case of Rameau’s *Quam dilecta* and *In convertendo*, while full of relish for Mondonville’s delight in colourful mimetic effect in *In exitu Israel* and *Dominus regnavit*. Every now and then I felt the need for rather more forward movement, but it would be churlish to deny the overwhelming impact of such superb singing and playing, greeted with an ecstatic response that demanded no fewer than three encores. Sadly, the final concert of the festival failed to maintain such an elevated standard. Given by Raphael Pichon and his Pygmalion choir and orchestra, it was devoted to music by the Bach family for the Feast of the Archangel Michael, including all four of J S Bach’s surviving cantatas for the occasion. I found it depressing that a conductor as young as the highly talented Pichon should be ignoring recent scholarship to the extent of fielding a chorus of 25 (including the soloists) and employing holed trumpets, either three or four of which are required in the often warlike music concerned with the ‘great strife’ aroused by Satan before his defeat, a dominating topic of these works. Neither were the performances flawless, with a variable group of soloists, among whom only alto Damien Guillion and the experienced bass Stephan MacCleod stood out, and some less than perfect trumpet playing.

CD REVIEWS

MEDIEVAL

Motets: Music from Northern France: the Cambrai manuscript A410 Graindelavoix, Björn Schmelzer 44' 04"

Glossa GCD P32109

Music by Gobin de Rains, Eustache le Peintre de Rains & anonymous

The maverick ensemble Graindelavoix has traditionally offered performances which question our preconceptions, using a variety of unblended voice productions to challenge the standard 'sweetness' and blend of other ensembles performing early music. This has occasionally been stimulating and stirringly persuasive, as in their Ockeghem CD, but I found the present CD with its rather ungenerous 44 minutes of 13th-century motets from Cambrai altogether less involving and convincing. The singing sounds more refined than on previous occasions – the female voices particularly achieve a pleasantly rounded tone and effective blend – but the male voices don't really gel and there are also some ragged entries and wild intonation. Occasionally the ensemble does 'get into the groove' and achieve the almost narcotic involvement with the music that I have heard on previous CDs, but this time the effect is intermittent and transient. Having said that, the singing and playing is generally convincing and the performers are clearly well acquainted with this quirky repertoire. I have read the programme note a couple of times to make sure that 'it isn't just me' – no, the note based on a conversation between Schmelzer and Mark Wiggins is genuinely baffling. I would blame the translation for passages which defy comprehension, but sadly the notes were composed in English. Certainly for me the apparent attempt to link the music with architectural diagrams in the memoirs of the medieval cathedral builder Villard de Honnecourt drew a blank.

D. James Ross

15th CENTURY

Dufay *The Masses for 1453* Cantica Symphonia, Giuseppe Maletto 80' 17"

Glossa GCD P31907

Missa Se la face ay pale, Missa L'Homme armé

This CD appears in the wake of research linking the masses *Se la face ay pale* and *L'Homme armé* by Dufay to events in the

momentous year 1453. The association between the latter setting and the fall of Constantinople comes as no surprise, but the linking of the former with the Turin Shroud, acquired by Louis of Savoie in 1453, shortly before he summoned Dufay to his court, is more of a surprise if nonetheless compelling. The performances by Cantica Symphonia seem to pick up where René Clemencic left off in the 1980s with his epic performances of Dufay masses combining voices and instruments. Indeed the two brass instruments, a pair of slide trumpets alternating with sackbuts, evoke exactly the same sound world. Not everybody will approve of the use of instruments in the church music of this period, but I have to confess that I have always loved it. These readings, with alternating solo voices and full ensemble, combining voices and organ, fiddles, harp and sackbuts, are splendid, bringing out the full magnificence of Dufay's conception and evoking the splendour of lavish 15th-century courtly ceremony. Like Clemencic, Maletto chooses which lines to occupy vocally and which instrumentally, resulting in brief instrumental passages alternating with vocal ones and mixed passages. The singing and playing are both beautifully detailed, with unfussy handling of the more rapid ornaments and a lovely sense of the broader sweep of the music. I have noticed that one-to-a-part vocal performances of Dufay Masses can sound rather spare (even bleak), and I am sure that 15th-century rulers in search of pomp and self-aggrandisement would have preferred their Dufay as it sounds here. I certainly do.

D. James Ross

de la Rue *Missa Conceptio tua Medieval and Renaissance Music for Advent* Schola of Chicago 57' 29"

Naxos 8.573260

+ O antiphons, Alma Redemptoris Mater, 3 late medieval English Carols

It is a remarkable fact that this CD includes a world premiere of a seven-part Mass by Pierre de la Rue – when in the programme note Michael Anderson speculates that this is largely due to the deep range of the Bass II part which hovers around a low D for much of the piece he is probably right! The CD opens with an account of the O antiphons sung beautifully by the ensemble's two female voices who achieved a remarkable blend –

there is no more difficult number of voices to blend than two! However, when the gentlemen take over for the de la Rue the blend is unfortunately much less accomplished. Two of the four listed tenors are in fact falsettists and their rather dry vocal tone stands out uncomfortably – in passages without them the blend is much happier, although the balance and tuning remain insecure. This discomfort is not helped by a rather unforgiving acoustic. Before listening to this recording I had by chance been listening to the superb boxed set of de la Rue masses, vespers and songs performed by the Capilla Flamenca (MEW 159) and the contrast is telling. However, even in this sadly unsatisfactory performance by the Schola Antiqua of Chicago the brilliance of de la Rue's setting shines through occasionally. The CD concludes with some more pleasing accounts of familiar medieval English carols in which the ladies' voices rejoin the ensemble.

D. James Ross

16th CENTURY

Hume *"Harke, harke!": Lyra Violls Humors & Delights* Guido Balestracci, Les Basses Réunies, Bruno Cocset 70' 31"

I've been a fan of Guido Balestracci's playing for some time, and also of Les Basses Réunies, and looked forward to hearing this recording. For even longer I have loved the music of Tobias Hume, so it's a special pleasure to hear his music played with such affection, freedom and infectious brilliance. The programme selects from both his books, including three of the songs played instrumentally. One of them, *Fain would I change that note*, is given a Scottish flavour by having its tune played first over a drone, and then rendered as a sprightly reel – surprising, brilliantly effective and a lot of fun. The purely instrumental *Music and Mirth* from "Poeticall Music" (1607) with the three viols, and chordal continuo from a gut-strung harpsichord is gloriously sonorous, and beautifully paced. The song *What greater grief* is played instrumentally, the first verse from the 1605 publication, on a small bass viol, accompanied by plucked bass viol, the second with the full complement in Hume's own reworking for two viols and continuo from his 1607 book. Although I would like to hear it

sung, this demonstrates what a lovely melody it has, and it is a wonderfully expressive rendition.

All the pieces they play are in standard tuning, save one: *This sport is ended*, one of the few pieces Hume wrote for the 'bandore set', or as he put it, 'for the Leera viole'.

The programme mixes the solo pieces, played by Balestracci, from the first book, with the duets from the second, giving a lovely variety. It's difficult to pick out particular tracks as they are all played with such freedom and inventiveness, and Hume's brilliance shines out. *Tickle me quickly* is played at breakneck speed, in fact one could complain that some of the speeds are too fast, at the expense of the music, but they still take your breath away. Lots of old 'favorets': *Souldier's Resolution*, *Harke harke*, (of course), a brilliant performance of *Captain Hume's Galliard* (in staff notation in the publication, and accompanied with harpsichord and bass viol), *Musicke and Mirth*; there are 24 tracks in all, a marvellous recording. Robert Oliver

Fontana / G. Gabrieli *Sonate & Canzone*
Le Concert Brisé, William Dongois 77' 42"
Accent ACC 24250

Fontana *Sonate* 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 13, 15, 16, 18
Gabrieli *Canzone* 2 & 4 a6, *Canzon duodecimi toni*, *Exaudi Domine passagiato*

The opening canzon is very measured out, more in the style of a walked intrada than a sung canzon. The Gabrieli larger scale canzone which punctuate the sequences of Fontana sonate are brilliantly played, but given this rather formal interpretation; sweeping from one tableau to another pose, rather than having a slalom-like overall flow. Perhaps this is to accentuate their presence as a foil to the smaller scale Fontanas. The fewer the players, the more free and flighty the interpretation becomes. The two cornett players, William Dongois and Judith Paquier, when left to their own devices, exercise these freedoms to the full, wonderfully delivering the dense musical content of Fontana's marvellous creations. For the gadget-minded, both players are using straight cornetts which are capable of both a very direct, bright sound, and also of a muted and velvety voice. Both voices are exploited perfectly as sonata XI a due develops and intensifies. There's a lovely "boxy" harpsichord too, with a virginals-like tone, which surprises the ear and supports the ensemble very well. This is an excellent new recording. I am left tantalised: What would the canzone have sounded like if

they had been approached in the same inventive, fluid and exciting way as had the Fontana sonate? Stephen Cassidy

Christmas with the Shepherds The Marian Consort, Rory McCleery 62' 55"
Delphian DCD34145

Morales *Missa Quæramus sum pastoribus*,
Pastores dicite quidnam vidistis Mouton *Puer natus est nobis Quæramus sum pastoribus*, *Noe noe*
Stabile Quæramus sum pastoribus

Another scholarly and musically superb disc, with a Christmas flavour – though fare of this quality deserves all-year delectation!

The core work is Jean Mouton's lovely early 16th-century motet *Quæramus cum pastores* which, according to the excellent sleevenote, was in the repertoire of the Sistine Chapel Choir for more than a hundred years and provides the musical basis for the Morales mass, in mid-century, and then the *Stabile* motet, many years later still. The programme is completed by three further Christmas motets, two by Mouton and one by Morales.

One of the greatest pleasures of renaissance polyphony is following a composer's compositional logic through an entire mass – Morales is one of the absolute masters of this, and the sense of fulfilment reached in the final *Agnus Dei* (end track 9), when he adds an additional tenor voice singing the original motet's opening motif in ostinato, is positively symphonic! The *Stabile* motet (track 10) provides a less contrapuntal but suitably richly scored conclusion to the disc.

The Marian Consort sing mainly one-to-a-part and are recorded in the limpid and well-trying acoustic of Merton College Oxford. Tuning and blend are exemplary, and tempi are well-judged to allow the glorious contrapuntal (in the Mouton and Morales) and antiphonal (in the *Stabile*) textures to glow.

Recordings like this should be the basis of any serious music collection – go forth and get! Alastair Harper

The Leiden Choirbooks Vol. IV Egidius Kwartet & College, Peter de Groot 105' 43"
Et cetera KTC1413 2 CDs

One of the chief delights of this excellent series is that the approach of focussing each double CD set on each of the six major Leiden choirbooks in turn means that we get a compelling cross-section of music by big names and local composers and for a variety of liturgical functions. On the present recordings familiar but

under-represented composers such as Thomas Crecquillon and Johannes Richafort rub shoulders with the more parochial Eustacius Barbion and Johannes Flamingus. It is interesting that there is no dramatic contrast in either quality or style, underlining the all-pervasive nature of the predominant franco-flemish idiom in the middle of the sixteenth century. The choirbooks themselves are very much the celebrities in this lavish project, and the hardcover book which accompanies the set is full of fascinating scholarly detail and mouthwatering illustrations. It is astonishing to realise that these magnificent books were compiled for the College of the Seven Liturgical Hours, one of a multitude of confraternities in Flanders at the time, each of whom may well originally have also possessed music collections of comparable magnificence. The fact that the Leiden Choirbooks were in a locked part of St Peter's Church when bands of iconoclasts destroyed much of the rest of the country's musical heritage is strikingly reminiscent of the situation in Renaissance Scotland and the remarkable survival of the Carver Choirbook. As the Egidius Quartet and College work their way through this repertoire – they intend to devote a double CD set to each of the six choirbooks – their approach gains in confidence and polish, and the present CDs provide enjoyable and dynamically varied accounts of the rich contents of book IV, a set of motets in four and five parts. The performers and the label are to be warmly congratulated for the vision which underlies this revelatory project.

D. James Ross

The Parisian Delight: Virtuoso works for lute & guitar Richard MacKenzie
Digital download www.magnatune.com
Music by Morlaye, Le Roy & de Rippe

In this his second CD, Richard MacKenzie gives an entertaining insight into the variety of what he calls "the Parisian chordophonic culture of the mid-16th century." The lute was well-known throughout western Europe at this time, but judging by a sudden flurry of publications in Paris, the renaissance guitar proved equally popular in France, at least for a decade or so.

The first track is an extraordinary Prelude for guitar by Adrian Le Roy, which calmly moves along with chords and the occasional passing note, and then suddenly bursts into a passage of frantic upward scales. There follows a *Fantaisie* by Guillaume Morlaye with similarities to a

lute fantasy by Francesco da Milano. A dignified polyphonic setting of *Susanne un jour* by Mithou, interspersed with fast cadential figures, contrasts with the frenetic strumming of *Caracossa Gaillarda*, within which are included the plucked variations from Phalèse and Bellère's *Selectissima elegantissimaque* of 1570; MacKenzie conjectures that they could have been plagiarised from Morlaye's guitar book of 1550 (now lost). Portraying the cut and thrust of battle may seem optimistic on a small 4-course guitar; Adrian Le Roy's setting of *Pavane de la Guerre*, based on Jannequin's ubiquitous chanson *La Guerre*, may be more song than war, but MacKenzie punches out the bugle calls with detached chords, and the story is effectively told. Most unusual is Adrian Le Roy's "Trois Bransles de Poitou en mode de Cornemuse" for guitar, which MacKenzie pleasingly brings to life with drone, drive, and dexterity.

The lute pieces include: a *Fantasia* by Luis de Narvaez, taken from his 1538 book, converted into French tablature and published by Morlaye in 1552; a charming *Pavane et Galliarde* pair by Adrian Le Roy based on the chanson *Sy je m'en vois*, repeated "plus diminuée" with rapid-fire divisions; an intabulation by Albert de Rippe of Sandrin's *Douce memoire*, which I would have preferred a bit slower; and a long, technically difficult *Fantasia* by Albert de Rippe, impressively sustained by MacKenzie, ending with an elaborately interpreted final chord. Albert de Rippe (c.1510-1558), originally from Italy, may be little known outside the lute world today, but, as lutenist to François I, he was greatly admired, and is said (according to the liner notes) to have earned twice as much as any other lutenist at the French court.

Stewart McCoy

A Spagna in the Works: 16th century dances, divisions, and instrumental works
Alison Crum early viols, Roy Marks lute & guitar (72' 18")

ORS087

see review on p. 15.

The Spy's Choirbook: Petrus Alamire & the Court of Henry VIII Alamire, English Cornett & Sackbut Ensemble, dir. David Skinner 115' 11" (2 CDs)

Obsidian CCL CD712

Music by Agricola, Févin, Ghiselin, Isaac, Josquin, La Rue, Mouton, Strus, Therache + 133 anon.

Alamire is, in musical circles, assumed to be primarily famous as a scribe (his name spells out the A below middle C), but he

was a diplomat with various other activities, hence the title of this recording. We rarely hear plausible instruments with brass at this period, but sackbuts were around in the 15th century and cornetts were just arriving. I don't know if pitch was fixed c.1515 at A=465: it certainly was normal, thanks to the German makers for some time – the St Thomas, Leipzig, organ was still playing at A=465 over two centuries later, though Bach copied out parts a tone lower, and while doing so, figured the basses. The wind do not play continually, but are refreshing. The singing is as I expect from David and his vocal forces (Soprano x 3, Contralto x 3, Tenor x5, Baritone x3, Bass x2) – but do read Simon Ravens' book reviewed in this issue. The tempi feel a little slow compared with current singers and simple openings don't always open out, but one is drawn in to what follows and the ends are so often moving. There is so much early vocal music to enjoy from this issue: make sure that you allocate recordings to and from your friends for a contrast with TV secularity!

CB

17th CENTURY

D'Anglebert Complete Harpsichord Music
Francesco Cera *hpscd* 173' 42" (3 CDs)
Brilliant Classics 94793

From the opening unmeasured prelude one knows that one is in safe hands with Francesco Cera whose playing combines the right amount of forward drive with unhurried pace, so that the ornaments don't clog up the line but help drive the music forward. These three CDs present excellent accounts of the four suites, the arrangements from Lully and other sources, and a group of independent pieces from an autograph manuscript. The suites are played with a unified sense of purpose while the arrangements have real sparkle and tremendous style. Cera plays on a copy of a 1691 instrument by Vincent Tibaut made by Roberto Livi which is cleanly and sympathetically recorded. This is a highly recommended recording.

Noel O'Regan

Carissimi Complete motets of [sic] Arion Romanus Ensemble Seicentonovocento, Flavio Colusso 184' 51" (3 CDs)
Brilliant Classics 94808

Arion Romanus is a collection of 28 motets attributed to Carissimi, collected and published by his pupil, Giovanni Battista Mocchi, in 1670 (by which time he was

working in the German town of Konstanz). There are four soprano solos and four soprano duets on CD1; CD2 has five duets and seven trios (four of them for three sopranos!); the third CD has two more trios, two trios with violins, two soprano solos with violins, one quartet and one quintet. In general terms (for me, at least), the greater the number of people involved, the more satisfying were the performances. I have no idea what effect the sopranos (or was it the director's idea?) at the beginning of *Ave dulcissime* – on a good day, it might have sounded like an extract from a French composer's settings of *Tenebrae*, but there was so much ebb and flow that I lost track. To be fair, this might work in live performance, but as a purely aural experience, I found myself unable to warm to it.

BC

Cavalli Elena Emöke Baráth, Valer Barna-Sabadus, Fernando Guimarães, Solenn' Lavanant Linke, Rodrigo Ferreira, Emiliano Gonzalez Toro, Anna Reinhold, Scott Conner, Mariana Flores, Majdouline Zerari, Brendan Tuohy, Cappella Mediterranea, Leonardo Gracia Alarcón
Ricercar RIC346 (177' 20", 2 DVDs)

This delightful confection was filmed at the 2013 Aix-en-Provence Festival, in a production by Jean-Yves Ruf.

The witty libretto was sketched by Giovanni Faustini, a regular collaborator with Cavalli, and versified, after the former's death, by Nicolo Minato. It was first performed in Venice in 1659. The action centres on the illegal abduction of Helen by Theseus, but includes a host of additional complications caused by disguises, mistaken identities and scheming servants – suffice it to say that all is eventually resolved to general mutual satisfaction, perhaps excepting that of Theseus's companion Pirithous, who spends most of the opera chasing the Amazon-disguised Menelaus, until she/he is (literally) exposed in the final scene!

Cavalli's score is fully equal to the myriad emotional twists of the plot. He can move from rustic comedy to high tragedy in the twinkling of an eye, and without ever putting a musical foot wrong. He has an unerring facility for bewitching triple-time melody – particular highlights for me were the scene at the beginning of the second act between Helen and the disguised Menelaus, and their wonderful third-laden duet towards the end of the last act, where they finally express their mutual affection.

The singers are without exception excel-

lent, full of character when solo, yet able to produce perfect blend and tuning in the frequent ensembles (e. g. Menelaus-Helen above!) The orchestra (which includes an almost Raymond Leppardian array of woodwind and percussion, as well as strings and continuo) plays superbly and follows García Alarcón's subtle and flexible tempi precisely. The production uses a simple but extremely successful set. I especially liked the billowing drapes of the second act, suggesting the complex disguises and emotional cross-currents, and the neat use of a carpet and chair to evoke Creon's throne room in the last scene. A fine souvenir of what must have been a charming and affecting occasion!

Alastair Harper

Molitor Motetten (1683) Basler Madrigalisten, Musica Fiorita, Daniela Dolci 69'
Pan Classics PC 10313

This is a very fine CD. 11 of a total of 18 pieces from Molitor's *Epinicion Mariarum*, which was probably printed to celebrate his appointment as 1st Cantor at St Gallen in Switzerland, a monastery with which he was linked throughout his life. Most are scored for five-part voices with two violins and continuo (here gamba, violone, organ and theorbo). The voices blend beautifully both in small groups and in the tutti; it is not clear how the five parts are shared by the eight singers named, nor is the presence of a cornetto explained; of course, there is no problem with the idea – except that we are told that the abbot objected to instrumental participation, so Molitor might have been pushing his luck by involving more than violins – but it would have been nice had the otherwise excellent notes been a bit more helpful. Be that as it may, the marvellously jubilant music and these energetic performances of it were just what I needed to hear as the grey of autumn set in...

BC

Monteverdi Madrigali Vol. 2 Mantova Les arts florissants, Paul Agnew 74'
AF003

Works from books 4–6

This is a very impressive recording, one of three planned by this group to highlight the cities in which Monteverdi worked: Cremona, Venice and, in this case, Mantua. Paul Agnew, who directs the group here, has chosen a representative sample of madrigals from Books 4, 5 and 6. They are mainly for five voices and, as described by Agnew in a booklet essay, represent the last great flowering of that idiom. His

selection includes many favourites, from *Sfogava con le stelle* and *Si ch'io vorrei morire* from Book 4, through *Cruda Amarilli* from Book 5 to the *Lamento d'Arianna* and the *Sestina* from Book 6. They start unaccompanied for those from Book 4, then lutes are added and finally strings and harpsichord for *Questi vaghi concetti* from Book 5. The level of control and unanimity of the singers is astonishing, as is the huge sense of commitment to the words which permeate the recording. Some initial shock at the intensity of some passages and the closeness to the edge to which the singers push the dissonance, gives way to admiration and a sense that, even more than in the admirable recordings by Concerto Italiano and La Venexiana, the singers of Les Arts Florissants have got the measure of Monteverdi's writing. This is not always an easy listen, but that was precisely the composer's intention, as articulated by the concept of the *seconda pratica*. Pronunciation is admirable and the sense of the words always comes across. The continuo is very supportive all through. The associated website includes some extra materials while the CD box includes a beautiful short story by René de Ceccatty *La Sibylle et la fresque des illusions* which knits together the putative life and love of a 20th-century Italian writer with allusions to Monteverdi madrigals. This is definitely a must buy.

Noel O'Regan

San Pietro de' Negri Amorosa Fenice Faenza, Marco Horvat 69' 15"
Agogique AGO018
+ Ghizzolo, Rognoni, Valera

This CD of music chiefly by Giulio San Pietro de' Negri but also featuring cameo appearances by other composers working at the time of Monteverdi such as Giovanni Ghizzolo, Francesco Rognoni and Ottavio Valera is a pure delight. This modest domestic music is often overshadowed by the spectacular church and courtly repertoire of the period, but these delicious performances by Faenza make a powerful case for making its wider and deeper acquaintance. The singing from a group of five soloists is absolutely superb, powerfully expressive and delicately but exquisitely ornamented, while the instrumental accompaniment is subtle and varied, using the timbres of a limited number of instruments to create a startling range of textures. The instrumental interludes showcase some charming recorder playing while the distinctive tones of the lirone are also prominent. In this sparsely-scored repertoire there is

nowhere to hide, but rather than approaching it with trepidation, the performers seem to delight in its exuberance. This is a CD which takes a fresh look at some largely unsuspected treasures and which more than deservedly invokes the phoenix in its title.

D. James Ross

Praetorius (Hieronymus & Jacob jun.) Organ Works Joseph Kelemen (1624 Scherer organ, St. Stephan, Tangermünde) Oehms Classics OC 691 (77')

Norddeutsche Orgelmeister – Vol. 6

H. P. Christ unser Herr zum Jordan kam, Christe qui lux, Dies Absoluti, Magnificat quinti toni, Te lucis J. P. Magnificat tertii toni, Praeambulum ex d, Von allen Menschen abgewandt, Was kann uns kommen

The Hamburg-based organist/composer Hieronymus Praetorius (1560–1629) was a contemporary of Amsterdam's Sweelinck. Although he didn't have the international reputation or influence of Sweelinck, he is an important founding father of the North German Organ School. His son Jacob (1586–1651) was one of the first of many young Hamburg organists who studied with Sweelinck, returning as organist of the Petrikirche alongside his father at the Jacobikirche. There can be few better instruments for this repertoire than the 1624 Hans Scherer Tangermünde organ, with its distinctive Renaissance colours. Both father and son Praetorius would have known the Hans Scherers (father and son), who looked after and enlarged both their Hamburg organs. Joseph Kelemen's registrations are well chosen, and are based on contemporary sources including, for example, treble lines played with high-pitched pedal stops, the polyphonic use of reeds (including the distinctive Renaissance Zink stop), manuals and pedals at the same (often 16') pitch, and the famous so called "Jacob Praetorius" Zink registration (although actually from Sweelinck) used by JP's pupil Weckmann at his audition to replace HP at the Jacobikirche. Kelemen's detailed programme notes cover issues of temperament (quarter comma meantone), registration, compositional style and performance practice. His playing is sensitive and relatively methodical, as befits this extraordinary repertoire.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Schütz Weihnachts-Historie Concerto Vocale, René Jacobs 50' 52"

Harmonia Mundi HMA 1951310 (1990)

+Heute ist Christus geboren SWV439, Hodie Christus natus est SWV315, Joseph du Sohn David SWV323, Rorate coeli desuper SWV322, Sei gegrüßet Maria SWV333

This is another of harmonia mundi's neat re-releases with the CD styled like a mini LP. It combines a stately (in a nice way!) performance of the *Christmas Story* with four seasonal pieces from the *Anderer Theil kleiner geistlicher Concerten* (2nd part of his small-[scale] sacred concertos) and the gem that is the two-choir *Heute ist Christus geboren* – just listen to that to get you into the festive spirit! BC

Ward Fantasies & Verse Anthems
Phantasm, Choir of Magdalen College, Oxford 60'
Linn CKD427

VDGS21-26, *Down caitiff wretch, How long wilt thou forget me, Let God arise, Mount up my soul, Praise the Lord, Prayer is an endless chain & This is a joyful happy holy day*

This is an excellent introduction to John Ward (c.1589-1638). Ian Payne has been the main editor of his works, especially the 5 and 6 voices-and-viols repertoire. He has also published the Oxford four-part viol Fantasias (Tr.T.T.B. & organ) in *Musica Britannica* 83, also available with score and parts from PRB Productions; MB 83 also includes 20 pieces for Tr.Tr.A.B without organ. The CD has a sensible programme, with the six Oxford pieces and six vocal works, three liturgical, three more widely religious. The viol pieces are mostly impressively played, but they feel slightly rushed, and I worry about weakness at the D string, which doesn't balance with the rest. This isn't a problem with the vocal items, which are more substantial than the Fantasias. Only one of the Fantasias stretches into three minutes, whereas the shortest vocal piece is nearly five minutes and the two-sectioned *Down, caitiff wretch* runs to over ten minutes. The mixing of viols and voices is more successful than viols alone, but I would prefer the three pieces that are not verse anthems to have only soloists. This raises Ward in my estimation, and it is well worth buying. CB

Acqua Alta Serikon, Daniel Stighill artistic leader, Erik Westberg conductor 79' 30"
Footprint FRCD 073

This is an impressive ensemble: 8 singers, 4 strings, 6 wind, 3 bc performing a mixture of Venetian music in contrast with 21st-century pieces by Alexander Campion (*Colour blinds the eye*) and Jan Sandström (*Acqua alta*). These seemed over-contrasting with the earlier music – and I did play it several times. There didn't seem enough for it to relate to the earlier Venetian manner. But the main pieces

were excellent. I'll list them roughly in chronological order:

Willaert *De profundis* (1550) a 8
Andrea Gabrieli *Domine in furore* (1583) a6
Merulo *Sanctus* a16
Giovanni Gabrieli *Omnes gentes* (1597) a16
Canzon II (1608) a4
Canzon X (1615) a8
Dario Castello *Sonata Lib.II/12* (1629) a3
Giovanni Rovetta *Domine Deus noster* ST bc
Barbara Strozzi *Salve Regina* S bc

I don't know the players (Gawain Glenton is named just as the supplier of a photo), but they are impressive, sensitive and not quite as overdone as one sometimes hears. I found it entirely enjoyable. The mixture of ensembles is appealing. The English booklet has 30 interesting pages, though I suspect that many purchasers will get tired eyes from the normal small booklet print – though I've seen worse. Well worth buying. CB

Castrum Doloris Bornus Consort, Orkiestra Czasów Zarazy, Tempus, Schola Gregoriana Silesiensis, Chór Samacki im. G. G. Gorczyckiego, Concerto Antemunde, Robert Pozarski 78' 23"

Dux 1104

This extraordinary CD is the one of the fruits of the recent flowering of early music in Poland, most of the multitude of participating ensembles having been formed in the past decade. The project is an ambitious one, namely to represent the musical element of the lavish burial ceremonies practised in Poland towards the end of the 17th and into the 18th century. In the mix is polyphony by Maciej Wronowicz and a punchy setting for voices and instruments, including trumpets, of the requiem by Damian Stacowicz – so far, so pan-European. The CD had opened with an extended Marcia lugubre on baroque drums and proceeded with much chant sung in splendid eastern style and with due lugubriousness, but the colourful local highlight for me were the processions for two magnificent great bocks – polish bagpipes with splendid bass drones and in which the head of the goat is represented in the instrument. The wheezing and concluding squeak of the bocks is just one of several extraneous sounds in this recording, but to my mind the occasional mismatch of pitches, rough edges and distant clatters as the performers move around simply add to the atmosphere of this evocative and utterly compelling recording. Robert Pozarski, clearly the inspirational presence

at the heart of this project and the utterly convincing cantor, is to be congratulated for gathering these forces together and for presenting a programme with uniquely Polish elements as well as standard European Baroque aspects all performed with complete commitment. D. James Ross

The Medici Castrato: A homage to Gualberto Magli (?–1625) Raffaele Pe cT, Chiara Granata triple harp, David Miller theorbo

Glossa GCD923501

Music by Francesca & Giulio Caccini, Ciccolini, d'India, Lambardi, Montesardo, Monteverdi, Nauwach, Trabaci & anon

A clever idea for a recording – Giovanni Gualberto Magli, a pupil of Caccini, was one of the favourite singers of the Medici family in early 17th-century Florence, and performed in Monteverdi's *Orfeo*, creating the roles of Musica in the Prologue and Speranza in the underworld scene, excerpts from both being included here. The disc is completed by a selection of pieces "in stile recitativo" by other composers of the same period, including Caccini, Ciccolini, D'India and a new name for me, Johann Nauwach, who published the first collection of arias for solo voice in Germany – Magli having for a short time been in the employment of the Elector of Brandenburg.

Raffaele Pe is a persuasive advocate of what can be (and possibly always was) intellectually demanding music, requiring absolute concentration from listener and performer, as every nuance of the text is explored; one can understand why opera rapidly included choruses, strophic arias and instrumental dances and interludes to charm the audience and provide "lighter" fare around the intense passion of the solo declamation. Try D'India's amazingly extended "Lamento di Giasone" (track 9), with its angular melodic leaps and anguished harmony, or the similarly developed Ciccolini "Solo e Pensoso" (track 13), with its lovely ground-bass lament and florid vocal ornaments; one can understand the excitement of the members of the Camerata Fiorentina as they supposedly recovered the ancient tradition of monody.

Chiara Granata and David Miller provide quietly virtuosic accompaniments. They come to the fore briefly in the ritornelli to the *Orfeo* prologue, and in a short Trabaci toccata. More music from them would not have gone amiss!

Anyway, a fascinating issue. One hopes to hear more from this exceptionally

interesting point in the development of opera and vocal music in general.

Alastair Harper

Verso Venezia: Sonate & Canzoni Pallade Musica <TT>

Atma Classique ACD2 2697

Castello Sonate prima e seconda a Sopran solo, Sonate settima e ottava a2, Legrenzi La Donata, La Foscari, La Galini, Sonata quinta a due Merula La Cappellina, La Scarinza, La Miradoro, La Monteverde

Pallade Musica are an interesting group in that they have chosen to explore repertoire for treble instrument (here violin), obbligato bass (here cello) and continuo. Their decision to record music by three relatively little-known composers is equally indicative of their determination. No matter what one thinks of their choice of instrument (I imagine there will be objections to the choice of cello as the bass string, for example), no-one can say these are not fine performances, virtuosity from all concerned and all very stylishly carried off. The booklet notes spend more time discussing Venetian social history than they do matters musicological, and I was not persuaded by the argument that Legrenzi's most modern music is to be found in his sonatas, nor that he had any influence at all on Bach! It would have been far better to shorten the note and concentrate on the music. Continuo support is provided by a theorbo and either organ or harpsichord. It was very interesting to hear four pieces by each composer – though Legrenzi was easily recognized, it was not always as simple to distinguish Castello from Merula. I really enjoyed this disc and hope to hear more from the group. BC

LATE BAROQUE

Bach Advent cantatas Sibylla Rubens S, Sarah Connolly A, Christoph Prégardien T, Peter Kooy B, Collegium Vocale, Philippe Herreweghe 62' 49"

Harmonia Mundi HMA 1951605 (1997)

This is a reissue on Harmonia Mundi's budget label of three cantatas for the First Sunday of Advent originally recorded in 1996. The playing of Herreweghe's band – all the participants are listed – is quite lovely: the opening movement of Cantata 36, *Schwingt freudig euch empor* – a cantata that uses a lot of material from a secular forerunner – sounds as if it originated in a concerto for oboe d'amore and the obbligato playing in the tenor aria as well as the exquisite violin playing in the

soprano aria *Auch mit gedämpften schwachen Stimmen* tell us that all the musicians love the music they are playing and singing. The 17 singers of the chorus and the 18 players are beautifully balanced; the direction is poised and properly reticent, so we hear Bach without the distractions of an assertive conductor: tempi are beautifully judged and feel just right to me – there is a wonderful trio of oboes and bassoon that provides the racy accompaniment to the tenor chorale *Der du bist dem Vater gleich* in 37. The singers of arias are artists who really use their instruments in the service of the music and the text rather than in demonstrating their technique. If you missed these wonderful performances first time round, get them now: they are the best of these cantatas that I can imagine – even the ungrateful bass aria in 62, *Streite, siege*, with its curious unison string accompaniment in continuous semiquavers works with the ever adaptable Peter Kooy and a perfectly judged tempo. David Stancliffe

Bach Köthener Trauermusik BWV244a [Sabine Devehle, Damien Guillon, Thomas Hobbs, Christian Immler SATB, Ensemble] Pygmalion, Raphaël Pichon Harmonia Mundi HMC 902211 (73' 53")

This interesting disc is a reconstruction by Morgon Jourdain of the Funeral Music for Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Cöthen, Bach's employer from 1717 to 1722 – a period Bach looked back on later through rose-tinted spectacles – and we know that Bach prepared and directed the funeral music in March 1729 with Picander as the librettist. From the text, the only thing to survive, we can be pretty certain that Bach parodied material from the Matthew Passion and used the opening and closing choruses of the Trauerode from 1727 with its gambas and lutes in addition to the ensemble containing flutes and oboes d'amore. But how was the work constructed?

In the 1870s Rust noticed that the verse rhythms of ten of the arias in the text matched ten numbers in the *Matthew Passion*, and in 1952 Smend matched the metres of the still-missing choruses to those in the *Trauerode*. In 1987 Häfner, studying the processes of parody in Bach's work, argued that the missing Dictum, the keystone of the second part (performed at the actual burial), was the second Kyrie from the B minor Mass – that austere, fugal motet. The remaining recitatives and ariosos were pieced together from the scoring and idioms of the Matthew

Passion, and tried out over a three year period: you can see the work in progress from a YouTube recording made in 2011.

So much for the genesis of this reconstruction; and in the hands of Pichon – known for his work on Rameau and the later repertoire, and an experience singer himself, it sounds for the most part very plausible. Certainly, the band and the 17 singers perform with great conviction, and bring clarity and finesse to the music. The weakest part is the freely re-composed materiel, which often had me reaching for the Bachian originals. Like small alterations to the words of well-known hymns, I found it was the nearly-but-not-quite numbers that jarred most. But if this reconstruction has given this splendid music a new context in which to blossom, I can live with that. Is the final result so very different in concept from a scored-up performance of the whole of the numbers we know as the Monteverdi Vespers?

I have not been able to track down a score to check the workings, but I have been listening to Andrew Parrott's version of this music, which he completed in 2004, and recorded in 2010 (on Avie AV-2241). Some of the material is the same, but not all. Andrew uses OVPP as you would expect for most of it, and has an equally convincing rationale for the way he has reconstructed it and chooses to perform it. And he has Clare Wilkinson and Charles Daniels! David Stancliffe

Bach Christmas Oratorio Claron McFadden, Bernarda Fink, Christoph Genz, Dietrich Henschel, Monteverdi Choir, English Baroque Soloists, Sir John Eliot Gardiner 142' (oratorio) + 52' (documentaries) Euroarts 204598 (2 DVDs, rec. 1999)

This pair of DVDs record the opening of John Eliot Gardiner's Bach cantata year with which he marked the millennium. For those who can play them on a system that has quality sound as well as vision and like the Monteverdi Choir's approach and style this will be a welcome addition to their collection and will offer insights on how Gardiner achieves his results. There is a 'pre-concert' talk to camera on how the Christmas Oratorio is structured and scored, and some of Gardiner's take on how he chooses to perform Bach is revealed. The playing of the band – led excellently by Alison Bury, though the instrumentalists are nowhere named in the booklet – in these live performances is splendid. They listen to the singers and articulate their phrases as if they were singing them, but Gardiner's take on

period instruments – revealed further in his book on Bach – is interesting. Long after Harnoncourt and Leonhardt had made their pioneering recordings of all the Bach cantatas Gardiner would not use them: he was waiting till the players had mastered the technical issues and could play to his standard. So his trumpeters are fudging their tuning with little finger vents, and I don't hear his chorus give that purity and clarity that comes from young singers who listen to the temperament that the players and keyboard instruments are using. They are belting it out, and we need to wait till the soloists and small accompanying forces are at work.

Disc 1 has parts 1–3, and the rationale; disc 2 the rest, with and

interesting video tour of Gardiner in various Thuringian churches and clips of other cantatas in rehearsal. The staging is dramatic – the Evangelist sings without a score from the pulpit. The choir has a number of its more mature members, and the whole performance feels a little more old-fashioned than we might expect these days – an indication of how difficult it is to balance the excitement of the moment in live performances with the cool clarity that you often need to make a recording that will wear re-playing.

But I enjoyed it, and learnt from it, as you always do, perhaps especially when the conductor does it differently from how you do it. Movements like the opening chorus of Part 5 were exhilarating, and the excitement never flags; though here Bernarda Fink (of the rather soloistic soloists who mostly sang the chorus lines) is revealed by the DVD as not quite up to speed! The tenor Christoph Genz is as convincing in the lines of the Evangelist as he is in negotiating the runs paired with the flute in *Frohe Hirten*. And it isn't every bass who can sing *Großer Herr* with the tromba, and then the fluid lines of *Erleucht auch meine finstre Sinnen* with an oboe d'amore in Part 5. This won't be my favourite performance, but with so little funding around for new recordings, you can understand the desire to hit the Christmas market – and the insight it gives into how Gardiner's Bach is achieved is very revealing.

David Stancliffe

Bach Partitas, BWV 825–830 Igor Levit piano
Sony Classical 88843036822

We did not request this, but it is not the first time Bach on piano has been reviewed in these pages. As someone with

a traumatic relationship with the medium (think weekly humiliation at counterpoint classes playing both Bach's 3-part inventions and *your own!*), I must admit that I enjoy hearing someone who *can* not only master all of those notes but also make them sound musical. In the faster movements, Levit displays an impressive range of touch, and the more relaxed dances are beautifully paced. If you don't object to the piano in principle, you will find much to enjoy here. BC

Bach Das Wohltemperierte Klavier John Butt *hpscd* 213' (4 CDs)
Linn CKD463

It is hard, if inspiring, going to absorb the "48": it needs time to spread the music. A series of live performances would be fine, but rather than a long listen at home, it's more refreshing. I've been too busy to even open the box yet, what with the Greenwich Early Music Exhibition followed by a week with an unusual number of operas the week after, then finishing *EMR*. John is so brilliant a musician, as player, director and academic: it is inevitable that he will have distinctive features of plausible originality. CB

That's just an advanced plug: Noel O'Regan will review the music!

Bach [Violin Concertos] Joshua Bell *vl*, Academy of St Martin in the Fields
Sony Classical 88843087792
BWV1041, 1042 + Air, Chaconne (orch. after Mendelssohn), Gavotte (orch. after Schumann)

I imagine this is more for fans of Joshua Bell than readers of *EMR*. Whilst he says that Bach has been "a huge presence in my life", it doesn't seem like HIP performance has had any influence. Seen from its own perspective though (virtuoso violinist with modern chamber orchestra), there is some interest in the disc; besides the two violin concertos, we hear orchestrations of two of Bach's greatest 19th-century admirers' arrangements of solo violin music. BC

Bach Violin Concertos Zsolt Kalló *vl*, Capella Savaria 56' 11"
Hungaroton HCD32749
BWV1041, 1042, 1052R, 1056R

This is a very enjoyable recording from a fine baroque orchestra (44221 strings, the first 4 including the soloist). As well as the two well known concertos, Zsolt Kalló plays reconstructions after surviving harpsichord concertos in D minor and F minor, the latter (as often happens) up a

tone. With three recordings to review in one issue, the differences in approach are interesting; Kalló's continuo team includes a lute, which gives more depth to the accompaniment while also to some extent reins in the imaginations of the players, meaning that there is more harmonic and less melodic accompaniment. That was an issue for me in the review below, but never to the same extent here. My only slightly moan about this CD is the length – they could easily have added another concerto, perhaps another of the less well-known "re-imaginings"? BC

Bach Violin Concertos Giuliano Carmignola *vl*, [Mayumi Hirasaki *vl*,] Concerto Köln 73' 44"
Archiv Produktion 00289 479 2695
BWV1041-43, 1052R, 1056R

This recording includes the same four pieces as the previous disc, and adds the concerto for two violins (with Carmignola deferring to the leader of Concerto Köln in taking the second solo part). I have long been a fan of the Italian, yet I was not entirely taken by his readings of some of this music, some of the semiquavers seem snatched in the opening movement of the A minor, for example. I was equally unimpressed by the harpsichord tinkering in the slow movements – if he felt the necessity to improvise melodies, why not consistently? Elsewhere there is much to admire – in those self-same movements, Carmignola's beautiful articulated melodic lines tease the ear in a way that might have seemed impossible in such familiar music; the double concerto is more duet than duel as it is sometimes cast; the strings (33221 with an extra 1st for the double concerto, and bassoon!) of Concerto Köln are masterful. Although even the great Carmignola struggles to be eloquent in the most difficult passages of the first movement of the D minor reconstruction, in general the re-worked pieces are not in the "the violin has to play as many notes from the harpsichord part as is possible – albeit it superhumanly!" mould. In other words, they sound more or less feasible as violin pieces. BC

Bach Concertos for Oboe and Oboe d'amore Gonzalo X. Ruiz *oboes*, Portland Baroque Orchestra, Monica Huggett 67' 21"
Avie AV2324
BWV1053R, 1055R, 1056R, 1059R, 1060R + aria from BWV51

This is an enjoyable disc, although if you go to sample it in a record shop (or is that

a sign of how behind the times I am?), do not take the first track as a measure of the quality of the rest; for some reason, the star oboist seems to have taken against triplets... While I totally agree that there is plenty of room within a long melisma for different stresses that will upset the natural flow (medieval theorists didn't opt for the term "perfection" to describe triple time by chance!), but even I have my limits; I remember being chastised for distorting triplets while singing along to the *Et incarnatus est* of Mozart's C minor mass, so I sympathise; fortunately, though, there is no known recording of my performance, whereas every time I listen to this disc I must endure the same instability. Elsewhere I had the feeling that the continuo section was a little pushy, and sometimes felt the soloist was being driven along a little harder than he would have liked. I do not want my review to sound negative, however, as this is a very good disc with an interesting choice or repertoire; the inclusion of a version of an aria for soprano and continuo as what looks like an encore is not as random as it at first seems – Ruiz explains that he uses it as the slow movement in BWV1056R when BWV1059R is also on the same programme as they share the same music... So, yes, you get the most famous of Bach's adagios for oboe twice on one disc, albeit in different keys. BC

Bononcini / A. Scarlatti Chamber cantatas
Gloria Banditelli A, Ensemble Aurora,
Enrico Gatti 52' 10"

Tactus TB 660003 (rec 1988)

Bononcini *Cari luci del mio bene, Il lamento d'Olimpia* A **Scarlatti** *Bella Madre de' Fiori*

I feel that I may have been rather unkind to other Tactus releases in this issue, but I have absolutely no problem in giving this disc the highest possible commendation. Of course, the performers' names (even if the original recording is already more than 25 years old) are enough to recommend it, but the music is also top notch. Alessandro Scarlatti has never really done much for me but his *Bella Madre de' Fiori* contains one of the most touching arias I have heard in a long time. The two other pieces are by Giovanni Bononcini and, like the Scarlatti, are scored for alto, two violins and continuo. Once again, there is much to admire in the music, as well as the performances, with Banditelli's meticulous tuning and vocal dexterity and some fine unisoni violins – never easy! BC

Caldara *La concordia de' pianeti* Daniel Behle *Mercurio*, Veronica Cangemi *Diana*, Ruxandra Donose *Giove*, Franco Fagioli *Apollo*, Delphine Galou *Venere*, Carlos Mena *Marte*, Luca Tittoto *Saturno*, La Cetra, Marcon 108' 07" (2 CDs)
Archiv Produktion 479 3356

As regular readers will know, I am a huge fan of Caldara's music – it is full of great tunes (the kind that stick around long after hearing them) and will give any of the big names a run for their money any day of the week. That said, it took me a while to realise that, beautiful as each individual melodic number on these two CDs is, the recording does lack something. Perhaps the fact that it is a serenata (planned to entertain the pregnant Austro-Hungarian Empress on her way back to Vienna after a coronation in Prague) is the root of the problem; essentially, the first half is taken up by deities talking in metaphors about the Empress Elizabeth (whose name day it happened to be) and her impending joy... So there is no dramatic action to give the piece any sense of shape – no-one ever gets angry and needs to let off steam, no-one dies, causing someone else to be in the depths of despair. It's all just very nice. The cast may be stepping into the shoes of some of the best singers money could buy, but – charming as much of the music is – I just could not get too excited about it. If, as the booklet notes tell us, the conductor spent months trawling through miles of microfilm of Caldara before making this selection, I think he could have done a far better job. Perhaps the Empress was not in a suitable condition for too much excitement but I actually like some drama in the music I listen to. Needless to say, though, cast, band and recording are first rate. BC

Corelli *La Follia* Michala Petri rec, Mahan Esfahani *hp*scd 66' 22"
Our Recordings 6.220610
Op. 5 Nos. 7–12

Corelli's opus 5 sonatas for violin and continuo were first published in Rome in 1700 and were reprinted by various publishers throughout the 18th century. The undated edition on which these recordings are based was published in London by John Walsh with the title "Six Solos for a Flute and a Bass by Archangelo Corelli... the whole exactly Transpos'd and made fitt for a flute and a bass with the approbation of severall Eminent Masters". Most of the sonatas consist of a prelude followed by a set of dances, while the last one which gives its name to the CD is the

well-known set of variations on what Walsh calls the Spanish Folly. This disc is the result of three days of recording in Copenhagen when, as Mahan Esfahani writes in his informative notes, every take was different and the final selection only replicates a few choices from a wide range of possibilities. Michala Petri's slow movements are embellished with a fine selection of florid ornamentation mostly based on 18th-century examples, while the elaborate continuo realisation is based on contemporary treatises and Antonio Tonelli's realisation of the complete op. 5 sonatas which is now in the Biblioteca Estense in Modena. These two performers obviously inspired each other and the result is a most enjoyable CD. Victoria Helby

Gilles Messe des Morts: Rameau's Funeral
Judith van Wanroij, Robert Getchell, Juan Sancho, Lisandro Abadie, Capriccio Stravagante, Les 24 Violons, Collegium Vocale Gent, Skip Sempé 63' 35"
Paradizo PA0013
+extracts from *Castor et Pollux*, *Dardanus* & *Zoroastre*

I'm really glad that someone has brought this event to us this year. The main musical content is the Jean Gilles *Messe des morts* (used at the funerals of Gilles himself, Camppra, Royer and Louis XV as well as Rameau) though in the updated adaptation made for the occasion by (probably) François Rebel and François Francoeur. As well re-writing and re-orchestrating (very effectively) the music to conform to modern taste, they also incorporated adaptations of Rameau's own music, notably from *Castor et Pollux*. This live recording offers some particularly fine orchestral playing and singing which is always at least good, and often better. Some of the soloists' ornaments sound rather laboured and they never quite decide how to pronounce the text (the inclination is towards French, though this is neither consistently nor universally embraced), but the choir is its usual accomplished self. All *Ramistes* will want this. David Hansell

Handel *Messiah* Lucy Crowe, Tim Mead, Andrew Staples, Christopher Purves, Le Concert d'Astrée, Emmanuelle Haïm
Erato 08256 46240555 (135' 28", 2 CDs)

An entertaining and uplifting recording of Handel's evergreen masterpiece. As Simon Heighes describes in his excellent notes, there is no one set version of this work; on this occasion Haïm has chosen to follow John Tobin's well-tried edition,

which is based on Handel's 1752 performances, and will probably be that most familiar to most listeners nowadays.* So we have, for example, the extended Pastoral Symphony, the alto "But who may abide" and the common time "Rejoice greatly."

Haïm directs with her customary precision and vigour; tempi are very well-judged to give Handel's matchless score due space for its full effect – brisk and dancing in "O Thou that tellest", but with due solemnity and weight in the Passion music of the Second Part. Occasionally one feels a little 'micro management' of dynamics and phrasing, especially in the choral movements (the staccato "Prince of Peace" exclamations or the swelling "hath spoken it" at the end of 'And the glory of the Lord'), though the fact that the choir negotiates this without turning a hair is tribute to their quality!

The soloists are a fine team. I particularly enjoyed Tim Mead's "refiner's fire" and searing 'sorrow' sequence in Part 2 from Andrew Staples. Christopher Purves is suitably mysterious in "And behold, darkness", but has the range and ringing tone to bring off the whole of 'The trumpet shall sound'.

Like Handel, I have kept the superb soprano until last; if Lucy Crowe's performance of the Nativity sequence in Part 1 is absolutely thrilling, her "I know that my redeemer liveth" at the beginning of Part 3 is quite perfect.

This wonderful work is exceptionally well-known to all music-lovers – Haïm and her team have achieved the miracle of making one feel one is discovering it afresh!

Alastair Harper

*The earlier editions of HHA are not particularly popular: it would be interesting to check usage via the PRS. It hardly seems authentic when English-speaking performers meet the title *Der Messias*, though at least the English text was placed above the German. It was published in 1965, only three years after the inadequate *Saul* (see p. 2). Watkins Shaw's 1959 "double-dotted" vocal score, now irrelevant, caught on. In 1965, the Novello full score was published, but rather inelegant, as were the parts. I've no idea how my Oxford UP edition has fared!

Handel Heroes from the Shadows Orfeo 55, Nathalie Stutzmann 79' 41"

Erato 08058 462317 7 5

Music from Agrippina, Alessandro, Amadigi, Arianna in Creta, Ariodante, Giulio Cesare (incl. a duet with Philippe Jaroussky), Orlando, Partenope, Poro, Radamisto, Rodelinda, Scipione, Serse, Silla & Tamerlano

Two features from the opposite ends of the scale characterise the variable qualities

of this recital, on which French contralto Nathalie Stutzmann both sings and directs Orfeo 55, the Metz-based ensemble she founded in 2009. The first is the duet for 'Son nata a lagrimar' from *Giulio Cesare*, where she is joined by countertenor Philippe Jaroussky in an unforgettable performance of heart-rending beauty and tragic intensity as mother and son mourn the loss of Pompeo. The second comes in the cadenza of Romilda's exuberant 'Io seguio sol fiero' (*Partenope*), where Stutzmann apes the sound of the horn in duet with the real thing. It is the kind of gimmick that *might* work as a one-off in concert (and it has to be confessed it is the sort of thing French audiences love), but on record it is dead in the water at birth.

Happily there is nothing else approaching such vulgarity – though the use of organ continuo in the *Radamisto* aria is non-HIP – and much to admire. As director, Stutzmann's Handel is sinewy and strong-limbed, with driving, full-blooded basses in faster music, while she brings a delicious lilt to the Sinfonia from act 3 of *Scipione*, one of a number of short instrumental pieces interposed between arias. Rather choppy rhythms at times? Some over-slow tempos in more reflective arias? Well, yes, maybe, but for my taste such dramatization is preferable to the anaemic, lightweight approach now often favoured by British conductors in Handel's operas. The programme is fascinating. Instead of concentrating on the usual big numbers for major characters, Stutzmann has planned the recital around the many fine arias Handel provided for secondary roles. Her contralto retains a coppery burnish, employing vibrato with a judiciousness that comes of long experience. *Passaggi* are unfailingly well articulated, though ornaments are not always precisely turned and her rare attempts at a trill are an approximation of the real thing. In slower arias Stutzmann does not always hit the note square on, and it is not always easy to tell if she is scooping or employing *portamento*. None-the-less, there is much more here to enjoy than complain of, for this is music making with real personality behind it. As such it communicates unfailingly and positively to the listener.

Brian Robins

Handel Organ concertos See under Rameau

Keiser Pomona Melanie Hirsch *Pomona*, [Doerthe Maria Sandmann *Flora*,] Olivia Vermeulen *Ceres*, [Magdalene Harer *Vertum-*

nus, Julian Podger *Mercurius*, Knut Schoch *Zephyrus*,] Raimonds Spogis *Bacchus*, Jan Kobow *Jasion/Jupiter*, [Jörg Gottschick *Vulcanus*,] Capella Orlandi Bremen, Thomas Ihlenfeldt 123' 23" (2 CDs in a box)

cpo 777 659-2

This "Operetta" was composed in Hamburg in 1702 for the birthday of King Frederick IV of Denmark. Postel's libretto is a fairly typical "Contest of the Seasons," won by Autumn – which (what luck!) coincides with Frederick's birthdate.

Keiser's music is a delight – the various protagonists are deftly characterised in a succession of short arias and duets of great melodic charm and rhythmic vitality, and the work concludes with Jupiter's judgement, in recitative, and general choral rejoicing.

I was particularly struck by Keiser's obvious influence on the young Handel, who worked with him at the Hamburg opera house around this time – not only providing melodic ideas (e. g. *Ceres* and *Jasion's* aria a2 -CD 1, directly quoted in Handel's *Salve Regina*) but also in general approach to Affekt-illustration (*Bacchus'* triple time air with woodwind pedals is echoed in *Alexander's Feast*, and his subsequent drinking aria suggests the echo effects in *Belshazzar's* "Let the Deep Bowl").

There are also moments of great beauty and tranquility; *Pomona's* "Ruhmet ihr Himmel" for strings 'senza cembalo' is especially memorable.

The conclusion of the work is a little musically thin, with Jupiter's judgment given in *secco recitative*, and echoed in rather short choruses; the original climactic effects were no doubt supplied as much by the stage business as by the music itself.

The performance is entirely satisfactory. The soloists cope effortlessly with their often-taxing coloratura and the band play like angels. The direction is faultless, both microscopically (in the varied continuo groupings distinguishing different characters, for example) and macroscopically (in the overall pacing of the work).

One hopes more of this fascinating repertoire will follow! Alastair Harper

A. Marcello 6 Concertos 'La Cetra', Concerto in D minor Andrea Mion ob, Insieme Strumentale di Roma, Giorgio Sasso 62' 29"

Brilliant Classics 94441

Although the more well-known Oboe Concerto in D minor (which comes first on the disc) is assumed to have been written by Alessandro, this work is so

stylistically different from the *La Cetra* concertos that one wonders whether they are by the same hand – more likely his brother, Benedetto? Giorgio Sasso, in his programme notes, suggests it may be by Albinoni in one of his more inspired moments, or even JSB himself! *La Cetra*, a collection of concertos in which flute and oboe have more of a concerted rather than a solo role, is stylistically varied – some at times anticipating the pre-classical style, whereas the D minor oboe concerto, admired and transcribed for keyboard by Bach, is firmly rooted in the Baroque. The few slightly untidy moments in the string playing from this small ensemble do not detract from a pleasant listening experience. The disc is worth it for the D minor concerto and the few inspirational touches in a few odd movements of the collection.

Ian Graham-Jones

Pergolesi *La Serva Padrona* • *Salve Regina*
Federico Benetti, Angela Nisi, I Solisti Lirienti, Flavio Emilio Scogna 63' 22"
Tactus TC 711606

I have to confess that I've never seen the attraction in *La Serva Padrona*, although I have never seen it live either, so that might explain it. The singers here play their parts well, with much voice characterisation without descending into caricature. The 3211 strings with continuo play neatly though not in an especially HIP style – notes are accented rather than articulated, with little air around them. In the *Salve Regina*, the soprano negotiates the much more demanding music, but finds the high register particularly challenging; I suspect that she has a beautiful voice but has been taught old school "vibrato with everything" singing; there are a couple of very ugly entries in *Et Jesum benedictum*. The endings of movements are bewilderingly ragged – was there really no time for a retake? BC

Pergolesi *Cantate da Camera*, opus II
Alessandra Rossi de Simone, Ensemble Concerto, Roberto Gini 59' 10"
Tactus TB711605 (© 1991)

After what can only be described as the disappointment of the previous release, this repackaged set, featuring a singer who uses her vibrato in the service of the music, was a relative pleasure. I regret that I cannot give the CD a full-hearted review, though as the instrumental playing is not quite up to scratch this time. They may be historical instruments, but I cannot believe that performances actually took place in Pergolesi's short lifetime. For that

matter, does a group this size need a conductor – without a doubt, that is the problem here; musicians watching someone else give a beat and artistic "leadership" rather than collaborating with one another to produce something free of external control. I would like to hear this very attractive music played with a larger body of strings – and fewer directors! BC

Porpora *Il maestro* Franco Fagioli cT, Academia Montis Regalis, Alessandro De Marchi
naïve V5369

Arias from *Carlo il Calvo*, *Didone abbandonata*, *Ericea*, *Ezio*, *Semiramide riconosciuto*, *Il verbo in carne*, *Meride e Selinunte*, *Polifemo & Vulcano*

"The greatest teacher of singing among composers, and the greatest composer among teachers of singing." (Walker, 1951) This is a fine disc. Nicola Porpora is probably best known today as the singing master of Farinelli, the 18th century's most famous castrato, but he was also a composer of much distinction. Francisco Fagioli gives us here an excellent overview of his output; alongside dazzling displays of coloratura we have graceful and finely poised *bel canto*, guaranteed to have any opera house (or indeed the King of Spain) clamouring for more.

Particular highlights are the opening *Se tu la reggi al volo* with blazing brass fanfares and an absolutely jaw-dropping display of perfectly-timed semiquaver runs, and the lovely triple-time *A voi ritorno campagne amene* with its plangent contrapuntal accompaniment (more than a suggestion here of Handel in *Ombra Cara* mood.)

Franco Fagioli is more than equal to the considerable demands of the music. As mentioned already, he throws off the extended coloratura passages with the greatest aplomb, every note precisely articulated, but also can command the beauty of tone and breath control to make the slower arias infinitely affecting.

De Marchi and the Academia Montis Regalis provide suitably-sizzling orchestral support (and some extra meteorological effects, e. g., in *Gia si desta la tempesta*).

The sleeve notes are suitably informative and, indeed, suggestive. There is a fine reproduction of a lovely 18th-century caricature of the great Bernacchi throwing a seemingly endless garland of semiquavers around and over the Campanile of San Marco with a *trillo* at the end. Fagioli is his worthy successor! Alastair Harper

Rameau Mathias Vidal, Ensemble Amarillis naïve V5377

3ième, 5ième concerts, *Le Berger fidèle*, *Orphée*

Be careful – this is not quite what it appears to be. An oboe finds its way into Concert II (no, it doesn't work mainly because the delicate balance of the parts that this music requires cannot be achieved) and the cantatas are sung by a tenor (very well, as it happens) rather than the composer's specified soprano. In addition, the instrumental lines in the arias are re-scored, in one case for violin and recorder in octaves – an unconvincing and unlikely sound in the context. At least Concert V survives any such interference and the lovely performance reveals that the composer really did know best. The mere fact that 18th-century re-scoring of this music exist does not necessarily mean that they are a good idea.

David Hansell

Rameau & Handel [Music for organ] Paul Goussot (Dom Bedos organ, 1748), Ensemble Zaïs, Benoît Babel 68' 20"
Paraty 714127

Handel op 4/1, 4/1, 7/4, improvised overture
Rameau 3ième & 4ième Concerts + Ritornelle from *Hippolyte et Aricie*

Both Handel and Rameau were renowned as virtuoso organists but, apart from the problematic publications of the organ concertos, Handel left very little organ music, and Rameau none. Although not perhaps for the purists, this CD partially remedies that. The culture shock of hearing Handel played on a full-blooded French baroque organ (the 1748 Dom Bedos in Sainte-Croix Abbey, Bordeaux, with its 32' Grand Orgue) is soon overcome by the sheer range of colours. Liberties are taken with the Handel concertos, including the replacement of movements with improvisations, added cadenzas, an improvised opening to Op. 4/4 and frequent use of the 32' manual Bourdon, just because it is there. There is also an entirely improvised Overture, curiously credited to Handel. Given the authenticity issues of all Handel's organ works, these interpretations are as valid as anybody else's, as is the use of French registrations that Handel would not have been familiar with – after all, these concertos were known in France and who knows how they were played there. The organ's colours really come into the fore in the transcriptions of seven of Rameau *Pièces de clavecin en concerts* for organ and orchestra. His use of orchestral colour

gives a clue to the way that he might have played these pieces himself on such a grand French organ. Paul Goussot is an acknowledged improviser and displays his talents well on this recording.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

A. Scarlatti Chamber cantata See under Bononcini

A. Scarlatti Sinfonie di Concerto Grosso, Opere per flauto e continuo Accademia della Magnifica Comunità, Enrico Casazza 110' 14" (2 CDs)
Tactus TB 661990

This is another welcome re-release from Tactus, mixing and matching the 12 *Sinfonie di Concerto Grosso* with concerto for recorder, two violins and strings, and a "sinfonia" for recorder and continuo. The original manuscript of the *Sinfonie* is in the British Library, and it is an interesting set, mixing works with recorders, oboe and trumpet. The one-to-a-part performances on this disc are excellent, with the balance between strings, winds and continuo well managed. Recorder players should all own it!

BC

D. Scarlatti Sonates pour clavecin vol. 1 Mario Raskin *hpscd* 61' 48"
Pierre Verany AR102

K1, 9, 14, 25, 27, 45, 69, 106, 107, 132, 208, 209, 211, 212

Mario Raskin plays 14 sonatas including both well-known and lesser-known pieces. His playing is measured and somewhat careful, very reliable rhythmically and technically assured, but lacking something in sparkle and idiosyncrasy, particularly when compared to the two piano recordings of Scarlatti sonatas reviewed below. He plays on two different harpsichords: a copy of a Grimaldi by André Christophe and a Franco-Flemish harpsichord by Jacques Braux. He makes more use of the latter, which is very resonant on this recording and its brightness gets a bit wearing after a time; the Grimaldi works better for me. The final four sonatas (the paired K208-209 and K211-212) are the most successful and show a good sense of style.

Noel O'Regan

D. Scarlatti Complete Keyboard Sonatas Vol. 15 Orion Weiss piano 79' 20"
Naxos 8.573222

K43, 72, 92, 177, 220, 230, 233, 253, 265, 273, 293, 296, 326, 365, 439, 448, 455, 552 + 553

American pianist Orion Weiss follows the recent trend of ignoring the traditional

pairings and planning a sort of 'narrative journey'. While this is not very convincing as a whole, I do welcome his choice of 19 sonatas since he ignores all well-known ones and includes quite a few that are rarely recorded. Unlike Igor Kamenz's recent recording, reviewed below, Weiss takes a more traditional approach, making his piano imitate somewhat the sound of a harpsichord, using a restricted tonal palette and steady tempi. He has a formidable technique and brings out the great variety of figurations used by Scarlatti, from the spiky brilliance of K 72 and K553, through the wistful and bell-like K365, to the idiosyncratic sprinklings of K230. Forward momentum is always maintained and these are very engaging performances indeed.

Noel O'Regan

Igor Kamenz plays [D.] Scarlatti [on piano] naïve V5399 (69')

K11, 17, 27, 29, 87, 96, 101, 109, 119, 135, 141, 146, 197, 209, 322, 380, 381 & 492

The Russian pianist Igor Kamenz was a child prodigy whose career was later eclipsed; he has recently re-emerged as a successful concert pianist, particularly in the USA. He has a formidable control of tonal nuance which he employs in these 18 sonatas, played on a modern Steinway. Unlike the Scarlatti playing of Orion Weiss, reviewed above, Kamenz makes no attempt to make his piano sound like a harpsichord but uses the full dynamic and tonal range. He does pull and push the tempo around quite a lot, verging on the mannered at times. He tends to exaggerate the proto-Romantic side of Scarlatti, for instance in his playing of K87 in B minor. His technical assuredness inspires confidence, however, tossing off the scales in K492 for example, and most of what he does is in line with indications in the music. Kamenz ignores traditional pairings and chooses his sonatas to make up a narrative suite of his own designing. While providing a good contrast of mood and tempo there is no real sense of an overall journey and listeners will probably want to dip in and out in any case. My own choice would be for harpsichord but this is a good piano alternative which gives new perspectives.

Noel O'Regan

Telemann The Grand Concertos for Mixed Instruments Vol. 1 La Stagione, Michael Schneider 62' 33"

cpo 777 859-2

TWV 44:42, 50:3, 53: D31, E1, 54:B1, deest

Another fabulous series from cpo and

Michael Schneider gets under way, and what a cracker the first disc is. The first work on it is not actually classified in the Telemann catalogues as a concerto as it is technically the overture to his *Pastorelle en Musique*. As such it has five movements, the first in three sections (but not quite what you might be thinking). Scored for pairs of trumpets and oboes with strings, it certainly fulfils the role of a rousing curtain raiser. The remaining works combine two flutes with oboe and violin, two oboes d'amore with cello, then recorder with gamba (with ripieno cornetto and sackbuts in the orchestra!) before the famous "love" concerto (flute with oboe d'amore and viola d'amore), and a concerto without orchestra for pairs of recorders, oboes, violins and continuo (one of my particular favourites!) This is the first time I've heard the concerto with solo cello and it is far more convincing that I had imagined when I published it years ago, but with a line-up like this, what would you expect? As seasoned Telemann performers, La Stagione Frankfurt really are at the top of their game on this release – I hope they can maintain these standards for the rest of the series: I'm sure they will!

BC

Telemann Complete Horn Concertos R J Kelley *hn*, Palisades Baroque, Richard Dunn 76' 26"

Centaur CRC 3380

TWV 43:D8, 52:D1, D2, D8, F3, F4, E51, 54: D2, E51

I must confess to having had this for quite some time now, and I apologise to both the record company and Richard Dunn, the man behind the enterprise, for the delay in writing a proper review of it. I had only ever listened to it on the player in my car and gained a rather unfavourable – and, as it turns out, false – impression of the sound, so I am glad that I waited and listened on proper equipment. Five pieces in D major in a row might seem a lot, but in hindsight, interspersing pieces in E flat or even F might have been too jarring, and Telemann being the resourceful composer that he is, no two movements are ever quite alike. The horns are played "open", meaning that the hand is kept out of the bell. The three hornists play with remarkable virtuosity, and if they cannot pull off some of the lines perfectly, I doubt anyone can do it consistently in live performance. While the string playing here may not match some of the groups reviewed elsewhere in these pages, there is much to enjoy.

BC

Gaetano Veneziano *Christmas in Naples*

Jenny Högström, Filippo Mineccia,
Ensemble Odyssee, Andrea Friggi 71' 06"
Pan Classics PC 10307

A. Scarlatti Sinfonia prima di concerto grosso,
Sinfonia seconda concertata Veneziano 1st
lessons (Notturmo I & II), 3rd lesson (Notturmo I),
Sonata, Pastorale a quattro voci

What a joyous disc this is – a seductive blend of foot-tapping rhythms, beguiling melody and casually virtuosic vocal fireworks!

Veneziano was a pupil of Provenza in Naples and worked for the Royal Chapel there, as maestro di capella, until his death in 1716. Ensemble Odyssee present here three of his *Lezione* for Matins on Christmas Day – opening melismatic invocations (like the “incipit” of a Lamentation), followed by the Lessons proper in which the text is briskly got through in a mixture of declamatory recitative and delectably-tuneful arias; the excellent sleeve notes point out the recurring use of the “bergamasca” ostinato bass (c-e-f-g-c), as used in the well-known Monteverdi *Beatus Vir*. Despite their compression, these follow the meaning of the words closely, eg the *conciato* figures when the Devil is mentioned in the first *Lezione* (track 7) and the bursts of *floritura* to point certain words. They each end with similar pleas for mercy – again more melodically treated.

The most substantial work is a delightful Pastorale ‘a quattro voci con trombe e flauti’. This opens and concludes with a vigorous chorus for the shepherds, but the particular pearls are a lovely siciliano aria *Sunt Care Christe Lacrymae* (track 35) and the following duet Pastorale with drone bass and cooing recorders.

The disc is completed by two of Alessandro Scarlatti’s well-known *Sinfonie di concerto grosso*, one with obbligati recorders and the other with trumpet.

Ensemble Odyssee are complete masters of their recital; the vocalists are uniformly splendid, with limpid tone and throw-away virtuosity when (frequently) required. The instrumentalists provide energetic accompaniments and shine themselves in the Scarlatti sinfonias.

I can see this lovely recital appearing in a lot of stockings this Christmas!

Alastair Harper

Vivaldi *The Four Seasons & String Concerti* European Union Baroque Orchestra, Huw Daniel, Bojan Čičić, Johannes Pramsohler, Zefira Valova vln, Lars Ulrich Mortensen 52' 50"

Obsidian CCL CD713

Four Seasons + RV124 (D), RV157 (g)

Not another *Four Seasons*, you might think. But this is different, in several ways. Firstly it is from the European Union Baroque Orchestra (EUBO) who regular readers will know I am a fan of. Secondly the four violinists are all ex-members, and later concertmasters of EUBO, and thirdly because this not only also includes the charmingly inoffensive little Concerto RV124, but also Vivaldi’s sonnets, read in Italian by another EUBO alumnus, Antonio de Sarlo (the CD booklet includes the texts). And finally, although not obvious from the CD, this whole project was accompanied by a commissioned puppet show for children – hopefully this will be released on DVD in the future, but a video can be found on the EUBO website. RV124 introduces the first of the sonnets. The four soloists then take turns portraying the various seasons with Huw Daniel as Spring, Bojan Čičić Summer, Johannes Pramsohler Autumn, and Zefira Valova as Winter. All four excel throughout, but particularly in the slow movements, when their collective ability to play on the edge of their tone with such musical conviction is outstanding. The recording balance of director Lars Ulrich Mortensen’s harpsichord is frequently far too prominent, becoming a distractingly percussive intrusion. Currently shorn of their usually EU funding, EUBO is trying to survive on the occasional concert and on the sale of CDs like this until stable financial support can be found. Anybody who has ever heard the talented young players of EUBO (who reform each year – or did, until their recent financial problems) will know how excellent they are, and how important a training experience it is for its members, many of whom go on to distinguished careers.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Vivaldi *Concerti per flauto* Maurice Steger,

1 Barocchisti, Diego Fasolis 68' 39"

harmonia mundi HMC 902190

Concertos in D (2), d, E flat, G, g (2)

Wow! That was my first reaction to the Concerto per flautino RV443 which opens this CD, and it pretty well sums up my reaction to the whole disc. Vivaldi is so often just an invitation to recorder players to play fast, and of course Maurice Steger does play incredibly fast, with a firework display of stunning articulation. But this album isn’t just about technical virtuosity. The slow movements are equally impres-

sive, with poised phrasing and lovely embellishments. Mention should also be made of 1 Barocchisti who provide not just the lavish orchestral backing but also soloists in some of the concerti. They have a rich palette of sounds, including a strong continuo chosen from organ, harpsichord, theorbos, violone and bassoon (Michele Fattori), and a hurdy-gurdy adds rustic charm to RV95 ‘La pastorella’. A lot of people will already own at least one recording of Vivaldi’s recorder concertos, but I’d certainly recommend buying this one to add to the collection.

Victoria Helby

Vivaldi *Concertos for Two Cellos* Julian and Jiaxin Lloyd Webber, European Union Chamber Orchestra, Peter Hofmann

Naxos 8.573374 (62' 31")

RV409, 531, 532, 539, 545, 812 + Piazzolla Milonga

Anyone currently rolling their eyes at the thought of Julian Lloyd Webber playing Vivaldi, or scratching their heads thinking, “erm, didn’t he only write *one* concerto for two cellos?” should first listen to this recording and then decide whether it has a place in *EMR*. To be sure the EUBO must not be confused for EUBO, but this recital includes the concerto for two cellos and arrangements of works originally for pairs of mandolins and horns, or combinations of oboe/bassoon or violin/cello. I guarantee that if you play this to an unsuspecting crowd, no-one in the room will be any the wiser, and if Michael Talbot endorses the project with a fine booklet note, who are we to roll our eyes? The slow movements, so often a *bête noire* in these pages, are again surprising – no all-consuming vibrato, just lots of stylishly articulated melodic lines and, when it is just the two cellos, beautifully balanced lines. All in all, a revelation.

BC

Vivaldi *senza basso* Baltic Baroque, Grigori Maltizov <TT>

Estonia Record Productions ERP6713

RV68, 70, 71, 77

There are four works on this exceptionally fine recording, all of which include the words “anco senza Basso” (also without bass). One of the reasons for that might be the high level of virtuosity in the violin parts; as if to emphasize the rudimentary nature of the continuo line, which merely doubles the lowest note of one or other violin, harpsichordist Imbi Tarum plays only the very simplest of accompaniments to RV68 and 70. Maria Krestinskaya and Evgeny Sviridov are outstanding fiddlers

who clearly understand the drama in this music and I hope Baltic Baroque might continue their Vivaldi series with a CD of concertos for two violins. This recording certainly deserves to be widely heard. *BC*

Avanti l'opera An A-Z of Italian Baroque Overtures Charivari Agréable, Kah-Ming Ng 63' 15"

Signum Records SIGCD383

Music by Albinoni, Ariosti, G. A. Bernabei, G. Bononcini, Caldara, Conti, Legrenzi, Leo, Pasquini, Pollaro, A. Scarlatti, Steffani & Ziani

This is a thoroughly enjoyable disc, with no fewer than 17 opera overtures by 13 composers (there are three by Giovanni Bononcini, and two each by Alessandro Scarlatti and Pollaro). They range from the "patchwork" overture to *Totila* by Legrenzi to the basically melody and bass with padding *Catone in Utica* by Leo. In between there are real jewels from Ariosti (the overture from *Vespasiano*, which is also praised by Alastair Harper below) and, I have to say, Giovanni Bononcini. Steffani's *Acheloo*, which I actually publish, sounds very Purcellian. All in all, this disc is full of insight and revelation, and to be highly recommended. *BC*

Baroque Christmas Cantatas Motets Ruth Ziesak S, Wilfried Jochens T, Klaus Mertens B, Reinhold Friedrich tpt, Thomanerchor Leipzig, Tölzer Knabenchor, Rheinische Kantorei, Das Kleine Konzert, Berliner Barock-Compagny, L'Arte del mondo, Werner Ehrhardt, Hermann Max 134' 25" (2 CDs)

Capriccio C5217

Music by C. P. E., J. C., J. C. F., J. S., + W. F. Bach, Buxtehude, Esterhazy, Geist, Po del Finale, Porpora & Telemann

If you're looking for an unusual Christmas set, you could do worse than buy this; you may know some of the pieces on the two CDs, or at least you'll recognise some of the melodies, but you'll also get a host of new music, and all of it beautifully sung and played. The recordings may date from as long ago as 1987, but none of them lacks vitality and lustre. The very opening track of CD1 (W. F. Bach's *Lasset uns ablegen die Werke der Finsternis*, a cantata for the first Sunday of Advent) gets the party off to a cracking start, despite its slightly doom-laden text, largely thanks to the fine direction of Hermann Max. If the tempo drops a bit at the start of the second disc in the company of Ludwig Güttler, Ruth Ziesak and the Berliner Barock-Compagny get us back into the mood to dance with

Christian Geist's lively *Wie lieblich leuchtet der Morgenstern*. Ideal background music for wrapping presents or passing around the cranberry sauce. *BC*

Chamber Music from the Dresden Court Ensemble Diderot 63' 11"

Audax Records ADX13701

Fasch FWV N: D4* Fux K340* Handel HWV393, 394 Telemann TWV 42: Es1 Tuma Sonata in c* [=first recordings]

I have put off reviewing this disc until now because I did not want simply to be swept along on a wave of "oh look, more Johannes Pramsohler – must be great!" euphoria. Throw into the pot the fact that the disc includes a premiere recording of a sonata by Herr Fasch (as well as similar firsts from Tuma and Fux), and you can understand why I might get carried away. In the event, the intervening weeks have only confirmed my initial response to the disc; considering that it is over an hour of trio sonatas for violins with an unchanging continuo line-up (cello and harpsichord – but *what* players!), it is impressive enough simply to say that I listened to it all the way through several times and always wanted more. I did fear a little that the other fiddler (no-one could ever call Varoujan Doneyan "the second violin") would not be able to equal Pramsohler, but throughout the disc the two showed themselves to be perfectly matched (it would be impossible to say who was playing which line without a score), and in their fellow Diderots, Gulrim Choi on cello and inimitable harpsichordist, Philippe Grisvard, they are something of a dream team for this repertoire. I would ask for more Fasch, but doubtless Pramsohler and Audax already have more exciting projects on the go... *BC*

Dancing Baroque Music Urszula Bartkiewicz hpscd 64' 35"

Dux 0600

d'Anglebert Menuet in G (1689) J. S. Bach French Suite 4 in E flat F. Couperin Forlane, Sarabande, Sicilienne Dieupart Suite 6 in f Lebègue Suite in C Rameau Les Indes Galantes Reincken Suite in F

The Polish harpsichord Ursula Bartkiewicz plays suites by Reincken, Lebègue, Dieupart and Bach (4th French Suite) as well as individual pieces by d'Anglebert, Couperin and Rameau (taken from *Les Indes Galantes*) on this recording which celebrates her long-standing collaboration with baroque dancers. This experience, as well as her study of dance theory, has given her a strong sense of the rhythmic

characteristics and contrasts between the various dances making up these suites. This also informs her Bach playing which is clear and transparent if sometimes a bit four-square and unvaried. On the other hand, her Rameau is vivid and spirited, revelling in that music's quirkiness and contrasts. She plays on a French-style instrument made by Reinhard von Nagel, which is closely recorded here with good clarity. Overall this is an enjoyable romp and a good introduction to the dance-inspired world of French baroque keyboard music. *Noel O'Regan*

A Royal Trio: Arias by Handel, Bononcini & Ariosti Lawrence Zazzo, La Nuova Musica, David Bates 78' 05"

Harmonia Mundi HMU 807590

Ariosti from *Coriolano*, *Il naufragio vicino*, *Vespasiano* Bononcini from *Crispo*, *Griselda*, Muzio Scevola Handel from *Admeto*, *Flavio*, *Giulio Cesare*, *Ottone*, *Rodelinda*

"Wrought up to the highest degree of perfection that music is capable of and is said to have drawn tears from the audience at every representation". (Hawkins *A General History of the Science and Practice of Music*, 1776) No, not Handel – the prison scene from Ariosti's *Coriolan* (1723).

This is an exceptionally interesting and well-researched release. For the first time on disc we are able to compare, alongside the 18th-century audience at the King's Theatre, London, the relative merits of Maestri Handel, Bononcini and Ariosti, and the latter does not by any means suffer in the comparison!

Zazzo and Bates provide a fine programme; Handel has the lion's share, with some characterful instrumental sinfonie as well as some less-performed arias from *Admeto*, *Flavio* and *Ottone*. I especially enjoyed the horns' contribution in the *Admeto* sinfonia, and the superb opening (with *Admeto* "indisposed in his Bed") from the same opera – the pianissimo da capo of *Chiudetevi* is most moving. Bononcini is represented by four arias – the contrapuntal string writing in *Così stanco pellegrino* is very fine, but elsewhere his music is pretty but not especially memorable (though Handel recollected and resurrected *Per la gloria* for *Sweet Rose and Lily* in *Theodora*, many years later.) Ariosti is the real discovery – as far as I am aware, this is the first time any of his operatic music has been recorded. The overture from *Vespasiano* opens the disc in fine style; the fugue is particularly lively, with sustained woodwind suspensions against the string figuration, but the

highlight for me was unquestionably the wonderful and extended prison scene from *Coriolano* with its sombre bassoon-coloured *accompagnato* and tragic triple-time aria (with *concitato* B section!)

Zazzo is at his splendid best in the slower, expressive music; his quiet singing, for example, in *Tanti affani* is a joy. Bates and La Nuova Musica provide spirited accompaniments – occasionally (e. g., in the opening dotted movement of the *Vespasiano* overture) taken a little fast for full enjoyment. The playing is superb throughout, however. May we hear more Ariosti, please?

Alastair Harper

I Dilettanti Xavier Sabata cT, Latinitas Nostra, Markellos Chryssicos 59'

Aparte AP093

Music by d'Astorga, Bigaglia, Maccari, B. Marcello & G. M. Ruggieri

An original and stimulating idea for a recital – though certainly not a disc for background listening while doing the dishes! The linking feature of all the composers featured is that they were Amateur in the true sense, i. e. that they did not depend on music for a living, and were, in theory, composing for pleasure.

Sabata has a distinguished and growing list of cleverly planned recordings; I particularly enjoyed his last issue, of Handel "Bad Guys." He has rich and glorious tone, seemingly-limitless breath control and a formidable dramatic sense, all of which are fully deployed here.

Most of the works follow the standard late-baroque two-aria-and-recitative form, familiar from Handel and Scarlatti. There are many delectable moments; try Maccari's rhythmically-teasing "Ti sovenisse almeno" or Bigaglia's lovesick turtle-dove (track 13).

The most substantial work is Benedetto Marcello's marvellous *Lucrezia*, whose music faithfully mirrors the turbulent emotions of the ravished Roman matron, as she hurls imprecations and finally plunges a dagger into her (clearly considerably heaving) breast. The music is absolutely astonishing – a rich, almost-unclassifiable through-composed mixture of recitative, arioso and aria, which grabs and keeps one's undivided (and somewhat horror-struck) attention throughout. There are many striking details, such as the sequence of rising intervals on "Di Libiche selve, del mar sulle sponde, dagli antri d'Averno", the anguished "Barbaro!" exclamations, and the extraordinary and highly moving ending – her (or rather Sabata's) final "Addio" seems to die away forever.

One's only slight criticism is of an almost 'embarras de richesses'; so much extremely emotionally and intellectually demanding continuo accompanied vocal music; a couple of instrumental sonatas, or even some instrumentally accompanied cantatas would have varied the programme and given the rich fare some space for digestion.

Anyway, we await Sabata's next project with much anticipation! Alastair Harper

Venetian Christmas Ruby Hughes S, Komalé Akakpo psaltery, Ewa Golinska vln, Arte dei Suonatori, Martin Gester BIS-2089 SACD 74' 40"

Hasse *Alma Redemptoris mater* Perotti Sonata in G Torelli Concerto in g op. 8/6 Vivaldi *Salve regina* RV617, Concertos in C RV774 and E266, Andante from RV270a, aria from *Giustino*

This would have to be at the top (so far) of my list of recommendations for Christmas music. Partly for the wonderful musicianship of all involved, but also for the great energy and the gorgeous music. I don't think I have heard Ruby Hughes before; she is a soprano who could possibly sing a note through the eye of a needle, though her precision compromises neither volume nor roundness. I hope to hear more of her in this and other repertoire. The even more distinctive sound in this recital, though, is the psaltery, and here most often paired with an organ (and plucked continuo!) It is not the first recording of baroque music to feature the instrument, but I think I can honestly say I have never heard it played so musically, especially when Akakpo is partnered by director Martin Gester in the reconstructed Vivaldi double concerto; in their respective solos, they give exactly the same amount of space to important notes in phrases, and I cannot begin to imagine how a player of a struck instrument goes about doing that with such precision. Elsewhere, Ewa Golinska's rendition of the E major violin concerto RV266 is delightful. In fact, every track is a winner – bravo to the Suonatori and Gester!

BC

CLASSICAL

C. P. E. Bach *Die letzten Leiden des Erlösers* Christine Schäfer, Ellen Schuring, Anette Elster, Thomas Dewald, Roman Trekel SSATBar, Kammerorchester C. P. E. Bach, Hartmut Haenchen 92' (DVD) EuroArte 2060808

This is a video recording of a performance from 1989; the orchestra play on modern

instruments but are quite stylish, given the vintage of the recording. The five soloists, though clearly in possession of operatic voices, also embrace the music on its own terms – there is a terrific soprano duet at the mid-point, where both women (as well as the accompanying duetting flutes and bassoons!) negotiate chains of triplets in thirds without aplomb, which is even more impressive, considering the tessitura of the vocal lines. While I must confess that there is not much in the way of visual entertainment, this may be your only chance to see some C. P. E. Bach, and full credit to Euro-Arts for re-releasing it in this anniversary year.

BC

C. P. E. Bach *Concertos & Symphonies* Alexei Lubimov, Yury Martynov *fp*, Reinhard Czasch, Haydn Sinfonietta Wien, Manfred Huss 78' 43"

BIS-2098 CD

Wq46, 183/1, 183/4, 166 (H408, 663, 666, 431) + J. C. Bach Symphony in E flat, op 18/1

I am impressed by BIS's devotion to C. P. E. Bach's music; with two series of complete keyboard works on the go, this disc has a broader repertoire and also includes one of his younger brother's rarely heard works for double orchestra. Two distinct fortepianos are used for the Concerto in F, Wq46 so it is easy to tell the two lines apart. You may know the A minor flute concerto from its cello version. The two symphonies from Bach's most popular set (today, that is!) round of the C. P. E. Bach section. Although it is his anniversary year, that is also a good excuse to explore the music of his brothers, and the choice of a symphony for two orchestras (one with oboes, horns and bassoon, the other with flutes and bassoon) is an inspired one; no sign of *Sturm und Drang* here, but much to compare with Haydn and Mozart at their finest. Of course, as Manfred Huss's note says, the J. C. Bach-Mozart connection is well established; that of his older brother perhaps not so much, but Mozart directed C. P. E.'s *Auferstehung und Himmelfahrt Christi* in Vienna in 1788, and the Wq183 sinfonias were performed there, too. Fine playing from the Haydn Sinfonietta Wien ensures that this disc will be in my player frequently in the coming months.

BC

C. P. E. Bach *Hamburger Sinfonien* Wq 182 Ostrobothnian Chamber Orchestra, Sakari Oramo 63' 11"
ALBA ABCD3374

It is somehow re-assuring that a modern

chamber orchestra has also decided to celebrate the 300th anniversary of C. P. E. Bach's birth, with this enjoyable set of six string symphonies, commissioned in 1773 by that Baron von Swieten. If it was *Sturm und Drang* he was after, he surely got it in large doses – the twists and turns of this music can be extreme; a movement starts perfectly innocently, then suddenly side-slips into a remote new key (much in the way of Prokofiev if slightly less extreme) or a dramatic change of dynamic and/or tempo. All of this is perfectly captured by the Ostrobothnian Chamber Orchestra under Sakari Oramo (who, as a champion of Elgar, earned an OBE in 2009, and his native country's Pro Finlandia Medal the following year); neatly detailed playing that would be the envy of many chamber orchestras. Recommended. BC

Boccherini Guitar Quintets José Miguel Moreno, La Real Cámara 50' 22" © 2000 Glossa GCD C80305
Quintets in D (G448) & e (G451)

Luigi Boccherini (1743-1805) wrote 12 guitar quintets for the academies of his patron, the Marquis of Benavente, who was an amateur guitarist. The guitar parts for the quintets are not technically demanding, and could be played by a competent amateur. Also in Madrid at this time (1798-9) was the guitarist Fernando Sor, whose patroness was the Duchess of Alba. No doubt there was some rivalry between the salons of these two patrons.

In fact, the music of the guitar quintets was not originally conceived for the guitar. Of the two quintets performed on this CD, the Quintet in E minor (G 451) was transcribed from op. 56 no. 1 with piano (G 407), and the Quintet in D major (G 448) came from two earlier compositions: the first two movements (Pastorale and Allegro maestoso) are from op. 10 no. 6, a quintet with two cellos (G 270); and the rest (Grave assai, Fandango) is from op. 40 no. 2 (G 341). The music for both guitar quintets may be seen online at the Petrucci site (IMSLP).

The up-beat Fandango with its mesmeric alternation between tonic and dominant chords is well known. There is a lot happening as the five instruments each chip in, for example high solo notes on a violin are echoed by descending notes on the cello. Moreno has added a rhythm section of tiple (small guitar) and castanets, which drop in and out. These extra instruments give this recording a special character – it is less starchy than one might expect, and has an element of

fun. There is some justification for Moreno's orchestration. The quintets were never published, and circulated in manuscript form. One surviving copy was owned by François Fossa, a French officer stationed in Madrid and friend of the Marquis of Benavente. In the cello part of his copy, where there are rests, is the word "castagnettes". Could it be that when the cellist had rests, he picked up his castanets to add a bit of local colour? I like Moreno's thinking expounded in his liner notes: we can be so stuffy today with a rigid approach to music, which people in the past adapted freely for their own pleasure; they didn't soul-search as to what was authentic – they just did it. It is a quirk of his notes that the English and German translations have two footnotes, whereas the French has four, including a lengthy explanation of the word "afrancesado" (francophile). I always enjoy listening to Moreno's recordings, and this is no exception. Stewart McCoy

M. Haydn Complete Wind Concertos Vol. 2 Linde Brunmayr-Tutz fl, Johannes Hinterholzer hn, Franz Landlinger tpt, Norbert Salvenmoser tbn, Makiko Kurabayashi bsn, Salzburger Hofmusik, Wolfgang Brunner 65' 20"
cpo 777 538-2

Like its predecessor, this disc combines *bona fide* concertos (for horn MH53 and flute MH81, both in D) with "concertini", which are basically movements featuring solo wind instruments from serenades; viz. an F major Larghetto with obbligato trombone, an Adagio ma non troppo with bassoon, as well as two paired Adagio & Allegro molto pairings (in C for trumpet, and in D for horn and trombone), as well as a lovely Romance in A flat, whose solo horn part comes from KV447. The very fine playing of soloists and orchestra alike (33221 strings) is a major joy. I hope that Brunner & co will look into recording some of the composer's very fine church music when they complete this series. BC

J. W. Hertel Jauchzet dem Herrn alle Welt: Sacred Works Katrin Hübner S, Andreas Weller T, NDR Chor, Mecklenburgisches Barockorchester, Johannes Moesus 67' 41"
cpo 777 732-2

Freuet euch!, Ich halte dich, Ich ruf zu dir, Jauchzet dem Herrn, Sei Lob und Ehr mit hohem Preis + Sinfonia from *Die Ihr das Glück genießet*

I have long championed Johann Wilhelm Hertel's music – there is something deeper than most of his contemporaries' output,

and this CD of his religious music brings yet another facet into focus. The works range from the sinfonia to a birthday cantata from 1754 (actually, not strictly suitable as it has a secular text!) to a setting of Psalm 100 (which gives the disc its title) for double choir and a large orchestra from 1780, via two relatively light motets with continuo (the lower three voices sing "polyphony" with continuo accompaniment while the chorale melody is carried by the sopranos), a "Choral-Kantate" in which the five verses of *Ich ruf zu dir, Herr Jesu Christ* are treated differently (the middle three by soloists), and finally the music Hertel penned to celebrate the end of the Seven Years War. As I said in my opening line, Hertel's music is at its best when the text hints at the angst of worldly existence; although the jubilant music of *Jauchzet dem Herrn alle Welt* is uplifting and thrilling, it is in the minor key movements that he really has a very powerful voice. BC

Mozart Mitridate, Re di Ponto Barry Banks Mitridate, Miah Persson Aspasia, Sophie Bevan Sifare, Lawrence Zazzo Farnace, Klara Ek Ismene, Robert Murray Marzio, Anna Devin Arbate, The Orchestra of Classical Opera, Ian Page 224' 18"
Signum Records SIGCD400 (4 CDs)

Ian Page's admirable cycle of Mozart's dramatic works continues with its biggest challenge yet, the first of the operas composed for the Regio Teatro Ducale in Milan, where it was first given in December 1770. Even more remarkable than the fact of a 14 year-old boy being commissioned to write an opera for what was at the time one of Europe's leading opera houses is the success he made of the opera. It was a success achieved, too, in the face of considerable demands from his singers, recognised here by the inclusion of a fourth CD including alternative arias. A fully-fledged *dramma per musica*, *Mitridate* shows a Mozart fully abreast of developments that were leading *opera seria* away from strict formulae. Full *da capo* and *dal segno* arias are almost entirely absent, while acts 2 and 3 both include remarkable alternations of *accompagnato* and arias to create closed scenes, the former an impressive sequence for the lovers Aspasia and Sifare at the height of their plight. The libretto is based on Racine's play of the same name. Its background is the struggle of the historical King Mithridates against the Romans, but at its heart lies the emotional turmoil ensuing from the love for Aspasia of three men: Mitridate himself and both

his sons, Sifare and Farnace. Of particular interest is Mozart's obvious sympathy with the latter, the 'black sheep' whose late (if unlikely) recantation not only inspires one of the work's finest arias, but is an early example of the theme of reconciliation that runs so powerfully through the composer's operas.

The new recording runs up against stern opposition in the shape of Christoph Rousset's 1999 Decca, an exceptionally strongly cast set. Given that it features a less starry cast that in general copes well with the formidable demands of Mozart's coloratura writing is greatly to the credit of the newcomer. Miah Persson, one of the few successes of the generally disappointing 2014 Drottningholm production of the opera, is an especially strong Aspasia. As in previous issues in the series, Ian Page's direction is sure-footed and stylish, drawing fine orchestral playing and showing an unerring feel for the overall pace of the opera. And in this age of ever more flamboyant and distracting continuo realisations, it is a pleasure it is to hear them given their correct function, that of providing a bass foundation. *Brian Robins*

St Petersburg Cecilia Bartoli, I Barocchisti, Diego Fasolis 77' 57"

Decca 478 6767

Music by Araja, Cimarosa, Dall'Oglio/Madonis, Manfredini & Raupach

Initial instinct on seeing the names involved in this collection is surprise at the absence of several famous names involved in bringing Italian opera to 18th century Imperial Russia. One thinks of the likes of Galuppi, Paisiello, Catherine the Great's *maestro di cappella* from 1776 until 1783, and his successor Giuseppe Sarti, *maestro* in St Petersburg between 1784 and 1801. Nevertheless, there is plenty here to indulge those of us with an insatiable appetite for 18th century opera, not least two arias by Francesco Araia, the Neapolitan composer who around 1734 became the earliest court composer in Russia. Later he wrote the first opera in the vernacular, foundations expanded by his successor, the German-born Hermann Raupach, three excerpts from whose *Al'tcesta* [Alceste] are included here, marking Bartoli's first foray into singing Russian. All the music included was unearthed from the library of the Mariinsky Theatre by the singer herself and it is all worth hearing. That said, the finest and most elaborate aria comes from the best-known composer, 'Agitata in tante pene' from *La vergine del sole* (St Petersburg, 1788), suggesting that the current

neglect of Cimarosa's serious operas may be unjustified.

The performances can be divided straight down the middle. Fast, coloratura arias now test Bartoli at the top of her range, where the voice takes on a shrill edge under pressure, a problem exacerbated here by hectic tempi and some of the ugliest, most brutal orchestral sound I've heard in a long time. It makes for exceedingly unpleasant listening. In the slower cantabile arias everyone calms down and the results are substantially more enjoyable. Indeed, although excessive vibrato is a problem at times, Bartoli shows in an aria like 'Idu na smert', Alceste's farewell to life, that she remains capable of captivating the listener with an exquisitely floated *mezza voce* and beautifully articulated trills. In the enchanting 'Pastor che a notte ombrosa' from Araia's *Seleuco* (Moscow, 1744) it is a rare and almost sensual pleasure to hear obbligato oboe and singer for once exchanging properly executed trills on terms of equality. The CD comes with a profusely illustrated 124-page booklet, not least a bizarre photo of Bartoli portrayed as a Russian empress! *Brian Robins*

19th CENTURY

Chopin Concertos opus 11 et 21, version pour piano et pianino Soo Park (solo in op. 21), Mathieu Dupouy (solo in op. 11) 79' 25"
Label-Hérissou LH11

I enjoyed very much the sound of these two Pleyel pianos (1838 and 1843), while constantly wondering why the recording had been made. Essentially, these are teaching or rehearsal versions of the concertos in which the orchestral reduction (cobbled together from various sources, since Chopin accompanied his pupils from memory and thus had no need to write one down) is played on an upright *pianino*. Whatever one may think of Chopin as a writer for orchestra there is a dynamism in the solo-tutti relationship that is inevitably missing here, much to the music's detriment in my view. I think this is probably for lovers of historic pianos and Chopin completists only. On the review copy, track 4 was reluctant to play. *David Hansell*

Hummel Piano Trios Vol.1: nos. 2, 3, 6,7
Gould Piano Trio
Naxos 8.573098 (65' 24")
Op. 22, 35, 93 & 96

Requesting a review copy of this was pure self-indulgence; years ago I heard a Rondo in B minor on Radio 3 (in the days before

it was dominated by jazz, world music, cross over and contemporary music) and I still get a little excited when I see his name. It is surprising that few HIPsters have taken up the repertoire – the four works on this disc would sit comfortably on any recital programme, all with three movements full of charm, but not without depth. I look forward to buying the next volumes in the series. *BC*

Salieri Lieder Ilse Eerens S, Annelie Sophie Müller mS, Ulrich Eisenlohr *Hammerflügel*
hänssler Classic CD 93.307 67' 24"

It is unlikely that I am the only person in *EMR*-land whose knowledge and view of Salieri owe almost everything to a famous (and brilliant) film. If I'm honest I didn't even know his dates (1750-1825). Well, here's a corrective – a charming and varied collection of songs (including some duets) that reveal him to be well above the run-of-the-mill. Having established himself as an opera composer, he turned to these smaller vocal forms in the 1790s. The piano writing is largely independent of the voice and this is played very well on a period instrument (no details are given apart from *Hammerflügel*). Once or twice the two ladies over-sing to the detriment of their tone, but for the most part this is focussed and radiant and well-matched to the accompaniment. The recital is further enhanced by the booklet: a lively and informative essay and full texts and translations. This is an excellent overall package. *David Hansell*

Soler Keyboard Sonatas Nos. 42-56
Mateusz Borowiak piano 68' 07"
Naxos 8.573281

Mateusz Borowiak is the latest winner of the Maria Canals International Music Competition to be given a group of Soler sonatas to record for Naxos as part of his prize. His are very musical, if somewhat understated, performances. He uses a detached technique which works well for this music, while still unmistakably playing on a modern piano. His approach tends to bring out the proto-Classical, Haydnesque, qualities of the music rather than its more robust Spanish ones, but he also handles figuration very well and lets the music speak for itself, rather than using it as a vehicle to demonstrate his virtuosity. An enjoyable recording. *Noel O'Regan*

Schumann The Symphonies Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Robin Ticciati
Linn Classics CKD450 (133' – 2 CDs)

It is thanks to John Eliot Gardiner's two recording projects of the late 90s that I am able to listen to orchestral Schumann at all; before then, much of the detail that makes these works so enjoyable was lost in huge sound made by the symphony orchestras who had had this music all to themselves for too long. This present recording seems to have accepted the benefits of JEG's approach, in that the SCO – for decades now pioneers in modern instrument HIP – are big enough to create the presence required for such music, but also with an eye on the subtleties of the composer's orchestration. I must confess that I became increasingly aware of a conductor's hand; the music did not always flow uninhibited, especially on Disc 2. That is not to say that there is anything wrong with rubato – this was an utterly personal reaction to the performance and others may feel quite differently. Unlike JEG, SCO and Ticciati perform the four standard symphonies (no. 4 in the 1851 version). John Worthen's notes make excellent background reading. BC

Schumann Variationen & Fantasiestücke
Andreas Staier pf 59' 52"

Harmonia Mundi HMC 902171
opp. 1, 12, 111 + Geistervariationen

We have a distinct lack of reviewers whose expertise covers this sort of repertoire, so it has fallen to me to write about Andreas Staier's most recent release. The timing shown above might suggest that it is a little short, but – believe me – you will be mentally exhausted enough by the end of this hour, should you decide to listen to it all in one sitting. The music ranges from the earliest of the composer's publications to the very end of his life, and it seems to me at least that every human emotion is covered, and Staier, whose performances are always thought-provoking, uses all his pianistic excellence and musicianly guile to engage the ear and mind of the listener. I have rarely listened to Schumann's keyboard music, so this was both an enjoyable experience and an edifying one. BC

Guitarra Clásica del Perú Alexander-Sergei Ramírez 74' 28"

Music by Pedro Ximénez de Abriell & anon

Little was known about the music of the Peruvian guitar virtuoso, Pedro Ximénez de Abriell (1780-1857), until an American historian, William L. Lofstrom, was by chance offered some old MSS for sale ten years ago in a street in Bolivia. These had come from a trunk full of well-preserved books,

which included most of Ximénez' output. They had been inherited by the seller, who was unaware of their value.

23 tracks with the simple title Minuet by a little-known composer might seem somewhat prosaic and uninviting, but these pieces by Ximénez are anything but that. They are very attractive, and have considerable variety and charm. The music is played beautifully with expressive changes of tone colour, volume and pace by the Peruvian guitarist Alexander-Sergei Ramírez on a modern classical guitar made by Paco Santiago Marin from Granada, Spain. It is enhanced with all kinds of special effects: surprising slides up and down the neck and short passages of very fast notes (track 3), brusque chords and flowing arpeggios (track 5), graceful *portamenti*, echo effects, and notes *étouffées* (track 6), *rasgueado* strums (track 17), surprising shifts of harmony (track 30), and contrasts of tone with notes played *sul ponticello* (track 32).

Among Ximénez' minuets Ramírez plays pieces from three early collections of music from Peru: the "Cuaderno – Música para Guitarra de Mathias José Maestro" (1786); the "Libro di Zifra" (1805) formerly owned by Francisco García, a Spanish lieutenant colonel posted in Lima; and the "Cuaderno para vihuela" (1830), containing music which some musicologists would ascribe to Ximénez on grounds of style. From the first of these sources is a gentle Andante in E minor with occasional trills and a contrasting minor section (track 9). There is also a wonderful Fandango in D (track 25), typically flamenco, with exciting *rasgueados*, Phrygian touches as the bass rises a semitone, notes *échappées*, *tambour* (tapping the strings with the side of the thumb), and various taps on the instrument itself. From the second source is a Minuet in E minor (track 20), with strummed chords, some of which have no third. It is a most gratifying CD.

According to the liner notes there is a modern edition of Ximénez' guitar music edited by Ramírez: Pedro Ximénez de Abriell Tirado, 100 Minuetos for Guitar Solo, published by Chanterelle, im Allegra Verlag, ECH 2707, but I couldn't locate any mention of it on the internet, not even on Ramírez' own website. Stewart McCoy

20th CENTURY

Orff Carmina Burana Y. Suh, Y. Saelen, T. Bauer SAT Collegium Eterna Brugge, Collegium Vocale Gent, Cantate Domino, Jos Van Immerseel dir 63' 40"
ZZT563

I first encountered Orff in the sixth form (1955-58), riding my bike some three miles regularly from Sydenham to visit Lewisham Public Library, the only one in the borough. It wasn't *Carmina Burana* that I first heard, but *Catulli Carmina*. We didn't formally read it in class, for obvious reasons, but the translations were helpful, except that some Latin phrases were left untranslated. The sparseness of the accompaniment, mostly percussion (I haven't got my copy at hand), was exhilarating, though I haven't heard it for some 50 years. *Carmina Burana* introduced me to medieval Latin, and, in my last year at Cambridge, I spent time on medieval literature and have subsequently shown more interest in Latin hymns and sequences (not part of Orff's interests) but also the secular poems that abounded more or less at the time of the Notre Dame polyphony. This recording is an attempt to perform it with "authentic" instruments of the 1930s. The balance was different, avoiding large choral societies: the use of two choirs, each with 16 singers, plus 15 boys, is very effective on disc, but I think I'd rather hear it live. The last performance I attended was some decades ago, at the Prom where the tenor was ill, so a volunteer appeared on the platform. Patrick McCarthy didn't join the world of the professional, but he did well, and I remember a variety of his performances in the Colchester area, particularly in Bach's Passions as a bold Evangelist. *Carmina Burana* is often scorned: I praise the simplicity and the singers' easy relationship (apart from the high notes) of words and tune. CB

VARIOUS

Spirit, Strength & Sorrow: Settings of Stabat Mater The Sixteen, Harry Christophers 68' 45"

Coro COR16127

Settings by Casciolini, Firsova, Kõrvits, Martin, D. Scarlatti

This CD is one of the fruits of a collaboration with the Genesis Foundation adding to the body of contemporary polyphonic church music by commissioning settings from new young composers and bringing them to a wider audience on CD. Almost inevitably the three modern settings of the *Stabat Mater* are a bit of a mixed bag, but a fine imaginative setting by Matthew Martin will probably stand the test of time. It is hauntingly sung here by the Sixteen who boast admirable credentials as performers of contempo-

rary music. Of more interest to *EMR* readers, the CD opens with the *Stabat Mater* chant and also features two Baroque settings. The rather plain strophic setting by the obscure Roman composer Claudio Cascioloni is broadly in *falsobordone* and is pleasant to listen to rather than profound. This would not be a problem were the text not precisely the *Stabat Mater*, one of the most austere moving texts to describe the crucifixion, which makes Cascioloni's music sound unfortunately trite. Happily the CD concludes with Domenico Scarlatti's stunning ten-part setting in which the composer responds with archaically old-school polyphony to this powerfully eloquent text. Ten solo voices alternate with the augmented choir with continuo instruments to produce an impressive performance of the finest work on the CD and probably its composer's masterpiece. It is certainly worth wading through the rather gushing presentation, complete with alliterating title and replete with 'heartfelt's and 'meltingly beautiful's, for the final work alone, but give the new commissions and Michael White's programme note a chance! D. James Ross

Taracea: A musical mosaic spanning five centuries Seldom Sene recorder quintet
Brilliant Classics 94871 (77' 29")

Music by J. S. Bach, Boismortier, Cabezón, Caldini, Coprario, Desprez, Frenzel, Geysen, Handl, Holborne, Johnson, Nasopoulou, Reger, Tallis, Tye & Victoria

One of my pet hates is the juxtaposition of music from different periods on Radio 3, so I was surprised to find myself really enjoying Amsterdam-based Seldom Sene's first CD. *Taracea* is the Spanish word for an intricate geometric mosaic of different coloured wood and other fine materials and is the inspiration behind this program-me of music from the renaissance period to the present day, carefully ordered so that there are no uncomfortable changes from one piece to the next. Frans Geysen's *Omtrent A-B-C* composed in 1984, a fascinating mosaic of rhythmic and melodic patterns based on three notes, sits between the third movement of Bach's sixth Brandenburg and Jacob Handl's wonderfully chromatic motet *Mirabile mysterium*. A set of three pieces by Holborne is followed by Aspasia Naso-poulou's *Lelia doura*, composed in 2012 for Seldom Sene and based on a 13th-century *cantiga de amigo* by Solaz. None of this seems to matter, perhaps because the beautiful sound produced by the quintet is what holds all this diverse material together. Their

intonation is admirable, their articulation and phrasing exactly matched, and in the organ transcriptions of Bach, Reger and Frenzel you could believe that you were listening to a particularly nice chamber organ. Don't be put off the group's funny name, which is taken from Christopher Tye's *In nomine*, one of the tracks on the recording. This is one of the best, perhaps actually the best, recorder consort CDs I've heard.

Victoria Helby

Digital downloads from OUTHERE

Releases from the outhere stable range from *Laudarium: songs of popular devotion from 14th-century Italy* to the first volume of an ambitious new project to record all of Haydn's symphonies by 2032 in time for the 300th anniversary of his birth, with an impressive diversity in between.

I was invited to audition for a Munich-based medieval group after graduating and I think I would have been more interested in persevering had the material heard on *Laudarium* (Arcana A379, 71' 10") been on offer; there is a lot of solo, as well as unison and octave voices, and a convincing mix of singers and instruments; I must say that I found it all mesmerizing and beautiful. Grounded in drones and gently dissonant fiddles, the individual voices sing powerfully across the reedy sounds, allowing the texts to be clearly heard, and when the entire group (La Reverdie) joins together, the effect is magical. Never before have I experienced such engagement from a recording.

Au saint Nau (Alpha 198, 65' 34") is at once a celebration of Christmas, and of the French Noël, mostly from the 16th century. Ensemble Clément Janequin and Trio Musica Humana join forces for a programme that includes movements from a mass by Arcadelt, festive contrafacta of popular chansons, and fantasies on organ. A wide range of vocal sounds is on display, representative of the secular as well as the sacred settings for musical performances of the 16th century; I am not sure that it has actually been established that there was such a "rustic" sound, but the variety certainly helps to break up the sequence.

We Brits can get a bit precious when Byrd is performed by non-natives, as if somehow his music was written explicitly for choirs with the Oxbridge sound, most of them rather ironically Anglican... If anything will cure us of this musical

xenophobia it is surely Philippe Herreweghe's new recording (Phi LPH014, 49' 49") entitled *Infelix ego*. The centrepiece is a beautifully crafted reading of the Mass for 5 voices, and as well as four other pieces by Byrd, we hear Alfonso Ferrabosco's *Peccantem me quotidie* and the glorious *Miserere* by Philippe de Monte. Apart from the title track, which is sung by five solo voices, the Collegium Vocale Gent is pared down to 12 voices (three sopranos and basses, divided tenors), ebbing and flowing as the individual lines rise and fall. The package is complete by a typically informative booklet note by Andrew Carwood.

One of the most beautiful French baroque recordings I have heard for a long time is *Le Poème Harmonique's* combination of the rightly celebrated *Leçons de ténèbres* by François Couperin with Clérambault's rich setting of the *Miserere* for three treble voices and continuo (Alpha 957, 65' 05"). And what voices! Hasnaa Bennani, Isabelle Druet and Claire Lefilliâtre negotiate the most ornate challenges of either composer; in fact, I had never heard any vocal music by Clérambault, and I am astonished – the quality is outstanding. Vincent Dumestre (theorbo) and his fellow continuo players (a gamba and a keyboardist) are the perfect partners. And don't shy away from this on the grounds that you already have another version of the Couperin – listen to the *Jod* at the opening of the third *Leçon* and see if you can resist. If you wonder what all the fuss is about when reviewer after reviewer complain mis-used vibrato, this is a perfect demonstration of its correct application.

Fans of Alfredo Bernardini will want to seek out *Concerti veneziani per oboe* (Alpha 380, 71' 30") in which he plays the inevitable Albinoni, Vivaldi and Marcello, but also lesser known works by Platti, Giuseppe Sammartini and Diogenio Bigaglia. If you heard the latter, I doubt you would think it was not by one of the great triumvirate... It is tuneful, predictable without being trite, virtuosic and cleverly constructed. As well as Michael Talbot's informative notes about the composers on the disc, there is an essay by Bernardini on the 1730 oboe he plays on it – pitched at 415 rather than the typical Venetian 440, it also has the facility to play the irksome bottom C sharp that causes so much debate among musicologists about why composers (or their copyists) write that note knowing full well that it is "impossible", but blocking a hole in the bell with wax also

allows bottom C to be played. Whatever the ramifications of that debate, this is a thoroughly enjoyable exploration of the solo oboe repertoire in Venice that will appeal to all fans of baroque concertos.

"Ricerca could not help but participate in celebrating Rameau Year," reads the press release for their release of *Les Dominos performing the "orchestrated versions" of the composer's Pièces de clavecin en concert (RIC350, 79')*. M. Decroix turned what had been trios for flute or violin, gamba and harpsichord into six-part pieces with extra violins and obbligato bassoon. Of course, Rameau would not have batted an eyelid at such treatment, and most of it works. I confess, though, that I would prefer "orchestral Rameau" played by a far larger ensemble. Still, any excuse to enjoy it is good enough for me!

One of the highlights of this batch is Giovanni Antonini and Il Giardino Armonico's first instalment of a projected complete recording of Haydn's symphonies (*Alpha 670, 70' 52"*). They are not taking too academic an approach to the whole, so although Symphony No. 1 is on the disc, the remainder is filled with nos. 39 & 49 (which gives the disc its title, *Passione*), as well as Gluck's 1761 ballet, *Don Juan*, the first in which the dancers told the story rather than simply filled in a space within an opera. Its performance is said to have inspired Haydn's "dramatic" symphonies, and nos. 39 and 49 clearly fit into that category – the former opens the disc with some seriously exciting playing; I look forward to hearing more Italian take on Haydn – perhaps they can finally shake of whatever it is that has prevented more than a handful of his symphonic output from finding a regular place in concert programmes. BC

CHRISTMAS

Dormi Jesu: A Caius Christmas Choir of Gonville & Caius College, Cambridge, Geoffrey Webber conductor, Annie Nick Lee organ 63' 29"
Delphian DCD34152

I was tempted to throw the disc away at the first track – an incredibly slow *Es ist ein Ros entsprungen* by Jan Andström: the tune has lost any shape – it would work as a cantus firmus, but all that's left is slow chordal progressions of no great effect. The next item, *A Patre unigenitus* by Carl Rütti (not using a chant), is far better.

Webern's *Dormi Jesu* only lasts 1' 10" and is hardly a carol: it might work, though, if all five of his op. 16 Canons were performed. I am, however, much happier with Howells' *Here is the little door*. Rather than playing with old songs, why not get new words as well as music. *Silent night* was composed like *Away in a major*: a simple movement between two solos singers and a guitar. Perhaps we need more carols nearer the popular world. CB

The Promise of Ages: A Christmas Collection Taverner Consort, Andrew Parrott 62' 17"
Avie AV2291

This was first issued by Sony in 1998 and well deserves revival. There are 25 items, 14 based on the *New Oxford Book of Carols*, which I can't possibly forget, but which hasn't led me to a life of annual Christmas carols – Hugh Keyte, the other editor, always spends Christmas with us, but not to sing! There are several items that don't fit with NOBC's definition, hence the settings of early poems by Peter Maxwell Davies. Andrew has moved on a bit with some of the items that are based on NOBC versions: I must confess that I'd rather have versions with clarity than the fairly monotonous settings of smoothly discordant works that crop up so often. This is well worth buying and Andrew is as happy to direct simple music as the more complex. The simplest is *I wonder as I wander*, possibly folk, but claimed by John Jacob Niles in 1934. All it needs is a single singer (in this case, his wife), though it works if the player is adding simple chords on a guitar. The more I think about carols, the simpler I want them, and this CD is about as simple as you can get. CB

The Wexford Carols Caitriona O'Leary featuring Tom Jones, Rosanne, Rihannon Giddens 61'
Heresy 016

There is a historical background to this release, in that carols come from two *Garlands* (one of *pious and godly songs*, the other of *songs for Christmas*) that were popular in County Wexford (and beyond) in the late 17th and early 18th centuries. We have reviewed other projects by Caitriona O'Leary in previous issues, and this has a similar pedigree – beautifully produced artwork and presentation, stylish performances (though about as far from HIP as it is possible to be), and something that – though enjoyable on CD –

would really come alive in the theatre, a church or, dare I say it, a pub. I imagine this is the only time Sir Tom Jones's work will be mentioned in these pages, but I'm sure every track on the disc deserves to be enjoyed by a wide audience. BC

LETTER

Dear Clifford,
I've just read your review of the Freiberg 'angels' disc. Having just come back from Freiberg, where they are celebrating the 300th anniversary of the fabulous Silbermann organ, I can fill in a bit more detail. The angels are in the Memorial Chapel for the Moritz ducal dynasty, behind the high altar – see photos at File: Dom zu Freiberg AB2012. 074 jpg. The coloured angels in the roof bear emblems of the Passion, the bronze ones around the memorial have the instruments.

Freiburg for Freiberg is a common mistake: they've even made it in the Google ad for the CD! – so beware!

Albrecht Koch, the cathedral organist, is a splendid musician, quite young and very multi-faceted.

Best wishes,

Ann (Bond)

I think we drove on New Year's Eve from the French ski slopes through Switzerland, stopping briefly at Freiberg, but not to see very much (there was snow everywhere and our car was misbehaving). We continued on to the German Freiburg to enjoy the evening's fireworks with a friend. We can date the year, 1989, by the collapse of communist Romania.

Perhaps we should come back there, but our next trip is to Malta, where there is an international early music festival in January with people I know: I'll write something on it for the February issue. CB

Schlaf wohl, du Himmelsknecht du

The setting on pp. 23-26 begins with the first two verses, as in *The New Oxford Book of Carols* (no. 178), followed by two more elaborate settings by Hugh Keyte. The source with text and music comes from Heinrich Riemann's *Das deutsche geistliche Lied...* of 1895. Fuller information on the background is in NOBC. Copies available from CB, but Hugh is usually with us here between Christmas and New Year if you want to buy a set for next year. CB

