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All around the world newspapers and magazines are struggling to compete with websites that offer the same content and, with the growing availability of internet content via tablets and mobile phones, the time was always going to come when we would be forced to confront the situation head on. Fortunately, *EMR* does not have that many direct competitors, so the prospect of moving into the digital age is very exciting.

We know that there is something special about holding a book and reading it, as opposed to staring at a computer screen for hours. But by making each review available on a page of its own, and adding what is called "dynamic content" (for which read audio and/or video samples, links to other websites with the most useful and relevant information, and the ability to click on a link that will allow you to buy the product without having had to search for it) as well "interactive elements" (whereby you can add your own comments or sign up to receive a monthly digest of reviews that have recently been added on the website), we hope that the experience of discovering the latest HIP publications will become even more rewarding. Also, if you need to find a review from the past, there is a search engine that will find *any* word in *any* review.

Where the printed magazine is organised into reviews of music, books, concerts and recordings, the website uses "categories" and "tags" – the former indicates the period of history to which the item belongs (medieval, baroque, classical, etc.) or a genre (e. g., opera or chant), while the latter refers to format (book, edition, recording, re-release are examples). There will be no concert reviews online – while these are often an interesting read, they are better suited to a blog site which is updated more regularly than earlymusicreview.com will be.

There is still plenty of scope for the inclusion of reports of conferences, and other musicological material, so authors should continue to submit material.

The present issue is the first of only two that will appear in both formats – the digital version will be available in full from April 1st; and no, it's not a joke!

BC

REVIEWS OF MUSIC

Clifford Bartlett

FROM VULGAR TO SACRED

Richard Wexler *Antoine Bruhier: Life and Works of a Renaissance Papal Composer*. Brepols, 2014. 555pp, €75.00. ISBN 978 2 503 55329 0

This massive volume – a habit with Brepols – is a fascinating book. The term “life and works” doesn't just imply a study of the music as well as the background, but a complete edition of the music as well. There are 74 pp dealing with prelims and introduction, pp. 77-223 covers commentary on each piece, and the 20 scores run from p. 231-555. These are substantial pages, size 27.0 = 18.5 cm, weight 1.310 kg – rather a stress on the wrist!

The secular music fits in with the repertoires I used to know well, but have lost track somewhat now they are not within reach – I kept on coming across references to them, and wish my copies were easily retrievable – Lowinsky's *Medici Codex*, Picker's *The Chanson Albums of Marguerite of Austria*, MS Magl. XIX. 164-167 (Garland facsimile), *Uppsala 76a* (Garland facsimile) + some printed sources, let alone thorough studies by familiar names. Bruhier, however, was never a major figure, so it is complicated to see how the author worked.

It seems likely that Bruhier came from northern France, but his main occupation was in Italy. He was in the service of Sigismondo d'Este around 1505-09. Later he became a singer at Leo X's private chapel, the most intimate of the three musical establishments, comprising mostly four singers. Leo died on 1 December 1521 and Bruhier vanished, with no surmises on his future.

The most surprising of the secular items are the blatant ones about sexual behaviour – and this is repertoire for the Pope! There are also Masses, but no liturgical motets, though more general religious motets survive for leisure use. There are four Masses, all in four parts except for *Missa Hodie scietis a5*, with low clefs (C2 C3 C4 F4 F4); *Missa carminum* and *Missa Mediatrix nostra* have C1 C4 C4 F4, *Missa Et lalala* has C1 C3 C4 F4. They require around 50 pages each.

Much of the life of Bruhier is deduced from his and other composers' activities, and a few new facts could make significant changes. Wexler has, however, produced a thorough volume covering everything related to the man and his music, and it does imply a certain element of the unusual. I wish more scholars mixed biography, musical activity and the scores – and the price is reasonable for something so revelatory. But the music isn't accessible for or usable by singers, and even if you got permission to copy, the pages don't open flat. Can Brepols do a deal with an appropriate publisher – it's a bit early for me.

See the June issue for two more Brepols volumes: *Calcagno writes a book*, whereas *Bianco and Cieci* are primarily concerned with the music!

Mauro Calcagno *Perspectives on Luca Marenzio's Secular Music*. Brepols, 2014. 527pp, €80.00. ISBN 978 2 503 55332 0

Aurelio Bianco & Sara Dieci *Biagio Marini Madrigali et Symfonie*. Brepols, 2014. 217pp, €60.00. ISBN 1 978 2 503 55328 3

GEORGE SMELLY-PENNY

Georg Schimmelpfennig (c.1582-1637) *La buona et felice mano: Italienische Madrigale 1615...* ed. by Jochen Faulhammer Pan (650), 2014. 51pp, €25.00.

Georg Schimmelpfennig seems to have a curious name, but nevertheless had some success, becoming a member of the Kasseler Hofkapelle. He was in particular the teacher of the La Serenissima Principessa Elisabeth Landgravine of Hesse. Unlike the usual habit of sending musicians to Venice (as illustrated by the series of madrigals, including Schütz, sponsored by Gabrieli), this collection of madrigals (not *Magridal* as on the end of the modern title page!) belongs more to the monodic settings and texts of Caccini and the Florentine style. There are 11 un-numbered songs for voice and bass. Since there are two versions published, it's easier to locate songs by number than page. The editor has modernised the verse by removing initial capitals – but as I often mention, it is surely helpful to keep the capitals to clarify the lines: either they help to check the common break at the beginning of a new line, or they realise that the continuation from the previous line needs some musical point. Rhythmic layout tends towards four minims per bar, though there are sometimes six minims and some irregularities. I don't see any reason for changing them.

Accidentals are more of a problem. The editor is a bit too strong in asserting that “an additional accidental applies only to the note that it precedes and to any immediate repetition of it”. Surely the convention should apply editorially to the realisation as well. So in the first piece, bar 7, the composer notated the F sharps with a G in between, whereas the realisation has a sharp in the first chord but not at the second, which coincides with the second sharp for the singer. The same practice occurs in bars 14 and 20. I don't think that there should be two principles. It would be much more useful to performers to print the original (ie voice and Bc) and the keyboard can play the score as in the current edition if he needs it. I've tried to look at the music without the right hand, and I didn't realise for some time that there was an alternative version without realisation, which makes it easier to place a piece on a pair of pages without turns.

Fuggimi quanto poi (no. 9) can be compared with the page of facsimile, which without a realisation gets more than two pages onto one! Bar 11 has a single minim. This isn't a musical idea but an end of the line: add it to bar 12 and you get the normal four minims! In the realisation at bars 15-17, the right hand is given E flats which only seem plausible for the first note of the three bars and the rest do not need them until the beginning of bar 19, but I'm not sure that the E flats are relevant in the group of 8 semiquavers. Bars 27-28 need something unusual for *et alla morte*: perhaps keep the first bar plain with the top note the D above middle C, then leave the C bare in the next bar.

I'm not going to comment on every bar, but the singer and players need to be alert and it is much less complex if the accompanist doesn't have to sort out the page-turning. It is certainly a good collection: a pity Schimmelpfennig abandoned music for what we might now call his later life of being a senior civil servant.

THE CARPING DIVA

Luigi Antinori *La Cantate smorfiosa (The Carping Diva): Cantata for soprano & continuo*, edited by Barbara Sachs. Green Man Press (Ant 1), 2014. 13pp + 9pp without realised kbd part. Green Man Press (Ant 1), 2014. £6.00

I was hoping to play this with a singer, but it hasn't worked out, so I won't delay any more. The overall form isn't surprising, except the "Cantata" comprising 7 bars under a 1/8 signature; the bass is easy – a g f e f g a in an A flat signature – but the voice is a real test of being in tune. That is preceded by a recit: the singer went to the opera but developed all sorts of problems: lost voice, headache, poor eyes, a little fever, catarrh: can he sing the song that's badly copied, who would want to sing it, is it Latin or vernacular – I'll try to sing it quietly. "Alluring hope" is the text for the 1/8 passage followed by an aria "These leaps can't be sung, the quavers don't sound, and so many flats" which looks on the 1/8 retrospectively. The next recit makes excuses, then the cantata ends with an aria – make the most of it, but the music has less obvious humour without the words. Antinori sang for Handel among others. Well worth singing.

VAŇHAL FUGUES

Jan Křtitel Vaňhal (1739-1813)... *Six Fugues for Organ*. Editors Tomáš Thon etc. Artthon. 2012. xxxii + 13pp facsimile, €20.80.

Vanhal's career began as a church organist around 1757 and a violinist as well, composing organ and violin concertos. He failed to be a successful performer on the organ, and never took over as organist or choirmaster in Vienna. He suffered bad health around 1770, but then spent most of his time on church music, including a series of organ preludes, fugues and cadenzas, mostly published after 1800. This edition is one of three for *Six Fugues* published in Vienna in 1810 – despite all the editorial text,

they are not specifically identified. They appear to be for home players rather than as organ voluntaries. In case you come across either of the other two 1810 volumes, the one published here contains 1 in C, 2 in A, 3 in D, 4 in Bb, 5 in G & 6 in E, all headed *Tempo moderato*. If played in church, the neutral tempo would be appropriate for interludes, and the lack of elaborate stops would fit domestic playing. The edition lists several organs with two manuals and pedals, though the music doesn't demand such elaboration. Church organists generally copied their repertoire by hand, whereas wealthier domestic players could afford to buy such sets. Worth playing!

EDITION WALHALL

Catelena Sammlung (Mus. ms. Landsberg 122-Berlin). Intavolatura mit Werken von Frescobaldi, Tarditi u. a. für Orgel (oder Cembalo). (Frutti Musicali 19) Band I (EW 919), 2013. [vi] + 50pp. €21.80

This is edited by Jolando Scarpa. There are 30 pieces in Vol. I. Only 2 each are ascribed to Frescobaldi and Tarditi, the rest are anonymous. It should be interesting getting a class of students to allocate the merits of the pieces by skill as well as by style.

Schmelzer Sonata Lanterly für 2 Violinen, Viola da Gamba und Basso Continuo (Harmonia Coelestis vii.) (EW 763), 2013. iv + 14pp + 5 parts. €16.50

The title probably implies a vagabond's music. The opening section in C starts with that tune. There's a change to 3/2 at bar 69 which is simpler – but I'm not sure that the editor can call it even a "a sort of galliard". The 12/8 Allegro starts at bar 112 definitely as a gigue, ending at bar 141 with C tempo again as coda. Adding editorial figures to the bass is, I would have thought, more useful than printing a blank treble stave – the whole point of learning to play continuo is to show the chords, not the notes. It seems odd not to treat the beaming in a more logical way. For instance, in bar 6 vln II has two groups of 8 semiquavers, whereas the same phrase in the gamba part is in groups of 4 semiquavers. It was sensible to include a viola part in C3 clef.

Schmelzer Ciaccona für Violine und Basso continuo (Harmonia Coelestis xi) (EW 648), 2014. 7pp + vln & unbound score for Bc. €10.00

The ground is (:a|Ae|F|D|E:||:e|Ef|D|E|A:). [Minims are capitals, crotchets are lower-case.] Rather than bar numbers, it is more useful to number the ground for the violinist, eg 1a, 1b, 2a, 2b etc. The bass & Bc only need to know how many times the bass is played. Simple pieces like this don't really need the occasional missing barline (eg bars 91 & 96) to be indicated by dotted lines nor why there is a single 8-note semiquaver group (bar 83).

Georg Muffat Sonata Violino Solo (Prag 1677) Violine und Basso continuo (Harmonia Coelestis, x) (EW 874). vi + 16 + 3 parts. 2014. €14.80

I first heard this played by John Holloway on Radio 3 and we decided that it needed publication. It's an amazing piece lasting 198 bars, the first 37 of which are *Adagio* and the rest *Allegros* and *Adagios* which don't offer gaps for page-turns. My edition (£6.00) is more straight-forward and cheaper for those who don't need a score with realised keyboard.

Georg Muffat *Vier Partiten für Cembalo* (B-Bsa SA 4581) (*Hormonia Coelestis IX*) (EW 769). xi + 28pp. €17.50

The four Partitas (C, F, E, e) are from the Berlin Sing-Akademie. Three Partitas (C, E and e) are new discoveries, while the set in F amplifies the previously-known sections. The MS was copied 30 years or more since the elder Muffat died. They are interesting to play, but it's not clear whether straight lines are to warn the reader that two notes are in a single part even if not notated with stems in the same direction, though sometimes they might be of some musical significance. The editor seems to be a bit pedantic, but the selection is worth playing.

Clérambault: *Simphonia V^e : Chaconne für Violine und Basso Continuo*. (*Frutti Musicali 21*) v + 6pp + 2 parts. €11.50

This does not have the repetitive bass of Schmelzer's *Ciaccona*, whose bass has no variety apart from what the players can inspire. This sensibly avoids a blank right-hand stave, though reading it through in my head, far too much seemed to follow the violin – perhaps I'm out of touch! Two pages of MS are shown, displaying nothing odd as in the earlier pieces considered here.

Johann Ulich *Sechs Sonaten für Blockflöte und Cembalo. Band I* (*Collegium Musicum*). (EW 921) 34 pp: two scores with facsimiles. €19.80

I don't know the composer at all, so it's worth giving his dates (1677-1742). His father was organist at Wittenberg, which is presumably where he acquired his skill. He was organist at Zerbst from 1708, active in St Bartholomew's church and as court musician. The *VI Sonaten à Flauto con Cembalo* was published in 1716 in two separate parts. The treble part is named *Flauto*, but that almost certainly implies recorder, whose notation is for the G on the bottom line going up two octaves. This has the first three of the six sonatas. There are two copies in score, one of which also has the recorder part in facsimile and the other the bass, both with the original prelims and the three first sonatas. The only complete copy is in the Russian State Library in Moscow, which justifies making the facsimile available. There's a recording of 2013, which lacks any picture of the cover, which seems a bit odd. Well worth buying

G. HENLE VERLAG

J. S. Bach *Invention und Sinfonien...* edited by Ullrich Scheideler... Henle (HN 589). ix + 91pp, €18.00. [HN 590 clothbound, HN 1589 without editorial fingering]

I deliberately ignored the name of the fingerer, and would personally prefer HN 1589. The figuring twists the movement to make everything legato, which is a challenge but a gross oversimplification avoiding variety of texture. Just because a piano usually sounds smoother than a harpsichord, that doesn't mean that is what you have to do with it. In other respects, though, it's a fine edition, with a thorough editorial commentary. Curiously, the introduction is in German, English and French, but the French need to know German or English for the commentary. The unfingured version would be the ideal edition for anyone using it for early performers.

C. Ph. Bach *Flötenkonzert d-moll, Klavierauszug* Henle (1207), 2015. vi + 37pp, €16.00.

The pedantic reader will wonder why there is no Wq or Helm number. It is one of those concertos that were written for flute or keyboard – in this case, not for cello as well. The pf versions is Wq 22 or Helm 425. It is now thought that the flute version existed before the keyboard, so there is no need to omit its authenticity.

Beethoven *Duo für Violine und Violoncello: fragment, edited and completed by Robert D. Levin*. Henle (1265), €10.00.

I find it difficult not to think of it as rather curious piano music – perhaps that would be less obvious if the bar-lines only went through the staves – do railwaymen still say "Please mind the gap!" Levin has been a regular completer of the incomplete, and this seems to work well – any pro should be able to manage it. It dates from around 1792.

MOZART HORN CONCERTO in D

Mozart *Concerto for Horn and Orchestra in D major with two Rondo versions, K 412/514...* completed and edited by Henrik Wiese Breitkopf/Henle (P-B 15128), 2014. [vi] + 29pp, €22.90.

K.412 is the normal form, though it seems now that it is no longer accepted as K412 put back to K386b (1782). There is no slow movement. The finale comes in two versions. RV 412 was added by Süssmayr who includes a quote from the Lamentations of Jeremiah; this was probably performed at Easter in 1992. K514 is the sketchy form of Mozart's version, with comments written above the horn stave and translated on page v. Leutgeb's musical range was getting lower, down to a ninth. The introduction isn't quite as clear as I expected – perhaps the German was clearer. I presume the Henle involvement is in the horn/piano version: the score is in the Breitkopf manner.

After June, CB will be reviewing editions of music on a blog, in conjunction with CDs, which will remain accessible for as long as is useful. We will be writing to publishers possible ways of organising it. CB

REVIEWS OF BOOKS

Clifford Bartlett

UNDERSTANDING RILLING'S MESSIAH

Helmut Rilling *Messiah: Understanding and Performing Handel's Masterpiece in collaboration with Kathy Saltzman Romey*. Carus-Verlag (CV F 24.070), 2015. 128pp, € 16.50. ISBN 978 3 89948 223 2.

This strikes me as an old-fashioned conductor born in 1933 – six years older than me. However, I kept my eyes on the musicology, and was refreshed when the early-instrument movement became common. I sang the work regularly in my teens, at first in the old-fashioned way from the Novello Prout edition of 1902 and later in the over-marked Watkins Shaw edition of 1959. Later I played continuo in the more fashionable style, generally reading from a complete score. I was honoured to be asked to produce a new edition of *Messiah* by Oxford University Press, published in 1998.¹ I haven't done any work on it since then.

Rilling has some good points, especially in pointing to Jennens' complex and skilful arrangement of the Biblical text to inspire the composer. But two basic points are not discussed. (a) How many singers are appropriate for a choir? Information from the Foundling Hospital in the mid 1750s gives fairly accurate details of the forces concerned. I'm surprised that Rilling did not quote them – around 13 singers including soloists: perhaps stage performances may have had a few more singers. Rilling gives no attempts of the size of the choir or the orchestra, yet he quotes specific smaller groups without relating them to the full-scale modern orchestras that he seems to anticipate. (b) What pitch is being used? Rilling comments on high parts without referring to the lower semitone pitch, which must make some difference. And (c) he misunderstands the presence of dynamics. The general indication of volume in the period is that the opening of a movement uses the full forces played with confidence, but *piano* is basically to make oboes and bassoons silent and the strings play at a lower level (though not necessarily as soft as *piano*).

In fact, Rilling fails by adding markings other than those that are obvious for the score but not necessarily for individual *forte* and *piano*. What he needs to think about is the shaping of individual phrases. That's why there are so few indications of musicality within music of the period. More important than marking dynamics is the shaping of the phrase. The first *Accompagnato* begins with four bars

of strings. The dynamic is quite low (but not low enough to warrant *Piano*). The tenor enters on the chord in bar 4 with *Com-fort ye*. This has three notes: the singer requires presence, but not particularly high volume. It is by the upper strings an octave higher: this can be treated as an echo, since the *p* which begins bar 5 is to make clear that the strings enter with a lower volume with the voice entering at top E on the second minim, which has a longer phrase: *Comfort ye my people*. The long *Com-* should have a brief accent from the first letter (*C*), then cutting back lower at once followed by a crescendo -*om-* then lightening *fort*, semiquaver *#f* and *#g*, continuing noticeably to *ye my* leading slightly on to the semiquaver at the end of the bar *ye*, ending the phrase with a slight rise on the first note of bar 7 *people*, followed by *diminuendo*. Throughout there's a vast pattern of shaping small phrases.

Similarly, choruses should sing in the same way. The opening of the Hallelujah Chorus presents problems since the crucial word has no fixed stress. Bars 4 & 5 make sense with a strong first syllable, but more plausible is accenting the third syllable in bar 6, but in bar 7 the strong point is the first note in the bar again, with a slight diminuendo for the strings to follow more quietly. I'm not necessarily following the accents on the Hallelujahs; they need to be shaped. But normal Handelian phrases in most singing is not so obvious and can be varied according to both words and music.

This sort of detail is rare. I think that the shaping of most baroque music is discovered within the phrases, without dynamics that became essential in the 19th century, and we eventually find modern 20th-century scores that can have a separate dynamic on and between each note – let alone pieces that flippantly have dynamics in silent bars! There's too much about size and volume, while the shaping of phrases is ignored. It is ironic that the Carus edition (55.056) of 2009 which is recommended by Rilling is more cautious in shortening upbeats than their editors, Ton Koopman and Jan H. Siemons. I think Rilling needed to make more comments on the different forces. The premiere of my edition was given by the Huddersfield Choral Society for the famous Christmas events. The choir was quite large, the orchestra a substantial chamber orchestra, a big organ, a packed audience and a marvellous conductor who hadn't played the piece before. The musical style isn't entirely dependent on the size of the choir. But Rilling oversimplifies by not commenting on different forces – both size and whether modern or early instruments.

However, the remarks on each number will encourage conductors and performers to think about the work, even if it is rather too general and often repetitive.

1. My Oxford University Press full-score edition of 1998 lists the 1754 and 1758 payments and parts on p. viii. The premiere in Dublin probably had 20 singers from the two Dublin choirs of Christ Church and St Patrick's Cathedral. The 1749 must have been larger forces, both for choir and instruments, the latter having *senza & con ripieno*: there's no such evidence for the later performances.

Bertin H. Van Boer *The Musical Life of Joseph Martin Kraus...* Indiana University Press, 2014. [viii] + 371 pp. \$55.99. ISBN 978 0 253 01274 6

As someone who has long enjoyed listening to Kraus's music, it has come as something of a disappointment that he seems to have been a rather unlikeable person. Most of the letters that comprise the first part of this volume are full of requests for money from his parents, and complaints about his lot in life; of course, these are very real considerations for all of us, and it makes it all the more remarkable that he chose to strive to make a musical career rather than become the lawyer his parents would have preferred. And while reading the letters, one constantly has to put on one's Jane Austen hat and try to understand what he writes in the context of the period – not to mention all the arcane references he shares with his family. In this one is sometimes aided by Van Boer's footnotes to the 116 letters, but some of his comments are fairly pointless ("The promised piece of music is unidentified", Letter 54, note 2 is but one example of notes dedicated to mysterious people and things), while others are contentious (discussing the Handel Centenary that Kraus attended in London in 1785, "Presumably the Dettingen "Te Deum," not the Utrecht "Te Deum.", Letter 77, note 2 – need one speculate at all, I would ask).

The book has four appendices, devoted to the composer's will (and a discussion of the value and dispersal of his estate), and three sets of letters written to Fredrik Silverstolpe (Kraus's first biographer) – 11 from members of the family and the answers to two questionnaires he had sent them, three that the family had asked Kraus's former teachers to write and nine from the composer Roman Hofstetter, who was one of the young Kraus's major influences. The latter tells Silverstolpe (among other things) that "the late Herr Kraus had for the most part nothing good to say about Italian composers"; from his own letters, it seems this extended to the majority of French and German composers, too.

I suppose the real value of this volume (aside from the many titbits of information about travel and postage in the late 18th century) is the insight it gives into the daily drudgery of composers' lives at this time, constantly struggling to make ends meet, and at the beck and call of fickle royal employers (in Kraus's case constantly at risk of being ousted by one or other of the factions at the Swedish court); it makes it all the more remarkable that he produced such beautiful music.

Brian Clark

WINTER JOURNEY

Ian Bostridge *Schubert's Winter Journey: Anatomy of an Obsession*. Faber and Faber. £20.00

The shocking impact on its first hearers of Schubert's *Winterreise* is well documented; his friends were 'dumbfounded' by the overwhelming power of the grief expressed in the 24 settings of Wilhelm Müller's poems. It

is hugely popular today, but you have to prepare yourself for a performance – rather like going to King Lear – and Bostridge notes that silence usually follows the closing song, *The Hurdy-Gurdy Man...* the "sort of silence that otherwise only a Bach Passion can summon up".

This guide to its grip on us, by someone as experienced in singing it and as authoritative about its background as Ian Bostridge, is a most welcome arrival. The book looks at each song in order, giving the text in the original German and then in translation, after which Bostridge explores its historical context then finding "new and unexpected connections – both contemporary and long dead – literary, visual, psychological, scientific and political". There is a refreshing lack of musical analysis which will recommend him to the general reader, but his wide knowledge of history and art and above all his personal engagement with this great work as an 'obsessed' singer make his insights absolutely fascinating.

The range of associations, anecdotes and illustrations make the book an unfolding treasury: behind the songs are perhaps the failed love and dread of approaching death of the tragically young composer, and the repression and censorship of the Biedermeier world of Schubert and his friends.

But they were written in the wake of the "Winter journey to end all winter journeys", Napoleon's retreat from Moscow, which Bostridge describes in horrifying detail. This is linked to much later history... for example, the first performance by Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, given when he was a schoolboy on January 30th 1943 and interrupted by a British bombing raid. The terrible conditions of the trenches in Stalingrad are considered, and Bostridge imagines German officers and soldiers listening to a recording made by Hans Hotter: "the *Winterreise* might have been a consoling companion in that other winter journey in 1942, abstract emotions allowing an escape from the concrete"

More contemporary resonances are struck with C. S. Lewis, *Krapp's Last Tape*, Bob Dylan and Amy Winehouse. There are some unique insights given into 19th century marriage laws in Austria, and into changing attitudes to tears and weeping. Snippets of autobiography, illustrating the writer's own journey, are revealing and touching.

Ian Bostridge's scholarship and mastery of such a wide range of material (the bibliography alone runs to 10 pages) is hugely impressive but his touch is light; this is immensely readable, enjoyable and enlightening. His 'obsession' reaches out to the mind and heart of the reader, ensuring a much deeper response to this transcendental work.

Cathy Martins

A late-comer to our columns! Cathy was a teaching colleague with Elaine while Cathy and Clifford both sang in the English Chamber Choir. The two pairs moved away from London, but Keighley is more remote than we are near Cambridge. We only rarely manage to meet. A pity that we did not invite her to contribute earlier!

CB/EB

REVIEWS of CONCERTS

Andrew Benson-Wilson

As this is the penultimate issue, it is perhaps time to reflect on the past 20 years of reviewing for *Early Music Review*. I started with the very first issue in June 1994, reviewing organ CDs. Then, from the March 1998 issue, I additionally started reviewing London concerts and venues within sensible reach of London, a brief that was soon expanded as an increasing number of invitations came my way to review early music festivals outside the UK.

Writing about organ CDs (as with my articles for organ magazines) was something that I should, in theory, know something about. But it was a different matter reviewing musical events that covered a huge range of styles and genres, not least because of the specialist (professional or amateur) knowledge of many of the readers of *EMR*. I knew that many readers would know a great deal more about the music being performed than me, however much homework I could fit in before an event. It was very likely that included amongst the readership would be several of the performers, the discoverer/arranger/editor of the music, and the musicologist who had devoted years of research into the music – and, of course, those readers who were at the event themselves and will have already formed their own view. I took the early decision to write as a reasonably knowledgeable but nonetheless lay member of the audience, responding honestly to the music and the performance that I heard on that occasion. If I didn't like something, I tried to explain why.

Not surprisingly, I have made a few enemies (and produced a few hissy fits) as a result of my reviewing. But I wouldn't have been doing my job properly if that wasn't the case. There are some astonishing stories I could tell about the response of some of those who see themselves as above criticism – and one day, I might. But I am very glad to say that I have made far more friends than enemies through my reviewing, including many whose performances I haven't always raved about. Unlike medicine, music is one of those professions that is publically reviewed. I have been reviewed myself, both as a performer and as a writer (of a modest little book on performing early music), so I do know what it is like.

As the final issue of *Early Music Review* approaches, I am finally responding to the many people who, over the years, have encouraged me to set up my own review website. So by the time this is published, the website "andrewbensonwilson.org" should be just about live, albeit in development. As well as including many of the reviews of early music that would have previously been published in *EMR*, this will also give me the chance to expand my reviewing activities. I will continue with my wish to try to review as many young groups and performers as I can.

I am determined to avoid the temptation to make money out of this website. Many review/blogger websites seem aimed to raise money for the site owner, with pages filled with flashy adverts and invitations to buy related products, at a profit to the site owner. I trust readers to be capable of finding out for themselves how to buy a reviewed CD, for example, without me providing a money-raising sponsored link for them. The site is in its early days, so please forgive any initial glitches. And by all means contact me on ajbw@hotmail.com to let me know about future events – the website should eventually have a way of registering for updates.

In the meantime, as winter slowly gives way to spring, it is a good moment to recall last summer's country house opera offerings.

GLYNDEBOURNE'S *LA FINTA GIARDINIERA*

Rather surprisingly, given Glyndebourne's devotion to Mozart, *La Finta Giardiniera* was the first time they have staged any of his early operas. Although obviously not on a par with the da Ponte operas, these earlier works are fascinating. Had he died aged 20, I reckon Mozart would still rate pretty highly in musical history. That said, *La Finta Giardiniera* is not amongst the Mozart greats, and needs careful handling. Covent Garden didn't altogether succeed in their troubled 2006 attempt, although more recently, the Academy of Ancient Music gave a commendable concert performance at The Barbican. The plot is the usual nonsense. Nardo (who is really Roberto disguised as a gardener) loves Serpetta who loves Don Anchise who loves Sandrina (who is really the Marchioness Violante, and is also disguised as the 'secret gardener' of the title) who loves Count Belfiore (who previously stabbed her and left her for dead) who loves Arminda who used to love Ramiro but jilted him and would be very surprised if he happened to turn up unexpectedly. Musically, the 19-year old Mozart is starting to challenge the supremacy of *opera buffa* by introducing elements of *opera seria*, treating this *buffa* plot with *seria* intensity. The opening is pure *buffa*, with the characters appearing to be happy bunnies until you hear the words of the individual solos and asides. Another feature of this work is Mozart's early development of his complex Act finales, one magnificent example coming at the end of the first act. Director Frederic Wake-Walker set the goings-on in a Germanic Rococco-style room, the fabric of which deconstructed as the evening progresses, as did some of the characters. Christiane Karg's Sandrina was the vocal highlight from a very strong young cast, her pure tone contrasting with the rather silly portrayals of Belfiore (Joel Prieto) as a wimp and Ramiro (Rachel Frenkel) as a Goth. Robin Ticciati (Glyndebourne's music director) directed the ever-excellent Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment with a fine sense of pace. But even with cuts, it was a rather long three hours.

GARSINGTON'S *FIDELIO*

Garsington Opera opened its 25th anniversary season with a revival of *Fidelio* (13 July), first heard (albeit not by me) in 2009, the opera company's final year in Garsington village. Now planted just beyond the ha-ha of the Getty's Wormsley estate, the extraordinary new opera house is a slightly incongruous setting for the bleakness of *Fidelio*'s prison, although it was a delight to see the prisoners brought into the (fading) light and out over the bridge into the ornamental gardens. But *Fidelio* remains a troublesome work. The elevated ideals that inspired Beethoven compositional struggles are marred by compromise of structure and plot, not least the rather inconsequential love scenes between Marzelline and Jaquino. *Fidelio* is frequently used as a vehicle for the political aspirations of the director, thereby overlying additional layers of complexity, usually very far from the original plot. But here, John Cox's production plays it commendably straight, supported by period costumes and a neutral staging. The character portrayals are convincing, notable in a young *Fidelio/Leonore*, sung with absolute integrity by the delightful Rebecca von Lipinski – a most impressive singer and actor, and equally believable in male and female incarnations. Stephen Richardson's Rocco contrasted power with compassion – a nice twist is that it seems pretty clear that he knows exactly who *Fidelio* is. Peter Wedd's Florestan dominated the second half, the sombre mood aided as the setting evening sun of the first half faded. Joshua Bloom's Minister contrasted with the pantomime antics of Darren Jeffery's Pizarro. Douglas Boyd conducted the house orchestra, playing modern instruments, with a fine sense of style and pace.

SALIERI & MOZART AT WEST GREEN HOUSE

What it might lack in social cachet (and, to be honest, musical excellence) in comparison to Glyndebourne, Garsington and The Grange, opera at West Green House (a few miles east of Basingstoke) is more than made up by the spectacular gardens, seen at their best under the post-opera lighting. One of their 2014 shows was the pairing of Salieri's *Prima la musica e pol le parole* and Mozart's *Der Schauspieldirektor*,^{*} the two one-act works (the Mozart a *Singspiel*) that Emperor Joseph II challenged the two composers to write in competition with each other as the climax of a 1786 celebration in the Orangery of his summer palace of Schönbrunn. Both explore issues of production and diva-ish competition, Salieri with an opera score (contrasting *opera buffa* with *seria*) that has a *prima dona* (originally Nancy Storace) but lacks a libretto, Mozart with a 'discussion' as to who is to be the *prima dona*, the argument finally resolved when the tenor steps in to announce that he is the *prima dona*.^{*} *Der Schauspieldirektor* has far more *speil* than *sing*, with only four musical numbers, but each is a fine aria – the work was written at the same time as *Figaro*. The paired-down production (to a piano accompaniment) was in association with Opera Project. Peter Willcock was the stand-out singer, not least for appearing in both works.

* An odd trio of slips: *pol.* *Mozart's!* & *Schauspieldirektor*. I've preserved Andrew's wishes in the footnote!

ULYSSES RETURNS TO IFORD

One of the posh frocks and picnic venues that combine musical excellence with spectacular gardens is Iford Manor, near Bath. This year's early music offering was Monteverdi's *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria* performed by the Early Opera Company in a setting that couldn't be more Italian. Iford's Peto Garden is full of Italian references, and the operas take place inside a pastiche 100 year-old Italian cloister – one of the most intimate opera spaces I know. The 12-strong (and vocally strong) cast was headed by mezzo Rowan Hellier as the complex and emotionally confused Penelope with Jonathan McGovern as the returning Ulysses. Penelope's three suitors were Callum Thorpe, Russell Harcourt and Alexander Robin Baker, with Oliver Mercer as their advocate Eurymachus. Elizabeth Cragg and Annie Gill made fine contributions as Minerva and Melanto, as did Daniel Auchincloss as Eumaeus, here portrayed as a gamekeeper. The Prologue was sensibly omitted, allowing the opening focus to be on Penelope's grief. The audience sit within a few feet of the central stage and it is impossible not to feel personally involved in the unfolding drama. It is a real test of the singers' sense of character and voice to be able to project to such a close audience. Justin Way directed, using Christopher Cowell's sensible ENO English translation, and an excellent and beautifully lit staging by Kimm Kovac, using imaginative and vaguely modern dress with a hint of the abdication era. Christian Curnyn directed his seven Early Opera Company players from the harpsichord, the violins of Catherine Martin and Oliver Webber being much in evidence.

ORFEO AT THE ROUNDHOUSE

From the sumptuous gardens and posh frocks of the summer's country house opera circuit to a former engine shed in North London in January was something of a leap. The Roundhouse is the latest of the Royal Opera House's ventures away from Covent Garden, another being the Sam Wanamaker playhouse at The Globe. The circular building (one of my haunts in earlier rock concert days) made an impressive, if acoustical tricky, venue for Monteverdi's *Orfeo*. The audience sit in a 270° arc around the off-centre circular stage with the instrumentalists of the Early Opera Company at the back of the stage. The Prologue opened with a young and rather sour looking Pluto and his entourage processing down a long sloping gangway onto the stage and up to a raised dais above the orchestra and what turned out to be the entrance to Hades. The gods were accompanied by be-robed priests who turned out to be the three *Pastore* (billed as 'Pastors' – very droll). It had the air of a court house, with the gods sitting in judgement as the scene unfolded below. Musica (who turns into Euridice via an on-stage costume change) sat with Orfeo draped *pieta*-like across her lap, a touching scene reversed at the end of the evening. The only prop was a simple chair, with the other scenes created by a lively group of 14 child dancers and acrobats (from East London Dance) who created arches through which the protagonists moved, as well as the ripples of the Styx. This was the first attempt at opera direction by the Royal

Shakespeare Company's former Artistic Director, Michael Boyd, and he sensibly resisted the temptation to overly embellish the plot. The sparse setting allowed the focus to be on the music itself, something that the young singers rose to with considerable aplomb. The Transylvanian baritone, Gyula Orendt, was a most impressive Orfeo, the clarity of his voice overcoming some slight pronunciation difficulties and the curious spectacle of him being hoisted precariously into the air at the end. Mary Bevan was outstanding as Euridice and Musica, both with her acting and the beauty of her voice. The other members of the cast were of a similar high standard, including the chorus drawn from Guildhall students. However, I was not convinced about casting Susan Bickley as the Messenger. The playing of the Early Opera Company and Christopher Moulds' musical direction was spot on. There is more I could write about some of the production issues, but will certainly remember this as a fine musical event.

LOCKE'S TEMPEST BY CANDELIGHT

The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment continued their collaboration with The Globe's new Sam Wanamaker Playhouse with an imaginative performance of Matthew Locke's music for the 1674 production of *The Tempest* (or *Enchanted Island*), devised and directed by Elizabeth Kenny with stage direction and text adaptation by Caroline Williams. Following the *Musica Britannica* edition, the music included additional pieces by Pelham Humphrey, Reggio, Banister, Purcell and Hart. The five OAE instrumentalists were joined by three singers, two boy trebles together with two actors who cleverly acted all the parts in the extracts from the rather curious version of Shakespeare's play for which Locke provided the music. Despite the oddities of the text, this *Tempest* was extraordinarily popular at the time, with frequent revivals over the following 150 years. Although 21st century eyes and ears might not rate the play quite so highly, setting Locke's relatively well-known music in the context of at least part of the spoken text and stage action does help with understanding the context of music like this. Along with Purcell's examples, this repertoire is difficult to slot into the mainstream European musical tradition of the late 17th century. The Wanamaker Playhouse is a gloriously intimate space for such performances, the candle lighting added much to the atmosphere. This was a lively and, at times, very funny production, not least when one of the actors portrayed a sword fight by playing both characters at the same time. The impressive singers were Katherine Watson, Frazer B Scott and Samuel Boden.

THE SIXTEEN'S VESPERS

Such is the profile and schedule of The Sixteen that I was surprised to find that their short tour of the Monteverdi *Vespers* was the first time they had toured with orchestra and choir together. Of their eight venues (six cathedrals, and two concert halls), I saw them in Guildford Cathedral (on 30 Jan), a pared-down Gothic building designed in the 1930s and finally opened in 1961. The acoustics were good, at least from my seat close to the performers, who were

positioned in what would have been termed 'the crossing' (in front of the choir and chancel) if there had been proper transepts. Very professional looking TV cameras broadcast to monitors to the sell-out audience down the long nave. "The sequence of movements was what has become the traditional one" as were several other aspects of the performance including, arguably, taking the *sequialtera* passages too fast. The (more substantial) *Magnificat* was sung at higher pitch. With 20 singers and 24 instrumentalists, this was an aurally powerful performance, although the tiny box organ was only occasionally audible. The use of such organs is common in the UK although I urge you to try and hear the *Vespers* (and any Bach cantatas, for that matter) performed with a church organ (for example, see my review of the Cantar Lontano recording in the October 2014 *EMR*). The rest of the continuo group was cello, violone, chitarrone, harp and dulcian, with string/recorders and cornet/sackbuts divided left and right. The vocal soloists, all stepping forward from the choir, were sopranos Grace Davidson and Charlotte Mobbs, tenors Mark Dobell and Jeremy Budd and basses Ben Davies and Eamonn Dougan – all most impressive. Relatively limited use was made of the available space, the main exception being the tenor/theorbo duet *Nigra Sum* which was performed from halfway down the central aisle, and Jeremy Budd singing *Audi coelum* from the pulpit. The echo passages were sung from somewhere towards the altar. As with their other cathedral venues, the singers in the *Sonata sopra Sancta Maria* were the local cathedral choristers, in this case Guildford's very able girls choir.

KING'S MINIMALISM

Included within the year-long Kings Place 'Minimalism Unwrapped' festival, Stephen Cleobury and the Choir of King's College Cambridge devised a programme based around plainchant (4 Feb). They combined this with their own celebrations of the 500th anniversary of the completion of their Chapel and reflections on the College's (and Eton College's) founder Henry VI and their patron, the Virgin Mary. The result was a complete Sarum Rite plainsong *Vespers In Nativitate Beatae Mariae Virginis* (including Dunstable's *Ave Maria Stella* and *Magnificat secundi toni*) and a recreated Mass sequence *De Beatae Maria Virginis*, incorporating music from the Old Hall Manuscript by Damett, Bittering, Power and 'Roy Henry'. Each half ended with a piece from the Eton Choir Book. The *Vespers* was enclosed within Robert Parsons' *Ave Maria* and the Old Hall *Salve Regina* by Robert Hacomplaynt, the interestingly surnamed Provost of Kings from 1509-28. The more elaborate flowing melismas of the Vesper antiphons provided contrast to the simpler melodic lines of the Psalms. Despite any possible arguments of authenticity, I do find the habit of overlengthening the silence in the middle of a chant verse, and then almost overlapping the end of one verse with the start of the next, rather curious.* The 16 choral scholars (nearly all undergraduates, judging by their academic gowns) were joined by 17 boy choristers for the large-scale pieces that opened and closed each half. Although it was a slightly curious notion to include music of this period in

a festival of minimalism – and, of course, it would have sounded very different if the King's College Choir had been singing on home turf – this was a fascinating and musically compelling insight into musical and liturgical history. It was also a fine example of the outstanding music making that goes on day by day in our cathedrals and college foundations.

* *The principle is customary, but it does sound odd! The logic is that the singers need to breath again for the second half, wheras the next verse can begin quickly since it is sung by the other half of the choir. CB*

CARDINALL'S @ CADOGAN

The Psalms of David are a key part of the liturgy of Christian and Jewish worship, and were rather nicely described by the (un-named) programme note writer of The Cardinall's Musick concert (Cadogan Hall, 5 Feb) as a "collection of praises and complaints, benedictions and moans ... dealing with the problems of ordinary life". Their programme looked at two of the many possible musical genres, comparing the European Catholic tradition of the 16th century with that of the English church of the same period, described by director Andrew Carwood as a collection of "sorbets and grand dishes". The 10 singers were used in many different formations, only coming together at the end of each half, firstly for the Allegri *Miserere* and then Byrd's joyful *Laudibus in sanctis*. After an opening *Jubilate Deo* by Giovanni Gabrieli, the first half was built around three of Victoria's large-scale double-choir Vespers Psalm settings, *Nisi Dominus*, *Dixit Dominus* and *Laudate Dominum*. These were contrasted with more intimate settings, notably Palestrina's *Super flumina Babylonis*, with its closely-wrought stepwise musical lines, and the *Ad Dominum cum tribularer* by Lassus with its contrast between high and low voices. The often intense English settings were intended for a very different liturgical purpose, usually as anthems during Evensong or Mattins, or for more private devotions. Only with the opening Gibbons' 'O clap your hands together' and the final Byrd *Laudibus in sanctis* did the English music approach the grandeur of Victoria's settings. Indeed, it was the intimate and madrigal-like 'O Lord in thy wrath' and *Laboravi in gemitu meo* (by Gibbons and Weelkes respectively) that were the emotional highlights for me. The rather youthful photographs of Andrew Carwood and Cardinall's Musick belied the fact that they are in their 25th year. They were on excellent form on this occasion, their forthright vocal style ideal for the large-scale works as well as seeking out the emotional intensity of the more intimate works.

WIND IN BASINGSTOKE

The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment brought their programme of music for winds to Basingstoke's Anvil, the day after their performance at the Queen Elizabeth Hall (6 Feb). Under the banner of the OAE's 'Flying the Flag' series, they focussed on central Europe and Bohemia, with Mozart and his little-known friend Josef Mysliveček, as well as the later Bohemian composer Josef Triebensee,

who arranged movements of *Don Giovanni* for the Prince of Lichenstein's *harmonie* wind band around 1790. The evening opened with Mozart's monumental 'Gran Partita' (Serenade No 10 for 13 wind instruments); nearly an hour of music of the most extraordinary intensity, and given an exceptional performance by the OAE players. I particularly liked the way that they slightly extended some key rests, adding to the air of suspense. Josef Mysliveček met the young Mozart in Bologna, and was an early influence despite their later falling out. The composer of some 29 operas and 55 Symphonies, the jolly little Wind Octet No.2 in E flat (discovered not so long ago in a pile of manuscripts in the Black Forest) was probably not the finest work to display his talents, but the OAE (in the more traditional wind band grouping of 8 players) brought out the humour of his writing, not least in one little passage where an oboe scale was finished off, after a slight pause, by the second oboe. The choice of Triebensee's arrangement of *Don Giovanni* was apt, as the opera itself includes an on-stage wind band playing an arrangement of Mozart's own *Figaro* – Mozart's dig at the bourgeoisie habit of background music. A fine oboist himself, Triebensee played the tricky second oboe part in the first performance of *The Magic Flute*, and makes much of the oboe in his arrangements, generally of soprano arias. Although lacking a vocal line, his arrangements are clever reinterpretations of Mozart's originals, and formed a light-hearted end to what had possibly been a rather heavy evening for Basingstoke's concert goers.

A SPY AT THE GLOBE

The Shakespeare Globe's Sam Wanamaker Playhouse continued with its enterprising series of candle-lit musical events with 'The Spy's Choirbook' (8 Feb). The four singers of Alamire (along with The English Cornett & Sackbut Ensemble) presenting extracts from the British Library's sumptuous manuscript (Roy 8.g.vii) produced in Antwerp at the workshop of Petrus Imhoff, who changed his name to the more musically appropriate Alamire (A-la-mi-re, as he often signed his name). Like many musicians of his time, Alamire was a spy who was well acquainted with many of the crowned heads of Europe, including Maximilian, Charles V and Christian II of Denmark. He acted for Henry VIII against the exiled Yorkist pretender, Richard de la Pole, Duke of Suffolk. He also presented Henry VIII with many musical gifts, including this enormous parchment manuscript, but amid accusations of counter-espionage he didn't even receive thanks for his efforts, or his gifts. It was therefore perhaps apt that it turns out that the manuscript was in fact second hand, having been originally intended for Louise XII of France and Anne of Brittany. But on the death of both of them, Alamire changed the dedication and some of the words to Henry and Catherine of Aragon who, like Louise and Anne, were desperate for a child. And so it is that London now has a collection of 34 motets works by the likes of Mouton, Josquin, Isaac and de la Rue. Alamire's director, David Skinner, conducted and introduced the story behind the manuscript. The whole volume has been recorded by substantially larger Alamire forces. The singing (from Clare Wilkinson, Nicholas Todd, Greg Skidmore and Rob Mac-

donald) was outstanding, as was the instrumental contributions, although I found the tenor shawm a rather better blend with the cornet and sackbuts than the alto shawm.

ROYAL BAROQUE IN BATTERSEA

The enterprising new series of monthly early Sunday evening musical events at St Michael's, Cobham Close, Battersea continued with Royal Baroque, a group of young multinational musicians who met in 2010 at the Guildhall School of Music (8 Feb). Their programme focussed on the French style, as represented in suites by Rebel and Telemann. The solo instruments were played by Christiane Eidsten Dahl, violin, and Rebecca Vučetić, recorders, with Kate Conway adding many solo moments to her continuo role on viola da gamba – and demonstrating impeccable tuning well above the frets. Continuo support came from Kaisa Pulkkinen, who didn't have much chance to show her wares on baroque harp, and Katarzyna Kowalik, harpsichord. Christiane Eidsten Dahl's sensitive and delicate violin playing blended well with the quieter sound of the recorder. All the players were well versed in French performing style, particularly evident in the gentler lyrical movements.

THE BAROQUE TRUMPET

As if to counter the normal accusation that trumpeters sidle on stage towards the end of the evening to take the bulk of the applause for their brief, but usually spectacular, contribution (to the chagrin of the violinists and continuo players who have laboured away all evening for a great deal less recognition), the Academy of Ancient Music devoted a whole evening to music for trumpets (Milton Court, 18 Feb). It turned out to be a curious affair, starting with the (unusually) far from note perfect little opening fanfare from the evening's director, David Blackadder. A suite of three Bach Cantata Sinfonia's followed (from cantatas 29, 150 & 249), my principal gripe being that Alistair Ross, the organ soloist in the opening Sinfonia, was not acknowledged as such in the programme. A related gripe was that the weedy little box organ was more-or-less inaudible above the over-strong string playing, a question of balance that should have been sorted out in rehearsal or at the previous day's concert in Cambridge. It is a major failing of most Bach performances (not just in the UK) that the sound of the organ is not heard as it would have been in Bach's day, when the organ accompaniment would usually have been a full-scale church, rather than tiny continuo one. The evening continued with a range of music for up to three trumpets (played by David Blackadder, Phillip Bainbridge and Robert Vanryne) by the likes of Biber, Corelli, Vivaldi, and Telemann, with the Bach Concerto for two violins thrown in for balance, the latter played by Bojan Čišić and Rebecca Livermore. The trumpet focus seemed to be on the spectacular rather than the melodic, which was a shame, as one of Blackadder's greatest achievements is often in the gently melodic moments that the baroque trumpet can excel in. Overall, the programme didn't really hang together as a musical unity. Perhaps trumpeters really are better off wandering in towards the end?

VIVALDI'S *L'ORACOLA IN MESSENNIA*

Although initially sceptical, I have grown to respect the Barbican's tradition of concert performances of operas. Without the distraction of staging or directorial imposition, there is the chance to concentrate on the music itself. One fine example of this came with the performance of Vivaldi's *pasticcio* opera *L'Oracolo in Messenia* of 1737 (20 Feb). Vivaldi's habit of living and travelling with his former pupil Anna Girò (some 32 years younger than him) seems to have been instrumental in the genesis of this work, after the Archbishop of Ferrara refused him entry to his city on the grounds of his companion. Vivaldi hurriedly arranged a season at Venice's Teatro S Angelo which opened with *L'Oracolo in Messenia*. As with so many of Vivaldi's operas, only the libretto exists, but Fabio Biondi has reconstructed the musical score from pieces that Vivaldi collected together, drawing on the Giacomelli work that Vivaldi used as the basis for his *pasticcio*. As is often the case in Vivaldi (and indeed in many other composers), the real musical interest often lay in the accompaniment rather than the vocal line. That said, there were some spectacular show-piece arias, the most extraordinary coming towards the end of Act 2 when Trasimede (the young Russian Julia Lezhneva, in one of the three trouser roles) who had hitherto had a relatively quiet time suddenly burst into a stunningly virtuosic aria (*Son qual nave*, originally written for Farinelli by his brother Ricardo Broschi) that not only produced by far the loudest audience applause but also a young man who leapt onto the stage from the audience to present her with a bunch of flowers – not, I think, a spur of the moment thing, but nonetheless well deserved. In a very strong vocal cast, the stand-out singers were Magnus Staveland (despite his voice sometimes seeming rather too nice for the villain Polifonte, who has murdered the previous King and all but one of his children and is now after his widow, Merope), Marianne Beate Kielland as the tragic heroine Merope, notably with her impressive mad scene, Vivica Genaux as Epitide, her clear voice having a fine lower register, albeit with rather too much vibrato for my taste, and Franziska Gottwald as the ambassador Licisco, making much of one of the lesser roles. Of the remaining cast, Marina de Liso's persistent vibrato was a turn-off, and Robert Enticknap, playing another nasty chap, struggled to demonstrate his ability in such a strong cast. It takes a bit of a culture shift to appreciate the 18th century love of *pasticcio* opera, but this was certainly an effort by Fabio Biondi that was well worth while. He also impressed as a director, leading with his violin, and showing great respect for his singers and fellow musicians.

MARK RYLANCE v IESTYN DAVIES

As television screens seemed to be filled with lingering shots of Mark Rylance in his role as Thomas Cromwell in BBC's *Wolf Hall*, he returned to his old hunting ground at the Shakespeare Globe to take the role of the dotty Philippe V of Spain, patron of Farinelli, in Claire van Kampen's play with music 'Farinelli and the King' (Sam Wanamaker Playhouse, 24 Feb). In a role that he could have been born to play, the mercurial Rylance

mischievously teased and inveigled the audience into the world of the complexly depressive King, starting with the very opening scene where he chats to his goldfish as he tries to catch it with a fishing rod. Better known as the composer of the music for many of the Globe's Shakespeare productions (and, perhaps, also as Mrs Rylance) this was Claire van Kampen's debut as a playwright. She has produced a play that is full of humour and sensitive insight into the world of madness and depression, as well as a fascinating insight into the world of Farinelli in the court of the crazy king. In a similarly excellent performance, the appropriately named Melody Grove played the King's wife, Isabella, who had procured Farinelli from London to aid the King. Sam Crane acted the role of Farinelli, but in an clever twist to the play, we also had the outstanding countertenor Iestyn Davies taking on the singing side of Farinelli's life, the combination of both sides of Farinelli's personality on stage at the same time adding a fascinating psychological aspect to the evening. This worked a great deal better than I thought it would, and proved to be an illuminating insight into the often divided personalities of performers, with Farinelli's insecure and reticent side becoming all too evident as the evening progressed, and as his relationship with Philippe and Isabella grew stronger. The miniature band of musicians was directed from the harpsichord by Robert Howarth, although unfortunately his pre-play playing was drowned out by the chatter of the excitable audience. I was rather glad that, despite Rylance's extraordinary (and unashamedly crowd-pleasing) acting, it was for Iestyn Davies that the audience reserved its strongest applause. And so they should.

For extended versions of some of these reviews, and other reviews (including ENO's *Indian Queen* and the Classical Opera Mozart in London weekend) please see andrewbensonwilson.org.

Andrew has, for some years now, headed his reviews: "This review is submitted for publication in *EMR* on condition that it is published in its entirety without comments or other text added to it, unless by express written permission or instruction." He seems to be unaware that a reputable publisher will proof-read the texts, yet he stores all his reviews in the uncorrected versions! An example of this, which isn't ignorance but carelessness, is on his first review (p. 7) in this issue: the heading is *Giardineira*, followed by the correct spelling *Giardiniera* on the 2nd and 7th line – but full marks for getting Čičić right on p. 11.

Andrew may have written from Issue 1, but there seems to be very little awareness of significant points covered in articles in *EMR*. There are two reviews of Monteverdi works here that merely accept what is sung or judged without considering the essential issues, rather than considering experts who have some idea of "authentic" performance. I invited Andrew to review for us on the strength of his Organ book, but I'm disappointed that he doesn't absorb enough information and ideas. Admittedly, there are areas of controversy, but Andrew seems to have little concept of what Early Music is. Whether liked or not, you can hardly accept every performance, and in this issue, *Fidelio* is beyond our area unless it were performed in an early 19th-century style. Then there's a review of Salieri and Mozart, accompanied by a piano!

Monteverdi Vespers. Andrew claims that the sequence of movements is a traditional one: it's not traditional, it's liturgical. The Mass a6 belongs to a completely different service and the Magnificat a6 can be used with an instrumentless adjustment, either with instruments omitted or in performance from a mixed group of vespers. Apart from Andrew Parrott (pioneering in the late 1970s but not generally accepted by other scholars), most performances are done in order and no standard publisher has presented it in the Parrott way. "The sequence of movements was what has become the traditional one" is an odd statement: the sequence is as printed in 1610. It's not normally an issue. The comment on sesquialtera isn't relevant without something more specific to argue. Church organs – fine! The list of instrumentation is a bit premature: the cello was not invented in 1610, but does its presence imply a 16-foot violone? Is there much evidence of using a harp in the liturgy? Roger Bowers has argued convincingly that Monteverdi had about 10 singers – which is just the number needed for the largest psalm *Nisi Dominus*. *Duo Seraphim* is spoiled by not having three voices of a kind. Is there a convention of north Italian children ready to sing the complicated accompaniment of *Sonata sopra Santa Maria*? How come that the *Magnificat* was higher but not *Lauda Jerusalem*? – at least, Andrew doesn't mention any other pitch-level; and what was the basic pitch (most likely around A=465). *Lauda Jerusalem* and *Magnificat* should be sung a fourth or fifth lower than the high clefs notated for that purpose. (I wrote a nearly five-page review of the Barenreiter edition in *EMR* no. 156, 2013: read it before you review the Vespers again!)

I've been accustomed to read Andrew's dramatic reviews through the individual performers, usually not approaching the works as a dramatic entity. Ulysses's defeat of the suitors is caused by Penelope handing him his bow and the suitors and minions can be killed – the scene is amazingly intense and has affected me since I first saw it in St Pancras Town Hall in the mid 1960s. The Act ends, and Act V (or III depending on whether it is treated as a three or a five-act performance) is clearly the morning after the night before, with a very different mood. The classical unity of time clocks so well when a director realises that it is part of classical logic. When I edited the work for the Stuttgart opera-house nearly 25 years ago, I made this point (and more generally the classical concept of plays accepting the period of 24 hours squashed in the performing time), but the director claimed that the canonical ages were irrelevant. Not only did he fail to use it to create tension – he didn't even know what stringing a bow meant! Andrew mentioned the drama, but not in any way that the reader would understand it. One needs good singers and players, but that's not all.

Andrew rejects (and is rejected by) some younger performers who are advancing in different ways: a few may be incompetent, but most are investigating alternative ideas. There are also organisations that will not accept Andrew, especially the London Handel Festival and the Early Music Exhibition at Trinity Laban. Andrew was particularly annoying: his fracas of getting access to Sir John Eliot Gardiner was before or just after we discussed the blog idea of early music reviews. But the College sent me an account of what had happened, and he won't be allowed there again. Andrew discussed his blog with me the same morning, but he didn't say a word about his behaviour, and I gather that wasn't the first time. I haven't encountered ill behaviour from Andrew, but others have, and without anyone keeping an eye on him, I suspect that he will have to be very careful! We rarely meet and I was surprised that he would have gone ahead once the December events were over, since they had mostly been booked. However, Andrew's foreign visits tend to produce more impressive reports. CB

THE LION AND THE LANCE:
FROM VENICE TO LEIPZIG.
St John's Chapel, Cambridge

The full title is rather a mouthful! The front cover to the programme (as above and on the booklet) is extended on the title page to *A Musical Journey from Giovanni Gabrieli's Venice to the Leipzig of Johann Sebastian Bach*. There were three organisations involved: Cambridge University Chamber Choir, Cambridge University Collegium Musicum directed by Margaret Faultless, and Royal Welsh College of Music Cornett and Sackbutt Ensemble directed by Jeremy West. Martin Ennis was the director. These are the forces that have for the last three years had a late-spring week preparing for concerts at St John's and Girton; this was earlier, but the same pattern was followed on Friday & Saturday, 6 & 7 February.

The first half had three works each for Gabrieli and Schein, with an interlude from 1676, Biber's *Sonatae tam aris quam aulis servientes*, the fourth of his set of 12. This has solo violin (Rachel Stroud) and trumpet (Chris Parsons), with three "violas", the third one being a cello (or bass viol) and continuo – a refreshing piece. The Gabrieli opening began with *Salvator noster* a15 – three choirs of five parts each, which doesn't have the normal set-up of one four-voice choir. *Canzon XVI* a12 is also for three instrumental choirs, in the common separation of high, medium and low. I'm not sure when I first encountered *O Jesu mi dulcissime* a8 – it might have been singing in a CUMS concert in King's College with *Spem in alium* and other pieces in 1960-61. I was a bit disappointed, since I'd always thought of it as two vocal choirs and organ, and didn't expect instruments as well. I'll probably get used to it – I do spend quite a lot of time advising on mixed instruments and voices – and it will also be included in a programme by AAM, Jeremy West, and the choir of Canterbury Cathedral among others.

The relationship between Gabrieli and Schein is a matter of publication. Gabrieli published a massive set of partbooks in 1597, alternating vocal and instrumental music according to the number of parts. The second set appeared three years after his death in 1612, with separate books for vocal (including many works that require instruments) and a set of 21 *Canzonas* and *Sonatas*, both published in 1615. The link with Schein is his *Cymbalum Sionum*, also of 1615. I know him chiefly for his *Fontana d'Israel* (1623), Biblical texts in profound madrigalian style, and his instrumental *Banchetto musicale* (1617). It was refreshing to hear pieces I didn't know.

Across the interval, the instruments changed from early to late baroque for two works by Bach – *Komm, Jesu, komm* was manageable enough, but the *Magnificat* was another matter. I must admit that the performance was in a higher league. The first half was good, but the *Magnificat* was really special. Martin Ennis's conducting was stunning – about the only point I question was his holding the final chord with raised, shaking hands. I reckon that gesture would be more convincing with the hands unshaken, but

gradually expanding the reach and finally giving the end cue, perhaps stretching the fingers just once at the climax – but I'm no conductor! The other weakness was the idea of letting no-one sing more than one solo. It worked fine in the lower voices, but the ladies (4 sopranos, added to which was a fifth in the first half) weren't fully up to it. In all other respects, this was a marvellous conclusion to the evening.

CB

RACHEL PODGER

It was reported in *The Strad* that "Violinist Rachel Podger has been awarded the 2015 Royal Academy of Music Bach Prize – the first woman to receive the honour." The award is £10,000, "given annually by the London institution to an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to the performance and/or scholarly study of the music of Johann Sebastian Bach". She well deserves it, as any of our readers will know. She now has her own festival in Brecon, this year's beginning with the St John Passion on 23 October. So far, I haven't been able to spend the weekend there – perhaps I'll manage one year. The Kohn Foundation has been generous to the RAM, including the Bach Cantata series. I don't know when this award began, but I do find it odd that five other winners (András Schiff, Sir John Eliot Gardiner, Masaaki Suzuki, Murray Perahia and Ton Koopman) are men.

MUSIC and LETTERS

I began to read *Music and Letters* in 1960 (when I was working in the summer vac) then subscribed from the mid-1960s till last year. I was in general put off by so many specific titles that raised little interest except from specialists: wouldn't it be sensible for the world's academic musical journals to divide them into special hierarchies: when I started reading M&L, I devoured most of it, but not now.

M&L used to have an extensive quantity of reviews of music – new editions of old material that requires comment. For instance, the recent Carus and revised Barenreiter editions of Handel's *Saul* needs a critical comparison between them: Carus provided me with a review copy, Barenreiter doesn't, and I'm not interested in a vocal score! Significant new compositions should also be reviewed.

We began *Early Music Review* with reviewing music editions as the opening section, but this stops in June. Instead, we are producing two sections on line – CDs etc and printed music (which might include important books). Barenreiter seemed interested to provide Collected Works for reevaluating and then sending back, which would be useful and might apply to other publishers.

Thanks to the rapid reminder of Beresford and Kate King Smith, they have informed us that "Jeffrey Skidmore received an OBE, not a CBE, in the New Year's Honours – perhaps Andrew Benson-Wilson misread his own notes!"

THE HISTORIC ENGLISH ALTO, c.1450-1550

Roger Bowers

Simon Ravens' article in *EMR* 164 (February 2015), pp. 6-8, pursues further his contention that the adult male alto was unknown in 15th- and 16th-century England, and that the *medius/meane* part in the elaborate church polyphony of the century following c.1450 can have been sung only by boy altos. Nevertheless, it does not raise any issue of substance that I have not already addressed in earlier writing, wherein all the source references necessary here will be found – e.g., 'Chains of (rehabilitated) gold', *EMR* 159 (April, 2014), pp. 10-17.

1. Rather than in any of the documentary sources of the time (and certainly not in any idiosyncrasies incorporated into their punctuation), primarily it is in close inspection of the music itself that there may be located the means to identify the vocal scoring appropriate to pre-Reformation church polyphony, and the sonic palette so resulting. Little could be clearer than perception of the process whereby the five-voice ensemble for which (or for evident variations upon which) church polyphony was being composed by c.1480 can be seen to have evolved from the preceding three-voice ensemble over the previous thirty years. Reduced to essentials, it was achieved through the addition of one new timbre above and one new timbre below, so converting a prevailing clef-configuration of C2-C2-C4 into that of G2-C2-C4-C4-F4. The contemporaneous inauguration of the training of boys to sing composed polyphony shows that the G2 voice may be identified as that of the boy treble (and identifies also, by extension, the F4 voice as that of the adult bass). Since up to about the mid-point of the 15th century boys had not been taught to sing composed polyphony in any timbre, it follows that prior to, throughout and beyond the transitions of c.1450-80 the C2 voice can only have been that of the adult alto. Hereby, the five-voice vocal scoring is identified as that of boy trebles and adult altos, equal tenors I and II, and basses.

2. This is the conclusion presented by the music itself, and it appears indisputable; it arises from pursuit of the sole available avenue of research that is legitimate for the purpose, being the systematic and laborious analysis and detailed assessment of the many hundreds of pieces of music germane to this issue, in respect both of the ranges of their individual component voices and of the differentials of pitch between the constituent vocal timbres. This finding is confirmed by the choice of four to be the number of expert singing-men newly added to the choir of Chichester Cathedral by bishop Robert Sherborn in 1526. With each voice supporting one division of the adult choir, that number may be understood to have been determined by (and thus to endorse) the manner in which the vocal scoring engaged for this period's standard five-part polyphony for full choir required not just three adult vocal timbres but actually four: bass, two tenors, and adult alto.

3. It is in the light of this finding that the further evidence supplied by documentary sources ancillary to the music may best be interpreted and understood. As regards the content of the training of the choristers, in the case of household chapel choirs stipulation might be made indirectly within household ordinance. At contemporary churches provision was made in some cases by statute, in others by the contractual employment terms of their appointed master. These were legal documents setting out general duties and obligations, and in these (as was normal for all such documentation) no attempt was made punctiliously to specify detail of the manner in which the work of teaching the polyphonic repertory to the boys was to be undertaken. Commonly there sufficed a phrase such as 'in the best the best manner he knows'; entirely properly, all else was left to the appointee's professional competence and judgement.

4. Contemporary documentation gives rise to no grounds for concluding that, as well as the treble part, the alto part lying a fifth below was also routinely being taught to the boys. Necessarily the master taught the treble part lying at the top of the five-part deployment of voices conventional for full choir. Further, since the voices of adult men had always been available to sing the C2 part, it may be understood that normally the master instructed the boys in no part other than the treble, so that this may be identified as the prevalent default position that needed no detailed stipulation. In those few instances in which, unusually, resort was made to some detailed specification, it may be understood that this arose because in this instance the employer was seeking some deviation from the norm.

5. I know of no contemporary set of collegiate statutes that directs any departure from the default position. In respect of the employment contracts of choristers' masters, I have tracked down and studied over sixty dating from between c.1450 and c.1550. In the case of those institutions responsible for the making of the vast majority of these, there was evinced no perception of need to depart from the standard default position. One alone from this period specified something different; the contract of John Hogges for the priory of Llanthony Secunda (1533) directed him to teach to the boys both treble and mean parts. Meanwhile, regulations of c.1505 and c.1518 for the chapel of the household of Henry Percy, earl of Northumberland, disclose that its boys were then divided into treble and mean (alternatively, treble and second treble); and processes of inference may supply a few more possible examples. In the case of Llanthony Secunda it is fair to understand that the circumstance generating the particular specification of this requirement was its tender of an acknowledged exception to the rule then prevailing, which would have been understood to apply otherwise; and the revelatory rarity of these

specified instances establishes them as exceptional, so confirming as conventional the practice of teaching to the choristers not these two parts but just a single part, necessarily the treble.

6. The unconventional circumstance under which there applied this particular departure from the norm may readily be identified. With few exceptions, ecclesiastical choirs consisted of bodies of singers in which the number of adult voices outnumbered that of the boys by a factor of two or three. Those very few choirs in which the team of boys was taught to supply the mean as well as the treble part turn out all to have belonged to one particular minority: that in which, unusually, the boys almost equalled or actually outnumbered the men, so making desirable the appointment of only three parts to the men, and two to the boys. That, however, was the exception; and indeed – bearing especially in mind the virtuoso difficulty of the music to be taught – the suggestion that in any of the vast majority of choirs that were conventionally constituted (e.g. Chichester Cathedral, where after 1526 there were twenty men and eight boys) a small number of boys routinely learnt and executed two independent upper parts while a much larger body of men sang only three, as argued by Mr Ravens, appears to possess no credible traction whatsoever.

7. The diverse vagaries and inconsistencies of punctuation that may be observed within any early 16th-century document have to be recognised as offering too slight a premise upon which to endeavour either to establish or to dismantle any historical discussion. At this period there prevailed settled rules neither for the deployment of marks of punctuation, nor even for the design of the various symbols. In consideration of such pre-modern imprecision, the common practice in editing for modern publication is to regularise the punctuation, necessarily with close regard to the category and resultant style of the document concerned, and in accordance with clarification of the meaning which the editor believes to be consistent with its manner and content as a whole.

8. The style of the Chichester Cathedral document of 1526 was conventional for its period. Its compiler was no practising musician presenting a definitive treatise upon composition, nor was his objective the tender to 21st-century musicologists of meticulous technical detail upon the manner of vocal scoring to be adopted for the performance of the current style of elaborate church polyphony. Rather, he was a lawyer creating a legal deed of duties and obligations, for observance and practice by its inaugural and subsequent users. His purpose was to encapsulate for immediate use the instructions given to him as Bishop Sherborn's intentions; as best he could, he chose his words appropriately, and it was thus by choice of words that his meaning was conveyed, and not by any feature so nebulous and capricious as the deployment of punctuation (at this period no more capable of containing and conveying subtlety or precision of meaning than choice of spelling). The compiler's non-perception of need to incorporate any such words as 'omnium praedictarum' into the phrase 'a communi vocum succentu' suffices to

show that his purpose was to make the phrase 'possint naturaliter et libere ascendere ad quindecim vel sexdecim notas' refer solely to the three singers currently adverted to and characterised as possessing voices meeting the description 'suaves et canore', and not also to the bass singer already fully considered and characterised as 'naturalis et audibilis vocis'; and this consideration applied irrespective of the presence or absence of any mark of punctuation between 'canore' and 'ita'. From its wording there thus emerges the clear meaning of this document; and clear it so remains irrespective of any application of a mark of punctuation, whether applied to his draft by the originating lawyer or inserted at will by subsequent copyists.

9. The authoritative opinion upon this whole subject is that of the late Frank Harrison, uniquely a master of both the music and the documents. He observed that 'though the actual pitch was partly a matter of convenience, it is clear that the range of polyphony until the second half of the fifteenth century corresponded to that of the tenor and countertenor voices of today'. His report of the Chichester Cathedral document of 1526 was perhaps over-succinct, but certainly yielded no indication that he had perceived within Bishop Sherborn's provisions anything that actually contradicted or undermined his earlier finding (*Music in Medieval Britain*, 2nd edn (London, 1963), pp. 311, 181); and his conclusive and definitive understanding of the vocal scoring appropriate to the music of the Eton Choirbook period, entirely consistent with these considerations, is revealed by two gramophone recordings made in the late 1960s. *Richard Davy: Passion according to St Matthew and Eton Choirbook: Record 2* (Argo: ZRG 557-8) were produced in 1968 under Harrison's immediate guidance and personal supervision. His chosen scoring was for boy trebles and adult altos, tenors and basses; and there appear to be no valid grounds for any departure from that definitive practice.

I happened to notice that the two standard clef patterns changed from C2-C2-C4 to G2-C2-C4-C4-F4. It is possible that the equal voices of C-2 had the same tessitura as the later equal C4 – perhaps a matter of the single pairs of voices being identical. Perhaps singers preferred to keep pitches in C clef until the wider range made the pitch levels more precise and other clefs were used. I've done no research on the matter, but it might be worth considering. Incidentally, Andrew Parrott's article in the February Early Music (arriving at the end of March) reached me after I had the idea, and I won't have time to read it till after EMR is in the post.

CB

Marc-Antoine Charpentier and *David et Jonathas*

Peter Holman

When Antoine Charpentier wrote *David et Jonathas* in 1688 he was in his mid 40s and at the height of his powers. We now know that he was born in Paris in 1643 (rather than 1634, as used to be thought), and that he studied in Rome in the late 1660s, supposedly with Carissimi. On his return to Paris around 1670 he was taken into the service of Marie de Lorraine, known as the Duchesse de Guise, who had lived in Florence in her youth and was an enthusiast for Italian music. As the aunt of Louis Joseph, Duc de Guise, who married Louise XIV's cousin Isabelle d'Orléans in 1667, she maintained one of the largest and most prestigious households in Paris, with a distinguished musical ensemble, including Charpentier as *haute-contre* singer. Charpentier spent 18 years in her employment, writing an enormous amount of music of all sorts for her singers and instrumentalists, ranging from small motets to large-scale psalm settings and oratorios, as well as some secular dramatic works, including the small-scale opera *Actéon* (1683-5) – the French equivalent of *Dido and Aeneas*. The Duchesse de Guise also seems to have promoted Charpentier by introducing him to Molière, leading to him writing music for a series of productions put on by the Troupe de Roy (later the Comédie Française), culminating in *La malade imaginaire* (1673), Molière's last play.

Charpentier gained considerable experience writing theatrical music in the 1670s and 80s for the Guise household and with Molière, though his career as a dramatic composer seems to have been hampered by Lully, who as director of the Académie Royale de Musique exercised a monopoly over opera in Paris. Lully made Charpentier rewrite his music for *La malade imaginaire* three times for ever smaller forces, and seems to have prevented him from writing for the Académie. However everything changed in the spring of 1687. The Duchesse de Guise died on 3 March, followed by Lully a few weeks later, on 22 March. So Charpentier was free to find a new patron and, eventually, to write large-scale opera. His new employers were the Jesuits, at the Collège Louis-le-Grand in Paris, the foremost boys' school in France, and they soon used him to write dramatic music. Drama was an important part of the Jesuit educational programme all over Europe, as we know, for instance, from the activities at the English college at Saint-Omer earlier in the 17th century or Zelenka's *Melodrama de Sancto Wenceslao*, performed in Prague in 1723. Charpentier's first Jesuit opera, *Celse Martyr*, written for Louis-le-Grand in 1687, is lost, though we have the second, *David et Jonathas*, a setting of a libretto by the Jesuit priest François Bretonneau, first performed there on 28 February 1688. With Lully out of the way Charpentier eventually went on to write a full-scale opera for the Académie: *Médée*, first performed on 4 December 1693.

David et Jonathas was originally part of what must have been a strange and lengthy theatrical experience. There are, of course, other examples of operas on Biblical themes, such as Rossini's *Mosè in Egitto*, Verdi's *Nabucco* or Saint-Saëns's *Samson et Delila*, and we are accustomed to the mixture of speech and music in the English theatrical tradition, as in Purcell's semi-operas. But *David et Jonathas* is a full-length all-sung *tragédie en musique*, five acts with a prologue, that was originally performed entwined with *Saül*, a complete spoken play in Latin. *Saül* has its own self-contained and complementary action, anticipating *David et Jonathas* act by act, which means that the libretto for Charpentier's opera concentrates more on developing character and building up spectacular set-pieces than telling the story in recitative. The opera is a self-contained, full-length work with a coherent plot telling a well-known story, so luckily it does not depend on the spoken element as, say, Purcell's semi-operas do.

David et Jonathas deals with the tragic sequence of events in the Book of Samuel arising out of David's victory over Goliath. He is celebrated by the Israelites as a hero, causing King Saul to descend into jealousy and madness. The prologue is a highly dramatic setting of the Saul and the Witch of Endor episode, familiar to us from Purcell's trio and the scene in Handel's oratorio *Saul*, in which Saul (a baritone) visits the witch (called La Pythonisse in Charpentier's opera, and set as an *haute-contre* role probably originally sung by the composer himself), who summons up the ghost of the prophet Samuel to foretell the future. As we might expect, the news is not good: Samuel, a low bass strikingly accompanied by a four-part consort of muted bass violins, tells the hapless king that his crimes have led God to abandon him – as this extract from the manuscript of the work shows (Illus. 1, 2).

The main part of the opera starts with events earlier in the story. David (another *haute-contre*, also probably sung by the composer) has been forced by Saul's jealousy to defect to the Philistines and their king Achise, a bass. Act I is largely taken up with celebrations welcoming David, set in a series of dance-like set-piece numbers for a range of solo voices, choir and orchestra, though in a wonderful solo scene accompanied by the full strings, David fears that his defection will lead him to war against the Israelites and his friend Jonathas, the king's son. In Act II the Philistine general Joabel (a tenor) seethes with jealousy as David meets Jonathas (a soprano, originally a boy) and agrees a truce, culminating in a superb large-scale chaconne for soloists, choir and orchestra. In Act III the focus shifts to Saul and his jealous rages, set out in another wonderful solo scene accompanied by the strings, forcing David to flee and leaving Joabel and the Philistines to celebrate the success of his plan to provoke the two sides to resume hostilities. In Act IV the focus is on the

Jonathas.

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David Et

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relationship between David and Jonathas and their anguish (expressed in fine solo scenes) caused by being on

opposing sides in the impending battle, which leads in Act V to successive death scenes for Jonathas and Saul, set to music of great intensity and pathos. Achise proclaims David the new king of Israel, and the opera ends with general rejoicing in an elaborate and richly scored ensemble – including another appearance of the bass violin consort.

As already mentioned, the fact that each act of *David et Jonathas* was preceded by an act of the spoken play allowed Bretonneau to keep the story-telling to a minimum, and enabled Charpentier to concentrate on illuminating the character of the protagonists in expressive solo scenes, and building up a vision of the magnificence of ancient Israel in richly scored set-pieces involving a large number of soloists with the choir and the orchestra – and, presumably, dancers: the acts end respectively with a minuet, the extended chaconne, a gigue, a rigaudon and a bourée, and the dance-like final number. In this respect, the English listener will inevitably be reminded of *Dido and Aeneas* (written quite possibly in the same year as *David et Jonathas*) as well as Purcell's semi-operas. Also, Charpentier is a match for Purcell in his adventurous musical language: unlike Lully and most of his French contemporaries he was continually pushing the boundaries with rich, unexpected harmonies and wonderfully dissonant part-writing.

Like Purcell, Charpentier was also a master of the orchestra. He used the French string layout with a single violin part and the bass played by bass violins rather than violoncellos and double basses as in later practice. However, he used four-part string writing, with two viola parts, rather than the five-part scoring with three violas as used at court and by Charpentier in *Médée* and a few other works. We do not know how large his orchestra was at Louis-le-Grand, but he clearly had a sizeable string group since he wrote for four bass violins, and he exploited the distinction between the *grand choeur*, the orchestral strings with the outer parts doubled by oboes and bassoon, and the *petit choeur*, the continuo group with pairs of obbligato solo violins and recorders accompanying the solo vocal music. By contrast, *Actéon* and the other dramatic works he wrote for the Guise household are mostly scored just with two treble instruments (viols or violins and/or recorders) and continuo. However, despite there being several triumphal and/or warlike scenes in D major and C major, there are no indications for trumpets and drums in *David et Jonathas*, as there would surely have been had the work been written for the Académie Royale de Musique.

We are fortunate that Charpentier's music for *David et Jonathas* survives. There is no score in the collection of his autographs, now in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, though a copy was made in 1690 for the royal music library by André Danican Philidor, perhaps in connection with a planned performance at the Académie Royale. There are digital images of this available at the *Gallica* website, as well as a copy of Bretonneau's printed libretto. Philidor's score is none too accurate, though the errors

are corrected in Jean Duron's edition for CNRS, published in 1981. Duron also convincingly reconstructs two missing passages, at the end of the chaconne in Act II and the first part of the opening *ritournelle* of Act III, apparently lost because of a missing leaf in the autograph; Philidor left two pages blank at that point in his score, presumably in the hope that it would be recovered. There is also a useful though more literal modern edition by Nicolas Sceaux available at the Petrucci Website, with a full score (in original as well as modernised clefs) and a set of orchestral parts.

David et Jonathas was evidently successful at the time. It was revived at Louis-le-Grand on 10 February 1706 and at other schools in the French provinces well into the eighteenth century. The 1706 revival is noteworthy in that the young Jean-Philippe Rameau, newly arrived in Paris, is likely to have taken part as a continuo player, since he had been appointed organist of the school a few months before. It was presumably one of his first experiences of large-scale opera, more than a quarter of a century before he was to make his own debut as a dramatic composer. After these performances, *David et Jonathas* does not seem to have been heard again, at least in its entirety, until it was put on by the English Bach Festival in performances conducted by Michael Corboz; a resulting recording was issued by Erato in 1981. There were subsequent recordings by William Christie and Les Arts Florissants (1988) and the Australian Pinchgut Opera (2010), as well as a DVD of a stage production at Aix en Provence (2012), again with Christie and Les Arts Florissants.

It is always dangerous to claim a first, but although there have been performances in London and Edinburgh, so far as I know *David et Jonathas* has not been put on elsewhere in Britain. The performance I am directing in St Peter's, Sudbury in Suffolk on 25 May certainly seems to be the first in East Anglia, and will be a rare chance to hear this wonderful work live. The cast is led by Daniel Auchincloss taking the two *haute-contre* roles, Claire Tomlin as Jonathas, Giles Davies as Saul, with Psalmody and Essex Baroque Orchestra – including four bass violins led by Mark Caudle.

For further details, go to:

<http://www.suffolkvillagesfestival.com/wpcontent/uploads/2015/03/SVF-Spring-brochure-2015.pdf>

We received a letter from Trevor Selwood on 15th February concerning a misprint in EMR 162. Oct. 2014.

In footnote 12 in Simon Raven's article "Falsetto and False Dichotomies" (EMR 162, p.13) the title of my work in Early Music, vol. 27 (2) (1999), OUP, pages 349-350 is referred to as "Counterarguments". The title should, of course, read "Counterarguments".

Our apologies. Regular readers will know that there are typos more often than we would like!

CD REVIEWS

MEDIEVAL

Good Friday in Jerusalem: Medieval Byzantine Chant from the Church of the Holy Sepulchre Cappella Romana, Alexander Lingas Cappella Romana CR413CD 74' 38"

Alexander Lingas, in collaboration with Ioannis Arvanitis, is fortunate in being able to reify his archival researches into Medieval Byzantine chant by means of Cappella Romana's fine musical skills and their recording team.

In his booklet he draws attention to the ritual use in Byzantine Jerusalem of shrines associated with the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. He describes the elements of the Holy Sepulchre cathedral complex built on the accepted site of the crucifixion and entombment, an atrium incorporating the hill of Golgotha and a rotunda over Christ's tomb, and cites the diary of a late fourth century pilgrim, Egeria, who refers to readings, prayers and psalmody performed at historically appropriate locations. Continuing the idea of spatial performance, he depicts the nocturnal start of the Jerusalem Passion Office on the Mount of Olives, the processions of worshippers to shrines such as Gethsemane, and the assembly in the atrium of the church, with specific chants, reading and hymns relating to these locations.

All this ritual once performed in space with the participation of celebrants must now be compressed onto the tracks of a CD and heard in the confines of a home. Only imagination and memories of Greek Orthodox services and processions could transform these tracks from music to chant enacted spatially in the presence of worshippers. Yet taken as a whole, the intensity of the singing and the vocal techniques do not allow the mind to wander into ecclesiastical reminiscences.

Initially we may admire the poetry of the words, clearly pronounced but sensitively and powerfully translated in the booklet, though hardly matched by the music in any programmatic sense. Then, as if we might be thinking the considerable potentialities of monophonic chorus and drone were exhausted, we are surprised by even more heartfelt drama and striking solos. In all, we can rejoice that these rites are preserved from a Holy Land now surrounded by architectural, human and cultural destruction.

Diana Maynard

La Lira d'Espéria II: Galicia Danças, Cantigas & Cantos da terra Jordi Savall rebec, tenor vielle, rebab, Pedro Estevan perc Alia Vox AVSA9907 74'

I have to confess that I approached this recording with some doubts; the *Cantigas de Santa Maria* are all songs, over 400 of them, and here is a purely instrumental version with no singing! Of course, Savall and a number of others have recorded many of the *Cantigas* in both sung and instrumental versions. Here he performs instrumental versions of 12 alongside 11 traditional Galician dances from what he describes as 'oral sources'. Thanks to the wonderful internet – which has the complete manuscript available – you can check out what he does with the material from which he is working.

Peter Dronke (*The Medieval Lyric*) says that accompanying dancing "was one of the prime functions of lyric throughout the Middle Ages". Fra Angelico's wonderful 'Last Judgement' depicts sixteen angels doing a round dance without any instruments apparent – clearly all singing as they danced. However, Johannes de Grocheio's remark that "The good artist generally introduces every *cantus* and *cantilena* and every musical form on the *vielle*", together with the large number of instruments depicted in the manuscript (many of which are reproduced in the lavishly illustrated booklet) well justifies a purely instrumental rendition. Anyway, with so few surviving instrumental dances from the period, much of dance music was improvised or played by non-readers: one must needs be creative.

I shouldn't have worried. By taking the notated music of the *Cantigas*, and putting it in the context of traditional, orally transmitted Galician dance music, he comes up with something that not only seems very true to the spirit of the older music, but is great listening.

He plays three different instruments: a Moorish rebec, waisted with four strings and frets; a 5-string rebec dating from the 15th century – also with frets, which looks to me more like a vielle, as it is also waisted; a 5-string tenor fiddle/vielle. The percussion ranges in pitch and timbre from a gorgeously boomy tambour, a bright sounding darbuka and tuned bells.

The sounds of the three string instruments are beautifully varied. The 'rebel morisco' sounds as though it has a skin sound-board, and the illustration bears this out – giving an intriguing 'hollowness' to the sound.

As you would expect, the playing is fantastic, spontaneous, brilliant. I loved the *Ductia & Rota* with its uneven phrases – four measures and then three measures, a wonderful catchy rhythm, an intuitive reaction to the material.

Savall encourages us to consider the

most ancient of our musical traditions in the context of living folk music. The 13th-century notation of the *Cantigas* is comparatively clear, but an approach like this can bring them so alive, an inspiring recording of what has been called "one of the greatest monuments of medieval music".

Robert Oliver

16th CENTURY

In Search of Dowland: Consort Music of John Dowland and Carl Rütti B-Five Recorder Consort 58' 45" Covello COV91415

Dowland's collection of five-part consort music, *Lachrimae or Seaven Teares* was completed in 1603 while the composer was employed as a lute player at the court of the Danish king Christian IV and dedicated to the king's sister Queen Anne of Scotland. It was published in England the following year. Seven "passionate pavans" based on Dowland's famous song "Flow my teares" are central to the collection which also includes livelier dance music. Three of the *Lachrimae* pavans are included on this disc, together with some of the galliards and almaines. These are interleaved with a five-movement contemporary work by the Swiss composer Carl Rütti, commissioned by B-Five in 2013 to mark Dowland's 450th birthday and the tenth anniversary of the consort. Dowland's *Lachrimae* were "set forth for the Lute, Viols, or Violons" but work very well on five recorders, as every recorder player will know. Rütti's haunting *Dowland-Suite* is based on Dowland motifs, sometimes clearly stated and sometimes considerably transformed, and the five movements recount stages in his life. B-Five have designed their performance so that these motifs are heard in an adjacent Dowland piece, and the result is a very pleasing and coherent programme. I'm not too keen on the few percussive thumps in the last movement of the Rütti, which sound as if someone has dropped their music and got rather annoyed about it, but they are probably more effective in live concert. Otherwise, it's all beautifully played with precise articulation and intonation on a set of renaissance recorders made by Adrian Brown.

Victoria Helby

Gesualdo Dolcissimo Veleno La Dolce Maniera, Luigi Gaggero 54' 23" Stradivarius STR 37010

La dolce maniera have adopted a highly original approach to the love madrigal here by taking at least one madrigal from

each of Gesualdo's published volumes, 20 madrigals in all, and arranging them into a 'romantic song cycle' charting the establishment, growth and eventual implosion of a romance. The sequence is indeed cumulatively effective, although perhaps mercifully it doesn't culminate in the sort of bloodbath which accompanied Gesualdo's own disappointment in love in real life! The group's highly 'affected' style of singing works very well with this mercurial repertoire. Less convincing is the decision to sing the music untransposed, leaving some of the soprano lines painfully and awkwardly high. I can understand the principle of this, but we now live in a world where the prevailing judgment of musicologists seems to be to 'sing it where it feels comfortable', and just occasionally here the sopranos sound seriously uncomfortable. Luigi Gaggero, the group's director, would argue that this discomfort is just the effect Gesualdo was looking for, but the fact is that nobody wants to listen to distressed singers, and I began to wonder uncharitably whether he had developed this theory before or after listening to the recordings. The fact is these are not impossibly high notes in themselves and perhaps the sopranos just needed to develop a slightly different technical approach. Anyway I don't want this relatively minor issue to overshadow an otherwise enjoyable and innovative recording.

D. James Ross

Surely anyone seeing vocal music of this period with a treble clef at the top and the bass part higher than the bass clef should first work out whether any the notated pitch implies lower performance. CB

Marenzio Quinto Libro di Madrigali La Compagnia del Madrigale 64' 17" Glossa GCD922804

This CD by the superb Compagnia del Madrigale is something of a masterclass in madrigal singing. I decided to take the opportunity to try to analyse the secrets of the Compagnia's impressive sound-world. The voices are all, of course, superb in their own right, rounded, supremely expressive and completely stable at whatever dynamic they are singing. However, I went on to detect two further features which I think help with this specific repertoire. The first may seem obvious but is by no means uniformly or even universally regarded as a virtue among small vocal ensembles: this is the rigorous avoidance of vibrato. The soprano section is particularly striking in this respect, but on this CD there are also impressively 'true' entries from tenors and altos. Debate all you like about how singers of the period may have sung with or without vibrato, there is no denying that performances of madrigals which are largely vibrato free allow the listener to appreciate the full power of the polyphonic writing.

The searing power of vibratoless musical exclamations is also undeniable. The second feature is the perfect blend of clearly defined voices, achieved interestingly without a conductor. I wouldn't like the superlative quality of the singing to overshadow the music in my review, so I should say that this CD confirms Luca Marenzio as one of the most underrated madrigal composers in spite of recent efforts to bring his music to wider attention. These six-part works are masterpieces of counterpoint using cutting-edge harmonic manipulation to match the twists and turns of the texts. D. James Ross

Flight of Angels: Music from the Golden Age in Spain The Sixteen, Harry Christophers 63' 52" Coro CORI6128

Guerrero Agnus Dei I & II (Missa Congratulamini mihi), Credo (Missa de la batalla escoutez) Duo Seraphim, Gloria (Missa Surge propera), Laudate Dominum a8, Maria Magdalene, Vexilla Regis Alonso Lobo Ave Maria a8, Ave Regina caelorum, Kyrie (Missa Maria Magdalene), Libera me, Versa est in luctum

This is a lovely disc. Guerrero and Lobo were associated with the great cathedral of Seville during its Golden Age in the late 16th and early 17th century, when it was the immensely wealthy mother church of Spain's South American colonies.

Harry Christophers has assembled a delectable feast of motets and mass movements; the disc opens with one of my personal favourites, the glorious Guerrero *Duo Seraphim*, dripping with Trinitarian symbolism – three choirs (12 voices), three 'full' episodes, two voices for the *Duo Seraphim*, rising to three for the *Tres Sunt* and so on. The Sixteen capture Guerrero's uniquely mellifluous vocal scoring to perfection. The same composer's *Maria Magdalene*, describing the events around the Resurrection, is another show-stopping favourite – try the wonderful *Secunda Pars* and marvel!

Guerrero's pupil and eventual successor, Alonso Lobo, completes the disc; it is fascinating to compare his denser reworking of *Maria Magdalene* into a mass ordinary with the more limpid original. I particularly enjoyed the tremendous contrapuntal cleverness of his 8-voice *Ave Maria*, where the second choir's music is derived canonically from that of the first.

The Sixteen perform with their customary poise, precision and passion. The programme neatly reflects their 2015 Choral Pilgrimage concert series, hopefully coming to A Church Near You at some point in the next few months. Go forth, attend and acquire! Alastair Harper

Flow my tears: Songs for lute, viol and voice Iestyn Davies cT, Thomas Dunford lute, Jonathan Manson viol 76' 38"

Wigmore Hall Live WHLive0074
Music by Campion, Danyel, Dowland, Hume, Johnson & Muhly

This is a recording of a concert from July 2013; this time it's lute songs, which Davies sings beautifully and intelligently as ever. I'm not going to bang on about countertenors and downward-transposed lute songs, and whether or not this a historical practice, yet again. Just enjoy this for what it is. Very fine singing and playing, all the more amazing for having been recorded live. Davies' intonation and word colouring is exemplary in this context, and there are few countertenors who would be brave, or good enough, let's be frank, to contemplate issuing live recordings. Singing in projected falsetto is very exposing of the slightest flaw – yet Davies does not seem to have any! There is one substantial modern piece, Mulhy's cantata 'Old Bones', a setting of texts from the media relating to the discovery of the remains of Richard III in 2012. This is an excellent addition to the repertoire, taking its place besides Fricker's 'Tomb of St. Eulalia' written for Deller in the 1950s.

Quibble: The sleeve notes attempt to comment on the beginning of the poem attributed to the Earl of Essex: 'Can she excuse my wrongs', adding that '...she (Elizabeth 1) could not, and beheaded him'. The author (understandably) does not realise that Dowland's/Essex's line actually means: 'the wrongs that she has done to me', and not what he did or said about her. Although staging a rebellion to depose her was what did for him in the end, as we all know.

Davies is the best (and busiest) British countertenor around, and we should celebrate that, because good un's don't come around that often!

David Hill

The Hunt is Up – Shakespeare's Songbook: Tunes and Ballads from the Plays of William Shakespeare (1564-1616) The Playfords 52' 05" Raum Klang RK 3404

Ross Duffin's *Shakespeare's Songbook* is quoted as the main source, though the scorings and adaptations are occasionally a bit odd. The main singer has an English accent that is a bit variable – why sing "Willow, willow, willow, willow"? The other performers are Annegret Fischer (recs), Erik Warkenthin (lute & guitar), Benjamin Dressler (viol, violone) & Nora Thiele (perc, colascione). The ensemble is not, however, strong enough for Elgar! Nor is there any evidence I know of for mixing pieces in short snippets. It is entertaining, but the title "The Playfords" suggests a slightly later style than Shakespeare, whose last works were about 40 years before Playford came on the scene, though there is no particular

indication that the ensemble's scorings and backings match either Shakespeare or Playford consistently. Worth hearing, but don't imitate!

CB

In the midst of life: Music from the Baldwin Partbooks I Contrapunctus, Owen Rees
Signum Records SIGCD408 (68' 18")
Byrd *Audivi vocem, Circumdederunt me dolores mortis* Gerarde *Sive vigilem* Mundy *Sive vigilem*
Parsons *Credo quod redemptor, Libera me Domine, Peccantem me quotidie* Sheppard *Media vita* Tallis
Nunc dimittis Taverner *Quemadmodum*

Like his counterpart in Scotland, Thomas Wode, John Baldwin is among a handful of musicians whom we have to thank for the preservation of the treasury of 16th-century choral music. Baldwin was particularly diligent, recording almost 170 works from early in the century right up to his own lifetime in the last quarter of the 1500s, many of which survive as unique copies. Most of the output of John Sheppard survives this way, although the loss of the tenor partbook has necessitated the reconstruction of that voice, leading to Sheppard somewhat 'missing the bus' in the revival in the middle of the last century of interest in Tudor church music. Contrapunctus, under their enterprising director Owen Rees, are devoting a series of CDs to these important partbooks, grouping their programmes under themes.

It may seem perverse to start with death, but its ubiquity and immediacy for Tudor composers has led to a particularly fine and poignant body of music remaining from the time. The undeniable jewel in the crown of this selection is Sheppard's magisterial setting of *Media vita* which gives the CD its title, but the chief joy for me were the one or two works with which I was hitherto unfamiliar, such as William Byrd's *Circumdederunt me dolores mortis*, which opens the programme, and the powerful *Sive vigilem* by the Flemish émigré Dericke Gerarde. The singing throughout is consistently full-toned and focussed, but essentially for this repertoire constantly ready with expressive crescendos and decrescendos to mark textual changes in mood. With its nine highly experienced singers (boosted to ten for the larger works) Contrapunctus is the ideal group for this superb repertoire, and I look forward with eager anticipation to future CDs in this series. D. James Ross

BC: A second copy of the disc arrived, so I sent it to someone else who I knew would have an opinion...

What an absolutely superb disc, both musically and musicologically! John Baldwin was a lay clerk at St George's Chapel, Windsor at the time these five (originally six- the tenor is missing) partbooks were copied, between about 1575 and 1581. They contain a huge range of Latin-texted

music, ranging in period from Taverner to Byrd, much of it uniquely preserved. The present recording takes as its theme music "concerned with mortality – the fear of death and eternal torment, anticipation of the Day of Judgement, and the soul's longing to meet God" and includes settings from the Catholic Office of the Dead, as well as penitential motets, perhaps for private Recusant use after the Reformation. With pieces (and performances) of such uniformly high quality, it is difficult to single out any one especially, though Dericke Gerarde was a new name for me; his wonderfully expansive and expressive setting of *Sive Vigilem* is one I shall be replaying often! The recital appropriately concludes with John Sheppard's massive and magnificent *Media Vita* – listen out for the wonderful final verse, with its typically English *gimell* in both the treble and mean, supported by the bass, far below. Extraordinary music, gloriously performed!

Alastair Harper

A painted tale Nicholas Phan T, Michael Leopold lute, Ann Marie Morgan viola da gamba 69' 39"
Avie Records AV 2325
Music by Blow, Dowland, Alfonso Ferrabosco, Lanier & Henry Purcell

The young American tenor Nicholas Phan has rightly attracted praise for his performances of Britten, with whose music he identifies. It is very noticeable that he has welcomed on board many elements of Pears' style, notably his use (particularly in his later years) of acciacatura – launching up to a higher note from the lower one, like a mini trampoline in front of a vaulting horse. This is a technique which most singers approaching Early Music rejected outright way back in the 1980s, mercifully. This might serve Britten well, and one could even describe it as 'authentic', since it is based upon a reliable source or two (Pears, and later Robert Tear – likewise no stranger to the trampoline), but when performing music of the 17th century, we have definitely moved on nowadays. This is a great shame – Phan is clearly a singer to watch, but not in this repertoire, sadly. Inspired by Pears' love of English lute song, as performed with Julian Bream, Phan tackles many of 'the usual suspects', arranging them into a faux-cycle to create a narrative of love and rejection inviting comparison with 'Die Schöne Müllerin' (he suggests), which is as good a way to present a programme as anything, but his style of singing scuppers enjoyment.

Unfortunately, Phan has failed to learn from Pears' subtle 'less is more' adjustment of his unique voice to form a close balance with the lute, and some tender songs here seem over-projected, Britten-esque style, as if he is imagining he is on

the beach at Aldeburgh, with a gale blowing behind.

Some songs (such as Purcell's 'Evening Hymn') with its long phrases feature some very dubious choices of where to take breaths – indeed, in that song, he appears so out of breath at the end of the final Hallelujah, he almost beats the lute and viol to arrival at the last note!

Sometimes he will remember he should be emphasising words, in the best Bostridge fashion, so the occasional one is promoted over its companions, but not always the best one in the sentence 'And he whose words his passions R-right can tell', with the 'R' on 'right' rolled like a sudden drum roll, so that this not particularly important word is made to protrude from the phrase like a sore thumb. He does something similar in Purcell's 'O Solitude', at 'when their Harr-rd, their hard fate', a phrase that he feels needs to stand out, for some reason, so although he precedes it with softer, gentle singing, he then belts that particular phrase, forte, like Grimes railing against Fate.

Throughout the disc he cannot seem to reconcile both ideas – emphatic and gentler singing. Like Bob Tear of blessed memory, Phan also strains and projects higher phrases by the trusty expedient of singing louder as the music ranges higher, often with a similarly slightly strangulated tone! Purcell's 'Sweeter than roses' taxes him, and his breathing to breaking point. Call me old-fashioned, but if you can't sing the whole of Purcell's phrase setting the word 'victorious' in one breath, you really should be re-thinking how to perform these songs. Then, at other times, he contradicts my moans by turning in a near perfect performance of, for example, Dowland's 'My thoughts are winged with hopes'. I said 'near' – he still belts the highest phrases! But Blow's 'Of all the torments' is all over the place – he seems to think he is Loge in Rheingold. The editions he is using have some oddities, unfortunately. In 'O Solitude' the word is 'Apollo's lore', for example, not Apollo's love. Likewise, Dowland wrote 'Better a thousand times to die, than for to live thus..., not 'then for to live', which makes no sense. I don't enjoy writing so many negative remarks about such a promising young singer who is clearly trying so hard to create something really beautiful and special, but he really needs to acquire some Early Music Technique like the rest of us had to – you really can't just 'wing it' in everything from Monteverdi to Wagner today, like Bob Tear got away with, no matter how suitable your voice may be for other material. I hope he re-thinks how to approach this earlier repertoire, and seeks proper advice, because I want to hear him do better.

David Hill

Pavans and Fantasies from the Age of Dowland John Holloway, Monika Baer vln/vla, Renate Steinmann, Susanna Hefti vla, Martin Zelle bass vln 49' 28" ECM New Series 481 0430

Dowland Lachrimae Pavans Jenkins Fantasy No. 12 W. Lawes 2 Airs for 4, Fantasy in C for 5 Locke Fantasy for 2 Morley Lamento for 2 Purcell Fantasy upon one note

Programming John Dowland's seven 'Lachrimae' pavans in concert or on CD is always a problem. Should they be played as a single sequence or be interspersed with contrasted pieces? They are often grouped in suites with other pieces from the 1604 *Lachrimae* collection, despite Dowland apparently wanting to avoid conventional pavan-galliard pairs. John Holloway, leading a group of (to judge from the photo in the booklet) rather younger string players in a recording made in Zurich, opts to intersperse pieces by other composers, ranging from Thomas Morley (the Lamento from *Canzonets for Two Voyces*, 1595) to Henry Purcell (*Fantasia upon One Note*) – mostly not 'from the age of Dowland' but fine music all the same. On balance, I prefer the cumulative impact of the pavans played in a sequence to the varied programme offered here, but (as Holloway points out in the booklet) you can always change the order by programming your CD player.

Holloway and his group also had to decide how to score the 'Lachrimae' pavans and which key and pitch to choose when using a violin consort rather than viols – Dowland allowed for that option by describing the contents of *Lachrimae* on the title-page as 'set forth for the Lute, Viols or Violons'. In 1992, when The Parley of Instruments recorded the whole collection using a Renaissance violin consort, we opted to transpose the seven pavans and the other low-tessitura pieces up a fourth, following the evidence in consort music for a process analogous to vocal *chiavette*. Also, with the gut strings then available we found it difficult to make the 'Lachrimae' pavans work at written pitch even at $a'=440$, particularly because the violas playing the tenor and quintus parts spend most of the time playing on the bottom strings. Holloway opts to play the pavans in the original key at $a'=415$ using four violas and bass violin, which makes them sound very dark indeed, though the third and fourth violas seem to have no problems with the low tessitura.

Holloway's solution works well in practice, though it is unlikely to be historically correct. A basic principle of Renaissance instrumentation (as shown by the treatises of the period) is that full-voiced instrumental consorts should consist of three sizes of instrument, not two (or four, for that matter), and that pieces should be scored according to

function: a soprano part should be played by a soprano instrument, inner parts by alto/tenor instruments and bass parts by bass instruments. Thus Dowland's pavans should be played by a violin, three violas and bass; so far as I know the earliest piece for four violas and bass is the sinfonia to J. S. Bach's Cantata no. 18. Also, Holloway opts to omit Dowland's lute part, arguing that the music is complete in the five string parts, though that is not quite true, since the lute adds decorative flourishes at the end of sections that keep the rhythm going when the other instruments hold long notes. Dowland's phrase 'set forth for the Lute, Viols or Violins' rather implies that he considered the bowed strings more dispensable than his own instrument. An alternative, which has not been explored to my knowledge, would be to perform *Lachrimae* with just lute, violin or treble viol and bass, a scoring used for dances published by Emanuel Adriaenssen and Louis de Moy.

Having got these musicological matters out of the way, I should say that the playing on this CD is very fine. The consort makes a wonderful sound (though sounding as if the instruments are set up in a rather later fashion than Dowland would have known), the tuning is excellent, and there is a real feeling that the players think through the music together in an intelligent and eloquent way. Also, I like the way in which they strike a balance between consistency and variety in Dowland's pavans, playing them at roughly the same speed and in a similar style but finding their subtly different characters. The interspersed pieces make a good contrast. They are all fantasias or (in the case of two of William Lawes's four-part airs) lively dances, and are all much brighter in sound, using two violins, though the two pieces for two trebles and bass (Jenkins's Fantasia no. 12 in three parts and the fantasia from Set no. 3 of Locke's *Broken Consort*) sound rather bare without accompaniment. Locke wrote out theorbo parts for these pieces and probably played the organ from his autograph score in performances, and it is likely that Jenkins's three-part fantasias also had organ accompaniment, though no part survives for them. The five-part fantasias by Lawes (from the Set in C major) and Purcell receive dashing performances, though occasionally I was brought up short by a style of bowing that struck me as belonging to a later period. But all in all this is a fine recital of some wonderful music. It makes a good case for using violins in pieces normally thought to be part of the core viol consort repertory. *Peter Holman*

I've found it difficult to decide which discs could equally well be placed in the 17th century!

17th CENTURY

Allegri Unpublished works from the manuscripts of the Collectio Altaemps Musica Flexanima Ensemble, Fabrizio Bigotti 74' 06" Tactus TC 550007

Allegri Missa "In lectulo meo" a8, Salutis humanae sator a8, Cantata (attrib), 3 Canzone Anerio 3 Canzone Bonomi In lectulo meo

The three sets of partbooks which were copied for Duke Giovanni Angelo Altaemps in the early 17th century constitute the most significant set of sources for early Baroque Roman music, both polychoral and small-scale concertato. They are also a rare source for non-Frescobaldi Roman instrumental canzonas, of which five by Gregorio Allegri and three by Giovanni F. Anerio are included here. All are for two instruments and continuo and show well-developed sophistication and variety, especially those by Anerio; it is good to have them recorded here for the first time. They are played by the popular Roman combination of violin and cornett, or in two cases by two violins (oddly, there is no mention of the cornett player among the list of instrumentalists). These are the unpublished works of the CD's title and are the only works from the Altaemps partbooks here, apart from the motet by the Flemish Bonhomme/Bonomi which provided the model for Allegri's Mass. The latter is found in a Cappella Sistina choirbook, as are the lamentations and hymn, while the cantata is attributed to the composer in a Naples manuscript. All are competently sung, though the instrumental performances definitely outshine the vocal ones. The singing is patchy, often pedestrian and with suspect tuning but occasionally rising above that to provide convincing moments. The acoustic is overly resonant and the recording tends to emphasise the choir's insecurities. The cantata is poorly performed, making it difficult to judge its merits; it needs a more leisurely pace and more attention to the words. There are better recordings of most of this vocal music but this is certainly worth listening to for the instrumental canzonas. The booklet does not provide texts, which is a pity, but they can be accessed on the Tactus website.

Noel O'Regan

Casini Il viaggio di Tobia [Laura Antonaz Angelo, Claudine Ansermet Tobia Figlio, Mya Fracassini Anna, Jeremy Ovenden Raguele, Sergio Foresti Tobia Padre – SSmSTB], Coro della Radiotelevisione Svizzera, I Barocchisti, Diego Fasolis Dynamic CDS 7055/1-2 (122' 43" (2 CDs)

This late 17th-century oratorio has both text and music by the little-known Giovanni Maria Casini, a Florentine who had gained favour at the court of Cosimo

III and Ferdinando Medici, where he came into contact with Alessandro Scarlatti. The present recording has five solo singers and a choir for those movements called "coro" (I would have thought Casini would have expected the soloists to sing those, too) and a band of strings and continuo, with a pair of trumpets used sparingly, considering the fact that one of the leading characters in the drama is an angel. I think the strings are playing *concertino* and *ripieno* parts, but the booklet is as disappointing in this respect as it is when it comes to a decent translation of the note (concerto becomes concerto, not concert, for example!), let alone one of the text, or even an indication of how the five acts are spread between the 71 tracks! Although there is much to enjoy from the instrumentalists, I am afraid I derived much less pleasure from the solo voices – too much "me" and not enough "essence of the character I'm supposed to be portraying" for my taste. BC

Cavalieri *Rappresentazione di Anima & di Corpo* Marie-Claude Chappuis *Anima*, Johannes Weisser *Corpo*, Gyula Orendt *Tempo/Consiglio*, Mark Milhofer *Intelletto/Piacere*, Marcos Fink *Mondo/Secondo Compagno di Piacere/Anima dannata*, Staatsopernchor Berlin, Concerto Vocale, Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin, René Jacobs 82' 52" Harmonia Mundi HMC 902200.01 (2 CDs)

What price progress in the early music world? This new version of Emilio de Cavalieri's seminal sacred opera falls both as to concept and performance a million miles short of Andrew Parrott's 1988 recording of the 1589 Florentine intermedi. That famous entertainment was of course organised by Cavalieri, who also contributed music to it. His opera (we'll leave debates about whether it is or is not an opera to others; it's accepted as such by *New Grove Opera*) followed eleven years later, beating Peri and Caccini by a matter of months to go down in history as the first opera. Although musically groundbreaking, dramatically *Rappresentazione* belongs to the age-old tradition of the morality play that engages dialogue between opposing viewpoints, in this case the thorny question of the conflict between earthly pleasure and spiritual elevation. By definition the subject offers contrast that was richly exploited by Cavalieri.

But not, I think, as richly as René Jacobs would have us believe. His recording stems from a Berlin Staatsoper production given in 2012. The realization is unashamedly pitched to the requirements of a modern opera house, with a rich tapestry of colourful instrumental sound, including bowed string instruments accompanying the singers, who largely appear to be all-purpose opera singers

with wide vibratos; that goes for the chorus, too. Harmonies are at times wildly anachronistic, reminding me of Raymond Leppard's Monteverdi and Cavalli arrangements for Glyndebourne in the 60s. If you want an example, listen to the Damned Souls chorus in act 3, thrice repeated and given a realization by Jacobs that Berlioz would have been happy to own to. Additionally, much of the singing is far too lyrical, arioso rather than the new *recitativo* style, and none of the singers seem to understand the function of *gorgie*. Now, there is no intrinsic problem with all of this but for the fact that, not for the first time with Jacobs, it is presented under a veneer of HIP, his notes at least implying a scholarly approach. I'm afraid I find that duplicitous and suggest that readers of *EMR* leave well alone. Brian Robins

Colonna *L'Assalone: oratorio per 5 voci* Laura Antonaz Assalone, Elena Biscuola Achitofele/Joabbe, Alberto Allegrezza Consigliere, Mauro Borgioni Davide, Elena Bertuzzi Testo, Ensemble "Les Nations", Maria Luisa Baldassari 63' 34" Tactus TC 630302

Assalone was one of no fewer than four oratorios which were performed at the Modena court of Francesco II d'Este in 1684 – Colonna's setting of the story of Judith was among the others. Francesco Lora (who edited the music) writes an illuminating note, not only on the work in question but also about the political importance of oratorio performances in Modena. Five singers take the six roles (Lora seeing no problem with the alto taking two such unrelated roles), and combine in the three short choruses. They are stylishly accompanied by a one-to-a-part band including solo trumpet, but there are no pluckers. Most of the singing is good, though I found some of the ornamentation in the repeated verses a little artificial for my liking (as if someone has sat down and composed them, and utterly obscured the original in the process). The playing, on the other hand, is impeccable – the duetting violinists are a perfect match, and the trumpet adds lustre to the texture. To have been written about so much, Colonna's music must have been good – it is a pity we get so few opportunities to hear it! BC

Mésangeau's Experiments Alex McCartney lute
Veterum Musica Suites in B flat, f and C

René Mésangeau (fl 1567-1638) was one of the pioneers of what was to become the Baroque lute, not least through his experiments in lute tuning that led to the 'standard' Baroque lute tuning based around a D minor chord. After a time in Germany he returned to his native Paris

and the Court of Louis XIII. Three Suites are included on this CD, in B flat, F minor and C, the latter Suite including two movements by an anonymous composer. Each suite opens with an unmeasured prelude following by groups of Allemandes and Courantes, finishing with Sarabandes or a Chaconne. The playing is sensitive and musical (albeit with a fair bit of finger noise), the acoustic adding a nice resonance to the sound, particularly in the many pieces at low pitch. The sleeve notes are minimal, and there is no indication of track or total timings – something to watch out for if you want anybody to broadcast tracks. Andrew Benson-Wilson

Piccinini Lute Music Mónica Pustilnik lute
Accent ACC 24193 (62' 30")

Two books of music by Alessandro Piccinini survive: his *Intavolatura di Liuto e di Chitarrone Libro Primo* (1623) and *Intavolatura di Liuto* (1639). The chitarrone (i.e. theorbo) pieces from the first book are one of the few major sources of music for that instrument, and have been recorded frequently in recent years. Piccinini's lute pieces are less well known, so it is nice to hear some in this recording by Mónica Pustilnik. The second book was published a year after Piccinini's death by his son, Leonardo Maria Piccinini, who collected his father's music together to create a second volume. Of the sixteen tracks, half are from the first book, and half from the second.

The CD gets off to a slow, gentle start with a *Sarabanda all francese* (bk.2, p.20). The long third section seems to be a separate piece of music, with a change of rhythm to 3/2, of tonality from C major to C minor, and interspersed with scalic runs of quavers. Pustilnik adds little ornaments of her own here and there.

Her interpretation of *Corrente 9* (bk.2, p.38) is carefully phrased, but lacks the drive one might have expected to keep the dance flowing. *Ricercar Primo* (bk.2, p.12) – not *Ricercare Primo* from book 1 – develops a slow, rising, chromatic theme. Pustilnik opts for a somewhat free interpretation, but the result is a speed which keeps changing. The first two bars are at crotchet=76; by bar 6 it has accelerated to crotchet=100; the speed starts to slow down in bar 36 (the first bar with semiquavers), so that by the penultimate bar it is down to crotchet=56, almost half the speed it was, and Piccinini's climax is emasculated.

Piccinini's inventiveness may be heard in *Aria di Saravanda in Varie Partite* (bk.1, p.44), including um-chings with occasional strums reminiscent of a baroque guitar, broken chords, and a variation high up the neck at the 10th fret. Most extraordinary is his *Toccata Cromatica 12* (bk.1, p.45), with sequences of dotted rhythms, strange

chromatic turns, a wide range with a trill up to the 12th fret and a scale down to the 12th course in the bass. Pustlinik sustains it well, bringing out its contrasting moods. She adds some nice touches of her own for the repeats of *Corrente 6* (bk.1, p.51), and I enjoyed her sparkling interpretation of *Corrente 7* (bk.2, p.30), a piece which to me sounds more French than Italian.

Two of the longest tracks are a *Chiaccona... alla vera Spagnola* (bk.2, Cappona p.55; Mariona p.49), which consist of a constantly changing set of variations over a simple 4-bar ground.

Pustlinik plays a single-strung archlute by Francisco Hervas. The treble notes are stronger than the rest, but that may be due to the recording engineer rather than the instrument.

Stewart McCoy

Purcell The Indian Queen; Daniel Purcell: The Masque of Hymen Julie Cooper, Kirsty Hopkins S, Jeremy Budd, Mark Dobell, Matthew Long T, Ben Davies, Eamonn Dougan, Stuart Young B, The Sixteen, Harry Christophers 72' 27"
Coro COR16129

It's a long time since I heard *The Indian Queen*, but I was surprised how quickly it came back to me. There are problems in the variable MSS. What appears at first to be the obvious one, with full text and music in sequence, turns out to have careless notation of the music. The scribe also copied two other texts. There is no mention of a particular source or modern edition mentioned in the notes. The two I know were published in 1994, one by me (£12.00 then as now) and a more lavish and thorough edition by Andrew Pinnock (words) and Margaret Laurie (music) as Vol. 19 of the revised and rather more expensive Purcell Society. I followed my edition, which isn't distracted by a separate two-stave realisation below the bass line and wasn't very different from the recorded version, and I'd rather read 75 pages than 137 (excluding appendices), though the volume as a whole has extensive material, including the complete text, with lxxix + 177 pages. There was some doubts on the performance of the work, and it may well have been fully performed only after the Henry Purcell's death and Daniel Purcell's intervention.

The players were fine, though I wonder if there might have been a few more hemiolas in triple time. Some tempi sounded OK at my desk but might work better in a live performance or a resonant room. Most of the singing was excellent, though "I attempt from Love's sickness to fly" lacked flow. But it's a good recording, complete with Daniel Purcell's concluding *Masque of Hymen*. Harry emphasised the depth of detail in his preparation, though the singers were not quite so well-trained as the players, but well worth buying. CB

Purcell's Revenge: Sweeter than roses? Olivia Chaney, James Bowman, Ana Silvera, Jim Moray, Concerto Caledonia, David McGuinness 66' 04"
Delphian DCD34161

This is the usual mixture of folk or minimally accompanied songs expanded in instrumentation and beyond. Not all our readers will be sympathetic, but I tend to react positively to most of them, despite an absence of early-music, classical or most sorts of folk singers; the mixture of instruments works, played mostly by top-rate early musicians. I was, however, a bit upset that "Now that the sun" had lost its ground – I'd much rather hear a singer inventing new music for another song [Emma Kirkby's singing of it at Christopher Hogwood's service of thanksgiving two days ago was still fresh in my mind, and will probably remain so.]

I think that it is ideal for long car-rides. It doesn't matter if you miss some of them – you can catch them next time, though EB might be more critical! CB

Rubino. Messa de Morti à 5 concertata, 1653 Cappella Musicale S. Maria in Campitelli, Studio di Musica Antica "Antonio II Verso", Vincenzo Di Betta 75' 33"
Tactus TC 601503

A new composer for me, Bonaventura Rubino (1600-1668) was master of music at Palermo Cathedral from 1645 until his death. His *Messa di Morti à 5 concertata* was published as part of his *Opera Quarta* in Palermo in 1653. The music is as it says on the box – substantial late renaissance polyphony alternates with a kaleidoscopic array of affecting solos, duos and trios; try the extended and attractive *Dies Irae* for a good taster. The recording has been carefully prepared to reproduce the structure of a solemn Requiem mass, using three celebrants for the chant and interspersing organ and instrumental music at appropriate points in the service. The performance is generally enjoyable. Although comparatively large, the choir sounds focused and well blended. The soloists are good, and the instrumentalists, as well as providing excellent doubling for the choir, shine in the sinfonias. I particularly relished the delectable sound of the 1635 chamber organ. Occasionally the music sounds a little rhythmically over emphasised, especially in the full sections but this does not detract unduly from one's overall pleasure in this important addition to the recorded repertoire.

Alastair Harper

Schütz Matthäuspassion Georg Poplitz, Felix Rumpf, Dresdner Kammerchor, Hans-Christoph Rademann 70' 27"
Carus 83.259
+ *Litania* SWV458, *O du allersüßester* SWV340, *In dich hab ich gehofft* SWV446

This eleventh volume in the Dresdner Kammerchor's projected complete recording of the works of Heinrich Schütz brings them to a work of his extreme old age, his *Matthew Passion*. According to Dresden Schlosskapelle edicts up to the end of the 17th century instruments were forbidden from playing during passion tide, as a result of which three quarters of Schütz's *Matthew Passion* consists of unaccompanied recitative while the balance is made up of *a cappella* choral singing. The former can be a little wearing for modern audiences, although the undoubtedly heightened by the minimalism of the bulk of the work. The huge dramatic and musical responsibility which lands on the shoulders of the Evangelist and Jesus is easily born by Georg Poplitz and Felix Rumpf respectively, who sing with engaging expression and drama. And if you like your 17th-century part-music sung by a small choir, as opposed to a group of soloists singing one to a part, you couldn't ask for more effective advocates than the Dresdner Kammerchor who sing with admirable focus and unanimity. The fillers are also small treasures, particularly the late setting of Luther's *Litania*, which in this performance takes on an almost narcotic quality, with its statement and response pattern. Particularly touching are the translation of the *Agnus Dei* and *Kyrie* which occur at the end, almost like a folk memory of the Catholic Mass. I noticed an occasional small degree of distortion on the Evangelist's microphone as if he was sometimes overstepping the max setting, or perhaps standing too close to the microphone, but otherwise the recording is of Carus's usual high quality. D. James Ross

Coronation Music for Charles II Oltremontano, Psallentes, Wim Becu 66' 36"
Accent ACC 24300
Music by Adson, Augustine Bassano, Byrd, Child, Fantini, Humfrey, William Lawes, Locke, Mersenne, Parsons + anon

This is a triumph of style over substance. It must have seemed a good idea to put together a programme reconstructing the coronation of Charles II in Westminster Abbey on 23 April 1661, packaging it with the glamorous painting of the enthroned king in his coronation robes. But someone needs to have done their homework properly for a 'reconstruction' of this sort to be more than a cynical marketing ploy. A good deal is known about the music that was performed for the coronation (the evidence is conveniently assembled in Matthias Range's book *Music and Ceremonial at British Coronations from James I to Elizabeth II* (Cambridge, 2012)), so I can say with confidence that none of the choral pieces recorded here were sung on that day. Furthermore, a feature of the service was the participation of the newly-formed Twenty-Four Violins (for which Henry

Cooke wrote two new anthems, 'Behold, O God our defender' and 'The king shall rejoice'), but the CD only uses cornetts, sackbuts and organ, with the occasional trumpet fanfare. Bizarrely, Pelham Humfrey's setting of 'The king shall rejoice' is recorded rather than Cooke's, and with winds rather than strings.

Also, most of the music chosen to represent what was played during the coronation banquet in Westminster Hall is hopelessly old-fashioned for 1661 (it is mostly by Elizabethan or Jacobean composers), is in an inappropriate idiom, or is played on the wrong instruments – or all three. We can imagine Charles II, who had an utter detestation of 'Fancys' according to Roger North and loved the fashionable French-style dance music played by his Twenty-Four Violins, choking on his food had he had to listen to cornetts and sackbuts playing Byrd's Browning or a six-part fantasia by William Lawes. Just about the only pieces that justify their place on this CD are Matthew Locke's five-part dances 'For his Majesty's Sagbutts & Cornetts', possibly written for the king's entry into London the night before the coronation, but they have been recorded many times before. All in all, this CD is a missed opportunity. I might have recommended it simply as an anthology of 16th- and 17th-century English music were it not for the fact that the choral pieces chosen are mostly rather poor, the choir's words are difficult to understand, and the tuning of the cornetts and sackbuts is sometimes sour. *Peter Holman*

Dialoghi a voce sola: Italian music of the 17th century Ulrike Hofbauer, Ensemble &cetera 71'53"

Raumklang RK 3306

Music by Berti, Carissimi, Castaldi, Ferrari, Frescobaldi, Huygens, D'India, de Macque, Mayone, Mazzocchi, Merula, Nauwach, Orlandi, Rasi, Luigi Rossi, Barbara Strozzi & Trabaci

This CD takes us on a tour of the rich 17th-century Italian repertoire for solo voice and continuo. The success or failure of such an enterprise relies heavily on the prowess of the soloist, and Ulrike Hofbauer has a lovely voice and a ready sense of the drama inherent in the music she is singing. She is helped considerably here by a small but inspired consort of instruments consisting of arpa doppia, chitarrone and lirone alternating with a treble viol. They come into their own in the lovely instrumental works which punctuate the programme and which they play with a wonderful freedom and spontaneity. These are qualities which they also bring to their accompanying, allowing them to respond appropriately to Hofbauer's creative interpretation of the vocal lines. The programme note addresses the rather oxymoronic title of the CD by explaining

that the voice is in dialogue with the listener, and certainly this is a recording which demands your undivided attention and, with its constantly changing colours and moods, fully earns it. All the big names of the period are here – Trabaci, Carissimi, Gastoldi, Frescobaldi, Strozzi, D'India, Merula and Luigi Rossi – but the performers have looked beyond the obvious to the less familiar and have included works by the likes of Camillo Orlandi, Giovanni Pietro Berti and Giovanni de Macque. Accounts of the singing of the 17th-century Roman soprano Leonora Baroni suggest that she augmented her singing with gestures and appropriate movements like an opera singer, and listening to this music it is easy to imagine such dramatization working extremely effectively. *D. James Ross*

Il Pianto d'Orfeo or the Birth of Opera
Nicholas Achten Bar, Deborah York S, Lambert Colson cornetto, Scherzi Musicali 75' 49"
Deutsche Harmonia Mundi 88843078722

This intriguing CD takes the Orpheus legend as a springboard to explore the world of early opera. To a surprising extent the legend dominated the early years of opera, providing in its story a powerful message demonstrated in the music, but also a hero who conveniently performs monophonically to his own instrumental accompaniment. What Nicholas Achten has done here is stitched together a fantasy opera in which numbers from a range of these early settings are placed in sequence to retell the story. At first, I determined to listen to the sequence 'blind' to see whether the music by Monteverdi stood out from his contemporaries as many commentators suggest that it ought to. Of course, this proved impossible to judge as I already knew the Monteverdi well, but to my mind much of the 'supporting' music by Rossi, Merula, Caccini, Cavalieri, Piccinini, Falconieri, Landi, Sartorio and of course Peri seemed highly effective and, in the hands of Scherzi Musicali, powerfully expressive. The role of Orfeo is taken by Nicholas Achten, whose light baritone voice seems constantly on the verge of ornamentation and is perfectly suited to the music – his account of the Monteverdi's superlative aria *Possente spirto* is one of the finest I have heard. His Euridice, who in keeping with the earliest settings plays a much smaller role in the drama, is Deborah York whose soprano voice is also convincingly expressive. The accompanying consort of strings plus two cornetts and a range of continuo keyboards, including harpsichord, organ and virginals occasionally joined by theorbo, guitar, harp and bass cittern, provides highly charged textures

to support the singers as well as performing purely instrumental items with considerable delicacy and passion. This CD is a true pleasure to listen to, and provides the very useful service of bringing several early operatic composers out of the textbooks and into the limelight, if perhaps in the context of a co-operative effort which few of them would have countenanced in life. *D. James Ross*

LATE BAROQUE

Bach St Matthew Passion BWV244b
Charles Daniels Evangelist, Peter Harvey Christus, Yorkshire Bach Soloists, Peter Seymour 153'33" (2 CDs)
Signum Classics SIGCD385

Peter Seymour's Yorkshire Baroque Soloists give us a thoughtful, moderately-paced account of the early version of Bach's *Matthäuspassion*, helped greatly by a score carefully prepared by Peter Seymour and splendidly sung by Charles Daniels and Peter Harvey. Charles Daniels has that exquisite vocal and linguistic fluency that makes you relish every syllable and hang on to the edge of your seat; and Peter Harvey's seasoned account of the part of Jesus, where in this performance the halo of single strings led by Lucy Russell have the clarity of a consort of viols, gets better each time he does it. He forms the secure bass of choir 1, so sings the arias too – as is proper: "Mache dich" is as splendid as it could ever be, with plenty of oboe da caccia coming through the texture.

In terms of vocal quality, Choir 2 has better blend, with the admirable Matthew Brook a violone-like bass, utterly gripping in "Gibt mir", and the clarity of Julian Podger's splendid tenor line (only heard on its own, alas, in "Geduld") well-matched by Nancy Cole, a very promising young singer. Peter Seymour is well-known for searching out and nurturing local talent, and Nancy has studied at York, as has the more experienced Helen Neeves. Choir 1 has another young local, Bethany Seymour, on the top line. In Part 1, I found her rather tight vibrato, apparent even in the chorus numbers, unattractive and her lack of breath control in "Ich will dir mein Herze" distracting; however, in the recit and "Aus Liebe" we hear a totally different singer! Here her clarity and ability to float the lines are winsome. But it is Sally Bruce-Payne who is of star quality throughout; she combines a real rich, deep vocal quality with a clarity and verbal flexibility that is not always evident in real alto voices. By contrast, Charles Daniels' sub in Choir 1, Joseph Cornwell, sounds rather strained in "O Schmerz". Peter and Pilate are sung convincingly by Johnny Herford, and

Bethan Thomas, singing the soprano bit parts, has the kind of voice I like.

The single strings have the advantage of letting us hear all the woodwind detail with even greater clarity. All the flutes are from the North East, and we hear their detail even in the *turba* choruses. The opening chorus is unhurried and well balanced, and I like the way the recording – in a relatively small space in a York church – is so clear and immediate. But we have a vocal line for the chorale in the very first chorus: is this right in this early version? I thought that it was most likely to have been played on the organ – but then this is a small box organ, and almost certainly has no *sesquialtera*.

The occasional accidentals that are different in the early version are intriguing, and of course the major differences from the 1736 version are the simple chorale to conclude Part 1, and a lute instead of the later gamba in "Komm süßes Kreuz" which gives it a less tortured, more domestic feel. Here I'd have preferred an organ to the lute stop of a harpsichord as providing a better contrast to the lute.

But overall, this is a musical and coherent performance, as you would expect from a group who have played together a good bit, made distinguished by some fine singing by many of the singers and lovely playing especially by the strings.

David Stancliffe

J. S. Bach St Matthew Passion, BWV 244 (1727 Version) James Gilchrist *Evangelista*, Matthew Rose *Jesus*, Ashley Riches *Pilatus*, Elizabeth Watts, Sarah Connolly, Thomas Hobbs, Christopher Maltman SATB, Choir of the AAM, Academy of Ancient Music, Richard Egarr
AAM Recordings AAM004

The Academy of Ancient Music with Richard Egarr have also released a 1727 *Matthew Passion*, which in many ways is very different from Peter Seymour's Yorkshire Bach Soloists. Here the current orthodoxy of eight voices is set aside in favour of two choruses of ten voices each and four distinctly soloistic soloists, who, together with three 'character parts' – Evangelist, Jesus and Pilate – never sing with the *chori*. This means that the chorus numbers – especially the *turba* choruses can be, and are, sung extremely fast and cleanly – there's no trace of a wobble here. Only once did I find myself really querying the elasticity of their fluent tempi changes, and that was in "Andern hat er geholfen" – the *turba* chorus that taunts Jesus on the cross. But sometimes they outpace even the admirable and mellifluous Evangelist, James Gilchrist, who sings to the accompaniment of a fairly full continuo section. In the

surviving score of the early version, copied by Altnickol's pupil c.1755, the one bass section serves as a joint bass line for both orchestras. Richard Egarr clearly plays the rather mellow harpsichord with the Evangelist, but why is there another one? Two harpsichords to one organ seems an odd balance.

Chorales are also brisk; not merely unsentimental, but fast and direct. In the opening chorus, at a rhythmic, swinging pace, the chorale is played (correctly) on the organ alone, (like the chorale in Cantata 161: Weimar 1716, where the *Sesquialtera* is also called for) although the Klop organ which boasts an 8' wooden principal doesn't run to the specified *Sesquialtera* – a pity, as some of Klop's do; and the tempo hots up for the sharp staccato exchange between the choirs – a foretaste of things to come. The variations in tempo indicated in this early score for "O Schmerz" for example – *un poco allegro* for the choir II chorale – are exploited to the full, and indeed the playing is so assured and confident that there can be a good deal of rubato in the movements – beautifully done by the flute, Christine Garratt, in "Aus Liebe" for example. This confidence and rhythmic fluency – evident in the soloists (for that's what they are) too – is the hallmark of this recording. Sarah Connolly stretches many phrases in "Erbame dich", and the solo violins in each band are accompanied by the string of the opposite group: an indication of single strings originally perhaps?

For me, the weakest voice is Matthew Rose, the bass who sings Jesus. His voice is much plummier than the others, and he makes Jesus sound rather portly and elderly. The tenor Thomas Hobbs is wonderfully clean by comparison and Christopher Maltman sings beautifully in "Komm süßes Kreuz" with the lute and just the organ in this early version, evoking the domestic side of Lutheran piety to perfection.

So there is much to commend this beautifully crafted performance: only in her last phrase did I find Elizabeth Watts' wobble on the sublime "Tausend Dank" unbearable. But it was clearly all very much meant and even if this isn't my favourite version there can't be enough takes – especially now that the 1727 material is readily available – of the Great Passion.

For those who would like an early version Matthew, there is a choice between these two versions. The AAM one is more polished, and a lot faster. The YBS is less hurried, and has a far finer Jesus; its soloists are the singers of the *chori*, so in many ways it is more 'proper', and it is on 2CDs in a standard package. But the slicker and glossier presentation – even if the scholarly evidence is less to the fore:

why can't all directors and writers of liner notes quote their sources, and give us helpful references to the instruments being used (as is done on the AAM set) and on the temperament chosen for the keyboards? – may win friends for the AAM. I would listen to both, and find a pair of contracting performances like these unusually instructive.

I should add, so that it is clear where my own preferences lie, that neither of these displace Paul McCreesh's Gabrieli Consort recording from 2003 (though it is of course the later version) made with the splendid organs in the cathedral at Roskilde at the top of my list of Matthew Passions.

David Stancliffe

Bach Weihnachtsoratorium [Sunhae Inn, Petra Noskaiová, Stephan Scherpe, Jan Van der Crabben SATB], La Petite Bande, Sigiswald Kuijken 139' 22" (2 CDs) Challenge Classics CC72394

Kuijken's *Weihnachtsoratorium* is a treat: it's clear as a bell, with every note of every line audible, and the tuning very precise. As you would expect from La Petite Bande, it's all one-to-a-part, except for doubling the upper strings, so the balance of voices, strings, wind and brass is as it is, and the liner notes say that this balance hasn't been messed around with by the recording engineers! No finger-holes in the trumpets, so ringing D major chords and some lovely 6ths, and Sara Kuijken, the second violin, doubles elegantly as the echo soprano in *Flößt, mein Heiland* in IV.4.

The voices are a pretty good blend: Kuijken often uses Van der Crabben, and while the clarity of his real bass voice provides an excellent foundation for the singers, he can also offer a lyrical quality in arias like *Erleucht* with the oboe d'amore in V.5 or the duet with the soprano in III.6. Petra Noskaiová, the alto, is another of Kuijken's frequent singers, and is very good too – she has all the clarity you need for the chorus work, and a robust and distinctive sound for the solo material: listen to her line in the Terzetto in V.9, where she offers a very distinctive counter-balance to the S/T duet. The tenor, Stephan Scherpe, is a real find, singing the choruses with control and restraint, the *evangelista* with effortless clarity and his arias – especially *Frohe Hirten* – with precision and panache.

About the soprano I feel less sure. The voice quality is always more problematic as you go higher in the vocal range, and although she is fine when not under pressure (as in *Flößt, mein Heiland* in IV.4), Sunhae Im does not match the superlative boy, Leopold Lampelsdorfer, who recorded I-III with Holger Eichhorn and the Musicalische Compagnie in 2012 (which I reviewed in *EMR* 153) in the

ensemble work. (Eichhorn never did IV to VI with Lampelsdorfer.) There is something about sopranos singing OVPP which needs exploring: it is more audible, and so more distracting, if you press on a note tied over a barline, which can add an unhelpful and occasionally panicky-sounding edge, rather than floating these held notes as a viol-player would; and then there is the question of whether the almost unconscious soloist's vibrato – especially in concerted passages – confuses the choral texture. How can singers learn to judge the different style that is needed for an aria and then in the chorus of four voices? Having said this, the ensemble is excellent in the largely homophonic passage like *Wo ist der neugeborne König* (V.3)

Tempi are judicious – perhaps a bonus from not having a driven conductor in charge? – and I imagine the layout is similar to the Petite Bande performances you can see on YouTube, where the singers stand together in front of the organ in the middle, and the players ring them on a raised box – strings on the left-hand side and the substantial bass violin next to the organ (there isn't any 16' of course – and I don't miss it) with the brass and wind to the right. With Kuijken leading and directing the ensemble from the wing of the instruments, there are only occasional moments when I feel the lack of an independent conductor, but the players are attentive to each other, and know where to make the minute adjustments for the singers that give this performance its caressing chamber-music quality without sacrificing its dance-like energy.

I like this performance, and am very happy to live with it long-term.

David Stancliffe

J. S. Bach *Motets* Capella Cracoviensis, Fabio Bonizzoni 66' 26"
Alpha 199 (BWV225–230, Anh. 159)

This recording of the complete motets by eight singers, cello, double bass and organ continuo is one of the most moving discs I have encountered in a long time. Fabio Bonizzoni explains that the group spent a long time exploring not only the music but also its background and original setting as part of a long German tradition of grave-side songs of consolation. Finding four pairs of equal voices that can combine seamlessly or split into two choirs as the music demands is not easy, but the results here are incredible; the texts are clearly enunciated, the phrases are beautifully shaped, and the tempi – and the spaces between movements – are spot on. There is room in the acoustic for the singers to use vibrato as an ornament, and there is, above all, a real sense of involvement in the ritual of a funeral.

Definitely one of my favourite discs this month.

BC

Bach and his rivals: Cantatas for audition at Leipzig, 1722–3, and for 30 January 1724 in Hamburg, Darmstadt, Leipzig The Bach Players 132' 11" (2 CDs)
Hyphen Press Music HPM008
Bach *Jesus nahm zu sich die Zwölfe, Jesus schläft was soll ich hoffen* Graupner *Aus der Tiefen rufen wir, Gott führt die seinen wunderbar*, Ouverture in c GWV413 Telemann *Laß vom Bösen und tue Gutes, Wer sich rachet*, Ouverture TWV55: fis 1

The interesting idea behind these two CDs packaged together is to give us a snapshot of what three jobbing musicians were producing at a fairly pivotal moment in their careers. Two and four years older than Bach respectively, both Graupner and Telemann were schooled at Leipzig, outlived Bach and both produced far more than the Bach output that has survived. Telemann, C.P.E. Bach's godfather, was Leipzig's first choice in 1722 but didn't want it, Graupner couldn't be released from his post at Darmstadt, so they called Bach for interview. It is instructive to hear how Graupner's music already sounds at this stage – more melodic and 'orchestral' in a modern sense. Telemann has obviously been influenced by the Italian and French music to which he had been introduced. Beside them, Bach's unusual scoring, free way of illuminating the texts both Biblical and poetic, shaping them with recitative, aria and duet as well as chorus all vary the texture and intrigue us. Bach's theological creativity makes the others seem less imaginative about the text; they already have half a foot in a symphonic future where the general mood of a piece can be reflected, rather than each word or theological concept prized.

Each CD contains an instrumental piece – by Telemann on the first and by Graupner on the second. Otherwise the Telemann cantata on the first, probably written in 1719, was performed in the Thomaskirche in 1725, while those by Graupner and Bach were their audition pieces. The link between the three on the second CD is that they were all written for the Fourth Sunday after Epiphany in 1724 – three treatments of Jesus stilling the storm, the gospel for that day.

These two CDs, recorded a year apart, offer us a chance to stand back and question our settled assumptions about Bach's magisterial primacy, but at the same time to reaffirm what a very distinctive and unique voice – as well as a somewhat old-fashioned one – he offers. The players in the Bach Players – one to a part strings, with a pair of oboes/recorders and a bassoon and a keyboard – cultivate a beautifully clean tone, which some of the singers match better than others. Simon Wall is the cleanest, and it is easiest for his

kind of light tenor voice; but both Matthew Brook and Sally Bruce-Payne are equally convincing both when singing singly and as part of the vocal ensemble and suggest hidden depths. Rachel Elliott as always draws the short straw: it is so much more difficult for a soprano to match the clean and almost steely tone of the violins and still sound both interesting and musical: she does really well but has to work hard to give that clean clarity in the chorus passage work and a steady tone in the homophonic passages before switching to a more soloistic vocal style in her (rather few) arias. This is my only uncomfortable moment with these quality performances, and perhaps it is because Nicolette Moonen herself gives no quarter. I like it, but it is very hard to match vocally.

The recording is close – you can hear every bow stroke as it was played; and the balance between strings and wind, instruments and voices is beautifully judged. The photographs showing how they stood in live performances may not reflect how the recordings were achieved, but a group like this, performing cantatas as intimate chamber music, never has to force their sound. This is a huge advantage over large-scale performances directed 'at' rather than performed 'among' their listeners.

As always with this group's products there is a minimalistic package, concealing a very well researched and intriguing essay by Hugh Wood with Stephen Pedder giving both the background to these auditions and a detailed analysis of the music. This is programme planning of a high order, and we are lucky to eavesdrop on their performances. David Stancliffe

J. S. & C. P. E. Bach *Sonatas for viola da gamba and harpsichord* The Brook Street Band (Tatty Theo vlc and Carolyn Gibley hpscd) 58' 57"
Avie Records AV2321

That someone should play Bach's music on instruments other than those stipulated in the title should not surprise us; I have even written positively in these pages about very successful transcriptions for the accordion! But when the translation on to the new instrument makes the music sound even more difficult, then I'm afraid I have reservations. The fact that the strings of the gamba are a whole tone closer than those of its distant cousin the cello means that stretches are all the wider, the music in the higher reaches of the instrument becomes precarious as the cello lacks the gamba's top-most string, and the "upside-down" bowing means the drawing of the shape of the notes is different, too. That the booklet seeks to justify the use of a cello at all in this repertoire is telling, as is the loose

remark about Bach senior's choice, since "by that time [the 1740s] in Europe the gamba was a dying instrument"; rather than go on to explore the irrelevant family connections with the Abels, the author might done better by reading Michael O'Loughlin's volume on music in Berlin and discovered that there was a whole Berlin school of gamba playing and that, horror of horrors, the late date of the autograph score might point to the possibility of Bach *composing* the work for one of the King's musicians (you know? the one he wrote the *Goldberg Variations* for! When were they published? 1741... the very date of celebrated gambist Johann Christian Hesse's appointment.) All of this sounds a little critical; I'm sorry I didn't especially enjoy the performances; try as I might to find a way into the Brook Street sound world, I'm afraid I failed. BC

Bach Musical Offering Ricercar Consort
Mirare MIR237 (54')

This recording, despite its relative brevity, left me exhausted; there is nothing tiring about the playing, which is absolutely first rate, but the music is just so intellectually demanding, or at least I allowed it to be so, teasing my brain with all its ingenuity! Of course, I could just have kicked back and enjoyed the experience as entertainment, but for some reason these perfectly shaped and effortlessly balanced performances "drew me in" and, once in the spider's web, there was no escape. This is not the first *Musical Offering* to be reviewed in these pages, nor will it be the last to be written about in a critical way, but I am sure this version will find many admirers in the Bach fraternity, and I will not be surprised to see it among this year's award winners. BC

Bach Violin Concertos BWV 1041–1043 & 1050R Guido Kraemer *vln*, Frederik From *vln*, Bjarte Eike *vln*, Peter Spissky *vln*, Antoine Torunczyk *oboe*, Concerto Copenhagen, Lars Ulrik Mortensen 55' 10"
cpo 777 904-2

If your initial reaction (like mine, I confess) was "oh no, not *another* recording of these concertos!", time to dispel fears of being anything other than captivated by a series of interpretations that are as finely nuanced without the slightest hint of micro-management as you are ever likely to hear. In the slow movement of the A minor concerto, for example, Frederik From (the only one of the quartet of solo violinists of whom I had never heard!) makes the semibreves the most interesting notes of the piece, by nourishing them as the bar passes with an ornament called vibrato – never was it better applied! His approach to the outer movements of the same work is typical of the COCO's Bach;

every detail is in its rightful place and no fuss is ever made of any particular note or phrase – I have never heard the pause halfway through the final *Allegro assai* and the pick-up from the basses and violas handled so neatly; I suppose that's how Bach must have intended it to sound. His rendition of the E major concerto is every bit as impressive, and again it is in the slow movement that he excels – his first entry is guaranteed to raise a few eyebrows. The soloists in the double violin concerto are Peter Spissky and Bjarte Eike, while the final work on the disc features Manfredo Kraemer and Antoine Torunczyk. The same virtues of From's solo concertos pervade both – effortless virtuosity and evenness of tone across the range of the instrument, beautifully paced with room for free ornamentation and no sense that everything is being centrally controlled. I understand this may not be everyone's idea of heaven, but it's pretty close for me. My only regret is that the disc is so short – elsewhere in these pages I have sometimes argued that too much of a good thing is perhaps not a good thing, but with these musicians on this kind of form, I'd take my chances! BC

Bach Keyboard Concertos Lucia Micallef *pf*, European Union Chamber Orchestra, Brian Schembri 61' 59"
Divine Art dda 25128
BWV 1052 in d (perhaps based on *vln conc.*)
1054 in D based on BWV 1042
1056 in f: slow movement based on *Sinfonia* with *oboe* in *Cantata 156*
1058 in g based on the a-minor *vln concerto* BWV 1041

I'm not normally interested in Bach on the piano: it can usually only work if it can be played in pianistic style. But the concertos come off very well. The pianist keeps firmly to tempo, but takes advantage of shaping by volume as the strings do. So I'm glad I did get a copy. I heard several good Maltese performers at this year's Valletta International Baroque Festival and the picture in the booklet of the 1731 Teatru Manoel reminds me that it has a fine acoustic. It would be interesting to hear a keyboard concerto programme there with Micallef on piano. CB

Delalande Symphonies pour les Soupers du Roy Elbipolis Barockorchester Hamburg, Jürgen Groß 61' 48"
Challenge Classics CC72664

This music is truly delightful – it's easy to see why the Sun King made Delalande such a prominent figure in the musical life of his court. Reconstruction of the inner parts has been skilfully undertaken, though for my tastes and, I suspect, those of the time, the changes of sonority within movements are over-elaborate and unnecess-

ary. I also doubt the use of the recorder at 4' pitch. But what is done, is done very well. In the booklet, the note, apparently from the point of view of one of the original players, is unconvincing though the main essay is fine. David Hansell
Gorczycki Conductus funebris, Litaniae de Providentia Divina, Missa Rorate caeli The Sixteen, Eamonn Dougan 68' 02"
Coro COR16130

Don't be put off by the snappy title and marvellous marketing! This is a gorgeous recording of some really lovely music – you will not be alone if you have never heard of the composer; he lived 1665–1734 and was head of music in the Wawel Cathedral in Krakow for the last 36 years of his life. You will be doing well if you can read all of the booklet note; while there is undoubtedly a lot of interesting material there, I was simply overwhelmed by the in-depth analysis of the pieces on the disc, especially when they are nothing out of the ordinary for the period in which they were written. The *a cappella* music is Fux-like (is that surprising for someone who lived in Prague and Vienna as a student?), while that with instruments has a lot in common with German music of the time (*les goûts réunis* and all that!) The performances are excellent, with lovely solo singing, a beautifully balanced and controlled choral sound, and some lively playing from the band (pairs of trumpets and oboes with strings and continuo including theorbo and harp, with special plaudits to Huw Daniel for some nifty bow work in the motet *Illuxit sol*). This is the third CD in The Sixteen's exploration of early music from Poland – don't miss them! BC

Guillemain Sonates en quatuors Ensemble Barockin' 56' 26"
Raumklang RK 3304
Sonatas in d & G (op. 12, 1743), c & D (op. 17, 1756)

EMR will readers will surely be able call to mind Quantz's advocacy of the quartet and his admiration for Telemann's works in the genre. Well, here's music that seriously rivals GPT and that's a clause I never thought I'd type. The instrumentation is the same as the 'Paris' set – flute, violin, gamba and continuo – and the musical style is much same with a judicious balance of conversation and counterpoint and even a touch of drama. The playing is very accomplished and the straightforward approach to the continuo (as requested by the composer) is more than welcome. There are a few lumps and bumps in the note though I enjoyed the Guillemain biography. Either the engineers or her colleagues could have done the flautist a few more favours in terms of the instrumental balance but overall this is a welcome discovery. Two of the works are

claimed as first recordings. *David Hansell*

Handel Rodelinda Danielle di Niese *Rodelinda*, Bejun Mehta *Bertarido*, Kurt Streit *Grimoaldo*, Konstantin Wolff *Garibaldo*, Malena Ernman *Eduige*, Matthias Rexroth *Unulfo*, Luis Neuhold *Flavio*, Angelo Margioli *Flavio's friend*, Concentus Musicus Wien, Nicolaus Harnoncourt 189' (2 DVDs) Belvedere 10144

This DVD is hardly worth listening to, let alone seeing. The speeds are dull – to take for example the overture (where was the minuet?), the *largo* was *andante-larghetto*; the *allegro* was *andante*. The tempi continue in such fashion ('mean' Handel – where fast is too slow and slow too fast). The cast is pretty decent, although indiscriminate vibrato taints them all. And while Bejun Mehta is not bad as *Bertarido*, Matthias Rexroth (*Unulfo*) makes a good case for using a contralto or mezzo. (Amazingly, women can play men.) As the heroine, de Niese has good facial expressions and can act (makes up for an indifferent voice), but *Rodelinda* is misconceived: no dignity or that aura of untouchability that means a) *Grimoaldo* is helpless about her in more sense than just love, and b) that she keeps her reputation and poise throughout. For example, her 'L'empio rigor' (far too pedestrian, by the way – and that's before de Niese lags behind the beat) starts with *Grimoaldo* actually touching her and towering over her; she seems indecisive and at a loss what to do. The music is so at odds with this that the whole thing's a nonsense. It's a shame, for *Grimoaldo's* entrance is suitably bumbling. And there's some bizarre wardrobe-moving – but what else do you do in the *da capo*? (And, of course, *Rodelinda*, being a woman, is only interested in clothes anyway.) The recitatives are awful – very sung; all notes almost the same length (interminable). There are occasional good moments (e. g. the first encounter between *Grimoaldo* and *Eduige*, and *Bertarido's* 'Dove sei'), but the bad moments are too cringe worthy – e. g. the sex scene between *Eduige* and *Garibaldo* (never mind that *Eduige* is supposed to have left the stage... And how do you bonk with your trousers on/tights up?) We've only got a third of the way through Act I. It doesn't improve. Avoid!

Katie Hawks

Handel in the Wind: The Messiah and Other Masterworks Red Priest 71' 59" Red Priest Records RPO12

Red Priest albums are always stylish, entertaining and controversial, and this one is no exception. It took me a little while to become accustomed to the sound world of Red Priest – recorder, violin, cello and harpsichord – as applied to

Handel's *Messiah* but I found I soon entered into it and really enjoyed their imaginative interpretations of such well-known music. There is a lot of very fine, conventional playing, contrasting with sections of virtuosic mania. The arrangements, originally by Angela East but developed and re-worked during the rehearsal process, are extremely ingenious and half the fun lies in picking out the little snippets of other pieces which creep in. There are some wonderful variations for Piers Adams in *The Recorder Shall Sound*, followed by a lovely duet for bass recorder and violin in *Despised and Rejected. Siciliano Pedicuro (How Beautiful are the Feet)* is another gorgeous duet, this time for violin and cello, and the only funny thing about it is the title. The jazzed-up "Hallelujah", on the other hand, had me laughing as, after snatches of *Always Look on the Bright Side of Life*, *Czardas* and other familiar tunes, it somehow turned into *Happy Birthday to You*.

"Lascia ch'io pianga" from *Rinaldo* marks the start of the second half of the performance with some lovely violin playing by Julia Bishop. The *Trio Sonata* in F major op.2 no. 4 is the only piece in the programme originally composed for the Red Priest instrumental line-up, five hyper-active fast movements contrasted with beautifully ornamented slow ones. We are allowed to recover from the breath-taking *Harmonious Blacksmith Variations* with the beautiful *Largo* from *Concerto Grosso* op.3 no. 2. This leads into some very silly pizzicato which turns out to be the *Passacaglia* from the *Keyboard Suite* in G minor with serious moments before becoming more and more manic. The finale is *Zadok the Red Priest* in which, as Piers Adams describes in his booklet notes, *Zadok the Priest* and the Queen of Sheba become unlikely but fervent lovers. Handel finally disappears into the wind with the bonus track, *Aria Amorosa* taken from the CD *Priest on the Run*.

Victoria Helby

Janitsch Sonate da Chiesa e da Camera Epoca Barocca 73' 03" cpo 777 910-2

da Chiesa in F & d; da Camera in D, E flat, F & g

Where previous releases of discs devoted to Janitsch's gorgeous chamber music have concentrated on quartets that highlight winds, the emphasis here is slightly on the string family, and divides the programme equally between quartets and the less often heard trios (one of which is taken one step further by having one of the treble lines played by the harpsichordist's right hand). While I have no problem with that, and it was always going to be a pleasure to hear the trios, in a perfect world I would have preferred the order to

have avoided grouping the quartets at the beginning of the disc. The *da chiesa* and *da camera* tags are here taken to indicate a change of continuo keyboard from organ to harpsichord, but there is surely no less "churchy" indication than that of the first of the two *da chiesa* sonatas – "ala [sic] siciliana ma un poco largo". Unlike his rather shapeless *sinfonias* and his mundane concertos, Janitsch's chamber music has remained popular as it gives everyone in the group a chance to share the melody, and it is not often in pre-20th century music that one is asked to pull off even quintuplets and septuplets in the same bar! And for an example of just how original Janitsch could be, try Track 4... Even despite the use of the lute stop on one track, I'm happy to recommend this CD for some exceptionally fine playing. BC

Kuhnau Complete Sacred Works I Opella Musica, camerata lipsiensis, Gregor Meyer cpo 777 868-2 (70' 08")

Daran erkennen wir, Es steh Gott auf, Mein Alter kömmt, Tristis est anima mea, Wenn euch fröhlich seid an euren Festen, Welt adieu ich bin dein müde

Like many composers of his generation (as well as the one following), Johann Kuhnau has long languished in the shadow cast by the giant who is Johann Sebastian Bach. A valiant effort by The King's Consort to rectify that situation sadly came to an end, but this new releases shows that there is hope. David Erler, camerata lipsiensis's alto, plans a scholarly edition of Kuhnau's complete surviving church music in time for the 300th anniversary of his death in 1722, and hopefully all of it will appear on cpo recordings of this high quality. The only piece to have appeared on disc before is the motet *Tristis est anima mea*, which Bach turned into *Der Gerechte kommt um* but Michael Maul, author of the excellent notes, suggests that actually it may not be by Kuhnau at all (the first attribution is dated 1823!), having so very little in common with the musical language of all the other surviving works (even conceding that huge quantities must have been lost over time), and is more likely to be by Antonio Lotti, who apparently sent Kuhnau music from Dresden. The other five works on the disc are cantatas for Easter (one opens the disc, the other closes it), the Purification of Mary (for tenor solo with a chorus as the last movement), Whitsun and the 24th Sunday after Trinity. This last is interesting as it is based on a funeral song by Johann Rosenmüller, who might have been Kuhnau's predecessor as Thomaskantor, had he not caused a stir in the mid 1650s.

camerata lipsiensis sing one to a part, and are accompanied by flute, oboes, bassoon, horns (especially made smaller instruments with trumpet mouth-pieces), trumpets, trombones, five-part strings

(including "Kontrabass"), lute, harpsichord and organ. I especially enjoyed the festive music, with some neat singing and playing from all concerned, but – having listened to *Ich hebe meine Augen auf* (see below) earlier in the day – I kept thinking how old-fashioned this music *felt*. I look forward to having that impression corrected as the series proceeds, and I am sure the performers will love exploring the music as it becomes available. BC

Leo Recorder Sonatas Tommaso Rossi, Ensemble Barocco di Napoli 58' 54" Stradivarius STR 33969

The Neapolitan composer Leonardo Leo (1694-1744) is best known for his sacred music and for operas both comic and serious, but seven sonatas for recorder and continuo by him survive in a manuscript from the collection of the Austrian Harrach family. One of its members, Aloys Thomas Raimund Harrach was Viceroy of Naples between 1728 and 1733, at a time when the recorder was still extremely popular there in spite of the rise in popularity of the transverse flute. This is the first recording of this attractive set of sonatas. They all have the same pattern of four movements, alternately slow and fast, but these tuneful pieces are never dull. Additional variety is given by the use of different instruments for the continuo of each sonata, archlute, cello, harpsichord and even bass recorder in different combinations. The booklet notes by Tommaso Rossi cram a great deal of information into a small space, and the occasional awkward translation and the lack of a clear distinction between the paragraphs make them a slightly difficult, though interesting, read. Victoria Helby

Rameau Pièces pour clavecin Bertrand Cuiller hpsc'd 151' (2 CDs)

Mirare MIR266

Premier livre (1706), Pièces de Clavessin (1724), Nouvelles Suites (1726-27), extracts from "Pièces de clavecin en concerts"

I must say I find quite extraordinary the note's suggestion that Rameau's solo harpsichord pieces are 'somewhat neglected', especially after this last year. Be that as it may, Bertrand Cuiller here sets about rectifying any such neglect with a will and no little vigour. He's also not afraid to go out on a bit of an interpretative limb, though from time to time in the slighter and slower pieces I did feel that the flexible pulse was losing touch with its base and the famous Gavotte is anything but dance-like, though the ensuing variations build to a rousing climax. Overall the greatest strength is that every track does sound like a performance with a touch of spontaneity even if this is at the expense of the

occasional minor imperfection. The resources of the (modern) instrument are sensibly deployed and its sound is very well captured. The tuner/technician might have done a better job however. Some tuning 'moments' are not the temperament and not every note always damps cleanly. So Christophe Rousset remains the king of this repertoire, though this release is certainly worthy of a place on the same shelf. Whoever typed and/or passed as fit for publication the track list in the booklet should be sacked.

David Hansell

Roman The 12 flute sonatas: Nos. 1-5 Dan Laurin rec, Paradiso Musicale 70' 04" BIS-2105 SACD

The Swedish composer Johan Helmich Roman's twelve flute sonatas were published in Stockholm in 1727, the year in which he was appointed as court Kapellmeister. Telemann advertised that he was the agent for their sale in Hamburg and praised them "for their lively and very charming composition" and for the quality of the printing (which you can see on the IMSLP web site). Roman claimed that they were youthful works so they may have been composed during his prolonged stay in London from 1716 to 1721 where he studied, played the violin for Handel and would have encountered Italian music and musicians. They certainly pre-date his visit to Italy but he owned and translated into Swedish Gasparini's *L'armonico pratico al cimbalo* which was first published in Venice in 1708. This fact has been used to justify harpsichordist Anna Paradiso's colourful and often dissonant continuo playing, which in any case is invited by Roman's dramatic style of composition. This is flute music of a high quality which works well on the voice flute (tenor recorder in D), avoiding the need for transposition. The SACD sound is so good that you can hear Dan Laurin's breathing and a faint jingle from the harpsichord but this should not put you off this excellent recording. The disc forms part of a series of recordings of Roman's music by the same musicians and I look forward to hearing their performances of the remaining seven sonatas in the set. Victoria Helby

Schultzen Recorder Sonatas & anonymous Viola da Gamba sonatas Barbara Heindlmeier rec, Ensemble La Ninfea 70' 33" Raumklang RK 3402

This is the first recording of the six recorder sonatas by Schultzen which were published by Roger in Amsterdam and survive in a copy in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France. Although they appear in Roger's 1737 catalogue they are known to have existed as early as 1704 and the

identity of A. H. Schultzen, the composer named on the print, is somewhat mysterious. The writers of the booklet notes, which are a little confusing at this point, have concluded that he is Andreas Heinrich Schulze, an organist at Hildesheim who attended the same school as Telemann. He appears in Walther's *Musikalisches Lexicon* (Leipzig 1732) where there is also a separate adjacent entry for A. Schultzen, a composer of six recorder sonatas who may or may not be the same person. The specified instrumentation is "flauto solo con cimbalo overo fagotto" but La Ninfea's varying continuo line-up of combinations of gamba, baroque lute, theorbo, harpsichord and organ is very effective and I like the little preludes which introduce some of the movements. The lovely warm performances by Christian Heim and Marthe Perle, who share the solos in the three anonymous gamba sonatas, contrast well with Barbara Heindlmeier's incisively played allegros and elaborately ornamented slow movements in the recorder sonatas. Readers who wish to play this attractive music themselves will be pleased to know that the very legible Roger edition of the Schultzen sonatas is available on the Petrucci web site. The gamba sonatas are from the library of Princess Louisa Frederica of Württemberg (1722-1791) and are now in the library of the University of Rostock. There doesn't appear to be an available edition but they would be well worth publishing. Victoria Helby

Telemann Festive Cantatas Miriam Feuersinger, Franz Vitzthum, Klaus Mertens ScTB/Bar, Collegium vocale Siegen, Hannoversche Hofkapelle, Ulrich Stötzel hänsler Classic CD 98.047 (58' 04") TVWV 1: 243, 284 & 413

The three works here (all in world modern premiere recordings) come from the cycle that Telemann published for 1748-49, the so-called "Engel-Jahrgang" to texts by Erdmann Neumeister, all following a five-movement pattern: chorus, aria, recitative, aria and chorale. The first cantata on the disc *Der Herr lebet* for Easter Sunday shares the spoils between the three soloists, while in the others, *Ehr und Dank sey Dir gesungen* for Michaelmas and *Der Geist giebt Zeugnis* for Whitsun, the central movements are all for solo bass and alto respectively. Of the three cantatas, the last was my favourite, especially the second of the arias, "Geist des Trostes und der Gnade", in which the soloist is not only accompanied by the strings but also by the two trumpets and timpani that feature in all the cantatas of the set. The choir sing well, but the booklet does not list names, so it is impossible to say how many are on each voice; nor are the players named. The

texts are laid out alongside a nice English translation, but it is a pity that the Biblical quotes are printed as pseudo poetry, while the verse patterns of the arias are obscured by arbitrary line breaks. It is a pity, too, that there is not more music for Miriam Feuersinger, as she has a lovely voice for this repertoire. This is the second Telemann recording from these forces; I hope there will be more!

BC

Telemann *Johannes Passion* Catherine Bott, Sarah Connolly, Reginaldo Pinheiro, Evangelist Jan Vandercrabbens *Christus*, Philip De Francq *SmSTBarB*, Collegium Instrumentale Brugense, [Capella Brugensis], Patrick Peire 2 CDs
Et'cetera KTC1518

Re-released just in time for Easter, this set originally appeared on Eufoda in 1995. Fans of Telemann's church music who missed it first time around will be glad to know that it is a 2-for-the-price-of-1 release and so competes rather well with the only offer on amazon uk (visited on 19th March) — £117.18 plus postage! I find it more than slightly disappointing that no HIP group has taken up this work, full as it is of such high calibre arias; Patrick Peire always strove for "authenticity" in performance, despite using modern instruments, and here they succeed rather well, but I would like to hear this magnificent music played as the composer might have intended — "Soll mir zu bitter dünken" with bite, delicate flutes in "Gottes Wort aus Jesu Munde" or the otherworldly combination of muted strings and oboe d'amore for "O wie brichst du mir das Herz"; the texts provide the composer with ample opportunities for word painting, which he takes up with aplomb. If you are looking for an alternative to Bach this Good Friday, this might be an option; perhaps not the definitive account of an exceptionally fine work, but well worth hearing.

BC

Veracini *Adriano in Siria* Sonia Prina *Adriano*, Ann Hallenberg *Farnaspe*, Roberta Invernizzi *Emirena*, Romina Basso *Sabina*, Lucia Cirillo *Idalma*, Ugo Guagliardo *Osroa*, Europa Galante, Fabio Biondi 172' (3 CDs)
Fra Bernardo FB1409491

Adriano in Siria was the first of three operas written by the virtuoso violinist Francesco Maria Veracini for Handel's London rivals, the Opera of the Nobility. It was first performed at the King's Theatre on 26 February 1735, subsequently running to an impressive 20 performances. The booklet notes for this first recording wrongly suggest a mixed reception, in the process inaccurately citing the king as the leading supporter of the Nobility, and quoting a long, damning (if amusing)

report of the opera by Lord John Hervey, without recognising that Hervey was by no means an impartial observer, being a bitter opponent of the Prince of Wales, who was the leading supporter of the Nobility. Adriano was set to a much-altered libretto of Metastasio's. It tells of the Emperor Hadrian's (Adriano) betrayal of the Roman princess Sabina in favour of Emirena, his captive and the daughter of his enemy Osroa, King of Parthia. Caught in the middle of this intrigue is Farnaspe, a Parthian prince betrothed to Emirena, a role taken by Farinelli, who headed a glittering cast that also included Senesino (Adriano), Cuzzoni (Emirena) and the bass Montagnana as the fierce Parthian ruler. The score is an admirably capable piece of work that includes an agreeable variety of arias. The writing, perhaps understandably, tends to be more instrumental in character than one might expect from Handel or Hasse, some of it indeed being reminiscent of Vivaldi (cf Osroa's act 1 *aria di furia* 'Sprezza il furor'). If there is a weakness it is a tendency for the instrumental writing (usually for strings alone) to fall back on sequential chains of roulades.

Nonetheless a large vote of thanks is due to Fabio Biondi for reviving the opera (and providing the missing plain recitatives) and doing so with a cast that in present-day terms seeks to emulate the original. Praise must however be tempered with considerable reservation regarding Biondi's direction of the live performance, which emanates from the 2014 edition of Vienna's Resonanzen Festival. Tempos are often extreme, while within arias they are often pulled around mercilessly, especially (for some reason) in B sections. The strings, not favoured by a dry recording, sound woefully undernourished, the small number (3-3-2-1-1) contrasting starkly with the 20-odd known to have been employed by the King's Theatre at the time. The addition of timpani in several numbers is almost certainly spurious. It is a measure of the quality of Ann Hallenberg's wonderful Farnaspe that it eclipses the remainder of a splendid cast, not least because she is the only one to produce proper trills. But whether in primarily lyrical arias such as 'Parto, si bella' (act 1) or the rather vacuously virtuosic 'Amor, dover, rispetto' that ends act 2, Hallenberg is here at her peerless best. The presentation by the recently established Fra Bernardo label is poor. The booklet's small white print on black is difficult to read, there is no translation of the Italian text, and the synopsis of the plot is remarkably unhelpful. The company has an interesting catalogue in prospect, but it will need to be more user friendly to English speaking collectors if it is to succeed.

Brian Robins

Vivaldi *L'Estro Armonico* Brecon Baroque, Rachel Podger 136'
Challenge Classics CCS SA3651S

Any new recording of *L'Estro Armonico* is most welcome! There simply is not a weak piece among the 12 concertos for one, two or four violins, with or without obbligato cello and continuo — truly, it is a virtuosic display of Vivaldi's talent, both as composer and as performer; the first time you hear the stratospheric string crossing at the end of the tenth concerto (the one Bach converted into a concerto for four harpsichords), you cannot help but be taken aback. With a group of Brecon Baroque's calibre, you just know that the playing will be brilliant (in its true sense), and that there will be plenty of energy between the players and in the performances themselves. As in a previous release, I was especially struck by the very focussed sound of the violas — no shrinking violets here, especially when they are the foundation of the ensemble. I was not, I'm sorry to say, as impressed by the presence of three continuo players; the eighth part-book is not, as Timothy Jones says in his note, for 'continuo e basso' (his quotation marks, suggesting that this is what Roger printed), but "Violone e Cembalo"; now, if the whole premise of *L'Estro Armonico* is that each partbook was for one player (or, in the last case for a keyboardist with a bass player reading over his/her shoulder — does this ever happen nowadays?), then we should have nine performers, but instead we have 11. In her introduction to the disc, Rachel Podger writes that it is not "often do you witness four violins trying to outdo each other!" — here there are several places where they cede the limelight to the keyboard player, and even a few where it's the lutenists who improvise in the spaces between chords. Now, I appreciate why it might seem like a very good idea to vary textures over the span of two CDs (and yes, I did listen to them both several times right through!), but I would rather have had just one continuo instrument per concerto, and — if I'm brutally honest — I don't think I need strummed chords to add to the energy levels; the gypsy moment at the end of the slow movement of the third concerto was excitement enough. I really don't want to sound too negative, though; I will be very surprised if this doesn't win awards, too...

BC

Sinkovsky plays & sings Vivaldi Dmitry Sinkovsky vln & cT, la voce strumentale 61' naïve OP3059
Le quattro stagioni, Cessate omai cessate, Gelido in ogni vena (*Farnace*)

What might one not like in this issue? Well, for me top of the list are the 'silly [and unnecessary] pluckers'. I also wonder about the need for more than single

players on the ripieno parts and the presence of a double bass in the concertos. And the more I listened and studied the booklet the more I kept wondering. Should the concertos be continuous (yes, for me) rather than have a vocal item after each of Summer and Autumn? Surely a recording of the Seasons needs to include the 'libretto' in the booklet? Is the string articulation rather too contrived? Is this a baroque violin player or Nigel Kennedy? So approach with caution (as you might a CD from Red Priest), but amid all the questions I am quite certain that Dmitry Sinkovsky (sic – booklet title page) is a wonderful player and not far behind as a singer.

David Hansell

The Famous Weiss David Miller baroque lutes 68' 21"

Timespan TS1401

Sonatas 5 in d & 30 in g, Prelude & Fantasie in c, Prelude in D, Campanella in D, Passagaille in D, Giga in D

The thoughtful and reflective mood of the opening D minor Prelude sets the scene for this enthralling CD of lute music by Silvius Leopold Weiss. I was introduced to the music of Weiss by David Miller in a Dartington concert in the mid 90s. An almost exact contemporary of JS Bach and Handel, Weiss spent time in Rome (alongside Handel and Scarlatti) before settling as lutenist to the Dresden Court. His visit to Berlin produced the 'Famous Weiss' comment from the sister of the future Frederick the Great. The two Sonatas (in practice, multi-movement suites) from the Dresden manuscripts are nicely contrasted, the simpler D minor suite forming a foil to the more substantial, elaborate and musically advanced G minor set. Of the six other pieces from a British Library manuscript, the Prelude in C minor, with its distinctive octave opening, shows Weiss's imaginative use of harmonic modulation, a factor specifically mentioned in relation to a competition with Bach in Dresden. As the opening Prelude demonstrates, David Miller plays with a particular sensitivity to musical ebb and flow, as well as producing a beautifully rich and refined tone. There is an informative video to be found at <http://www.timespanrecordings.co.uk/david-miller---baroque-lute.html>.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Et in Arcadia ego: Italian Cantatas & Sonatas Concentus VII (Emily Atkinson S, Louise Strickland rec, Belinda Paul ob/rec, Amélie Addison vlc, Martin Knizia hpscd) Resonus RES10142 (67' 16")

Music by Handel, Lotti, Mancini & A. Scarlatti

I've placed this as post-1700, though A. Scarlatti was 40 at 1700. There are two cantatas by him (*Filli tu sai* 1701 and *Bella s'io*

t'amo undated) and a pair by Handel (*Mi palpita il cor* HWV 132a and *Pensieri notturni di Filli* HWV 134), all published by Green Man Press. Handel is a step beyond Scarlatti, but that's a stylistic issue, not a criticism. The concluding cantata is Lotti's *Ti sento, O Dio bendato*, which survives in the Fitzwilliam Museum in a MS of the 1770s – I've got a copy somewhere. There are also sonatas for oboe and Bc in B flat (HWV 357) and Mancini No. 1 in D minor. The ensemble sounds well, despite or because of the mixed background of the performers. Well worth buying. CB

En Suite Romina Lischka gamba, Sofie Vanden Eynde theorbo 72' 28"
Paraty 814129

Music by Marais, Ste. Colombe, de Visée

This is a marvellous disc. The pairing of theorbo and bass viol is a potent one, sometimes played separately (de Visée, Ste Colombe) sometimes together (Marais). Romina Lischke is a pupil of Paolo Pandolfo and Philippe Pierlot, and she clearly shares with them a very attractive impulsiveness, and a brilliant technique. She plays what I guess might be a copy of a Colichon (the booklet doesn't tell us about the instruments) – it has a lovely, bright, pleasingly astringent top string, with a very sonorous middle register and a booming bass. The recording is made in a generous acoustic, but there is no issue of clarity. Both instruments are closely miked, and the result is a very atmospheric and intimate sound, which perfectly suits the music they have chosen.

They open with a suite of seven Marais dances, cherry-picked from all five books, in E minor or G major, and conclude with an eloquent rendering of Marais' *Tombeau pour Mr de Ste Colombe*. This is followed by a suite in D made up of Preludes and dance movements, alternating Ste Colombe and de Visée for solo viol or solo lute. The final tracks feature three of Marais' character pieces: *Les Vois humaines*, *La Rêveuse*, and *Le Badinage* – yes, the famous one in F sharp minor from the film.

It is very satisfying listening. I very much enjoyed the beautifully poised lute playing, both solo and accompanying, but my focus is on the music from the so-called Tournus Manuscript, of pieces for solo bass viol by Ste Colombe. I recently reviewed the edition of this manuscript published by Güntersberg, and I've found exploring the music fascinating and stimulating. As many players will know, it shares with the well-known duets many unmeasured bars, not just the *notes perdues* but fully written-out *roulades*. What makes them more interesting is that there are some quite detailed instructions for bowing, which all work out very well and are very informative. His music is

quite unlike that of his pupils, or anyone else for that matter, and his melodies take unexpected turns. His harmonies are unorthodox, and clearly arise out of his improvisations, so wedded are they to the technique of the instrument. As the developer of the silver-wound bass strings, he clearly loves the possibilities offered by their new clarity. He must have been a marvellous player, and he does require from a modern player a great deal of understanding and intuitive insight, as well as a brilliant technique. These performances abundantly fulfil all these requirements, and his music comes across as enormously appealing. One can discern the effect he must have had on his most distinguished pupil. De Visée's music is more conventional, but no less compelling, and of course that of Marais is great. Open a good Bordeaux, light some candles, turn off the lights, and let the music cast its potent spell.

Robert Oliver

Ich hebe meine Augen auf: Telemann, Heinichen & Graupner in Leipzig [Veronika Winter, Alex Potter, Hans Jörg Mammel, Markus Flraig SATB], L'arpa festante, Rien Voskuilen 78' 11"
Carus 83-337

Graupner Vergnügte Ruh Heinichen Herr nun lässt du Telemann Ich hebe meine Augen auf
Ouverture TWV55: Es4

The title of the disc is a slight misnomer – although Graupner, like Heinichen and Telemann, studied in Leipzig and participated in the city's rich musical life, his impressive setting of Georg Christian Lehms' *Vergnügte Ruh* was written in 1711, i. e. the year after he was "headhunted" to take charge of music at the court of Hessen-Darmstadt. No such worries about the Telemann piece, which is based on the earliest datable autograph source for a sacred piece by the composer. Veronika Winter and Markus Flraig sing the psalm beautifully (four of the six movements are duets, the others being arias). Pace Michael Maul's otherwise excellent booklet note, Graupner's cantata is not scored for two flutes (as given in the translation – he actually wrote "Flöten", which would normally be given as "recorders"), two muted violins and two "violettas"; the surviving original material also includes *traverso* and two violas. Veronika Winter is outstanding; she sings the coloratura with extraordinary ease and takes great care to shape the sustained notes. Thought to have been written for his *collegium musicum*, Telemann's Overture in E flat might be an assemblage of nine movements taken from a now-lost opera; seemingly group in threes (each set ending with a pair of dances), titles include *Entrée* and *Aria*. The text of the Heinichen work is built around the *Nunc dimittis*. Two "choral" movements (which both begin with decla-

mation but move into fugue) present the words from St Luke's gospel, while two arias for bass, one for tenor and a duet reflect upon similar texts. Musically, Heinichen frames the piece cleverly – the opening sinfonia's second section is an instrumental presentation of the chorale with which the work ends, but before that the voices (initially accompanied only by continuo) have sung a chorale fantasy on the same melody. As a further attempt to contextualize Bach, this stimulating CD is a very welcome addition to the catalogue. BC

Le Masque de Fer Ensemble La Ninfea
Raumklang RK 3308 (69' 45")
Music by Chambonnières, Marais, Sainte-Colombe, Toinon & the Saizenay manuscript

The Man in the Iron Mask has been the subject of books, films and much speculation about his identity. He may just have been a valet but there have been claims that he was an illegitimate half-brother of Louis XIV, a disgraced French general or an Italian diplomat. The one certain fact is that he died in the Bastille in 1703 after more than thirty years in several different French prisons where elaborate precautions were taken to hide his identity. On the assumption that the prisoner was not just a servant but had access to music, the German ensemble La Ninfea present a programme of French baroque music designed not to cheer the prisoner in his lonely cell but rather to reflect his desperate situation. There are pieces for two recorders and continuo, duets for two gambas, solos for recorder or gamba with continuo and two for solo theorbo. The prevailing melancholy mood is lightened by the occasional fast movement and in two sets of arrangements by La Ninfea of music originally adapted for theorbo by Robert de Visée. On the whole, the programme flows nicely along with stylish performances of some beautiful music, but this is perhaps not a CD to listen to if you are already feeling depressed.

Victoria Helby

I musicisti dell'imperatore Raffaella Milanesi S, G.A.P. Ensemble 74' 10"
Pan Classics PC 10324
Caldara Risoluto son già tiranno amore Piani
Violin sonatas op.1, 3, 9 A. Scarlatti Appena chiudo gli occhi **Vivaldi Lungi dal vago volto**

The title of this recording is something of a marketing ploy – yes, Piani was one of the most highly paid musicians in Vienna but the violin sonatas on the disc were published in Paris before he was employed by the Habsburgs; Alessandro Scarlatti and Vivaldi's connection was as composer to a particular residence, but how many times did they actually encounter the emperor? Caldara, of course, deserves his place on the programme, though I am not sure

what he would have made of this performance of one of his many cantatas... Giovanni Antonio Pieni (G.A.P., as in the ensemble's name) published his op. 1 (a set of 12 violin sonatas) in 1712, nine years before he began almost 40 years of Viennese service. They build on the Corellian model but have not the stature of Locatelli, Veracini or even Geminiani. They are, however, all I can conscientiously recommend about this CD. The problem is not the singer's voice *per se*, but rather one of balance; the aggressive opening chords of the Caldara recitative and the "dramatic" interpretation that ensues from singer and continuo alike in my opinion distorts the music, pushing it to the very limits of good taste, especially with regards to tuning. In the arias, the single sweet-toned violin struggles to compete with the full-blooded operatic voice, and when the music has to slow down – not only for the entire "B" section, but also for some of the vocal coloratura – that really was too much; it was scarcely less uncomfortable, listening to the violinist's efforts to draw not only more volume but also drama from his instrument. BC

CLASSICAL

Haydn Symphonies Nos. 57, 67, 68 Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, Nicholas McGegan 78' 29"
Philharmonia Baroque Productions PBP-08

A colleague once said that the best Haydn symphony was the one that he had heard last. This has worked for me over the years, with very few exceptions, and certainly I found this dictum true again in Nicholas McGegan's selection of these three symphonies. Haydn's creative imagination never ceases to astound. A simple variation movement (57/2) of a theme of just three notes with a simple I-V-I harmony held me spellbound. Haydn uses interesting innovations of *col legno* (67/2) and even *scordatura* (67/3), with a solo second violin playing a drone on the G string tuned down to F accompanying the first violin solo playing in dizzying heights (up to a top B flat). Haydn unusually places his *Minuetto* before his *Adagio* in No. 68, the latter lasting over 12 minutes – as long as the same movement in Beethoven's Choral Symphony, for example. Of course, the finales of all three will never cease to delight the listener. The symphonies of the 1770s don't always get the attention they deserve, and it is good that these works have here got such a special airing on period instruments. The Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra is on top form under McGegan's direction, and so, for Haydn lovers, this CD is a must. Which is the best of the three? The last one I put on!

Ian Graham-Jones

Mozart • Mendelssohn Chiaroscuro Quartet
Aparté AP092 58' 06"
K421 + op. 13

Chiaroscuro is a period-instrument quartet that is not frightened of its pianissimos. So many ensembles pay little attention to the full range of dynamics that are available on their instruments. These players, however, all emanating from the Royal College of Music in London but now in a residency in France, are able to immediately captivate the attention of the listener. Through their use of wide-ranging dynamics, the discreet use of rubato, and impeccable intonation and attention to detail, they are able to convey the dramatic intensity of the fine D minor work's first movement, as well as the skittishness of the minuet's trio section and the last movement's variations. The booklet notes relate ideas and compositional principles in Mendelssohn's second string quartet of 1827 to material from Beethoven's late string quartets, but I would need a more careful study of the scores to see any but a general relationship. For those that, like me, only enjoy classical quartets on gut strings and with only the most sympathetic use of vibrato, this is an impressive CD, and I look forward to hearing more from these players.

Ian Graham-Jones

Rolle Jauchzet dem Herrn alle Welt: 31 motets Kammerchor Michaelstein, Sebastian Göring 119' 58" (2 CDs)
cpo 777 778-2

Though nowadays considered a secondary figure in the history of music, Johann Heinrich Rolle was actually widely respected in his own day. His oratorios were very widely disseminated and performed (even enjoying the relative luxury of being printed in vocal score format) and it is not difficult to see why: in an age that saw musical language simplified to a certain degree (complex baroque counterpoint giving way to a more tuneful style), Rolle's works manage to combine elements of both. The 31 motets on these two CDs are perfect examples of this – and more, since they show that Rolle also understood how to vary the textures and styles within relatively short works to give them all a satisfying overall shape. The discs are taken from different recording sessions (2004 and 2006 respectively) but there is no discernible difference in the quality of the performances. If I am brutally honest, I do find the alternation between the solo ensemble and the tutti a little unbalanced – the choir is simply too big (22 singers with single strings doubling, while the second disc has two singers per part and only lute or guitar accompaniment). Otherwise, this is a fine achievement and convincingly

demonstrates that choirs need not simply jump from motets by Bach to those by Mendelssohn! BC

Les ombres heureuses: Les organistes français de la fin de l'Ancien Régime
Olivier Baumont 63' 31"
Radio France TEM316053
Music by Balbastre, Beauvarlet-Charpentier, Benaut, Corrette, A-L Couperin & Lasceux

The CD was so tightly jammed into the central jaws that it snapped in half as I tried to get it out of the box. However I found snippets of all the pieces on the internet. The period leading up to the French Revolution formed the technical peak of the French Classical organ although the music written for it didn't reach similar heights. In France, the musical highlight came around 1700 with De Grigny, after which pieces became increasingly secular and fanciful in character – and more fun. Pushing the earlier Baroque forms and colours to extremes, the likes of Balbastre ended up providing entertainment for the revolutionary populace in the newly designated Temples of Reason, saving many important organs from destruction in the process. This CD covers most of the composers of the mid to late 18th century, along with the varied musical styles, most loosely based on the earlier Baroque concepts of registration and form. The 1748 Dom Bedos organ in Sainte-Croix, Bordeaux, is one of the finest surviving organs of this period, with a rich palette of tonal colours. The 1791 Erard-frères piano organisé used for several central tracks produces a fascinating and unusual sound and brings the sound world into the domestic scene. Olivier Baumont takes this repertoire seriously, as he should, and is a compelling advocate for an often-criticised period of French music.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

19th CENTURY

Hoffmann Symphony • Overtures Witt Sinfonia in A Kölner Akademie, Michael Alexander Willens 61' 39"
cpo 777 208-2

Sandwiched between two lively symphonies, each equally deserving of a place in the repertoire of most orchestras looking to explore the music of Beethoven's contemporaries, are the overtures to Hoffmann's *Undine* and *Aurora*, considered by many as the first Romantic operas in German. In the case of the latter, Willens and his ever impressive band opt to resolve the final cadence that originally led into the work's opening chorus into one of the marches from its closing pages. (On my equipment, that caused an extra track to appear, so the Witt was tracks 8-11). I was more often reminded of Haydn than Beethoven, but I

imagine that is what one would expect; all credit to cpo and the Kölner Akademie for continuing to present us with "new" music that can only help to broaden our understanding of those composers in whose shadows the likes of Hoffmann and Witt have laboured for too long, and – in the case of this recording for one – provide an easy evening's entertainment. BC

Ries Three Sonatas for Violin and Piano
Eric Grossman, Susan Kagan 77' 44"
Naxos 8.573193
Opp. 8/1 in F & 2 in c, 19 in f

As with a previous recording of Ries's music, I asked for this review copy because the music is woefully unknown and otherwise unavailable. Susan Kagan has already been on something of a mission for Naxos, with several piano recitals under her belt and here she is joined by the mellow sounds of Eric Grossman's violin for three contrasting sonatas, each with more in common with Beethoven than with Mozart and each worthy of a place in the regular repertoire; it is slightly odd that keyboard and larger chamber music have been bitten by the HIP bug, but not really the solo sonata (apart from Beethoven!). BC

VARIOUS

In mulieribus: Live 2, 2009-2014 48' 49"
6 19981 36032 6 www.inmulieribus.org

This is a follow up to their previous CD, which I'll mention later. There are eight lady singers (assuming that the artistic director, Anna Song, also sings). The programme begins with the earliest piece, *Venite omnes cristicole* from Codex Calixtinus (c.1150), lasting 1'28", followed by Carpentras (c.1470-1548) *Recordare Domine*, which is three seconds longer. The longest piece is Ivan Moody's *Cum natus esset Jesus*, which is impressive without the backward-looking of Kingsbury's *Hodie Christus natus est*. Other composers are Josquin, Brumel, Byrd and two substantial (and familiar) anonymous pieces, *Thys endere nygth* and *Mervele nocht, Joseph*. There are texts and translations, but no notes. Personally, I'd be happier to have male rather than female ensembles, but this is convincing, and the forthcoming departure of Anonymous Four is a sad loss: I'd rather have one-to-a-part or more than two. CB

A December Feast: Carols and motets for Christmas and other feasts in December In mulieribus 54' 26"
6 19981 31142 7

On the whole, I find this earlier disc (2010) slightly preferable, though *Live 2* does have a substantial contemporary work. The longest piece is *Sederunt principes*, Perotin's

four-voice setting for St Stephen in 1199 with three intertwining top parts and a slow chant below, which continues while the virtuosi have breaks. The disappointment is the Victoria and Palestrina – neither are particularly suited to female voices when compared with the rest of the programme, and it would have been interesting to have music that (whether written high or low) would have fitted better. Good to have 1' 49" of Maxwell Davies's *The Fader of heven*, though there could be more! But any critical comments shouldn't prevent buying it for next Christmas. CB

The Music of the Habsburg Empire: The Austrian sound of the Baroque era Ars Antiqua Austria, Gunar Letzbor 609' (10 CDs)

Pan Classics PC 10311 (© 2002-2015)

If, like me, you thought this was a simple re-packaging to make more money from old recordings, think again! Although there is, of course, an element of truth in my original impression, six of the discs are actually new releases. Each is devoted to one geographical area – some whose only connection with the Habsburgs is that the court employed musicians from there! In numerical order they are: Slovakia, Slovenia, Hungary, Poland, Bohemia,* Moravia, Spain,* Venice, Paris and Rome. The discs marked with asterisks are live concert recordings while the others are from the studios of NDR and ORF Oberösterreich (1-4, 8 & 10, and 6 & 9 respectively). In listening to them, one must bear in mind Letzbor's fascination with "natural sound recording" – bringing the listener as close to what the performer hears as possible. The booklet notes are minimal, so, for example, there is no explanation of why Stölzel appears on the disc devoted to Bohemia, and – since he was employed there as music director and composer to music-loving count (devotee of Vivaldi's Op. 8 concertos) – it seems a little odd that he is represented by the enharmonic keyboard sonata rather than one of his concertos, or even one of the many as yet unrecorded trios. As a concept (discovering little-known composers from different parts of the Austrian empire), this is fun, though some of the performances are a little odd – tracks where the lute part shares the melody with the violin throughout were particularly strange – and some discs mix arty with rustic music a little too à la Savall for my taste. BC

Comédie et Tragédie: Orchestral music for the theatre Volume 1 Tempesta di Mare Chandos Chaconne CHAN 0805 67' 04"
Suites from: Lully *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*
Marais *Alcyone* & *rébel Les élémens*

The presentation of dance suites collected

from French operas is nothing new, of course, though an extended and wide-ranging series such as this would still be more than welcome, particularly of the pre-Rameau repertoire. The danger is that, in order to emphasize its attractiveness, the lily is gilded by excursions to and beyond the edge of likely performance practice and the results, while they may well attract some, may irritate others. In this recital, questions can be asked of the pitch of the recorders, the over-instrumentation of the continuo, the use of percussion and the changing instrumentation within movements. I sometimes feel that performers who do that are suggesting that they don't quite believe in the music. The playing from this top band is all very good — sample the Rebel Chaconne if you need re-assurance — though for me it never quite catches fire, especially in the Lully. The booklet is more than adequate, though the note deals with the suites in chronological order whereas the performance puts Rebel in the middle. Finally, some may feel that the sound is rather dry and constricted, even by theatrical standards.

David Hansell

Guerre et Paix 1614-1714 H. Bayodi-Hirt, P. Bertin, D. Carnovich, D. Guillon, Ch. Immller, M. B. Kielland, S. MacLeod, N. Mulroy, Ll. Vilamajó, La Capella Reial de Catalunya, Le Concert des Nations, Hespérion XXI, Jordi Savall 153' 45" (2 CDs in book)

Alia Vox AVSA9908

I had real problems listening to this — and I wonder if I am alone in not enjoying these baroque / folk / ethnic / Hollywood or whatever it is actually trying to be. I do get the premise — to present music from both sides of a conflict and the celebration of its resolution, but still I struggled to cope with the constant to-ing and fro-ing between repertoires and sound worlds — Savall's orchestration of the Catalan national anthem (really!) stuck out like a sore thumb. And yet there is some fine music-making here, too, like a lively account of Rosenmüller's *Siehe an die Werke Gottes* (though I'm not sure that so large a choir would have been available to any of the composer's contemporaries). The book (at nearly 400 pages!) not only has texts and translations (no fewer than six languages!) but also a number of essays on a century of war in Europe, as well as contemporary illustrations and plenty of publicity shots for the various ensembles involved (the recordings themselves range from 1996 to 2014) and the usual discography. Fans of Savall and Co. (including the Rothschilds, apparently) will lap this up, but I'm afraid that — for much of the time, at least — it did little for me.

BC

Psalmus: Psalms in Christian Jewish dialogue Deutscher Kammerchor, Michael Alber, Christophorus CHR 77396 (73' 29")

Martin Bail calls his introductory notes "Parallelismus Musicarum: Psalm Settings in a Christian-Jewish Dialogue", alluding to the parallelism of Hebrew poetry which, as he says, aids musical elaboration of the psalms, and in particular responsorial singing. He gives a concise but informative account of the 19th-century movement in Germany to reform synagogue music by interacting with Christian composition, and a similar attempt to reform Christian music. His analyses of psalm settings by Schubert, Mendelssohn, Lewandowski and Rheinberger are amply illustrated by the beautiful singing of the Deutscher Kammerchor, whose placing of phrases in time and space emphasises the structure and antiphonal effect. The more conventional compositions of Alfred Rose precede an atmospheric performance with extra-musical effects of verses from psalms on the theme of water by Gilead Mishory, currently Professor of Music in Freiburg. The finale of the recording is Schönberg's "De profundis", based on Psalm 130, with its expressive use of twelve-tone technique.

This is a choir with exceptional mastery of dramatic techniques and high quality of sound from cantorial to soprano solo. Amateur choirs singing mostly a capella might aspire to emulate such subtle and skilful interpretation, and I recommend the recording to choir masters and church or chamber choristers, in particular.

Diana Maynard

There follows a selection of recent Glossa re-releases — all the numbers given should be preceded by GCD C8

Pedro de Escobar: Missa in Granada (c.1520) Ensemble Cantus Figuratus, Dominique Vellard 0015, 55' 59"

This fine recording, made in 2000, was first issued on the Christophorus label in 2003. Escobar was originally from Porto; in the early 16th century he was music director and *Magister Puerorum* at Seville Cathedral, where he may have taught the young Morales. His four-voice mass, recorded here, is preserved in a manuscript from Tarazona Cathedral; the performance sets it in the context of a Marian feast as it may have been celebrated in the Capilla Real of Granada Cathedral in the early 16th century, using appropriate Spanish proper and adding three Peñalosa motets. Much musical care has clearly gone into the project, though the (continuing) controversy over the use of instruments to accompany or replace the polyphony, and

indeed the size of choir used, has to my ears not been satisfactorily settled. A mixed ensemble of some ten voices is used throughout for the Escobar Ordinary, with shawms and sackbuts being added in, e. g., the opening *Kyrie* and the *Sanctus*: the instruments actually replace the voices in the first *Agnus Dei* invocation. Conversely, a goodly proportion of the chant (e. g., much of the *Gradual*) is sung by one or two soloists. Overall, the effect is to make much of the polyphony sound rather homogenous and slightly lacking in subtlety; the intermittent addition of the 'loud' reed instruments only exaggerates this. The chant is beautifully sung, with appropriate rhythmic and cadential melodic embellishment; it would be fascinating to hear the polyphony similarly done by soloists!

Alastair Harper

Music in the time of Velázquez Ensemble La Romanesca, José Miguel Moreno 0201 62' 45"

It is hard to believe that this sparkling recital was originally issued in 1993; the repertoire it explores, that of 17th-century Spanish secular music, remains relatively little known. Much of the vocal half of the disc is devoted to the theatre music of Juan Hidalgo, who was closely associated with the great dramatist Calderón. Marta Almajano's delicate and precise soprano negotiates his teasing and rhythmically plex lines with aplomb — try the delightful 'Cuidado, Pastor' for an appetite whetter. I particularly enjoyed Sebastián Durón's lovely 'Sosieguen, descansen', with its haunting gamba-obbligato'd triple-time refrain. Unfortunately the booklet only gives the texts in Spanish; with such dramatically conceived music, translations would have been very helpful. Moreno and the players of Ensemble La Romanesca come to the fore in the remaining half of the disc, with a dazzling display of variations on well-known grounds of the period, e. g. the lovely Sanz *Canarios*, along with a couple of more extended fantasias; that by Salaverde is especially memorable.

Alastair Harper

Zelenka: Trio Sonatas Paul Dombrecht, Marcel Ponseele, Danny Bond, Chiara Banchini 0014 108' 35", 2 CDs

Those unfamiliar with Zelenka's set of six trio sonatas (four for two oboes and two for violin and oboe) may have noticed the timings for the two CDs. These work out at an average of about 18 minutes per sonata. In these works is none of the shallow writing that can be found, for example, in some of Zelenka's more well-known Italian contemporaries; for these are massive works, requiring careful listening to appreciate the vastness of the structure

of the *allegro* movements in particular. These two discs are, I think, a re-mastering of the earlier vinyl recording by these great baroque virtuosi of the 1980s, and it is good to have all the sonatas available on CD. The only other recordings still available are the original Heinz Holliger of 1972 and just one period instrument recording by Ensemble Marsyas — but this is a single disc containing only three of the sonatas. The term *trio sonata* is perhaps a misnomer, as the bassoon often has a virtuoso *concertante* part independent of the continuo line. Zelenka, an embittered recluse in later life, never managed to achieve the positions he had aspired to, and his music, admired by both Telemann and J. S. Bach, was never published in his day. It was Smetana who first revived some of his orchestral music, though these sonatas remained unpublished and probably unperformed until the 1960s. So often reissues can sound dated, but this complete version loses nothing in its reincarnation. The booklet gives a comprehensive account of Zelenka's life and the source material for these works, but could perhaps have included a little about the music itself. These players still sound on top form (although the harpsichord continuo could barely be made out) and it is one that I have enjoyed listening to.

Ian Graham-Jones

Giuseppe Sammartini: Concertos for the organ, op. 9 Fabio Bonizzoni, La Risonanza 1505, 63' 17"

This is a re-release of a 2000 recording. Giuseppe was the elder brother of the better known Giovanni Battista. Born in 1695, he left Milan for London in 1728, where he stayed until his death in 1750, making quite a name for himself. These concertos, published after his death for "Harpsichord or Organ", are domestic in scale, with just two violins, cello and bass alongside the organ. It is not clear when they were composed, but they have more of a Rococo than Baroque feel to them, rather enhanced by the playing style on this CD. The spiky solo registrations are not in keeping with the English organ of the period, nor is the over-articulated performance style. Bonizzoni keeps to the

two-part structure of most of the organ solos (without infilling the harmonies, a two-part structure of most of the organ, a debatable point for this repertoire), but it is a shame that he doesn't make more of the organ when in its continuo role — it is more-or-less inaudible. The notes give no information on the organ, but I have afeeling it is later than this repertoire. It is certainly not in any English or Italian early to mid 18th-century style. Two lively little Sonatas by Giovanni Battista Sammartini complete the disc. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

Beethoven: Symphony No. 9 Orchestra of the Eighteenth Century, Frans Brüggen 1120, 65' 06"

Period instrument performances of Beethoven's symphonies are relatively few and far between compared with the array of modern orchestral ones, so it is good to have another of the composer's great masterpiece. The only other one I have to compare it with is the complete 2010 set on five CDs conducted by Emmanuel Krivine (Naïve), and my preference is undoubtedly for the latter. Brüggen, however, achieves a stunning pianissimo at the opening, with the strings almost appearing out of nowhere from the wind chords, but overall it lacks the forward drive of Krivine's performance. This is most noticeable in the scherzo. The finale's opening recitative, although more relaxed than Krivine's, is more flexible in its treatment. The soloists on both recordings are prone to a wide vibrato. It is strange that, although a continuous vibrato was not used orchestrally until nearly a century after this symphony was composed, vocalists still seem compelled not to match the orchestra in this respect. Indeed, it is clear from many sources that a constant vibrato in the voice only became the norm by the 1880s, beating their orchestral counterparts by a decade or so. A period performance should, whether vocal or instrumental, surely, follow Spohr's advice: "The deviation from the perfect intonation of the tone should hardly be perceptible to the ear." The recording quality leaves a little to be desired, lacking clarity and punch. This was disappointing, as it could have been so much better.

Ian Graham-Jones

FAMILY & FRIENDS

We have recently had two visits from one of Elaine's cousins who recently acquired a Chinese wife over the internet. Elaine had invited them since she wanted to find out more about this surprise addition to the family. Their month's visit to the UK was their honeymoon, so we thought we should be as helpful as possible, though patience ran a little thin when we discovered after the first night that our work computers were speaking and writing in Chinese. They had endured a week's whistle-stop tour (London, Oxford, Stratford, York, Edinburgh, Loch Ness, Glasgow and Manchester) and we picked them up at their last stop in a deluge at Cambridge. Our duties included delivering them to Bradford and it was then that we met Kathy Martins in Keighley (p.6) and then to deliver them from Morecambe to Heathrow for departure on the 11th March, the day of the Christopher Hogwood memorial (p.38).

We took advantage of the disruption to spend a weekend in the Lake District. We were not expecting any musical interests, but one of our oldest subscriber, Alan Bolt, had ordered a score of Handel's *Saul* recently, and we decided to go and see him. We arrived two days after his 96th birthday. He wasn't very mobile, but he had plenty to talk about. He gave up conducting a decade ago (and ceased being master of the hounds rather earlier, I assumed). I was too busy talking, but Elaine said that it was like a home from home upstairs as there was a vast quantity of performing material about. His wife, Alison, shared his musical interests and was a keen member of their local early music group — the Dorian Consort. We stayed so long that we could only gaze at the Furness Abbey ruins in the gloom, but are very glad that we called. Alan, if you are alive in four years, do tell us! I didn't note the date, but our visit was 8th March, so your memorable event is 5th or 6th, 2019: we've just received a diary that lasts the rest of the decade thanks to *Les Talens Lyriques*. Richard Abram mentioned yesterday that he knew an active musician at 111! So there is hope for us all yet!

CB/EB

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Unfortunately, printing and postal prices are such that we cannot afford to send out a free last issue to the many subscribers whose subscriptions run out at the end of May. (The first issue of the magazine was June 1994.) Invoices for those needing to pay for the June issue are enclosed with this magazine. Please pay promptly.

For the subscriber who sent a contribution for the last few years he hadn't paid, many thanks: we will, of course, supply you with any issue you didn't receive during that period. We would, of course, be delighted if the consciences of others were similarly pricked!

EB

OBITUARIES

Denys Darlow

13-5-1921 — 24-2-2015

I've probably had a more affable acquaintance with Denys than with Tim or Oliver. He was quite early in working on Bach and Handel in particular, starting with attempts at playing as stylishly as possible, but later using baroque instruments. His academic education was not top rate, so after schooling he worked as a runner for lawyers. During the war he worked on radar for the RAF, but his eyesight was too poor for active service. He studied organ with Harold Darke, conducting with Stanford Robinson and composition with Edmund Rubbra.

He moved to Surrey and established his Tilford Bach Orchestra. Later, he became director of music at St George's, Hanover Square, and in the 1980s he became director of the City of Bath Choir. He composed a Requiem for Bath, and a Missa Brevis, a Te Deum and the Stabat Mater. He was professor at the Royal College of Music until 1996, though continued conducting Handel operas there until 2002. Denys produced acceptable performances, though I've noticed that in quick movements, the players followed the leader, not the conductor. But he was well liked, and had regular audiences, particularly for the St Matthew Passion. He founded the London Handel Festival in 1978: this year's Festival is dedicated to Denys.

Denys was an only child: in return, he had twelve, in three marriages. I knew nothing in particular about his illness in his later years. Three or four years ago I called on his house a few miles from what was then the Beauchamp Summer School, but was told that he was not well enough to be visited.

CB



Emma Kirkby & Denys Darlow

Oliver Brookes

11-5-1922 — 28-2-2015

Oliver Ernest Brookes was born on the 11th May 1922 and his early years were spent in Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands, where he attended Bishop Vesey's Grammar School. He developed an interest in music encouraged by his parents, who held musical evenings at home where Oliver played the cello, often accompanied by his sister Greta on piano.

Oliver's war years were spent in the Royal Artillery Band and as well as playing the cello he learned to play the clarinet for marching duties. He trained as an accountant and worked in the family business of Brookes & Adams Ltd in Barr Street, Birmingham, and later Shady Lane in Kingstanding, Birmingham.

Oliver studied cello at the Guildhall School of Music under Arnold Trowall then joined the Element String Quartet in the Midlands where he learned much of the important cello repertoire. Interest in early music led him to take up the bass viol which he studied with Desmond Dupré and played in the Rameau Ensemble, this experience with various ensembles led to him being regarded as a highly esteemed chamber music player. He continued his researches into the history of stringed instruments and had replicas made such as the Tromba Marina, Renaissance viol, Crwth and Baryton.

In 1961 he became a member of the Archduke Trio directed by Kenneth Page giving many concerts and broadcasts and in 1964 the Archduke Trio was appointed piano trio to Leicester University. He was a freelance cellist playing with the CBSO, Orchestra da Camera, Birmingham Philharmonic to name a few, and he was on the staff of a number of universities, principally Leicester, Birmingham and the Royal Northern College of Music where he taught Viola da Gamba, and he was engaged for performances by the BBC for over 25 years.

He was a regular member of the David Munrow ensemble – Bass Gamba, Cello, Arpeggione and various wind instruments – from 1967 till David's abrupt death in May 1976. Oliver continued to play with the London Early Music Group directed by James Tyler playing a variety of stringed instruments, and this continued until 1995.

There were recordings with Academy of Ancient Music, Early Music Consort of London, London Early Music Group, The Kings Singers, Grosvenor Records & Roundelay Record. In addition, TV Productions included *The Six Wives of Henry VIII* and *King Lear*.

His later years were divided between his home in Ashburton, Devon, and America, where he gave lectures and concerts with Roxana Gundry. He returned to live in

Sutton Coldfield in the early 2000's where he continued to teach and compose. He was vegetarian from around the age of nineteen and he supported numerous animal charities. Music formed a major part of his life and as well as learning to play a number of instruments he inherited his father's interest in photograph and painting, and his mastery of numerous instruments must stand out as one of the main achievements of his career.

Oliver passed away at 9.30am in Good Hope Hospital, Sutton Coldfield. He developed a chest infection over a month ago and was hospitalised, then sent home but readmitted with the infection recurring. He was barely conscious most of this week and not wanting to eat anything and it became clear that he wanted to go. He was aged 92.

Adrian Brookes

There is little information available on Oliver Brookes, and most people remember him from the David Munrow period. So we're grateful to the family for this summary. The only contact I know is Roxana Gundry, who seems to be persona non grata to the current family; but she passed me on to them, for which I'm very grateful. The Oliver-Brookes-Collection, Indiana, can be seen on-line.

CB

Oliver Wray Neighbour (Tim)
1 April 1923 – 20 Jan 2015

I first encountered Tim at the British Museum Music Library while earning money during the summer of 1960 and 1961 by fetching and carrying books within the main library. We had a few brief conversations, but for most of my subsequent period as a music librarian at the BBC, I was involved with national and international meetings with Alec Hyatt King, who was in charge of the music library. Tim succeeded him. I found him somewhat shy, but I didn't have the advantage of sharing a seat on a day return up north as I did with Alec, and I didn't feel very comfortable with Tim until I'd known him for some time.

He was responsible for acquiring music and cataloguing. Sadly, the latter was done before computers transformed how catalogues can now work so easily. He was also involved in acquiring music MSS, which he passed on to the Library in 2007. He wrote on Byrd and Schoenberg. I last saw him in the Foundling Hospital at a music-library gathering, the first I'd visited for decades!

CB



IN MEMORIAM
CHRISTOPHER HOGWOOD

*Wednesday 11 March, St George's,
Hanover Square*

We managed to print a rushed biography in October, with a personal *In memoriam* by the Birks family in December. The formal *In memoriam* was an impressive occasion, long enough after Chris's death for people to have accepted his departure. The church was packed, with access by ticket – no formal fee, but a collection.

Alastair Ross introduced the event on the big organ, then the first formal event, after the Bidding, was the first two movements of Handel's op. 4 no. 4 with the band. A paragraph of T.H. White's *The Sword in the Stone* was a witty comment on learning. The extraordinary introduction of *Eternal source of light divine* was sung by James Bowman with trumpet: I would guess he was the first to make it work. The First Address (Colin Lawson) was followed by *O praise ye the Lord*, firmly sung with a mixture of hearty unison and four parts, plus a descant for the last verse. Auden's *Metologue to the Magic Flute* was, for 1956, a reminder that ludicrous stage directions were already familiar.

Two Purcell pieces were divided by the Second Address (Catherine Bott), preceded by a Pavan (Z750) followed by Emma Kirkby's *Now that the sun: she must have sung it so often, but as fresh as ever*. After prayers, Vivaldi ended the music with op. 3/1, alias RV 549; the four violins, in equal merit, were Pavlo Beznosiuk, Monica Huggett, Catherine Mackintosh and Simon Standage. After the blessing, the music concluded with *Let all the world in every corner sing*. The words are by George Herbert, the music by Basil Harwood, the opposite of the Baker and Croft of the first hymn. The *St Anne Prelude and Fugue* didn't make much impression: by then, everyone wanted to talk, and the congregation took a half-mile or so walk for an early evening of conversation at Dartmouth House, 37 Charles St. Most of the crowded congregation found their way there.

There were two rooms, one with wine, the other with water (maybe a bit more elaborate with soft drinks). It was good to see visitors from abroad – at least from USA and Germany. I reckon I stayed well over two and a half hours, and enjoyed a variety of friends and people I didn't know. I don't visit London much now, so I was relieved to identify only one person wrongly! There were some comments that a better use could have been made of Chris's instruments rather than getting the highest prices for them: they could have been passed on to worthy players and still would have afforded scholarships.

I was hoping to print the two Addresses, but *Early Music* was given precedence for February 2016 (Feb. 2015 issue arrived near the end of March). One of his relatives thought that a quick printing would be desirable for those who couldn't attend on the day, but that was not to be. CB

Jack Edwards
28-5-1937 – 1-3-2015

My first memory of Jack was a semi-dramatic event of dance covering some 400 years, performed at St John's, Smith Square. Peggy Dixon was the founder of Nonsuch Dances, and Jack performed the narrative. But where did the music come from? Jack and Peter Holman had met a few years before, and Jack assembled a body of young performers. Peter has had an extraordinary awareness of available and relevant music. I think that the event was 1973 – sadly, I don't know where my programme is; it was the a charity for Venice in Peril, though "Death in Venice" was preferred informally! Some young performers became

leading experts in their style – Monica Huggett, for instance, who works in both the East and West sides of the USA, but has a home not too far from A. E. Bolt (see p. 36). Jack had (and continued to have) a panache in all his dramatic involvements with Peter in the 1980s at Holme pierrepont Hall, near Nottingham, and later Opera Restor'd. Jack (without Peter) was also involved in opera in Chile, the Boston Festival, Australia and Drottningholm. I didn't see much of him over his last decade or two and his face looks rather different in the picture. Jack was quite a character, very individual but a delight to be with in performance or at leisure. Peter Holman is hoping for his obituary to be printed in a reputable paper. See picture below. *CB*



**Bruno Turner to receive
La Medalla de Oro al
Mérito en las Bellas Artes –
Spain's top cultural award**

*Instituto del Patrimonio
Cultural de España
Bruno Turner – Musicologist*

Bruno Turner, choral director and musicologist, was born in London on February 7, 1931. Raised in a strict Catholic environment, he learnt early chant and polyphony with such teachers as Denis Stevens and Thurston Dart. He began directing interpretations of Renaissance polyphony before the age of thirty and was choir-master of various ecclesiastical organisations between 1952 and 1973. In 1962, he performed the first liturgical reconstruction interpreting the *Missa Tecum Principium* by Robert Fayrfax (1464-1521). He was director of prestigious early music groups such as Pro Musica Sacra (1956-1964), Pro Cantione Antiqua (1968-2002) and Cappella Choir (1977-1984). Leading Pro Cantione Antiqua, he conducted a series of recordings for the Archiv label (Deutsche Gramophone). These recordings were collected in "The Flowering of Renaissance Polyphony" collection, comprising six volumes of works by Ockeghem, Josquin des Prez, Gombert and Francisco de Peñalosa.

His research in the field of plainsong focused on the Sarum rite variant of the Roman Rite, based in Salisbury (southern England) and also in the chant of the Iberian Peninsula and its relationship to the back polyphony. As a record producer, he has published over sixty LP and CDs for DGG Archiv prestige editions, Das Alte Werk, Harmonia Mundi, Hyperion and many others. He has collaborated in many reviews in the prestigious journal *Early Music*. He is vice president of the Renaissance Society and Singers, President (since 2007) of The Plainsong and Medieval Music Society (founded in 1888), member of the editorial board of the journal *Plainsong and Medieval Music* (Cambridge University Press) and regular contributor to the BBC between 1959 and 1980. In 2011 he was appointed honorary member of The Academy of St. Cecilia in London.

He is still going strong at the age of 84.



**OK - best of three decides who gets
their name on the 'cello suites...**

Invitation

We invite readers to contribute to
our last printed edition
Number 166, June 2015

Articles, news, concert reviews and letters:

all are welcome.

Deadline 10th May

Please send to:

Clifford.Bartlett@btopenworld.com
Redcroft, Banks End, Wyton, Huntingdon,
Cambs PE28 2AA

Apologies

Not only are we getting old, but so is the equipment we use – a breakdown over the last weekend in March has caused considerable delay.

We hope that the last issue will be delivered
on time!