

Early Music

REVIEW

Number 38

March 1998

ISSN 1355-3437

Price £1.50

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Early Music Review is published on the first of each month except January and August by King's Music, Redcroft, Banks End, Wyton, Huntingdon, Cambs PE17 2AA tel +44 (0)1480 52076 fax +44 (0)1480 450821 e-mail cbkings@ibm.net

Subscription rates

UK: £10.00 Europe: £13.00

Rest of World:

£20.00 (airmail), £13.00 (surface)

Cheques payable to King's Music except French francs (FFR115) and

\$US (\$30.00 airmail, \$20.00 surface) payable to C. A. J. Bartlett

NB. As we announced in the Diary section last month, we are preparing an exhibition for Roger Norrington's Tchaikovsky Experience in Paris, Birmingham and London in March; this may delay the production of the April issue.

Having written the programme notes for a weekend of Bach concerts by the augmented Purcell Quartet at the Wigmore Hall which included church music sung and played one-to-a-part, I could not resist the temptation to attend one of them, even though it was the weekend which I should have devoted to getting this issue of *EMR* finalised and to the printer. Thanks to someone throwing a supermarket trolley onto the railway line, I missed the first half. To compensate, in the second the interest in *Christ lag in Todesbanden* was even greater than I expected. Richard Boothby appeared without instrument as page-turner for Robert Woolley at the organ and there was no string bass instrument. It worked surprisingly well, though chatting to Richard afterwards, we agreed that it was sensible to think of the cello in the early cantatas (the programme also included 131 & 196) as part of the string group but not as a continuo instrument that plays throughout; the early Bach cantatas are still very 17th-century in their performance demands. I wondered whether the fact that the cello (or gamba) is played from a seated position was relevant. There are advantages in instrumentalists playing on their feet in church galleries: it helps the sound carry over the parapet. In secular music there may have been social reasons for players to stand. So many German sources have parts for two violins, two violas and *fagotto*: is that why? And if a violone is used, is it not so much for its low pitch as because it is played standing up? Comments from readers are welcome.

Returning to Cantata 4, the one-to-a-part performance made perfect sense, at least in the Wigmore Hall acoustics. The balance between voices and strings in the first chorus is so much better than with chamber orchestra and choir, and it is easier to get a tempo that makes the chorale melody singable and to achieve a real doubling of speed for the *alla breve* at the end of the movement. The absence of cello focussed attention on the voices in the duets far more than usual. It is a pity that these cantatas are not being recorded, especially since the two current complete series of cantatas perform them with larger forces (which I find odd, irrespective of any arguments about forces for the later cantatas); but we should be able to hear the short Masses on disc from Chandos in due course. CB

Books and Music

Clifford Bartlett

TROUBADOUR

Elizabeth Aubrey *The Music of the Troubadours* Indiana UP, 1996. xxi + 326pp, £41.95. ISBN 0 253 33207 9

Aubrey quotes Jean de Garlande on how to write a book review under four headings (p. 71). So first I need to praise or blame (chiefly the former) the work's *efficient cause*: i.e. its writer. The author is Head of Musicology at the University of Iowa and is involved in singing and playing medieval and Renaissance music (and favours capitalising the two periods differently). She seems to possess infinite patience, as is shown by the exhaustive tabulations of the form of the songs. But she clearly sees that as a means, not an end, and does not forget that she is dealing with songs that only exist in performance. Her chief weakness, if it can be called that, is a caution in speculating on the difference between what the sources record and what might have been sung. Even when the documents are contemporary, they are a poor guide to performance. 20th-century popular music sounds ludicrous if played straight from voice and piano copies. How much more must be lost in the transmission of such remote and scantily-notated songs.

We may treat the *material cause* (the paper and ink) and the *formal cause* (the layout) together. It is a neat, compact book, clear to read, with paper meeting the accepted standards of permanence. But, like other recent Indiana UP publications, it is bound so tightly that it does not stay open. This may be acceptable for paperbacks, but one expects hardbacks to lie open on a flat surface.

The *final cause* is the purpose: will the ignorant be made more knowledgeable? Yes. Some of the book is heavy going, and those whose interest is in following up what they hear on recordings may skip the analysis. But that still leaves a lot that can read with enjoyment. All foreign texts quoted are translated, including songs. There is a cautious chapter on performance; it seems somewhat optimistic to assume that a song's genre, poetic structure and style, notation, variants, and musical structure and style will tell you the rhythm, but they may modify your preconceptions. There are two ways in which this is less than user-friendly. Having just read a book on hymns (reviewed last month) in which 'verse' is a synonym for 'stanza', it is difficult to adjust to Aubrey's non-English usage of 'verse' meaning 'line'. And an alphabetic index of songs would be far more use than one arranged by numbers from a catalogue few readers will possess. The reassurance of the introductory glossary isn't carried through systematically enough; a few words on the language, for instance, might have helped those primarily interested in the music. How strongly was

it stressed, and was there uniformity in this respect throughout Occitania? – a matter that may have a bearing on performance rhythm. There is a little of the solidity of a textbook, but this can be recommended for setting out what is known about Europe's first performable repertoire of vernacular song.

FINDING DEVOTION

'Prions en chantant': *Devotional Songs of the Trouvères* Edited and translated by Marcia Jenneth Epstein. University of Toronto Press, 1997. x + 340pp. hb ISBN 0 8020 0840 2 £37.40; pb 0 8020 7826 5 £14.15.

This is an anthology of the 61 poems, 49 with melodies, forming a distinctive and overlapping repertoire which survives in two trouvère MSS normally abbreviated as V (Paris BN f.fr. 24406) and X (ib. n.a.fr. 1050). The editor supplies substantial (nearly 100 pages) introductory chapters on the sources, the place of the poems in popular culture, the texts, and the music. Each poem is printed in French with an English translation on the opposite page – it would have been easier to take in both at a glance if they had been aligned exactly and column by column, as in most CD booklets. The music (never facing the text) is also set out twice: on the left a modern-clef MS version retaining the original note-shapes, on the right a computer-set modern version with rhythms and bar lines. Most readers would, I think, have preferred a compromise: typeset words and black-blob notes on a modern stave with the original neums above the stave. But the information is here, and the rhythms are not as overpowering as those in the Gennrich tradition. You can only perform from this if you have a good memory or if you enlist the help of a photocopier, scissors and paste. But it is good to have attention drawn to these Marian songs in a secular tradition with a wealth of information in the same volume as the transcriptions. Treated with a little freedom, these mostly come out in accordance with the equal syllable theory, which currently seems the most satisfactory. I wouldn't have made the suggestions for accompaniment quite so prominent in the section on performance practice.

MASS FOR PHILIP

Bartolomé de Escobedo *Missa Philippus Rex Hispaniae*. SSATTB Transcribed & Edited by Anthony Fiumara with Paul Raasveld. Mapa Mundi (A100), 1997. 39pp, £8.30 (£7.50 for 6 or more copies).

Philip II of Spain is not a monarch particularly favoured in Britain: neither his possible marriage to Queen Mary nor

his Armada have ingratiated him with historians and the public, so celebrations of the 400th anniversary of his death are likely to be muted, apart from as an excuse for a good concert. (The 450th anniversary of Victoria is rather more congenial.) This mass is likely to have been written for Philip's accession in 1556 and is based on a theme derived from the solmisation of his name: *Philippus rex Hispanie* = mi mi ut re mi fa me re = A A F G A Bb A G. Escobedo was born c.1510, sang in the Papal choir in Rome from 1536-1554 (where he was querulous and affected a mini-cassock) and died in 1563. It looks a fine piece: there will be a chance to hear it later in the year, with a concert at St John's, Smith Square on 29 April and a CD from Westminster Cathedral Choir; you can sing it at one of Andrew van der Beek's Laycock courses (see *Diary*). It was sung in Spain on Friday 13 Feb. The original is in high clefs (G2 C1 C2 C3 C3 F3), transposed here down a tone, which gives a very low alto part and both tenors going up to Ab. It is also available down a fourth for male voices, and fits A A T Bar Bar B more comfortably. The edition is prefaced with a picture of the young Philip, two pages reproduced from the sole source, Vatican Capp. Sist. 39, and an informative introduction.

1597 CANZONI & SONATE

Giovanni Gabrieli *15 Canzoni + Sonate (Sacrae Symphoniae) 1597*
 Edited by Bernard Thomas. London Pro Musica (LPM GAB1), 1997. Score: 225pp, £20.00. Parts also available.

This has been around for some months, but I gather from players who have used early copies that there have been problems with some of the parts, so perhaps that is why I have only just received a copy. But it is worth waiting for, even though having two good performing editions of the set is something of a luxury. I wrote about Alan Lumsden's Beauchamp Press version in December (*EMR* 36, p. 4); the discrepancy in the number of pieces (that edition has 16) is because LPM treats the two versions of *Canzon in echo duodecimi toni a10* as a single item. Taking that as a point of comparison, there is very little difference in the editions: a listener would not be able to tell which was being used. LPM brackets naturals that have been added to cancel previous sharps which would still be valid by modern notational practice while Beauchamp adds them unmarked. In bars 11-13 Beauchamp's ties are very difficult to read (at least in the score); LPM has dotted notes (slightly less orthodox in terms of modern rules). LPM, however, is more orthodox in breaking groups of eight notes under a single beam into two half-groups of four. These differences are quite petty. LPM is in general slightly more spacious in layout horizontally, but vertically it needs to squash in more since it includes the keyboard parts surviving in MS. It looks slightly odd to me to put those for the first six pieces in two staves at the bottom of the system rather than have the choir I accompaniment with Choir I. In the piece we have been comparing, however, the organ parts are placed thus. But their inclusion means that the LPM score can only get one system to a page, while Beauchamp gets two, fitting the music more conveniently onto 8 pages

rather than 16. LPM gains from the firmer image of printing over photocopying and the use of a more pleasing music font. The most obvious difference is the matter of note values. LPM preserves the originals (which I prefer), while Beauchamp halves them (which Alan finds more acceptable to the non-specialist players that he teaches).

The LPM edition is available complete in a box (which is slightly too small) containing 23 parts. These comprise two different sets – it might have helped if that had been more obvious, e.g. by reversing the colours of the covers of one set. The main set contains 12 partbooks named and with contents as in the 1597 print, together with alternative clef books for *Tenor* and *Octavus*. This requires the shuffling around of parts between players, but seems the best way to organise them. Further alternative clef versions are included within the partbooks where helpful. Extra loose sheets allow for the *Canzon a15*. There is also an organ part, fully figured but not realised. If you are using an organ with each choir, you will need to order another copy. The other set contains eight partbooks (with a few extra parts tucked into the *Octavus*) with down-a-fourth transpositions of the first 12 pieces – rather more than anyone is likely to want at such a pitch. Individual pieces are also available separately at £5.50 for those a8, £6.50 for a10 and £7.50 for a12; Beauchamp prices vary from £3.20 to £5.60.

I am in two minds about the use of spiral binding for the LPM score. It opens flat on a music stand in a way that only a very expensively bound volume would; yet few libraries are likely to buy the set because that binding is not suitable for library wear and is not rebindable. It is also a bit floppy when held in the hand. But at £20.00 it is very good value. Eventually there will be a Charteris CMM volume to sit on the reference shelves, but I doubt if that will look any better than the LPM score or have very much to offer in the way of editorial improvements. The Beauchamp version comes only as separate pieces, but extends to all the vocal pieces of the 1597 set as well.

If you want to invest in the whole set, there are clear advantages in LPM; it looks better and has an introduction which, along with the notes by Tim Roberts to the Hyperion CD, is essential reading for anyone seriously interested in this music. But the Beauchamp separate editions are cheaper. It is those that I have used, and I have found no problems with them. Both versions can be supplied with transposed parts on request. The choice will, I suspect, be made primarily on note values and price. Editorially, both editions seem reliable as far as I have been able to check them.

Both LPM and Beauchamp are continuing with Gabrieli's music. Alan Lumsden is preparing the 1615 set (except for items available from King's Music) for his summer school, at which they will offer more idiomatic instrumental writing to contrast with the vocal repertoire of pre-Gabrieli polychoral music. The LPM edition is labelled *Andrea & Giovanni Gabrieli: Complete Instrumental Music*. I have seen an advance copy of Andrea's *Battle* and await the final edition eagerly.

NEW SARABAND

Three more issues from Patrice Connelly in Sydney: buy now while the Australian dollar is cheap (and give her some consolation for the increased cost of what she imports from England!) William White's 2 "*Diapente*" *Fantasias* (SM16) are among the few viol consorts to have been published by a big publisher: Peters issued an edition by Gordon Dodd in 1973, but it is now out of print. The title comes from the five-note cantus firmus (ascending in the first piece, descending in the second, which seems to be a sequel written after the first had become popular); a more logical title might have been *pentachord*. This is satisfying music to play; scoring TrTrTTB with optional organ. I'm puzzled why, having stated that not all of the organ part can be reached, editorial notes are added that are unplayable (e.g. No. 1 bar 11); in fact, the keyboard part seems quite carefully written and the absence of what one might think were essential notes should perhaps be respected.

The Tenor Viol Book (SM15) will help players extend their technique with solo music for the bass transposed for the tenor. It begins with exercises and divisions by Christopher Simpson and continues with music by Ortiz, Hume, De Machy, D'Hervelois, Young and Bach (BWV 1027). The last item presents problems for the harpsichord (reversing the normal method of publication, the main book is for the solo instrument and the keyboard copy is the insert), since the matter of the high tessitura of the right hand is not addressed; even if your instrument has a very top F, it isn't likely to sound good. You will need to work out your own octave adjustments. That apart, this anthology is a good idea and should help tenor violists develop beyond fantasy parts. It is also suggested that children might prepare for the bass by playing its repertoire on the smaller tenor.

I'm puzzled by an arrangement of an aria by Barbara Strozzi *Donna di Maestà* for recorder and continuo by Benjamin Thorn (SM18). There's no reason why recorders who want to play mid-17th century Italian music shouldn't call on the repertoire of the voice rather than the violin or cornetto. But, as I have said often before, why ignore the best guide to understanding the music that is available, the words? As early as bar two the recorder player has a problem: what is the relationship of the two crotchet Cs? It might seem more interesting to make the second begin a new phrase. But the text would have made it clear: the second is just a weak final syllable and should be played lightly (or even tied to the first crotchet) and the next phrase begins after it. Talking of ties, why are those between the first and second and sixth and seventh notes of the first bar missing? And surely it helps the player to know that the first 18 notes are a melisma on the first syllable of the text? Bernard Thomas points out in the preface to his Gabrieli edition the importance of comparing instrumental phrases in the canzonas with similar texted ones in his motets; it is absolutely basic to learning 16th and 17th century instrumental interpretation to know what singers would have done. If there aren't words, it helps to imagine

them; if there are, they should be studied, not suppressed, especially in a piece like this in which the underlay gives interesting clues for phrasing that is by no means obvious. Try bars 175-6 then check the underlay with the original (p. 11 of op. 2: it is in the Garland Strozzi song volume). So thumbs up to SM 15 & 16, down to SM 18.

CORDA MUSIC

There isn't much orchestral music from pre-Handelian London available so a suite by James Paisible from *She Wou'd and She Wou'd Not* (1702) edited by Peter Holman is most welcome. The pattern is familiar from the Purcell play music (still only available in facsimile, apart from the two suites Faber publishes): an overture and a suite of dances. This is an order designed for separate performance and does not represent the way the music functioned in the theatre. These movements are all in D major and come from a spoken play rather than a theatrical piece with other music, which may mean that they were intended only for a string quartet. But they can be played by orchestra, perhaps with oboes and bassoon added, or by a four-part oboe/bassoon band, though the recorder consort mentioned is more a sop to the modern market than that of 1702. The music is attractive, not too difficult, and does not require a keyboard instrument: useful for getting a new group into

NEW EDITIONS

CMP 461 J. Paisible: Suite from "She wou'd and She wou'd not" (1702). Score and parts £ 6.00
4-part theatre music from the Restoration stage edited by Peter Holman. For violins/viols/recorders/wind, etc.

CMP 443 The Earl of Abingdon: 12 Country Dances & 3 Capriccios Score and parts £ 3.75
2 tr. insts (flutes, vlms) & a bass. A stylish collection of folksy Georgian dances c. 1790

CMP 445 Roland Marais: Accompanying Rules for the Bass Viol. (c.1750) £ 3.00
An English translation. Rules for bowing and fingering on the bass viol, with a further set of rules on how to improvise divisions for repeats of dance movements. With music examples of the techniques discussed.

CMP 446 Les Nouveautés de Caix: Bk 1. £ 3.75
Suite for bass viol & continuo by Louis de Caix d'Hervelois transcribed and edited from the *Pièces de Flute Traversière* by Ian Gammie. Score and parts with a keyboard continuo realisation.

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shape or for educational purposes. The typeface may look familiar; Ian Gammie (Mr Corda) uses PMS like King's Music and Joed. (CMP 461; £6.00 score and parts.)

There is no reason why musicians should be good linguists, so translations of instruction manuals are always welcome. Roland Marais' *Accompanying Rules for the Bass Viol* is not a comprehensive treatise, perhaps just notes of his teaching. A double-column, bilingual edition would have been ideal, but Ian Gammie's translation includes some crucial words in French. The short text (four A4 pages) is followed by further explanations and illustrative examples added by the translator. A useful little book (CMP 445; £3.00). The series *French Music for Viols* attempts to demystify the French solo repertoire to players who are more used to consort music (English players approach the viol in a way very different to the French, who seem interested predominantly in the solo music). In *Les Nouveautés de Caix: Book 1* (CMP 446) Ian Gammie takes a suite for flute and continuo and adapts it for gamba, giving the player the chance to get the feel of the French style without having the technical problems that occur in most of the original repertoire for gamba and continuo, nor the frequent change of clefs – the solo part stays firmly in the alto. For your £3.75 you get two copies of a treble-bass score plus a separate keyboard part. Good idea, good music.

INDIANA KEYBOARD

Willi Apel *The History of Keyboard Music to 1700* translated and revised by Hans Tischler. Indiana UP, 1972. xvi + 878pp, £40.50 (pb). ISBN 0 253 21141 7.

Edward L. Kottick and George Lucktenberg *Early Keyboard Instruments in European Museums* Indiana UP, 1997. xxviii + 276pp, £29.50. ISBN 0 253 33239 7

Barbara Owen *The Registration of Baroque Organ Music* Indiana UP, 1997. ix + 284pp, £33.50. ISBN 0 253 33240 0

I used to have a copy of Apel's magisterial survey of early keyboard music in my office and have missed it for the last fifteen years. So I am very pleased to see it reappearing in paperback, sturdy but rather expensive. It is not a book that I would ever expect to read through again (I'm not sure if I ever did go from cover to cover), but it is useful for quick reference and its surveys of the repertoire, references to editions and clear accounts of the forms make it still a useful, indeed essential, companion for the serious player of early keyboard instruments. One particular merit is its treatment of organ and harpsichord music together. It has dated less than I expected. There have been new editions of major composers (e.g. Buxtehude) and facsimiles of major sources, but not very many editions of unpublished music.

According to the blurb, Edward L. Kottick has 'conducted tours of many of the museums': is he really a tour guide, or is this an example of the difference between English and American I haven't noticed before? This is not a formal catalogue of instruments but a readable description of them; like a good tourist guidebook, it is interesting to dip

into in itself, but also provides useful information for the traveller, including opening hours, phone and fax numbers as well as more organological matters. The copious illustrations are in the text, so not as clear as separated plates might have been; but no-one will be using them for serious study, and they give an immediate visual impression while one is reading the accompanying text. There are ample references to catalogues and relevant literature. The book is concerned with harpsichords, clavichords and early pianos; organs, of course, are mostly in churches, but are excluded anyway unless attached to harpsichords or pianos. While not offering the last word on any instrument, this gives a good idea of what is available and the authors seem to say the right things about the instruments they describe.

The first time I encountered a book about organs (our church organist had a copy of Sumner), I was fascinated by the stop-lists it contained for famous organs. But I never moved very far into the serious organ world, and my subsequent experience has been almost entirely confined to chamber instruments. So I resisted my initial temptation to pass this on to our organ expert and decided that it was a subject I needed to learn more about. This has stop-lists aplenty. The book is divided by period:

- I Renaissance & Reformation [and counter-Reformation]
- II Later Renaissance to Early Baroque
- III High Baroque
- IV Summation: Late Baroque to Classical [i.e. post Bach & Handel – some might prefer Decadence as a title!]

So the title is too limited, and the book is all the better for it. In each section the chapters are arranged nationally. Each begins with a list of relevant composers and dates, followed by specification of instruments. The author then sketches how the registrations were applied to actual music and concludes each chapter with suggestions on how to get similar effects on modern instruments. I learnt a lot from it, and I'm sure more experienced organists will too. My one criticism is that there is no glossary of stop names like the compact one in the *New Grove* organ spin-off. This is a book that the practical organist will find useful and is arranged and written so as to be a convenient source of reference to the non-specialist. But the organs whose stops are listed are infuriatingly omitted from the index.

BUXTEHUDE REVISED

Dietrich Buxtehude *Sämtliche Orgelwerke* herausgegeben von Klaus Beckmann Revised New Edition (1997).

Breitkopf & Härtel (EB 6661-2, DM 42,00 each).

Vol. 1 *Freie Orgelwerke BuxWV 136-153 (Pedaliter-Präludien)*.

Vol. 2 *Freie Orgelwerke BuxWV 155-176, 225 (Toccaten, Praeambulum, Ciacconen, Passacaglia, Manualiter-Kompositionen)*

What happened to BuxWV 154? It may be so obvious to the editor that it needs no mention, but it is a question that immediately came to mind when typing out the heading; a brief entry at the end of the commentary to vol. 1 could

have explained that it is an 18-bar fragment. It is printed in vol. 3 of the Bärenreiter edition (BA 8223, p. 72-3). And shouldn't *Praeambulum* be *Praeambula*? But this deserves better than sniping at trivia (or perhaps we should say triviums and praebulums, in accordance with our government's aversion to Latin plurals: New Labour, New Grammar). Beckmann's first edition appeared in a learned version in 1971 which was issued more cheaply without its critical apparatus, an odd procedure which is now explained as a condition of the subsidy for the academic version – a nice example of the outmoded (I hope) separation between players and scholars.

It is now common knowledge (thanks perhaps to Becker's first edition) that editing Buxtehude is a problem, not merely because of the lack of autographs (even one autograph can throw light on the sort of changes later copyists might make) but because the surviving copies have usually been translated from organ tablature to staff notation. Possible errors of transmission can sometimes be spotted by translating back into tablature. But it is surely too strong to call the surviving sources 'spurious'. The most obvious problem is the decision of how many staves to use. This is a matter which does not arise with tablature, since it just presents the polyphonic lines (it is a pity that a facsimile page of a tablature source could not have been included: there is room on the versos of the contents lists). Beckmann scorns the evidence of the transcribed sources except for pieces that are obviously for manuals only. But the generation immediately after Buxtehude seems to have normally used two staves: why is the later three-stave system better except when the music is sufficiently complex for it to be necessary? Beckmann tries to minimise the assumption that what the editor puts on the bottom staff is by definition a pedal part by ruling bar-lines through all three staves and not bracketing the upper two staves, sensible hints that no doubt most organists will ignore.

I do not have a copy of the 1971 edition so cannot offer a detailed check on the changes. Spot checks with Christoph Albrecht's 1994 Bärenreiter edition shows Beckmann more likely to make minor amendments, which the player is likely to accept since the continuous mass in which the commentary is squashed must be quite hard work to read even for native German-speakers. Beckmann's layout on the staves is more pedantically polyphonic, so in that respect probably represents both the hypothetical and the surviving sources more closely, but may be less clear to the non-specialist player. I made a close comparison of BuxWV 156 (coincidentally no. 20 in both editions) and was puzzled by bars 26-27, where Beckmann is far too concerned with counterpoint, to the extent that he even sticks two stems on a single pedal note. His desire to restore the contrapuntal notation of the hypothetical tablature ignores the fact that tablature must often have imposed a polyphonic manner of notation that the music did not always demand. When notating keyboard music on the music processing system we use (PMS), we often have to split chords into hypothetical polyphonic lines; that device has nothing to do

with the music itself, but is just a trick similar to one which those who notated keyboard music in tablature (or earlier in part-books) must often have needed.

Which do you buy? The enthusiastic Buxtehudean is likely to want both the Bärenreiter and Breitkopf because they each look at the music from slightly different perspectives. The Breitkopf works out at about £15.00 for each of two volumes, the Bärenreiter costs £22.50 for each of three, so Breitkopf wins comfortably on cost, even if in other respects the differences are more balanced.

VIENNESE BUFFA

Opera Buffa in Mozart's Vienna Edited by Mary Hunter and James Webster Cambridge UP, 1997. xii + 459pp, £45.00. ISBN 0 521 57239 8

I found this very heavy going and it occupied much of last month's reading time. So apologies to CUP: I consequently have several more of your books still waiting to be read. It comprises the papers given at a conference at Cornell in 1994. According to the opening paragraph, some 75 *opere buffe* were produced in Vienna between 1783 and 1792, of which 22 were written specifically for Vienna. A check-list of them would have shown that very few are accessible – one of the editors had to take down an aria that he discusses by ear from a recording and only later managed to get access to a score. I am worried how many of them the authors actually knew. If the subject had been *The Symphony in Mozart's Vienna*, a wide selection of the music would have been accessible to authors and readers. With some exceptions, I feel that the contributors are putting in their thumbs and pulling out a plum or two without knowing what else the pie contains. There is a massive amount of thoroughly commendable research on the verbal sources; but despite some illuminating analysis, I'm not convinced that what is written here would increase my understanding of, say, *L'arbore di Diana* anything like as much as listening to a recording a couple of times or seeing a production. Some of the papers here are useful background; others are probably twenty years ahead of their potential readership (on the optimistic assumption that in 20 years time more of the music will be available, whether recorded or in print). But by then, they will probably be out of date, especially those which stress the novelty of their method of analysis.

That said, though, this is a worthwhile book, with a lot that throws light on the Da Ponte/Mozart masterpieces. It is not surprising that Goldoni looms large, but I was unaware of the importance of Linnaeus, making a chapter with two words in its title which generally switch me off ('class' and 'gender') of considerable interest. Despite the sexist blurb for the series (this is the first *Cambridge Study in Opera*), which states that topics include 'the operatic presentation of women or the singers who portrayed them', this volume fortunately does not exclude consideration of male roles and singers, and one of its most impressive contributions, by Julian Rushton on tessitura and tonality, concentrates specifically

on *buffo* bass roles and indicates a much more sophisticated manner in matching music to the singers than has been believed hitherto. The potential that a book around Mozart has to interest non-specialists, however, is dissipated by its esoteric language. Is it necessary to write (p. 2) that the historicizing of Mozart's output implicitly valorizes an output? (Valorize seems to be a precise economic term that has been given a vaguer meaning in recent academic writing.) Later in the introduction we get 'constructions of multivalence' (p. 17), using a term defined on the previous page as opera's musical and dramatic meanings conveyed non-congruently in different domains. There is no objection to technical terms when required and using a recondite vocabulary when only that will do (as with Fabrice Fitch's Ockeghem book reviewed last month); but the material here is worth the effort of turning into language we can all read. There's a market in Mozart: why publish a book that most of his admirers can't read even if they want to? Without under-valuing singers' intellectual capabilities, I suspect that few who take part in Mozart's operas will read this, which is a pity: there is a lot they could learn from it.

In fact, perhaps what the subject needs is not a series of intellectual discussions but the sort of down-to-earth survey of the works themselves as is provided in Charles Osborne's *The Complete Operas of Mozart: a critical guide*, recently reissued in paperback (Indigo £9.99; ISBN 0 575 40119 2). The adjective 'critical' may, in the context of this review, be an exaggeration; but if the essential information, with an account of the plots and mention of the musical highlights, were available for the 75 operas that are the potential subject of the Cambridge volume, there would be a broad basis for surveying the subject in detail.

NEW EDITIONS

Antonio Vivaldi *Sonate c-Moll für Oboe und Basso continuo* [RV 53]. Edited by Ingomar Rainer. Doblinger (*Diletto Musicale* 1230), 1997. £8.35.

Vivaldi's only oboe solo is available in facsimile, along with two trios with oboe, from Fuzeau at about the same price as this edition. But if you need parts, this is a good way of acquiring the piece. In fact, you get a score with realisation, and two copies of a score without, with no tricky page-turns and with the third movement printed twice, once with the editor's embellishments on a third stave and once with a blank stave on which you can notate your own version. The movement raises the problem of whether you can fill in an expressive diminished seventh without reducing its dramatic effect. In other respects, the edition does not help the players, e.g. should you shorten isolated semi-quavers in the dotted opening movement (yes) or adjust paired quavers to triplets in the final (perhaps). But if you know about such matters, this is a good edition.

J. S. Bach *Konzert d-moll... Concerto in D minor for Oboe, Violin, Strings and Basso continuo after the Concerto in C minor for two Harpsichords BWV 1060...arranged and edited by Klaus*

B.V. MUZIEKHANDEL SAUL B. GROEN

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Hofmann. Breitkopf & Härtel (PB 5289), 1997. DM 32,00 (about £11.00). Parts (OB 5289) and pf reduction with ob, vln & vlc parts (EB8662) also available.

Bach's concertos keep scholars busy in guessing what they might originally have been scored for and preparing reconstructions. It is generally agreed that BWV 1060 (for two harpsichords in C minor) was originally for oboe and violin. Two versions have been widely performed: Seiffert's for Breitkopf (1921) and, more recently, Fischer's for Bärenreiter (1970). Breitkopf has now had another attempt with a version by Klaus Hofmann (PB 5289). Very sensibly, since there are arguments in favour of both keys, it is in D minor, giving performers an alternative to the Bärenreiter, which is in C minor. There are far too many minor differences for a quick evaluation, and I'm puzzled as early as bar 2: why does the new score omit the orchestral slur that presumably (since it is in the NBA score of the two-harpsichord version) has good authority. I suspect that it will be the key and the comfort of the oboist that will guide the performers' choice.

Georg Friedrich Händel *Three Sonatas for Flute and Basso Continuo*, HWV 374-376. Edited by Gerhard Braun; Realisation of figured bass: Siegfried Petrenz. Universal Edition (*Universal Flute Edition*) UE 30408, £9.90.

This comprises a score with realisation and two flute & continuo copies of the three so-called 'Halle' sonatas published by Walsh in 1730. Two of them (HWV 374 &

376) fail the simple test for authenticity of Handel's instrumental music: whether he uses any of the music elsewhere. HWV 375 in e is Handelian in essence, though the composer was not responsible for its published form. All are omitted from the standard Lasocki/Holman Faber edition, so you are not duplicating anything if you have that and want three more attractive sonatas from the same period; the edition is fine, don't believe the name on the cover.

Joseph Haydn *Concerto per il Clavicembalo o l'Organo. D-Dur. Hob. XVIII:2. Erstdruck* (H. C. Robbins Landon). Doblinger (*Diletto Musicale* 78), 1997. Score £21.40, solo kbd £12.35, set of parts £42.75, extra strings £3.60.

This is listed in the Breitkopf catalogue of 1767, though it may date from as much as ten years earlier; A. Peter Brown suggests that it is Haydn's first concerto. Its authenticity is confirmed by an entry in Haydn's own thematic catalogue, though there is one source which ascribes it to Galuppi. The edition follows the majority of the sources and gives an accompaniment for strings only; one MS has implausible parts for oboes, trumpets and timps. The sources (including Haydn's catalogue) call it a concerto for *clavicembalo*, but the restriction of its upper compass to c''' suggest that an organ was intended (or at least allowed for). It needs a brighter instrument than the average English church organ, but would make a pleasant change of texture in a concert using a continuo organ.

Mozart *Missa brevis in Bb for Soloists, Chorus, Orchestra and Organ, K. 275 (272b)...* edited by Franz Beyer. Breitkopf & Härtel (PB 5281), 1997. DM 46.00 (about £16.00). Also available: orchestral parts (OB5281), vocal score (EB 8624) and chorus score (ChB 5264).

For most English choirs, Mozart's masses begin with K317 and those he wrote earlier are ignored. This is a pity. They do not need large forces, and this certainly is well worth performing. The forces required are SATB soli and chorus. The score adds to the voices just two staves for violins and a continuo part which Beyer's introduction says should be played by violone, bassoon and organ, not cello, though the stave is headed cello in his score. The preface to the NMA edition is more helpful, since it lists the numbers of parts in a set that belonged to the Mozart family copied before 1780: SATB soli, two each of ATB ripieni, 2 each of vln 1 & 2, trombone parts doubling ATB chorus, continuo parts for bassoon & violone, 2 figured organ parts, and a conductor's cue-sheet labelled *battuta*. Whether or not one wants to recreate any particular early performance, it is surely useful for the performer to be given such information when available; we may dispute whether one or two singers used a ripieno part and whether a cello could share with a violone (meaning what in Salzburg in 1777?), but we should be given that information when authentic parts exist.

Carl Ditters von Dittersdorf *Klaviersonate A-dur (Sonata per il Forte piano) Erstdruck* (Rudolf Walter). Doblinger (*Diletto Musicale* 1196), 1997. £11.40.

The autograph of this sonata is dated the year of the composer's death, 1799. It does not have much in common with the sort of music Beethoven was writing by this date (the *Pathétique* was published that year), so the most likely use of this edition is to give students material for a 'compare and contrast' essay. Interest in the music is not helped by the ungainly appearance: Doblinger's setting is usually good, but here vertical and horizontal seem out of proportion. The *Menuetto*, marked *Moderato* and having the function of a slow movement, is the most interesting section.

Ludwig van Beethoven *Symphony No. 7 in A Major* edited by Peter Hauschild. Breitkopf & Härtel (Studienpartitur PB 5347), 1997. DM18,00 (about £6.25)

Breitkopf and Bärenreiter are independently publishing the results of re-examinations of the sources of Beethoven's symphonies. Editions in current use rely on the old Collected Works produced when musicology was less sophisticated and fewer sources were known. The introduction to this study score is mostly about the music rather than the sources, the only specific comments relating to the use of dashes rather than dots except beneath slurs. So in the opening of the second movement, quavers are dashed, crotchets dotted. Will that sound different? I will need the two new editions and their commentaries side-by-side to make any sensible comparisons between them. Orchestras that play Beethoven should consider whether their material needs refurbishing; if you want a new interpretation, a new set of parts is cheaper than a jet-set conductor!

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Charpentier – Premier Air (*Medée*: Prologue)

The musical score is presented in five systems, each containing five staves. The first system covers measures 1 through 8. The second system, beginning at measure 9, includes first and second endings marked with '1' and '2' above the staff. The third system, beginning at measure 18, continues the piece. The fourth system, beginning at measure 25, also features first and second endings. The notation includes various clefs (treble, alto, and bass), accidentals (sharps, flats, and naturals), and performance markings such as '+' and 'b' above notes. The time signature is 2/4.

A MESSIAH FOR THE MILLENNIUM

Anthony Hicks

Handel *Messiah* Dorothea Röschmann, Susan Gritton, Bernarda Fink, Charles Daniels, Neal Davies SSATB, Gabrieli Consort & Players, Paul McCreesh 132' 19" 2 CDs in box DGG Archiv 453 464-2

'A *Messiah* for the Millennium' is McCreesh's motto for this musical manifestation. More 'A *Messiah* for the Marketing Men', I murmur, mindful of massive promotion in the December *Gramophone* and moved to a morsel of mockery. According to the feature interview in that magazine, McCreesh is hoping to record one of Handel's dramatic oratorios, 'but, for the time being, DG wanted a *Messiah* for their catalogue, and *Messiah* it was to be'. (What of Trevor Pinnock's 1988 recording, also on the Archiv label? Apparently that is Polydor Archiv, not Deutsche Grammophon Archiv, but I can't elucidate further.) McCreesh has re-investigated the original sources and has impeccably assembled period instrumental forces, but he also wanted this *Messiah* to be 'thoroughly modern' and to evoke the 'passionate communication of an earlier generation, especially Sargent'. His research led him to the so-called 'Foundling Hospital' version of 1754, partly because the numbers composed in 1750 for the alto castrato Guadagni were 'recast... for a second soprano, an altogether more pragmatic solution today'. (I think that means 'no c.....rt...r required'.) Similar reasoning made Christopher Hogwood choose the 1754 version for his 1980 recording, the first with period forces, and he stuck to it rigorously. McCreesh, however, re-distributes the music for the two solo sopranos and has 'But who may abide' (originally D minor, in 1754 A minor) 'in a later [post-Handelian] G minor version which preserves a better tonal relationship with the succeeding chorus'. (In fact it puts it in the same key, an effect Handel

may have wished to avoid, and as the violin parts are mostly a fifth down from the original it sounds duller than both the A minor and D minor versions.)

I'm afraid I see no merit in a second recording of the historically quirky 1754 version, especially if subjected to 'pragmatic' tinkering. It means you get only the short version of the *Pifa* (here dispatched briskly, a suggestion of bag-pipes undermined by sophisticated soft dynamics) and the short 'Why do the nations'. Handel himself may never have performed the full version of the aria, but the first section at least is a superb musical paragraph and *Messiah* is diminished by its curtailment; Davies, always holding a true line, would have done it justice. On the whole the choruses impress more than the solo contributions. They do often have a sense of fervour, and the accuracy and fleetness the Gabrieli Consort bring to the 'duet-choruses' is no worse for being 'thoroughly modern'. The formal fugues have a Karajan-like smoothness – perhaps significantly, in view of Beecham's description of Karajan as 'a sort of musical Malcolm Sargent'. Some of McCreesh's tempos are odd. The dotted accompaniment in the mid-section of 'He was despised' (*Largo*) is effectively grim (if not exactly *un poco piano*): why is 'Surely' (*Largo e staccato*, similar rhythms) radically faster? And in the final chorus why is 'Amen' (*Allegro moderato*) slower than 'To receive power' (*Andante*), and the latter slower than 'Blessing and honour' (*Larghetto*)? But basically this is a pretty decent *Messiah* (no doubt I have over-reacted to the hype) and I hope it will release McCreesh to explore less well-trodden Handelian paths, where his questing approach is more likely to bring millennial revelation.

LUTE SONGS FOR COUNTERTENORS?

Lynda Sayce

As I was reviewing the Rickards-Linell Dowland disc (see p. 14), I was also mulling over the performance practice issues involved in the use of the countertenor voice and the transposition of lute songs in general. I do not wish to add to the already lengthy discussions of countertenor repertory aired in recent issues of this journal, but the question of the lute song transposition is a broader issue which affects many singers (not just countertenors) and therefore merits a brief examination. Because of the long shadow of Alfred Deller, the general public probably assumes that English lute songs are standard countertenor repertory. In fact, the songs do

not lie particularly well for most countertenor voices, and Deller's performance of them was sometimes assisted by his accompanist using a lute strung a third lower than the nominal pitch required by the sources.*

Virtually all of the songs are in either treble or soprano clefs and lie well for a high voice, either tenor or soprano. (A male singer, ideally self-accompanied, best fits the sources, as many texts are written from the man's view-point; but some composers, notably Thomas Campion, provided texts which are more suitable for female singers.) Songs in the

treble clef usually have top notes of F or G (I won't specify octaves for obvious reasons); those in the soprano clef usually ascend to D or E. The choice of clef was largely dictated by the desire to avoid leger lines, as all of these songbooks were originally printed with movable type, which doesn't handle leger lines particularly well. Clearly these ranges are not ideal for countertenors; some can easily sing E or higher, but many would not choose to do so, and most would quail at the thought of performing a whole concert of songs which hover around this area of the voice. So if countertenors are to sing the repertory, some transposition is generally required.

The songs have tablature accompaniments which indicate specific chord voicings on the lute and which require a lute in nominal g' to match the written pitch of the vocal parts. The timbre of a lute is drastically affected by the key and voicings chosen. The songs were all written by lutenists, who knew the consequences of choosing chord x over chord y. If we tinker with their tablatures, we tinker with the composers' intentions much more directly than if we transpose a continuo song or a piano accompaniment. However, the use of the g lute pitches many of these songs just a little too high for many singers' tastes. The problem is exacerbated by the modern practice of using relatively small lutes, tuned to g' at A440. The nominal g' lute of the old lute consort was the tenor-sized lute. We have a few surviving lutes from the period, of all sizes, and the tenor size was considerably larger (and therefore lower in pitch) than the instrument generally used by modern players as their g' lute (an instrument which corresponds to the historical alto). Modern players are often reluctant to use a real tenor rather than a modern tenor because of the larger size and bigger stretches involved; the net result is that the lute forces the songs even higher than they originally lay.

To transpose these songs you have three options, in approximate order of authenticity:

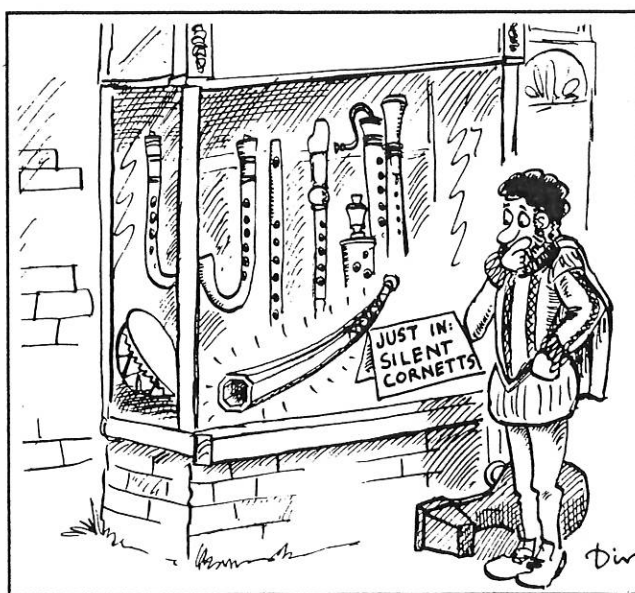
- 1) Use a bigger (and therefore lower) lute reading from the tablature. The old tenor lute was probably tuned a good tone lower than the modern equivalent, so the use of the proper size of lute is generally all that is required to bring the songs into a comfortable range for the high voices suggested by the original clefs.
- 2) Quite inauthentic, but possible with modern metal-wound strings, is the restringing of a small lute at a lower pitch, still reading from the tablature. This will give the instrument a heavier, muddier sound.
- 3) A more drastic option is to rewrite the accompaniment in another key, radically altering the fingerboard layout of the part, and thus its timbre. Note, when a downward transposition is required, this may mean sacrificing some bass notes which lie outside the range of the instrument in the new key.

I have laboured this point to drive home the fact that when these songs are too high for the voice, they can be transposed only with difficulty and at great cost to the sound. This issue comes to the fore with countertenors, who

generally need the songs transposed down at least a third or sometimes even more. It sounds as though the Rickards-Linell duo has opted for using a smallish lute, very heavily strung at a relatively low pitch giving a downward transposition of about a third. In spite of this, many of the songs sound as though they are stretching the singer's range in both directions; he copes admirably, but the result is sometimes uncomfortable listening. When, as there, the lutenist is of the heavy strings and nails school *and* has to string at a relatively low pitch, the lute's lowest notes are marred by the characteristic clonking thud produced by short, very thick strings, which no amount of artistry can disguise.

This leads us to the inevitable conclusion that these songs are not intended for voices which cannot happily cope with a upper range limit of between D and G with the further conclusion that *some* countertenors will be able to sing *some* of these songs; whether they should is a matter for others to discuss, but I hope I have made the point that they (or other low voices) should not appropriate this repertory at the expense of a viable lute part. The lutenist is more often duet partner than accompanist in these songs; it is our repertory too.

* Deller's accompanist was often the late Robert Spencer, who was himself probably the finest self-accompanied singer of the repertory. Bob was an indefatigable transcriber of lute songs into every conceivable key, sometimes for his own use, but also to enable as many singers as possible to experience these wonderful songs; but he also used a couple of otherwise identical lutes tuned a third apart to transpose the accompaniments as they stood. Bob fondly related that this had once led to a minor hiccup in a concert, where he had inadvertently picked up the higher lute and given Deller a nasty shock!



Peter Berg has pointed out that the English text of the excellent Rore disc reviewed last month listed an instrument called the silent cornett. Useful for those living in flats with thin walls! Jeremy West would do a roaring trade were he to add them to his production line.

LONDON MUSIC

Andrew Benson-Wilson

My first contribution under this heading could not have started in a more exciting way, with one of the finest concerts I have ever heard. Sonnerie (the all-encompassing name now given to the various guises of Trio and Ensemble Sonnerie) were at the Wigmore Hall on 5 February in a programme of Bach and Telemann called Brandenburg Four and Friends. An apt title, because the performers seemed like a crowd of good friends gathered together for a thumping good time. Something of a hen night, in fact, for this was an almost all-female do. The token male player was Gary Cooper on continuo organ and harpsichord, providing a superbly sensitive canvas for the other players to paint. He was confidently and expressively supported by Alison McGillivray in that often unsung hero role of continuo cellist. Monica Huggett was the stunningly virtuoso soloist as concertante violin in Brandenburg 4 and obbligato violin in the *Aria mit Chorale* from cantata 158 *Der Friede sei mit dir*. Sarah Cunningham was wonderfully expressive as soloist in Telemann's Suite in D for gamba and strings, and complemented Pamela Thorby's sparkling and vivacious playing in Telemann's Concerto in A minor for recorder and gamba. This was Telemann at his rollicking best – gutsy, raw and full of vitality. How he suffers from being so prolific! Why on earth didn't his PR consultant encourage him to hide away most of his music in obscure manuscripts to be discovered, one by one, over the succeeding centuries?

One of the many highlights was the baritone singing of Thomas Guthrie. His seemingly effortless self confidence, combined with a natural and unforced tone and an exquisitely expressive affinity with Bach's music was wonderful to experience – a singer to watch out for. Rachel Elliott's wide-ranging voice was ideal for the questioning and finally pleading role of the Soul to Thomas Guthrie's Jesus in the final duet of Cantata 152, *Tritt auf die Glaubensbahn*. She was particularly effective in the simple chorale interpolations in *Der Friede sei mit dir*. She was complemented in that role by the oboe of Catherine Latham who, playing recorder, joined Pamela Thorby in the concluding Brandenburg 4. Altogether a wonderful party.

I am afraid that few of these compliments can be used to describe the Trinity College of Music's concert a couple of days earlier at St John's Smith Square. Gavin Henderson, whose 50th birthday bash it was, is Principal of the College as well as Artistic Director of Dartington International Summer School – was it his presence that allowed some of that wonderful 'Dartington effect' of barely concealed chaos to pervade the event. The stars shone, of course. Emma Kirkby was delightful in Purcell's *Come ye Sons of Art away* and Bach's *Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen*, and Joanna McGregor was stunning in Lou Harrison's rumbustious Piano Concerto. But it was the playing of Trinity's early music groups that let the side down. Individually talented these young musicians may be, but as a group the lapses of intonation were all too audible. Such a shame.

I eventually managed to break through the bureaucracy of the increasingly bizarre and unhelpful BBC Radio Ticket

Unit to join the disorganised throngs suffering the BBC Front of House arrangements to attend Music Restored's 'Exploring Bach's Musical Offering' day at the Royal Academy of Music. The three concerts will be broadcast on Radio 3 during March at 10 pm on Thursdays. The day centred around the visit of Bach to Frederick the Great's court in Berlin in May 1747. At the first concert (5 March) the Purcell Quartet plus assorted harpsichordists demonstrated 'Bach the Performer'. Robert Woolley opened with a steady account of the 3-part *Ricercar* and was joined by Paul Nicholson and Laurence Cummings for the Concerto in D for three harpsichords (BWV 1063). John Toll was the fourth player in Bach's reworking of Vivaldi's A-minor concerto. Bach would probably have played the first harpsichord himself, with his sons playing the rest. Although all managed the amazing feat of staying in time and on rhythm, the sons seemed to play with more verve and excitement than 'Old Bach' (for those checking this out on-air, RW was to the left, followed by JT (in the concerto for 4), PN and LC). A bit more light and shade from the other players, particularly the continuo strings, would have enlivened the slightly plodding performances.

The Palladian Ensemble was joined by Laurence Cummings for a superb insight into 'Bach the Contrapuntal Gamester' (12 March), playing the 10 canons from the *Musical Offering* and 5 of the variations and the 14 canons discovered in 1975 in a copy of the *Goldberg Variations*. These really are some of the finest musicians on the concert scene – and who better to present a programme almost entirely made up of canons! I particularly enjoyed the exquisitely sensitive and delicate playing of canons 6, 7 and 8 of the *Musical Offering* and the concluding canon of the Goldberg set – a wonderful crescendo of the sinuous countersubject over the chorale-like ground bass which died away to give the most spellbindingly hushed conclusion to a concert that I have heard in a long time.

Some of the Royal Academy's talented early music students, under the interesting name of Puttanesca (I blame student loans!), gave an excellent and well thought out concert of music by Vitali, Telemann, Graun and Handel to a packed St Marylebone Church. A shame the BBC were not recording it. Mónica Marubayshi is a superb soprano. My only quibble was the heavy breathing of the violinist and, to a lesser extent, the cellist – a habit to lose before embarking on a professional career.

The final two broadcasts (19/26 March) will be of the concert by Sonnerie 'Bach in Berlin'. Sonnerie have had quite enough praise from me for one review although, apart from Monica Huggett, Gary Cooper and Emilia Benjamin, this was a different line-up. In the hall, the flute playing of Wilbert Hazelzet was a bit overwhelmed by the others, but no doubt the BBC boffins will sort that out. The concert featured sonatas and concertos written for, and in one case, by Frederick the Great. The colourful instrumentation of the final 6-part *Ricercar* from the *Musical Offering* was a delightful moment of repose.

RECORD REVIEWS

MEDIEVAL

Hildegard von Bingen *O vis aeternitatis: Vesper in der Abtei St. Hildegard* Schola der Benediktinerinnenabtei St. Hildegard, Eibingen, dir Johannes Berchmans Gödchi & Christiane Rath 69' 24"
Ars Musici AM 1203-2

What could be more authentic? A recording by a group of nuns from Hildegard's own monastery of Eibingen. Not that there has been a continuous tradition, and if there had, there is no chance that anything useful would have survived nine centuries. More important, the music is here sung by people who spend their life singing chant, still observing the Benedictine tradition. No names are given, but the photo shows a choir of 14. Some of the solo singing may not be quite as skilful as on other Hildegard CDs and there are some obtrusive voices in the choral sections; but the quality is extremely high, especially considering that there are only 60 nuns from which to select the choir. (Do they have to pass an audition before taking the veil?) I am happy to make allowances in return for the confidence and authority of the performances as a whole. The disc contains a Vespers service with antiphons by Hildegard and three of her sequences. The booklet is helpful, though it is confusing that the numbers given with the texts and translations are not those of the tracks. However individual Hildegard's music, the liturgical pieces spring out of chant and are most convincingly presented in a liturgical context by singers who have lived with the liturgy, chant and Hildegard in a way to which others cannot aspire. CB

16th CENTURY

Byrd 13 Motets from *Cantiones Sacrae* The Sarum Consort, Andrew Mackay 75' 22"
ASV Quicksilver CD QS 6211 £
1575: *Laudate pueri, O lux beata Trinitas, Tribue Domine*; 1589 *In resurrectione tua, Laetantur coeli, Ne irascaris, O quam gloriosum, Tribulationes civitatum*; 1591 *Cantate Domino, Exsurge Domine, Haec dies, Recordare Domine, Salve Regina*

This selection of five- and six-part motets by Byrd provides us with a generous disc of very pleasant and competent performances in a sympathetic acoustic. The Sarum Consort has grown in musical stature since its first recording for ASV (CD QS 6185) and a more focussed sound has given confidence to sing this rich repertoire expressively and persuasively. Andrew Mackay has given a lot of thought to the interpretation and the dramatic intensity of a motet like *Tribulationes civitatum*, which is impressively conveyed by his singers. In the more animated sections of *In resurrectione tua* a less sympathetic light is shone on the technical prowess of the choir. While the ensemble may lack the final polish of the Cardinal's Musick and the booklet notes are pitched at a less specialist level

than those accompanying the complete Byrd, this release provides some very enjoyable listening indeed. D. James Ross

Holborne Holburns *Passion: Music for lute, cittern & bandora* Jacob Heringman lute, Susanna Pell b.viol 70' 40"
ASV Gaudeamus CD GAU 173

The appeal of Holborne's music to the 20th century has often been eclipsed by his flashier contemporaries, but this CD exposes the variety of output which is not so evident in those other composers. I have quite a collection of lute CDs, but am embarrassed to admit that, if one of them was put on the player, I might well not be able to tell which it was and would probably drift off to sleep after dance number nine. Jacob Heringman prevents any such torpor by accompanying one section with a bass viol and including instruments less commonly heard on solo recordings, bandora and cittern. Music for these accounts for a substantial proportion of Holborne's output. But it wasn't just the change of timbre that was refreshing. The playing has both freshness and vitality in quantities to revive even my jaded palate, supported by a technical virtuosity that often had me wondering if I wasn't really listening to duets. Julia Craig-McFeely

Merulo *Toccate, ricercari, canzoni d'intavolatura d'organo* Fabio Bonizzoni (1519/89 Bizzari-Antegnati organ, Madonna di Campagna à Ponte, Valtellina & anon 16th century Venetian harpsichord)
Arcana A30 69' 15"

Merulo's keyboard music is not as well known as it should be. We tend to think of him filling the gap between Gabrieli and Frescobaldi, though he began publishing organ music as early as the 1560s, and he has been overshadowed by both. He was a pioneer of the hugely influential multi-sectional Italian toccata and the 8 toccatas on this CD are an eloquent testament to his musical importance. Apart from a photo, there is nothing about Fabio Bonizzoni in the booklet: a shame, because he is a fine musician. His use of ornament and rhapsodic invention is stylistically sympathetic and musically perceptive. Music like this can so easily be destroyed by those players who see a page of semiquavers as a boy-racer challenge. Bonizzoni has clearly thought out how each note fits into a musical whole – it is worth following a score as you listen. His interpretation of semiquavers varies from sensitive melisma to breathtaking ornamental fireworks. He also takes the pieces at a sensible speed, as compared with the tortuously slow Merulo interpretations on the Naxos CDs previously reviewed in EMR. Andrew Benson-Wilson

Negri *Le Gratie d'Amore* (1602) Ensemble La Follia 52' 37"
Dynamic S 2001 ££

It is refreshing to hear early dance music kept in its place – as the servant of the dancers. But although very jolly, the music is not strong enough to stand on its own. You can practically hear these musicians accompanying unseen steps; but without them, something essential is missing. There is a wide variety of instrumental texture, which the group justifies by Negri's own list of instruments used in dances – though is the ubiquitous harpsichord continuo really an essential part of a dance band of the time? This disk is certainly useful for dancers, since all the repeats are played so complete choreographies can be realised. As the sound-track for a video, it would work splendidly, but as a CD it is of specialist interest only. Rosemary Druce

Palestrina *Missa Assumpta est Maria, Missa L'homme armé* Pro Cantione Antiqua, Mark Brown 74' 19" rec 1990
Carlton Classics 30366 00782 ££

Pro Cantione Antiqua has had some bad press of late and I was determined to listen to this with an open mind. The two masses are presented with chant introit, gradual, offertory and communion (*L'homme armé* is set for the Feast of Epiphany). The opening plainsong is typical: the intonation is just too fruity, but the response is actually well done with a nice shape and unanimity. The polyphony is, of course, wonderful, but I was a little put off by the countertenor in the opening Kyrie and the tuning in the opening phrases of the ensuing Christe was 'interesting'. The singing is bigger than some people might like, but I wonder how much closer to Italian choirs they sound than English ones and whether we are too willing to accept English purity as the ideal. BC

Tallis *The Complete Works, vol. 3: Music for Queen Mary* Chapelle du Roi, Alistair Dixon Signum SIGCD003 64' 37"
Missa Puer natus est (with chant Kyrie *Deus creator* & propers *Puer natus est nobis, Viderunt omnes, Dies sanctificatus, Celeste organum*), *Beati immaculati, Gaude gloriosa, Suscipe quae*

What luxury: two Tallis discs this month. Vol. 3 of the ongoing complete works has as its main features the Mass a7 and *Gaude gloriosa*. That was the first of the large-scale mid-Tudor antiphons that I heard; I was stunned by the difference in style, though not quality, from the more concise and less melismatic *Lamentations* and *Spem in alium* which I knew already, and it never ceases to amaze me. It comes over well here, with a good flow and shape and with fine singing. The soprano problem of the earlier two discs seems to have eased, and indeed the ladies make a good boyish sound (though some may find such unsexing phoney). They tend to swamp the rich middle textures of the mass, but not enough to spoil an enjoyable disc. As before, the booklet notes by Nick Sandon are an asset. CB

Tallis *Spem in alium* Pro Cantione Antiqua, Mark Brown 60' 48"

Carlton Classics 30366 00952 ££

God grant we grace, Hear the voice and prayer, If ye love me, In ieiunio et fletu, Lamentations I & II, O Lord give thy Holy Spirit, Mihi autem nimis, O nata lux, O sacrum convivium, Salvator mundi, Spem in alium, Te lucis ante terminum

When I first encountered *Spem in alium* there was only one recording, by the Morley College Choir conducted by Tippett on 78s; now there is a wide choice. The version here does not oust the Taverner Choir from my affections; that has greater musical and technical clarity, and feels as if it is going somewhere, as one might guess from the timings: 10' 20" against PCA's 13' 52". *Spem* comes second on the PCA disc, introduced by the famous canon (with an unconvincing flat leading note). Such simple music exposes what worries me about the sound: chords wax and wane, drawing attention to themselves and obstructing continuity of line and phrase, in the way baroque violins used to. I suspect the similarity is accidental, but it has the same effect. If that doesn't worry you, this is a well-chosen selection – though a pity there wasn't an old tape of *Gaude gloriosa* to include as well. CB

Victoria and the Music of Imperial Spain

Mixolydian, Piers Schmidt 56' 59" rec 1989

Carlton Classics 30366 00802 ££

Padilla Missa Ego flos campi, Stabat mater, Victoria Missa Surge propera, Alma redemptoris mater

I should begin by pointing out that this is a release of an almost ten-year-old recording and has as a result two disadvantages: brevity (56' 59") and a slightly dated performance standard. The former is qualified by the fact that about half the repertoire is unfamiliar and the second is really limited to some rather fruity tenor singing which muddies the inner voices and occasionally spills over into the bass part. That said, while better performances of the Victoria mass are on hand, the works by Padilla are not otherwise available, and these are the better-sung repertoire on the present disc. The singers rise well to the challenge of his double choir Mass, an arresting piece which uses the fascinating device of each choir interrupting the other with dramatic interjections – in the Creed for example the word *credo* is interjected throughout the whole movement, while in the *Agnus Dei* the petitions *miserere nobis* and *dona nobis pacem* are dramatically juxtaposed by the two choirs. The disc is worth having for this intriguing mass alone. D. James Ross

Il Chiostro Manieristico Anthonello (Yoshimichi Hamada *cnt, rec*, Kaori Ishikawa *gamba*, Marie Nishiyama *hpscd*) 44' 23"

Cookie & Bear 00001

Music by Bassano, Bovicelli, Cabezon, Castello, Cima, Frescobaldi, Picchi, Salvatore, Selma y Salaverde with divisions on Au joly bois, Io son ferito, Onques amour, Susanne un jour

This is an all-Japanese disc, and the booklet has only names and the running order in roman characters, together with a couple of group photos that make me regret having complained about arty ones (or is the

cracked wall meant to signify the decline of the Japanese economy?) But the music and performances speak most eloquently for themselves, with brilliant cornetto-playing from Yoshimichi Hamada. My only criticism, apart from the shortness of duration (an economic rather than artistic comment: the length feels right for the content), is a slight tendency to gild the lily, to add what to me sounds like excess expression to virtuososo passages whose effect is diminished by such subtleties. Most impressive! CB

Available from Lindum Records

Fantasia de mon triste: Renaissance Lute Virtuosi of Rome and Venice Christopher Wilson lute 50' 00"

Metronome MET CD 1025

Spinacino, Capirola and Francesco da Milano (Ness 9, 12, 28, 31, 33, 34, 36, 84, 88, 106, 121)

This is a most welcome re-release of a 1985 Hyperion recording. It includes a beautifully chosen and well-varied selection of some of the earliest lute music to survive, and the well-produced booklet has excellent notes (in English and Italian) by Tim Crawford. Spinacino and Capirola have been somewhat overshadowed by da Milano on disc, but this goes some way to redressing the balance. The delicate and evocative music of Spinacino is noticeably earlier in style than the Capirola and da Milano, but is highly developed nonetheless. It can be difficult to appreciate on first hearing (or playing) and Wilson's interpretations are persuasive and helpful. Capirola's music is altogether more robust, and Wilson captures both the rustic fun of the Padoana (track 6) and the polyphonic intricacies of the intabulations. The pieces by da Milano include several of his finest compositions: try *La Compagna* (track 15) for a splendid combination of virtuosity and tautness of construction. The playing sounds effortless throughout. Wilson produces a beautifully balanced tone, and his interpretations are wonderfully evocative. The disc is a little short by present standards, but is still highly recommended if you don't have the earlier version. Lynda Sayce

17th CENTURY

Becker *Sonatas & Suites* Parnassi musici

cpo 999 411-2 67' 29"

Contains nos. 1-3, 4-8 of *Erster Theil*... 1674

This set of trio sonatas with suites was published in 1674, when Becker was head of Hamburg's city ensemble. The seven pieces selected for recording are arranged in ascending order of key and mainly consist of a 'patchwork' sonata in the Rosenmüller vein and a suite of *Allmandt, Courant, Sarabanda, Gigue* (suite seven opens with an *Aria*; suite five is exceptional with *Brandle simple, Gay, Amener, Gavott, Courant simple 1, Courant simple 2, Sarabanda*). Parnassi musici (two violins alternating between first and second, viola da gamba, archlute and harpsichord/organ) are excellent. The violinists relish Becker's often unpredictable lines in the sonatas and have great fun in the dances, varying between bold, sharp bowing for allegros and a richer, full-bowed

tone in slower movements. The continuo team does a marvellous job of keeping rhythm taut and providing a luxuriant harmonic background for the fiddles. The booklet notes are good on background but waffle about when talking about the music itself: 'we repeatedly encounter... harmonic items of usages, expressive formulations attesting to the composer's pleasure in the artistic-refined departure from the norm' – Pseuds! Corner material! BC

If you want to try the music yourself, there is a King's Music facsimile for £25.00

Dowland *Flow my tears, and other lute songs*

Steven Rickards *ct*, Dorothy Linell *lute*

Naxos 8.553381 £ 74' 08"

Dowland certainly seems to be the flavour of the moment, with discs of both songs and solos in abundance. This one has few competitors in the budget price band and for that alone is welcome. It does not restrict itself to a single songbook but presents a selection of Dowland's most famous (and best-loved) songs, interspersed with solos (not all by Dowland, being mostly ballad tune settings). For the non-specialist listener this is a very attractive disc, although purists may find the combination of a counter-tenor voice and a heavily-strung lute is not to their taste. Steven Rickards has a fine, clear voice with excellent diction, good intonation and a wide range of expression and dynamic. Dorothy Linell is a subtle and very responsive accompanist, and clearly knows the nuances of the texts as well as the singer. Her neatly played solos provide welcome contrasts of texture. Overall the performances are expressive, full of interest and most enjoyable. As an added bonus the booklet includes the texts of all of the songs.

Lynda Sayce

See also page 10

Monteverdi *L'Orfeo* Marinella Pennicchi *La Musica/Euridice*, Rosita Frisani *Ninfa/Messaggiera*, Proserpina, Alessandro Carmignani *Orfeo*, Carlo Lepore *Caronte*, Gastone Sarti *Plutone*, Cappella Musicale di San Patronio, Sergio Vartolo 139' 57" 2 CDs in box Naxos 8.554094-95 £

An amazing performance, in places the best I have heard, but not entirely convincing. There are two main points of contention. First, *Possente Spirto* is performed with the plain versions of each section sung before the embellished one. This ruins the proportions of Act III, even though it makes it even more plausible that Orfeo wins over Caronte by boring him rather than charming him with his gorgie. More worrying is the attempt to present the original ending; I'd be happy with good pseudo-Monteverdi, but what we are given is just bathetic. A pity, since there are so many good things here. It is marvellous to hear stylish singing by native Italians; Alessandro Carmignani as Orfeo is especially good. There are various matters with which in a longer review I would quibble, but it is a recording well-worth hearing. I doubt if I will ever play through it again complete, but there are marvellous bits in it, and at under £10.00

one can afford to buy it to supplement another recording. The substantial booklet has notes that interested me but are unhelpful to those meeting the work for the first time. The track numbers are wrong and who is Jeffrey Robin? CB

Monteverdi *Il combattimento, Lamento della Ninfa, madrigali* Concentus musicus Wien, Nikolaus Harnoncourt 53' 28" (rec 1980/84) Teldec *Das Alte Werk* 4509-92181-2
+ *Ogni amante è guerrier & Mentre vaga Angioletta*

Il combattimento has a high success rate on disc; you don't record it unless you have a narrator who can sing it, and the opportunity for distorting Monteverdi's intentions are few. Kurt Equiluz gives a good performance, but not so good that it compels purchase of a short-measure reissue. *Ogni amante* is decked out with superfluous instruments and *Mentre vaga*, given to two sopranos, lacks the magic of Wilfred Brown and Gerald English; their opening of the duet on the Deller Consort reissue (see *EMR* 35 p.13) was probably the most moving sound I heard on CD last year. In the *Lamento*, Ann Murray is more stylish than in her recent Handel disc (*EMR* 36, p. 20). Had the number of items on this disc been greater, the variability of success might have been more acceptable. CB

Pachelbel *Hexachordum Apollinis, chaconnes in D & f* John Butt org 65' 30" rec 1990 Harmonia Mundi *Suite HMT* 790729 ££

Some of the music here is so simple that it almost sounds naive, and at first I felt that the organ performance gives it just a little to much gravity; the use of the moderately-sized Harrold organ in the Berkeley music faculty hall rather than a domestic instrument reinforces this. But once my ears adjusted, this came over as a fine performance of an exemplary collection (perhaps a *Clavier Übung*) of variation writing. This mid-price reissue is most welcome. CB

Schütz *Geistliche Chormusik, Die sieben Worte* Bach Collegium Japan, Masaaki Suzuki BIS CD-831/832 121" 43" 2 CDs

The Bach Collegium may have difficulties with English consonants (see *EMR* 37 p. 17-18) but they master the more difficult German ones with no problem and BC (who can speak with far more authority on German pronunciation than I can) assures me that they are very convincing. This also applies to the music. The opening and close of the Seven Words are sung one-to-a-part, and very movingly too; I would have welcomed more of that texture, though the choral singing of the *Geistliche Chormusik* is very good, with a rhythmic response that expresses the music without overdoing it. The option of using continuo is taken. The booklet note is excellent, but how long before the text will also be included on the disc so that one can read it or print it out at a sensible size? CB

Hark! hark! the lark: Music for Shakespeare's Company Catherine Bott, Julia Gooding,

Joseph Cornwell, Stephen Varcoe SSTB, The Parley of Instruments, Peter Holman Hyperion CDA66836 70' 30"

This is one of the most enjoyable of the English Orpheus series (whose title is now banished to small print inside the booklet). There are a dozen tracks of music by Robert Johnson, with a slightly later repertoire from John Wilson, William Lawes and Simon Ives. Many of the songs require lavish embellishment, which all the singers pour forth with utter fluency. I have already mentioned in the preceding column the sound that most moved me last year; I will be surprised if I find anything this year to outclass Catherine Bott's hushed *Care-charming sleep*. But not everything is refined; there is folkly stuff from the lighter scenes of the plays, given with dramatic flair. CB

Tiento a las Españas: Music of the age of the Spanish Empire. Andrés Cea (1765 Chavarria organ, Marchena, Sevilla, Spain). Lindoro MPC-0701
Tejada, Storace, Valente, Coelho, Correa.

This is an excellent CD. Fascinating music, a well-presented programme, intelligent sleeve notes and superb playing by Andrés Cea, one of Spain's leading young organists. Using a recently rebuilt organ dating from 1765 but including pipework from 1619, the programme covers the period from around 1576 to 1721. The late-17th century facademounted trumpets (Clarín de Batalla and Clarín de Campaña) are reserved for the first and last pieces – lively Españolaletas dating from 1721 and 1707. The musical high points of the CD are the six Tientos of Manoel Rodrigues Coelho (Lisbon) and Correa de Arauxo (Seville). The wide range of musical moods in these pieces (from austere to the flamboyant) is well demonstrated by Cea. Other pieces are the well known *Lo ballo dell'intorchia* of Valente (Naples) and four delightful pieces from a Liège manuscript of 1617. Andrés Cea is a superb interpreter of Spanish music. His musical use of ornament and rhetoric, combined with technical brilliance, makes for exciting and dramatic performances. Strongly recommended. Andrew Benson-Wilson

LATE BAROQUE

Bach *Complete Cantatas* vol. 6 Ruth Ziesak, Elisabeth von Magnus, Paul Agnew, Klaus Mertens SATB, Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra & Choir, Ton Koopman 196' Erato 3984-21629-2 3 CDs in box
Cantatas 50, 59, 69, 69a, 75-6, 104, 179, 186, 190

Koopman's series proceeds with its usual qualities of sensible musicianship, now with a detectable added differentiation between chorus, solo aria and narrative recitative, and with many excellent qualities displayed in these early Leipzig and preceding cantatas. There are still compromises, of course, notably in the heavily modern and female sound of the choral and solo soprano and alto singing as well as in some of the playing of the strings, where I often still prefer the venerable Harnoncourt/Leonhardt complete

recording. Boys sound better in Bach than women to some of us, as do Alice Harnoncourt's solos to those played very well in her own less genuinely baroque style by Margaret Faultless. But so many essentials – tempi, style and general approaches – are so very positive in the new series, which seems also to respond to criticism of it. Stephen Daw

Bach *Weltliche Kantaten* Christine Schäfer, Sybilla Rubens, Ingeborg Danz, Stanford Olsen, Michael Volle SSATB, Gächinger Kantorei & Bach-Collegium Stuttgart, Helmuth Rilling 57' 49" Hänssler CD 98.169
Schleicht, spielende Wellen (BWV 206), *Weichet nur, betrübte Schatten* (BWV 202)

Helmuth Rilling uses modern instruments and pitch for his Bach, but this combination of Bach's 'Water Music' and his most famous wedding cantata invites response. Bach may have performed his undateable wedding cantata something like this, and possibly also his *Schleicht, spielende Wellen*, but the jollity is somewhat odd even in comparison with other modern-instrument recordings like those from Canada's *Les Violons du Roi* on Dorian, who are also doing a spectacular secular Bach series that shows the more positive aspects of modern approaches to this music. Stephen Daw

Bach *4 Orchestral Suites* Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra, Ton Koopman 77' 21" Erato 0630 17868-2

Fans of this ensemble and of this music will enjoy this recording. Famous pieces, played here with a freedom and expressiveness which makes you feel that they have been liberated by the instrumental techniques of the 18th century. But they should also be heard by those who retain a prejudice against period instrument ensembles. The performances are lithe and deft, blithely rhythmic, pointed and directional, but without undue emphasis. The famous tunes receive breadth and warmth of tone, but with the bow rather than with the left hand vibrato. Ton Koopman's virtuoso harpsichord continuo is to the fore, as always, but in an enjoyable way, though I wouldn't like to lend him my harpsichord – at times it rivals the tamps as a percussion instrument. Robert Oliver

Handel *Messiah* Dorothea Röschmann, Susan Gritton, Bernarda Fink, Charles Daniels, Neal Davies SSATB, Gabrieli Consort & Players, Paul McCreeh 132' 19" 2 CDs in box DGG Archiv 453 464-2

See page 10.

Leclair *Sonates pour violon & basse continue, Livre 1* (nos. 1,3,8,9) François Fernandez vln, Pierre Hantaï hpscd, Philippe Pierlot gamba Audivis Astrée E 8662 63' 35"

As a fiddler, I am a great fan of Leclair's music and I'm also extremely envious of anyone who can make it seem effortless, as François Fernandez does here. Readers of *EMR* will recall that I was rather less enthusiastic about this team's earlier release (Astrée E 8586), but I have few reservations

about the current selection of four sonatas. Sometimes the right hand of the keyboard sounds a little thin or a little high and there is a definite emphasis on the violin and gamba lines, which works on the whole. Very highly recommended. BC

B. Marcello Sonatas for cello & continuo; oboe concerto arr. Bach BWV 974 Alexander Zagorinsky vlc, Alexei Shmitov org 62' 08" Carlton 30366 00732 ££

This is an interesting release from two youngish Russians who are obviously aware of the development of early performance practice: the cellist uses minimal vibrato and yet maintains a beautiful tone throughout, and the organist's choice of stops is just right – the bass is clear and bright, the treble quite chamber organ-like. The concerto arrangement by Bach shows the organist at his best: there is an unexpected (but welcome!) fluidity of rhythm, especially in the expressive slow movement. Having feared the worse of a Russian duo playing Italian baroque music, I have been very pleasantly surprised indeed! BC

Rameau Les Fêtes d'Hébé Sophie Daneman, Sarah Connolly, Jean-Paul Fouchécourt, Paul Agnew, Thierry Félix SSTTB, Les Arts Florissants, William Christie 148' 2 CDs in box Erato 3984 21064 2

From the very first notes of the electrifying overture both Rameau and Les Arts Florissants give of their very considerable best in this beguiling *opéra-ballet*, which enjoyed an initial run of 80 performances and a total of approximately 200 during the composer's lifetime, despite its rather feeble libretto. (Nicholas Anderson's admirable essay quotes some amusing contemporary criticism of this.) The orchestra in particular is on top form – not always the case in its recent recordings – almost persuading one to overlook the glosses, usually of a percussive kind, that have been put on Rameau's already fairly exotic orchestration. The music offers an attractive sequence of vocal solos and ensembles as well as the wonderful dances and seldom does anyone sound less than comfortable with the detailed melodic lines. Dramatic continuity is, as usual with Christie, a strength and I can honestly say that the time required for a complete audition flew by. Final congratulations and thanks go to Erato for resisting the temptation to spread onto a third disc (the Second *Entrée* spans the two) and to the city of Caen for funding the project. David Hansell

Roman Music for a Royal Wedding; Drottningholm Music Uppsala Chamber Orchestra, Anthony Halstead 72' 45" Naxos 8.553733 £

There are two sets of Drottningholm Music: a suite of 24 miscellaneous movements and a smaller set of eight, which were apparently held in reserve for various parts of the four-day royal wedding celebrations in Stockholm in August 1744. There is not much about the performance which will come as a surprise: the orchestra play

on modern instruments, but very much with the guiding hand of Anthony Halstead, who is used to working with both period instrument and modern bands. At the usual Naxos price, this could well be your first choice for Roman's masterpiece. BC

Telemann Orpheus Roman Trekel *Orpheus*, Dorothea Röschmann *Orasia*, Ruth Ziesak *Euridice*, Werner Güra *Eurimedes* RIAS-Kammerchor, Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin, René Jacobs 159' 24" 2 CDs Harmonia Mundi HMC 901618.19

When this opera was revised a decade after its first performance, it was titled *Vengeful Love, or Orasia, the widowed Queen of Thrace*. This makes more sense than *Orpheus* since, although the charmed singer is a major player in the action, this is not the familiar tale: Orasia is in love with Orpheus and it is she who arranges Euridice's death, and when the lovers are about to emerge from Hades, she is waiting to kill Euridice anew so that she can have Orpheus to herself, only to be forced to set the Bacchantes upon him when he spurns her once more. I am not convinced that such roles, however unbalanced psychologically, require singers to get so carried away that they do not sing in tune. I was disappointed by Dorothea Röschmann's first few numbers and although she improves on the second disc, it was difficult to get over my initial distaste. There is, thankfully, some wonderful singing to enjoy from the other soloists, and the radio choir and the orchestra are very good. The highlight for me was Ruth Ziesak's 'Mit dir mich zu ergetzen', with repeated notes, high coloratura and an amazing two-octave quaver leap – utterly stunning! The music is not all by Telemann (the MS is incomplete) and it would have been nice for the relevant sources (for music by other composers in particular) as well as an indication of which of the recitatives had been given string parts (some of which were quite strange) to have been noted somewhere. But overall another triumph for Telemann's stage music. BC

Telemann Viola da Gamba: concertos, quatuor, sonates avec basse de viole soliste Lorenz Duftschmid, Armonico Tributo Austria 68' 15" Arcana A 42

This anthology includes concertos and chamber music with obbligato bass viol, both the sonatas for bass viol solo with continuo, and the unaccompanied sonata. I mightn't have bought this record myself, but having heard it I would. The playing is all brilliant. The instrumental ensemble that plays the two concertos (recorder and viol; oboe, violin and viol) is very vigorous and emphatic in its approach to the fast movements, languid and free in the slow. The quartet (flute, violin and viol – not a Paris quartet) is a lovely work, beautifully played here, which became popular in France and led to Telemann writing the Paris Quartets. Viol players know the solo sonatas as some of the more technically accessible pieces in the repertoire, but it does take a good player to play them well, especially as well as Lorenz Duftschmid. He makes a particu-

larly beautiful, unforced tone, and they are unfailingly lyrical, with neatly unobtrusive embellishments. In the unaccompanied sonata the microphone is closer, and he gives a compelling vigorous performance, never sacrificing the lovely sound. Robert Oliver

CLASSICAL

Pugnani Werther: Melologo in due parti da Goethe (Tesori del Piemonte, vol. 4) Graziano Piazza, Luca Occeci speakers, Academia Montis Regalis, Luigi Mangiocavallo Opus 111 OPS 30-197/198 92' 02" 2 CDs

This *Melologo in due parti da Goethe* is one of the most interesting issues to have come my way for a long time. Gaetano Pugnani is well known as an outstanding violinist, less well known as a talented composer. This melodrama, composed in Turin around 1790, towards the end of his life, consists of 22 musical numbers of varying length that comment on, or are interspersed with, passages from Goethe's renowned epistolary novel. Apart from brief narrative passages the words of the doomed Werther himself hold sway, from his relief at escape from a girl he does not love, to the pistol-shot that ends his own life in consequence of his passionate love for Lotte, fiancée, then wife, of another man. It may seem odd that Alberto Basso, who has edited and here introduces this fascinating score, should have chosen to use an Italian translation of 1931 rather than a contemporary one. But the reading carries great conviction and, backed by music of elegance, power and in places touching beauty, will make a direct appeal to modern listeners. The small orchestra, somewhat over-resonantly recorded, offers fine playing both corporately and individually and Luigi Mangiocavallo directs with spirit and discernment. Peter Branscombe

19th CENTURY

Schubert Die schöne Müllerin Thierry Félix, Paul Badura-Skoda (Conrad Graf fp c.1825) Arcana A 57 57' 00"

This is not my favourite recording of the cycle, and with so many fantastic performances to choose from, this does not indicate that it is so bad. The good qualities: beautiful baritone, forward, clear and bright, an ardently dramatic approach, crystal-clear words. The accompaniment is played on a Graf by one of the foremost pianists of his generation. Counting against it are mostly details – a lack of subtlety in the approach to the German, overemphasis leading to frequent attacks under the note, and an occasional loss of focus. Badura-Skoda, for all his brilliant and beautiful playing, doesn't seem to have the total empathy with the singer that makes a great rather than a good performance. Thierry Félix reminds me of his distinguished countryman Gérard Souzay, but without the vibrato. He does have a very beautiful voice, and there is much to enjoy in the performance, but there are too many great recordings for this one to compete. Robert Oliver