Early Music REVIEW

Number 40 May 1998

ISSN 1355-3437 Price £1.50

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)

One of the topics discussed in John Potter's book (see p. 2) is dress. He sees the normal concert dress as heavily class-coded (p. 184) but misses the point that a DJ shows, not that musicians are members of an upper class, but that they are their servants. Where do you buy cheap concert attire? At shops aimed at waiters, of course. The wearing of tails by orchestras is an attempt to improve status. Tails were a sign of higher status, such as being conductor or soloist, and only in the last few decades have they become orchestra wear. And is playing with vibrato, until well into this century confined to soloists (wearing tails), another way in which orchestral players tried to increase their status? If we can change the dress code, can we get rid of excessive vibrato? (Tchaikovsky's *Serenade for Strings* sounded magnificent at the Norrington/OAE weekends with a large body of unvibrating players.)

But the dress code is difficult to crack. There is enormous convenience in any player anywhere in the world knowing what to wear. A minor change was made in the OAE Tchaikovsky: ladies were allowed to wear black and gold. This meant that each had to take more than one gold item in case it clashed with a neighbour's. The alternative might be to imitate brass bands and male voice choirs and have uniforms. Our local male voice choir got a grant from the Sports Council for theirs.

In the late 60s, early music groups sought less class-specific dress. The Consort of Musicke tried fishermen's smocks, Ars Nova had plain shirts of one design but different colours. David Munrow insisted on standard dress because he didn't want his group to seem different from other mainstream ensembles. Some audiences actually welcome formal dress; I write programme notes for a series for which the audience has insisted on DJs for itself as well. I prefer early groups to look as unstuffy as possible, though there are problems if the clothes are too individual. Very few early groups are as consistent in membership as a string quartet. 'No, we can't play the seven-part *In nomine*: we haven't got a costume for the extra player.' And if you needed a dep, you would need to find one who matched you, not only musically, but in size. *CB*

Books and Music

Clifford Bartlett

RAISING THE LARYNX

John Potter *Vocal Authority: Singing style and ideology* Cambridge UP, 1998. xvi + 217pp, £35.00. ISBN 0 521 56356 9

Yes, this is *the* John Potter; as well as touring the world with the Hilliards, he has found time to take an Open University doctorate, upon which this book is based. I find it immensely stimulating, and there is room here for few of the thoughts that it provoked. At its core is the plausible and important theory that there was a fundamental change in the method of voice production in the mid-19th century. Before then, Western singing was much nearer speech, and consequently with no pitch vibrato; it was produced from a high larynx position with little of what we would call vocal training. The change was to a trained sound from a low larynx – the only vocal training I received was that before singing I should yawn and pretend to be sick to get my throat in the right shape. From this position, singers could produce greater volume, longer phrases and vibrato. (This position is unlike normal speech, but is nearer to that required for Received Pronunciation – the BBC English that still survives among most Radio 3 announcers – than are most other forms of English.) In contrast, modern popular music, helped by the microphone and motivated by a desire to avoid posh accents and, more positively, to make the words important again (as with the Florentine Camerata and Monteverdi's *seconda prattica*), has reverted to the high-larynx, vibrato-less manner. The book is primarily concerned with the sociological implication of these changes.

I was puzzled by the idea of words being audible in pop music. Back in the 60s, it amazed me that other people knew the words of Beatle songs until I saw the sleeve of *Sgt Pepper* with them printed on the back, and my recollection of *Top of the Pops* is of singers shouting inaudibly against drummers trying to destroy their instruments: an unbearable noise accompanied by (or maybe accompanying) aggressive sexual movements. So I watched the programme last night and was amazed: words were perfectly audible, except for one item by a survivor from the age of violence who was prancing around embracing a microphone stand. The reader will gather that I'm not *au fait* with pop music; I was set in my ways before pop music was invented in the mid-50s (about ten years before sex, according to Larkin). There is a lot about popular music here which means little to me; but, just as he criticises the way 'serious' music culture tries to manipulate the respectability of popular music, I am equally suspicious of the agenda of musicologists foraying into the popular world. Is that not also an attempt by the educated to take over popular culture and make it more respectable (a bit like New Labour, perhaps)?

What worries me about the book is its basis on old-fashioned class terminology. The middle class is always rising (like a good cake), the bourgeois (a continental group who never really settled in England) appear quite often, and I even spotted a petit-bourgeois – I suppose the doctorate was done when Marxism was still respectable. Social structures are more complicated than the old terms. For an example, take West Gallery music: until recently, it was seen as a working-class phenomenon, but it has emerged that we have been misled by Hardy's descriptions of one particular rural area, and in fact elsewhere and earlier it was not class-specific (cf the last recording reviewed on p. 24). There is little mention of age in the book; that is surely a crucial factor in the circulation and categorisation of pop music.

There is a fascinating description of a duet by Montserrat Caballé and Freddie Mercury, with honours clearly going to the latter, for whom the articulation of the text is an essential element of his musical expression. (The book really needs an accompanying disc, but sorting out the rights would have been impossibly expensive.) Whether we enjoy popular music or not, its message is clear, and is generally conveyed through the words; the reluctance of opera-houses to adopt surtitles shows how little meaning matters to the arbiters of classical taste. Most of those seriously involved in early music are concerned with texts, even though solutions are not always obvious. This book should encourage us, and also make us take more seriously the need for a very different type of voice.

PUERI CANTORES

Osvaldo Gambassi *«Pueri cantores» nelle catedrali d'Italia tra medio e età moderna: le scuole eugeniane: scuole di canto annesse alle cappelle musicali. (Historiae Musicae Cultores Biblioteca,* 80). Florence: Olschki, 1997. 284pp, £IT55,000 ISBN 88 222 4547 4

This book places another brick in the wall, as it were, of information about the Italian *quattrocento*, an area about which we are largely ignorant. The preponderance of Northern musicans in Italy in the period has traditionally been explained at least partly by the superior musical training of boys in the Low Countries and its lack in the South. Gambassi, who has already published on S. Petronio, Bologna, here surveys a range of cathedrals and other churches in northern and central Italy to ascertain the extent of their provision for the education of boys, both in music and in grammar. There was surprisingly good provision, much of it the result of foundations, or re-organisations, initiated by Pope Eugenius IV (1431-1447), the first pope to take such matters seriously in the wake of the Schism. Cities such as Turin (1435), Pistoia (1401, reformed 1436),

Florence and Bologna, S. Petronio (1436), Treviso (1437), Padua (1438), Bologna, S. Pietro and Urbino (1439) all made such provision, with the approval of Eugenius, for boys from poor but good-living homes in schools attached to cathedrals or major churches. Numbers varied from eight to thirty, with the best of the boys taking regular part in liturgical services as singers, the others often as altar boys. Inevitably, many of the boys went on to become priests and these schools were also proto-seminaries, many being subsumed into the new post-Tridentine seminaries after 1563. Some continued to run alongside the latter, continuing until the Napoleonic upheaval or, in some cases, until killed off by Vatican II. For the most part the boys lived at home, but were contracted by the parents to attend the school and to sing only for the institution. The stuff of this book is mainly the contracts that were drawn up, as well as statutes of institution and arrangements for funding. There is, unfortunately, little enough information on how or what the boys were taught, or on what they sang; what there is tends to come from the later 16th and 17th centuries with Padua providing some useful evidence of boys taking part in liturgical dramas around Christmas and Easter. The text is heavily documented, both with footnotes and appendices, and can get a bit repetitive, as the author takes us around yet another institution; some more general synthesis would have made for an easier read and lessened the temptation not to cut open all 284 pages! It does, however, provide a useful picture of a flourishing state of musical affairs in Italian cathedrals by the mid-15th century, even if not much music survives. *Noel O'Regan*

FAITHFUL SHEPHERD

Guarini: la musica, i musicisti a cura di Angelo Pompilio. (*ConNotazioni*, 3) Libreria Musicale Italiana, 1997. 232pp, £IT60,000. ISBN 88 7096 193 1

This contains seven papers and two indexes. Beginning with the latter, James Chater has compiled a list of settings of *Il pastor fido* in the order in which each text appears in the play. This is complemented by an alphabetical index by Antonio Vassalli and the editor of settings of all Guarini's verse, with those from *Il pastor fido* cross-referenced to Chater's list. For these alone the book is an essential buy for libraries and for anyone interested in madrigals and monodies from around 1600 (and costs little over £20.00). Tim Carter explains why the monodies are less important and impressive than the madrigals. James Chater discusses the early settings of texts from *Il pastor fido*: 'remarkably few of the early [pre-1594] settings from the play adhere to Guarini's definitive text' (p. 150). In my first draft (before the computer lost it) I went on at length about Massimo Ossi's account of Monteverdi's *Con che soavità*, a work to which I was introduced thirty years ago by Jantina Noorman's inimitable (or at least unimitated) voice. It was disproportionate, so I won't rewrite it. Ossi is, as always, well worth reading. But he should say what he thinks a *contrabasso* is and he shouldn't ignore the changes of pace in the work: the whole rhythmic parameter is missing from his analysis. There may be only five Monteverdi works about kisses (one was in *EMR* last month), but it is pedantic to exclude lips in a context which implies kissing (e.g. the *bocca* so prominent in the Nerone/Lucano duet and in Nerone's subsequent *Son rubini amorosi Tuoi labri pretioso* in *Poppea*). Turning to the contributions in Italian, Paolo Cecchi discusses Marenzio's *Baci soavi e cari*, Dinko Fabris lists letters by G. B. and Alessandro Guarini in the Archivio Bentivoglio in Ferrara, and Elio Durante & Anna Martellotti relate Guarini to the *Concerto delle Dame*.

Also from LIM comes vol. 18/1-2 (1997) of *Rivista internazionale di musica sacra* (£IT60,000). Articles on Bruckner and Mompou are too modern for *EMR*, as is one on the way Italy celebrated the Bach bicentenary in 1950, which coincided with a catholic holy year. The BBC could well emulate the fortnightly series on the history of the mass which Radio Italiana broadcast, beginning with Machaut, Dufay, Ockeghem, Josquin, Brumel, Taverner, A. Gabrieli, Palestrina, Lassus, Victoria, Byrd and Monteverdi. Carlo Ramella, after introductory information on the composer, discusses the modality/tonality of a *Missa sine nomine* (1622) by Francesco Bellazzi. Marina Vaccarini Gallarani lists the Lenten sacred cantatas performed for the Congregazione del Santissimo Entierro at San Fedele in Milan from 1713 to 1773; from 1725 the music was by G. B. Sammartini.

REFORMED EECM

Thomas Morley *II Services* Transcribed and edited by John Morehen (*Early English Church Music*, 41). Stainer and Bell, 1998. xiii + 118pp, £45.00. ISBN 0 85249 842 X

As I mentioned last month, there have been considerable changes in the editorial policy of this series. Even before the contents are noted, the format requires comment. The former size, based on the once-standard choral octavo, has been replaced by a new page-size of 12½ x 9½ inches. This seems a strange decision for a committee composed almost entirely of academics who must know that, to be of any use to students or for teaching, the editions will inevitably be photocopied (without or with permission); a standard A4 page would have saved reduction and be more comfortable and convenient for singers (who are now used to A4). Even apart from such use, if Stainer and Bell itself produces offprints, they will presumably be in photocopy form and will inevitably be reduced to A4; so the slightly small print of the new design will be even smaller, while the full height of the page will not be exploited. I suppose the argument is that these bound volumes will be the same size as *Musica Britannica* volumes finish up after binders have trimmed the borders, and the smart binding the EECM vlumes now have is an asset, making them much better value than MB. The pages look good (the computer setting is by Silverfen), except that the impression is now much lighter.

Editorial policy has been gradually changing since we had to read Gibbons through a multiplicity of flats and reduced note values. Later volumes have eschewed transposition,

and that is now firm policy. Whether that is right for *chiavette* pieces may be questioned, but that does not arise here, since the only piece with a G2 clef has an F4 bass. Similarly, note values are unchanged, with even black notation preserved in triple time – something I've seen in a few Italian (I think) editions, but not in any major series. It may upset your church choir, but it is not too difficult to understand.

Barring is basically in 4/2, but I find it even odder in this context than in more conventional scholarly editions that modern signatures are used (a point I have probably made boringly often). Anyone reading this edition will be capable of counting how many minims there are in a bar (even if there are sometimes six rather than four) and will be far more interested to see the original mensural signs. In fact, the edition is confusing. Take page 80, for example. Bar 41 has a mensural change ⊙3 printed above the top part and between the staves of the organ part (not easily seen by the middle-part singers) but the other parts have six minims in the bar rather than four, but with no indication of mensuration change. At bar 45 all parts have a modern time signature of 4/2 but again no mensuration change; at bar 47 all parts have 6/2, yet still no mensuration change. In context, since most of the movement has been ⊙3, one will assume that is in operation here, but it is only confirmed by the black notation at bar 85. In future volumes the score should ignore modern signatures (or print them only where the original ones now appear) and keep the old ones. I hope, however, that bar-lines will be retained, since they are characteristic of notation in score.

The voices are called Mean, Countertenor, Tenor and Bass. I cannot find any indication of the part-names of the sources. Countertenor parts are transcribed in octave-treble clef – sensible, since whatever voice sings the parts, the music fits the staves much better thus. Altos of either sex who can sing down to low D or C should be able to read the clef; tenor top A is the other end of their compass. The performer wanting to see ranges at a glance would find it easier if they were printed after the modern clefs, not in the preliminary stave in the original clefs. It may, as the editor suggests, no longer be acceptable to use *full* to indicate a return to full choir both after division into separate *decani* and *cantoris* and also after *verse*. However, in choosing to cancel the former by *full* and the latter by *chorus* he is going against the natural use of *full* as the opposite of *verse* in the terminology of *verse* and *full anthem*.

The treatment of accidentals is surprisingly conventional in that the modern determination by the bar-line is preserved. I would recommend strongly that in future volumes the King's Music convention (worked out in conjunction with Richard Charteris) is adopted, as representing early practice without looking too strange or requiring special knowledge by the performer. All accidentals are retained except on consecutive notes. When consecutive notes are interrupted by a bar line, if the note after the line has an accidental, it is printed; if it doesn't, a cautionary or editorial one is added according to the normal practice of the source (editorial if the source normally has an accidental for each note, cautionary if it doesn't). Any cases of doubt should be marked with a cautionary or editorial accidental, as should a change of inflection that might not be expected by readers accustomed to the modern convention (e.g. the failure of an earlier accidental to apply to a subsequent note). We have been using this policy throughout the 1990s, often without drawing attention to it, and it seems to work well without annoying non-specialists.

It is nice to see organ parts printed as they stand (apart from adjustment for 5'/10' pitch) rather than filled-in; we still know too little about how organists used the parts to make editorial suggestions.

The critical commentary is utterly indigestible. I'm not blaming the editor, rather the absence of authoritative sources and a variety of late ones. But such detailed listing of minor variants in small type in long paragraphs is virtually unusable. I suspect that most of the variants are too trivial to be usefully placed on the music pages. Should we perhaps trust the editor, but have as safeguard the availability on disc of the score with the variants fully notated (preferably with a different colour for each source)? It need not be in a form that the user might manipulate as music: just a series of images to read on a PC.

I'd better at least mention what music is included, even though the editorial principles have taken most of my space. The first service contains a Venite, Te Deum, Benedictus, three Kyries (with a fourth by Child), a Credo, Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis (those unfamiliar with the repertoire should note that the texts are in English, but by convention they are given Latin titles). The second and third are both evening services (just Mag & Nunc). The first requires a full team of soloists and five-part choir on each side of the chancel; the other two are full services, without soli. Services seem rarely to find their way into concerts and non-ecclesiastical recordings; that is a pity, and choirs wanting to experiment could well begin here.

CHROMATIC FOURTH

Peter Williams *The Chromatic Fourth During Four Centuries of Music*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997 [1998]. 262pp, £40.00. ISBN 0 19 816563 3

This was a topic that was on my mind, since I had been talking on the subject to Peter Holman only a few weeks before it arrived in connection with his forthcoming book on Dowland's *Lachrimae* and we were considering both the diatonic and chromatic fourth, and postulated that, rather surprisingly, the former derived from the latter. It is pleasing to see that Peter Williams seems to agree, but only in a passing aside. The problem with a study of this sort is in deciding how to define the subject. In fact, it would probably be easier to do so for a study of the descending fourth (*Pur ti miro*, etc), in that a descent (or ascent) of a

fourth is so common that there needs to be something self-conscious to make it significant. The trouble here is that there is no such rigour, and at times the subject veers dangerously towards chromatic movement in general or to phrases that begin with a chromatic fourth but which continue without letting it have any individual entity. I'm not sure what the end of Gabrieli's *Timor et tremor* is doing here (p. 51): it is a series of chromatic thirds. As to why Gabrieli chose this section of text for such treatment, although the chromatics are new, the rhythmic displacement looks back to the setting by Lassus, as does the sequence of fourths in the bass.

Central to the discussion, in fact, is the element of allusion, which looms large, if perhaps a bit casually, in the book. Williams recognises two types of fourths, the grammatical and the rhetorical; it would be an oversimplification to deduce that the former are instrumental, with no extra-musical meaning, while the latter may have very varied significancies. It is a nice coincidence that one of the four books advertised on the back of the jacket is Deryck Cooke's *The Language of Music*. Williams is too sophisticated to attempt any of the linguistic precision that Cooke sought and thought he found. I wonder, in fact, whether Williams sometimes reads a 1990s sophistication into the intent of earlier musicians who may have been less suspicious of clear emotional statement than we are. It is, however, interesting that he several times makes the point that composers avoid the descending chromatic fourth in what seem to be personally-felt laments where one might expect it (e.g. Purcell on Playford and Charles II: see p. 70). It is a stimulating book; if readers find points of disagreement, that is no bad thing.

CAPRICORNUS

Samuel Capricornus *Geistliche Harmonien III* Edited by Paul Walker (*Collegium Musicum: Yale University. Second Series, Volume 13*) Madison: A-R Editions, 1997. xviii + 258pp, $86.40. ISBN 0 89579 380 6

I must confess that Capricornus was a name unknown to me until I met Martin Gester, heard his recording and saw his brother's editions, which whetted my appetite for more. This is a complete edition of a set published in 1664, the year before the composer's death at the age of 37. His music was quite popular at the time, and circulated widely – even to Rome, where Carissimi performed a work he had sent him. There are 18 sacred concertos, all except one for three solo voices in a variety of combinations and instruments. Most pieces require two violins, some a bassoon or trombone as well. Assuming that the contents lists of the part-books specified the original scorings (that of the organ part at least is likely to have done so), it is a pity that it is not reproduced, since a curiosity of the edition is the failure to give the original nomenclature; original clefs are also not stated. *Dulcis amor* is for SSB, two violas and bassoon, *Ad te suspiro* for SAB, two violins and three violas (clefs not stated) and a continuo part that does seem to need a string bass instrument; elsewhere, however, *bassus pro organo* probably means what is says. (That I can quote the part's title is only because of the caption to a page of facsimile; in the score it is labelled *Basso continuo*.) A cornetto appears twice, with violin and trombone in *Praeparate* and with SSB alone (+ of course organ) in *Paratum cor meum*. The most unusual scoring is *Ich bin schwarz* for bass and five recorders; here again a melodic bass part is needed to complete the instrumental texture. An indication of range of each part would have been useful here in particular, though should have been included throughout. I've mentioned scorings rather than picking pieces out for merit; I think any of the pieces will be rewarding to sing and play. I can't see any indication of parts being available from the publisher; A-R normally produce them, so I hope they will appear later.

The editor (co-compiler of the marvellous catalogue *German Sacred Polyphonic Music*, see *EMR* 37, p. 4) gets rather hung up over continuo practice. Commendably, he does not include a realisation but adds editorial figuring when the original is skimpy. He seems to expect players to be more familiar with 18th-century practice (though why anyone would want to approach figured bass at its most difficult is incomprehensible: it is much easier to learn how to play by starting at the beginning), so it would have been helpful to have devoted a few lines to pointing out that, for instance, players of the mid-17th century would expect a chord on the third degree of a scale to be a 6/3 unless there was very good reason otherwise. The editorial addition of a 6 near the end of semibreves to avoid consecutives implies that the organ should sustain right through long notes, though that is questionable. In general, though, the added figures will help the inexperienced player but Capricornus's original is not as inadequate as the editor claims.

ISABELLA LEONARDA

Isabella Leonarda *Iam diu dilecte mi Jesu, Motette, opus 20...* [edited by] Ingrid Grave-Müller Furore-Edition (555), 1995. [viii] + 16pp + 4 parts, DM48.

Isabella Leonarda is so-far the best known Italian convent composer, though she may be overtaken soon by Lucrezia Vizzana (see p. 15). She was 80 when op. 20, her last publication, appeared. The style is on the whole of an earlier period, but the late date may explain why what looks like a solo violin part is explicitly for two violins: indeed, the work is described as for *Canto solo con Violini all'unisono in risposta ad libitum*, which the introduction quotes but doesn't explain; it would be interesting to be told whether both violin partbooks include the part. The part marked violoncello (what was the original designation?) plays with the violins; the music would seem to imply that no further melodic bass instrument is required, though an unfigured basso part is included here. The inclusion of a separate part with the voice and bass makes the single copy self-sufficient for a performance. The music isn't quite as sexy as is implied by the text (quite an impassioned love-song to Christ), but it is worth singing.

But there are several problems with the edition. First, the text is not properly dealt with. Common though it be for 17th-century printers to omit the occasional hyphen, it is not good enough to print *di lecte, pa cis* or *cul pas,* and some editorial punctuation would not come amiss. It is a good discipline for an editor to set out the text apart from the music, punctuate it, distinguish prose from verse, and translate it; it is sensible then to include it in the edition – maybe not in all the four languages of the introduction, but at least in one modern language. Fluency in Latin may perhaps be assumed in German sopranos, but not in most other parts of the world. The appearance is odd, with instrumental semiquavers set in modern groups of four but unwieldy beaming in the voice part; and in some systems the gap between the text and the continuo stave is far too small. There is also a strange discrepancy in size between sharps and the other bass figures. What the user may accept in a cheap-looking photocopy from a small firm isn't so acceptable from an edition produced as smartly as this.

Two other Furore publications sent with the Leonarda and Hildegard (see p. 17) have no such problems, though have music a bit too modern for us. If you're an organist tired of the usual Mendelssohn, you could confuse the bride with a Prelude (which might equally well have been called a March) by Fanny Mendelssohn, which she had to write for her own wedding since brother Felix was detained in England by an accident and neither appeared nor sent the expected music. Harald Pfeiffer has spiced it up with a couple of *ad lib.* trumpet parts and it would sound quite impressive (Fue 246; score with trumpet parts in C and B♭; there is also an edition of the organ piece alone, Fue 124). A fragmentary *Präludium* in G breaks off at bar 30; Ronald Herrmann-Lubin's reconstruction runs to twice that length (Fue 249).

RECONSTRUCTING MARK

Johann Sebastian Bach *Markus-Passion, St. Mark Passion, BWV 247*... Recitatives and turbae by Reinhard Keiser (1674-1739) ... Reconstruction, Edition and Vocal Score by A. H. Gomme. Bärenreiter (BA 5209a), 1997. 167pp, £10.50

It is curious that two versions of the lost St Mark Passion should have been produced in such short succession. That by Simon Heighes has been performed several times and has been recorded (Musica Oscura 070970). It is published by King's Music in full score and parts (for sale); we will probably produce some sort of chorus score before the next Passion season. Andor Gomme's version has been performed in London and is now published just in vocal score; full score and parts are on hire. As far as the singers are concerned, the Gomme version is far easier to use, since the vocal score is well-produced and easy to read.

Although no music survives from the work, Picander's libretto is extant. Rust realised 130 years ago that the framing choruses and three of the arias came from the *Trauerode,* BWV 198; of the remaining three arias, the source of only one seems controversial. There are Bach settings of all 16 chorales that are needed, though there is no evidence that any of them actually belong here. Gomme ends Part I with a normal chorale rather than the more elaborate setting which Heighes selects. The chief problem is that the biblical narrative itself would have been newly-written, and that has to be either composed or borrowed from another setting. Both Heighes and Gomme have taken a Passion by Keiser which Bach is known to have performed. Good though it is, it doesn't sound quite like Bach, and it sets Christ's words with five-part strings instead of the four-parts ubiquitous in Bach's Leipzig recitative. There is also not enough of it, since his setting (in accordance with Hamburg custom) starts later in the narrative than Bach needed to at Leipzig. Heighes composes his own (try listening to the CD and see if you can tell where Heighes stops and Keiser begins), but Gomme begins where Keiser begins, inserting Bach material that belongs in the missing section (an aria and three chorales) at suitable places later. Minor adjustments are needed to make the recitative fit the Bach material. Heighes adapts some of the *turbae* choruses from other Bach works, but Gomme retains the integrity of the Keiser setting.

Might not it be better to perform the Keiser Passion in its own right, and add the *Trauerode* to make the concert up to full length? Yet the knowledge that a Bach work existed and that much of the material to reconstruct it can be found is tantalising and challenging. The boldest solution would be to write pseudo-Bachian recitative. But editors are naturally cautious, and Keiser seems a good compromise. I'm not going to tell you whether to choose Heighes or Gomme: even if I felt myself capable, it is difficult to compare them since I know the Heighes better than the Gomme. You must decide for yourself. This vocal score certainly, in practical terms, gives Gomme an advantage.

FIELD NOCTURNES

John Field *Nocturnes and related pieces* edited by Robin Langley (*Musica Britannica* LXXI). Stainer and Bell, 1997. xlii + 121pp, £67.50. ISBN 0 85249 836 5

Like Mendelssohn, Field is a bit late for us. But his music benefits from the use of early instruments in that his style of writing was more intimately related to the actual sound of the piano than, say, that of Beethoven or Schubert (but not, of course, his Nocturne-writing follower Chopin). In fact, the dates of Field's Nocturnes are spread rather more than I for one had imagined (not, I confess, that I had ever looked them up), with several as late as the mid-1830s. The the series starts quite late, with none published until some years after he settled in Russia. There are considerable problems for an editor, since most of the pieces survive with significant variation between sources. This is not at all surprising, since there is no reason to expect the composer to have always played such pieces the same way, and we should be grateful that editions reflect this. It is, however, a problem for the editor to set out such detail without making the score difficult to read. Various techniques are adopted. In No. 2, for

instance, one source is given in small print above a more carefully-notated version. Oddly, the simpler version (with few slurs and no dynamics) is later, though I would guess that it was reprinted from an earlier, lost edition. In other Nocturnes, small staves appear erratically to show specific variants. Nocturnes 8 & 10 are printed twice, each with further variants; it is a pity that they are given separate numbers, Nocturne 11 thus becoming No. 14. The volume concludes with four versions (with more small-print variants) of the Pastorale/Romance in A and five other nocturne-like pieces. Robin Langley has done a thorough job chasing the early Russian editions and digesting the material into manageable form: few pieces have dense lists of variants such as those that are so troublesome in the EECM Morley reviewed above. The sometimes-cumbersome layout caused by printing variants with the main musical text is not too much of a problem for piano music, since serious players are likely to memorise it. How does a publisher claim performance fees when the pianist plays from memory and the edition includes so many variants?

LOCATELLI STUDIED

Barbara Gogolick Sachs

Intorno a Locatelli. Studi in occasione del trecentario della nascita di Pietro Antonio Locatelli (1695-1764). Edited by Albert Dunning. Libreria Musicale Italiana, 1995, 2 vols, xiv + 599pp and vi + 651pp, £IT250,000. ISBN 88-7096-143-5

The 300th anniversary of the birth of Locatelli did not get much attention: in 1994, when it was clear that even a planned Locatelli convention was to be cancelled, the Pietro Antonio Locatelli Foundation of Cremona and Amsterdam invited twenty scholars to write articles about his work, his patrons and his contempories. The result is this pair of books, in octavo, with many illustrations and musical examples. They come as a boxed set and appear as the first item of a new series of studies on various musicological and historical subjects, called appropriately *Speculum Musicae*, under the aegis of the Locatelli Foundation. This foundation is also preparing a critical edition of Locatelli's *Opera Omnia* for Schott, some volumes of which have been reviewed in Early Music Review. The present studies are exceptionally informative and, unlike much Italian musicological output, even readable (only three studies in volume 2 are translations). Perhaps it was editorial policy to make them accessible to foreigners reading Italian, or else this is simply the result of an effort on the part of all the contributors. The remarks which follow are about the ten studies in the first volume. A review of the remaining ten in the second volume will follow, an opportunity to remind readers that these books present research pertaining to other Italian baroque composers, to three centres of musical production in the first half of the 18th century, and to baroque instrumental practice in general.

Six of the first ten studies say little about Locatelli, who was arguably only a minor figure in the history of music. But they are particularly welcome nevertheless as the writers chose to deal with historical context, style, and performance practice.

Alessandra Bernardi writes about musical patronage in Venice in the first half of the 18th century. This is a fascinating description of a paradoxical situation. Venice began to fake being a great power in the 18th century: despite economic crisis, loss of commerce and territory, an infant mortality rate of 50%, with a sixth of the population living off charity by the end of the century, and a fall in the number of aristocratic families, prestige was still sought and acquired by means of ostentation. A lot of money remained in the hands of Venetian nobility – old families and families from other cities who came to Venice and became 'noble' in the 1600s – and they supported otherwise unrealizable artistic and cultural endeavours. They celebrated every religious and state occasion; they built palaces, commissioned paintings, supported theatres and printers, in order to show off their taste for what was new. They sent their offspring to monasteries and convents where concerts, dances and sumptuous banquets were held. The public included the ever-growing numbers of tourists, such as princes, dignitaries, ambassadors and foreign nobles who resided temporarily in Venice and had money to spend. This trend continued from the 17th century. Carnival was a state affair, officially starting in October when the theatre season opened: the attractions for the foreign nobility included the unique opportunity to circulate *incognito*, thanks to the laws permitting the use of masks. In this historical context Bernardi describes the types of music performed in the churches, the *Scuole*, the *accademie*, the charitable institutions and the theatres, all vividly marked by a spirit of rivalry and by changing tastes.

Locatelli only gave some concerts in Venice, whereas he resided in Amsterdam from 1729 until his death. Johan Giskes, through detailed accounts of the patrons he played for or dedicated his works to, describes his world – and his talent for public relations! Earlier he had studied in Rome and then played in the court orchestra of Cardinal Pietro Ottoboni (between 1717 and 1723). The Roman musical environment in the first half of the 18th century is reflected in a vast number of documents from the Cardinal's court (from 1700-1740), reproduced and discussed by Stefano La Via. This study is really a book in itself on orchestral practice, repertory and musical taste in a transition period in which a more treble-dominated style began to replace the concerto grosso style and the structure of the orchestra itself was changing accordingly.

Four studies are about music in Locatelli's time. Margherita Canale Degrassi, herself a baroque violin player, discusses Tartini's violin concertos, his bowing technique, the ornamented versions of adagios from his and others' concertos and sonatas, cadenzas by himself and his pupils, his cryptic mottos which are suggestive of the phrasing he wanted, even considerations on the strings he used. It is a call for further research of this sort for other composers as well. Galliani Ciliberti documents the characteristics of the 18th century *Christmas Concerto*, with its mixture of sacred and popular style, its inspiration in the Franciscan tradition of poverty, as reflected in the use of particular instruments. Examples range from folk music and familiar concerti grossi to Scarlatti and the Well-Tempered Clavier. Giacomo Fornai writes on the decline of instrumental music in the 1700s. Whether this period has been undervalued as an anticipation of romanticism, as Torrefranca believes, or whether the repertoire really is less interesting (weakened

by the emigration of Italian musicians, the printing of easy music for amateurs, and the dominance of opera), this essay gives many descriptive accounts of a varied panorama which merits further study.

Angela Lepore contributes a study of the trio sonata of Corelli's time based on her doctoral thesis of 1991-2. The social and cultural life of Rome during the period of Corelli's activity there is described, as well as the history of the trio genre. It is surprising that we have so little information on the liturgical use of the *church* sonata or even the way the *chamber* sonata was used in private circles. She gives a detailed catalogue of trios composed in Rome between 1682 and 1720 (with keys, time signatures, tempo indications and length) by sixteen composers, in alphabetical order from Baldassari to Valentini. After the biographical information she discusses the music and particular features of the collections (e.g. Carlo Mannelli's bowing indications [1692] and their reappearance in a collection by Pietro Migali [1696]). A list of trio composers born in Italy, with extensive footnotes on their work, ends the study.

All the above were literally *around* if not deliberately avoiding mention of Locatelli. *About* Locatelli we read: Marco Bizzarinis's speculations on a possible influence from B. Marcello – there was some affinity of thought if little similarity in their work; Cesare Fertonani's analyses of the six *Introduzioni Teatrali* of 1735, a type of *Sinfonia* blending the Neapolitan opera overture, the Roman concerto grosso and the Venetian concerto a 4 – he finds Locatelli's receptivity to tradition and innovation indicative of the mid-century transition from the baroque to classicism; and Alberto Cantùs' study entitled *Locatelli between the Past and the Future* – he analyses the concertos with reference to Corelli and Vivaldi, and presents Locatelli as a precursor of Paganini, with examples from their respective *Capricci*. These articles were as rewarding as the complementary ones, and the second volume looks as promising as the first.

THE MARRIAGE OF ENGLAND AND SPAIN

Music for the Wedding of Philip II and Mary Tudor, 25 July 1554

Richard Cheetham

In 1554 on the Feast of St. James, patron saint of Spain, the wedding of Philip II of Spain and Mary Tudor of England was celebrated in Winchester Cathedral with all the pomp and splendour which two countries could muster. The English Royal Chapel sang at this spectacular event and included Thomas Tallis and John Sheppard among their ranks, whilst Philippe de Monte and the famous organist-composer, Antonio de Cabezon, performed with the Spanish choir. The choir of Winchester Cathedral supplemented the musical forces of these two institutions in a ceremony which surpassed all previous royal weddings in England.

The celebrated Capilla Flamenca which Philip II had inherited from his father, the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, boasted a complement of 13 wind players. The Capilla Flamenca gathered the finest singers from the Netherlands, who performed under the direction of such illustrious chapelmasters as Nicholas Gombert, Georges de la Hele and Philippe Rogier. The royal *ministriles* accompanied the choir and also played instrumental music on shawms, dulcians and sackbuts at strategic points during the service, according to Spanish practice. These musicians were extremely well travelled, having followed Charles V on his extensive journeys throughout the Empire, and were intimately acquainted with both Italian and northern European performance traditions. Philip II himself was the greatest patron of music and the arts of his day, and the journey to England for this royal wedding was marked by lavish courtly magnificences and religious spectacles in which the singers and instrumentalists of the Capilla Flamenca played a leading part.

On the day of the wedding service, which united the kingdoms of England and Spain, another stratum in the history of English music was laid. For the very first time, an English cathedral echoed with the sound of shawms, dulcians and sackbuts. Before this date, only the organ had been played inside an English church, and to the assembled congregation who were used to hearing sacred music performed a cappella, the instrumentalists of the Spanish court must have revealed a whole new sound world. This wedding introduced a pan-European style of instrumental and vocal performance to England, a fact corroborated by Elizabeth I's predilection for the sound of cornetts and sackbuts in her private masses just five years later. It can be argued that Philip's wedding to Mary Tudor changed the face of the English a cappella tradition.

In concerts at 7.30 pm on 28 May and 2 June 1998, in St. John's Smith Square and Winchester Cathedral respectively, the Orchestra of the Renaissance will perform a reconstruction of the wedding mass. In a programme which challenges our perception of sixteenth-century English sacred music, John Taverner's *Missa Gloria tibi Trinitas* will be accompanied by shawms, dulcians, sackbuts, cornett, harp and organ. The programme also includes motets and instrumental works by Morales, Cabezon, Gombert, Sermisy and Tallis, together with plainchant sung by the Spanish baritone, Josep Cabre.

The Marriage of England and Spain will be recorded by Glossa, the first in a series of CDs featuring voices and instruments in Renaissance sacred music.

LONDON MUSIC

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Sharona Joshua (fortepiano) and Joanne Lunn (soprano) are the only early music contributors to *Fresh* – the Purcell Room's series of concerts by young musicians. Their enthusiastically applauded concert on 6 March gave the series an excellent send off. The well-conceived programme centred on vocal music by Haydn (the *English Canzonets* of 1794/5), Mozart, and the English composers under their influence – the Linleys, Storace, Pinto and Bishop – together with fortepiano sonatas by Haydn and Mozart. Joanne Lunn was the BBC's 1991 Choirgirl of the Year and, following studies at the Royal College of Music, is now establishing herself as an adult singer. This was a confident and expressive performance of a taxing programme. She has a most effective stage presence, with a gently expressive use of gesture. Sharona Joshua is a superb accompanist, always sensitive to the mood of the songs. But it was in her solo pieces that she showed her true mettle, with a brilliant performance of Haydn's virtuosic final E♭ Sonata. It was a shame that the well-deserved applause after the first movement rather obscured Haydn's bizarre key slide from E♭ to E major, and the slide back to E♭ for the final movement was clouded by a noisy page turn. Mozart's F major Sonata K332 was played with panache, the delicate tone of the fortepiano (by Christopher Barlow, after the Schantz piano in Bath's Holburne Museum) was ideal for the expressive *Adagio*. A wonderful evening from two highly talented musicians.

Despite superb singing by Paul Agnew, beautiful flute playing by Rachel Brown and sensitive cello support by Katherine Sharman, the King's Consort concert at the Wigmore Hall on 11 March was a disappointment. The programme was Bach, Pergolesi and Boccherini. In each piece, the Consort's rhythmic accent was far too prominent (the first beat of every bar was so strongly accented that all sense of line and musical direction was lost) and the violinists, Anne Schumann and Simon Jones, both played at an insensitively overbearing volume (or so it sounded from my seat, but balance in the Wigmore balance can mislead, and people sitting elsewhere found the violins rather soft). In Bach's 'Oboe d'amore' concerto in A (the BWV 1055 harpsichord concerto without ornaments), Alfredo Bernadini's long oboe melismas and well-controlled dynamic range attempted to pour acoustic oil on the choppy waters of the accompanying forces. In Pergolesi's Flute Concerto in G, Rachel Brown's flute was drowned out by the over-emphasis of supporting motifs by the accompaniment. One way to test how well performers know a piece of music is to turn all the lights out and see how long they can continue playing. That is just what did happened in the *Adagio* – and it was only the soloist who managed to continue for more than a few bars. It all seemed a bit under-rehearsed. Paul Agnew's singing of Bach's *Ich armer Mensch* (Cantata 55) was the highlight – particularly the penitential aria *Erbarme dich* with its pleading vocal cadenza. With the sensitive support of the cello and flute alone, this was Bach performance at its emotional best. But the supporting instruments missed the mood of Paul Agnew's beautifully gentle repetitions of *Sündenknecht* at the close of the opening aria.

Paul Agnew's talent also shone through in Boccherini's rarely performed *Stabat Mater*, in its reworking for two sopranos and tenor of 1800. I had trouble with this piece. The mood of Boccherini's music seemed totally at odds with the mood of the words, since much of the accompaniment sounded like jaunty saloon music. If this was Boccherini representing a 'bittersweet mood of tender supplication', as the programme note described it, I dread to think what he would have written if the text had been more jovial. Was this due to Robert King's interpretation, or Boccherini himself? The vibrato of the two sopranos, Claron McFadden and Marianne Hellgren, was unremitting and produced an unsteady sense of tuning and pitch, particularly when singing in thirds. The final nail in the coffin was Robert King's pianistic thumping of an undeserving little continuo organ in the more dramatic sections. Far from making the poor wee thing sound any louder, it just produced unpleasant percussive effects and did the action no good at all.

The BBC Singers are giving four concerts at St John's, Smith Square of music from the Royal Chapels of Europe, under the title *Power and Glory*. They will be broadcast sometime after the Proms. On 19 March, they were joined by the conductor, Ivor Bolton, and his St James's Baroque Players for a programme of music from the Court of Louis XIV by Du Mont, Lully, Lalande and Charpentier's *Missa Assumpta est Maria*. The instrumentalists showed a real affinity with the lyrical quality of French music of this period, and Ivor Bolton's energetic conducting whipped up some real passion in the sections for the full chorus. But the BBC Singers were otherwise not up to scratch. Their opening piece, Du Mont's *Pulsate tympana* (an outrageously over-the-top paean to the Sun King), lacked punch and gusto, although Kim Porter's gently sonorous alto voice lent a lovely lyrical quality to the more mournful moments. The three soprano soloists in Lully's *Anima Christi* were hopelessly ill-matched in tone, volume and singing style – Micaela Haslam had the clearly-focused voice that suited the music and acoustics best, but the other two were a quiet low wobbler and an overbearingly loud and voracious high wobbler. Unfortunately it was the high wobbler who also performed in Charpentier's wonderful Mass setting. With the presence of a continuo organ player of the calibre of John Toll, it was a shame that Charpentier's directions

for organ pieces in the Kyrie and to replace the Benedictus were not followed. Indeed, the programme note didn't mention that the Benedictus was omitted and ignored the final *Domine salvum fac regem*, traditional in Mass settings in Louis XIV's Court and no doubt intended to show who really was in charge.

The Wigmore Hall's Early Music and Baroque Series continued on 27 March with five singers from I Fagiolini together with the harpsichordist Catherine Pierron. The programme was, appropriately, Italian – Monteverdi, Mazzochi, D'India and Frescobaldi. Madrigals as performed by I Fagiolini are nothing if not expressive – emotional intensity oozes out vocally and physically, spreading across their faces (particularly that of the wonderfully expressive face of the bass, Matthew Brook) until, by the second half, they could contain themselves no longer, and resorted to acting out Monteverdi's *Gira il nemico*. Great fun, and a well-timed interlude in an emotionally-intense programme presented in rather a scholarly way. I Fagiolini's singers (in this case, Rachel Elliott, Anna Crookes, Robert Hollingworth, Nicholas Hurndall Smith and Matthew Brook) are highly skilled solo performers, and can deal admirably with the impassioned and intense word painting of Italian Madrigals. But without wishing to upset aficionados of wobbly singing too much or too often, I must say that the strongly operatic inflections to their voices makes them less effective, to my ears, as a madrigal group. For me, vocal vibrato is best treated as an ornamental device to be used sensitively. In a madrigal repertoire in the beautiful acoustics of the Wigmore Hall, the consistently strong vibrato of all except the bass just resulted in a feeling of unsteady intonation and ensemble. This was particularly noticable in the rising semitone passages of Monteverdi's *Piange e sospira* and the astonishing harmonic slithering in D'India's *Strana armonica*. Catherine Pierron's two solo Frescobaldi pieces were rythmically and stylistically energetic, with a madrigal-like intensity to the varying moods of the *Toccata decima* from the 1637 publication. Her continuo playing was effective and supportive, although I did wonder at times whether the gentler support of an organ and/or plucked instruments would have caught the mood slightly better. This was, however, a fine concert, with some lovely gentle vocal moments and a beautifully paced decrescendo conclusion – and Phylis and Daphne only got one mention apiece.

The British debut of the three highly-talented young players of Ensemble Arion took place at the Purcell Room on 1 April under the title *Eyes look no more*. Raphaela Danksagmüller (recorders), Kjetil Ree-Pedersen (gamba) and Naoya Otsuka (organ/harpsichord) met at the Sweelinck Conservatorium in Amsterdam. Their impeccably well-judged and well-presented programme was based around the theme of melancholy in the 17th century, with pieces from England, the Netherlands and France. The mood was set beautifully with a hushed and expectant interpretation of the opening *Adagio* of Purcell's G minor Trio Sonata. Dowland's *Flow my tears* and two pieces based on it, the *Lachrimae Pavan* by Schop and John Danyel's parody 'Eyes look no more', showed the ability of the group to bring vocalistic interpretation to instrumental music. This was a wonderfully musical performance, with superb consort, solo and accompanimental playing. The three players had a strong sense of musical line and the broader musical structure. Raphaela Danksagmüller has a gently vocal style of recorder playing: even in the fastest moments, her tone was never forced or shrill. Beneath her quietly-confident stage manner lies real a musical virtuosity, and she responded with remarkable sensitivity to the mood and *Affekt* of each piece. Kjetil Ree-Pedersen and Naoya Otsuka supported her well, particularly catching the changing moods of the Grounds that concluded each half. They also showed the strength of their individual talent in solo pieces, including Bull's *Melancholy Pavan*, where Otsuka never allowed the virtuosic passage work, so typical of Bull, to obscure the overall mood of the piece. A wonderful concert by a group to watch out for.

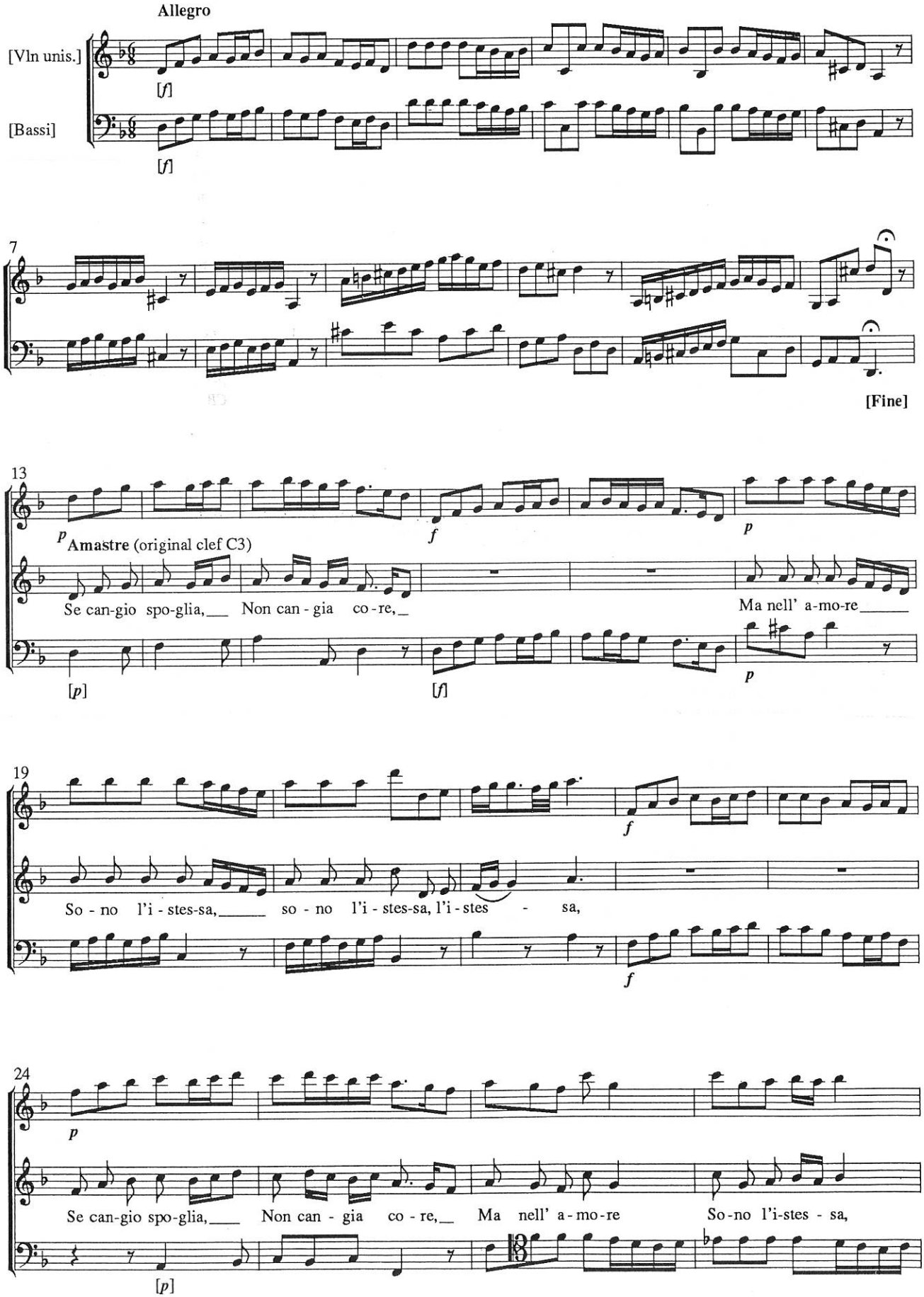
The Carolinian Consort's concert at the Wigmore Hall on 3 April concentrated on the music of Luigi Rossi, the 400th anniversary of whose birth (probably) falls this year. [Some of us celebrated it last year. *CB*] A product of the Spanish/Italian Neapolitan Court, he spent most of his musical life in Rome in the service of the Borghese family and Cardinal Barberini. He was also organist of San Luigi dei Francesi. The bulk of his compositions were chamber cantatas, few of which have been published. Members of the Carolinian Consort have transcribed and edited a number of these largely secular cantatas from manuscripts in the British Library and Christ Church Library, Oxford. This concert featured ten of Rossi's cantatas for 1, 2 or 3 voices, plus Marazzoli's *Ogni nostro piacer* and two pieces by Carissimi, including the dramatic *Ferma lascia ch'io parli*, the solo lament on the death of Mary Queen of Scots. This was the highlight for me, sung with a range of passion that was rather lacking in much of the rest of the programme. The switch from the drama of the torments, tortures, scourging and other atrocities to the hushed and mournful ending was well judged. Rossi's *Hor guardate come va* was billed and sung as a 'light-hearted' piece, with strumming harpsichord and guitar, despite the text being full of sighs, weeping torments and cruelty – perhaps it was Daphne turning herself into a tree that cheered them up. The three sopranos (whose intonation on the upper notes was not always of the best) were accompanied by guitar/theorbo and harpsichord/organ, the organ being curiously placed at such an angle that the player was facing away from the singers. Despite reservations, a worthy effort on behalf of Signor Rossi.

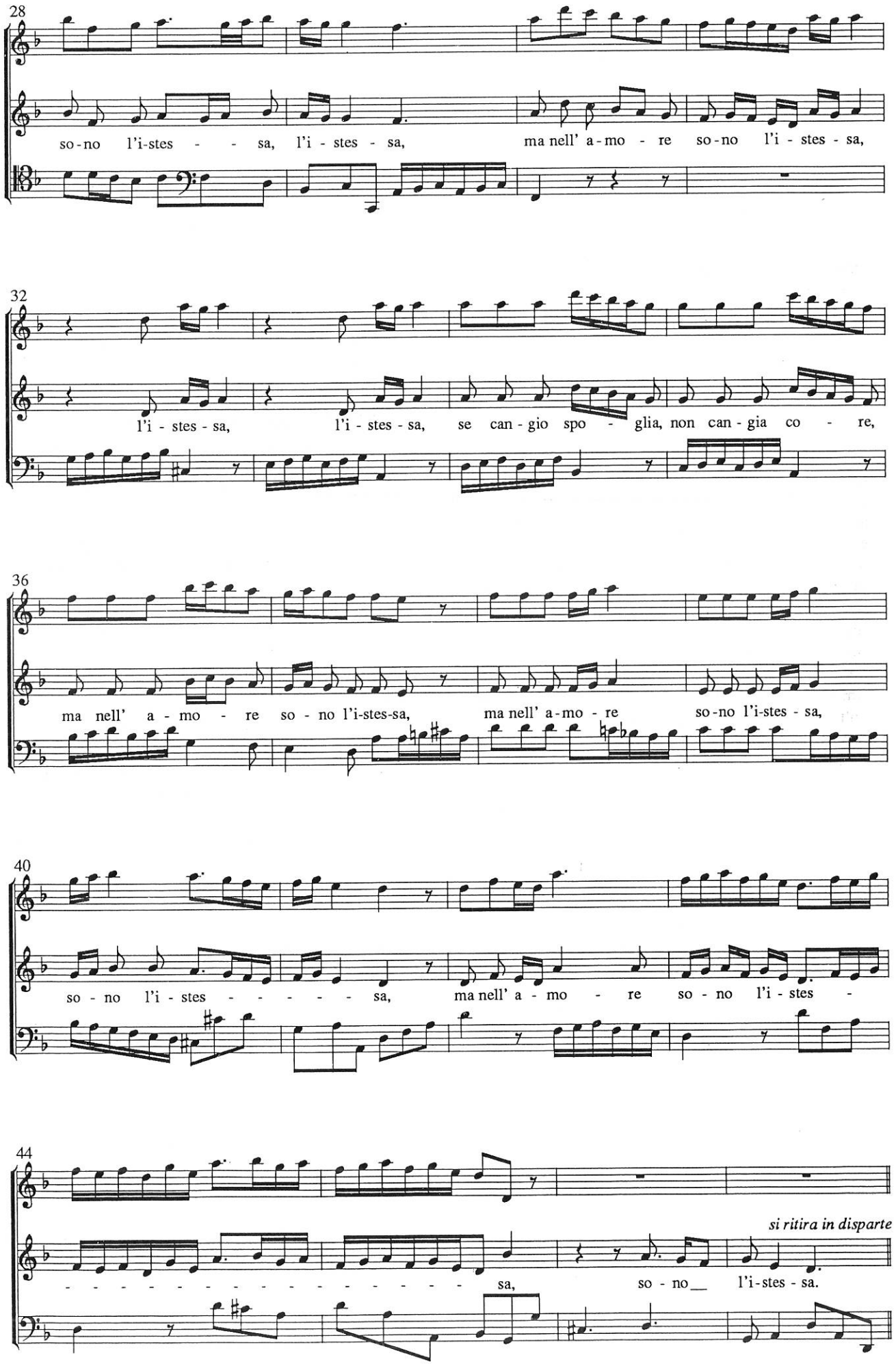
****

I cannot resist adding a brief comment on the OAE/Norrington Tchaikovsky. Symphony 6 was an absolute revelation. The sound of a large but unvibrating body of strings was stunning, the clarity of the German wind instruments was phenomenal, and Roger Norrington produced a searing performance that reinstated it as one of the major works of the 19th century. Sadly, no record company took advantage of the exceptionally thoroughly-rehearsed performance, the culmination of three consecutive weekend Experiences, nor was the BBC present. Pathetic indeed! CB

Handel: Serse – Atto I, scena 8

19 (HWV 40/11) *Aria* Amastre *in abito da Uomo seguita da uno Scudiere*




28
so-no l'i-stes - - sa, l'i - stes - sa, ma nell' a-mo - re so-no l'i - stes - sa,
32
l'i - stes - sa, l'i - stes - sa, se can - gio spo - glia, non can - gia co - re,
36
ma nell' a - mo - re so - no l'i-stes-sa, ma nell' a-mo - re so-no l'i-stes - sa,
40
so - no l'i - stes - - - - - sa, ma nell' a - mo - re so - no l'i - stes -
44
- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - sa, so - no__ l'i-stes - sa.
si ritira in disparte
D. C.

HILDEGARD & LUCREZIA

Clifford Bartlett

Hildegard von Bingen *Symphonia armoniae caelestium revelationum* Vol. 2. *Chants for the Blessed Virgin Mary: Mother and Son* [edited by] Marianne Richert Pfau. Furore (39702), 1997. 42pp, DM 29,00.

Hildegard of Bingen *Ordo virtutum* Vox Animae, dir Michael Fields & Evelyn Tubb. Video. Petri Visser Production, 1997 KTCV 101 69' 30"

Lucrezia Vizzana *Componimenti Musicali (1623): Songs of Devotion and Ecstasy from a 17th Century Italian Convent* Musica Secreta with Catherine King. 63' 40"
Linn CKD 071

There are eight volumes of this edition listed in the 1998/99 Furore catalogue. Five of them are priced, of which the one sent for review is the most expensive, so presumably the longest. There are also some cheap selections. The catalogue heads the series *Gesamtausgabe der Werke*, though excludes the *Ordo Virtutum*. So those who can read standard chant notation might prefer the Salzburg edition[1], which includes that as well for a cost of about £25.00. The alternative is to supplement the Furore set with the edition of the *Ordo Virtutum* from Medieval Institute Publications, Kalamazoo ($13.00). The Furore edition is published under licence from the Hildegard Publishing Company, Bryn Mawr: I don't know if that is also available and how it differs. The introduction refers to literal English translations of the texts; these are not present (nor replaced by German ones). Their absence makes the editor's punctuation, based on musical rather than syntactical reasons (though the two are, of course, closely related), less helpful than it might be to singers not fluent in medieval Latin.

Pfau's transcriptions have black blobs on a five-line stave. I used that method of notation in the example I printed in *EMR* No. 23, but this edition is more punctilious in letting the user see through the modern notation to the original – in theory, at least. But the very first and second lines of the first piece both end with four notes slurred. The key to the relationship between transcription and neums is on the page opposite, enabling easy comparison; but there is no neum listed which corresponds to four notes under a slur. There is not, though, any interpretational problem here. I was taken to task by Alison Sabedoria in *EMR* 24, p. 28 for my failure to distinguish clearly between ornamental and liquescent notes. That is attended to here, with the former written as smaller blobs, the latter as slashed small quavers. But there is a problem with the smaller blobs – an optical illusion which makes blobs between the lines look larger than those on the lines. So when there is a series of small blobs for a scale, alternate notes appear to be of different sizes. The solution would be to copy the original neum shapes above the transcription. That apart, the notation is clear, the layout intelligent (returning to the first piece, it isn't by accident that the two identical patterns are at the ends of consecutive lines), and the edition can be used with no special knowledge of notation, though singers might have appreciated some comment on the meaning of ornamental and liquescent neums. It would also have been useful had there been at least a brief comment on why most recordings are rhythmical and add drones.

I wrote about the CD of the *Ordo virtutum* by Vox Animae in *EMR* 36 p. 15. The matching video arrived some weeks ago; I had been hoping that the new recording by Sequentia (not a reissue of the 1982 LP set) would have arrived in time for a comparative review, but I can't wait any longer unless this issue is to be as late as the last. [In fact, the disc – or rather, pair of discs – arrived just as I was correcting the proofs.]

This is a work with many short solos. The variety of sound produced by the female cast was noticeable and extremely effective, but there were enough singers for the unison sound to cohere. By far the outstanding performance came from Evelyn Tubb as Humilitas; her Latin felt as if it meant something and she found an emotional depth in the music that was otherwise less apparent. Even if the listener is dependent on the English subtitles (which were excellently done), Hildegard's music must sound as if it springs from the words, and they must be audible: often I had to take my eyes from the screen to look at the Latin in the score. In my review of the CD, I expressed my doubts about Ansy Boothroyd, who has the largest role as Anima (The Soul). I was interested to listen again, since Jennie Cassidy (who sings one of the smaller parts) was extremely enthusiastic about her. In fact, I found that each time she sang, it took a few notes to adjust to her voice (a comment I have previously made about Jennie herself); but it was worth persevering, and having her in vision is definitely an asset. But was the way she held her head slightly to one side a mannerism or symbolic? I was similarly mystified by the continual movement of the chorus, both within the Abbey (St Bartholomew the Great in London) and to ruins in Sussex – I'm not going to run the tape through again just to check the exact place from the closing credits. Was this just the usual twin TV obsessions with movement and

1. Hildegard von Bingen *Lieder* nach den Handschriften herausgegeben von Pudentiana Barth OSB, M. Immaculata Ritscher OSB und Joseph Schmidt-Görg. Otto Müller Verlag, Salzburg, 1969. There is a facsimile that includes 58 pieces from the *Symphonia* but not the *Ludus:* Hildegard of Bingen *Symphoniae harmoniae caelestium revelationum: Dendermonde St.-Pieters & Paulusabdij MS. Cod. 9* Introduction Peter van Poucke, Peer: Alamire, 1991. BEF2590, $81.00. The best anthology is: Abbess Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179) *Sequences and Hymns* Edited by Christopher Page. Antico, 1983.

getting pretty backgrounds, or did I miss the symbolic use of different parts of the church? As the modern-dress Diabolus reveals, let alone what Anima is wearing under her robe, this is not an attempt at an authentic production – something that is not possible anyway – but a tactful presentation in a plausible medieval style. But there was a touch of the nativity play about the movement that diminished its credibility.

There are realisations of music of this period in which instrumental participation is essential to the vision of the director; here it seemed an appendage. Rhythmically, much of the music felt quite natural and free, with equality of syllable-length being the general guide. I wasn't convinced by the occasional attempt to find a more regular rhythm and some long melismas seemed too rushed. (I must be careful here; Michael Fields phoned to discuss the matter with me before his first performance, and I don't want him to blame me for his decisions!) I'm not sure how a TV audience would have reacted had it been shown instead of *Ben Hur* on Good Friday afternoon (the nearest TV got to religion at peak viewing time); but with a sympathetic introduction it could bring Hildegard to a wider audience.

Until now, the most famous 17th-century composing nun has been Isabella Leonarda, but with a disc devoted to her work (and probably editions to follow) Lucrezia Vizzana is a strong rival. Unfortunately, we did not receive a review copy of what seems to have been an excellent book, *Disembodied voices* by Craig Monson (who has worked with Musica Secreta), on the Convent of Santa Cristina in Bologna, although we did review a comparable study of the convents in Milan by Robert Kendrick (*Celestial Sirens*; see *EMR* 27 p. 5). A point briefly touched on there is the possibility that nuns used the convention of notating ensemble music in two standard clef-patterns by inverting the normal rules. I had a long phone conversation with Deborah Roberts before writing this, and was interested that Musica Secreta had been thinking on similar lines. She earns much of her livelihood singing 'treble' in The Tallis Scholars, which tends to perform with transposition on the Wulstan hypothesis so takes her up to top B♭s. This seems to be well above the range needed for normal music of the 16th & 17th centuries but may have been used in convents. Music in *chiavette* is singable by female choirs at notated pitch; altos can manage to go down to the octave below middle C (you don't even have to be an alto: as I mentioned when reviewing the disc version of the Hildegard video, Jennie Cassidy, who calls herself a mezzo, sings a low C drone), while high sopranos can sing the G2 part at pitch. Similarly, if standard-clef pieces are transposed up to the *chiavette* range, they can be managed with the same line-up. (Such either-way transposition has also been proposed for making the same canzonas suitable for different families of instruments.) Deborah has been looking more widely into music in convents, and there is evidence that, when bass parts went below female range, they were sung an octave higher with perhaps a bassoon as well as organ doubling at the written pitch. Thus normal Palestina-style polyphony was performable by female choirs.

Unlike Isabella, Lucrezia was a one-work composer; her *Compenimenti musicali* of 1623 (published when she was 33) was not followed by any further collections, although she lived for another forty years. Convent life was disrupted by a series of alleged scandals – it is difficult to tell how genuine they were, since there is a long history of ecclesiastical managers looking for disciplinary excuses to curtail musical activities.

Deborah reckons that throughout the baroque period and over most of Italy (not just at the Venetian *Ospedali*), those attending services primarily to listen to music were more likely to hear female than male voices. The amount of specific conventual repertoire is quite small, though there is more to investigate, as Kendrick's book shows. The present recording only has one four-part piece, with Mary Nichols providing a solid bass. The gap between her and Deborah is filled by Tessa Bonner, with Catherine King taking the third line and John Toll and David Miller playing continuo (organ and chitarrone). I find the performance completely convincing; even if the solos and duets were less so (which they are not), the singing of that track would make this a demonstration disc for the legitimacy of this as a way for female voices to present four-part vocal music, probably the more convincing for having an organ accompaniment. The clarity of diction is also impressive: if all singers were as good, I would be less worried about Furore's defects in their Isabella Leonarda edition (see p. 5).

It is easy to judge convent music by irrelevant criteria. There has always been a prurient interest from men about what happens inside nunneries. The concept of sex as an impure activity has now almost competely vanished, which makes it difficult for modern audiences to accept the relevance of *Ordo virtutum* and the need to place it firmly in a lost medieval world. So we find it difficult to imagine the convent as an institution that women might have entered voluntarily and where they might find fulfilment. Consequently, stories of immorality are only too readily believed. More recently, attention has been focussed on the convent as a place where women were, at least at times, allowed to function with some degree of intellectual independence, especially as musicians. In Western culture, music was often part of a girl's education, but was frowned upon if taken too seriously after marriage; Fanny Mendelssohn is a prime example. There were in the 17th century a few women who could practise music and still remain respectable (Francesca Caccini and Barbara Strozzi are notable examples), but usually women in the entertainment profession required aristocratic sexual liaisons for artistic survival, and they were acquired by singing and acting, not composing. So the rarity of fully-competent female composers is likely to make us favour their music more than it might be worth. Vizzana's music strikes me as professional, skilful, imaginative, sometimes more, but perhaps a notch below Barbara Strozzi; comparison with Monteverdi should be avoided, but that applies to any composer of the period. With Hildegard there is no problem: in music as in other aspects of her life she seems to have had a unique gift.

LONDON WEISS

Lynda Sayce

Silvius Leopold Weiss *The London Manuscript* Michel Cardin *baroque lute* 6 discs
Société Nouvelle d'enregistrement *For numbers, see below*

Weiss is the undisputed giant of the German baroque lute repertory, the only name commonly mentioned in the same breath as Bach, and the composer whose works most lutenists aspire to play. His considerable output survives largely in manuscript; it as almost all for solo lute, with the exception of a handful of chamber works, most of which survive incomplete. The London Manuscript is one of the largest anthologies of Weiss's work, so-called because it now resides in the British Library. The other comparable source, known as the Dresden Manuscript, again because of its current home, was compiled rather later than London. There are some concordances between the two sources, but they often vary tremendously in their details. The picture is complicated by the fact that Weiss's music survives in several smaller sources in addition to these, often with significantly divergent readings. The variation between sources can include relatively minor points such as the position of slurs or the number of notes in a chord, or it can include major reworking of individual movements, the presence of a suite in various sources with different constituent movements, or the presence of versions of the same piece for lutes with different numbers of courses. There are also some pieces whose authorship is disputed.

A major headache for a project such as this one is the choosing of the music and the versions that are to be included. Much of the London Manuscript is straightforward in this respect, as it largely organized by key, and generally in sensible orders within each key area. Purists may like to know that Cardin has chosen to proceed by recording all of the sections which make sensible suites, omitting stray movements, which will be mopped up later. The suites comprise about 80% of the manuscript, so a fair amount will remain in limbo until the end of the series.

Such a project is ambitious in its extent; a series of 11 or 12 discs are projected for this manuscript alone. The notes are somewhat ambiguous regarding the plans for Dresden and other sources; if they are to be included then this total will easily be doubled. The advent of such a project is

Miami Weiss

marvellous news for the lute, which has been seen as a marginal instrument for too long, with a corresponding lack of musicological attention to its major composers. For this alone Michel Cardin deserves congratulations, and all lute enthusiasts should vote with their feet and their cheque books in the direction of their nearest record shop.

The great strength of this project is that it will enable us to evaluate Weiss on the basis of his entire surviving output, rather than on the few suites that are favoured by performers. It is a shock to realize that much of the music on these discs has not been recorded before, and many of the newly-recorded items are comparable in quality to the old warhorses, which is good news both for listeners and players. There is competition from many players, but it is worth noting that many Weiss recordings add relatively little to the recording catalogue, as there has been a tendency for the same few popular suites to be recorded several times. However, mention should be made of Robert Barto, whose own first disc of Weiss (on Naxos) I reviewed recently in these pages. This is presumably the beginning of another substantial Weiss project. For the moment at least, the two series complement each other well, as Barto started with a selection from the Dresden manuscript. Such is the extent of Weiss's output that both projects can continue to add new material to the catalogue for many discs yet without fear of extensive duplication. I feel it is fair to say that the series will probably not have widespread popular appeal, any more than complete cycles of Mozart or Haydn symphonies have with the general public. However, the discs deserve praise on their own individual merits, not merely because of the milestone which they represent for the instrument.

In a series such as this, it would be easy for the performances to congeal into safe and uncontroversial reference works. Happily Cardin has avoided this. In selecting his source, many decisions of the nature outlined above were made for him by the scribe; there has been some further editorial input in the decision to record logical suites, rather than entire sequences of movements which happen to share a key, but basically Cardin has simply set about recording his chosen version of each suite with the same kind of detail and commitment that each would merit if it were the sole focus of a programme. This has resulted in some very personal readings, particularly with regard to ornamentation, which is often lavish and sometimes startling. Consequently the performances may be too idiosyncratic for those who like their archives to be impersonally bland, but they make for marvellous listening. Personally, I feel that Weiss's music is typical of the output of virtuoso performers, in that however well-crafted, it requires a full-blooded performance to come alive. The mere playing of the notes is not enough. Also it must be said that there are movements in several suites which are frankly substandard. They can be rescued by an imaginative performance, as here, but an impersonal rendering would shine a merciless searchlight on their flaws.

On a technical level, Cardin plays with good tone and great fluency. In the slow movements in particular he phrases with exquisite subtlety, and uses the whole dynamic compass of the instrument. There is also considerable variety of timbre and articulation. I felt that he has occasionally overstepped the bounds of good taste or technical feasibility in the complexity of his ornaments, but his additions remain firmly within the range of legitimately available resources. He brings the music alive with conviction, and for this he should be applauded. There is great variety within Weiss's output, and Cardon captures this well.

It should perhaps be mentioned that the London manuscript has been worked over at least once, and many of its contents modified from 11 to 13 courses, or *vice versa*. The modifications could have been in either direction; early 11 course works could be adapted to take advantage of a later instrument, or they could be written for 13 course instrument, and modified by a scribe whose lute possessed only 11 courses. The differences are largely limited to the choice of octave for the bass line, but occasionally they affect the treble lines too. The distinction is largely irrelevant for most listeners, but purists may like to know that Cardon favours the 13 course readings. The discs are recorded on two different 13 course lutes, one a swan-neck type, the other with a rider pegbox.

Extensive notes in French and English are supplied by the performer himself. They are not the most informative or fluently written, being largely a descriptive analysis of each movement, which sometimes degenerates into the musicological equivalent of legalese; for example I would be grateful to know what 'agogic inflexions' are. (The French version is just as cryptic.) But they contain a lot of useful information about Weiss's life, and the first disc contains a helpful index to the entire manuscript. Cardin has written more extensively (and more coherently) about Weiss's works in the pages of the American Lute Society Newsletter, for anyone who needs more information. But I suspect most listeners will either have access to copious information about Weiss in other sources, or will be happy just to listen to the music.

The individual discs all have much to recommend them; committed lute enthusiasts will probably want to acquire them all. but for those who just want to try a single disc, the contents are as follows. Suite numbers follow the order of the manuscript; Douglas Alton Smiths's numbers (referring to the critical edition of the London Manuscript published in 4 volumes under *Das Erbe deutscher Musik*, Peters edition, 1983-90) are added on brackets where these are available.

Volume 1: Suites 1 in F, 2 in D, 3 in g. Index. SNE 596 71' 53"
Volume 2: Suites 4 (5) in G, 5 (7) in c,6 (10) in Eb. SNE 600 66' 30"
Volume 3: Suites 7(11) in d, 8 (12) in A, 9 (13) in d. SNE 605 67' 28"
Volume 4: Suites 10 (15) in Bb, 11 (16) in A. 12 (17) in C. SNE 608 77' 43"
Volume 5: Suites 13 (18) in D, 14 (19) in F,15 (21) in f. SNE 615 77' 07"
Volume 6: Suites 16 (22) in G, 17 (23) in Bb. SNE 625 62' 44"

PENITENCE & LAMENTATION

Eric Van Tassel & Noel O'Regan

Lassus *Penitential Psalms* Henry's Eight
Hyperion CDA67271/2 142' 23" 2 discs in box

Is it because of his very fecundity that Lassus is comparatively neglected? He really is quite wonderful, and this recording is a good introduction to his serious side. The seven Penitential Psalms were written during the earlier parts of his almost 40 years' residence in Munich. Described in its own day as the essence of *musica reservata*, the set makes a good case for interpreting that troublesome term as alluding to a close responsiveness to the meaning of the text, with affective harmonic and rhythmic gestures as well as devices such as eye-music and word-painting that would appeal to the informed and attentive patron – and, not incidentally, flatter his connoisseurship.

Each of the seven long motets, ranging here from under nine minutes to over 27, is sub-divided into several short clauses (not separately tracked), in which Lassus varies the number of voices from two to six, always ending in a six-part doxology. The writing is what I call madrigable – that is, singable by a one-per-part consort – but this recording adopts neither that extreme nor its opposite, the richly mixed ensemble suggested by Mielich's picture of the Munich chapel (frequently reproduced; e.g. the cover of *Early Music* August 1994). The Eight, singing without instruments, double the parts in some sections but not in others; in this fairly resonant recording, I can't always tell which parts are doubled, but nowhere do the results seem other than musical.

I'm no expert, but I imagine that in 1560s Munich these pieces may have been heard on the seven Fridays in Lent (and not, as in the Prayer Book, all on Ash Wednesday). Lassus set the psalms in ascending modes; with no music in mode 8; the 1584 published version tacked on shorter settings of Psalms 148 and 150, which have no liturgical place but would do nicely some time on Easter Day. (For reasons of space, Hyperion has put these at the end of CD 1, between Lassus' third and fourth psalms.) Two hours of penitential polyphony seems to promise heavy going, and despite their expressive and textural variety these pieces are best taken in small doses. Over the period leading up to Holy Week I have been listening to them at intervals, one motet at a sitting; I hear more in them each time, in these lucid, unemphatic but expressive performances.

Eric Van Tassel

The new edition is by Jon Dixon (Joed Music), who is also editing the complete works of Victoria. A full catalogue appeared in EMR 33, September 1997, pp. 16-17

Victoria *Vol II: The Mystery of the Cross: Lamentations of Jeremiah.* The Sixteen, Harry Christophers 76' 16"
Collins Classics 15182

This second volume has all the hallmarks of the first: strong full tone, impeccable tuning, wonderful phrasing, intense commitment to the text. Tempi are a bit slow for my liking, but the breath-control is staggering[1] (literally so, perhaps!) and allows the singers to show every nuance. Comparison with Musica Contexta's recording of Palestrina Lamentations (see *EMR* 39 p.15) is interesting on many fronts: how different the composers' approaches are, with Victoria's sounding much more telling and emotionally-involved. These differences are highlighted by the performing pitch and this raises important questions about the Victoria.

Two of his nine Lamentations are in *chiavette* with ranges about a fourth higher than most of the others (some have mixed clefs, which complicates the situation). The Sixteen do all at their written pitches, so the final lessons for Good Friday and Holy Saturday occupy a very different part of the aural spectrum. Now this makes for thrilling singing with the voices straining, and the two sopranos making some wonderful combination tones, but in the context of the other lessons it sounds too high. I believe that clefs are related to modes and that they should be equalised in a set like this (as in a BVM mass, or in the Monteverdi *Vespers*). Otherwise, who would have sung these two? There's also my belief that Roman pitch was low anyway – certainly during Holy Week. Musica Contexta performs everything at a very low pitch and hearing the two recordings together has made me aware of how important pitch is for this music. Of course The Sixteen make no claim to historical accuracy and their *Incipit oratio* is thrilling in the way that high performances of Victoria's *O vos omnes* are – or the same group's high Monteverdi 1610 Magnificat.

Another quibble with their Victoria is the inclusion of all the alternative *Jerusalem* refrains: wonderful to have them, but doing both, one after the other, upsets the balanced structure of those lessons where they are provided – and is certainly not authentic. A minor quibble is that the two plainchant-based hymns are given to the wrong days; both are very impressive, of coures, with the final triple-time verse of *Pange lingua* providing some of the most magical singing on this disc which, one could say, represents a concert performance of this music rather than liturgical one. It certainly provides some wonderful insights into under-recorded Victoria.

Noel O'Regan

1. John Potter (see review on p; 2) has some interesting remarks about breath control as a feature of the new style of the mid-19th century and probably not a feature of earlier singing, except for the physically-unnatural castrati. CB

LE TRE ORE DI AGONIA

Tristram Pugin

Giovanni Felice Sances *Stabat mater a voce sola* (1638); Girolamo Frescobaldi *Sonetto spirituale Maddalena alla Croce*; Niccolò Jommelli: *Agonia di Cristo (le Sette Parole di N.S.) à 4 voci, con due violoncelli, fagotto e contrabasso.* Caterona Calvi *A*, Ensemble vocale 'Concerto', Ensemble 'Concerto', Roberto Gini *dir.* 51' 23"
Nuova Era 7020.

The *Tre Ore di Agonia di Nostro Signore Gesú* is a devotional practice that grew up in Perù during the 17th Century where it was given its classic literary form by the Spanish Jesuit Alonso Messia Bedoy. It consists of three hours of homiletic and musical meditation on the Seven Last Words of Christ, starting at noon on Good Friday and concluding at three, the equivalent of the ninth hour when Jesus died on the Cross. An *Invito* calling the faithful to relive the hours of agony as an aid to their own salvation introduces Christ's seven last 'words', each followed by a sermon and by a musical setting of the appropriate verses from Messia's poem. The service then ends with the Credo.

The *Tre ore* were gradually replaced during the 19th century by the *Via crucis*. Haydn provided the only music for it widely known today, but there were many other works written for the service, especially in Central and Southern Italy, where rather than instrumental interludes it was customary to provide settings of the poem written for the service by Alonso Messia in Italian translation. Roberto Gini came across such a setting by Niccolò Jommelli in the Ospedaletto in Venice where Jommelli was musical director from 1743 to 1747. It is an early work but already in a burgeoning classical style which shows how quickly music in Venice was developing in those years. The setting is extraordinary: vocal quartet, two cellos, contrabass and bassoon. The bassoon part is obbligato throughout in the nocturnal and lugubrious manner of Vivaldi's *La notte*, however different the overall expression. Nearly half an hour of melodic bassoon writing in any century is a rarity and this piece is as important for a bassoonist as any concerto. Jommelli's choral writing, however modern the style, still has about it more than a suggestion of sacred polyphony. It is no more (nor less) operatic than the intimate baroque oratorio.

Roberto Gini chooses to set the words of Christ in four part faux bourdon 'according to the style of the period'. This is to misunderstand the nature of the *Tre ore*, since the words were spoken or intoned in Latin or Italian before the priest commented on them: Gini's solution is out of place here. Jommelli's is a touching masterpiece by a composer whose genius is on a level with his historical importance but has received little attention up to now.

Of the other pieces recorded here Frescobaldi's spiritual sonnet *Maddalena alla Croce* is one of the most familiar vocal pieces of the time, but the *Stabat mater* by Sances will comes as a very pleasant surprise, a solo setting in the style of Monteverdi and Cavalli. Lasting a little over ten minutes, it would be a perfect replacement for the plainchant *Stabat* at an actual church service.

Returning to the *Tre ore*, BC was not very kind to another disc of music for that service by Giuseppe Giordani, perhaps through unfamiliarity with the music's function (see *EMR* 37, p. 19). Written in Fermo in 1795, three years before the composer's death, this is one of the last monuments of Italian sacred music before the deluge of *bel canto* gimcrack. The style is that of Salieri or the Mozart of *La clemenza*, the means those of Vivaldi's *Griselda*: strings and two horns, and I find the playing by a small classical ensemble, with vocal production scaled down to match, very effective (Arts 47373-2; 58' 28"). Gian Paolo Fagotto, the director, chose to have the words recited and to follow them with a brief Credo by Giordani, which lingers suitably on the events of the Passion.

Much of Giordani's music is in the minor. But since the *Tre ore* are also about the *Felix culpa*, there are exultant passages as well. The darkest music is saved for the final terzett, punctuated by stopped horns. This suggests to me that an image of Christ was placed in a funeral urn after the piece was over, either under the high altar or in a special chapel dedicated to the Passion, most likely before the intonation of the Credo. The disc also includes two *Canzoncini per i Venerdi di Marzo*, which the editors (Ugo Gironacci and Italo Vescovo, who are producing critical editions of Giordano's music) believe to have accompanied the *Via crucis*, which I doubt. The first, *Per le piaghe che soffriste*, is a brief *a capella* setting of a text on the Holy Wounds. The second, *Sommo ben dell' alma mia*, for vocal quartet, strings and horns, sets an extended poem begging Christ to look down from the Cross and forgive the sins of we who have offended him.

****

Tristram Pugin has also drawn our attention to a delightful disc of music by Domenico Scarlatti: *Sei sonate per mandolino e chitarra, K 77, 81, 88-91* played by the Duo Capriccioso (Gertrud & Michael Tröster) on baroque mandolin and guitar, a combination that we might think of as implausible (Thorofon CTH 235; 51' 58"). But the mandolin is justified by a concordance in the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal in Paris with the heading *Sonatina per mandolino e cimbalo* and the guitar is a natural accompanying instrument for it, despite the specific reference to harpsichord, the two instruments being particularly associated with serenading.

RECORD REVIEWS

MEDIEVAL

Hildegard of Bingen ***Ordo vertutum*** Vox Animae, dir. Michael Fields & Evelyn Tubb. Video KTCV 101

see p. 14

Bestiarium: Animals and Nature in Medieval Music La Reverdie 56' 15" (rec 1990) Cantus **C 9601**

It can be argued that in general words and music of medieval songs exist in parallel, so only in the later of the settings here, e.g. Vaillant's *Par mantes foys*, can one hear bird noises. So although this is an enjoyable anthology just to listen to, to benefit fully one has to work at the texts; there are also two introductory essays. The four versatile singers and players make bold and lively sounds, with maybe just a little too much emphasis on instruments, but they are persuasive and impressive. *CB*

15th CENTURY

Obrecht ***Missa Malheur me bat & Motets by Obrecht & Martini*** The Clerks' Group, Edward Wickham 68' 26" ASV *Gaudeamus* **CD GAU 171**

Martini *Ave maris stella, Magnificat tertii toni, O beate Sebastiane, Salve Regina*; Obrecht *Laudes Christo*

Following their highly successful recordings of music by Ockeghem, this ensemble is ideally placed to tackle the challenging work of his slightly younger contemporary Jacob Obrecht. The opening motet *Laudes Christo* typifies their approach, audaciously virtuosic with a slightly edgy tone, emphasised by a relatively dead acoustic. The mass itself is not Obrecht's most engaging work and might have benefited from a slightly less earnest approach at points, where the singing occasionally has little more soul than a technical exercise. In the later movements, where phrases are given room to breathe, the performance is much more convincing. Johannes Martini's music confirms his maturely-quirky slant to the Franco-Flemish idiom, and the present selection of pieces whets the appetite for more – perhaps his *Missa* 'Cucu' with its intriguing avine *cantus firmus! D. James Ross*

Lorenzo il Magnifico: Trionfo di Bacco: chants de Carneval (1449-1492) Doulce Mémoire, Denis Raisin Dadre 54' 18" Auvidis *Astrée* **E 8626**

anon except Dalza *Calata*; Demiphon *Volgi gli occhi*; Ghiselin *La Spagna*; Isaac *Palle*; Josquin *Scaramella, La Spagna*

This collection of Medici entertainment music is vigorous and lively. It begins with a group of May Carnival songs, introduced by the piece irreverently known as Isaac's Balls on an *alta* ensemble. There follow Spagnas by Josquin and Ghiselin, a group of carnival songs, and the disc closes with songs from Savonarola's replacement to the carnival, the *Carnoval con crocifisso*. The *haut* vocal style sounds a bit artificially coarse, but the tone of most items is appropriate and effective. The tempi are often a bit quick to have worked out-of-doors and drums are obtrusive in pieces with quick-changing harmonies. Mostly a jolly disc, but there is a sudden change of mood with the stark *Carro della morte*, in which the singers use their *bas* voices (why? surely the singers used the same vocal style for processions, whether secular or religious) and adopt some strange ornamental gestures. Make sure your copy contains the card listing the correct track numbers: the original version omits *Io mio padre* (no. 5). *CB*

16th CENTURY

Lassus ***Penitential Psalms*** Henry's Eight Hyperion **CDA67271/2** 142' 23" 2 discs in box

see p. 18

Victoria ***Vol II: The Mystery of the Cross; Lamentations of Jeremiah.*** The Sixteen, Harry Christophers 76' 16" Collins Classics **15182**

see p. 18

17th CENTURY

Carissimi ***Oratorios and Motets*** Hassler Consort, Franz Raml 53' 48" Dabringhaus & Grimm **MDG 614 0753-2**

Cain, Ezechia, Job, Judicium Salamonis Desiderata nobis, Sancta et individua Trinitas

I was puzzled by the group photo, which shows twice as many people as are needed for this programme of four oratorios and two motets. Fortunately, the seven voices and seven players listed are all that are involved. There is, I think, one too many: the violone is superfluous, especially when doubling bass solos, a practice which I would have thought very un-Italian and which Schütz objected to in Germany. The performances are effective and stylish, but I don't find any particular voice really gripping. If you like the music, you'll enjoy it; but if you are not keen on Carissimi, this is not a disc to win you over, despite the fine fiddling from the two players on the Polish disc (see p. 21). *CB*

Monteverdi ***Vespers (1610)***; **Palestrina** ***Missa Papae Marcelli*** Choir of King's College Cambridge, Early Music Consort of London, Philip Ledger, David Willcocks (Mass) 119' 38" (2 discs) 1976 & 1971 HMV Classics **HMVD 5 72770 2** ££

I wonder what I thought of this *Vespers* in 1976. It was the year in which I first played the work (Kingston Parish Church with Louis Halsey) and the year before Andrew Parrott introduced the transposed *Lauda & Magnificat* at a Prom at St Augustine's, Kilburn. Sadly, the King's version has not worn well. The choir sounds better than the soloists, though of course one doesn't really need a choir at all; but even the choral singing is disappointing, with no real feel for the shape of the words. The triple tempi are slow – was Roger Bowers already influencing Cambridge performers? It would have been interesting if the booklet had listed the players of Munrow's band. The Palestrina isn't my style, but it has a coherence and conviction which the Monteverdi lacks. *CB*

Petersen ***Speelstukken*** Manfredo Kraemer, The Rare Fruits Council 67' 53" Auvidis *Astrée* **E 8615**

What an extraordinary CD! Manfredo Kraemer is, as we all know, a stunning violinist and this totally unknown set of sonatas (unknown to me that is, of course!) is just the sort of thing he seems to relish: it sounds – at least in the hands of someone as talented as this – every bit as stunning as the solo repertoire of Biber and Schmelzer (some passages are very reminiscent of the Mystery Sonatas). The continuo group varies from sonata to sonata (No. 4, for example, has no keyboard, while No. 5 has no string bass) and I have to confess that I was so disappointed that after almost 70 minutes, it was all over so played it through again! I'm not all that convinced that we needed all the hypotheses about Petersen's biography: the exceptional standard of music more than speaks for itself. *BC*

Facsimile published by Diapason, Utrecht.

Barbara Strozzi ***Arie, Cantate & Lamenti*** Ensemble Incantato (Mona Spägele *S*, Paulina van Laarhoven *lirone, gamba*, Hubert Hoffmann *chit, archlute*, Detlef Bratschke *hpscd, org*) 70' 32" cpo **999 533-2**

The music is powerful enough, and the singing is emotional and impassioned. The problem is that Mona Spägele sings it as if she is on an operatic stage with a distant audience. I welcome the pureness of sound, but the tempi (e.g. the ground in *L'Eraclito amoroso*, which almost grinds to a halt) seem to demand a vibrato – to which, of course, I would object were it there! I heard this before reading John Potter's book (see p. 2); perhaps I was unwittingly feeling that the breath-control is inappropriate for the style. The setting for music like this is, I imagine, a room – large, but still a room – in a Venetian palazzo, where this sort of performance would seem over the top. The singing is enormously affecting: I feel a killjoy for objecting. But the Kate Bott disc *To the Unknown Goddess* (Carlton 30366 00412) is a better introduction to Strozzi. To compare just tempi, her timing for *Appresso ai molli argenti* is 12' 12" while Spägele takes 16' 12". Timing isn't everything, but it encapsulates the stylistic differences. *CB*

Lucrezia Vizzana ***Componimenti Musicali (1623)*** Musica Secreta (Deborah Roberts, Tessa Bonner, Mary Nichols *SSA*, John Toll *org*, David Miller *lute*) with Catherine King *mS* Linn **CKD 071** 63' 40"

see p. 14

Loves Lost... and Found: Lute Songs & Solos from Elizabethan England Barbara Hollinshead *mS*, Howard Bass *lute* 64' 50" **RHB 9801**

This appears to be a privately produced promotion disc, which should not put you off, but it may not be easy to obtain in the UK. [That's a challenge for Lindum Records! *CB*] It is an attractive and varied programme, unrestricted by the shackles of the single-composer policy, which probably accords well with what most of the general CD-buying public would like in this repertory. The performances are splendid. Barbara Hollinshead has a lovely light, natural voice which suits this music well, and both intonation and diction are good. A little more variation of dynamic and expression would have been welcome, but this is a minor quibble which is more than offset by the extensive ornamentation, beautifully and tastefully executed. Howard Bass is a sensitive accompanist who produces a strong, substantial sound. His solos are sometimes a touch ponderous but are played with accuracy and conviction. The balance between lute and voice is well-judged and the disc is furnished with good notes and all of the song texts. In short a delightfully intimate disc, which is a very appealing introduction to this repertory.

Lynda Sayce

from Barbara Hollinshead, 5009 S 25th St, Arlington VA 22206. e-mail bass@nmah.si.edu

Musica Polonica: Eastern European Music of the XVIIth century In Stil Moderno (Mimi Mitchell, Heide Erbrich *vlns*, Timothy Dowling, Cas Gevers, Vincent Rombouts *crmbns*, Stephen Taylor *org*) 65' 25"
Cantus **C 9611**
Buonamente, Jarzebski, Jelich, Merula, Mielczewski, Rohaczewski, Speer, Szarynski & anon

Since I first played the Usper sonata for two violins, two cornetti and four trombones, I have revelled in this sort of repertoire. In Stil Moderno is a group new to me and I have to say that I am very impressed indeed: the three trombones with chamber organ produce a wonderfully rich sound, which provides the fiddles with the perfect harmonic background to weave some crisply-articulated, bright, high treble counterpoint. This is not to demean the wind players – their contributions are every bit as lively! I have become familiar with some of the music through my cherished CDs of the Polish group Il Tempo, but they clearly have stiff competition here! *BC*

£ = midprice £ = around £5.00
Other discs are, as far as we know, full price
All CDs reviewed here are available from Lindum Records
Address on p. 7

LATE BAROQUE

Bach ***Cantates pour alto (BWV 35, 54 & 170)*** Andreas Scholl, Orchestre du Collegium Vocale, Philippe Herreweghe 59' 19"
Harmonia Mundi **HMC 901664**

This comes with a free companion CD containing a 35-minute *Portrait* of Andreas Scholl with seven tracks of a ballad about King Henry, Schütz, Krieger, Caldara, Bach, & Handel. The three works here for alto soloist are widely diverse in dates of origin, in liturgical/biblical foundation and in responsive layout, so that Scholl, treading in paths already explored by Alfred Deller, Paul Esswood and James Bowman, has even more to contend with and to prove. Fortunately he comes over as a very positive new talent – a male alto without apparent strain or effort, having unusually rounded vowels, clear diction and giving a very musical impression. One thing that Cantatas 54, 170 and 35 have in common is excellence. The venerable 54 (later re-used at the start of the lost/reconstructable St Mark Passion) opens with a fierce chord to illustrate 'beware'. 35 is an utterly amiable keyboard concerto with vocal accompaniment. The much-praised 170 is beautifully balanced and most warmly delivered, for all Tovey's warnings that it is unusually difficult to perform at all. Harmonia Mundi are making a big fuss of Scholl at the moment, but we have yet to see how his instrument will stand up to the inevitable strain. He will be lucky to have this disc to compare with his future development, and we should be grateful at being able to share that privilege. *Stephen Daw*

Bach ***Kantaten 36b & 134a*** Linda Perillo, Matthias Koch, Nils Giesecke *SAT*, Leipziger Universitätschor, Pauliner Barockensemble, Wolfgang Unger 67' 57"
Thorofon *Capella* **CTH 2369**

'First Recording' the label proudly announces in German, although that only applies to the Rivinus homage-cantata 36b, which is mostly quite familar through its sacred cousin BWV 36 for Advent, and, as with the Köthen Serenata 134a, only the recitatives distinguish the secular version from the comparatively familiar sacred one. Leipzig recordings and performances fascinate me, because that really is THE Bach town, and its tenure of authenticity is uniquely maintained/disregarded. As often, this actual disc comes from rather further afield (Hannover) and some of the participants adhere to far-flung traditions, like the low-countries adherent Matthias Koch, whose counter-tenor sounds really agreeable in challenging heroic roles here: to Bach and his contemporaries, operatic heroes were customarily singers at alto pitch. The oboists sound more home-grown, the flautists fluent and the bassoonist rather modern by current standards, but the spirit of the originals is conveyed in a very direct, businesslike way; because of this, I adjudge this a superior reading to the recording of 134a by the Canadian group Les Violons du Roi under Bernard Labelle on DORIAN **DOR90199**, released some two years ago. *Stephen Daw*

Bach ***Mass in B minor*** Johanette Zorner, Véronique Gens, Andreas Scholl, Christoph Prégardien, Peter Kooy, Hanno Müller-Brachmann *SSATBB*, Collegium Vocale, Philippe Herreweghe 109' 22" 2 discs
Harmonia Mundi **HMC 901614.15**

Philippe Herreweghe's latest recording of the B-minor Mass employs fewer chorus and orchestral individuals and a partly new team of soloists, with Andreas Scholl and Christoph Prégardien substituted for Charles Brett and Howard Crook, both of whom demonstrated distinctive musicianship in the April 1988 performance which preceded this one of midsummer 1996. I find Scholl's unusually slow interpretation of the *Agnus Dei* singularly inappropriate, although I am impressed by his technical (breathkeeping) versatility. Herreweghe is, however, very much a performing scholar for our time, and I find him ideally versed in filling all those gaps between certainty and doubt about the early choral repertoire such as, how long, when and how to deliver the actual music. He is far from uncritical in making his decisions about compromises, and would almost certainly admit them if challanged. The new brass choir is far more accurate in its tuning than the 1988 one was, but the old string group, led by François Fernandez, somehow made the earlier version tenser, as well as even more expressive, than the new orchestra under Sirkka Liisa Kaakinen, for all its own moments of apparent rapport with Bach. The smaller choir of Collegium Vocale has become even better. If any work really deserves considered attention, it is this one, especially in accounts as good as these. *Stephen Daw*

Bach ***Das historische König-Orgel der Basilika Steinfeld: Craig Cramer spielt J. S. Bach***
Motette **CD 12281** 68' 49"
BWV 531, 542,. 583,662-4, 768, 1027a

I thought I was going to love this CD after the first few notes. The declamatory pedal solo at the start of Bach's *Praeludium* in C was treated with a fine sense of drama and rhetoric. But I am afraid it didn't last. By the time the manuals joined the fray, the rhythmic pulse had been lost and the playing lapsed into the often-heard clickety-click of typewriter playing. It remained as such for the rest of the CD. Page after page of semiquavers were played in unremittingly regular fashion, with no audible attempt at displaying the nuances of articulation or touch that are essential if organ playing is not to sound dull. It was only the occasional rests that brought the flow to any sort of temporary respite. Registrations occasionally sounded odd, particularly the very exposed harmonics at the beginning of the C major Fugue. There was no consistent pulse through the Partita on *Sei gegrüßet, Jesu gütig*: the first variation was painfully slow and the fifth lost all sense of propriety with a rather silly bouncy left-hand. The highlight was a few seconds of a jolly-sounding Nachtigall at the end of one of the Trio movements. The organ was not particularly impressive either, and it sounded suspiciously as if tuned in equal temperament. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

Bach ***Organ works vol. 3*** Jacques van Oortmerssen (The Wagner organ, Trondheim Cathedral) 72' 59"
Vanguard Classics **99103**
BWV 525, 532, 546, 571, 645-50

Van Oortmerssen is one of the most gifted interpreters of Bach around. His playing and musical interpretation are quite superb. Although his performances are always personal and from the heart, he doesn't impose on the music or come between the composer and the listener. He interprets, rather than merely performs. His sense of musical style, and the techniques of organ touch and articulation that are needed to bring life to organ music, make for playing of immense maturity. His Bach is grown-up Bach. He doesn't attempt to dazzle by virtuoso technique or to amaze by speed. He brings to his music a lifetime's experience of teaching (at the Sweelinck Conservatory in Amsterdam) and thoughtful reflection. His use of gentle and unimposing rhetoric is impeccably well-judged. The majestic c-minor *Praeludium and Fuga* demonstrates his ability to reflect the structure of a large scale piece. His truly instrumental style of playing is shown to superb effect in the Trio Sonata in E♭; the Adagio, in particular, melts with lyricism. All three movements are played with compatible timbre and volume, reflecting the chamber-music nature of the music – there is no trace of neo-Baroquery here! The same applies to the six Schübler Chorales: their roots as translations of Cantata movements for the organ are reflected in the way that each voice is treated as a musical instrument. Buy!

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Bach Greta Kraus *hpscd* 73' 43"
CBC **PSCD 2014**
English Suite 3 BWV 808 *rec 1964*
Chromatic Fantasy & Fugue BWV 903 *rec 1954*
Partita in b BWV 831 *rec late 1960s*
Aria variata BWV 989 *rec 1954*

It would be neither fair nor appropriate to compare this disc with anything done in the last twenty years by specialist early music harpsichordists. Greta Kraus, who trained in Vienna as a pianist, was introduced to the harpsichord by chance, it seems, in the 1920s, and gave her first performance on the instrument covering for an ill player friend. In doing so she says she found 'the one instrument on which I can express everything I want to express in music'. She later went on to teach Early Music at the University of Toronto, and a cursory internet search reveals a large group of keyboard players who list Kraus as an important influence in their musical education. The type of instrument Kraus plays on this disc is typical of the type manufactured in the 1950s and -60s – 16' stop, notched pedals, myriad colour options through the use of lute and harp stops, leather plectra, and a very poor basic timbre. Her playing is equally dated, with variation and interest achieved through frequent stop changes and some very odd-sounding articulation and phrasing. But don't be misled – Kraus undoubtedly *is* a harpsichordist, rather than, say, a pianist doing a turn on a related instrument, and her playing is stylish in its own way, if rather mannered and heavy handed. The value of this recording of her is in revealing one way in which the harpsichord was given a voice before one was effectively found for it in the rediscovery and reassessment of original performance practice. *Robin Bigwood*

Bonporti ***Motetti op. 3*** Ellen Hargis *S*, Ensemble Ouabache 60' 14"
Dorian *Discovery* **DIS-80163**

I first played this immediately after Mona Spägele's Strozzi (see p. 20): what an agreeable contrast. Like the music, Ellen Hargis's voice is refreshing, controlled and civilised. Admittedly, there is less passion, and it is mostly not required. Perhaps that is ultimately a weakness, but this is an extremely enjoyable presentation of music that is virtually unknown and is well worth rediscovering, both by listeners and sopranos, though it is quite tricky to sing. The accompanying trio-sonata group from Indianapolis plays well and stylishly. *CB*

Bonporti ***Concerti & Serenati*** Bloomington Baroque, Stanley Ritchie *vln & dir* 69' 24"
Dorian *Discovery* **DIS-80160**
Op. 11/1, 3, 5, 6, 8; op. 12/6, 8

The concertos are based on what might be called the Albinoni model: the solo violin occasionally emerges from the tutti rather than standing completely apart from it. Bloomington Baroque play one to a part and are extremely eloquent advocates of Bonporti's accomplished music: never overpoweringly virtuosic but with enough sparkle to give an indication of how good a player he himself must have been. The *Serenate* are for solo violin and continuo and the examples on the disc are more subdued affairs than the exuberant concertos, which, bringing a welcome change of character, makes this an ideal long-distance drive CD, and one-sitting listening is a continuing pleasure. *BC*

Maxwell Sobel's editions of Bonporti are published by King's Music

J. G. Graun ***Konzertante Musik mit Viola da Gamba*** Christoph Coin, Vittorio Ghielmi *vdg*, Gilles Colliard *vln*, Ensemble Baroque de Limoges 73' 43"
Auvidis *Astrée* **E 8617**
Concertos: vln & vdg in c; vdg in a.
Trios: 2 vdg & bc in G, pardessus, vln & bc in A

If someone asked you to name the composer of a concerto for viola da gamba, that of Johann Gottlieb Graun would not, I fear, immediately leap to mind; which is unfortunate, as the two works here are really rather nice. The duo concerto (which, the booklet tells us, also survives in a version for violin and viola da braccio or tenor viol [sic!]) is interesting in contrasting the timbres of the different instruments (the gamba part covers the entire compass), while the solo piece allows the player some wonderful opportunities for real virtuosity. Graun's sometimes-sparse orchestral writing means that all of the players have to be on their toes. The most bizarre piece on the disc is the trio for scordatura violin and dessus de viole (and made even more so by the cadenza at the end of track 10); it, too, is an attractive piece which gambists should try (I can supply several pupils to play the 'distuned' fiddle). The sonata for two basses is a glorious work, with three intertwining bass lines, some beautiful cantilena playing from both gambists and it is, all in all, worth the price of the disc on its own. Can we look forward to hearing more of the Berlin school? *BC*

The unknown Handel Musica ad Rhenum, dir. Jed Wentz 70' 29"
Vanguard Classics **99088**
HWV 287, 288, 339, 390b, 399, 404 & *Concerto à quattro* in d

Musica ad Rhenum, led by their first flute Jed Wentz, is a combination of woodwind and strings not well suited to Handel's instrumental music, but here they take some of it on with exceptional *chutzpah*. The title of the CD is misleading – the five works by Handel have all been published and recorded, and the sixth is spurious – and the notes are packed with factual errors, bad logic and high pretension ('It is Handel's voice which speaks to us... as warm, humorous and lively as of he'd never known the grave'). Among the genuine Handel items only the *Sonata a 5* with solo violin (HWV 288) retains its original scoring, though this touch of authenticity is marred when Chrysanders's corrupt text is adopted in the final bars. (The correct text was published in 1971.*) In the 'Malmesbury' sonata (HWV 404) and the so-called Oboe Concerto no.3 (HVW 287) Wentz simply substitutes flute for oboe as solo instrument, with mildly enervating effect. (Recently discovered part-books for the Concerto, apparently unknown to Wentz, mark the solo part *Hautb. e Flute Travers:*, but the oboe remains the likely intended instrument.) The peculiar 3-part Sinfonia (HWV 339) acquires extra strings and a pair of flutes, in the mind-boggling reasoning that it is related to Handel's Roman Cantatas (it isn't). Extra wind and strings are also added to the trio sonatas Op. 5/4 (HWV 399) and Op. 2/5 (HWV 390a), making them 'Concertos'. (Op. 5/4 is a pasticcio derived from orchestral music, but the original scoring is not restored.) Considered just as music-making, the group's performances have exhilarating panache and virtuosity, though their mannered rubato sometimes annoys. The disc is perhaps best regarded as a striking calling-card for the group's live appearances, the players not so much serving the music as compelling it to serve them. *Anthony Hicks*

** and King's Music has score and parts for sale.*

Handel & Companye: Works by G. F. Handel, A. Steffani, G. Bononcini & F. X. Geminiani The Musicke Companye 69' 30"
Intim Musik **IMCD 054**
Bononcini *Luci barbare spietate*; Geminiani *Cello sonata 1*; Handel *Fronda leggiera, Nò di voi non vo' fidarmi, Sento là che ristretto, Vedendo amor, 'Harmonious Blacksmith'*; Steffani *Che volete o crude pene, Son erede di tormenti* [from *Dimmi, dimmi, Cupido*]

Handel is represented here by a mix of the familiar and the unfamiliar. The two late SA duets have often been recorded, as has the alto cantata *Vedendo amor*, but the later soprano version of the cantata *Sento là che ristretto* makes its first CD appearance. Bononcini's little duet cantata (from his *Cantate e Duetti* published in London in 1723) is also a welcome first recording, but Steffani is not so well served, the second 'duet' being his *Dimmi, dimmi Cupido* with the solo sections omitted. (It is sung complete on Glossa **GCD 920902.**) The source is vaguely said to be Steffani's own MS of his revised duets in the BL , but he is not known to have revised *Dimmi, dimmi Cupido*, and the actual source is perhaps R.M.23.l.2, part of a secondary collection where the duet is abridged as here. I have enjoyed all the performances, especially the duets where Hyde and Brown blend well and spark a touch of passion, a little more of which would have been valuable in the cantatas. The Geminiani cello sonata is warmly phrased by Jennifer Janse. The presentation and translation of the Italian texts in the booklet could have been improved. *Anthony Hicks*

M. Mascitti *6 Sonate da camera Op. 2*
Fabrizio Cipriani *vln*, Antonio Fantinuoli *vlc*
Cantus **C 9610** 60' 55"

An hour of sonatas played on violin and cello was a trifle daunting. I had expected something of the David Watkin 'continuo cello' concept with spread chords and double stopping, but there's nothing of the sort. Instead, the cello provides a fairly straight bass line (I don't wish to do him any disservice – this is very stylish cello playing) while the violinist embellishes his part imaginatively and remarkably cleanly. There was, just occasionally, a hint of dubious intonation, but scarcely enough to detract from what are compelling performances, even if, now and then, I longed for a fuller cadence. A most worthwhile recording of an attractive set of sonatas by something of a rare phenomenon – a successful Italian working in Paris! *BC*

Tartini *The Devil's Sonatas and other works*
Andrew Manze *vln solo* 68' 53"
Harmonia Mundi **HGMU 907213**
F11, g5 A16, a3

The innocent ear might at first mistake this for a minus-one disc (or rather minus two, since there is no cello or harpsichord). But there is evidence that Tartini played his violin music unaccompanied, and it is anyway unlikely that the Devil turned up with a harpsichord in tow. Reaction will depend in part on whether you find the unaccompanied sound satisfying. For much of the time, even though the violin fills in with extra bass notes, it does sound to me like music lacking a bass, rather than Bach's solo music that has perfect sufficiency. But that may be because I'm a continuo player! It is certainly worth hearing this amazing playing. Of the two famous (or notorious) works here, the obvious comparison for *The Devil's Trill* is Wallfisch on Hyperion **CDA 66430**, who sounds at times less sweet than usual; is there something in Tartini's writing that calls up a grainier style? Both discs also include the *Pastorale* in A. Wallfisch has four other sonatas, while Manze adds 14 variations from *L'arte del arco* (sensible not to include all 50) and a Sonata in A minor. But comparisons are not relevant, since anyone interested in baroque violin music needs to study (and enjoy) this amazing recording. *CB*

There is a new Bärenreiter critical edition of the Devil's Trill *advertised; a copy has not yet arrived. Performers' Facsimiles have the early print of the 38-variation of* L'arte del arco; *I don't know of a good edition of the 50-variation version and am not sure where my poor photocopy of an early Naples edition came from.* CB

Telemann *Admiralitätsmusik (1723), Hamburger Ebb' und Fluth* van der Sluis, Pushee, Müller, Mertens, Thomas and Schopper *STTBBB*, Alsfelder Vokalensemble, Barockorchester Bremen, dir. Wolfgang Helbich
cpo **999 373-2** 118' 46" (2 CDs)

Telemann *Die Hirten an der Krippe zu Bethlehem and two Christmas cantatas from 1761 & 1762* Backes, Goerg, Post, Mertens *SATB*, Telemann Kammerorchester & Kammerchor Michaelstein, dir. Ludger Rémy
cpo **999 419-2** 66' 44"

We missed both of these recordings first time around and I was happy to pick them up during the Telemann-Festtage in Magdeburg (see *EMR* 29, p. 13). The Helbich recording reunites Telemann's *Water Music* with the serenata with which it was performed in Hamburg on the 100th anniversary of the founding of that city's 'Admiralty' (the body responsible for protecting the trade ships of that great commercial hub). There is some excellent singing, especially from the three basses (some of the arias are quite Handelian), and the constantly changing instrumental combinations are well conceived and equally well rendered. I'm not 100% convinced by the orchestral suite (there have been several better recent recordings) but the serenata is a most welcome addition to the catalogue. The Christmas CD is also well worth investing in: Ludger Rémy is a tireless champion of Telemann's sacred output. The three pieces and the performances of them are first rate; a particularly glorious angel at the start of *Siehe, ich verkündige Euch* is perhaps the highlight. Even outside the festive season, this is a highly recommendable disc. *BC*

Vivaldi *12 Sonate per violino, op. 2* Fabrizio Cipriani *vln*, Antonio Fantinuoli *vlc*, Antonio Frigé *hpscd*, Ugo Nastrucci *theorbo* 119' 43"
Cantus **C 9608/9** 2 discs

Before going any further, I want to point out that the violin playing on these discs is quite stunning. While not as extrovert as Manfredo Kraemer's Petersen reviewed above, Cipriani clearly has a formidable technique: his tone is bright, he has a wide range of bow strokes and his ornamentation (as already mentioned in my Mascitti review) is inventive and stylish, although the added cadenzas do not always ring true to Vivaldi. What I found strange here was the decision to alter scoring within individual sonatas. Nos. 2, 4-7 and 9-11 are played by consistent groups, while the remainder vary from movement to movement. If a particularly strong case could be made for different ensembles, could not alternative tracks have been included (there is ample space on both discs)? I have to say that the contribution of neither of the continuo players is that inspired. This concern apart, this is a hugely enjoyable set of sonatas and the soloist is worth hearing, irrespective of who is accompanying him. *BC*

Vivaldi *Six cello sonatas* Lucia Swarts *vlc*, Siebe Henstra *hpscd*, Richte van der Meer *vlc*, Stephen Stubbs *guitar/lute*, Robert Franenberg *violone* 65' 20"
Vanguard Classics **99139**
Contents: RV 40, 41, 43, 45-47

Lucia Swarts has chosen six sonatas for the present recording and, extremely enjoyable as her performances are (she is equally at ease in the flowing ariosi slow movements and the brisker ones), it is a pity that she opted for part of the cello repertoire which already boasts two outstanding recordings: the complete set by David Watkins with Robert King on Hyperion and Pieter Wispelwey with Florilegium on Channel Classics. I can imagine what so wonderfully lyrical a player and the all-star continuo group she boasts could have made of the Marcello or Geminiani sets – or are they in the pipeline already? I certainly hope so. Although the use of violone in addition to cello in the continuo section is, of course, interesting and the recorded sound is beautiful, for me Wispelwey still has the edge. *BC*

Vivaldi *Gloria RV 589, Magnificat RV 611*
Deborah York, Patrizia Biccire, Sara Mingardo *SSA*, Akademia, Concerto Italiano, Rinaldo Alessandrini *dir* 59' 49"
Opus 111 **OPS 30-195**
+ Concerto in d RV 243, Concerto 2 tpt RV 563

Here is a Vivaldi *Gloria* that will alternately have ecstatic and soporific effects on the listener – or, perhaps, engender the sort of reaction that the Beecham/Goosens version of Messiah has on modern critics! For although performed on period instruments, the tempi are extreme; the jaw-socking openings of the allegro choruses are so fast the band cannot always catch on in the first bar, yet the over-mannered cello solo in the *Domine Deus Agnus Dei* is so slow that it grinds to a halt with a grand rallentando and a 2-second pause before the cadence note of the opening ritornello. Nevertheless it is a recording that choral conductors should hear; in spite of such annoying mannerisms, the choir (just four voices per part) is superb. The soloists are not always convincing, with disturbing vibrato from the two sopranos, as well the solo violin (not the usual oboe) in the *Domine Deus Rex coelistis*.

The *Magnificat* (a better work than the Gloria, I feel, though not so well known)

with its extended solo numbers, is more convincing, with more realistic choices of tempi and less aggressive string playing. The conductor chooses the alternative extended solo numbers for singers at the Ospedale [not, incidentally, girls; Apollonia, who sang the first solo, was about 40 *CB*] and these are charmingly sung, though the mannerism of the pause before each final cadence chord becomes rather tedious. Two concertos, performed with a rather over-powering organ continuo, fill the rest of the disc. RV243 is an interesting string concerto, though the speed of the *Largo* is somewhat extreme – almost as fast and aggressive as the following *Allegro*. RV563 is a fine piece with some brilliant trumpet writing. The slow movment for oboe solo is here played with an excess of rubato.

Ian Graham-Jones

CLASSICAL

J. C. Bach ***Symphonies op. 9*** The Hanover Band, Anthony Halstead 59' 40"
cpo **999 487-2**
op. 9/1-3; in B♭ & E♭ (Seiber, 1773); version of op. 9/2 in E♭ with clarinets.

This is for the analytical collector, with duplication of the first third of the disc in the guise of alternative 'original versions'. The main works are the three symphonies of op. 9, posthumously republished as *Three Favorite Overtures* op. 21. Apart from the early versions – with clarinets and a bubbly bassoon – of the first two symphonies there is an E♭ symphony brought out by Bach's Parisian publisher, Sieber, in 1773. Though I found the balance somewhat taut-bottomed (2 cellos + bass *vs* 11 violins), the performances are infectiously lively and the music very rapidly grew on me. *Kah-Ming Ng*

Mozart ***Don Giovanni*** Danielle Borst *Donna Anna*, Véronique Gens *Donna Elvira*, Sophie Marin Degor *Zerlina*, Simon Edwards *Don Ottavio*, Nicolas Rivenq *Don Giovanni*, Hubert Claessens *Leporello*, Patrick Donnelly *Il Commendatore, Masetto*, La Grand Écurie..., Jean-Claude Malgoire 158' 09" 2 discs
Auvidis *Astrée* **E 8635** ££

CB reviewed the boxed set of Malgoire's versions of the three Mozart/Da Ponte operas in March 1997; here is a separate issue of Don Giovanni. It is by no means a perfect performance, but it has several positive features. The peasant scene sounds more bucolic than usual; there is abundant fire in the big dramatic moments; and the singing of the (to me largely unfamiliar) cast is generally stylish and spirited, if seldom actually beautiful – and very short on appoggiaturas. Nicolas Rivenq often sounds sardonic rather than saturnine, and Patrick Donnelly, the Commendatore (who doubles Masetto, as did the original singer), lacks due weight. The documentation is woefully inadequate: no sung text is provided (though as this would be few people's first choice for the work, a libretto will already be in most hands). More seriously, there is no indication as to the version used – many listeners will be surprised that the opera here ends with Giovanni's descent to hell, the closing moral sextet being omitted.* Otherwise, this is a mixture of the original Prague and revised Vienna texts; Simon Edwards, for instance, sings both Ottavio's arias, and Véronique Gens has a good shot at Elvira's *Mi tradi*. The orchestral playing excitingly raw and vivid, and Malgoire's tempi are well chosen, though at times uncomfortably rigid. The recording is lively, though balance isn't always just. Overall: interesting (and cheap) rather than totally convincing. *Peter Branscombe*

**Michael F. Robinson argues in* Opera buffa in Mozart's Vienna *(rev. EMR 38 p. 6) p. 261 that this 19th-century practice may at least have crossed the minds of Da Ponte and Mozart.* CB

Mozart etc. ***Oboe quartets*** Paul Goodwin, Terzetto (Anna McDonald, Jane Rogers, Helen Gough) 68' 47"
Harmonia Mundi **HMU 907220**
Krommer *No. 1 in C*; Mozart *K370, 580a*; Massonneau *in F*; C. Stamitz *op. 8*

The Mozart quartet is given the stylish and elegantly phrased performance one would expect from these players, the smooth-toned classical oboe of Paul Goodwin blending much more closely into the string texture than a modern instrument would – though of course all these composers still treat the oboe in concertante fashion. The disc ends with a Mozart curiosity, the lovely *Adagio* for cor anglais K580a that shares an opening with the *Ave verum*. But there are fine moments too in the largely unknown quartets by Massonneau and Krommer, both bringing inventive chromaticism and textural ingenuity to the post-Haydn/ Mozart vein current around 1800. It is frustrating that neither sustains the level of invention throughout, but these are undoubtedly useful additions to the repertory. Those wishing to explore further should presumably be encouraged by the liner-notes' comment that the performing editions 'were prepared from existing sources'[1]! *Simon McVeigh*

1 *I don't know what lies behind that phrase here, but on another recent disc it derives from concern at the payments some libraries now expect for editions based on their MSS for recording.* CB

Mozart ***Quintettes à cordes K. 515 & 516*** Ensemble 415 68' 51"
Harmonia Mundi **HMT 7901512** ££

The vibrancy and immediacy of the sonority are what make the first impression on this disc. Ensemble 415, led by Chiara Banchini, do not hesitate to give a full-blooded response to Mozart's two most famous quintets, and the recording will appeal to those who like their classical instruments sounding closer to modern than baroque: but these are nevertheless stylish renderings, to which I return repeatedly with pleasure.

Simon McVeigh

Mozart ***Sonatas para fortepiano y violin (I) Sonate Palatine, K. 301-305*** Fabrizio Cipriani *vln* Sergio Ciomei *fp* 77' 45"
Cantus **C 9602**

This disc opens with the powerful E minor sonata in which both instruments participate in the drama; Mozart's use of the violin as a concertante instrument distinguishes him from his contemporaries. This 18th century violin (maker unknown) has particularly fine resonance and sounds excellent with the Walter reproduction fortepiano by P. McNulty; the good recording is enhanced by a lively acoustic. Features to look out for in these performances are the pleasing changes in character within movements (e.g. the minuet section in the allegro of K.301) and the subtle ornamentation with occasional flourishes that appear in the repeats. My only caveat is the trace of uneasy intonation that appears in some quick notes inside phrases on the violin. *Margaret Cranmer*

Mozart ***Violin Sonatas K. 306, 380, 454*** Fabio Biondi *vln*, Olga Tverskaya *fp* 60' 19"
Opus 111 **OPS 30-216**

The quality of the playing on this disc is stunning with superb voicing throughout; it is rarely that one hears violin playing of this calibre. The music is gratifying to play and to listen to, and contains plenty of variety; the finale of K.306 is operatic in style with a written out cadenza. The haunting melody of the *Andante con moto* in K.380 is played with lovely placing of the slightly dissonant notes. Both performers have the ability to lift the ends of phrases when appropriate. The recording is excellent with the violin slightly forwad in sound. *Margaret Cranmer*

Vanhal ***Symphonies*** *(g2, D4, c2)* London Mozart Players, Matthias Bamert 60' 35"
Chandos **CHAN 9607**

I was particularly glad to see that this CD features unfamiliar symphonies: it has, unfortunately, become quite common for the same few works of relatively obscure composers to be recorded over and over again. The London Mozart Players have chosen three contrasting pieces, the common elements being Vanhal's melodic charm (try the *Andante* from the C minor symphony) and harmonic simplicity. The woodwind solos are particularly attractive (especially the oboe in the G minor work). Matthias Bamert's choice of tempi seems just right. Another excellent volume in their *Contemporaries of Mozart* series, with only the somewhat muddled sleevenotes (perhaps written with a different playing order in mind, then shuffled around without the necessary changes being made?) to slightly tarnish an otherwise perfect release. *BC*

Vital Spark of Heav'nly Flame: Music of Death and Resurrection from English Parish Churches and Chapels, 1760-1840 Psalmody, The Parley of Instruments, Peter Holman *dir*
Hyperion **CDA67020** 66' 40"

This Easter disc is even better than the Christmas one. I reported favourably on the concert which preceded the recording; the most striking thing is the quality and variety of the music, and the performance matches it well. I suspect that S. Wesley's fussy changes for later verses of *Rejoice the Lord is King* did not circulate very widely; but why are his organ interludes not in print? *CB*