

# Early Music REVIEW

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I was going to devote our fiftieth editorial to reflections on what we have been trying to do in the previous 49 issues and suggest more interesting things to put on our front cover. But instead, we celebrate another fiftieth anniversary. It used to be thought unchivalrous to discuss a lady's age. But now we are all equal, so let us join in the congratulations for Emma Kirkby's fiftieth birthday.

Any study of the great voices of the 20th century will have to have a chapter devoted to her – and not just because of her voice, style and intelligence. Before her, there had been no acceptable female sound for early music. I first encountered her at Dartington in (I would guess) 1972, where, like me, she was participating as an amateur in David Munrow's course. It was immediately obvious that here was the voice we had been waiting for – and we really were waiting. Various singers had been tried and found wanting by the handful of groups who were concerned with such matters. Countertenors were in favour, partly because they tended to sing more in tune and with less vibrato than other voices, and also because they were then particularly associated with early music. But they could only manage part of the repertoire.

It took Emma a long time before the astonishing criticism that her voice was characterless or sexless disappeared. (I got into trouble in a previous editorial for trying to discuss the nature of sexiness in a singer's voice.) It is gratifying that what, over 25 years ago, seemed very much a minority taste has now become widely accepted, to the extent of her being ClassicFM Magazine's artist of the year, and she is the first cover-artist for *Gramophone*'s new early music magazine. We are pleased at the success of the two anthology discs that Decca has issued: the later one is reviewed at the end of our diary section. (We would, of course, have reviewed the first one had Decca sent a copy.) Our belated birthday congratulations to you, Emma. And perhaps I can speak on behalf of the many groups with whom you have been happy to sing: thank you for your support – your participation must so often not just have brought artistic credibility but kept the bank manager happy by doubling the size of the audience. CB

## BOOKS & MUSIC

Clifford Bartlett

*Rethinking Music* Edited by Nicholas Cook & Mark Everist, Oxford UP, 1999. xvii + 574pp, £65.00. ISBN 0 19 879003 1

After being criticised last month as a Luddite for my failure to understand fashionable trends in musicology, this is a timely arrival to enable me to catch up on what I have been neglecting. The title deserves comment. This isn't primarily a book about music but about musicology; not about how listeners or performers think about music, but how some musicologists do so – and there are still some extremely distinguished musicologists who have nothing to do with 'new musicology'. A book which looms large in the excellent introduction (a refreshingly sceptical guide to what musicologists have been up to since it appeared) is Joseph Kerman's *Contemplating music*, which was renamed *Musicology* on this side of the Atlantic. This book needed a title that made clear that it was by and for musicologists.

The introduction mentions a neat example of the clash between musicological PC and actual practice. The idea of music history dominated by a handful of Great Composers is meant to be old-fashioned – though if so, why are most analytical essays written about their works: the analytical magazines are not filled with titles like *Parodies of bathos: closural procedures in the late flute variations of Kuhlau*. But when Ian Woodfield came across fresh information about Mozart when studying Indian music, guess what had priority.

Trying to analyse our thoughts and assumptions is a bit like making a docusoap: how do we know whether the fact that being filmed affects what a person does or says? There is an extreme philosophic position that you cannot study anything without changing it. I find that, almost invariably, if I try to argue a position, I push it so hard that I eventually finish up advocating something that is more extreme and simpler than what I would normally believe. Try it on a basic subject like 'What is a piece of music?' If Benjamin Zander manages to persuade Coca Cola to commemorate the millennium by issuing a CD of Beethoven's Fifth with every twelve-pack, what is it the world will hear? What the composer thought, what he wrote, how it might have sounded in an ideal performance when he wrote it, how it sounds in a good performance now? And will people from different cultures hear what we hear (even assuming that is more or less the same), let alone understand it in the same way? And so on. Books have been written on the subject, but there is no answer. The more one pushes any particular solution, the less likely anyone else is to agree with you. It seems to be an important question, yet for most purposes we are happy not to have an answer. Perhaps other musical assumptions should be treated similarly, without being pushed too far. (After writing this I came across an apposite quotation in an

article by Maynard Solomon in the Alan Tyson Festschrift reviewed below from St Augustine via Borges on the idea that concepts elude definition: 'If you don't ask me, I know; but if you ask me, I don't know.' *Confessions* XI, 14.)

When I read English at university, there was an idea in circulation that you had to react to a poem on its own terms and that the traditional academic approach of relating it to its background was irrelevant. But the best critics were those who had that background knowledge and could call on it unselfconsciously. Pupils rightly took the idea that the poem was more important than the background, but by pushing the argument too far, rejected the supporting framework which enabled the poem to be understood. The importance of context to understanding is tossed around by current musicologists. A major result of the traditional musicological procedures is that much more music has been published and studied (and is available on CD) so that our knowledge of the musical context in which Palestrina or Handel worked is much richer. We may also know more about cultural and historical matters. But setting an opposition between contextual and analytical studies seems pointless: let each interpreter concentrate on the aspect about which he has something to say.

We can learn from this book many different ways of thinking about music. Some we may find stimulating; but we need not worry about those which we don't, it doesn't matter. Musicology isn't a science in the sense that new knowledge invalidates old (except in clear-cut cases like discovering that X was born twenty years later than was thought or that Y didn't write what had been assumed to have been one of his best pieces). If searching for unity and for diversity in a movement both lead to insights, why quarrel? There are signs that the writers here are much more relaxed about such disagreements than in the past, though I think they still take their ideas a bit too seriously. Perhaps the book could have been entitled 'Games musicologists play'. Much of the 'theoretical' discussion seems to me to be more suitable for late-night arguments in conference bars than airing formally in print. But since it is, the book would have benefited from a glossary of non-musical technical terms (even more so if the contributors had squabbled over the definitions).

One idea occurred to me: a canon of classical music makes sense in European societies where radio and television have, until recently, been controlled so that they offer a common cultural experience. But in the USA, where there is no such control of the air waves, that common experience is lacking (except perhaps for the adverts), so the idea of a canonic repertoire known to all is more of an oddity.

## CAMBRIDGE ORGAN

*The Cambridge Companion to the Organ* edited by Nicholas Thistletonwaite and Geoffrey Webber Cambridge UP, 1998. xiv + 340pp. hb £37.50 ISBN 0 521 57309 2. pb: £13.95 ISBN 0 521 57584

This is a comprehensive survey by 16 authors in 20 chapters, divided into three sections: the instrument, the player and selected repertoires. Many illustrations of surviving instruments are scattered through the book, reproduced quite clearly. Most contributions are well-balanced, and players (or, for that matter, non-players) will find it informative. Sometimes it tries to do too much: I doubt whether you can learn how to finger and ornament Bach's organ music from a page and a half. Some of the chapters on repertoires are more tightly focused than others: luckily for those with an 'early' interest, the weaker ones are devoted to later music. A weakness is the absence of a chapter on continuo playing.

There is a puzzling remark on page 95: 'The benches of many historical organs are too high for the heels to lie on the keys, and in these cases it is very difficult to use the heels when playing.' If that is true, and cannot be explained away by organists (who were probably shorter than anyway) having worn high-heeled shoes, why is the author not stressing that use of the heels is an inappropriate technique for some (?much) of the repertoire?

The book has the expected bibliography, and the repertoire chapters have lists of editions. But it also needs a discography, or at least references to enable the listener to hear the organs described and illustrated playing appropriate music. Even better would have been a companion set of discs with sample recordings: perhaps one of the record companies specialising in organ CDs could oblige?

TYSON AT 65 (+7)

*Haydn, Mozart, & Beethoven: Studies in the Music of the Classical Period. Essays in honour of Alan Tyson* Edited by Sieghard Brandenburg. Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1998. viii + 318pp. ISBN 0 19 816362 2

My only meeting with Alan Tyson was, I think, in 1971 in a basement flat near Earls Court occupied temporarily by an American harpsichordist, Kenneth Cooper, though why I was there I have no idea. I was pleased to see Alan, since I had made frequent use of his *English Music Publishers' Plate Numbers in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century* in my cataloguing work at the RAM, and I had the paperback anthology of Beethoven letters that he had prepared. I had no idea that the jolly man who enthused over Cooper's playing of Scott Joplin (then a complete novelty) would become such a distinguished scholar, but being able to visualise him in conversation was a useful counterbalance to the apparently dry nature of his publications on paper. Dry they may have seemed, but they were of enormous importance in enabling studies of Mozart and Beethoven to

move on, so he thoroughly deserves the honour of a Festschrift. Its prototype was first presented to him on his 65th birthday party on 27 October 1991. It is perhaps a pity that so long has passed since then: scholarship has moved on a bit. From the performer's viewpoint, the most interesting of the 19 contributions is James Webster's survey of articulation marks in the autograph of Haydn's Piano Sonata 49 in Eb, which convincingly demolishes the assumption that parallel passages should be normalised. His arguments are certainly convincing for Haydn, but should not automatically be transferred to other composers. The autographs I know best are those of Handel, and I am convinced that inconsistencies there are caused by the composer trying to get on to paper as quickly as possible what is in his head. His main concern is the notes. Sometimes these come out with a slur, but the inclusion of such performance indications is haphazard. The editor, however, on behalf of the performer, needs to grasp any suggestion of how he was thinking of a phrase. Editors will need to make individual decisions for each composer; but it is salutary to be reminded that logical consistency is not always right. (But is there a parallel with the abandonment of the search for unity, one of the themes of *Rethinking music*? Does being fashionable make an idea less plausible?)

The final essay, 'In search of Palestrina: Beethoven in the Archives' by Richard Kramer also intrigued me, not so much for what it said about Beethoven but for explaining why Vaughan Williams created a renaissance style that ignored harmonic movement by suspension and resolution and used unrelated triads in his marvellous neo-Tudor pieces, the *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis* and the *Mass in G minor*. (Not that Kramer mentions Vaughan Williams.) A possible source for his practice comes in a quotation from Johann Friedrich Reichardt who in 1791 wrote about a Gloria from a Magnificat by Palestrina – its relevance to the volume is that Beethoven copied out the music. Reichardt is impressed by a sequence of three minor triads (A, G and D) in root position. 'The omitted transitional chords... make of each step a colossus, and allow the mind only dimly to surmise the path of harmony. Every individual chord seizes the listener with its full force, and strikes with double strength in that it strikes without preparation.' Just like Vaughan Williams' unrelated triads! Some of the ideas that led to the English folk-song movement came from Herder; also writing at this time: how well did Vaughan Williams, who studied in Berlin with Max Bruch a century or so later, know late-18th-century German writings?

As always in such volumes, it is difficult to do anything other than pick out items on which to comment. Cliff Eisen demolishes the authenticity of the piano-duet K. 19d, though cannot come up with an alternative composer. Neal Zaslaw edits and discusses an *Adagio* in F, K<sup>1</sup> 206a, K<sup>6</sup> Anhang A 65: the elaborate ornamentation is accepted as being by Mozart, but is not sure whether the unadorned piece that underlies it is by him or not. Since he argues that the simpler version needs to be played before the surviving version is used as a repeat for each section, it is a pity that

the edition does not include an attempt at it. Maynard Solomon's exploration of Beethoven's relationship to what he calls romantic images – talking trees, correspondent breezes, starry skies, the romantic solitary, etc – will be useful to programme-note writers. The editor puts the squabbling over the custody of Beethoven's nephew in perspective by studying the criminal career of the boy's mother. This isn't an essential purchase, but I will find it useful to have a copy around. The list of books, articles, review and translations (of Freud) by Alan Tyson shows the impressive range of his work.

#### HILDEGARD

I now have the complete bundle of Hildegard von Bingen's *Symphonia armonie celestium revalationum*, eight volumes of them. I wrote about the series in February (*EMR* 47 p 2), except that those copies came through two intermediaries (Furore-Edition in Kassel and A. Kalmus in England). There doesn't seem to be any great price advantage in ordering direct from the USA. The American and European editions differ slightly. The content is essentially the same, but the introductions have been reformatted. The Furore versions lack the English translations of the poems, while the American version doesn't list the titles of the poems on the covers. The European scores are A4 size, the American their squatter equivalent. The two versions use different spellings for the title, the American retaining the medieval *armonie celestium* while the German is changed to the classical *armoniae caelestium*. Was it worth the bother? But either version is highly desirable, even if there are some features of the notation which require study of the facsimiles. The total cost works out at \$131.25, about £80.00. Individual pieces are available separately, which should encourage more group performances.

#### OUR LADY OF THE SHARPS

Guillaume de Machaut *Messe de Nostre Dame*. Mixed Voices. Edited by Lucy E. Cross. C. F. Peters (No. 67574), 1998. 36 + x pp, £5.50.

What distinguishes this from other editions of the Mass is the attention paid to accidentals. Lucy Cross thinks she understands where they should be, so prints them in big type, whether they derive from the sources or from her interpretation of the rules and justifies how each sharp (there are few flats) can be added *causa pulchritudinis* or *causa necessitatis* (I would have thought that logically the latter should have come first). She may be right, but it is clear from her justifications of each single situation in the mass that there must be doubt in at least some cases. Many conductors who undertake this work are likely to have some understanding of the problems and will expect the normal scholarly procedures for showing which accidentals are editorial upon which they can base their own interpretation, and there are some singers around who are skilled enough for their own reaction to be trustworthy – after all, the inflection of notes was primarily the duty of the singer. But for those

who want a score with all such decisions made for them, this is useful, and cheaper than the most likely alternative, the Oxford UP edition by Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, which has a whole separate book to justify it. I would question the editor's assumption that if parts are not underlaid, they must be instrumental.

#### CROSSING THE RED SEA

Elisabeth Jacquet de La Guerre *Le Passage de la Mer Rouge: Cantata for Voice, Violin and Basso Continuo*. Diane Guthrie, editor. Hildegard Publishing Company (Box 332, Bryn Mawr, PA 19010), 1994. 37pp score + parts, \$29.50

I was a little scathing about the quality of women composers in general last month, so it is a relief that I can redeem myself by praising this both as composition and edition. Unusually, La Guerre's first two books of cantatas were on religious subjects; this is from Book I of 1708, only two years after the publication of the first examples of the form. It is a dramatic piece, with violins and basses running around in demisemiquavers in the first recitative and a *bruit de guerre* as the sea engulfs the Egyptians. It is odd that the violin(s) do not take part in the concluding *Air*; it might have been sensible to have listed it as *tacet* in the parts, in case the player felt inclined to stand up after the *Guerre* and take a bow. The package sensibly includes two scores and two parts. I am puzzled what 'version B' means under the title. There is a good introduction. Although the notation is modern, there is little point in the long slurs over the melismas in no. 3, and the heading of no. 9 looks as if *Air Gay* is a single phrase, whereas in the original *Air* is in the middle of the page and *Gay* in smaller type above the first bar. It is nice to see the text printed separately with a translation, but why square brackets in 'Règne[nt]' in no. 6? The letters are not an editorial addition (unless the Minkoff facsimile has been touched up).

Hildegard has also sent me a sample offprint from *Women Composers through the Ages*, a violin sonata by Francesca Lebrun. It has a violin part, but none of the editorial matter from the original volume.

#### SCHOTT VOCALS

Claudio Monteverdi *Magnificat a 6 voci SV 206 for chorus (SSATT(B)B), soloists and organ*. Edited by... Jerome Roche. Vocal score. Schott (ED 12628), 1999. 28pp, £5.00  
 Marc-Antoine Charpentier *Messe de Minuit à 4 voix flûtes et violons pour Noël, H9 for chorus SATB, soloists and orchestra*. Edited by... Jean-Paul Montagnier. Vocal score. Schott (ED 12600), 1999. 65pp, £9.95.  
 Marc-Antoine Charpentier *Te Deum H146 for chorus SATB, soloists and orchestra*. Edited by... Jean-Paul Montagnier. Vocal score. Schott (ED 12601), 1999. 54pp, £9.25.

These relate to Eulenburg miniature scores, the Monteverdi to the more recent *Vespers* edition by Jerome Roche rather than the older version by Denis Arnold. It seems to me to

be the least useful of the three. It doesn't work at this pitch. Like the setting with instruments that precedes it in the 1610 publication, it is notated in *chiavette*, so needs to go down (giving one very low passage comparable to a similar section in the 1641 *Gloria*). The original clefs are not listed, and since the opening tessitura is not exceptionally high, it is not obvious till later in the work that there might be problems. It isn't out of range for modern singers, but it sounds far too top-heavy. Non-specialist organists will welcome the realisation, but the page turns are awkward. I don't like flaunting my own editions in reviews, but it is the same price, is available at this pitch or down a fourth, and has rather better page-turns.

*I have left the vocal score of the Vespers until next month to consider along with the new Oxford UP edition.*

The other two issues in the striking blue covers are far less problematic. The title of the *Midnight Mass*, however authentic, is confusing with no punctuation for the instrumentation: it looks like the only known work requiring four voice-flutes! More worrying is double function for which the score is designed. I doubt anyway the relevance of the concept of vocal score for this sort of repertoire. With the full score being roughly the same page-size and length, and with a stave-size that is not much smaller, I wonder whether the bother of preparing another version was worth it: wouldn't it have been easier just to reduce the price of the Eulenburg score (which is 8<sup>o</sup> format, not miniature) and perhaps give it a new cover? Admittedly, the full score lacks a keyboard realisation, but that could surely be published separately with the instrumental parts (available on hire). The keyboard part of the vocal score is not simply a keyboard reduction of the score but primarily a continuo realisation with cues for the instrumentation on a further stave above. I imagine that the Mass is sometimes performed by church choirs just with organ, and for that purpose the accompanist would probably prefer a two-stave reduction; the sort of village organist who could not negotiate the full score would probably flounder with three staves to negotiate. The acceptable (high praise!) realisation in all three of these scores is attributed to C. J. S. Caesar, presumably Clifford Caesar, who as a senior figure at Schott's must have been responsible for the wider decisions as well. The vocal score has the advantage over the Eulenburg score of the three additional items in the appendix being transferred to the places in which they are needed, and a good, comparatively cheap score of this work for choirs to use is most welcome.

For the *Te Deum* – the one that begins with the Eurovision tune – there is competition with a Faber vocal score, which I have not seen but which is listed at a somewhat lower price. The comments above apply to this too. It is interesting that, in both works, the editor is happy to let the mass market negotiate void-notation triple sections: that is something I wouldn't dare to do, even if our computer programme could handle it! I made my comments on the editions when the full scores came out: here I need only commend the principle of making nicely-produced copies available for choirs, even if I have some doubts about details.

## ENGLISH PASSION

Johann Sebastian Bach *St John Passion* Passio secundum Johannem (BWV 245)... Edited in a new English version by Neil Jenkins. Vocal score (English/German). Novello (NOV 072489), 1999. xxi + 206pp, £8.95

I took some time off over Easter from the three solid volumes of essays and articles reviewed above to read a detective story, *On Beulah Height*, by Reginald Hill. I bought it (£3.99 in Tesco's) because the opening looked interesting for its setting around a Yorkshire village destroyed to make a reservoir, and didn't realise until later that a crucial element of the plot was a newly-released CD and performance of Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder* in English (the book includes a complete singing translation as if from the CD booklet, as well as its cover, with a quotation from the *Resurrection* symphony, whose relevance eventually emerges – but sadly there is no CD). The point is made several times that singing Mahler in English is unusual: in fact, I don't think I have ever heard a note of his music sung thus. That is odd; there must be a balance between sound and sense, and sound should not win every time.

A few days earlier I had attended the official premiere of Neil Jenkins's translation of the *St John Passion* at the Barbican (not the very first performance: it was tried out last year in Colchester by one of our subscribers). I welcomed the Jenkins/Novello *St Matthew Passion*, and there is much to commend in the new *John*. There are occasions when performance in English is appropriate; if the purpose of the performance is primarily religious, then it is sensible to have the words understood, and one cannot imagine Bach, had he come to England and been invited to give a performance at St Paul's, doubting that it would need to be sung in English. If, however, the performers are particularly concentrating on the actual sound of the music, then it may be better to preserve the sound of the language: the audience can, after all, read the translation in the programme (if it occurs to the management to keep the lighting up).

Now is perhaps the wrong time to be making a new translation, since there is an older generation that has the authorised version of the bible in its head and expects an English translation to preserve it as far as possible, while most people under, say, forty, grew up with no sentimental attachment to it. So I would guess that Jenkins' attempt to stick to the authorised version may have quite a short shelf-life. Since Pilate is in fashion at the moment thanks to a recent 'biography', I'll take three of his phrases for a closer look. (I have the 1872 Novello/Troutbeck and 1981 Bärenreiter/Drinker translations to hand for comparison: I can't find my copy of the 1929 Novello/Atkins, which is the only one I have sung. Numbers are as in the Jenkins score, and agree with BWV.)

No 22 bar 8. Both 1981 & 1999 have 'What accusation bring ye now against this man?', which places a redundant 'now' on the first of a group of four semiquavers; 1872

omits it and ties the semiquaver to the preceding quaver – verbally and musically better, though it would make a bilingual page look messy (1872 has only the English text, 1981 is German-English, 1999 is English-German).

No 24, bar 2. 1999 has 'Now take ye him away, and judge ye him according to your law.' This represents AV 'Take ye him, and judge him according to your law', the first phrase of which needs expansion to fit the syllables of the German 'Da sprach Pilatus zu ihnen'. My inclination would be to simplify the music so that the first phrase comprised just two crotchets (G B) and the quaver E for 'Take ye him'. Alternatively, 'So take (J) him away' would be better.

No. 28, bar 11. 1872 has no compunction about replacing 'Was ist Wahrheit?' by 'What is truth?', omitting the first of the two quavers on 'Wahrheit' and making the second a crotchet: both 1981 & 1999 have 'What is truth then?'

I find that the translations shows too much respect for the details of the German recitative. However marvellous Bach's recitative may be, it is dependent on the words, and it is cart-before-the-horse to distort a phrase like 'What is truth?', familiar to those who never hear any version of the Bible, to fit the number of syllables in Luther's German. The new version is not bold enough.

But the balance of words and music in arias and choruses is different. The number of syllables must agree, and how a sound fits the voice becomes a major consideration. Here the translation is a notable improvement, with an example in the very first word. In other translations this is 'Lord' (= *Herr*), but Jenkins has 'Hail', which relates to the sound of the German and is far better than 'Lord' on the sopranos' (or 'soprano's' in a Rifkin-esque performance) top G.

There is much to commend this as a vocal score, irrespective of the translation aspect, provided that you are happy with the German text below rather than above the English. The piano reduction has been freshly done. It is an improvement on Novello predecessors, and is less cluttered than the Bärenreiter, both in content and in layout. An appendix contains the three arias substituted in 1725, though not the two alternative choruses, which are less likely to be useful; the Bärenreiter has the arias and the choruses. The Novello is lighter to hold (630gms as opposed to 690). It is shorter by 64 pages of music, but has a concise and informative introduction. The appearance is a mixture of squashed and spacious. I worry that at a reprint some of the footnotes printed very near the bottom of the page might vanish, and there is absolutely no room for libraries to trim at binding. (Perhaps they don't bother to bind now: it's probably cheaper to replace worn-out copies than bind them.) Some of the page-turns are unfortunate: the chorale No 40, for instance, is only eight bars long, but there are two verses, so the turn at bar 6 needs to be made three times. In many places, though, the layout works well. The edition also includes a plan for getting through the standard one-and-only orchestral rehearsal on the afternoon

of the concert: I suspect that German and American orchestral players will be amazed that anyone ever tries.

Since Andrew Benson-Wilson does not include a review of the inaugural concert at the Barbican on 29 March, I will reluctantly add a few words – I found it disappointing. Interestingly, although members of the audience could be overheard saying how good it was, the applause was lacklustre, so I do not think that I am reflecting a minority view. The main problem is, I think, the hall itself. There is nothing in the architecture to make the sound cohere and give it body. (I assume I had a good seat, in the front row of the gallery, courtesy of Novello's.) In the first chorus I could see the continuo playing vigorously, but the sound did not come across. As far as I could tell, the ladies (plus a token male oboist) of the Wren Baroque Orchestra played well. But the soloists, normally fine singers, were off form. Nicola Jenkins got lost, James Bowman seemed ill at ease with the words, and Paul Elliott must have had jet-lag. Of the basses, Julian Clarkson made a good job of the arias, but Martin Elliott as Christ lacked presence. Fortunately, Neil Jenkins was in full control as evangelist. Brian Wright set good tempi, but had difficulty getting the Goldsmiths Choral Union to sing precisely without becoming abrupt and curt – a general problem when trying to tame a choral society. The various elements of the performance didn't come together. Those who read my account in *EMR* 47 of the Huddersfield *Messiah* will be aware that I can be moved by large-scale performances. But that had an atmosphere and intensity that this lacked. I envied the children I had seen going to *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* next door.

A review of Novello's new *Judas Maccabaeus* will appear next month.

#### MINIATURE MASS

J. S. Bach *Messe in H-Moll. Mass in B minor BWV 232...* Edited from the sources by Christoph Wolff... Study Score. Urtext. C. F. Peters (Nr 8735a), © 1997. 408pp, £9.75.

When I was a student, I favoured the cloth-bound miniature scores that Peters produced of works like the op. 6 by both Corelli and Handel, Bach's Suites and the Brandenburgs, and *Messiah*. It is nice to see Peters still operating within the format, even though this reduction from their new edition is paperbound. It seems sturdy, though my eyesight isn't what it was and I suspect that if I were buying a new copy, I'd prefer the larger Bärenreiter study-score. But the NBA volume on which that is based is by no means the last word in scholarship, as is rightly stated in a succinct paragraph by the editor on p. 406. One weakness is the failure of the NBA to give due weight to the set of parts copied by Bach and his family which was sent to Dresden in 1733. I don't have the facsimile at hand to check (it seems to be out of print), but judging from the green marks on my NBA score which I added to show the differences, the articulation marks are incorporated, though not all variant readings. Major variants are shown as foot-notes, though there is no detailed critical commentary. The shorter-texted version of 'Et in unum

'Dominum' is given in the main sequence with the redundant longer version in an appendix (the opposite to Bärenreiter, which makes matters worse by hiding between the Creed and the Sanctus the version that is normally performed). Other appendix items are an early version of 'Credo in unum Deum' and a short instrumental introduction to the Credo by C. P. E. Bach.

The only quarrel one might have with the edition is the dubious comments about the vocal forces for which the work might have been intended. Bach does not, as Wolff claims, call in the *Entwurff* for three to four singers per part to sing in a single choir (what he does say has been discussed in great detail in recent issues of *Early Music*, but has been a matter of controversy for a decade or two). The presence of *Solo* in a part might, as he suggests, be to tell other singers of the part to shut up, but it may be to tell a solitary singer that he now has a solo in the sense that the alto, tenor and bass are not longer singing. *Solo/tutti* marks in BWV 191 or 232<sup>III</sup> are not strictly relevant: no-one is disputing that sometimes Bach scored for a ripieno choir. The *Violini solo* in 'Et in unum Dominum' just means that the *oboi d'amore* sharing the stave are *tacent*. Complex arguments cannot be solved by such naivety, which (probably wrongly) makes one suspect the integrity of the rest of the scholarship that underlies the edition. It would have been better for Wolff to have said nothing until he can deal with the matter with as thoroughly as it deserves: a far better case can surely be made for the traditional view than we have seen so far.

#### CORDA NOVA

Corda has begun a new series comprising reconstructions by Peter Holman of pieces which survive incomplete, beginning with Haydn's *Deutschlands Klage auf den Tod des Größen Friedrichs Börussens König* (Germany's Lament on the Death of the Great Frederick, King of Prussia). At least, it was assumed to be by Haydn until recently; now it is attributed to Carl Franz, who is known to have sung the work to his own baryton accompaniment in 1788, two years after Frederick's death. The surviving MS is for soprano and a rather bare unfigured continuo, not very satisfactory when performed as it stands; perhaps it was a copy intended just for the singer. Peter Holman has here, with help from Jeremy Brookner and Mark Caudle, provided a baryton part, and Ian Gammie has transcribed it for gamba as an alternative, barytons not being very readily available. The work has been transposed down a semitone, D being a better key for the instrument than E<sub>b</sub>. The work needs a soprano (or tenor), baryton (or gamba) and cello; keyboard continuo isn't necessary, and the keyboard version in the score is for use as a substitute rather than the complement the cello; a second copy of the score would also be needed, no great financial handicap, since the set only costs £5.00. (Corda Music Publications CMP 454, and no. 1 of a series neatly entitled *Dr Holman's Restorative*.)

The *Divertissements* for flute, violin & cello op. 100 (alias op. 38 or 59) are genuine Haydn, though enough sources

have been found in earlier works by the composer to make it likely that they are all arrangements. Derek McCulloch sets out the story in his introduction. Since there already is a good edition based on the autograph and London print of 1784, Ian Gammie has based his on a set of parts published in Brunswick c.1800 which seems to derive from another authoritative source (or perhaps it had a good copy-editor). The edition provides score as well as parts (unlike some of the earlier editions). I've seen CMP 452, which has No. 3 & 4 for £6.00: the set will be completed this summer.

Garrick's Shakespeare Jubilee at Stratford in 1769 was hardly a success, but was redeemed financially by a long-running play called *The Jubilee*. Charles Dibdin was Garrick's house composer at Drury Lane at the time, so wrote some of the music, naturally cashing in on the success by publishing it in a popular form. Ian Gammie has edited his *XII Country Dances and VI Cotillions*, originally published on two staves with dancing instructions. He has added a middle part for second violin. No doubt originally the music would have been played by anything from solo fiddle or harpsichord up to an orchestra. Corda also offers a version transposed for recorders, a part with guitar chords, the 2nd violin part in alto clef, and various other transpositions. The basic set (CMP 438) costs £4.75. I suspect that the impetus for performance will come from dance groups, and the music could also be useful for educational and dramatic purposes.

#### NEW EDITIONS

**CMP 454** attrib. J. Haydn: *Deutschlands Klage* (*Lament on the death of Frederick the Great*) - reconstructed by Peter Holman for Soprano or Tenor voice, Baryton (or Bass Viol) & B.C. Score & parts. £5.00

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**CMP 470** Overture to *Alexander's Feast* (Handel) for 4 bass viols, arr. S. Orford. Score & parts. £3.50

**CMP 451** J. Haydn: *Divertissements Nos 1 & 2* (Op. 100, Hob: IV, 6-7) for Flute, Violin and Cello. edited from the Brunswick edition c.1800. £6.00

**CMP 457** M. Corrette: *Sonata 1* for two bass viols (*continuo ad lib*) £3.00

#### CORDA MUSIC PUBLICATIONS

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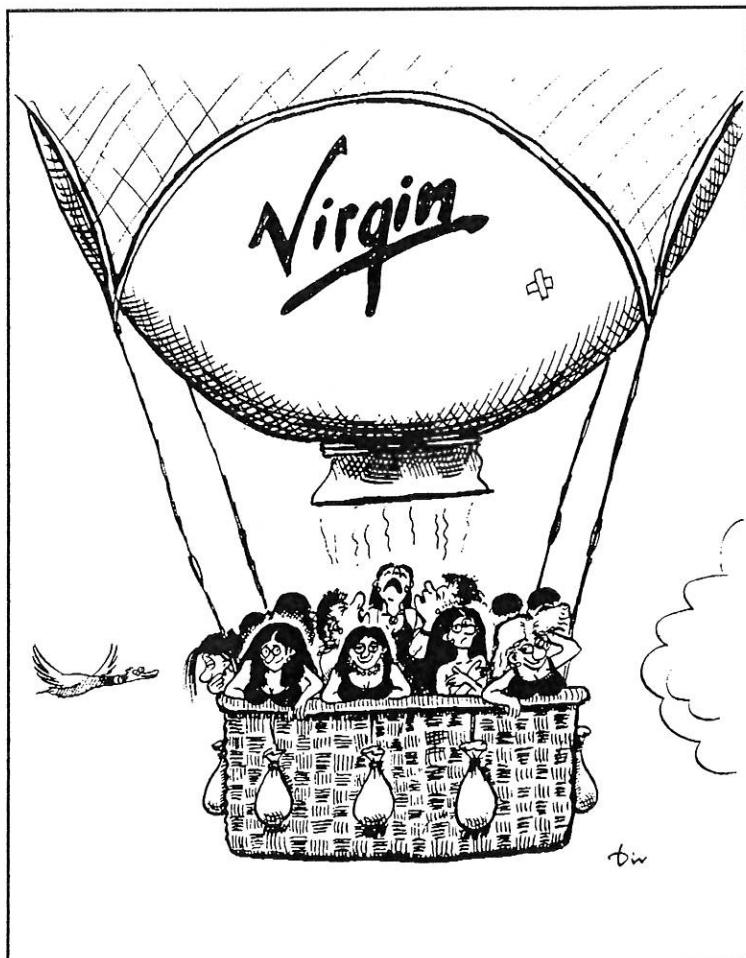
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## LONDON MUSIC

Andrew Benson-Wilson

At Passacaglia's Purcell Room concert (2 March), I had the unnerving experience of seeing my own words highlighted on the programme: 'Passacaglia is a most impressive young group of players, thoroughly professional, musically sophisticated and confident' was my earlier view, and their latest concert did nothing to change my opinion. It is so satisfying to listen to a group that doesn't rely on ostentation or empty virtuosity to sell their wares. They simply get on with the job and play, producing excellent ensemble playing through effective communication, both within the group and with the audience. I am reluctant to separate any of the players out, although Reiko Ichise's viola da gamba playing was particularly impassioned in Telemann's solo Sonata in D and her plucked strings were beautifully subtle in the Grave of Sammartini's Sonata 5. The recorder players (Annabel Knight and Louise Bradbury) have an inseparable affinity of tone and articulation, although both suffered the almost inevitable recorder player's habit of slightly dropping pitch as they bring a long-held cadence note to a close. Robin Bigwood's harpsichord solo (four pieces from Couperin's *Vingt-Quatrième ordre*) was welcomingly unpretentious and controlled. An excellent group.

In case you have missed all the publicity, the Mediæval Bæbes are an all-girl group that have created and thrived on a raunchy and provocative image. Stories of wild and exotic personal lives abound, and have produced rather more press coverage (since their signing by an inappropriately named record label) than most 'early music' bands achieve in a lifetime. With backgrounds in groups like Miranda Sex Garden, Hotstuffs from Hell, Love Craft, Lost Virgins in Space and Blood Horror, perhaps the early music world has something to learn about band names. They started their concert at the Queen Elizabeth Hall (5 March) with an apology that they would not be taking their clothes off. The programme went some way to satisfy those who wanted to see a bit more of the 12 young ladies, but also revealed the fact that of the 30 pieces, only 11 used either traditional or medieval music. Most of the rest, although using medieval texts, were written by Katharine Blake, one of the few in the group with musical training. Blake's settings were effective and occasionally clever, with a suitably medieval feel to them. For a group that relies on sex appeal for much of its publicity, I was surprised at how chaste they all appeared on stage. There was something of the rather embarrassed and giggly end-of-term concert about them, but there was nothing to frighten the horses. The greatest show of nudity and eroticism came from the two male percussionists who, stripped to the waist, worked up quite a lather. The Bæbes' singing was of the simple folk tradition – indeed some of the more untrained voices were the most effective. The greatest weakness was their use of microphones and the speaker system – not so much for the fact that they felt that they needed amplification, but because the whistles and feedback got in the way of the music, and the forward placing of the speakers moved the aural focus to the sides of the stage. Whilst I would not risk a wholehearted recommendation that *EMR* readers rush off to the nearest Bæbes' gig, I think that only the most prissy amongst us would be really horrified at what they heard and saw. I took my young cousin along (for personal protection purposes, you understand), and she thought they were great.



The Hanover Band's Wigmore Hall concert (9 March) saw the debut of Richard Egarr directing from the harpsichord. The bright yellow and orange shoelaces beneath Egarr's formal evening wear was a warning that we were in for something unusual, as was his defensive programme note warning of the forthcoming 'romantic' interpretations, and hinting at a bit of a battering from previous reviewers. The opening Handel Sonata (Op. 5/4) was punchy and

adventurous and Schmelzer's francophile *Balletti pastorella* featured a vast dynamic range. The concluding Bach Suite (No 2 in B minor) included a guitar, whose percussive strums echoed those of the harpsichord. But it was in Bach's Fifth Brandenburg Concerto that the full force of Egarr's interpretation was unleashed. The first movement included a most-effective *sotto voce* central section where motifs were gently tossed about between the instruments. This proved to be the lull before the storm when the convivial Egarr launched into a cadenza of such wild extravagance that it was not for nothing that he looked up with gleeful relief when it ended. To call it merely 'romantic' would be to underestimate the sheer power he unleashed. I don't have a problem with rubato and flexibility of tempo, but for one who views Bach's instrumental writing as being based on the 'first amongst equals' principal, I found the imbalance between the harpsichord and the other instrumentalists stylistically inappropriate. But a refreshing evening, if not one which I would want to experience too often.

Da Camera is a new group formed by Emma Murphy (recorders) and Steven Devine (harpsichord). Their debut concert (with Nick Stringfellow, cello) in the delightful setting of Hampstead's Burgh House on 14 March had a nicely-balanced first half of sonatas by Castello and Cima framed by sonatas by Mancini, Corelli and Telemann and a slightly less coherent second half of anonymous Pavans, Sonatas by Telemann and Vivaldi/Chedeville, Divisions by Carr and Eccles and Sweelinck's *Praeludium Toccata*. Emma Murphy is a superb recorder player. She combines outstanding virtuosity with musical intelligence and sensitivity (not always an obvious combination) and has a solid control of tone (with no cadential dropping). She also has an endearingly cheerful stage manner that engages the audience. Nick Stringfellow's continuo cello was stylishly appropriate and his lyrical obbligato playing in the *Pastorale* of the increasingly popular Chedeville/Vivaldi *Il Pastor Fido* (which seems to have had a new lease of life now that its origin is known) was most effective (although I have never heard that movement played so slowly – the expansive tempo approached Wagnerian proportion and romantic intensity). The weakest part of the group was the harpsichord playing and general demeanour of Steven Devine. Although clearly blessed with enviable technical skills, his continuo playing was too clever by half, all but outwitting the recorder solo line, and his jauntily laddish stage manner was distracting. His performance of Sweelinck approached the bizarre, endowing the normally austere Master of Amsterdam with an excess of Italian rhythmic anarchy. Nonetheless, subject to some tightening of Mr Devine's lead, this is a group with a future.

The Wigmore Hall comes into its own with small-scale chamber music, and Catherine King and Charles Daniels worked wonders with the exquisite acoustic in their delightful concert of courtly songs from early-17th-century France, *Airs de Cour* (6 March). With the delicate support of Jacob Heringman, lute, the sequence of multi-verse airs became almost hypnotic through consistent tone, volume

and structure. The gentle snores from one member of the audience should be taken as a complement. This was a brave presentation. With lesser musicians, or a more restless audience, the predictability of many of the pieces would have caused problems. But for a singer to retain attention through the seven verses of Besard's 'Ma belle si ton âme', for example, each separated by the same lute riff, says a lot about the attraction of pure vocal tone and simple communication. Many of the airs were in dialogue form, and Daniels and King made an ideal couple. Although there were times when Catherine King's voice displayed a slightly nervous tremble, she sang with a delightfully focused timbre. Charles Daniels is one of the finest vocalists around – his voice always thrills, and he also manages to convey the most complex of emotions with subtle ease. Two lute solos revealed Jacob Heringman as a fine tonal colourist. A wonderfully relaxing evening. [David Hansell also liked the CD: see p. 17.]

Considering the paucity of choruses, the City of London Choir showed commendable restraint in fielding Handel's *Acis & Galatea* (St John's, Smith Square, 17 March). Conducted by Hilary Davan Wetton with the Hanover Band in support, there was much to commend in this performance, in particular the fine singing of Mark Wilde as Acis. His final aria, 'Love sounds the alarm' ends with the words '... for life is a pain'. And so it proved, for he was about to be crushed to death by a boulder cast by the one-eyed monster Polyphemus, sung with something less than terrifying ferocity by Andrew Mayor, despite his striking red cummerbund. Jeni Bern was Galatea, who got over her grief for the recently-squashed Acis by turning what was left of him into a fountain. Damon, the voice of moderation, was sung by Ivan Sharpe. Despite the incongruous sight of over 80 assorted nymphs and shepherds lurking in the background, the chorus was effective. My main quibble was the overly crisp direction which rather got in the way of the musical flow – this applied also to the opening *Libera me* by Arne. The continuo organ was also rather prominent and slightly ahead of the beat for much of the time, possibly because the (un-named) player was facing away from the conductor.

The Scholars Baroque Ensemble are probably best known for their various Naxos CDs. Their first London concert (St. John's, Smith Square, 18 March) included all six of Bach's motets, accompanied by organ, cello and violone. I have never been entirely happy with their CDs. It has been difficult to pin down, but they don't quite seem to manage that purity of consort that separates out a top-class choir. Satisfying as their concert was, I came away with something of the same feeling. There are some very good singers amongst the eight Scholars, although the four 'visitors' had a slight edge over the permanent core. It was good to see no conductor – the concentration between the performers resulted in a focused and direct sound, and the instrumental support was excellent (Terence Charlston, organ, Katie Stephens, cello, and Jan Spencer, violone).

Mediva are a new medieval group made up from students and recent early performance graduates. Their concert in the Pond Street Chapel, Highgate (21 March) had a distinctively Spanish flavour to it, although the title of *¡Fiesta!* and the interval sangria were perhaps not entirely authentic. Although their programme of *Cantigas* and similar works didn't break new academic ground, they had put a considerable amount of thought and effort into the presentation of the music. Each piece had a distinctive and dramatic feel to it, aided by an imaginative use of movement and space, lighting and instrumentation. This aspect was most successful, although one or two of the younger ones appeared terrified by the whole thing, nervously looking to their leader for moral support. I was disappointed with the two lead singers – one had a pleasant enough mezzo voice, in the often-effective middle-eastern timbre, but her uncontrolled vibrato was a distraction when singing in consort. Her soprano companion's stage manner was most distracting. She fixed her eyes on a point way above the audience and sang to that point; this would have been unsettling in any auditorium, but was particularly so in the intimate setting of this smallish chapel. The instrumentalists included far more descant recorder players than should be allowed out of captivity, but were otherwise effective. Mediva is a group that clearly knows and loves the repertoire. Their presentation was thoughtful and effective.

The Purcell Room hosted two concerts on 24 March, starting with the English Cornett and Sackbut Ensemble, with Matthew Wadsworth, lute, and Helen Neeves, soprano. Of course, the loud winds would have been safely tucked away far from the Privy Chamber of the English Court, where the lutes and singers were to be found, so their presence on the same stage stretched credibility. Helen Neeves produced a boyishly handsome voice for Dowland and Whythorne (composer of a nice cornett duo played by Adrian Woodward and Fiona Russell).

The main concert of the evening was a group new to me, though well-known in disc, the Hanover-based Musica Alta Ripa with a programme of chamber music from London around 1740/50. The two violins, recorder, cello and harpsichord gave a most impressive performance. Their playing is vivacious, with an intelligent use of dynamic contrast, a musically sensitive range of articulation and rhythmic fluidity and tastefully restrained continuo playing. The programme gave an interesting insight into London musical life. Highlights included Boyce's saloon-like *Affetuoso* movement from his Sonata in C and Variations on an English tune from Geminiani's *Rules for playing in a true taste*.

As a change to the usual round of Easter Passions, the New London Consort presented *Crucifixus, a medieval medley of music for Holy Week* (Queen Elizabeth Hall, 31 March). The musical highlights were two extended dramas, the *Planctus Mariae* and *Visitatio Sepulchri*, both from manuscripts in Cividale del Friuli in the north-eastern corner of Italy, as was the opening Palm Sunday processional sequence and the

*Improperia* (reproaches) that formed part of the Good Friday ceremonies. The audience prize would have gone to the rondellus 'Perspice, christicola' performed here in its sacred Latin form rather than in its better known incarnation as 'Sumer is icumen in'. The performance mood for this piece veered towards the secular, but it was just what was needed to bring us back to earth after an evening of plainchant. The only instrumental contribution was from the QEH organ, largely in sub-Langlais *Blockwerk* organum-style interludes or *alternatim* verses. The singers also switched between unadorned chant and organum. Five excellent, seasoned males singers contrasted with four younger females. Of the latter, Susan Hamilton was a most effective Mary Magdalen in the *Visitatio Sepulchri*, avoiding Joanne Lunn's rather sanctimonious approach in the *Planctus Mariae*. The sparsely mechanical surroundings of the Queen Elizabeth Hall did little to enhance the performance. Having already got the singers into flowing robes, it would have been worth investing in some simple quasi-liturgical staging and more imaginative lighting.

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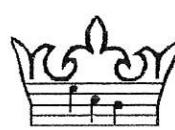
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## D'INDIA MADRIGALS

Eric Van Tassel

D'India *Madrigali* Les Arts Florissants, Ensemble de Violes  
 Orlando Gibbons, William Christie 64' 48"  
 Erato 3984-23418-2

It's never been clear to me why madrigal composers after Monteverdi should get so much exposure and those before him so little. Perhaps the rediscovery of Gesualdo in the 1920s established the rather childish notion (which we don't accept in any later repertoire) that the more bizarre a composer is, the better. This bias in favour of the autumn of the madrigal means that at least one-third of the music on this CD has been recorded before, while something like 80 per cent of the unimaginably greater music of Marenzio goes unheard. But that's not d'India's fault (incidentally, why does everyone cite him thus, rather than as 'India'?): he is undeniably versatile and effective, even if he does always labour under the burden of having to be more outré than his forerunners.

Of the two sides of d'India's output, this CD appears to favour the more conservative, with just two SA duets and four solos as against some 11 five-part madrigals. But five of the latter can be discounted at once: they are played by a viol consort plus theorbo, without voices, an arrangement incomprehensible on any ground except the competitive quest for novelty. This is quintessentially *Hamlet* without the prince, since nobody has ever written music more word-driven than this. The viols do breathe well – in this respect, they could give lessons to the viols on the Schütz CD reviewed in this issue (see p. 17) – but without the words, the exotic harmonies and the declamatory phraseology (a plethora of repeated chords) are left utterly unmotivated. And in the virtuosic *Quell'augellin*, especially at the start, the viols make it all sound technically easy and lose the sense of living dangerously. Instrumental performance also aggravates/exaggerates d'India's great weakness, a tendency towards a choppy succession of short clauses inadequately unified. (Incidentally, Erato should at least have printed the texts for these unsung pieces; on the other hand, in the two duets they might have managed to not print the stanzas that aren't performed.)

Since I can't imagine anyone listening twice to the instrumental madrigals, 20 per cent of the CD is sheer waste. The rest is better value. The solo pieces are enjoyable if somewhat monotonous; the two declamatory laments *in stile rappresentativo* (one by Jason and one by Orpheus, after the manner of Monteverdi's *Arianna*) are simply too long for the material. The best music on the CD is the polyphonic madrigals with and without obbligato continuo (including d'India's masterpiece, the Guarini cycle in five sections from Book VIII). Alex Ross pointed out in the *New*

*Yorker* recently that 'Critics who write about CDs sometimes forget that other people don't get them free.' So I'll just say that I'd have paid something, at least, for the 4½-minute *Strana armonia*: exotic harmonies and constantly surprising declamation, wholly in the service of the words.

That these singers are (mainly) French and not Italian is clear not so much from their accents as from their timbre and style; in places, the tenor Etienne Lescroart reminded me of a young Hugues Cuenod. The continuo isn't always uncluttered (I'd have omitted the bass viol), but the theorist Elizabeth Kenny displays her usual mastery and canniness about when and what to play, and Christie's harpsichord is colourful without being (as many harpsichord-playing directors are) too obtrusive. (But the continuo players should have gone out for a smoke in the purely polyphonic *Mercè! grido*.) In a competing version of the Guarini cycle, Alan Curtis's all-Italian group I Febi Armonici is more aggressive, often excessively so, but also more flexible in tempo and declamation. However, Christie's softer-grained singers are better in passages of pure imitation, where the Italians bark and bellow more than they should. (Erato places Christie's voices too far back on the sound-stage.)

But many of the mannered vocal gestures here are becoming just too familiar. If only we had an International Madrigal Authority! It could award cash bonuses for imaginative variations in tempo, dynamics and vocal colour, while imposing a five-year moratorium on Puccinian sobs and enforcing a strict quota on portamentos and glissandos. (I'm reminded of the singer/composer Barbara Strozzi, who wrote to a patron in the 1630s, 'I know very well that I would not have the honour of your presence if, at the last session, I had invited you to hear me cry and not to hear me sing.')

*It seems that we were maligning the BBC in explaining the absence of this review from our last issue: Eric writes:*  
 Your editorial note in *EMR* 49, p. 20, was true as far as it went: this review was indeed delayed because I had lent the CD to Radio 3 so that a few minutes from it could be dubbed into a programme I recorded for them at the end of February. But I think you were inadvertently unjust to the Beeb. It was at my suggestion that they used my copy of the Erato CD, and if I hadn't offered it I don't doubt that a BBC copy could have been found; I saw (and see) no harm in trying to save an undermanned BBC library a few minutes' legwork. I expected the dubbing to be done while I was at Broadcasting House, not realizing that we'd still be taping the spoken bits at 7.30 in the evening: even BBC producers are entitled to go home sometime. Finally, I didn't tell my producer at the time that I'd need to have the CD returned so I could finish my review: when I did let her know, it came back promptly.

## RECORD REVIEWS

## MEDIEVAL

*Edda: Myths from medieval Iceland* *Sequentia*  
DHM 05472 77381 2 76' 52"

A fascinating disc, and by its very adventurousness a worthy memorial to Barbara Thornton, who died while the disc was at its final editing phase. I decided that the smattering of Old Icelandic that I learnt back in 1961 (and the enticing view of the sunny but no doubt bitterly-cold island as we flew to California in February) did not qualify me to review it, so we have passed it to an Icelander; unfortunately, at the time of writing, the disc is at his Scottish home and he is in Iceland, so the review is deferred till next month. CB

*Music of the Troubadours* Ensemble Unicorn, Michael Posch dir; Oni Wyatars, Marco Ambrosini dir; Maria D. Lafitte voice 69' 32" Naxos 8.554257 £

The remarks about instrumentation made in the following review are relevant here. The great attraction is Maria D. Lafitte, and the disc is worth getting for her lovely clear and eloquent singing, though the continual accompaniment is a pity: she is good enough not to need it. The attempt to provide an audible context (as in track 9) annoys on repeated hearings, and having thought of *Riverdance* during track 11, I don't think I want to play it again. As a creative performance, though, this is entertaining and fun. Texts and English translations are included. CB

Alfonso X 'El Sabio' *Cantigas de Santa Maria e Cantigas de Fiestas de Nostro Senyor e outras de Fiestas de Santa Maria* *Theatrum Instrumentorum*, Gloria Moretti, Federica Doniselli, Ivana Grasso, Roberto Bolelli; Aleksandar Sasha Karlic dir 73' 29" ARTS authentic 47528-2 £

*Madre de Deus: Cantigas de Santa Maria* *Micrologus* 63' 06" Opus 111 OPS 30-225 *Compostela medieval* Porque trobar, John Wright dir 69' 21" *Fonti Musicali* fmd 216

As regular readers will know, I have problems with many of the performances we hear of medieval secular monophony. Put in a nutshell, why, when the sources are only explicit about the melody, is it rhythm and instrumentation that are most prominent on nearly every disc? All of these are highly instrumented. Porque trobar has a single voice, but the other two discs also have considerable and effective participation by a chorus (or at least a group of voices). The eponymous track of *Madre de Deus* builds up a mesmeric atmosphere through its ten verses. The exotic sounds here are mostly Arabic, which is what one expects. But *Theatrum Instrumentorum* goes further afield, and we almost get an anthology of world music attached to Alfonsine tunes. Track 2 sounds to me as if it is inspired by a South African style, while Andean flutes appear in track 4. Porque trobar is the

most disciplined in its selection, taking a whole set of the groups of ten into which the *Cantigas* are divided, though undermining this by performing some purely instrumentally (surely the grouping is for textual rather than musical reasons?) These are preceded by three songs from Provence and *Ens ne soy/Ar ne kuthe*, in Norman-French and Middle English. This is perhaps the most sombre and, to my ears, historically-convincing recording. But the others are entertaining, indeed moving, whether or not 13th-century Spanish music was anything like it. All the performers have thought hard about what they are trying to do, and are convincing in their own terms. It is so frustrating that the melodies and a wealth of pictures of instruments are extant but nothing except the faint possibility of folk survival to guide a performance. Porque trobar give summaries of the texts, *Theatrum Instrumentorum* has the original language only, *Micrologus* gives the original and translations in German, English and French. CB

*Machaut Motets and Music from the Ivrea Codex* The Clerks' Group, Edward Wickham Signum SIGCD011 56' 12"

Definitely my favourite record this month. For a start, no instruments! The singers feel more relaxed than Gothic Voices, and the sensuous aspect of Machaut comes more to the fore. Most performances of (and writing about) Machaut make one think that he is a 14th-century equivalent of Webern, so a disc that feels more like Elgar is refreshing. Not that there is anything unstylish here, just an emphasis on a different aspect of the music. We are continually being told that the idea of the great composer is old hat; but even when only half-listening the first time I played the disc, and not checking what the pieces were, my ears pricked up after the opening three Ivrea mass movements: Machaut clearly operates at a different level. CB

*Fumeux fume par fumee* *Speculum* 63' 51" *Speculum* JMPA002 Music by Ciconia, Landini, Machaut, Senleches, Trebor, Vaillant & anon

The performances are fine in their way, and the dances (*Tre fontane*, *Lamento di Tristano*, *Manfredina*) are well-played. But they miss the point of the more complex texted pieces, whose sheer virtuosity is undermined by instrumental or mixed instrument and voice performances. Take the title song, an extraordinary piece of writing (cf *Early Music* XVI/2, 1988, p. 176-183). We hear it twice, once on instruments and once with a voice on the top line. But it is a rondeau: there is a huge difference between ABAB and ABaAabAB. We only hear half the text, which itself embodies the subtlety discussed in the notes. The music doesn't really work with either of the combinations chosen, especi-

ally in the section where all three voices exchange a three-note phrase. I am also suspicious about the percussion in such rhythmically-complex music as Ciconia's *Una panthera*, tactful though it be. Such pieces seem to me to be playing with notation in a way that demands highly-literate musicians, and I doubt whether instrumentalists had that sort of training. I'd rather hear the group in 16th-century repertoire, which would suit their forces rather better. CB

## 15th CENTURY

*Dufay Fragmenta missarum Cantica Symphonia*, Kees Boeke & Giuseppe Maletto *Stradivarius Dulcimer* STR 33440 79' 59"

It is excellent to have so much marvellous but rarely-recorded music available on this well-filled disc. The programme gives two sequence of unrelated masses, separated by the late *Ave regina coelorum*. Some of it sounds good, though the style is a little fussy for my taste: I'd prefer a chaster approach to dynamic variation, but even if I wanted more, it often seems arbitrary. In the most famous piece here, the *Ave regina*, the impetus is missing. Despite the learned booklet note, I can see little point in setting up the chance to compare one mass with instruments, the other mostly without, when the instrumentation seems to be so haphazard - an isolated slide-trumpeter doubling trombone, for instance, in an ensemble that otherwise consists of *bas* instruments. There is considerable doubt whether the organ would be involved in the liturgy in any way except alternating with voices, not playing with them. I may be out of date, but I would have thought that some justification of the instrumentation was more important than a table of sources. So a bit of a wasted opportunity, but worth getting for the music. CB

## 16th CENTURY

*A. Gabrieli Madrigali e Canzoni* Weser Renaissance, Manfred Cordes 68' 12" cpo 999 642-2

Weser-Renaissance discs are usually so good that I was surprised to be disappointed by the first track, the three-choir *Cantiam di Dio*. It felt a bit congested, perhaps because too many lines are taken by voices. (By my understanding of Venetian practice, Choro II is a *capella* for voices only, while the other choirs should be instrumental with a few solo voices: the recording reverses this.) Elsewhere, I wonder whether the voices are trying too hard: at least some of the music is domestic (even if a Venetian Palazzo has rooms bigger than the modern suburban drawing-room). I found it more enjoyable at a lowish volume. But I don't want to sound too discouraging. A disc devoted just to Andrea is rare and most

welcome. His music is grossly underperformed, and I hope this will encourage further interest in it. CB

Milán *El Maestro* (1536): songs & vihuela solos Catherine King, Jacob Heringman ASV CD GAU 183 74' 31

As one might expect, this recording is a thing of great beauty, subtly chosen and blended by performers of impeccable pedigree and virtuosity. Catherine King has a voice that many singers would die – or even kill – for. It is absolutely flawless, stunningly accurate, and its quality has a uniformity across the range that would make any other singer spit. She is well paired with Jacob Heringman's equally subtle and artful playing. Perhaps too perfect? There was something lacking, I felt: after a few tracks I began to long for something that sounded a little different. Too much perfection can give anyone indigestion. *Julia Craig-McFeely*

*Fedeltà d'Amore: Music at the Court of Salzburg*  
Paul Hofhaimer Consort Salzburg, Michael Seywald dir 61' 36"  
Arte Nova Classics 74321 61338 2 £  
Buchner, Finck, Gastoldi, Hofhaimer, Kotter, Negri, Senfl, Unterholtzer, Vecchi

The selection is odd: much of the disc concentrates on music of the early 16th century, with some warm, anonymous singing in *Tenorlieder* by Hofhaimer and others, recorded far too prominently in relationship to the instruments. However, if you don't know German, you may find the unvaried delivery dull. (There are no translations in the booklet.) In fact, there is a certain lack of panache, especially when compared with the *Musica Antiqua* of London Senfl disc (*EMR* 48, p. 18). A few Italian pieces justify the misleading 'Um 1600' on the back of the box, but have nothing in common with the earlier stuff, which is less recorded and of greater musical interest. CB

*Napolitane: Villanelle, Arie, Moresche*  
1530-1570 (*Tesori di Napoli*, 7) Patrizia Bovi, Giuseppe De Vittorio, Rosario Totaro STT, Micrologus, Cappella De' Turchini 60' 21"  
Opus 111 OPS 30-214

Micrologus show their versatility here in a very different repertoire from *Madre de Deus* (see p. 12). We sometimes hear the Neapolitan villanella repertoire in the more civilised settings from the north (including some by Lassus). Here they are given in a far rougher form. Dinko Fabris and Donna Cardamone in the booklet both stress that the relationship with popular music is more complex than used to be thought, including an element of local patriotism. The performers generally go for a popularist style, and it works very well. This is useful for playing to friends who think renaissance music is always refined. CB

*Piae Cantiones: Early Finnish Vocal Music*  
Finnish Radio Chamber Choir, Timo Nuoranne 67' 43"  
Ondine ODE 918-2

This is the third recording of music from the famous Finnish anthology to reach us within a few months. Two Naxos discs (see *EMR* 45 p. 15 and 49 p. 19) have emphasised the medieval origins of the repertoire and how the music sounds when sung exactly as printed in 1582. The feeling here is far more modern, partly because the choir is not a specialist early-music group, and partly because some settings come from later editions. The disc begins, for instance, with two settings of *Iucundare iugiter*, one a3 with an archaic double leading-note cadence from the 1582 edition followed by a jolly setting a4 from the 1625 edition. The booklet (which gives texts in Latin and Finnish, though the introductory note is in English, German and French) could be a little more informative about the sources. I would not recommend this in preference to the two Naxos discs (and not just because they are so cheap); but if you have enjoyed those, try this for further songs and a different style of singing. CB

*Realities and Illusions: Music and ideas around Philip II of Spain* Ensemble La Romanesca, José Miguel Moreno (3 discs)  
Glossa GSP 98001 E  
Reissue in a box with hard-bound bilingual booklet of material from *Canto del Cavallero* (1993), Al Alva Venid (1995), *Canción del Emperador* (1998) & 4 tracks from *La Guitarra Española* (1994),

No doubt about the recordings: if you haven't got them already and have any interest at all in the repertoire, buy this set. I was hoping that the hard-bound 132-page booklet (half in Spanish, half in English) would correct my Anglo-biased image of Philip II. However, it is short on hard information, and long on theory and fancy, so I'm little the wiser: a shame. CB  
See also p. 28.

*Vecchie letture: Italian Renaissance Music*  
Syntagma Musicum 55' 02"  
ARTS authentic 47504-2 ££  
Arcadelt, Attaignant, Capriolo/Bossinensis, Crema, Gastoldi, Lassus, Mantovano, Moderne, Ortiz, Phalèse, Susato, Tromboncino, Willaert, Zesso & anon

This is a delightfully unpretentious recording of the sort of performances one can well imagine being given by the Italian musicians in Lorenzo Costa's famous painting *The Concert*. A simple vocal style combines easily with elegant wind and string playing to produce very convincing interpretations of repertoire from the mid-15th to the late-16th century, while an inventive approach to instrumentation and vocal colour avoids any sense of tedium. This is also a recording with great energy, and while just occasionally in the 'comic' pieces intonation is too readily sacrificed to the false god of farcical effect, who is to say that Lassus in his clown's suit entertaining the Bavarian Court didn't do the same! On the whole, though, the vocal ornaments are negotiated well, and there is a fine sense of ensemble and shared purpose. More importantly, there is in the voices the same sense of wide-eyed naivety which is so obvious in Costa's masterpiece,

making this a very evocative and entertaining disc to listen to. *D. James Ross*

## 17th CENTURY

*Biber Litaniae Sancto Josepho Muffat Missa in labore requies* Cantus Cölln, Concerto Palatino, Konrad Junghänel 69' 27"  
Harmonia Mundi HMC 901667

From the opening phrase of Biber's Litany of St Joseph and the huge reverberation of the Abbey at Melk, this CD had me smiling. Readers will know of my love of 17th-century Austrian church music and my admiration for *Cantus Cölln* and *Concerto Palatino*, so it will scarcely surprise anyone that I love this set. Add to Biber and the unfamiliar Muffat two sonatas by Antonio Bertali, and I have over an hour of ecstasy – the singing is amazing (there really are only eight voices!) and the instrumental playing brilliant (in the glistening trumpet sense). Do not expect the Muffat to sound like vocal versions of the *Florilegia* or reworkings of his *Sonate*: anyone familiar with the Schmelzer masses and those by that man Bertali will recognise where he got his ideas, right down to the essence of his *Agnus Dei*. The repertoire could not ask for better performers. BC

*Coma Sacrae cantiones* (1614) Musica Antica, Francesco Tasini cond 106' 00" (2 CDs)  
Dynamic CSS 237/1-2 ££

It is not at all clear whether 'Musica Antica' on the front is the name of a group or a series: otherwise, the performers are merely named individually: SSAATTBBB, violone & curtal, with the conductor – strange choice of term – playing organ. The music is interesting: if Viadana had not existed, he might have been a familiar name in the history books for his collection of small-scale vocal concerti – one for solo voice (whose opening is uncannily close to Byrd's best-known motet), 16 for two, 13 for three and 4 for four, plus a pair of instrumental canzonas, here played on an unidentified (perhaps old) organ. The music strikes me as better than the performances: they are not unstylish, but lack the precision of tuning that comes when singers carefully listen to every chord. CB

*Dowland Earth, Water, Air & Fire: a new look at John Dowland and friends* The Consort of Musicke (Evelyn Tubb, Lucy Ballard, Andrew King and Simon Grant SATB), Anthony Rooley 71' 16"  
ASV Gaudeamus CD GAU 187  
Music by Dowland + Locke, Morley, Sermisy, Tomkins, Weelkes

The Consort revisits old repertoire in boldly experimental mood, choosing songs of different moods, mostly melancholy, for two to four voices, some with lute, and some solos. It's very mannered, with some superb performances. In the intensity of their response to the dramatic texts, they take risks that don't all come off, so it is uneven and ensemble is compromised. The full-blooded response to the words, where

## Wilbye - Weepe, weepe, myne eyes

1

Weepe, weepe, weepe, myne eyes, my \_\_\_\_\_ harte can

2

take no \_\_\_\_\_ rest, weepe, weepe, weepe, my \_\_\_\_\_ harte,

3

myne \_\_\_\_\_ eyes shall n'er be \_\_\_\_\_ blest. Weepe eyes, weepe

4

hart, and \_\_\_\_\_ both this ac - - - - - cent crye:

5

a thou-sand\_ deaths I \_\_\_\_\_ dye,

6

a thou-sand, thou - sand deaths I dye, a \_\_\_ thou -

7

-sand deaths I \_\_\_\_\_ dye. Aye me! ah, ah cru-ell For-tune,

21

aye me! Now Le - an - der to dye I feare not;

7 6 4 3 5 6 7 6 5 3

25

Death doe the worst I care not, Death do the worst I care not, Death do the

4 # 4 # 4 # 4 # 4 # 4 #

28

worst I care not. I hope, I hope when I am

4 # 5 6 # b

32

dead in E - ly - sian playne, in E - ly - sian playne,

# 6

34

in E - ly - sian playne, to meet & thear with ioye,

6 4 # 6 4 5 3

36

and thear with ioye, and thear with ioye, theere wee'll

4 2 3 1 6 5 4 2 b3 1 6 5 3 8 7 6 4

39

love a-gaine.

5 4 #

This embellished setting comes from British Library Egerton MS 2971, f. 30v. The original clefs are C1 & F4. The original has been modernised as little as possible, except for punctuation. Bass figures indicate the harmony of the five-voice madrigal upon which this monody is based, which is printed in John Wilbye's *The Second Set of Madrigales to 3. 4. 5. and 6. parts, apt both for Voyals and Voyces... London, 1609*. Players who knew it may have attempted to reproduce it. However, it is more likely that simpler chords were played.

Bar 3: the last note in the voice part is sharpened in 1609.  
Bars 32-33 in *Elizium playne*. 1609 has *Elizian*.

Bar 19: 1609 begins repeat here at note 2 (not at bar 29).  
Bar 34, note 5: no sharp in 1609.

appropriate, is very effective, particularly *Toss not my soul* and the opening *Come again*, which is turned into a dialogue, beginning unexpectedly and effectively with the bass singing the solo. His performance of *In darkness let me dwell* isn't so effective. He lacks the necessary intensity of tone, and his sound, beautiful and velvety though it is, needs more variety. There is nice freedom of tempo, for example to paint 'and feeds me with delay' in *Come again*; but in the third verse of *Sleep wayward thoughts* it begs the question why Dowland set this text to a galliard. Evelyn Tubb is always impressive in her dramatic expressiveness, her ornamentation, and particularly her soft singing. Every now and then at *fortes*, particularly about F, on particular vowels (as in 'woeful'), her sound becomes too intense, and loses its beauty. The Matthew Locke dialogue, a remarkable piece, has two superbly expressive choruses, but the spoken dialogue could pall on repeated listening.

Robert Oliver

**Frescobaldi Harpsichord Pieces** Blandine Verlet 48' 24"  
Auvidis Astrée E 8654 (rec 1972)  
Toccate I: 1, *Fra Jacopino*, 4 Corrente, *Le Monicha*. II: 1, 10, 11, *La Frescobalda*, *Aria detta Balletto*  
**Jacquet de la Guerre Pièces de Clavecin**  
Blandine Verlet 61' 22"  
Auvidis Astrée E 8644  
**Handel The Eight Grand Suites** Blandine Verlet 102' (2 CDs) ££  
Auvidis Astrée E 8655

The Handel and Frescobaldi discs are reissues of recordings Verlet made in the early 1970s, yet in performance style they are virtually indistinguishable from the Jacquet de la Guerre, recorded last year. I have some reservations about Verlet's playing – her interpretations are unquestionably poetic and often have an air of great authority, but sometimes extreme rubato, flawed execution of ornaments and strange articulation spoils the effect. The Handel is probably the most successful disc of the three. Interpretations are sensible and imaginative – I like particularly the sense of stature in many of the slower movements, which helps to place the suites in the context of their 17th-century French predecessors. The harpsichord is a copy of a double-manual (probably Ruckers) by Dowd, and sounds good. Careful listening, however, reveals the deterioration that has taken place in the 25-year-old recording – there are frequent dropouts and occasional distortion. The Frescobaldi disc is not an attractive purchase. First of all, there is less than an hour of material – only a tiny selection from the 1637 editions of *Libro Primo & Secondo*. Then there's the harpsichord ('clavecin anonyme du XVIIeme siècle'), which, despite (or perhaps because of?) two 8 foot and a 4 foot, lacks interest and real power. The playing is a little pedestrian: I found nothing really compelling, and in comparison with, say, Richard Egarr's 1991 recording on Globe, this CD, I'm afraid, is not a serious contender. The Jacquet de la Guerre is better, with Verlet once again on home ground, but even here there are odd

tempo fluctuations which undermine the logic of the music. Despite the attraction of Verlet's Colmar Ruckers listeners would be much better served by Carole Cerasi's recent Metronome recording, which is far more sophisticated and still has the appeal of a 'real' Ruckers.

Robin Bigwood

**D'India Madrigali** Les Arts Florissants, Ensemble de Violes Orlando Gibbons, William Christie 64' 48"  
Erato 3984-23418-2

see p. 11

**Jacquet de la Guerre Pièces de Clavecin**  
Blandine Verlet see under Frescobaldi

**Marini Le Lacrime di Davide Sparse nel Miserere**. Gli Erranti, Alessandro Casari dir Stradivarius Dulcimer STR 33474 71' 51"

This is an important release, inasmuch as it may be the first CD devoted entirely to Marini's sacred music, only four collections of which are known today – Opera 15, 18, 20, and 21 – and of these only the last has all partbooks extant. Opus 21 comprises four settings of Psalm 50 (*Miserere mei Deus*), a Litany of Saints (*Letanie de Santii*), and three motets. The present CD wisely omits the repetitious and perfunctory second *Miserere*, as well as the motet *Tantum ergo*. With a few florid exceptions, much of this music is in a sober, declamatory style recalling, say, Schütz in his more austere moments. All four *Misereres* alternate 'measured' music with freer sections in falsobordone style. Dissonance usage and text painting are bold enough, however, to provide and sustain interest for the contemporary listener, especially in the third *Miserere*. Although the Litany is described as 'abbreviated' on the original title page, it nevertheless manages to mention enough Saints to make it possibly Marini's longest piece (17' 30" in this performance). To what extent a work such as this can be 'appreciated' outside of the environment and function for which it was originally intended can be debated, although the repeated pleas for intercession can cast a hypnotic, almost incantatory spell. The two motets are more immediately approachable. *O dulcissime Jesu* is, in fact, one of the composer's finest achievements. Touching and straightforward, the work exudes a lyric melancholy much in the same vein as the instrumental *Passacaglia* from Opus 22.

The performances are quite good, although phrase endings can sometimes fade out to the extent that the final note is inaudible at average listening level. It is instructive to compare the performance of the first *Miserere* on this CD with the one on Ricercar 205852 in which the singers, who include Maria Christina Kiehr and John Elwes, add ornamentation of their own. There are a few slips, grammatical and factual, in the English translation of the booklet notes.

Thomas Dunn

We welcome a review from Thomas Dunn, whom many readers will know from his edition of Marini's string sonatas. He has recently transcribed Marini's *Vesperi per tutte le festività del' anno*, op. 20, 1654, reconstructing the missing bass and continuo parts.

**Michna Missa a7, Cantiones, Requiem** Capella Regis Musicalis, dir. Robert Hugo 61' Studio Matous Authentic MK 0001-2 (rec 1992)

This Studio Matous recording has now become available here through Koch International and it is a welcome arrival. The *Missa a7* features a solo baritone and some interesting chromatic writing. The *Cantiones pro defunctis* are in Czech and only speakers of that language will be able to understand what is happening as there are no printed texts. The *Requiem* is a delightful work. Michna's music is a somewhat curious mixture of early 17th-century counterpoint and Czech folk melodies. I felt that the mass was a little rushed to allow the different sections to breathe, but the remainder of the disc is far better in this respect.

BC

**Monteverdi Partenza amorosa** M Cechalova, I Troupova, Z Matouskova SSS W Katschner lute, Wilke hpscd & org, with S Predota T, J Klecker B, Z Nova, J Doubravská vln, H Flekova vlc 74' 12" (rec 1993)  
Studio Matous Authentic MK 0012-2 231

This selection of solos and duets, plus one four-voice canzonetta with violins, has, like the Michna reviewed above, recently become available through Koch International. The only slight reservation, as with the Michna, is the lack of texts and translations. The performances themselves are mostly exemplary: this is Monteverdi with a regular pulse, so that the syncopations in the violin ritornelli really sound quite funky. There are, however, occasional blemishes, such as the mezzo-soprano's entry in the final tutti of the final piece. On balance, though, a fine disc: the sopranos duets particularly so.

BC

**Monteverdi VIII Libro de' Madrigali: Madrigali guerrieri** Il Ruggiero, Emanuela Marcante Tactus TC 561305 66' 21"  
Altri canti d'Amor, Hor ch'el ciel, Gira il nemico, Ogni amante è guerrier, Ardo avvampo, Combattimento..., Ballo Volgendo... Movete

I am puzzled. A performance of *Hor ch'el ciel* in which the soaring soprano phrase with its prominent fourths at the end leaves me cold is rare indeed, so this should be a complete write-off. The balance between voices and instruments isn't always right; why are the violins doubled? The *Testo* in *Il Combattimento* just isn't accurate enough (and has too heavy a voice – it's like listening to a baritone Orfeo). The mannerism of up-beat scales by the harpsichord infuriate. Yet there is a vigour and vitality that other Monteverdi discs lack. Don't get this as your only recording of the music, but it is worth hearing.

CB

The 'original spelling' practice that is a sign, not just of editorial pedantry but of an interest in the original pronunciation, seems not to have progressed far in Italy. (Can Italian pronunciation have been fixed for so long?) But whether or not it has changed since 1638, modernising the 1638 spelling of *Hor ch'el ciel*, as is done on the cover of this disc, is confusing. The English version of the note, by a mistranslation, appears to say that Tasso wrote the opening lines of the poem.

**Provenzale Mottette** (*Tesori di Napoli*, 6) Roberta Invernizzi, Emanuela Galli, Giuseppe De Vittorio SST, Cappella De' Turchini, Antonio Florio 62' 07"  
Opus 111 OPS 30-211

*Avitrano Sonata II L'Aragona, X La Maddaloni; Marchitelli Sonata II; Provenzale Angelicae mentes, Audite caeli, Cantemus psallamus, O Jesu mea spes,*

This CD contains four duet motets from Provenzale's only published work, three for a pair of sopranos and one for soprano and tenor, which may (according to the booklet notes) have been written for the virtuoso singers who accompanied the composer when he left his post at the Royal Chapel in 1684. 'Listen, O heavens! to the moans of a tormented soul' is taken to extremes by the solo tenor and I'm not utterly convinced that his performance is dictated by a nuanced interpretation of the text. For me, though, the revelation of this disc is the three sonatas for three violins and continuo, two from a published set by Avitrano and the other (by Mascitti's uncle and teacher, Marchitelli) from MS. I hope the series will include more of these! BC

**A. Scarlatti** *Stabat mater* see Pergolesi (p.20)

**Schütz** *Geistliche Chormusik 1648: The Five-Voice Motets* Chorus of Emmanuel Music, Craig Smith 61' 08"  
Koch 3 7189-2 rec 1992

Using 21 mixed voices (without continuo), this recording demonstrates by default why one voice per part is becoming the norm in this repertoire. The subtle variations in tempo and articulation which can animate a performance by single voices are wholly absent from these doggedly metronomic readings. Along with the five-part motets from the 1648 collection, the CD includes the five pieces *a6* and *a7* which have untexted parts. These fare rather better: the solo voices are clear and pleasant, and the tenor William Hite at least understands phrasing with the words – I'd like to hear him in a madrigal ensemble doing Weelkes or Bennett. But the tempos are still unyieldingly steady, undermining Schütz's intention of marrying madrigalian flexibility with conservative contrapuntal control. The viols which take all the instrumental lines make, to my ear, a better fit with the voices than do the trombones favoured by (e.g.) Weser Renaissance on CPO; but the players need to leave more breathing spaces in their legato (who was it who compared a viol consort to a harmonium?). I feel a twinge of disloyalty in not liking this CD better, for this chorus represents just the ideal towards which my American college glee club forty years ago was striving; but I hope I sound neither smug nor patronizing when I say that our ideal then should be no one's ideal now. Eric Van Tassel

**Airs de Cour** Catherine King mS, Charles Daniels T, Jacob Heringman lute 77' 32"  
Linn CKD 089  
Airs by Besard, Boeset, Guédron, Moulinié, R. Ballard; lute pieces by R. Ballard

Exquisite is, if not necessarily the only word, certainly a highly appropriate one to describe this repertoire, programme and set of performances. Both singers have clearly worked hard to master the unfamiliar period pronunciations (an aspect of performance still too seldom addressed) and to get thoroughly inside this highly mannered idiom. The many repeats – not only those inherent in a verse/refrain structure but also those within the binary form of the verses – are intelligently handled, with ornamentation neither automatic nor formulaic, but always nicely calculated to add to the expressive content of both words and music. The resonant, squeak-free lute accompaniments are delicious and the solos, as well as being enjoyable in themselves, fulfil the important function of turning what might have been simply a well-planned anthology into a more varied domestic concert. Recommended for all occasions, but especially for the late evening with a glass of something smooth and red. David Hansell

See also concert review, p. 9

**A Battle and no Battle** Battalia 69' 40"  
Alba ABCD 139

Baltzar *Prelude & John come Kiss me Now*; Bull *A Battle and no Battle*; W. Lawes *Fantazia-Suites in g & G*; Locke *The Broken Consort Suite 4 in C*; Purcell *Two in one upon a ground*; Sonata 6 in g (1697); Simpson *Prelude & Ground* in D; Wilson *Fantazias 26 & 27*

The title comes from the opening piece by Bull, played on two harpsichords with tremendous vigour – recording it must have been fun. The contrast with a Lawes trio-suite is highly effective and leads to a well-played compilation of English 17th-century music, closing with an enjoyable account of Purcell's G minor chaconne. There have been several recordings of single categories of this repertoire lately. Fine for those with a special interest in it; but if you want more varied fare, don't hesitate: the playing is as good as the music. You can enjoy it just as music, but the booklet ties it together as a battle between Cavaliers and Roundheads. CB

**Va, Donna Ingrata: Musiques des XVI et XVII siècles en Italie, en Espagne et dans les Flandres** Johannette Zomer, Robert Expert SA, Ensemble La Primavera, Clemence Comte Zig Zag Territoires ZZT 9807-01  
Cabanelles, Carissimi, Falconiero, Fontana, Frescobaldi, Hidalgo, Huygens, d'India, Monteverdi, Ortiz, Peri, Rore/Spadi, Sanz, Selma y Salaverde, Sweelinck, Vitali & anon

A fairly random selection of 16th- and 17th-century hits from Italy, Spain and Flanders, performed by seven young musicians whose ensemble has taken several prizes – but I can't help wondering how. Their combined faults include excessive vibrato (both singers), dodgy timing (harpsichord), ugly and unsubtle overblowing (recorder), and boring performance (almost all of them). They do all have redeeming features, of course: the counter-tenor has some fine dramatic tricks up his sleeve, including a gorgeous line in *dolcezzze*; the recorder

player, who also directs the group, is fine on the fast and jolly pieces, where he's not trying too hard to put his education into practice. The gamba and harp players' fault is that they are not heard enough. The soprano makes a fine job of the pieces she can get her teeth into; but in the *Poppea* duet which ends the recording, the singers sound as if they will strangle each other at the end of the singing competition rather than share an everlasting embrace. This might be suitable as a gift to introduce a friend to this repertoire, but to anyone with a serious interest I cannot recommend it other than for the sake of a couple of rarities: the title piece, by Huygens, or the charmingly (if gutturally) performed anonymous Flemish Goddinne.

Selene Mills

## LATE BAROQUE

**Bach** *The Complete Works...* on 160 CDs [Sampler, 72' 53" and introductory booklet]. Hänsler 92.920

I use the diminutive term 'booklet' merely to imply that it will fit onto shelves designed for CDs. In fact it is a 256-page book. The copy we received is in English only; I presume that if you buy one in a German shop you get a copy in German. The second half contains two indexes to Bach's works: one in BWV order stating the disc in which each work is recorded, the other listing the contents (though not the performers) of the 160 CDs, as far as is determined at present (a few decisions have not yet been made). The first half has a certain amount of puff for the first complete recording of Bach's music, but plenty more besides, such as a short introduction to each category of composition and a glossary. The guiding figure and chief conductor is Helmut Rilling, so don't expect period-instrument ensembles. This sample disc has a fair number of interesting performances, but I doubt whether, for our readers, the insight they show compensates for the old-fashioned use of modern instruments. I don't quite follow the logic of recording the *Art of Fugue* on a harpsichord rather than piano, but using a modern violin for the *Six Solos*, even if the latter turns out to be as good a performance as the former. CB

See below for reviews of vols. 1 (Cantatas 1-3), 119 (the *Violin Solos*) & 134 (The *Art of Fugue*).

**Bach** *Cantatas 1-3* Gächinger Kantorei, Bach-Collegium Stuttgart, Helmuth Rilling Hänsler CD 92-001 65' 51" rec 1988-91

The former music publisher Friedrich Hänsler (his catalogue has for several years been available from Carus-Verlag) has had the ambitious idea of celebrating the millennium by issuing Bach's complete oeuvre for our enjoyment and enlightenment. However, the scheme has some of the drawbacks often associated with otherwise imaginative plans. The first issues show that we must not expect consistency of approach in choices of performance criteria. Thus for the complete *Cantatas*

we find ourselves confronted with Helmut Rilling's informed but previously-available Stuttgart performances, completed some 12 years ago and available at low prices. The main new development is the new ordering by BWV (the Bach-Gesellschaft) numbering, but this order, apart from having no intrinsic logic, has nothing to do with the recording sequence of the project, as it did for the Harnoncourt/Leonhardt cycle compiled nearly simultaneously. To sample the first disc, I first listened to Helen Watts, an artist with whom I have long sympathised and admired for her sincerity, singing her first contribution on Disc 1, the aria 'Tilg, O Gott, die Lehren' (BWV 2/3); although the singing itself is highly agreeable, the overall sound is confused by the prominence of the soloistic lines of accompanying instruments and continuo harpsichord. Reading the section in the commentary on 'Tradition, change, modernity' did little to persuade me that the new Complete Edition is using the Rilling recordings for anything but commercial and personal reasons rather than artistic ones. On hearing the excellent recording in the series of *The Art of Fugue* [see below], I wondered the more at this particular choice.

Stephen Daw

Bach *Cantatas* vol. 9 (24, 76, 167) Midori Suzuki, Robin Blaze, Gerd Türk, Chiyuki Urano SATB, Bach Collegium Japan, Masaaki Suzuki 67' 12" BIS-CD-931

The continuing authority of Dr Suzuki's CDs of Bach's Cantatas derives from his (and his performers') ability to highlight the individuality of each one. The results are far less predictable than is the case with other series. The cantatas on this disc date from Bach's first two months in Leipzig, when his joy at his appointment and his new situation in a fashionable city does indeed permeate into his works, resulting in those happy arias, those unconventionally festive instrumental descants above chorales, and those wonderful commendations of faith that we hear in all of these works. More and more of the performers have native Japanese names, and good taste, as well as the expressive character, continues to delight those of us for whom this repertoire is really precious. Stephen Daw

Bach *Mass in B minor* Hellen Kwon, Hedwig Fassbender, Peter Straka, Wolfgang Newerla, Peter Lika SmSTBarB, Bach-Ensemble der EuropaChorAkademie, Münchner Symphoniker, Joshard Daus 122' 27" 2 discs in box Arte Nova Classics, 74321 63632 2 £

No period instruments here (we are told that the orchestra specialises in film music), so a review is earned because of those areas where the new recording deserves mention for its inherent authority, because that is what real authenticity is. Here, the choir's trainer, Joshard Daus, generally conducts well, but with a slightly old-fashioned daintiness or primness, often associated with slowish tempi. Really special, though is the short passage on

Disc 2, where both the *Et incarnatus est* and the *Crucifixus* are invested with truly outstanding tenderness. Whether or not the performers knew that the whole of the former movement and the introductory 45 bars of the latter were probably the very last bars written by Bach, their special performance conveys, for me, the exact quality of this portrayal of the *magnum mysterium* which all festive masses should aim for. No special words for a cavalier set of trumpeters, who regularly tarnish the festive singing of the chorus. Stephen Daw

Bach *St Mark Passion* (Gomme); Keiser *Laudate pueri Dominum* Jeremy Ovenden Evangelist, Timothy Mirfin Christ, Ruth Gomme, William Towers, James Gilchrist, Paul Thompson SATT, Choir of Gonville & Caius College, Cambridge Baroque Camerata, Geoffrey Webber 115' 41" 2 CDs ASV CD GAX 237 ££

Whatever one may feel about the methods by which an attempt has been made to find music for the *St Mark* passion (of which only a published libretto survives), the result here has involved hard and ingenious application, and the result sounds reasonable as music. There can, though, be no question of its having the excellent qualities we might reasonably expect of a Passion by J. S. Bach from 1731 or indeed any other period after Good Friday 1724. There is simply no sense of the pedigree, the involvement or the commitment in this sequence of movements. The performance is the second I've reviewed here. The instrumental aspect has been placed rather too much in the background, pleasant though it is, and good though most of the singing is, certainly in comparison with the performance under Roy Goodman (on Music Oscura 070970 in an alternative, yet similar, edition by Simon Heighes). That account treated its 'St Mark' as though it were a real discovery, being the climax of a long and distinguished international collaboration. A special word of praise must be given to the conductor Geoffrey Webber for his apt inclusion and sensible edition of the Keiser Motet, a good piece of Italianate *stile misto*, which fills the last track of Disc 2. Stephen Daw

The Gomme score is published by Bärenreiter, the Heighes version by King's Music.

*Silbermann-Orgeln im Vogtland: Mylau und Reichenbach* Felix Friedrich 72' 14" Motette CD 12421

On Reichenbach organ: Bach BWV539, 546, 565, 578, 767. On Mylau organ: Bach BWV 564, pieces by Kneller, Pachelbel, Pestel & Werckmeister from Mylauer Tabulaturbuch

Gottried Silbermann organs are arguably the closest we can get to a 'Bach organ', and they are still relatively little known in Britain, despite the removal of the Iron Curtain. Of the two represented on this CD, Mylau seems to have survived the better - from what I can make out from the German text and memories of my own visit to both organs many years ago, little of Silbermann remains in the Reichenbach

organ. The four pieces from the Mylauer Tabulaturbuch are of interest as examples of the immediate pre-Bach era in Saxony. Felix Friedrich is organist of Kreb's organ in Schloss Altenburg and has been active in restoring Silbermann organs. His playing is persuasive and stylish, with a nice sense of rubato. A CD worth a listen.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Bach *Das Wohltemperierte Klavier, Book 1* Scott Ross hpsecd 101' 47" (2 CDs) Disques Pelléas CD-0101/2

The late Scott Ross presumably recorded these discs at a time when he was still busy learning his main testimony to us - his complete recording of all Domenico Scarlatti's Sonatas. Book 1 occupies two discs, whilst Ton Koopman has recorded it on one for Erato (a disc that has more virtues than mere economy). The playing seems to me to be rather unimaginative, and the instrument not of the highest quality. I prefer what I have heard of his Scarlatti. There is no serious shortage of alternative, better, accounts. Stephen Daw

Bach *Sonate per il cembalo: BWV 964-966, 968 & 954* Andreas Staier 76' 33" Teldec *Das alte Werk* 3984-21461-2

There is a fair bit of 'background' to these works, but suffice to say that the transcriptions of the solo violin pieces are doubtfully ascribed to J S Bach, and that the Reinken transcriptions are definitely by Bach but one of them, BWV 968, is completed by Andreas Staier. Whatever their ancestry, there is some excellent music here. The Reinken transcriptions are fascinating - in some of the *Fugas* I felt I was listening to the forerunners of fugal sections in the early *Toccatas*, which, given that they may date from 1703-05, could well be true. Elsewhere though, the *Hortus Musicus* transcriptions reflect much more their chamber music, expanded *sonata da chiesa* heritage, although with extensive revision by Bach it is sometimes hard to know where, so to speak, the 17th century ends and the 18th begins. The solo violin transcriptions are equally interesting. Staier makes the point, rather controversially, that Bach may have made the harpsichord transcriptions for reasons 'entirely prosaic, namely [a] desire to hear them played well for once' and suggests that most performances by violinists, to this day, fail 'to achieve any appreciable degree of artistic insight or penetration'. I for one agree with him - few things irritate me more than over-earnest, bloated performances of the six *Soli* - and the keyboard versions, whoever was responsible for them, are very good. This disc is perhaps not near the top of many people's want-list, but I wholeheartedly recommend it. The historical and musicological implications are intriguing, the pieces themselves are very good indeed, the sound quality is lovely, and Staier's performances are first rate - sensitive, revealing, engaging and authoritative.

Robin Bigwood

**Bach Sonatas and Partitas for Solo Violin, Vol. 1** (BWV 1001-3) Lucy van Dael 62'57 Naxos 8.554422 £

**Bach Sonatas and Partitas for Solo Violin, Vol. 2** (BWV 1004-6) Lucy van Dael 65'57 Naxos 8.554423 £

**Bach Sonatas & Partitas for solo violin** Dmitry Sitkovetsky 133'33" (2 CDs in box) Hänssler CD 92.119

**Bach Six Suites a Violoncello Solo senza Basso** Sergei Istomin vlc 131'22" (2 CDs) Analekta fleurs de lys FL 2 3114-5

For a record company to release new versions of these standard repertoire works, they have to believe they have something special. Naxos surely has bargain basement winner in Lucy van Dael - I've rarely heard the melodic lines of some of the slow movements projected with such clarity, and there's not a technical blemish in the fast ones either. My Sigiswald Kuijken set remains a firm favourite, but this will sit by it on my shelves for a long time. The Sitkovetsky set is something of a revelation. Having imagined a huge, vibrato-laden sound, with portamenti flying in all directions, and tempos veering towards *prestissimo* or *molto adagio*, I was happy to be rudely awakened by meticulously detailed, and - dare I say it - incredibly stylish playing. I should have known better really, for he is a stunning violinist in the repertoire with which I associate him, and any good musician will come to music on its own terms. Full marks to him for showing other modern violinists the way. Sergei Istomin is not a name I knew before listening to this new set of the cello suites. He is, of course, on particularly risky ground, given that there are now two versions from Wisselwey (of whose Beethoven and Brahms sets you can read more below), as well as Jaap ter Linden's set. At this level, there is little to choose between them technically, so any attempt to place them in order of preference comes down to personal taste. Even this proved quite difficult, because Istomin is every bit as stylish as the other two, except in one of my particular favourite movements, the Prelude to Suite No. 4, where, to my ears, he has a temporary lapse of taste, hanging about on the eighth quaver of each bar, like someone leaning out from the bridge before bungy jumping - it's all a bit unsettling. Still that is a very minor quibble over what is an excellent performance. BC

*The South Island of New Zealand was a long way for BC to go just to find a metaphor.* CB

**Bach The Art of Fugue** Robert Hill hpsc'd Hänssler CD 92-134 104'04" 2 CDs in box

Bach's *Art of Fugue* has hitherto been so misunderstood - even by the most eminent creative and performing musicians - that it is a huge pleasure to be able to welcome this important volume in the First Complete Recorded Edition of his music. The work was intended from its start (probably in the late 1740), through its first procedure and conclusion (probably c. 1742) until its continuation and presumed abandonment (?c. 1747/48) to be a textbook by example.

But that is only part of its rationale. It was also written as delightful, unlaboured music to play, and an ideal performance reflects throughout its sheer beauty, strength and humour. So often this has been attempted and not quite managed. Now, at last, we have from Robert Hill, an American-born scholar based in Germany, a really distinguished and authoritative reading. As I hear it repeatedly over the coming years, I fear that I may just slightly tire of the regular slowing down as each *contrapunctus* ends. But all else seems to me completely desirable: this is what late Bach is all about.

Stephen Daw

**Corelli Opera VI: Concerti Grossi, concerti 1-6** Modo Antiquo, Federico Maria Sardelli Tactus TC 650307 63'35"

A note stuck on the outside of the wrapping notes 'First performance with addition of wind instruments'. The use of oboes to double the ripieno strings is highly plausible, but one has to be suspicious in drawing conclusions from lists of instruments hired for an event: there is no need to assume that, if a wealthy prince hired a player, he necessarily expected to get his full money's worth out of him. (For the minimal use of players in later scores, glance, at the clarinet parts in the standard version of Fauré's *Requiem*.) It is pretty clear from comparison with the scoring of Roman works of the period which have fairly full indications of instrumentation (e.g. Handel's *La Resurrezione*) that some of the additions here, e.g. trumpets and brief recorder interjections, are implausible, and the fussy changes of timbre seem to come from the practice of a century later. Irrespective of the wind, the performances are impressive. It is a pity that the harpsichord is not more prominently recorded: it would have been nice to hear Giulia Nuti demonstrating what she described in her article in *Harpsichord & Fortepiano* 7/2. This is certainly a disc to hear, but only buy it if you already have a more conventional recording: I wouldn't want anyone to expect Concerto 2 to begin with recorders. CB

**Handel Omnia mai fu: arias from Giulio Cesare, Admeto, Radamisto, Rodelinda, Serse, Alcina** Andreas Scholl, Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin 76'21" Harmonia Mundi HMC 901685

An odd compilation, with poor notes. Though ostensibly a Handel recital by Scholl, nearly half the disc is taken up with orchestral music. The sequence from *Admeto* makes sense, since it consists of the overture and the opening scene of the opera, with its threatening dance for the apparitions around Admetus' sick-bed, but what are listed as sequences from *Serse*, *Giulio Cesare* and *Rodelinda* contain respectively a sinfonia, a gigue and another sinfonia which are actually from *Orlando*, the concerto Op. 6/9 and *Ezio*. 'Verdi prati' from *Alcina* stands on its own, and the *Alexander's Feast* concerto irrelevantly concludes the disc, robustly played (as are the other orchestral items) by the apparently conductorless

Berlin Akademie. The *Radamisto* suite consists of four numbers from the recently published ballet music intended for (but mostly not used in) the first performing version of April 1720. The music has not previously been recorded under that description, though the noble *Passacaille* is familiar from its later appearances in the ballet *Terpsicore* and the trio sonata Op.5/4. Scholl's contributions are well-chosen for his voice. He impresses with his on-the-note accuracy and beauty of tone as well as a fine sensitivity to dramatic context, especially in the slower numbers. The *Giulio Cesare* items (the rather vapid 'Se in fiorito prato' and the ubiquitous 'Va tacito', the latter spoiled by over-enthusiastic embellishment from the horn player) might well have been replaced by more unexpected selections. Scholl's artistry is confirmed, but a better-planned disc would have displayed it more worthily.

Anthony Hicks

**Endless Pleasure: Handel & Mozart Arias** Ruth Ann Swenson, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Sir Charles Mackerras EMI Classics 7243 5 56672 2 9 67'57" **Handel Semele:** Endless pleasure, Myself I shall adore, O sleep why dost thou leave me; *Giulio Cesare:* Da tempeste, Sa pietà, V'addoro pupille. **Mozart Die Entführung...Traurigkeit,** Martem aller Arten *Lucio Silla* Parto m'affretto; *Misera dove son K369*

A dangerous title for a recording, and it challenges a cynical reviewer to deny it. Ruth Ann Swenson has a voice that is up to the demands made on her - literally up, in that the high compass of much of the programme does not sound uncomfortable or strained, and she can manage the other difficulties. Her Mozart is thoroughly convincing, her Handel less so, especially her *Semele*. A disappointment is that to hear the orchestra properly (especially the soloists in *Martem aller Arten*), I have to adjust the volume to make the voice louder than I want it. With the OAE and Sir Charles (and two of the three composers one most associates with him: what would the OAE do with Janacek?) the backing deserves to be more forward.

CB

**Handel Chandos Te Deum** HWV 281; **Chandos Anthem 'Let God Arise'** HWV 256a Vocal-solisten Frankfurt, Drottningholms Baroque Ensemble, Gerhard Jenemann 56'52" £ Arte Nova Classics 74321 59228 2 rec 1994

The representation of Handel's English church music on CD is curiously patchy, with several of the Chapel Royal anthems as yet unrecorded. This disc belatedly completes the Cannons canon, with the first appearance of the *Chandos Te Deum*, recorded in 1994 by Hessischer Rundfunk, but apparently not previously issued on CD. The *Te Deum* is a substantial choral work of about 35 minutes, but its typical Cannons scoring for STTTB is off-putting for choirs, and it rarely gets an airing. The vocal parts are here sung by solo voices with (I think) discreet doubling in *tutti* passages (the skimpy notes give no details of the performers), which works well. Another problem is the disproportionate

length of some of the contrapuntal choruses, and that too is minimised by tempos which are brisk just when they need to be. The one-per-part violins (there are no violas) are less convincing, but do not matter so much in the *Te Deum* as in the more extensive instrumental writing found in the anthem *Let God arise* (especially the opening Sonata), where the effect is uncomfortably spiky. At budget price, however, the disc is worth having just for the *Te Deum*. *Anthony Hicks*

**Handel Ceremonial Music** Il Fondamento, Paul Dombrecht 49' 49" ££  
Vanguard Classics Passacaille Collection 99722  
Music for the Royal Fireworks HWV 351, Concerti a Due Cori 2 & 3 HWV 333 & 334

The Fireworks Music is given with strings and single winds, and gets a matter-of-fact, clinical performance. The grandeur of the opening is diminished by the fast tempo (perhaps chosen to avoid the application of double dotting, tricky in this movement) and the two minuets are also briskly despatched. (They are played as separate movements, which is admittedly what the score implies, but the usual alternation is very effective.) Strings merely double the wind here, so the small size of the band (4.4.3.2.1) is not important, but it does matter in the concertos, where twice the number is needed to do justice to some of Handel's richest orchestral scoring. A little more exuberance from the politely accurate horns would also have been welcome. Most of the faster movements bowl along agreeably, but on the whole it is hard to commend the disc, especially in view of its short measure. All three of the *due cori* concertos could easily have been included.

*Anthony Hicks*

**Handel The Eight Grand Suites** Blandine Verlet 102' (2 CDs) see under **Frescobaldi**

**Pergolesi & A. Scarlatti *Stabat mater*** Gemma Bertagnolli, Sara Mingardo SA, Concerto Italiano, Rinaldo Alessandrini 69' 39"  
Opus 111 OPS 30-160

At a first hearing, these works may come across as very similar, although many stylistic details reveal the chronological gap between them. The work by Pergolesi was commissioned in 1734 to replace that of Scarlatti (written c. 1712) in the Lenten series of performances held at the church of San Luigi di Palazzo in Naples when the latter's relatively full textures and less obviously melodic character began to sound old-fashioned. Neapolitan connoisseurs of harmony may have felt disappointed, however, for in spite of its famous opening suspensions Pergolesi's work is, in this respect, bland compared to its predecessor. Indeed, there are moments in Scarlatti where one almost questions the accuracy of transcription of what the booklet describes as the 'chaotic' notation of the non-autograph source. Both works rely for much of their impact on strong contrasts (try track 6) and these performers certainly do not hold back in this regard. This is but one aspect of the disc that will invite

English listeners brought up on the Novello edition of the Pergolesi\* to reassess the fundamental nature of the piece (and several of the notes!) Throughout, the music sounds thoroughly prepared, both technically and musically, and is recorded with a pleasing natural balance. The accompanying essay is informative and the full texts are given with parallel translations into English, French & German. All in all, a desirable issue. *David Hansell*

\*My current is the Breitkopf, with good orchestral parts for sale quite cheaply. *CB*

**Platti Sonate e Triosonate** Ensemble J. M. Anciuti 73' 47"  
Tactus TC 691601

Having only known the work of Platti in student days from the keyboard sonata in HAM II, I was agreeably surprised by the quality of the music apparent in these works. On offer here is a varied collection, including a solo oboe sonata and triosonatas for combinations of violin and oboe, oboe and cello, oboe and bassoon, and flute and violin (all with continuo). As expected, the style remains fundamentally baroque, but with touches of the pre-classical, particularly in the minuet movements. A generally enjoyable record, which I would recommend. The playing is always stylish, with plenty of added ornamentation, although it must be said that the standard of the players is not always up to the best British period ensembles. *Ian Graham-Jones*

Music by Platti can also be found on two anthologies reviewed below.

**Rebel Violin Sonatas** Andrew Manze vln, Richard Egarr hpscd, Jaap ter Linden vdg  
Harmonia Mundi HMU 907221 78' 03"

This fine recording contains eight of the 12 pieces published in 1713 (Nos. 1-7 & 9), and I hope that harmonia mundi USA will do a follow-up with the remainder along with the five solo sonatas from the composer's earlier set. (The Ensemble Rebel has already recorded the complete trio sonatas on deutsche harmonia mundi 05472 77382 2, which is much recommended.) As the quotation on the back of the sleeve notes says, 'Rebel tempered 'Italian fire and genius with French wisdom and tenderness' and it appears that Andrew Manze has followed suit, for there is very little of his familiar gypsy rhapsody. Instead, he shows what a sensitive musician he can be, particularly in those sections where the viol becomes a true duetting voice above the continuo – and what a beautiful voice ter Linden's gamba has! The contrast between the sounds of this set and Elizabeth Wallfisch's Leclair last month is astounding. *BC*

**G. Sammartini 12 Trio Sonatas per due flauti traversi, fagotto e cembalo** Il Grande Barocco Italiano (Claudio Ferrarini, Annalisa Pisani fl, Francesco Tasini hpscd, Andrea Corsi bsn)  
Mondo Musica MM 96029 98' 06" (2 CDs)  
Despite the accompanying picture of

Claudio Ferrarini clutching a half-hidden wooden flute, this is a modern instrument recording. Their one concession to period performance practice is the use of harpsichord and bassoon continuo; otherwise they stick to modern, traditional interpretation which, though not completely unmusical, allows little in the way of shape, contrast or tonal flexibility. This is, surprisingly, the only available recording of these works, although I would question the need to record them in their entirety, especially as a double CD; they are short, bright, occasional works of somewhat variable quality, and hardly comprise a monumental opus. The programme notes are of appalling quality, and arrogantly declare the impossibility of the works being for recorder due to the compass they demand. This is complete nonsense, as they work perfectly well on two treble recorders, and all bar two of the works are in flat keys which favour recorders rather than (baroque) flutes. For those not bothered by issues of authenticity, the performance quality is actually very good, with excellent tuning and ensemble and some interesting ideas; there is even one very entertaining editing 'gaffe' from a take obviously never intended for use (the end of track 14). Not bad – but far better to wait for somebody else to release (dare I say it) the real thing. *Marie Ritter*

**Telemann Musique de Table (Tafelmusik)**  
Volume 2 Orchestra of the Golden Age, Robert Glenton 61' 41"  
Naxos 8.553725 £  
Tafelmusik I Trio in Eb, Solo in b, Conclusion; Tafelmusik II Overture in D

This volume of the Naxos set completes Part I of Telemann's subscription publication with the trio sonata, flute sonata and conclusion, and also includes the overture to Part II. This last piece is by far the most successful; the solo trumpet playing is simply superb and the strings, who seem slightly ill-at-ease elsewhere, brighten immeasurably. The CD is something of a historical document: recorded in 1995, this is its first release. *BC*

**Telemann Sonatas for two violins** Angèle Dubeau 59' 13"  
Analekta fleurs de lys FL 2 3085 (rec 1995)  
TWV 40:101-3, 105, 119, 121-3

As a teenager, I became so frustrated with not being able to play in local chamber groups (there being none!), that I rigged up two tape recorders and double- and triple-tracked myself. Angele Dubeau is hardly in the same league, obviously, and the technical quality of this CD is quite sensational; yet there remains something unearthly about such endeavours – for all the care which has gone into synchronising the two fiddles (at least, two instruments are shown on the cover, but only one is detailed inside the booklet), the fact remains that duets are surely about responding to your fellow musician. The notes to another disc with recorders calls these pieces duels rather than duets, but here there's no hint of interaction. *BC*

Vivaldi *Concerti per flauto Op. 10* Frédéric de Roos rec, La Pastorella Ricercar 206392

This is one of the best recordings of Vivaldi I have heard in a very long time. There is of course much speculation over the solo instrument designations of Vivaldi's opus 10, but giving explanations and justifications in the sleeve notes de Roos plays them all on recorder. Not that this is really the issue – de Roos plays with a passion and energy which obviously puts interpretation and musicianship top of the list, and the result is absolutely riveting. For a relatively small string ensemble (one to a part), the Ricercar Consort make a fantastically rich and full-blooded sound, and every idea, shade and nuance is boldly and convincingly borne out. The more programmatic works, such as *La Tempesta di Mare*, *La Notte* and *Il Gardellino*, are particularly creative and exciting, but even a weaker piece such as the Concerto in G major RV437 really comes alive. This is not a wacky recording by any means – just packed with musicality, virtuosity and spirit. An absolute must. *Marie Ritter*

Vivaldi *Dresden Concerti* vol. 4 Cristiano Rossi vln, Accademia I Filharmonici, Alberto Martini 67' 03" Naxos 8.554310 £ RV 213, 219, 224, 240, 260, 344, 388

You might think that there's nothing more likely to persuade you that Stravinsky was right when he said Vivaldi wrote the same concerto 600 times than a CD of seven violin concertos, the last three of them in D major. However, the variety of the solo writing and the range of melodic ideas sustained my interest from start to finish. I think, on reflection, I might have reordered the disc slightly and, obviously, pre-tracking can play back in the order of your choice – and, as we repeatedly say, there's no requirement to listen to the set from start to finish! Cristiano Rossi is a tidy fiddler with a bright-sounding instrument, and he's well supported and accompanied by the relatively light band. *BC*

Vivaldi *Oboe concertos* Paul Dombrecht, Il Fondamento 53' 06" Vanguard Classics Passacaille 99723 ££ RV 451, 454, 457, 460, 461, 463

These performances were recorded in 1997 and the copyright line on the disc has 1998, but I don't recognise them. Indeed, two of the concertos (RV451 & 463) are new to me altogether – quite a novel experience, in fact! Paul Dombrecht does his usual trick of making your ears twitch, even when you think you know the piece. Lightening the first note of the last movement ritornello is quite a striking example; subtle use of rests to hold the listeners' attention is another. Also typical of Dombrecht are his tempi; always slightly more relaxed than other performers and, once again, this pays dividends. All is not 100 per cent on the technical side (Vivaldi was not an oboist!), but, by virtue of its

poise and overall conviction, this is probably the best CD of non-stop oboe concertos I've heard. *BC*

Vivaldi *Avanti l'Opera: Rare Operatic Overtures* L'Arte dell' Arco, Christopher Hogwood 68' 27" Deutsche Harmonia Mundi 05472 77501 2 RV 128, 149, 571, & sinfonias from 703, 709, 711, 717, 725, 729, 739, 761

This anthology of the Red Priest's opera overtures gives yet another insight into Vivaldi the opera composer: maybe someone will soon take up the call to record some of the wonderful arias that lurk in the scores. I have not been too enthusiastic about L'Arte dell' Arco's on-going Tartini series and I have to say that I have reservations about some aspects of performance here, too – the omnipresent 16-foot bass (which is rarely in tune with the cello it is supposedly doubling) seems so heavy (especially when there's a bassoon and a theorbo keeping the strings and the harpsichords company); there are some dubious tunings in the violins, too; inevitably such a resonant acoustic (it may be an appropriate performance location, but would the room used have been empty at the time?) causes slight differences in phrasing between the violins to be picked up by the microphones. Still there is a lot to say for the recording – the performances are extremely lively, and the spirit of the composer is definitely conveyed in full. *BC*

Vivaldi 22 *Cantate per soprano e basso continuo*. Vol. I-II Cecilia Gasdia, Barocco Veneziano, Claudio Ferrarini dir 132' 03" Mondo Musica MM90011 ££

RV 649, 650, 652-3, 655-7, 660-1, 663, 669 796

Vivaldi 22 *Cantate per soprano e basso continuo*. Vol. III-IV Cecilia Gasdia, Barocco Veneziano, Claudio Ferrarini dir 113' 03" Mondo Musica MM 90021 ££ 2 CDs

RV 651, 654, 659, 662, 664-8

Vivaldi 5 *Cantate per soprano e diversi strumenti*, RV 678-82; *Salve Regina* RV 617 Cecilia Gasdia, Barocco Veneziano, Claudio Ferrarini 81' 01" Mondo Musica MM 90031 ££ 2 CDs

This is really a mixed bag: some of the singing is first class, but some of it really is not what I imagine one of Vivaldi's singers to have sounded like. There are some dubious choices of instrumentation: an aria accompanied by solo bassoon, then an aria in which the bassoon plays spread chord figuration in the first section, which is taken up in the B section by a guitar while the melodic bass is sustained by cello and the bassoon is tacet, then re-enters for the *Da capo*. While I'm not saying that this must be 'wrong', it seems too fussy for what is essentially rather simple music and, being a modern-instrument performance, the sounds are just too big. The booklet (which refers to the composer's pupil Anna G. Raud, and is the first I've seen to include a photograph of the sound engineer) gives neither texts nor translations, and does not explain why some cantatas are prefaced by whispered (as opposed to spoken) introductions. At best, an interesting reference point for

singers interested in this repertoire (though they would have been far more useful with texts and translations), but approach with caution! *BC*

Zelenka *Prague 1723 Il Fondamento*, Paul Dombrecht 66' 23" ££

Vanguard Classics Passacaille Collection 99724 Concerto a8 in G, *Hipocondrie* a7 in A, *Ouverture* a7 in F, *Simphonia* a8 in a

1723 was a significant year for Zelenka: he went to Prague to attend the coronation of King Charles VI of Bohemia, for which he had written a melodrama about Good King Wenceslas. At least one of the pieces on the present recording was written 'in a hurry' in Prague that year, so it appears that there was an urgent need for even more music; the festivities also included Caldara conducting Fux's opera, *Constanza e fortezza*. For all the supposed haste, there is nothing slap-dash about the four pieces: they are beautifully crafted, full of Zelenka's quirky harmonies and expansive melodic lines. Il Fondamento's version of Handel's *Water Music* was recently BBC Radio 3's (more precisely, Lucie Skeaping's) first choice, which is hardly surprising – Paul Dombrecht manages to pick tempi which initially seem not quite right, but, by the time you've heard the repeat, you're wondering why everyone else plays the piece so quickly or slowly or whatever. The grandiose opening of the first track is typical: the whole is quite captivating. *BC*

*Italian Cello Concertos* Lucia Swarts, Teatro Lirico, Stephen Stubbs 60' 20"

Vanguard Classics 99148 ££

Jacchini op. 4/9; Leo Concerto in d; Platti Concertos in C & c; Porpora Concerto in a; Vivaldi Concerto in g for two cellos (with Richte van der Meer)

The last time I reviewed a Lucia Swarts CD she was playing the Vivaldi cello sonatas, and I didn't feel that recording would compete with either Pieter Wispelwey or David Watkin. Stephen Stubbs and Richte van der Meer were involved then, too, so this CD is (with a bit of luck) a sign of on-going cooperation. The string band (with the inevitable plucked continuo, as well as harpsichord) features a lot of Eastern European names, and plays well. Of the music, I knew only the Porpora, Leo and Vivaldi pieces (the latter for two cellos). The 'unknown' pieces fully deserve these world première recordings, the two pieces by Platti, in particular. Strange to think how backward my home town of Dundee was when the well-to-do inhabitants of our twin city of Würzburg were enjoying such sophistication, and, with another 26 cello concertos in the wings, I hope not to have to wait too long to hear more. *BC*

*Sonate Veneziane del '700* Stefano Bet traverso, Francesco Cera hpscd 73' 11"

Tactus TC 700002

Bon op. 1/4, Ferrandini op. 2/6; B. Marcello op 1/2; Pescetti in c hpscd; Platti op. 3/6, Vivaldi RV50

This disc features 18th-century flute sonatas by composers from Venice; in fact, the title is something of a red herring given

that all the featured composers bar one finally settled elsewhere in Europe, but in fact this becomes an extra point of interest when one compares the different styles which evolved from the Italian *da camera* tradition. In fact, several of these composers show a preference for a more galant style of composition, which tends towards a duo relationship in place of the old basso continuo; this may account for the choice on this recording to dispense with the extra bass instrument. Interestingly, the E minor Sonata attributed to Vivaldi (known today as the 'Stockholm') is a work which, though highly atypical of Vivaldi, fits in beautifully with the choice of programme. The similarly elegant sonatas by Bon, Platti and to some extent Ferrandini all betray musical characteristics of the courts of Northern Germany where these composers were employed, and in fact work very well without the use of an added bass instrument. Having said that, there were several moments where the presence of a weighty cello might have lifted the performance into slightly more exciting territory. The playing is neat, flexible and stylish, and Francesco Cera's Pescetti Sonata is particularly musical despite the interminably repetitive second movement. As a duo, these players seem ideally suited to the lighter, more galant style, and I would be interested to hear them playing C. P. E. or J. C. Bach. *Marie Ritter*

## CLASSICAL

C. P. E. Bach *An Hour with C. P. E. Bach*  
Les Coucous Bénévoles (Elissa Poole fl, Linda Melsted vln, Sergei Istomin vdg, Colin Tilney hpscd + Margaret Gay vlc 60' 05"  
Music & Arts CD-1037  
H209, 554, 559, 570, 580

C. P. E. Bach's chamber music is not always the easiest to listen to, despite being extremely satisfying to play; the many contrasts and fragmented ideas inherent in the *empfindsamer stil* can be difficult to project coherently, but if played well this music can be deeply moving. There is some very beautiful playing on this disc; the Canadian Ensemble is a sensitive group, with a refreshing lightness of touch. Colin Tilney's playing of the solo harpsichord Sonata H209 is particularly neat and stylish, and along with Sergei Istomin's impressive gamba playing in the Sonata H559 it is perhaps one of the strongest pieces on the disc; elsewhere I felt the playing lacked body, with the flute and violin sadly projecting the least. This could easily be a product of the recording balance, but on the whole I would prefer to hear just a little more substance and character in this type of music. Not brimming with passion, but good nevertheless. *Marie Ritter*

C. P. E. Bach *The Solo Keyboard Music 3: The Early Sonatinas and Sonatas [H. 5-12 & 16]* Miklós Spányi clavichord 79' 30"  
BIS-CD-882

The generous provision here covers much of the keyboard music C. P. E. Bach com-

posed before about 1737. It is in general less familiar to us today than the 'Prussian' Sonatas which occupy much of Discs 1 & 2; the main exception is in track 22, which, as the eventual first movement of the Sonatina in E flat (H.16) found its earliest home in the 1725 Anna Magdalena Bach *Notenbüchlein* before eventually opening the Hamburg three-movement composition. Spányi plays well, has chosen a fine instrument, and here introduces world-première recordings throughout. It is very good to see that, as the music is accumulating on discs, so it is to be issued at Budapest in new editions. *Stephen Daw*

J. C. Bach *Piano Concertos op. 7* Anthony Halstead (fp, dir), Members of The Hanover Band (Graham Cracknell, Anna McDonald vlns, Sebastian Combetti vlc) 73' 29"  
cpo 999 600-2

Like the concertos of op. 1, the six concertos of op. 7 were first published with a dedication to Bach's royal pupil Queen Charlotte. In Welcker's 1770 edition the concertos were designated for the modest scoring of piano (or harpsichord) with the accompaniment of two violins and cello, the form in which they are recorded here. In his customarily scholarly note Ernest Warburton draws attention to the existence of a more extensive and demanding piano part for the last of the concertos, while unauthenticated horn and oboe parts for other concertos in the set have been found in various locations. Warburton does not offer the suggestion, but it therefore seems more than possible to me that the printed parts are simplified arrangements made by Bach to satisfy the burgeoning appetite for chamber works suitable for amateurs. Whatever the case, it has to be said that with the exception of No.5 the set as it has come down to us hardly represents Bach at his best. Halstead's pleasantly relaxed and fluent performances on a mellow-toned grand piano of the period built by John Broadwood and Sons are most attractive, adding yet another fine issue to this indispensable series. *Brian Robins*

Eckard *Sonates et Menuet pour le piano forte*  
Arthur Schoonderwoerd 54' 40"  
Zig-Zag Territoires 9806 01  
Sonates op. 1/3, 4; op. 2/1, Menuet d'Exaudet

These wisely chosen pieces show Eckard to be a varied as well as skilled craftsman, influenced by C.P.E. Bach but with his own initiative in thematic development. The apt and concise notes by Arthur Schoonderwoerd also contain an interesting description by Christopher Clarke of the copy of a Sebastian Lengerer fortepiano that he built. The performer uses the forte and moderato knee-levers most effectively and his interpretation is full of character, with inventive but not obtrusive ornamentation and lively articulation. Very highly recommended on all counts. *Margaret Cranmer*

£ = budget-price ££ = mid-price  
Other discs full price  
as far as we know

Haydn *L'Isola disabitata; Arianna a Naxos*  
Ying Huang, Susanne Mentzer, John Aler, Christopher Schaldenbrand SmSTB, Padova Chamber Orchestra, David Golub 120"44"  
Arabesque Recordings 26717-2

I'm disappointed by this recording. Some of the singing is very fine, but most of it is not of the best. The notes ask why Haydn's operas remain unpopular, particularly a piece such as this with its unusually rich continually-accompanied recitative. Given this performance, I can only think it's because audiences fall asleep. The basic problem is that the whole performance is conceived in terms of later opera: the overture is not a Wagnerian tone poem, irrespective of its unusually chromatic harmony! What passes for outpourings of emotion simply failed to catch my imagination and, I'm sorry, the story is too ridiculous for music of this gravity. Haydn does cleverly associate each of the four characters with an orchestral instrument and there are occasionally some rather nice tunes, but I'm afraid that's that. And the less said about *Arianna a Naxos* the better, I fear. *BC*

Mozart *Mitridate re di Ponto* Giuseppe Sabbatini *Mitridate*, Natalie Dessay *Aspasia*, Cecilia Bartoli *Sifare*, Brian Asawa *Farnace*, Sandrine Piau *Ismene*, Juan Diego Flórez *Marzio*, Hélène Le Corre *Arbate*, Les Talens Lyriques, Christophe Rousset 174' 33"  
Decca 460 772-2 3 CDs in box

Boxing Day 1770 was an important day for the 14-year old Mozart: *Mitridate*, his first, and very successful, opera for Italy had its première that day in Milan. The story may be a rather predictable tale of love, jealousy and intrigue in Roman times, the recitatives are often very long; we have to wait until the end of Act II for the first vocal ensemble. Yet there are abundant signs of coming genius, and this recording (the second after Hager's version of 1977, and the first to use period instruments) will give delight for a long time to come. The cast is starry, the performance first rate, with strong, neat and eloquent singing; there is stylish, often very bold ornamentation. The 35-strong orchestra is as lively as it is sensitive. Christophe Rousset directs with a sure hand, the recorded quality is high, and the booklet contains all one could reasonably ask for in the way of introduction, text and translation. The score gets better and better, with wonderful accompanied recitatives and related arias in the last act in particular. I shan't be disposing of the old Hager recording, but this new Rousset version should not be missed: it is very exciting. *Peter Branscombe*

Mozart *Symphonies 10, 11, 42, 44-46 (K74, 73q, 75, 73l, 73n, 111b)* Concentus Musicus Wien, Nikolaus Harnoncourt 69' 10"  
Teldec *Das Alte Werk* 3984-25914-2

If, like me, you have a problem with listening to the works of a pre-pubescent smart alec, just pretend that these are expertly-crafted Italian opera sinfonias.

Harnoncourt treats these works with due care to detail, with the theatrical aspects aptly characterised. He does, however, overplay the *empfindsam* element a tad, encouraging the brass to snarl and the dynamics to jump at you. Nevertheless, I am glad to re-acquaint myself – after an absence of over a decade – with the raw power and energy of this pioneering orchestra.

Kah-Ming Ng

**Mozart Complete Solo Piano Music vol. 10.**  
Ronald Brautigam fp 61' 21"  
BIS-CD-897

K 25, 138a, 180, 264, 460, 485 573, Anh.138a

The excellent recording quality of this disc enhances the intimacy of the music as well as allowing the sweet-toned fortepiano to sparkle. Ronald Brautigam conveys the cheerfulness of the more extrovert variations admirably, and he is no less skilled in interpretation when the music is contemplative. Mozart originally invented these charming pieces for his recitals, since he was making a living by performing as well as composing. This series of recordings is well worth collecting.

Margaret Cranmer

**J. Stamitz Symphonies Vol. 2 Op. 4/1,2,4,6**  
Northern Chamber Orchestra, Nicholas Ward  
Naxos 8.554447 61' 11" £

The playing, on modern instruments, is generally stylish and spirited without undue vibrato, though I did detect the occasional violin portamento in some slow movements. The rather unflattering acoustics tended to show up the occasional slight lack of uniformity in the string intonation. Oboe and horn passages are nicely prominent, but such slender music could have received greater characterisation from the players. The *Sinfonia Pastorale* (No. 2) and No. 6 in Eb are perhaps the more interesting of these symphonies, and are good examples of the development of the form in the early 1750s.

Ian Graham-Jones

**German Baroque Music for Flute and Organ**  
Mimesis (Jari S. Puhakka fl, Olli Porthan org)  
Alba ABCD 125 57' 48"  
C.P.E. Bach Sonatas in G & C H.509 & 515; Hertel Partita III; Krebs Fantasia in D & g; Telemann Trio in e

This rather unusual disc has been produced in association with the Church Music Department of the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki. Featuring an organ of the type found in Northern German churches at the end of the 17th century complete with Chorton pitch (A=424), the choice of music is slightly later than one might expect; hence works by C. P. E. Bach and Krebs are programmed with a trio by Telemann and an original work by Hertel. Despite the rather heavy feel of the organ, the overall blend is very effective, with the flute stop of the organ sounding at times almost indistinguishable from the real thing and giving the impression of trio with two flutes and continuo. The Krebs Fantasia in G minor is to my mind the most successful work on the disc, with its long sustained lines and harmonic tension; on the other hand, the galant pieces of C.

P. E. Bach have variable success in this combination, the lower registers of the organ only just coping with the demands of a more active bass line. The performances are attractive if a little staid, but if you are prepared to put up with a fair amount of mechanical noise and slightly suspect tuning from the organ, there is definitely something very appealing about this disc.

Marie Ritter

*It is not clear if Mimesis is a group name or the title of the programme: I thought the former, our reviewer the latter. CB.*

*Jagdkonzerte für Naturalhorn und Orchester*

Hansjörg Angerer hn, Ensemble Sol-sol-lasol, Howard Arman 41' 58"

Koch Schwann 3-6502-2

Rosetti Concerto in E K3:42; Stich-Punto Concerto 5 in F

I remember long ago hearing an American disc of the Water Music which began with a demonstration of natural horns playing a section of one of their duets without any attempt to modify the natural tuning, and then a commentator coming in and saying that baroque tuning was like that, after which they played the whole piece with indescribable tuning. I feared the worst when the short opening track was played thus. But the natural style used for the 'realistic' horn calls by Ondrej Anton is not carried over (except, I think, occasionally with intent and in a few tricky places) into the two more sophisticated concertos. Although short measure, this is an interesting recording of two virtuosic solo pieces. The playing has enough panache and artistry to make the performances enjoyable, though the music will not stand playing too often.

CB

*Das Janus-Gesicht des empfindsamen Stils La Ricordanza 78' 49"*

Dabringhaus & Grimm MDG 505 0872-2  
J C Bach Quartet op. 19 no. 2, Quartet in Bb, Quintet op. 22 no. 1; Janitsch Quartet op. 1 no. 1, Quartet in D

The intriguing title of this disc refers to the symbolic face of Janus, Roman God of the new year, with its power to observe both past and future events simultaneously. In a selection of chamber works by J. C. Bach and J. G. Janitsch, La Ricordanza use this symbol of duality to illustrate the fascinating opposition of musical styles which developed in Northern Europe after the death of J. S. Bach. Working alongside C. P. E. Bach in Berlin, Janitsch's music clearly projects *sturm und drang* ideology, where the musical expression of human sentiments directly and subjectively was of prime importance. Conversely, the music of J. C. Bach working in London extols the virtues of grace, balance, entertainment and elegance above all else – values which ultimately proved more appealing for the great classicists of the late 18th century. The pieces on this disc by J. C. Bach are sparkling works, full of imaginative scoring and arching melodic lines, without ever being vacuous or overly decorative: the famous *Andantino* from the D major op22/1 Quintet gives flute, oboe, cello and harpsichord equally important solo parts

without ever becoming disjointed or contrived, whilst the quartets clearly anticipate the balanced textures of Haydn's early string quartets. Janitsch's two quartets are a little less amenable, and clearly owe more to the contrapuntalists of earlier generations; relying far less on melody, the overall effect can, in lesser hands than these, often be long-winded and fragmentary. Yet with this fine ensemble a kind of musical unanimity takes over, the music flowing and dovetailing in an easy conversation between the instruments, showing Janitsch in a truly complimentary light. This is a relatively young group in its first recording and there is much to admire in their special musical rapport and understanding; most poignant of all, though, is to discover that the disc is dedicated to the memory of their talented young harpsichordist, Matthias Ihrig, who was tragically killed in 1998 before the recording was released.

Marie Ritter

*Variaciones del Fandango Español* Andreas Staier hpscD 65' 19"

Teldec Das Alte Werk 3984-21468-2

S. de Albero *Recercata, Fuga y Sonata* in G & D; Boccherini *Fandango*; J. Ferrer *Adagio* in g; *Sonata* in g; J. Galles *Sonatas* 9, 16, 17; F. M. López *Variaciones del Fandango español*; Soler *Fandango*

This disc is absolutely breathtaking. Staier gives the harpsichord (Sidey and Bal, after anon., school of Silbermann c.1735) a massive range, forceful quasi-Flamenco effects contrasting with singing lyricism, and always a wonderful balance between precision and abandonment. There are three Fandangos, along with excellent and highly-varied sonatas, variations, *recercatas* and fugues by Spanish composers. The tripartite pieces by Albero are very good indeed, their fantasia-like first movements followed by brilliant fugues. The other pieces, by Galles and Ferrer, are also well worth listening to. But the Fandangos dominate this disc. The Lopez *Variaciones del Fandango español* are brief but exciting, the Boccherini (in an arrangement for two harpsichords and castanets) is a hoot, and the Soler is, for me, a definitive version – beautifully-paced, impassioned, exhilarating both for its audacity and flawlessness, and deeply musical. In spite of its inherent lollipop tendencies this is one of the best harpsichord CDs I have ever heard – Staier's technique and musicality are irrefutable. Go and buy it.

Robin Bigwood

## 19th CENTURY

**Beethoven The Piano Sonatas Vol. IV**

Paul Komen fp 49' 57"

Globe GLO 5184

Nos 24-27, op. 78, 79, 81a & 90

This is a welcome addition to Paul Komen's recording of the Op.31 sonatas on the same superb fortepiano by Salvatore la Grassa. He is musical and uses the spaces between notes to good effect. The 'Les Adieux' sonata (which Beethoven actually called *Das Lebewohl*) is the highlight of the recording; the performance captures the grand excitement in the movement that

describes the return. Paul Komen occasionally turns the composer's *forte* into a slightly brutal *fortissimo*, but his articulation is crisp and the tempi are well chosen. The disc is unfortunately on the short side.

Margaret Cranmer

**Cherubini String quartets 1 & 6** Hausmusik cpo 999 463-2 65' 16"

These two quartets receive stunning performances from the period-instrument quartet, led alternately by Monica Huggett and Pavlo Beznosiuk, with some dramatic and stylish playing which brings out the best in these interesting works. No. 1 in Eb is the earlier and more classical. An extensive sonata-form first movement (with a repeated exposition) leads to an interesting contrapuntal development section with some dramatic *pianissimo* playing. The Scherzo is almost Dvorak-like in its repeated east-European rhythms, with a trio anticipating Mendelssohn's skittishness. Written 21 years later, No. 6 in A minor is more concise in its writing yet surprisingly does not reflect the dramatic changes in style that occurred during the intervening years. In spite of some operatic-like cadenza passages from the first violin, the finale retains the gentler characteristics of the work, reflected in the *allegro affettuoso* marking. This is a recording which I have no hesitation in recommending to those wishing to explore the less familiar string quartet repertoire.

Ian Graham-Jones

**Mendelssohn String Quartets op. 12, op. 13, Eb op. post. Eroica Quartet** 78' 04" Harmonia Mundi HMU 907245

Not so long ago, I said that the recording of opp. 12 and 13 by the Mosaiques would probably be my recording of the year: now I'm not so sure! This CD has both of these quartets and the (earlier!) posthumously-published Eb quartet. The playing is quite what you'd expect from four such talented players – not only are they technically brilliant but they play around with the music slightly more; the contrasting sections of the *Adagio non lento* of Op. 13, for example, are more pointed. This is not without hazard: there are one or two rasping G strings and the odd bit of intonation trouble, but never a hint of the music suffering. There's more of a sense of the composer experimenting with the medium here, where the Mosaiques are slightly settled in a familiar environment. Personally I'm delighted to have both – I'd hate to have to give one up! BC

## VARIOUS

**A Golden Treasury of Ancient Instruments** Amon Ra CD-SAR 69 79' 08"

Not a disc to listen through, but of considerable educational value. The short extracts (complete movements, not bleeding chunks) come from Saydisc and Amon Ra recordings of the 1980s. Some may perhaps embarrass the players: standards have improved during the 1990s. But on the

whole this can be recommended to teachers. The title is odd: 'ancient' to me suggests some period BC rather the middle third of the second millennium AD. CB

**El Canto de Auroras: Vigilias y musica en la tradición mediterránea** Alia Musica 59' 21" Harmonia Mundi Iberica HMI 987018

This is music from a living tradition, stretching back to medieval times, bearing traces of its ancient lineage, together with incursions or 'enrichments' from more recent times. There is no attempt at variety. Nearly 60 minutes of four to six unaccompanied male voices sing melodies with small range, seeking no change of colour, the only instrument being a brief use of a handbell. Simple harmonies derive from improvised practices (voices in thirds and sixths over a held note in the bass, for example). But if you enjoy listening to chant, you will love this. The singing has a naive quality – no vibrato, clear vowels, rich but unadorned tone, bang in tune. At times it sounds very medieval: open fourths and fifths, unmeasured or slowly measured chants, a complete absence of subjective involvement. Then the independent movement of the voices, particularly over a pedal bass, form 6/4 and seventh chords, reminiscent of Mendelssohn, but sounding far older. The 'chants to the dawn' are all traditional songs sung in the wee small hours as a meditational exercise. They are of the Spanish-Jewish tradition, in turn in Latin, Spanish and Hebrew, the latter in songs from Morocco and Syria, with the trademark 'Arabic' melody of augmented followed by minor second. I can't comment on the historical basis for this, but it rings true. Highly recommended. Robert Oliver

**La Folia 1490-1701** Jordi Savall, etc 54' 45" Alia Vox AV 9805

Cabezon, Corelli, Enzina, Marais, Martin y Coll, Ortiz

57 minutes is not long for a CD these days, but how often is there a monothematic CD? Devoted to pieces based on the *Folia* bass, written between 1490 and 1701, there is great variety and originality. Savall plays two bass viols (the renaissance Zanetti and the baroque Barak Norman) and a treble viol. He is accompanied by the marvellous Rolf Lislevand playing guitar, vihuela and theorbo, Arianna Savall harp, Bruno Coeset bass violin, his stalwart percussionist and castanet-player of Hesperion XX, Pedro Estevan, Adela Gonzales-Campa on castanets and Michael Behringer playing various harpsichords and organ. It's all delightfully appropriate: renaissance music should sound different from baroque. Ortiz sounds marvellous here, the best I've heard. Savall also improvises on treble viol, with Lislevand in brilliant collaboration – very successful and enjoyable, with subtle, deft percussion. *La Folia* by Martin y Coll evidently preceded the Marais: can he have known it? Non-viol-players may not know of the 18th century MS transcription of the Corelli Opus V for bass viol, differing from the original only in the chords, all in alto clef except for the *La Folia*, which is in

treble clef. Savall takes this as an invitation to play it on the treble, entirely plausibly, given the later French repertoire for dessus, for example by Thomas Marc. He also puts it into A, so that the harmonies correspond to open strings on the viol. He gives it a brilliant performance. A hard act to follow for Marais's colossal 32 variations, but this too succeeds triumphantly. Savall's performance is beautifully judged, brilliantly played, and builds to a tremendous climax. The accompaniments throughout are superb, a great recording. Robert Oliver

**Organ History Spain & Portugal** Arturo Sacchetti 65' 36" ARTS 47394-2 ££

de Alvaredo, Bermudo, Cabanilles, Cabezon, Correa de Arauxo, Elias, Eslava y Elizondo, Guridi, Halfiter, Jimenez, de Lacerna, Machado, de Oxinagas, de Paiva, de Peraza, Santa Maria, Soler

Although the CD box cover suggests that this is a 1998 recording, the inner sleeve reveals various recording dates from 1986 to 1992 – something that does the credibility of the recording industry no good at all. The music ranges from the early 16th century to 1973. The early pieces are recorded on a shrill 1976 Tamburini organ in Turin. Apart from the fact that the organ (like a number from that period) sounds unpleasant, I cannot see the logic of recording Iberian music (so closely linked to the distinctive tonal palette of the Spanish organ) on a modern Italian organ. Moreover, the playing is undistinguished too. Give this one a miss.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

**the art of Counter Tenor** Michael Chance, English Chamber Orchestra, John Nelson cond; English Baroque Soloists, John Eliot Gardiner cond; English Concert, Trevor Pinnock cond 133' 04", 2 discs DGG Archiv 463 042-2 (rec 1985-97) Bach (excerpts) BWV 106, 147, 198, 232, 244-5; Handel (excerpts) Messiah, Semele; Purcell Sound the trumpet Z323/3, The pale and purple rose Z333/6, Sound trumpet sound Z333/13; Vivaldi Nisi Dominus RV608, Salve Regina RV616, Stabat mater RV621

This is really two 'artist portraits' in one. CD 1 is a typical sampler from the label's existing recordings, with soundbites from Schütz (1 track), Purcell (3), Handel (5) and Bach (9). As often happens in such a patchwork, the balances don't always match up: the sound-stage in *Messiah* is too remote after the close miking in *Semele*.) Tom Sutcliffe's notes deserve some kind of prize for cutting out the obfuscation and using the f-word (no, the other f-word, 'falsetto') several times, starting in the second sentence; but apart from a passing hint that the falsetto alto might not belong in Purcell's sound-world, he says little about the original voice types in these works. The Purcell solos are almost certainly meant for a high tenor, not a falsettist; the Handel bits are probably for a castrato or a female alto. The voice that Schütz and Bach used is, I suspect, a species nearly as difficult to re-create as the castrato: a boy alto with unbroken voice, but aged 16 or 17 with all those extra years of musicianship behind him.

Given the constraints of singing a lot of music meant for the greater flexibility of full-bodied voice production, Michael Chance does better than many of his peers. His voice is very attractive; he's almost always in tune (if he's just slightly flat in a few pieces, it's noticeable only because unwanted), and he ranges over the whole (admittedly not very wide) expressive compass which these pieces demand. The real meat of this release is in CD 2, with three complete works by Vivaldi, all with Trevor Pinnock and the English Concert. This is a real programme, which allows you to immerse yourself in the composer's and the performers' conceptual world. The music (even if it was meant for a castrato or a female alto) mostly sits well in Chance's range and doesn't ask him to go too low. More important, Chance gets the opportunity here to be tellingly dramatic and convincingly pathetic. RV 608 in particular fits this voice like a glove, and it draws upon springs of genuine pathos, often merely by some sustained *pp* singing – which is a lot harder than Chance makes it sound. *Eric Van Tassel*

*Classical and Baroque Songs and Arias* Maggie Teyte, Gabriella Gatti, Jolanda di Maria-Petriss, Erna Berger 66' 43" SanCtuS SCSH 017

Another remarkable document from the annals of music history, with recordings from the late 1940s. The most successful performances are Maggie Teyte's arias by Monsigny and Gretry, beautifully sung with surprisingly sensitive accompaniments from the RCA Victor Orchestra under Jean Paul Morel. Gabriella Gatti's 1949 recital with George Malcolm at the harpsichord (covering repertoire from the 13th century to Vivaldi) is interesting, though the range of the sounds produced by the keyboard and the sometimes slightly fuzzy voice make one suspicious, remarkable though the range of pieces be! Strictly one for collectors of historical voices, I fear. *BC*

*the sweet sound of Emma Kirkby* (with The Academy of Ancient Music & The Consort of Musicke) 70' 13" Decca 466 322-2 rec 1978-98

Music by Arne, Bach, Handel, Monteverdi, Mozart, Pergolesi, Purcell, Stölzel, Tromboncino, Vivaldi, Wilbye

See Editorial (p. 1) and p. 28 of the concert diary.

## DUTCH REVIVALS

These are discs that have achieved only limited circulation outside Holland, but should now be more readily available, at least in the UK. If they are not at your local record shop, try Lindum Records.

**Froberger The Complete Keyboard Works 1** Richard Egarr hpscd, org 115' 09" Globe GLO 6022 (2 CDs in box) rec 1994 Libro Secondo, 1649

This was given an enthusiastic review by CB when first issued in 1994, and I would concur. Egarr uses two modern harpsichords (a two manual after Ruckers, 1638, and a short octave one manual after

Guisti, 1681) and a c1650 organ in Cuijk, near Nijmegen in the Netherlands. Grouping the pieces by type rather than instrument means jumping from the intimate acoustic of the harpsichords to the rather remote focus of the organ, but the slight pitch difference is less noticeable than the change in ambience. It is good to hear one of the suites played on the organ, although some of the solo registers over power the accompaniment. Egarr is a distinctive interpreter, with a feel for the mood of each piece, although he has adopted the occasionally-quirky Ton Koopman style of articulation, particularly at cadences. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

*Baroque Opera Arias by Purcell, Handel, Gluck* Carolyn Watkinson, Amsterdam Bach Soloists, Jan Willem de Vriend cond Etcetera KTC 1064 (rec. 1988) Purcell *Dido & Aeneas*: Overture & When I am laid; Handel *Cara sposa, Dopo notte, Dove sei amato bene? Ombramafu*, Where shall I fly; Gluck *Orfeo* (excerpts)

I have heard performances in which Carolyn Watkinson has sounded impressive and stylish. But despite the band's claim (which is some respects true) that its 'approach to Baroque music is based on authentic interpreting practices', the slow tempi suggest an unregenerate modern style on the part of the conductor and singer. So the fast items are better than the slow ones; but it isn't a disc to attract *EMR* readers. *CB*

**Beethoven The Complete Sonatas for Pianoforte and Cello** Pieter Wispelwey vlc, Paul Komen pf 119' 10" (2 CDs) Channel Classics CCS 3592 rec 1991 Brahms *Sonatas in e op. 38 & F op. 99* Pieter Wispelwey vlc, Paul Komen pf 53' 00" Channel Classics CCS 5493 rec 1992

These are re-releases, so ordinarily we would not devote very much space to them, but the technical mastery and artistic excellence, combined with some outstanding recordings make these sets worthy of note, even second time around. The period piano allows Komen to be percussive when necessary (particularly in the Beethoven) without swamping the cello (even though it's an early instrument and clearly at the very edge of being able to cope with such powerful repertoire), while Wispelwey's unerring gift for picking just the right sound for a phrase, his faultless (and seemingly effortless) phrasing, and their almost sixth-sense-like togetherness are wonderful. If you need recordings of these pieces, these are definitely the ones to have! *BC*

**Mendelssohn Die Hochzeit des Camacho** Hofmann Quiteria S, Ulrich Lucinda ms, Weir Basilio T, Rhys-Evans Vivaldo T, van der Meel Camacho T, Wild Carrasco Bar, Malmberg Sancho Panza B, Cold Don Quixote B, Anima Eterna, Der Junge Chor Aachen & Chor Modus Novus 110' 303 (2 CDs in box) Channel Classics CCS 5593 (rec 1992)

What an extraordinary achievement this piece is! The precosity of Mendelssohn's

talent is, of course, probably unique and *Camacho* owes a lot to Mozart and Weber, but there are some truly original moments and some lovely vocal and orchestral writing. The opera was a miserable failure in its (single!) day, which I find equally extraordinary. There are some strange miscalculations, such as Carrasco's 'Quiet! Quiet!' which totally lacks characterisation, but overall I found the music rather enchanting and, inevitably, all the more so bearing in mind the supposed immaturity of its composer. Highly recommended.

*BC*

**Mendelssohn The Piano Trios op. 49 & op.**

66 Julian Reynolds Erard Pf, Johannes Leertouwer vln, Viola de Hoog vlc 52' 11" Globe GLO 5156 rec 1996

Margaret Cranmer praised 'the spontaneity, energy and rhythmic vitality' of this CD when it first appeared (*EMR* 29, p. 15) and called it 'a highly desirable recording'.

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## Letters

Dear Clifford,

Many thanks for having printed my reply to your review of *Opera in Context* (EMR 48, p. 23). Thanks also for your counter arguments, which I found interesting and thought-provoking. Again, I feel inclined to uncap my pen (figuratively, of course):

(1) The surviving libretto says that *Dido and Aeneas* was 'performed' at Priest's school for girls in Chelsea. In neither version of my essay do I state or imply that this was the 'first' performance, although I would not rule out that possibility. The point I would make is that scores of 17th-century compositions ought not to be viewed with anachronistic, Urtext conceptions that came about subsequently in music history. Even if there was a court version of a Purcell opera with the title *Dido and Aeneas*, I suspect it would differ from the score as we know it, which I believe was *Dido and Aeneas* as it was performed at Priest's school. The conspicuous absence of a solo air for the male lead – despite the fact that Purcell writes a beautiful ostinato aria for the secondary female, Belinda, and a splendid ensemble number for two witches ('But ere we this perform') – requires explanation, particularly in view of the fact that to a one, all of Purcell's court odes include solo airs for male voices. If a court version of *Dido* should ever be discovered, I suspect it would be as different from the score we know as the early 18th-century London version of it as a dramatick opera is. (See Ellen T. Harris's monograph on *Dido* for details of that version.) An operatic title in Purcell's day did not represent a 'definitive' version. Neither do titles in the 18th or 19th century represent 'cast in concrete' works. Think of Wagner's *Tannhäuser* in its Dresden and Paris versions, or Verdi's *Don Carlos* in its Parisian version and its subsequent revision for Italy! The *Dido* we know is, I suspect, the Chelsea *Dido*.

(2) You are right in thinking that I have not seen Julia and Frans Muller's model of the Dorset Garden Theatre. Still, for the construction of a three-dimensional model, where do scholars go but to the same documents that have been addressed in my study?

(3) The discussion of 'The Musick Room' in Curtis Price's *Music in the Restoration Theatre* asserts that (a) the musick room 'must have been of little use and soon abandoned' (p.

84); (b) an instrumental ensemble was likely placed in an area opened up into the front of the stage in more or less the same position we would expect in a present-day theater; (c) documentation for such a placement can be found in the first stage direction of Shadwell's *Tempest* of [1673]. All three segments of this hypothesis originated with Edward J. Dent's discussion in *The Foundations of English Opera* (Cambridge University Press, 1928: 139-140; accordingly, the citation should be (and is) to Dent, not to Price, who merely restates Dent's theory.

At the present, I do not find absolute evidence for or against a musick room; consequently, I continue to entertain the possibility of such a facility. We must beware of imposing present day theatrical paradigms on theatrical practices of bygone times simply because they seem to us to make better sense.

Mark A. Radice

*I don't think that there can be any dispute that operas tended to be changed on revival: they still are, with the absurdity that even when the literary and musical text are regarded as sacrosanct, the director fundamentally disrupts them by design and staging. That may, however, not have happened with the analogue to Dido and Aeneas, Blow's Venus and Adonis, since the 1684 libretto for the Chelsey performance corresponds with the chief MS source of the music, which can be connected with a court performance because of the inclusion of the names of the royal mistress Moll Davies as Venus and her daughter Lady Mary Tudor as Cupid. We cannot ignore the resemblances with Dido, even though there is no explicit evidence that Dido and Aeneas was also performed at court. It may, indeed, be significant that the Chelsey libretto of Dido lacks any equivalent to the phrase in the heading to the Venus libretto 'Perform'd before the KING. Afterwards at...'; but the printer had a lot of text to squash on his eight pages, so perhaps too much should not be made of that. The allocation of solo voices in Dido may be explained by imagining a cast of royal mistresses and their children, as in Venus, with a professional tenor brought in for Aeneas. At court, members of the Chapel Royal could easily have been summoned to sing the chorus. Purcell's life was centered round the court and Abbey; would he really write a one-off dramatic work for a suburban school?*

*Your essay states (p. 73) that Dido was 'composed for Josiah Priest's school', which I would have thought implies a first performance there.*

CB

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Dear Mr Bartlett

I have been reading your publication for a few years now. The CD reviews and (generally) the book appraisals are extremely helpful. On the other hand, I really do feel that your editorials and the (seemingly noisome) correspondence they engender most of your readers could happily do without. In April's edition we have some remarks about Cromwell in Huntingdon (hardly debatable, though what is the point in *EMR* specifically?) followed by the now customary middle-middle-class politicking (write for 'The Telegraph', please). Last month the spectacle was of the Pursuit of the Jargonauts; I really don't pay the admittedly token subscription to an early music magazine for such diatribes (including the inevitable right-to-replies). I have studied more lit. crit. than music and know my Deleuze from my Dornel, but when I pick up Northwestern's journal on Husserl (Heaven forfend) I don't want their bangoing on about the poor quality of Albinoni's concerti (why are they being recorded so much?) but speech act phenomenology. Of course much lifted musicological jargon is often half-baked, though 'signification' seems hardly a far-fetched notion; unless you are saying that music can have none? Surely time would be better spent adding to excellent articles like Ms (OK?) Cassidy's. An analysis of signification/meaning with respect to mathematics in Bach, representation in Biber and (Sad) Tomkins, please? Or Mr Clark on Bohemian pre-classical perhaps? (Quite enough Carver thanks.)

I have my doubts about some of the coteriness of some of the accounts of meetings/workshops too. The underlying problem seems to be the parts of the review that correspond to a sophisticated chatline sit uneasily with the (quite) serious business. Sometimes the fiefdom tendency spills over into reviewing too; why not inform us of some of the findings in the Fauvel book (I wore my old Reflexe recording to a significationless lamella), rather than be reduced to what comes over as carping. (And please stop writing [sic] next to correspondents' typos; your use of the hyphen is blatantly-unorthodox).

No, I'm being cruel. But still you often seem to be yourselves; though all the cluckling on 'plucking' was much more the sort of Civil War I for one like to see in *EMR*...

Your work in music publishing is first rate.

David Radzinowicz Howell

*Poor Huntingdon: it has so few claims to fame that I wanted to get it in *EMR* somehow! Sadly, the original script, which came back to music at the end, didn't work, and there wasn't time to devise something else: *EMR* is put together in a horrifically short time (even worse than usual this month!) Some people actually read the correspondence (if any) first, and I do my best to provoke replies. I wouldn't associate myself with readers of the Daily Telegraph: any political views I have are pretty sceptical, and objections to New Labour are as likely to be from the left as from the right.*

*I am very concerned about unnecessary professionalisation in writing about music. I suspect that the majority of our readers do not know what the titles I quoted in March actually mean. Our house is well equipped with dictionaries, since our daughter collects them (even though she can't read). I've looked up signification, but none (and they are all fairly recent) give a definition as a semiotic technical term as used in the titles I quoted in the March editorial, apart from the full Oxford English Dictionary. It seems sensible to me that musicologists should use the technical*

*vocabulary of music when necessary, but be extremely cautious about other words (especially fashionable ones) that the reader is unlikely to find in a normal one-volume dictionary. While all groups (social, political, occupational, racial) develop their own jargon, these should be left for use within the groups.*

*We do, of course, normally give contributors the benefit of proof-reading, but found it significant (if I may use the word non-technically) that a writer who was happy to use complex language made two such elementary mistakes. Sic was, of course, necessary to make it clear that they were not ours: our standard of accuracy is not infallible (and I'm not blaming our proof readers). I have, however, left one of your words which I was tempted to correct, 'bangoing', not knowing whether it was a slang term I hadn't met or a misprint for 'banging': as with an odd note in an early edition, I don't know if it is an interesting deviation from the norm or just a misprint. Our policy is to use hyphens in adverb+adjective phrases when the adverb does not end in '-ly'; we would print 'mid-18th-century galantries' but not your 'blantly-unorthodox'. Our proof-readers keep me on my toes on this point, the authority being The Oxford Guide to the English Language (1988). I presume that I should also have added a hyphen in your 'speech act phenomenolgy' to match our house-style.*

*We deliberately try to be informal and include the odd low-key report. Unfortunately, the write-up of Tucson by the person who organised the course arrived just too late. Part of our appeal to some readers is the personal feel of *EMR*, and we try to keep it that way, to make it different from its rivals. I like the idea of treating it in part as a hard-copy chatline. Our circulation is small, and we have met so many of our subscribers, that we feel that an informal tone is appropriate.*

*The problem with reviewing the Fauvel book (like the three volumes of essays which begin this month's reviews) was that there was so much there, but so little that could be given a coherent summary. I hadn't intended to appear carping: I was very impressed by it. I've never addressed Jennie Cassidy formally enough to know whether she prefers Mrs or Ms; I may present myself as an old fogey, and my wife calls herself a chairman not a chairperson, but I'm all in favour of Ms, since why should I need to know the married status of every woman I have to address?*

*Others have also commented that Carver has been aired enough. Thanks for the compliment about our music editing. With regard to the pluckers, you're lucky: here is the next instalment.* CB

Dear Clifford,

On the question of the pluckers, Peter Holman says that I 'misunderstand' the function of guitar continuo, and that the notion of continuo instruments playing the bass line as their first priority is 'essentially a late Baroque conception'. I fully recognise that guitars perform the function he describes in the performances under his direction; what I question is whether they were ever used for that or any other purpose in theatre orchestras at the time the music was composed. And I fail to see why applying a late baroque conception of continuo to a late baroque composer is a misunderstanding. My challenge is a simple one: is there evidence that guitars were used as continuo instruments in orchestral music of the baroque period (late or otherwise)? If Peter and (apparently) the entire readership of *EMR* cannot produce any, it seems reasonable to suppose there is none, and that such usage, whatever its attractions in present-day performance of baroque music, has no established historical validity. Anthony Hicks

## FRANCIS &amp; JUNE BAINES

We were very sorry to hear of the recent deaths of June and Francis Baines. Francis (b. 1917), brother of Anthony, the distinguished expert on wind instruments, and June were playing the viol before most of the current early musicians were born; in addition, June was a violinist and Francis played double-bass/violone in his own inimitable fashion (somehow he seemed to play the treble viol and violone in the same way). This made a strong visual impression on me when he was the double-bass player in Philomusica of London, which used to give regular concerts in Cambridge under Thurston Dart when I was a student around 1960. One particular memory was of the 6-part Ricercar in *The Musical Offering*, where while bowing the penultimate G on an open string, he frantically tuned down the bottom string so to finish on the low C.

Another memory is of his attempt to salvage one of several disastrous moments in an eventful performance of the St Matthew Passion (probably the first with early-instruments in Britain) in which a student soprano managed to sing the whole of 'Er hat uns allen wohlgetan' in a completely different tempo from the (extremely raucous) oboi da caccia. Francis felt impelled to join in to correct matters, and I don't know how anyone could sing against so rhythmic a bass. But the soprano must have been an expert at the sort of contemporary music where the voice has to sing against the accompaniment and persisted. She was heard to say to her alto neighbour when she sat down 'I was right, wasn't I?'

One of the concerts I put on during my brief period as impresario (running the Early Music Centre Festival) alternated Monica Huggett playing unaccompanied Bach with some of his motets. My first choice for a violone player to accompany was inevitably Francis, and I paired him with an up-and-coming conductor Paul McCreesh on cello. I'm sure Paul won't mind me repeating that he found playing with Francis an educational experience.

My personal contact with Francis and June was chiefly through playing the viol at the evening classes that they ran at Chiswick in the late 1960s and 1970s. (Do London boroughs still subsidise such classes?) Their approach was entirely different, but both had enormous patience with people like me and Peter Holman, who were far more comfortable at the keyboard than on a string instrument, and we learnt so much from their enthusiasm and experience. June was less prominent, but no less skilled: a perfect pair of opposites!

There will be a memorial service with music at Chiswick Parish Church on Sunday 20 June: full details next month.

## Jargon

William Billings (1778)

Forte

5

10

Fortissimo

Let hor-rid Jar - gon split the Air, And  
rive the Nerves a - sun-der. Let hate-ful Dis-cord  
rive the Nerves a - sun-der. Let hate-ful Dis-cord  
rive the Nerves a - sun-der. Let hate-ful Dis-cord  
rive the Nerves a - sun-der. Let hate-ful Dis-cord

greet the Ear, As ter - ri - ble as Thun-der.  
greet the Ear, As ter - ri - ble as Thun-der.  
greet the Ear, As ter - ri - ble as Thun-der.  
greet the Ear, As ter - ri - ble as Thun-der.

## CAMERA HORRIBILUM

Philip II made himself into a sign, remorselessly dooming historians' discourse to metalanguage or autobiography. And it is here alone that we can see the perversity that was the King's accomplice, in how he has passed to posterity devoid of memory, speeding up and anticipating that final point that, after two and a half milleniums of loving search for wisdom, *performatives* and *telematics* have applied to the symbolic capital that kept the secret in humanity's unconscious memory.

*From an essay by Héctor Ortega in the booklet to Realidades y Espejismos (Realities and Illusions) accompanying the Glossa CD set with the same title. (See CD Reviews, p. 13). The English version quoted above is on p. 92. It is a rather literal translation of the original Spanish on p. 20 of the booklet, but translateese isn't an excuse.*

Please send in further offerings.

*Ian Gammie sent us an excerpt from an interview in Classical Guitar with a cello-playing guitarist, Tilman Hoppstock:*

During my studies I preferred the Classical Romantic: Brahms, Beethoven, etc. but after my studies I was involved more and more with Baroque music. Four years ago I recorded the sonata by Sergei Rachmaninoff on CD.