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I wonder how many of our readers remember Charles Cudworth. He was the librarian before last to the Cambridge music faculty, a delightful man – perhaps too kind to be a reviewer, but whose enthusiasm on the BBC Saturday-morning record review programme must have drawn many to share his love of baroque music. I met him a couple of times while a student, impinging on him by borrowing some reference-only Chrysander Handel scores from the library, which resulted in him visiting me (on the other side of town) to retrieve them: do librarians treat their readers so personally now? He was the best raconteur I have ever met (the only rival was John Julius Norwich at Bach recording at Cöthen). I had a marvellous evening with Charles in 1972 at the closing dinner of a Music Librarian's conference in Bologna. We had had a long day out to Faenza and Ravenna, and our bus arrived at the restaurant two hours before the others. We were led to our table and plied with unlimited wine, while Charles held forth about people and incidents he had encountered – absolutely entralling. But next morning, thanks to the wine, it was all forgotten.

Some year earlier, I had another memorable meal with him. After a Royal Musical Association meeting, he saw me looking lost and took me off for a curry, along with a young musicologist, Richard Platt, who is a familiar voice on the phone and who subscribes to *EMR*. He remembered the occasion, but not the particular remark that stuck in my mind. Charles was concerned that a consequence of ageing was that music did not speak to him so directly and emotionally as in his youth. I've now reached or passed his age then, and my response is certainly different. Increased knowledge makes me more suspicious and new experiences have to compete with those in the memory. Recently, I had been wondering what *Nunc dimittis* (if that's the plural) to set before the Eastern Early Music Forum's Dragon feast and thought of the powerful effect the English words had in the college chapel when sung to the *tonus peregrinus*. Then I played Paul Hillier's *Thanksgiving* disc (see p. 29) and was similarly moved by Elisha West's *Evening Hymn*, a comforting proof that I can still react with youthful intensity to fresh music and words, however simple. CB

BOOKS & MUSIC

Clifford Bartlett

FLEURY PLAYBOOK

The Fleury Playbook: I. Four twelfth-century Saint Nicholas liturgical dramas edited by Wyndham Thomas. Antico Edition (MCM4), 1998. xiii + 31pp, £8.50.

It was in 1963 when I made my own transcription of two of these plays, and it must have been around then when I sang in a performance of one of the others, *Filius Getronis*. Fashions have now changed, and the issue that preoccupied me then – how to find a rhythmic pattern that represented the verse form – now seems irrelevant: Wyndham Thomas doesn't even bother to describe the ubiquitous ten-syllable line with caesura after the fourth syllable. Since the frequent repetition of the rhythm may lead singers to try to impose a pattern, some comment on how the French stressed Latin at this period would have been useful: the first half of such lines tends often to be two dissyllables, which should 'correctly' each be stressed strong-weak, but the French may already have put greater weight on the second syllables. I don't think that it was just my nonconformist background that made me feel that the hagiographical plays were less interesting than the liturgical and biblical dramas of the Nativity, Resurrection, St Paul and Daniel: the repetitious nature of the melodies, despite some subtlety (as sketched in the preface here), did not sustain interest, though that may partly have been because rhythmicisation weakened them. Anyway, it is excellent that these four plays have appeared in what is labelled vol. 1, so we may hope for the remaining six. The edition is simply and sensibly done, with black-blob notes and dashes to mark off metrical units. An English translation is printed in the introduction: I suppose that placing it at the foot of each page would have been rather too messy and printing the Latin (set out as verse) and English in parallel columns would have added too much to the cost. It would, however, have been useful to have footnoted liturgical quotes: it is possible that such material might be sung in a different style from the new. Sensibly, the editor makes no suggestions for adding drones, parallel fifths, etc, and there are none of the instrumental scorings that cluttered up earlier editions of the repertoire, such as one of *The Son of Getron* by Colin C. Sterne (University of Pittsburgh Press, 1962) with flute, bassoon, trumpet, guitar, violin, viola and percussion – though with the continuing use of instruments in secular monophony, I'm sure we will hear performances with rebecs, lutes and percussion.

BUSNOYS ESSAYS

Antoine Busnoys: Method, Meaning, and Context in Late Medieval Music edited by Paul Higgins Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1999. xxii + 599pp, £80.00. ISBN 0 19 816406 8

Yes: another composer has changed his spelling, though at least it isn't going to have much effect on alphabeticisation (unlike variants to Ockeghem discussed on pp. 250-2). This is a magnificent volume of essays, based on a conference in 1992. Most of the major anglophone scholars, and a few others, working on 15th-century music seem to be here, though Reinhard Strohm is a notable absentee. There is no easy way to summarise 20 contributions, but don't presume that the brevity of this review is an indication of its lack of merit. While this is not as far-ranging as the even fatter volume of essays on Fauvel, this is equally admirable, and I am sure that one by-product will be an increased awareness of Busnoys as a major composer of the second half of the 15th century. Non-specialists will benefit from reading Paula Higgins' introduction, which summarises the contributions, and David Fallows' 'Towards a new picture of Busnoys'. These set the extremes of musicological tone, with the former so formal that she refers to her own contribution in the third person (p. 13 line 1), while the latter writes much more fluently by including a few first person singulars. I was amused by Jaap van Benthem's suggestion that *In hydraulis* needs an editorial bar's rest (surely something that would have been difficult to lose in transmission in parts: see p. 223); I wonder whether this introduces a copyrightable element, now that it is so difficult to claim that mere transcription warrants a performance fee. The same essay mentions a frontispiece to the volume: in fact, there isn't one, and the facsimile to which he refers is on the jacket – which my local university library will have thrown away before any reader can see it. The volume has indexes of MSS and of works by or attributed to Busnoys as well as a general index, so the vast amount of information here is accessible. The big handicap to Busnoys achieving his rightful status is the absence of a complete edition of his chansons: let's hope that will soon appear.

JOSQUIN MOTETS

A Josquin Anthology: 12 Motets Edited by Ross W. Duffin with an Introduction by Paul Hillier. Oxford UP, 1999. xi + 123pp, £11.95. ISBN 0 19 353218 2

There are two reasons why so many singers who love music of the 16th century have so little chance to sing Josquin. One is the shortage of good, accessible and cheap editions. Now this edition has appeared, the only excuse is the meanness of singers: at a pound a motet, this is good value, even though buying enough copies for even a one-a-part ensemble involves a bit of an outlay. The edition would be fine for an Early Music Forum day, but I suspect that there would be enormous resistance to adding £11.95 per head to the cost of tutor and hall. As I've said before, I'm

continually amazed at the unwillingness of so many people to pay realistic rates for their music.

The other main problem with Josquin is the compass of his parts. A few weeks ago, I had a roomful of people available longing to sing, and very happy to sing the Josquin I had brought with me. But it was incredibly hard work since, to take a typical work which is in the Oxford anthology (though we sung it then from my edition), *Illibata dei virgo* has a top part (B to E) manageable by most women, a normal bass part (F to middle C), a *cantus firmus* part from the D below middle C to the D above, manageable by any tenor or bass, but two wide-ranging tenor parts (from the D below middle C to the G above). So only one of the five lines requires women (who tend to be the majority in smaller choirs and such *ad hoc* groups) and two proper tenors are needed. There is not much leeway for transposition. Some pieces in the anthology are less awkward. *Gaude virgo mater Christi* works for SATB (though the tessitura, with G2 C1 C4 C4 clefs, might imply that it would have been sung rather lower), as does *Memor esto verbu tui* (the top F shown as the top of the altus range is a fourth too high) and *Tu solus qui facis mirabilia* (the altus is printed in octave-treble, but only goes down to F). To use this book you need at least two, sometimes three good tenors.

The music is printed very compactly: fine for a single reader, but don't expect to be able to share. The presence of a piano accompaniment would be a surprise had I not been told so often in connection with the *Oxford Choral Classics* that American choirs always have accompanists and that they cannot be trusted to read a score. Advantage is taken at times to let the accompaniment show proportional relationships (e.g. at the end of the *Stabat mater*), though elsewhere the usual form of $\text{a} = \text{b}$ is used. Note values are halved. Barring is treated in various ways. Normally there are four minims to a duple, six to a triple bar. Where the musical pulse does not relate to such regularity, as in *Pater noster/Ave Maria*, mensurstrich is used. The first section of *Illibata* has long bars of nine minims divided into three by dotted mensurstrich to allow one note of the *cantus firmus* per bar: that seems to me to be a bit fussy. Although the original mensuration signs are shown for the opening of each piece, subsequent changes are given only in modern notation: a common and regrettable failing. That is, however, the only objection to a fine anthology which should bring a wide variety of singers to Josquin's music. Paul Hillier contributes a useful introduction on singing Josquin.

PETERHOUSE PARTBOOKS

Another three issues in Nick Sandon's publication of the Peterhouse partbooks appeared last year. In each case, the tenor is missing and is reconstructed by the editor. Singers are likely to be attracted first to the well-known name of Fayrfax. His *Lauda vivi alpha* (RCM130: £7.50) is a setting of a unique and ambitious text asking the Virgin to pray for Henry VIII, which dates it between his accession (1509) and the composer's death (1521): Sandon speculates that it must

have been written for a major state occasion, perhaps even for a coronation. Three parts survive in other sources, but not the missing tenor. The editor is modest about his completion, and even draws attention to sections about which he is not entirely happy: but at least it allows the work to be performed. It is a substantial piece (300 long bars) and a fine one, scored for SATBarB, here put up a tone: I would have thought this unnecessary, but the editor has tried it out in several drafts with Exeter University's The Cantors (whose two CDs we have favourably reviewed) and claims that it sounds best thus; an untransposed version is also available. Robert Jones was a gentleman of the Chapel Royal in the 1520s. Only three works survive: the bass of a song, a Magnificat (RCM128, publ. 1994) and the *Missa Spes nostra* (RCM118; £9.00). It is based on a chant for Matins on Trinity Sunday. The editor claims that his idiosyncratic style is effective, 'revealing Jones as a composer with a strong personality, a flair for the telling detail, and a superb ear for effective choral textures'. William Pashe sang in the choir of St Paul's Cathedral around 1520. His *Sancta Maria mater dei* (RCM115) is included on one of The Cantors' CDs, and sounded impressive. Newly edited is his Magnificat (RCM129; £5.50). This is based on the faburden of the seventh Magnificat tone; Pashe seems to exploit its resemblance to the antiphon *Christus resurgens*. Since the *cantus firmus* is in the mean part, the editorial invention of the tenor lacks the constraints that aid Sandon's composition in the other two works described here.

As is customary for the series, original note-values are retained: it is a feature that I welcome, but I would be interested in feedback from non-specialists who have tried to sing from these editions: have any problems vanished fairly quickly? All are for five voices. Like the Fayrfax, the Pashe is transposed up a tone from original clefs of G2, C2, C4, [C4] & F4, though it would be manageable untransposed, with adjustment left to the needs of specific singers and acoustics. The Jones Mass (G1, C1, C3, [C4], C5) definitely needs transposition and is put down a minor third. Might it have been more helpful to have printed the sources of the *cantus firmi* at the pitch of the edition? My admiration for this series continues. But in view of my comment about singers' reluctance to buy music, I wonder if Antico might be prepared to hire sets for courses and sing-throughs.

GIBBONS

John Harley Orlando Gibbons and the Gibbons family of musicians, Ashgate, 1999. x + 341pp, £45.00. ISBN 1 84014 209 X

This is, I suppose, the successor to *Orlando Gibbons: A Short Account of his Life and Work* by Edmund Fellowes, elegantly published by the Clarendon Press in 1925. At that time, little of his music was available; he gave thorough lists of works naming sources, but no references to lead the reader to editions. John Harley's list on page 290 covers virtually everything in scholarly (if sometimes infuriating) editions, though he might have helped those seeking anthems that

don't have to be read through a welter of flats, instrumental music with parts, and facsimiles. Fellowes' most notorious sentence, providing a fascinating example of the change of taste, follows the discussion of the full anthems: 'Passing to the verse anthems it must be frankly admitted we find ourselves on a decidedly lower level.' He includes *This is the record of John* among 'the more effective verse anthems', but does not group with them such outstanding works as *Behold thou hast made my days* and *See, see the Word is incarnate*. John Harley does not fall into that trap, but still feels obliged to be over-critical – perhaps as a way of responding to comments that the section on the music in his *William Byrd* was less professional in tone than the biography.

As is normal with composers of this period, biographical information is sparse and mostly comes from documents that merely state when and where Gibbons was employed and what he was paid at various points in his life. It might have been worth stating explicitly whether he is listed in all documents in which one might expect to find his name: i. e. that he really was a member of the Chapel Royal from 1605. Since this may well be read by those who are not familiar with archival documents, it is a pity that technical terms are not explained: 'supplication' and 'incorporation', for example, on p. 30 and elsewhere. This offers as much biographical information as we are likely to get, and it is presented thoroughly and accessibly.

The bulk of the book is devoted to discussion of the music. One underlying assumption is that Gibbons' music suffers at times from facility. I don't think that is something I have ever felt. There must be some reason other than inertia for a concentration of popular affection for just a few works (though more than the four which Fellowes notes), but I'm not sure if that is the real explanation. I would have welcomed more effort to show why some pieces are so loved. No-one would guess from pp. 116-119 why viol players are so drawn to the six-part fantasies.

There are comments which reveal an inadequate awareness of aspects of music of the period. One would not expect Gibbons to have written for broken consort, for instance (p. 76 note 3): most of the music for the 'consort of six' (if that is what he means: I use Ian Harwood's term for it) comprises arrangements by specialists. There seems little point in comparing the melodies in a fantasy with Robert Johnson's *Baboons' Dance*: masque dances of composers who also wrote fantasies are equally different, and anyway why quote Johnson as arranged by Brade (p. 123-4). There is a strange lack of respect for Dowland. Why mention the possible relevance of clefs to the arrangement of pieces in the 1612 madrigal set without listing them – it is now common to tabulate clefs in discussions of continental publications. (Gibbons does not, incidentally, follow the European convention of using only C1C3C4F4 and G2C2C3F3.)

There are some odd remarks about instruments and anthems. Is there any evidence that organ parts of full anthems were intended for rehearsal? I don't know when organs stopped

being used in alternation with choirs and came to be used with them (no doubt Roger Bowers can tell us), but there seems an unbroken line between early-17th-century organ parts and those from later in the century that must have been used by organists in church performance, and anyway the idea of helping a choir out with a keyboard seems to come from modern parish-choir practice. (I suspect that the author hasn't followed recent discussions on the use of the organ to double voices and instruments in 17th-century music in general.) I find implausible his idea that Gibbons would have written scores of, say, a five-part verse anthem on ten staves rather than alternating on five. And since the use of voices and organ and of viols and organ are each normal, why should we assume that viols and voices in the same piece were not accompanied by organ? From a European perspective, sackbuts and cornets would seem to be the obvious instruments for church use; rejecting the evidence as being from later than Gibbons' death isn't supported by the mention of their use at Westminster Abbey in 1599 (quoted on p. 202).

The book deals with the whole Gibbons family, with a chapter on Christopher and a list of his works. As a documentary study, this will be extremely valuable. The writing on the music seems a bit out of touch both with the best recent musicological practice and with the needs of those who are excited and moved by the music.

BIBER, FISCHER, REINCKEN

Edition Walhall are new to me. I came across them when seeking an edition of Reincken's *Hortus Musicus* and intrigued by their catalogue, made contact with them. They publish editions of baroque and modern music, and also supply Fuzeau facsimiles in Germany and Austria. The items mentioned here can be obtained through the usual early-music specialist retailers, through King's Music, or direct from Edition Walhall: Verlag Franz Biersack, Babelsberger Str. 6, D-39114, Magdeburg, tel +49 1391 857820, fax 8520079.

Reincken's *Hortus Musicus* (1687) is well known because Bach made keyboard transcriptions of some movements, (BWV 954, 965 & 966) and the original Sonata/Suite 1 in A minor was widely circulated in the appendix to Spitta's Bach biography (the curious inversions of his bass figures are not from the source). A surprisingly good edition was published in 1886. Walhall's edition, in a series *Collection Thierry Mathis*, has a preface by Mathis, who is presumably the responsible editor. Strangely, it is not based on the 1687 original but on the 1886 edition, and adds some further mistakes of its own. (At least, so I'm told by The Purcell Quartet, who had the 1886 and the new edition available for a recent recording: unfortunately, the microfilm of the 1687 edition ordered from Berlin arrived in Dundee the day they started recording in London). The film reached me too late to check it in any detail before writing this. The set is scored for two violins, gamba and *Bassus Continuus*; it is not stated who supplied the keyboard realisation. I gather from the Purcell Quartet that, interesting though the music was,

it did not stand extensive playing. A set of score and parts is, however, useful to have, and enthusiasts for the period will welcome their availability. (EW 117a-c, each DM 38.00)

Johann Caspar Ferdinand Fischer's *Journal du Printemps* (1695) was an important channel by which the French orchestral style circulated in Germany. The 8 Suites (each comprising *Ouverture* and dances) are scored for five-part strings, with a pair of trumpets in the first and last. The strings are labelled *Dessus, Hautecontre, Taille, Quinte & Basse*. The score prints them in G2 G2 C3 C4 & F4 clefs. The editor, Hans Peter Eisenmann, claims that this corresponds with Lully's orchestration of violins for the upper parts, which can be doubled by oboes; however, my understanding of the normal Lullian scoring is that the *hautecontre* was normally a viola part in C1 clef, and that oboes and violins all play the top line except in trio sections, in which they divide. Assuming the G2 clef of the edition is right (he takes the *hautecontre* up to G even in tutti sections), Fischer is following a more modern convention. (I haven't checked the score in DDT 10.) I've only seen the Walhall score, which includes a blank stave to help inexperienced continuo players (two Suites per volume: EW 114, 123, 183 & 185 DM 32.00 each: parts are also available at 5.00 DM per part).

I have seen three Biber editions, in a series entitled *Collection Monarca della Tromba: Musik der Fürstenhöfe*, all edited by Johann Plietzsch. The *Sonata à 6* is the one that was published by Musica Rara down a tone in B_b; here, as in the recent DTO 151, it is in its original key of C. It is scored for trumpet (the MS labels the part *Clarino* but has *Tromba* as the title on the folder), 2 vln, 2 *viole*, *violone* & organ. Curiously, the scholarly DTO score has a keyboard realisation, whereas the practical edition doesn't, though it does have a separate realised part. The introduction assumes that the *viole* are alto and tenor violins, though tenor clef is quite normal for violas (cf. the normal French orchestral scoring). And it is misleading to say that the thoroughbass needs *violone* (double-bass viol) and organ: is that meant to suggest that, in addition to an 8' instrument on the *violone* part, there should be a 16' instrument doubling the part marked *organo*? I'm not too happy at the suggestion that the trumpet needs to be matched with a bassoon or trombone as well: the labelling of the original parts is specific enough and perfectly adequate. But ignoring such matters, it is useful to have a separate edition with score and parts available (EW 147; DM 32.00).

EW204 is titled *Sonate due: Zwei Sonaten à 8* and contains Sonatas 1 & 12 of the *Sonatae tam aris quam aulis servientes* of 1676 edited primarily from Kromeriz MS IV 72/A 521, where they are entitled *Sonata due, 2 Violini, 4 Viole, 2 Clarini, cum Violone et Organo*. Again the introduction mentions violins (for a standard *da braccio* layout in C1, C3, C4 and F4 clefs) and makes rather a fuss over the standard *colla parte* notation of the organ part. EW 124 is *Sonata à Cinque* for two *trombe*, 2 vlns and *basso di viola*. The score does not contain the separate continuo part, but adds the figures to the *basso di viola* part, though there are three

separate parts supplied (unfigured, figured and realised). The introduction, however, is again confusing in detail, and unhelpful in general in advocating so overpowering a line-up for the ground. And what is the evidence for the Italian use of the trombone as a continuo instrument? It is useful to have these performing editions, but I'd prefer introductions that took the evidence of the source material a little more seriously. I haven't had a chance to check them for accuracy, but the parts seem well set-out and easy to read.

BACH BOOKS

Oxford Composer Companions. J. S. Bach Edited by Malcolm Boyd. Consultant Editor John Butt. Oxford UP, 1999. xxv + 626pp, £40.00. ISBN 0 19 866208 4
Das Bach-Lexikon Herausgegeben von Michael Heinemann. (Bach-Handbuch, Band 6.) Laaber, 2000. 623pp, DM168.00. ISBN 3 89007 456 1

These two books are similar in that they are about the same length (Laaber has bigger pages, Oxford smaller type) and comprise a series of alphabetically-arranged articles on double-column pages by a variety of contributors. But there are huge differences, some perhaps because of national and cultural backgrounds, some merely because two editors will inevitably approach their task differently. The Laaber volume is part of a six-volume series, which may have some effect on its contents. Oxford, for instance, has an entry for each cantata, whereas Laaber only includes those with titles (so *Actus tragicus* is in, but not 'Christ lag in Todesbanden'). Oxford enters them under text incipits, not numbers, though refers to them by numbers in other articles. I would prefer listing under numbers myself: unless I know a cantata well, I'm more likely to remember the number than the German incipit. I've just been corresponding with a reader about what we have both called *Cantata 65*. To check whether it told us whether Bach had ever seen a camel (the opening movement may well illustrate the motion of a ship of the desert), I had to turn the book on its side and look it up in the BWV-ordered list of works: sadly, no camels are mentioned, though dromedaries crop up in W. G. Whittaker's not-entirely-outmoded OUP study of the cantatas. The article on Whittaker in OUP is perhaps too harsh; Laaber, not surprisingly, does not mention him. Both have lists of works; Laaber sensibly lists all the dubious and spurious items, but Oxford is more ruthless, listing only pieces with full BWV numbers and omitting the appendices – surely it's useful to know the current status of works previously thought to be by Bach, like the *Kleine Magnificat*, ascribed once Telemann, now to Hoffmann. The Laaber contributors seem to be German, while the Oxford team is more international. I'm not sure why a book with articles arranged alphabetically needs a list of articles at the beginning as does Laaber; Oxford has a more useful list of general topics showing articles which relate to them. Laaber is particularly strong on entries about sources: there is a list of *AUTOGRAPHE* and of *FAKSIMILE*, of the volumes of the *BACH-GESAMTAUSGABE* (BGA, which Oxford calls BG) and *NEUE BACH-AUSGABE* (NBA). Laaber seems in

some ways more musicological, while Oxford is more attuned to the non-specialist listener.

I've tried following a chain of thought and seeing which book is more helpful. We start with CHORUS. Oxford has an excellent article by John Butt containing the significant statement: 'the vocal parts of cantata choruses are conceptually solo – often virtuoso – lines that may or may not have been reinforced'. The Laaber CHOR is shorter and more circumspect, but refers to a separate entry for KURTZER, IEDÖCH HÖCHSTNÖTIGER ENTWURFF... (misprinted at the heading to p. 329), the 1730 document over which there has been so much controversy. This is reproduced in facsimile, along with an explanation. I wondered what I could find about the motets which began the Sunday service. Oxford gives a brief history of the MOTET in Germany before discussing Bach's motets; Laaber, however, mentions under MOTETTEN the anthology *Florilegium Portense* and has an entry under that name. Oxford has a similar entry, but I'm not sure how you would know what to look up if you don't know the name. I would have gone first for Bodenschatz, but neither book lists him. I tried the entry for the Sunday service, for which you need to use the German word HAUPTGOTTESDIENST, but that merely states that the second item of the service is a Motetta. The Oxford user has, in fact, to use various German words: Lateinschule, for instance, which has no entry in Laaber. I wondered whether discussions of the coffee cantata might tell us how much a cup of the beverage cost in comparison with beer or wine. Oxford has an article CURRENCY which tells us that coffee, alcohol and tobacco were expensive in comparison with modern prices, but frustratingly mentions that Bach's spirit and tobacco bills for a fortnight in 1713 survive without quoting them: if you are interested, you must consult *Bach-Jahrbuch* 80 (1994), pp. 32-33.

On the whole, readers can feel happy with the volume in their own language; but if you have a modicum of German, there is enough in Laaber to make it a useful second point of reference, though it is rather more expensive, especially if you feel you need the other five volumes.

Joel Lester *Bach's Works for Solo Violin: Style, Structure, Performance* New York: Oxford UP, 1999. x + 186pp. £22.50 ISBN 0 19 512097 3

I feared the worst when I read on the jacket that the author is a former editor of *Music Theory Spectrum*, but I need not have worried: this is intelligent writing about music that eschews the normal jargon and is particularly concerned with examining how Bach puts together his music in ways that are different from those used by composers of the sonata-form period. He concentrates chiefly on the sonata in G minor, but brings in discussion of other music, not just the remaining five *Solos* – why are people so reluctant to use Bach's word for the six unaccompanied works? Analysis is related closely to how the works may be played, and I am sure that anyone performing the music will benefit by a close reading of this book.

A few odd points attracted my attention. The layout of the chord in Example 1-3 is not as close to the facsimile on the opposite page as it should be: the stems of the chord are too separated. At the end of p. 7, *sonata da camera* and *sonata da chiesa* are reversed. Surely the *violino piccolo* in Brandenburg 1 is a different instrument, not just a violin tuned up a minor third (p. 9)? The list of facsimiles (p. 11) misses the SPES one, which is the most likely to be bought now. In view of normal practice (*Clavier-Übung*, *Essercizi*, *Lessons*) is there anything at all surprising in the *Solos* being called studies (p. 20). Since the G minor sonata's fugue begins on the dominant, why is the writer surprised that its second statement preserves the E flat that one would expect from the key (p. 68)? The remarks on the *Chaconne* would be strengthened by reference to the form's history of being favoured for their most substantial movements by Biber, Corelli, Lully, Purcell, etc – maybe not all known to Bach, but part of a tradition (p. 151). These, however, are minor matters compared with the excellence of the book as a whole.

BACH FACSIMILE

Johann Sebastian Bach *Die Achtzehn Grossen Orgelchoräle BWV 651-668 und Canonische Veränderungen über 'Vom Himmel hoch' BWV 769*. Faksimile der Originalhandschrift mit einem Vorwort herausgegeben von Peter Wollny (*Meisterwerke der Musik in Faksimile*, 5) Laaber, 1999. xix + pp. 57-110, DM 128.00. ISBN 3 89007 409 X

This comprises the second part of Berlin Staatsbibliothek Mus. ms. Bach P 271. The first part (pp 1-56 in the 19th-century numbering) contains the organ sonatas BWV 525-530, apparently written on the same paper but perhaps ten years earlier (around 1730); a facsimile of that was published by Bärenreiter in 1987. The Laaber facsimile contains the final version of the 18 chorale preludes BWV 651-665, all except BWV 666 and 667 in Bach's hand and written around 1739-42. After their publication in 1747, Bach added a revised version of the Canonic Variations BWV 769. This section ends with *Vor deinen Thron* BWV 668, perhaps (if the preface to the first edition of *The Art of Fugue* is to be believed) taken down from Bach's dictation after he had become blind. This breaks off at the end of the last page. The MS now ends with an earlier version of BWV 660 on paper from Bach's period at Weimar. BWV 666 & 667 were added in a gap between BWV 665 and the Canonic Variations by Altnickol, perhaps soon after Bach's death. The introduction sets all the information out clearly in German and English.

The music is, of course, all available in print: NBA IV/2 includes both the early versions and the evidently-final versions of this MS (though having them in the same volume makes comparison difficult). A glance at the facsimile shows that NBA isn't quite as pedantic as one would like. Take the first piece, for example. NBA prints as heading:

*Fantasia super
Komm, Heiliger Geist
in organo pleno/il canto fermo nel pedale*

Bach has no comma or capitals in the chorale title and writes in *organo pleno* at the beginning of the first system, not as part of the title. Also, he writes the music on two staves; since the edition has three staves, the rubric *Pedal* for the third stave is unnecessary, even though it is in the source: Bach does not bother to write it in the next setting, which is on three staves. All this is, of course, pedantic, but it is a lesson not to rely on the headings elsewhere in NBA without checking the critical commentaries. There are odd differences in placement on the stave as well. These are probably just a matter of convenience, but the serious student will want to see exactly what Bach wrote. The facsimile is very clear: there are no serious problems of show-through. Organists should treat themselves to a copy.

BACH from BÄRENREITER

As publisher of the NBA, Bärenreiter is in a privileged position to circulate cheaper editions of Bach's music, and the items here are all based on the NBA. The most substantial of the batch here is *Die Kunst der Fuge für Cembalo (Klavier)*, BWV 1080 (BA 5207; £19.50). Bach will have expected the work to have been studied and played from open score from the old clefs, as it was published, and there are pedagogic and musical reasons to continue to do so. But the music is still worth playing by people who have no desire to acquire such skills, so this two-stave version, based on the posthumous print though including material from the MS, is very welcome. There is a thorough introduction by Klaus Hofmann setting out, among other things, the differences between the MS and the printed version. An additional separate copy of the mirror fugues for two instruments is included. David Schuhlenberg's completion of the final fugue is given in an appendix. This is a useful edition, probably the best available unless you demand four staves: there is even an attempt (though the task is impossible) to provide manageable page-turns.

Hofmann the Herbipolitan (why does his name always have *Herbipol.* printed after it?) is also responsible for a reconstruction from the Second Brandenburg Concerto of a *Concerto da Camera in F* for trumpet (or *corno da caccia*), recorder, oboe, violin and continuo. This uses a couple of secondary sources of the concerto which may preserve earlier readings than the presentation score of the Brandenburgs, allied to a deduction that the familiar work originally lacked the violin and viola parts. There is much sense in the proposition, though it is confusing that the edition sometimes gives precedence to Bach's later changes. Keyboard players would normally take the presence of a figure as a cue for playing a chord, yet for half the figures on the first page Hofmann gives no right-hand chord. (BA 5196: £11.95 for score and parts)

Bach's solo transcriptions of concertos by Vivaldi and others are fun to play and are important in showing his interest in the concerto form, even if not all the originals are of distinguished origin. The first of three reprints from NBA V/11 contains six concerti BWV 972-977: Vivaldi op. 3/9,

op. 7/8, A. Marcello's oboe concerto, Vivaldi RV 316 & op. 3/12 and a work of unknown origin in C. (BA 5221; £9.50)

Finally, a pair of anthologies for students: obbligato movements from vocal works giving the instrumental and vocal solo lines. Drinker's English translations are included as well as the German texts. BA6414 contains 16 movements for recorders (£13.50), BA6986 has 18 movements for violin (£16.95). The violin volume includes two duets, with a separate 2nd violin part; the recorder volume has duets and trios but no separate parts. The two books have different editorial policies. The recorder parts are left as Urtext, but the violin parts have suggestions for bowing and fingering, which will be less to the taste of our readers. The recorder book will be invaluable for teachers and students and is highly recommended; a pity the violin book was not edited on the same basis.

Those who have paid for the instrumental study-score set must be patient: a mistake was discovered just as they were ready to be sent out and they have had to be reprinted.

FRENCH FLUTE

M. Blavet *Sonates pour flûte et basse continue opus 2*. Édition par David Ledbetter. (*Le Pupitre* L. P. 79). Heugel, 1999. 2 vols; £19.90 & £21.40.

This poses the question whether the quality of the edition and introductory remarks justify paying over £40.00 when you can buy the Fuzeau facsimile for under £15.00. I haven't seen that, so cannot comment on the usefulness of its introduction, which apparently includes a comparison with the second edition of c.1741. David Ledbetter notes a second printing from after 1733, and reproduces a page from it, but claims that it is merely a more elegant but unchanged re-ingraving of the first. His introduction is extremely helpful for the performer, and he provides a continuo realisation that is better than most. The edition comes with a separate flute part (though why does its outer margin have to be so small?) This is certainly an edition that libraries should buy (any decent library should subscribe to *Le Pupitre* anyway), and those with only a modest enthusiasm for Blavet can buy just one volume.

François Devienne's *Nouvelle Méthode Théorique et Pratique pour la Flute*. Facsimile of the original edition with an introduction, annotated catalogue of later editions, and translation by Jane Bowers. Commentary on the original edition by Thomas Boehm. Ashgate, 1999. x + 116 + 77pp, £45.00. ISBN 1 84014 642 7

This begins with a biography of the author, three pages on earlier flute methods and a bibliographic description of the original Imbault editions by Jane Bowers. Then Thomas Boehm (a modern writer, not a contemporary of Theobald) surveys the content of the *Méthode*. Bowers returns to describe the later history of the publication, including 20th-century editions that preserve the name but none of the original content (like *New Grove*). The main content

comprises the translation of the text (given without the music examples) and the facsimile, somewhat reduced in size so probably rather hard work to read from a music stand. This is a basic work for students of the classical flute and its availability with this thorough introductory material is most welcome.

HISTORICAL PERFORMANCE

Colin Lawson and Robin Stowell *The Historical Performance of Music: An Introduction* Cambridge UP, 1999. xiii + 219pp. hb £35.00 ISBN 0 521 62193 3. pb £12.95 ISBN 0 521 62738 9

This book is misleadingly titled. Not until the penultimate line of the first page of the preface is the reader told that it covers only the period from c.1700 to c.1900 – quite a small proportion of the output of historical performers (in our December issue, five pages are devoted to reviews of CDs from before 1700, seven to CDs of later music, of which five relate to the first half of the 18th century). In fact, the book is concerned with music that has been widely known to the general public for much of the 20th century, even if in a performance style that has been questioned over the last few decades, and is not about the earlier music that was not known at all. No objection to that, but the title should make the subject clear.

The other major criticism is a backhanded one: I found it rather boring to read because I agreed with virtually everything. I might take issue with some emphases on the more philosophical remarks justifying historical performance, but otherwise this sets out very clearly in fairly general terms the background that should be understood by performers and listeners. Four works are singled out for specific comment: Bach's *St Matthew Passion*, Mozart's *Serenade K361*, the *Symphonie fantastique* and Brahms' *Second Symphony* – I think I would have chosen a Verdi opera instead of the Brahms to get a wider geographical and formal range. Very few specific comments felt odd. Mozart's orchestration may have made Handel's organ continuo redundant, but isn't there evidence of an organ being imported for at least one of van Swieten's Viennese Handel performances (p. 5)? There have been suggestions that the cello endpin goes back long before 1860 (p. 128). Comparing two different editions is difficult if they are not printed on the same opening (pp. 112-119). This excellent book should broaden the horizons of the younger generation of 'early' performers who learn from the first generation rather than invent the style for themselves.

SOR SEGUIDILLAS

Fernando Sor *More Seguidillas for two and three voices, with guitar or piano accompaniment*. Edited by Brian Jeffery. Tecla, 1999. xxi + 52pp. hb (no. 0379) £32.00; pb (0380) £16.00.

To the general public, Sor is exclusively a composer of music for the solo guitar. But in 1976 Brian Jeffery published a dozen of his *Seguidillas* for voice and guitar or

piano in 1976, and now has produced some more for two and three singers. The index lists 16 pieces, but those that have both guitar and piano accompaniment are numbered separately. Pride of place is given to a set of three songs for three voices (with stratified ranges for S, mS and a highish A) which survive in an early source in the BL (Egerton 3289, perhaps c. 1805-10) with guitar and in an edition published in Paris between 1811 & 1816 that is clearly from a similar source but has an idiomatic piano accompaniment, perhaps by its editor Narciso Paz. They look entertaining. The editor evidently longs to hear them sung with dancing, though his introduction (which quotes extensively from descriptions in a contemporary diary) suggests that the music does not exactly match the danced *seguidillas boleras* of c.1800. Is this the first publication we have reviewed which received its first modern performance in Darwin? (We listed the International Guitar Festival in the *EMR* diary, but not that particular event). This is a fine publication: attractive but unknown music is presented with all the information that one needs. New information will be posted on www.tecla.com/catalog/0305.htm – perhaps this should become standard practice. [There has recently, for instance, been some discussion on a chat group of the text of a Spanish carol that could usefully have been linked to a *New Oxford Book of Carols* site if one existed.]
(Ordering information on www.tecla.com)

Despite more space than usual having been given to book and music reviews, there still isn't room for them all. There is, gratifyingly, a higher proportion of music to books than usual. Several editions are held over to next month, along with the following books. It is a pity that we did not have Clive Brown's study for direct comparison with Lawson & Stowell's CUP Handbook.

Music in Art: International Journal for Music Iconography. Vol. XXIII, no. 1-2, Spring-Fall 1998

A Catalogue of the Shaw-Hellier Collection in the Music Library, Barber Institute of Fine Arts, The University of Birmingham compiled by Ian Ledsham. Ashgate, 1999. xxx + 385pp. £52.50. ISBN 1 852928 386 1

Angela Evans/Robert Dearling Josef Myslivecek: A Thematic Catalogue of his Instrumental and Orchestral Works. (*Musikwissenschaftliche Schriften*, 35). Munich & Salzburg: Katzbichler, 1999. 188pp. ISBN 3 87397 132 1.

Demar Irvine Irvine's Writing about Music. Third edition, revised and enlarged by Mark A. Radice. Amadeus Press, 1999. xv + 257pp. \$17.95. ISBN 1 57467 049 2

Clive Brown Classical & Romantic Performing Practice 1750-1900. Oxford UP, 1999. xii + 662pp. £65.00. ISBN 0 19 816165 4

John Caldwell The Oxford History of English Music. Volume II: From c. 1715 to the Present Day. Oxford UP, 1999. xxii + 612pp. £80.00. ISBN 0 19 816288 X

EMR remains just right! neither too scholarly nor too populist! Unique. Keep it that way please! Michèle Kohler

BACH at ST ANDREWS

Peter Branscombe

St Andrews enjoyed a lively and imaginative Bach Festival recently. A taut, well-planned series of concerts and recitals in Holy Trinity Church was compressed into the three days of 26-28 November. The principal work was the Christmas Oratorio, though other cantatas, Brandenburg concertos, several smaller-scale chamber works, and an organ competition and winners' recital on the church's fine Harrison organ were also included in the programme. On the Saturday there was even a late-night jazz concert, *Bach and Beyond*, for people with sufficient stamina. The festival was basically a showcase for the long-established St Andrews Chorus, a sizable choir of singers from town and university, and the Heisenberg Ensemble, a chamber orchestra founded ten years ago, that has long since outlived any hint of the Uncertainty Principle associated with its patron's name. Excellent young players from St Mary's Music School, Edinburgh, provided a leavening in front desks and with obbligati, and talented singers drawn from the environs and further afield shone in the solos in the cantatas. The concerts were directed by John Grundy, head of music at St Mary's, and for some time the regular conductor of the St Andrews Chorus. If there was a fault, it lay in the ambitiously fast tempos at which some of the movements were taken – but this is much to be preferred to a heavy, portentous tread. John Grundy showed other skills in his brilliant realization of the solo harpsichord part in the Fifth Brandenburg.

On the Friday afternoon there was an organ competition, with a prize donated by the Chorus. In the event, there was judged to be so little to choose between Nicola Grant, Joseph McHardy and Andrew Macintosh that, for the winning organ recital at lunch time on Sunday, all three

were invited to play and were awarded a part of the prize. Joseph McHardy, the principal prize-winner, showed his worthiness of the award in poised performances of two chorale preludes, though the other soloists, with their choice of more challenging works, might well have been forgiven a touch of disappointment. The Saturday lunch-hour recital included a neat account of the Sixth Brandenburg (nos 3, 4 and 5 were accommodated elsewhere in the programmes). Before that, Claire Docherty played violin Sonata in A minor with some panache, but the outstanding achievement was Robin Mason's vivid account of the Cello Suite in C minor. The main events were the three evening concerts. Two cantatas from the Christmas Oratorio were the focal points of each. Remarkably assured players had been found for the taxing trumpet, horn and woodwind obbligati, and – particularly pleasing in view of the large size of the choir – balance was never a problem. The chorales were poised, diction (the oratorio was sung in English) remarkably clear. Of the two motets included (sung in German), *Singet dem Herrn* was well sustained by the full forces; *Komm Jesu, komm* from the University Singers, on the other hand, was, despite instrumental backing, disappointingly tentative and edgy. In the one solo cantata in the programme, *Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen*, Marni Rachel Lamb and the fine trumpeter Hedley Benson duetted with wit and style. Both Saturday's and Sunday's concerts ended with rousing performances of Cantata 50, *Nun ist das Heil und die Kraft*. The excellent programme booklet deserves a word of praise. The whole festival was a splendid tribute in advance of the 250th anniversary of Bach's death and was greatly enjoyed by large and enthusiastic audiences.

MESSIAH in BRISBANE & ADELAIDE

Graham Abbott

We are grateful to Graham for letting us reprint this; it was written to introduce his 1999 performances, not specifically for us, or we would have moderated the fourth paragraph!

Whilst it may not be immediately apparent to the audience, the 1999 *Messiah* performances under my direction – in Brisbane and Adelaide – are the result of a whole new look at this famous and much-loved score. Many decisions need to be made about rhythms, phrasing, dynamics and other matters as Handel did not make all these explicit in his score. A conductor needs to decide what to do, based on an understanding of the conventions

of the day, Handel's own performance practices and – let's face it – educated guesswork.

In 1990 I bought a set of orchestral parts for *Messiah*, in what was at that time the best available edition in terms of making clear what Handel actually wrote (as opposed to what an editor might assume he meant), and in providing most of the myriad alternative versions Handel wrote and sanctioned in his many revisions of the piece. I marked these with my own bowings, phrasings, dynamics, and rhythmic decisions so that whenever I conducted the piece I would have all the things I wanted readily in front of the orchestra.

According to my records, this set of parts was used by me for 36 performances (the number of *Messiah* performances Handel conducted in his lifetime!) between 1990 and 1998. But I have had my doubts at times about some of my ideas, and rather than making a few changes here and there to the orchestral material, I wanted to start again. (There are a number of errors in that particular edition, and in any case, the parts were getting pretty battered!)

Last year, a new edition emerged, this time from Oxford University Press, edited by Clifford Bartlett, one of the finest minds in the early music movement in Britain, and someone whom I have known for more than a decade. Clifford's editions of many works fill my shelves (his specialities are Handel, Monteverdi and Purcell), and his OUP edition of the Handel Coronation Anthems is now the standard edition world-wide. I knew his *Messiah* would be the one to have, and so it proved to be. When the parts and score arrived earlier this year I was amazed at the balance of scholarship and practicality they embodied. Here also was every known variant written or sanctioned by the composer.

In 1999 I am using this edition for the first time. I have taken some months to completely rethink most of my decisions about the piece, but having at my fingertips an edition which makes absolutely clear what the composer wrote gave me as much information as I could possibly have upon which to base those decisions. Not that the decisions themselves are easy to make. Many questions remain, simply because Handel doesn't tell us. Is the end of the overture meant to slow down? Will I finally have the courage to remove the traditional slurs (which Handel didn't write) in the semiquavers at the start of 'O thou that tellest'? Does Handel's marking about putting the trumpets in the distance in 'Glory to God' make any difference with modern trumpets in a modern concert hall? Will I add slurs to 'He shall feed his flock'? What rhythms did Handel actually perform in 'Behold the Lamb of God' and a dozen

other movements? On and on they go, hundreds of questions. Many of my answers now are different to those I came to in 1990.

One interesting factor is the way I feel now about giving modern orchestral string players bowings which are for them rather unorthodox, but which are suited to Baroque string technique. In 1990 I suggested 'retake' bowing in the opening of the overture with great trepidation. Nowadays players ask me if they can use this technique! This has made me braver in suggesting more separate bows and less 'hooked' bowing generally, despite the fact that Baroque separate bowing is at times awkward with a modern bow. Modern-style string players in Australia seem to be much more open to using earlier styles of playing than they used to be. In my opinion, it simply makes the music sound better. Of course, there are times when we do compromise – after all, the players aren't using Baroque bows and gut strings – but the overall effect we can achieve nowadays on modern instruments, even with limited rehearsal time, is much better than ten years ago.

While I don't have accurate timings of all my performances, I do know that I am slowing down. Part One used to run (depending, of course, on versions used) to about 55 minutes. Now it's closer to an hour. Part Two has been lengthened in recent years by my rethinking of 'And with his stripes', which now goes very slowly. This year I will restore the only real cut I have ever made in recent years: we will perform the entire trumpet aria, not just the first section.

I've been conducting *Messiah* for twenty years now, and whereas in the early days I thought I should be radical and fast in order to make an impression (who'd be 21 again!), these days I think I'm able to let a little more of the real Handel show through. It's a big work, and it takes time to learn, and time to perform. I hope that this year I'm getting a little closer...

MESSIAH in NAZARETH

Clifford Bartlett

Readers may have noticed that the Concert Diary in the last issue listed nine performances of *Messiah* in Israel from 31 December to 15 January. Apologies to the singers for the way their names came out after being transliterated into Hebrew and back again: 'Jenny Hensel', for instance, isn't a descendant of Fanny Mendelssohn but the wife of one of our regular reviewers.

The leader of the orchestra, Lydia Peres, asked me to go to Israel for some of the performances but I initially declined, since it seemed a bit mean to go alone without the family and we are saving up to extend our house. But I got as far as checking the cost of cheap flights, and a couple of weeks

before Christmas EB suggested that perhaps I ought to go. So, still suffering from the millennial flu bug, I flew out on December 28th, not quite knowing what to expect.

My hosts Lydia and her husband Assaf Hari are both PhDs and teachers of maths at the Haifa Technion (which seems to be the Israeli equivalent of the MIT) as well as enthusiastic and skilful players of the baroque violin and viola respectively. The Carmel Baroque Chamber Orchestra included a few other amateurs mixed with professional players of modern instruments who were also interested in playing baroque. The string strength varied slightly, but was basically 3.3.2.2.1, with two oboes, bassoon, timps and

keyboard. Unfortunately Israel has no baroque trumpet; one came from England with the soloists, but for the performance I heard the words should have been changed to 'The oboe shall sound'; the oboe played exceptionally well. I went to a rehearsal on my first day (lasting five hours with a single break) and was extraordinarily impressed by the quality and devotion. The orchestra had worked immensely hard (about ten rehearsals), and in particular had studied the text carefully. This was apparent in their fine phrasing, far more carefully thought-through than at the usual single-rehearsal-on-the-day performances that one hears here. Intonation was excellent, helped by a few exercises at the beginning of the rehearsal and the occasional stops to tune chords.

I intended to catch the two performances with Israeli soloists, rather than the later ones with an English team. But the concert on the 31st in Jerusalem was cancelled. No-one seemed to regret it. There were fears of attempts to hasten the end of the world (which turned out to be as false an alarm as the millennium bug), and in fact, after a family Sabbath meal, we were in bed by ten pm. The performance on 1 January at Nazareth had problems. It was part of a festival of sacred music. The previous concert, by a Christian Kenyan choir, had started late and over-ran with lots of encores, so there was no time to sort out balance in the church (surprisingly, churches seem to be common venues for concerts in Israel). The alto soloist then discovered that she had no voice, despite turning up ready to sing in her glad rags. In England, of course, that would have presented no problem: someone from the choir or audience would have volunteered to take her place before you could say 'Patrick McCarthy'. But *Messiah* is less of a repertory piece there (though by no means unknown), so the performance was given with no alto solos. The surroundings were not conducive to intent listening, with a battery of fireworks interrupting 'Comfort ye' and returning at 'I know that my redeemer liveth', and the audience was generally restless, if ultimately appreciative. So it would be unfair to review the concert as a whole. I gather that the performances in Haifa and Tel Aviv (the former sold out) were intensely moving experiences.

The outstanding soloist was the tenor, Boaz Davidoff. He could probably sing a shopping list and bring it to life, such is his power of dramatic and musical delivery. He has a good sense of style as well as a fine voice. But he needs to think more carefully about his use of gesture: either all soloists should use them or none, and they are more effective without a score in one hand. I'm sure we will see him here soon. The Galilee Chamber Choir, members of kibbutzim in Galilee and the Golan Heights, sounded rather more baroque than most British choirs of similar size (about 40), though the voices themselves were not as good as, for instance, those of the Dorset choir with which I played the Praetorius Christmas Vespers early in December in Sherborne Abbey. I was extremely impressed with the conductor, Ron Zarchi. Much of the instrumental details had been worked out by the leader, but he was responsible

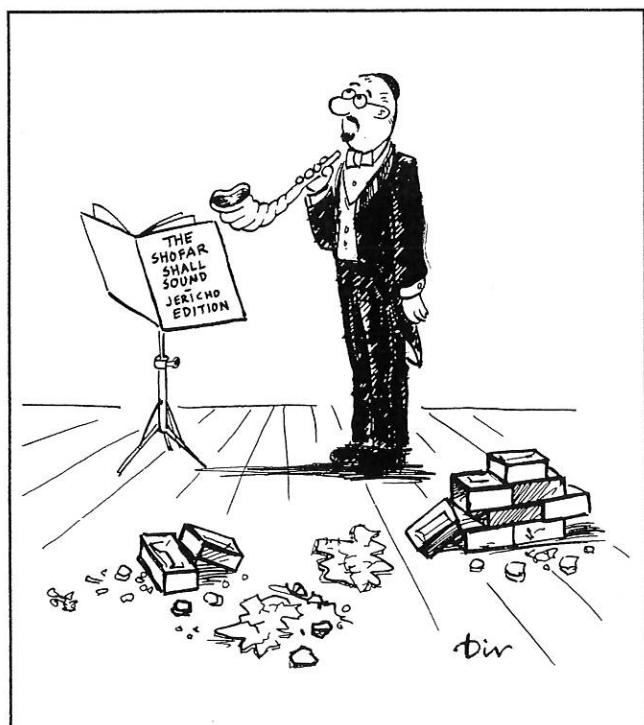
for the overall shaping and the choral sound, which was distinguished by excellent phrasing, with none of the banging on weak final syllables that distinguishes many UK performances ('For the mouth of the Lord hath spoken IT').

I had wondered whether there would be any problems with the explicitly Christian aspects of the work. I remembered that, when I prepared a cut version of *Belshazzar* for Roger Norrington to perform in Jerusalem some 15 years ago, there were problems about retaining the name of God. But no-one I spoke to was in the least concerned, and at least they probably had a better idea of why the sons of Levi should be purified than most European singers.

The problem with getting a baroque orchestra together in Israel is that there are no high-quality teachers there, just occasional visitors, and there is too little professional work to keep good players; Kati Debretzeni, for instance, had to move to Europe to attain her full potential. Lydia and Assaf have permanent jobs outside music, so will stay; but younger players who want to become full-time baroque players have to move on. Several English players go out to teach: Cat Macintosh and Walter Reiter were mentioned among violinists, and Philip Thorby, who was there a few weeks before me, will return to do the Biber Requiem in F minor in the autumn. I wonder if Salzburg Cathedral library has found the manuscript yet: they reported it lost when we wanted to produce an edition in 1991. (The score in DTO isn't entirely fault-free.)

Lydia has subsequently e-mailed informal and entertaining reports of the remaining performances: if there is space, we will include excerpts in the diary section.

King's Music still offers reduced prices for the Oxford UP *Messiah* score, vocal score and parts.



LONDON MUSIC

Andrew Benson-Wilson

One of the Royal College of Organists' contributions to the nationwide Italian Festival was a recital by the Italian organist Francesco Cera (St Andrew's Holborn, 11 Nov). Much of the concert was given on an Italian positive organ built in 1996 after a 17th-century model – its typically clear and brilliantly singing tones sounded most effective in the generous acoustic. Italian keyboard music is a distinctive genre with its own often-complex sets of rules. Playing on a real historic Italian instrument (organ or harpsichord) is fundamental to its understanding for performers. Listening to home-grown interpreters, weaned on such instruments, can be revealing. Cera plays in a quiet relaxed style with subdued hand movements and a clear sense of musical direction. He does not treat semiquavers as a lyrical or melodic device, but also avoids the empty virtuosity that spoils so many present day performances. Musically the highlights were in the first half, with music by Trabaci, Salvatore and Gesualdo's harmonically turbulent *Canzon francese del Principe*, but de Macque's bizarre *Capriccio re fa mi sol* was ruined by the astonishing decision to play it on the St Andrew's organ, built after English mid-19th-century models. The unpleasant harshness of tone caused by the equal temperament was just one of the oddities. Apparently this was a decision by Cera himself rather than the RCO, but I have a sneaky feeling that a number of organists present might have preferred this interpretation to that on the Italian organ – they probably also liked Pergolesi's Rococo flight of fancy that concluded the recital. The RCO let themselves down by the programme note, which gave no information about the pieces played, apart from their titles. But credit is due for their increasing willingness to encompass the world of organ music outside the English parish church tradition, as was also witnessed by their recent excellent workshop day for teachers and performers on the The History and Development of Organ Technique given by Jacques van Oortmerssen.

Also part of The Italian Festival was The Italian Madrigal Group's imaginative concert based around the conjectural programme of a performance put on by Monteverdi at the house of Sir Isaac Wake, the English Ambassador, in Venice on 17 July 1627 (St John's, Smith Square, 12 November). The culmination was *Il Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda*, preceded by another setting from Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata*, the magnificent *Vattene pur crudel* (although I wasn't convinced that this piece fitted Monteverdi's own request that *Il Combattimento* be preceded by madrigals 'without gesture'). The five singers and seven instrumentalists were joined by tenor Nigel Robson in the opening *Tempo la cetra* and as the narrator in *Il Combattimento*. This was a friendly and approachable concert, with some rather folksy introductions, including a map of Venice for us all to pinpoint the Ambassador's house.

Mid-November bought a host of Handel concerts, starting with *Rinaldo* at the Barbican (15 November) with Christopher Hogwood's Academy of Ancient Music (mirrored by a student performance at the next door Guildhall School of Music). Despite the presence of such divas as Cecilia Bartoli (whose first London opera appearance it was), David Daniels and Luba Orgonasova (none of whom seemed to be firing on all cylinders), it was the supporting singers that I will remember, including Daniel Taylor, Bernarda Fink and especially Gerald Finley in a staggeringly robust, dramatic and musical performance as Argante. Hogwood coaxed and encouraged rather than imposed, letting music and musicians speak for themselves. Amongst the instrumentalists, Andrew Manze delivered some energetic Handelian violin carpentry, Rachel Brown produced some charming birds from her sopranino recorder and Paul Nicholson took on Handel's harpsichord role in the solo interludes in Armida's aria 'Vo' far guerra' at the end of Act II. An excellent programme note attempted to make sense of the story line and gave a fascinating insight into the background of the original performance.

After her diminutive role as second Siren in *Rinaldo*, Catherine Bott moved centre stage to sing two Handel motets with The Hanover Band (Wigmore Hall 1 December). Bott's light and mellifluous vocal interpretations were by far the best part of a disappointing evening, but the guest direction of harpsichordist Richard Egarr was far removed from the mood set by Bott. He pushed the players hard, resulting in overly emphatic and punchy articulation and an explosive attack on notes. The harpsichord continuo was frequently out of keeping with the rest of the instrumental lines and there were moments of pure burlesque when Egarr and guitar player William Carter seemed gleefully bent on out-doing each other in exaggeration. There didn't seem to be a meeting of minds between director and players, most of whom kept their heads buried in the music. The programme notes were poor, with no words for the motets, and more text on the director than on the music.

English National Opera's latest blockbusting Handel extravaganza was *Alcina*, in a new production directed by David McVicar. As with the ENO production of *Semele*, the biggest weaknesses were the massed and romantically inclined forces of the ENO Chorus and the orchestra, almost as unstylistic, with some alarmingly un-Handelian violin and cello solos. In an attempt to counter the appearance of the great Farinelli at a rival theatre, Handel laid on a troupe of dancers in the first run to liven up proceedings as Alcina's Spirits. Although some national press reviewers have slated this aspect of the ENO performance, I thought the young dancers were most inspiring in some stylishly post-modern choreography by Michael Keegan-Dolan. Vocally Sarah

Connolly (in the alto-castrato role of Ruggiero), Toby Spence (Oronte) and Gail Pearson (Oberto) impressed me the most, with Christine Rice (Bradamante) not far behind. Joan Rogers never quite took the title role to the heights demanded and Lisa Milne (a rising star in the operatic world) was a trifle too operatic as Morgana for my early-music tastes. Sir Charles Mackerras was a spacious and stately conductor, although it would have been interesting to hear him with a period instrument band and historically aware chorus – surely it is time for the ENO to buy in at least a chorus from one of the established early music groups. The production was spectacular and glitzy, focusing on Handel as the Andrew Lloyd Webber of his day.

From one of Handel's magical operas to one of his four military oratorios, with a performance of *Joshua* by the Orlando Chamber Choir and Baroque Orchestra directed by Brian Gordon (St John's, Smith Square, 6 December). The 33-strong choir is a amateur one specialising in the baroque repertoire. They were impressive, with a consistent tone, clear articulation and helpful clarity of words. Less impressive were the orchestra and some aspects of the direction. Timing and intonation suffered the most, and the direction was frequently too insistent and heavy, occasionally producing too loud a sound from the band. For a former singer, Gordon was surprisingly unforgiving in allowing his soloists space for their interpretations. But there were some fine moments, including the key central scene between 'Almighty Ruler of the Skies' and the appealing melodic 'As cheers the sun', with its panoply of triumph, despair, resolute defiance, battle and finally sex. Charles Daniels was, as ever, a most persuasive musical interpreter in the title role with the ubiquitous Catherine Bott providing the love interest as Achsah.

Award-winners' concerts can be mixed affairs. Expectations are high, for the performers are assumed to have gone through a rigorous selection process. If such a concert does not meet those expectations, questions are raised as much by the selection process as by the quality of a one-off performance by the winners. The 1999 Gerard W. Byrne Award for Handelian Performance, administered by the Handel Institute, came under scrutiny on 25 November as the prize winners, Amphion, were given a chance to show their mettle at St James's, Piccadilly. They played a fascinating programme of early Handel works for soprano and chamber instruments. The enthusiasm of the group was evident to all, and there were some effective moments. A highlight was the concluding Passacaille of the Trio Sonata op. 5 no. 4, with a nice use of light and shade and a well controlled crescendo leading into the minor key section, and it was good to hear a continuo organ, rather than harpsichord, in the *Concert a Quattro*. But there were far too many moments of uncertainty. Although the soprano's ability to make eye contact with her audience was commendable, the speed of her vibrato gave a nervous edge to her tone and she didn't quite articulate Handel's punishing runs to suite the acoustic. Her singing was also strangely matter of fact, given the dramatic content of many of the pieces. Timing between the group

was often found wanting, as was the consistency of pulse in, for example, the harpsichord Chaconne in G. Overlarge gaps between cantata sections interrupted the flow. Perhaps the group were not used to playing in such a generous acoustic, which can play tricks on intonation and integration.

The final burst of Handel was *Theodora* given by the Gabrieli Consort and Players under Paul McCreesh (Barbican, 7 December). For me, this was by far the best of the seasons Handel concerts, not least because the plot does not demand a doctorate in chaos theory. The straight-forward, if sentimental, story of an early Christian Martyr extends through the whole gamut range of human emotions and has an inevitability of tragedy that Thomas Hardy would have appreciated. Apart from some minor cuts, this was the score of the first performance, with Handel's rather paranoid post-production omissions restored. McCreesh directed with commendable restraint, letting the music flow and the musicians develop their lines – another example of the recent, and welcome, relaxing of his often rather frenetic style. Susan Gritton was on top form in the title role, her two linked arias in Part 2 Scene 2 ('With Darkness deep as is my Woe' and 'O that I on Wings could rise') forming the emotional high point of the evening. Paul Agnew perfectly portrayed the changing emotions of Septimius (the final reprise in his first Air 'Descend, kind pity, heav'ly Guest' was quite sublime) and Neal Davis gave a highly charged depiction of the Roman baddy, Valens. Christopher Robson was a disappointing Didymus. I wasn't convinced of the stability of his countertenor register, and the dropouts (or noticeable switches to tenor timbre) in the lower register and tendency for the high notes to become increasingly piercing and insecure in pitch were all too evident. And I am sure that a Roman soldier, even a Christian one, would not have got away with singing with his hands in his pockets. One instrumental passage that I wasn't quite sure of was the introduction to Theodora's Air 'Fond, flatt'ring World, adieu' where the articulation seemed to cut across what perhaps should have been octave echoes. It was good to see singers singing TO each other, as the text demanded, with the recipient standing during colleague's recitatives. Unfortunately the audience contained the idiot (is it the same one each time, or is there more than one of them?) who bursts into solo applause well before the final note had died away. This is not done because of an excess of emotion, but purely to display musical arrogance – in this case the clever chap (it surely must be a chap) had read the programme note sufficiently well to realise that the final words of Septimius to the Christians were never set to music by Handel, although they remain in the libretto. Conductors try their best to conduct the final silence, but a discrete and silent crossbow bolt to the head is really what is needed. [*Alcina*, *Joshua* and *Theodora* all used King's Music editions.]

It takes something for four male early music singers to fill the Albert Hall with an audience that included at least one reigning monarch. But the singers were The Hilliard Ensemble and the 'something' was the Norwegian jazz saxophonist

Jan Garbarek. Following the worldwide success of *Officium*, they have ventured back to the Sankt Gerold monastery for another improvisatory collaboration, and this concert was part of the launch tour of their new CD *Mnemosyme*. Apparently previous audiences of the *Officium* tour have complained that the saxophone wasn't playing the same lines as on the CD, completely missing the point that this is improvised music. They made good use of the vast space of the Albert Hall with their hypnotic fusion of vocal music and (for this performance at least) rather laid-back and moderate interjections from the saxophone. It does not help to try and categorise this sort of music, nor to be patronising about suggesting conversions to 'early music'. But by increasing the focus on vocal improvisation, and moving away from purely renaissance choral music, *Mnemosyme* perhaps gets closer than *Officium* to the common roots of our shared musical heritage. A mellow evening.

Yet again the Wigmore Hall has managed to field Andreas Scholl for a lunchtime concert (22 November) in the company of Purcell, Blow, Bach and Handel. Scholl is gradually losing his rather buttoned-up persona and his stage presence is more relaxed and free. Vocally too, I detect a slight loosening of the throat and a more flexibly cantabile line. At times this results in a slight lift at the beginning of notes (which I do not find disturbing at all) and the occasional swoop up to notes, which singers of a lesser calibre would need to watch out for in the future. But Scholl's innate musicality and the heavenly tone of his voice put such matters in the shade. He can do exquisite things with a single note on a single word - 'freeze' in Purcell's *Sweeter than roses*, for example. It was good to hear three of Bach's continuo songs, even if one wasn't by him at all. It says a lot for the enlightened management of the Wigmore Hall, and for Scholl himself, that he is still prepared to give relatively small scale concerts like this in such sympathetic acoustics - long may it remain so.

One of the most promising new groups over the last few years has been The Bach Players, founded in 1996 and dedicated to the music of Bach. A London highlight has been their exploration of Bach Cantatas, the latest of which featured Advent cantatas: two on *Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland* and *Bereitet die Wege, bereitet die Bahn* (St John's Wood Parish Church, 28 November). It is wonderful to experience a group that has no obvious director, but coordinates its entries from within, usually by the merest intake of breath. The resulting cohesion is aural as well as visual, producing a performance of outstanding integrity and emotional strength. The four excellent singers, Rachel Elliott, Sally Bruce-Payne, Mark Padmore and Thomas Guthrie, were on fine form, as were the key players, Nicolette Moonen (violin), James Eastaway (oboe) and Richard Campbell (cello). An inspiring concert by a group that deserves success in its important chosen repertoire.

Rachel Elliott took centre stage with Gérard Lesne and his instrumental group, Il Seminario Musicale, for a concert of Brossard, Scarlatti and Corelli as part of the Wigmore Hall's

'François Couperin and His Age' series (18 November). Better known today for his *Dictionnaire de Musique* of 1703, Brossard, like Couperin, was an avid follower of Italian music. His three *Leçons des morts* were written while he was *maître de chapelle* in Strasbourg, and display the influence of the intense word-painting of the Italian madrigal. Rachel Elliott's fluid and evocative soprano voice was ideal for this intensely spiritual repertoire, as also displayed in Scarlatti's *Salve Regina*. I had more problems with Lesne and the instrumentalists, though. Endings of phrases were often cut too short, and the attack of the instrumentalists was often too accented (including the bass violin, which was punchy and buzzy at times). This made for an unhappy mix with Lesne's voice, which tended to crescendo into a note, leaving an impression that singer and instruments were not together. The large gaps between movements, complete with rather noisy page turns, did not allow the music to flow at it should. But it was lovely to see the lead violinist mouthing all the words.

In one of the fullest houses ever seen at the Wigmore Hall, the current darling of the opera stage, Cecilia Bartoli, came and sang and conquered in a programme of arias from little known Vivaldi operas that her record company would have us believe she personally discovered and transcribed in the library of Turin University (2 December): we even saw her visit the library in the related TV programme. However fascinating these additions to the Vivaldi canon might be, it was not what most of the audience had come for. Bartoli expresses her music through the sheer power of personality. Diminutive in height but big in every other aspect, she gathered the audience into her arms from her first ecstatic appearance and kept us in a state of unbearable excitement until the last of her many encores. Every piece was lashed with such unbridled emotional passion that lesser mortals would need to lie down in a darkened room after just one piece. Of course the audience loved every minute. She has a curious technique which would probably cause many singing teachers apoplexy - but despite hunching her shoulders up around her ears and sliding her head back and forth with a huge repertoire of facial distortions, she produces a sound of real power that reaches the parts that many other singers would probably avoid - but they would probably also avoid quite as much slithering and sliding around and between notes. Her backing group were the extremely impressive Akademie für Alte Musik, Berlin, lead by Stephan Mai. They are far better than the group on the CD, with a much stronger grasp of baroque technique and less of a willingness to compromise. An astonishing evening of Vivaldian Viagra.

Was it Londoners' innate jingoism or a jinx from the nearby English Parliament that caused such a sparse audience at a fascinating concert of music from Scotland and England around the time of the 1707 Act of Union (St John's, Smith Square, 3 December). The ambitious (and, despite cuts, still rather lengthy) programme was devised by Ian McFarlane as part of an ongoing project to highlight Scottish music. Gary Cooper directed from the harpsichord

a 23-strong Florilegium, with Dominique Visse among the singers. However appropriate Visse might have been, bearing in mind the political allegiances of the day, I did wonder how his distinctive voice would have gone down amongst the rather basic Scots of the day. In the Cantata *Dom Quichotte* by Courbois, for example, he swung from high pitch screech to pure tenor (the latter sounding very effective). A real discovery was the music of John Clerk (1676-1755) who studied with Corelli as a youth before moving away from music into civic and antiquarian life. A shame - his music showed real talent, particularly in his imaginative use of harmony (in the introduction to *Eheu! Eheu!*, for example). Lorna Anderson (soprano) was persuasive in her interpretations of this piece, *Tuba sonato feralis!* (with its restrained martial mood and delightful Corelli bass in the fourth section) and the extended cantata *Odo di mesto intorno* with two wonderful arias - 'Alla battaglia', sung with gusto and evident enjoyment, and 'Amoretti ch' intorno scherzate'. Politics were never far from the scene, and tenor Jamie MacDougall gave a show-stopping solo performance of 'The wee wee German Lairdie'. This was countered by 'God save great George our King' and its call to crush the Scots. Of course, the evening ended with 'Auld lang syne', in its first incarnation (as 'Old long-syne', and set to music from a late-17th-century manuscript) and, with Robert Burns words, in the amazing setting by Beethoven.

continued on p. 18

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A. Grandi – Vocem iucunditatis (1629)

Soprano
(Original clef: C1)

Basso
Continuo

8 *Violin I* *Presto*

Violin 2

Al-le-lu-ia, Al-le-lu-ia, Al-le-lu-ia, Al-le-lu-ia.

19 *Adasio*

Presto

Li-be-ra-vit Do-mi-nus, li-be-ra-vit Do-mi-nus, po-pu-lum su-um.

29

Al-le-lu-ia, Al-le-lu-ia, Al-le-lu-ia, Al-le-lu-ia.

40

Adasio

-le-lu-ia, Al-le-lu-ia, Al-le-lu-ia. A-scen-dit

LONDON MUSIC (cont)

This year's Spitalfields Winter Festival featured a number of concerts with an early music interest, including the 23-strong mixed choir of Trinity College, Cambridge under Richard Marlow (13 December). The well known double-choir setting by Michael Praetorius of Nicolai's great chorale, 'Wachet auf!' opens with entries that tumble over each other like a peal of bells, a mood which also purveys the concluding Magnificat of the Hamburg organist/composer and pre-Sweelinck father of the indigenous north German organ school, Hieronymous Praetorius (no relation). The programme note did not specify which one of the nine settings this was [I checked that it wasn't the well-known one with inserted carols and thought further information would be too pedantic CB] and was rather sparing on information about Praetorius himself. Bach's *Jauchzet dem Herrn alle Welt* and three early English Christmas pieces rather tested the choir, who were not altogether comfortable on their high notes.

The following lunchtime gave the chance to compare Trinity College choir with the 18 or so boys and 13 men of their world famous neighbours at King's College (The Temple Church, 14 December). And what a difference! Although there were times when solo voices dropped just under their note, together they behaved like organ pipes which collectively pull themselves into tune. They have a firm and solid bass line, slightly buzzy tenors and trebles, and a beautifully smooth alto line (it is good to hear that the English countertenor factory is still in full production). Although they were somewhat short of absolutely pure intonation, they had a coherence and satisfying depth of colour. The programme told the Christmas story and was built around pieces by Lassus (including the descriptive *Videntes Stellam* with its opening skyward leap), Victoria and Palestrina. Stephen Cleobury was a suitably restrained director, but was nonetheless effective for that. He clearly didn't expect a choir of his stature to give something as common as an 'encore' – but he quietly mentioned they had 'bought an extra piece of music with them by mistake' and they sang that!

Back at Christ Church Spitalfields (15 December), the Birmingham Choir Ex Cathedra (together with a small instrumental group) made the first of two London appearances with a whirlwind tour around Christmassy Europe in the company of Schütz (*Ehre sei Gott* from the Christmas Story), Sweelinck, Monteverdi, Weelkes, Gibbons (the sublime *See, see the word is incarnate*, with its gradual increase in the number of soloists in each section), Bach (a nicely measured performance of *Freut euch und jubiliert* from the original Christmas Day version of the Magnificat), Buxtehude, Bouzignac and Charpentier. It was great to hear Guillaume Bouzignac's *Noé pastores* again (I first came across this piece in an Ex Cathedra concert). Bouzignac (who lived between 1592 and 1641, perhaps longer) uses a unique musical language in pieces like this, compressions of an almost operatic range of emotions and drama. The main feature is

a soaring soprano solo (beautifully sung by Elizabeth Cragg), which intertwines and contrasts with the choir sections in the manner of much French music of what we must now think of as the last century. There were a few unsteady moments from the choir, and one real disaster that could have been avoided – some dreadful instrumental tuning right from the start of Buxtehude's *In dulci jubilo*, despite just having tuned-up. On such occasions, it is worth starting the piece again.

Ex Cathedra were in much better form a few days later at St John's, Smith Square (18 December) with Monteverdi's Vespers. Jeffrey Skidmore manages to mould a range of disparate voices (many emanating from young singers with solo, rather than choral, careers in mind) into a coherent whole – giving a valuable training for young professionals in the process. He conducts in a broad and relaxed style, letting the sweep of line and mood show through and allowing musicians to develop their own role in performance – an evident recipe for commitment. The Vespers are a minefield for performance: for the sake of enjoyment it is better to steer clear of too dogmatic an approach to the various interpretational arguments. This is a work that needs to be listened to over and over again – there is always something new to discover. But, for the record, *Lauda Jerusalem* was sung down a tone and the Magnificat was sung at pitch (rather than the currently preferred transposition down a fourth for both). The biggest move from tradition was using three sopranos for *Duo Seraphim* rather than 3 tenors. Whatever the arguments might be for or against [e. g. the parts are in tenor clef, whereas elsewhere in the Vespers soprano parts are in the soprano clef CB], I thought this worked perfectly. Plainchant antiphons were sung before and after the psalm settings, using the Feast of the Assumption settings in the *Antiphonarium Romanum* (Venice 1607) rhythmicised in accordance with the 1582 and 1604 editions of the *Directorium Chori*. Despite my belief that angels and seraphim must be female, I would have preferred an all-male choir for the plainchant antiphons. I also had some worries about the vibrato of Andrew King's tenor voice in the opening intonation and *Nigra sum* – in the latter, the speed of his vibrations were confusingly close to the expected speed of a Monteverdian trillo. But he showed he could hold a steady note at the end of *Laudate pueri*, so the technique is clearly there. *Duo Seraphim* featured three superb sopranos, led by the rising star, Carolyn Sampson. She has a wonderfully clear and harmonically rich voice, full of conviction, and she sends her high notes straight to the heart. A remarkable young singer and an excellent concert.

Britain's answer to Andreas Scholl, the young countertenor Robin Blaze, joined the viol consort Concordia for a concert of Germanic music from the 17th century (Spitalfields, 17 December). Blaze has a beautiful voice but, more importantly, a real understanding of musical interpretation. His singing

of Buxtehude's lament *Muß der Tod denn auch entbinden* was absolutely mesmerising, as was the seductive little motif on 'in Abrahams Schoß' from *Ach Herr, laß deine lieben Engelein*, a German adaptation of Rovetta. There was some imaginative continuo organ playing from Gary Cooper, particularly in Buxtehude's *Jubilate Domino*, although Mark Levy allowed his intonation to slip when venturing above the frets and he struggled at times to get his bow and the viol's strings to combine quite as they should. Some editing to his chat wouldn't have gone amiss either, at least omitting the (inaccurate) dig at the writer of the programme notes.

There was a chance to compare two medieval groups in December. The first British appearance by the six-strong Italian group Acanthus (formerly Sine Nomine) was at the Temple Church (7 December). Their programme of late-medieval sacred and secular Italian music included a number of works from the Cape Town manuscript. This was a most impressive performance from a vivacious and technically assured group. With a soprano and alto as the main singers, they used a wide variety of accompaniments, including virtuoso performances on the Jew's harp and bagpipe (the design of which would send shivers down the spine of animal lovers). Although remaining close to the improvisatory nature of the music, they nonetheless displayed a magnificently assured grasp on musical direction. They sang with a convincing sound, in the now traditional rather nasal middle eastern style that is generally so suitable to music of this period.

In this comparison, I am afraid that The Dufay Collective (St John's, Smith Square) didn't come out too well in their Goday, Sir Cristemas programme of English and French medieval and early renaissance music. There were a number of issues. The balance of the programme was rather too uniform, with too many pieces of the same style presented in a similar way. This produced little sense of building a mood or direction to the concert as a whole and stopped well short of whipping the audience into any sort of frenzy. Their use of instruments soon became unadventurous, and the performance veered towards the scripted rather than improvisatory. Most of them are not natural singers, so they could usefully have cut down on the number of a capella numbers. But, as performers, the biggest let down for most of them was their overly laconic style. However professionally competent the playing might be, it can come to naught unless a relationship is built between performer and audience. The bone-dry humour of the spoken interjections probably didn't help – they just didn't seem to be enjoying themselves. That said, there were some good moments. The natural and unforced voice and engaging stage manner of guest singer Vivien Ellis was most effective, particularly with the enticingly simple backing of harp (*Ther is no Rose of Swych* [but sung as 'sweet'] *Vertu*) or vielle (*Gabriel fram Heven-King*). There were brief moments of excitement (and some slippery cadences) from two bagpipes and it was good to hear the bell-like tinkles from the highest strings of the harp and a nicely buzzy psaltery adding some distinctive tone colour – and a symphony that was used for more than a drone.

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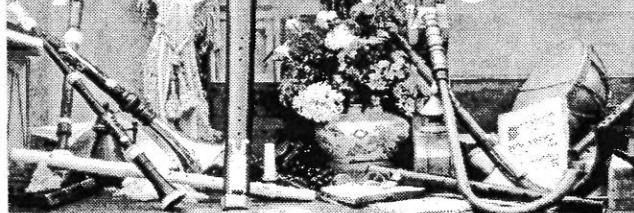
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RECORD REVIEWS

We would normally expect to review in the February issue all discs that had reached us by about Dec 20th, and also include some later arrivals. This month, what with the flu and my trip to Israel (see p. 10), I haven't got round to chasing reviews that were not waiting me on my return, so some are missing. Since the pile of CDs for March is so far quite small, this enforced hold-over at least helps enlarge the content of the next issue; but we apologise to the record companies as well as to our readers for not being quite as up-to-date as we would like. CB

MEDIEVAL

Ballads of the Sephardic Jews Sarband 49' 21"
Dorian DOR-93190

Juden in Mittelalter - Aus Sepharad uns Ashkenas Jalta Rebling voice, Hans-Werner Apel, Stefan Maass lutes, Susanne Ansorg fidel, Sabine Heller harp, Veit Heller portative, Michael Metzler perc 61' 18"
Raum Klang RK 9901

Unfortunately, I forgot to take these with me to Israel, where I might have found some expert opinions. Last time I sought advice, Judith R. Cohen was sceptical of the attempts by most early-music groups to interpret the still-living tradition (see *EMR* 31 p. 13). Much of the Sarband disc sounds more ethnic than early, which is probably to its credit, but there are also some renaissance pieces whose rather wishy-washy sounds have no stylistic relationship with the rest. I found the final track *Una tarde de verano* the most affecting. The Raum Klang disc relies heavily on a single singer, Jalta Rebling, who fully justifies the burden put upon her, aided by five instruments. The texts are from the 11th to the 13th centuries, often sung as contrafacta of music of the period; some melodies are by a Christian convert Obadiah (Ovadja in the running order). A fascinating disc. Both recordings sometimes drop into a sound that is obviously Jewish (not unrelated to popular music heard in Israeli taxis and buses); I wonder if the style really goes back so far; but these are both experiments worth hearing. CB

Legenda Aurea: Laudes des Saints au Trecento italiano La Reverdie 70' 00"
Arcana A 304

We have deferred this till next month for a combined review with the A-R Edition of the lauda MS Florence BR 18.

16th CENTURY

Cabezon Obras de Musica para Tecla, Arpa y Vihuela, vol. 2 Harmonices Mundi, La Moranda, Claudio Astronio dir & org 60' 43"
Stradivarius STR 33450

There are several discs this month that might be condemned as arrangements. Hernando Cabezon's 1578 collection of his

father's music is evidently, like much of Bach's keyboard music, intended to teach composition as well as playing. But unlike Bach's, it is less wedded to the keyboard (indeed, the title page also mentions harp and vihuela) and has here been given another use: as a guide to renaissance instruments, and one that has rather more contrapuntal interest than the dances of Susato and Praetorius. I have my doubts whether treating the music as a graded series of lessons is a particularly good way to arrange a series of performances rather than a textbook, but it is interesting to hear which combinations fit the music and which produce sounds that feel imposed rather than grow out of it. I find that working systematically from two to three to four parts is didactic rather than aesthetic: why not try setting your player to sample tracks at random? CB

Cara Fiamma amorosa et bella: musiche di Marchetto Cara alla corte di Isabella d'Este Consort Veneto 48' 58"
Bongiovanni GB 5086-2

Lucky Isabella, sitting listening to or playing these catchy tunes all day long. Well, I suppose she had other business to attend to as well, but I like to picture her leisure hours like this. She would have been even luckier if she had her choice of singer; my own choice would definitely not have been Bianca Simone, who delivers a rather strange bulging tone and an equally strange approach to the music. She sings all the notes rather in the manner of plainsong, and most of the time (apart from the first few bars) makes a pleasant sound; but she fails to engage with the music or the words. In spite of her nationality, her sung Italian is almost incomprehensible, and she seems oblivious to the meaning of the words, which anticipate the madrigalian vein, full of contrasts - ice and fire, love and death - along with pig castrations and much more besides. Even in a piece containing the line 'hi hi hi hi hi' there is no laughter in the voice. But the five instrumentalists, on the other hand, sparkle with life and vigour, and make even the wordless pieces speak. The dulcian sometimes overbalances the other parts, but there is deft and delightful playing from them all. Selene Mills

Mathurin Forestier Missae Baises moy & L'homme armé Chicago a cappella, Jonathan Miller 57' 08"
Centaur CRC 2420

In Forestier, Thomas MacCracken, who initiated the recording project and wrote the programme notes, has uncovered a practically forgotten Franco-Flemish master who, on the present evidence, deserves wider attention. His music is reminiscent of Josquin but has a character of its own, presumably vintage Forestier. In the final

Agnes Dei of the *Missa L'homme armé* he brings off a technical tour de force not attempted even by the composer of the famous Naples *L'homme armé* Mass cycle - a seven-part canon using only the *L'homme armé* tune! The singing of the American ensemble is generally good, notwithstanding one or two episodes of sour intonation, and their reading of the music is forthright and flowing. St Clement's Church, Chicago supplies a generous acoustic, if also some distant traffic ambience, while the booklet note provides interesting background information as well as introducing the enticing concept of 'Arts Bridge, the nation's first business incubator for the arts'. D. James Ross

Guerrero Requiem Orchestra of the Renaissance, Richard Cheetham dir. Michael Noone cond 78' 19"
Glossa GCD 921402

The event at the heart of this project is the funeral in Seville Cathedral on 10 Nov. 1599 of the Francisco Guerrero, chapel master of the Cathedral and a composer venerated by his Spanish contemporaries above all others. Seville was the first Cathedral in Spain to employ a wind band, and, assuming that Guerrero's colleagues saw him fittingly buried with full pomp and to the strains of his own Requiem setting, the Orchestra of the Renaissance present a deeply moving and extremely impressive liturgical reconstruction of the service. The singing, mainly by solo voices, is superlative and ably supported by cornetts, shawms and sackbuts, with a slightly unexpected but extremely convincing contribution from a harp, an instrument played by Guerrero himself. The lavish acoustic of St Jude-on-the-Hill provides a perfect ambience for this rich music, and to provide the icing on the cake the handsome presentation with comprehensive notes by Michael Noone makes this a very attractive package. I have consistently admired the work of Richard Cheetham's Orchestra of the Renaissance as it explores the use of instruments in a range of European church music, and the present recording with its firm grounding in scholarship and its very high performance and recording values is a further jewel in their crown. D. James Ross

Marenzio Il nono libro de madrigali a5, 1599
La Venexiana 62' 40"
Glossa GCD 920906

I am in two minds about this. La Venexiana have certainly achieved their passionate ambition 'to savour each dissonance, each false relation, holding the silences between one phrase and the next, aiming to discover all the ingredients', but is this the best way to present this music? The expressive pauses are so long that the ear loses the structure of the piece, which

is surely as fundamental a part of a madrigal as the individual elements which are so extensively savoured. Marenzio, in this final publication, is deliberately archaic in his predominant use of the ancient poets of lugubrium, Dante and Petrarch, and the melancholy of the madrigals reflects a departure from sunnier themes and sweeter music. The intellectually lucid approach of this performance explains all the magic, but leaves nothing to mystery or imagination. It offers the listener a kind of Dorling Kindersley guide to the music, which almost satisfies until we remember that we need to travel there ourselves to gain the full experience of this stunning and complex repertoire. The madrigals in *chiavette acute* are transposed down a third or fourth, resulting in a lot of fruity bottom Ds for the bass (Daniele Carnovich)*, but the inner parts are weak (or under-miked), and the soprano, the inescapable Rossana Bertini, still sounds shrill and frequently flat. Sadly, she appears to be a *sine qua non* of La Venexiana, in spite of her apparent inability to sing a row of minims legato or a *messa di voce* without turning on the vibrato. In the end, while the extremes of interpretation can be justified, it is mainly Bertini's limitations which make me unhappy with this recording. *Selene Mills*

* In fact, transposing high-clef pieces down a fourth from A440 does not produce many bottom Ds: on the other hand, transposing them down just a tone (as in Steele's edition) gives top Gs to the sopranos, whereas the low-clef madrigals rise only to E or (rarely) F. CB

Victoria Officium Hebdomadae Sanctae (Roma, 1585): In passione Domini Complesso Vocale e Strumentale e Schola Gregoriana de La Stagione Armonica 53' 22"

Tactus TC 552901

This is a new Italian group to me. Numbering about 24 and with female sopranos and altos, they sing unaccompanied with enthusiasm and conviction, though occasionally this spills over into forcing which puts the tuning out. The sound is full-bodied and comes off best in the *turba* sections of the Passion which overall gets a fine performance here, lasting for over half an hour. Particularly good is the plainsong evangelist's part, beautifully and movingly sung by Alessio Randon. This is the only version of the passion currently available and the CD is certainly worth getting for this. It is accompanied by some of the best-known pieces from Victoria's Holy Week office which do get better performances elsewhere; however, this is a group which knows how the music should sound and I imagine we will be hearing more from them. *Noel O'Regan*

The A-La-Mi-Re Manuscripts Capilla Flamenca Naxos 8.554744 62' 05" £
Music by Alamire, Gascogne, Isaac, Josquin, Mouton, Newsiedler, de Orto, Rigo, Willaert & anon.

I like the idea of devoting a recording to a music copyist. Alamire's hand produced some of the most distinguished MSS of first quarter of the 16th century and his magnificent products were used in the

diplomatic manoeuvrings of European princes; indeed, his own activities extended from copying to spying for Henry VIII. The 17 items here are mostly from MSS which he or his employees copied: one that isn't may be his only surviving piece, though Richard Taruskin (in his anthology of *T'Andernakens*) is sceptical of both its ascription and its allocation to crumhorns in one source. (Their intonation here is as dubious as one expects: is it an acoustic phenomenon that, however well played, they always sound thus?) Most of the disc, however, is vocal, and the Capilla Flamenca (8 singers directed by Dirk Snellings) makes a very good impression with a programme that could stand without any extraneous theme. Certainly worth a fiver, though the three new books on Alamire listed in the booklet will cost rather more. CB

Maastrichts Liedboek (1554) Camerata Trajectina 74' 42" + free sampler disc 74' 03" Globe GLO 6046

Music by Clemens non Papa, Ludovicus Episcopius etc.

Dat ierste boeck van den bieuve duytsche Liedekens, met III, IIII, V, VI, ende VIII partyen, published in Maastricht in 1554, contains 30 vernacular songs, frustrating because the treble partbook is missing. It has been reconstructed for this recording, and very convincing it sounds, despite the problem in recreating what the musicologist behind the project, Louis Peter Grijp, calls the 'face' of the music. Were I a Dutchman writing for compatriots, I would recommend this very highly: appealing music receives first-rate performances. The problem is that the 30 songs in Dutch require understanding of the words, but sitting studying a booklet somehow seems the wrong way to listen to this mostly straightforward music: full translations are not given anyway. I enjoyed playing it in the car without worrying about the meaning. As a bonus, you get an equally-long disc selected from other Globe recordings of similar repertoire. CB

Il Madrigali Italiano La Venexiana 46' 0"
Glossa GCD 920007

Music by D'India, Luzzaschi, Marenzio, Monteverdi

I wanted to keep La Venexiana's Marenzio disc to play along with John Steele's edition, but was put off by the opening point of the first piece, Dante's canzona *Cosi nel mio parlar*. Its opening rising minor third is not tonally adjusted when inverted from the dominant (A- $\frac{4}{4}$ C being answered by E- $\frac{4}{4}$ C), but was sung so ineffectively to my ears that the resulting clashes were not fully apparent. So I sent it to Selene hoping that she might be less troubled by the vibrato. (She wasn't: see above.) The close vibrato which spoilt those false relations is also present in this compilation from various previous madrigal discs. The men are fine, but I don't like the sound of the women. The other problem is a tendency to treat each phrase in isolation. To my mind, if you abandon a continuous rhythmic pulse, you have to work twice as hard to create any intensity from the separated phrases; far better to keep the clock ticking and get

the same effect by more subtle temporal displacement. Even in *Solo e pensoso*, the inevitable regularity of the 22-note rising and falling chromatic scale is spoilt by some irritating hesitations – the formality of Petrarch's sonnet isn't matched by the rhythmic shape. But perhaps that is the English way, not the Italian. If that and the sopranos do not worry you, this is a well-chosen anthology of marvellous, if continually intense, music. CB

What Thing is Love Amy-Elizabeth Wheeler S, Jaroslaw Lipski lute, theorbo 42' 07" Peregrine Records PRCD001
Music by Brewer, Dowland, Holborne, Jones, Rosseter, Wilson & anon

CDs sent out of the blue by subscribers or customers whom I have never heard perform always fill me with dread: am I going to have to conceal an amateurish performance with as much tact as I can muster, or be cruel and lose a subscription? This is even more embarrassing, since its covering letter asked about some music ordered over a year ago! But am delighted to have received the CD. Amy has a lovely, natural voice, suitably sexy for the sentiments, which has managed to survive any singing lessons she may have had with great success. I enjoyed it immensely. It is a fascinating programme, based around about 1600 but avoiding most of the hackneyed pieces. Every word is audible, with no suggestion of them being artificially spat out. My one slight criticism is that the folksy or pseudo-folky songs (including, alas, the first item) are just a bit too arty. Fine lute-playing, though the action noises in the solos are too audible. Highly recommended. CB

We were sent this in CD form, in an ingenious and attractive box, by the singer; we printed her report on early music in Poland on p. 10 of our last issue. Peregrine Records markets this CD only via the internet: it may be ordered from www.peregrinerecords.com by credit card or a check in US dollars. Customers can also download individual tracks of the CD using Liquid Audio (www.liquidaudio.com) which, we are told, provides the listener with near-CD-quality tracks rivaling the popular MP3 format. Each track will cost about \$US1.00 to download. I'd rather get the whole CD: it's too good just to select a few tracks. Its timing is short, but just the right length musically.

17th CENTURY

H. I. F. & C. H. Biber Sonatas for trumpet, strings and continuo Gabriele Cassone tpt, Ensemble "Pian & Forte", Antonio Frigé org & dir 68' 47"

Dynamic CDS 234

H. I. F: Partia V a3, Sonatae tam aris... 4 & 7 a5, Sonata representativa; C. H: 6 sonatas

This fine disc from Dynamic is somewhat let down by the booklet notes – one of the pieces goes unidentified (Partia V is from *Harmonia artificiosa-ariosa*, published posthumously in 1712), there's no indication of when the two players listed as violin and viola play either instrument, and the actual text is full of gems like 'There he made a fast career.' The playing itself is fine, particularly, of course, the trumpeting. The

string band is first-violin dominated. Carl Heinrich was writing for a society with different taste, but he also appears (to me) to lack his father's imagination and compositional flair, despite his 'quest for pompous and magnificent sound'. The *sonata representativa* features an array of continuo instruments and an unscheduled appearance by some percussion – not at all out of place, of course, but I would have thought Biber knew when he wanted the effect. It is supposed to encourage one to use one's imagination, after all. But the violinistic effects are extremely well done. BC

Buxtehude Harpsichord Music, Vol. 2. Lars Ulrik Mortensen 52' 42"
Da Capo 8.224117
BuxWV 170, 171, 174, 215, 235, 242, 245, 247

After Vol. 1 of this series I had been looking forward to listening to this disc, and I'm happy to report that I have not been disappointed. The *More Palatino* variations get things under way and immediately Mortensen's strengths are apparent. His approach is spacious, presenting phrases very naturally whilst preserving a high level of small-scale detail. The imaginative ordering of works is also very welcome, variation set giving way to suite, followed by Fuga, and so on. This seems infinitely preferable to, say, a CD full of suites, which would be a very heavy-going proposition. Really I can't fault this disc – the sound is lovely, the playing superb, and the repertoire fascinating. Top notch. Robin Bigwood

Förster Vanitas vanitatum Olga Pasiecznik, Marta Boberska, Kai Wessel, Krzysztof Szmyt, Grzegorz Zychowicz SSATB, Il Tempo, Agata Sapiecha vln, dir 79'28"
PolyGram Polska 011 958-2

It is evident from the sound of the very first note that this is going to be a record to enjoy. So my intention of sending it off to BC disappeared. A jaundiced reviewer who is only academically concerned about value for money, I often hope that discs of unknown music will have short durations; but here the full content is most welcome, giving us a chance to hear just over a fifth of Förster's 48 surviving works. Förster was of Polish origin (b. Gdańsk 1616, d. near there 1673), but studied in Rome with Carissimi and also spent a few years in Venice, where he was honoured by the title of Knight of the Order of St Mark for fighting the Turks. His main musical employment was as Kapellmeister to Frederik II of Denmark. He wrote in the Italianate mid-century German style, perhaps a little uneventful to those not attuned to its restrained language. Sadly, there is no exploitation of his own wide vocal range: although an alto, he is recorded to have played the organ in a vocal trio while singing a bass part ranging down three octaves from the A above middle C. The disc contains the title piece and another dialogue, six motets and two sonatas a3. The only possible complaint about the performance is that it is just a little static: more concerned with beauty than energy.

The Polish performers (the only name not listed above that lacks a Z is Paula Chateauneuf) are first-rate, and this is an essential disc for any wishing to extend their experience of 17th-century music. The booklet (too thick for the jewel case) has a fine essay by Ewa Obninska in Polish and English, with texts in Latin and Polish. CB

Hassler Feinslieb, du hast mich gfangen: Secular Music. Currende, Erik van Nevel
Eufoda 1284 67' 07"

It is disappointing when a recording makes you think that a composer isn't as good as you thought he was. In principle, this survey of Hassler's secular works (nine items from *Lustgarten*, 15 from elsewhere) should be recommended as drawing attention to music that is not as well known in Britain as it should be. But I found few of the performances satisfying. The instrumentation is often strange, and I rapidly tired of the sound of a lute continually playing along with the voices. The playing (in the vocal pieces as well as the purely-instrumental ones) is good, as one would expect with Bruce Dickie and Charles Toet in the line-up, but I found the singing less successful than on the disc which I happened on two occasions to play immediately before this: the *Maastrichts Liedboek*. CB

Venice before Vivaldi: a Portrait of Legrenzi
El Mundo 71' 10"
Koch 3-7446-2

El Mundo are to be congratulated in identifying Giovanni Legrenzi as being one of the better composers of the late 17th century, and in selecting previously unrecorded instrumental music for their CD. It appears that they are unfamiliar with Pavel Klikar's excellent recording with *Musica Antiqua Praha*, where the two motets Mr Savino has chosen from the posthumous Opus 17 set are performed (in my opinion with far greater style and empathy with the composer – how strange that the tempi here should be so slow, when the instrumental pieces flow along nicely); they also appear on Martin Gester's equally impressive Bassani Vespers set, where the Legrenzi pieces function as perfect antiphon substitutes in a Christmas Vespers reconstruction. There is something unsettling about booklet notes which deal with the subject matter in under a page and a half and spend the next five pages or so detailing the careers of the performers. Some information might also have been given about the continuo instruments – some sonatas are played with a couple of fiddles and two pluckers (as we have come to know them in *EMR*) without specification. I think that the idea of combining the dance movements at the end of Opus 4 into suites is perfectly reasonable, but it seems strange to follow a sonata in D with a dance set in A minor/major. And just for the sake of completeness, track 10 (the Allemanda seconda) should be subtitled *La Sanfior*. This will not win converts to Legrenzi in the way that the Supraphon disc might, but it has some very pleasant

music, and I hope El Mundo will go on to relish the delights that await in the prints they didn't explore this time around. BC

Lully L'Orchestre du Roi Soleil: Symphonies, Ouvertures & Airs à jouer Le Concert des Nations. Jordi Savall 64' 19"
Alia Vox AV9807
Suites from *Alceste*, *Le bourgeois Gentilhomme* etc

In contrast to *Danse Royale* (see p. 23), this elegantly-packaged collection of dances from Lully's stage works deploys as large an array of instruments as the composer could ever have seen, in ways which he might never have thought of. To my ears, the arrangements – for that is surely how many of these performances must be described – have more in common with the sound-world of Handel and Rameau (though they would have been surprised at so much percussion) than the 17th century, not least as a result of the 16' sound in the tutti. As one would expect from so creative a musician as Savall, there is some exhilarating music-making on display here, but it is open to doubt whether it represents the sound of *L'Orchestre du Roi Soleil*. David Hansell

Monteverdi Le Passioni dell' Anima Concerto Italiano, Rinaldo Alessandrini 60' 15"
Opus 111 OPS 30-256
17 items, including *Lamento d'Arianna* (Rosa Dominguez ms) & *Tarsi e Clori*

The Italians definitely treat their 16th- and 17th-century music in a very different way from us. This shares with the two discs from *La Venexiana* reviewed above the trait of catching the intensity of the moment that can be very effective (more, I suspect, in a live performance than on disc) but which gets in the way of making a whole work feel more than the sum of its parts. This is exacerbated here by the inclusion of barely-dependent excerpts: I can just about imagine the ultra-expressive manner of the Sinfonia from Act II of *Orfeo* making sense in context, but in isolation it seems over the top. The performance matches the title; any anthology of Monteverdi will contain 'the most heated of passions, love and beauty'. The is much to stimulate, and much about which I would like to comment in detail. Hear it as a representative of one way of performing Monteverdi, one extreme of what is plausible. CB

A. Scarlatti Stabat Mater Sandrine Piau, Gérard Lesne, Jean-François Novelli SAT, Il Seminario Musicale 63' 59"
Virgin 7243 5 45366 2 5
Quae est ista, *Salve Regina* in c, *Stabat mater* in c

Of the three CDs with prominent countertenors I've listened to this month, this is my favourite – and, strangely enough, it's the one where the voice sounds most like a woman. I don't mean that as an insult, merely a comment on the actual timbre of the voice and the evenness across the range. It's a less 'heroic' voice Scholl's, but more focused than Daniels'. It also complements Sandrine Piau's warm soprano in a way that the Scholl/Bonney combination never quite achieves. This disc also

appeals to me simply because it opts for slightly less well-known music, which has all the qualities of the Pergolesi, and presents it without any special effects. Jean-François Novelli's contribution is fairly minimal, but he does it with style. A fine recording. BC

Schütz *Madrigaux italiens* (Libro primo de *Madrigali*) Cantus Cölln, Konrad Junghänel Harmonia Mundi HMC 901686 57' 59"

In contrast to *La Venexiana* (see review of Marenzio above), *Cantus Cölln* is an equal partnership of vigorous and agile voices, all blending beautifully yet with their own energy and life. The speeds are on the fast side, so that written-out flourishes (e.g. on 'sospiri' in *Tornate i cari baci*) are ornamental and expressive rather than simply notes; but an impressive stillness can still be achieved (*Di marmo*, for example). Here is real singing, not submission to an intellectual idea; the result is passionate music, full of interest and variety. It is fascinating to catch aural glimpses of Schütz's later, more controlled, style. Although he was only 26 when his *opus primum* was published, Schütz shows not only the mastery of the styles one might expect after a two-year apprenticeship to Giovanni Gabrieli (both madrigalian and ecclesiastical/instrumental, as the 8-voice dedicatory *Vasto mar* testifies), but also a keenness to experiment with tonality and chromaticism much more boldly than those familiar only with his later work might expect. Highly recommended, both for the performance and for the opportunity to discover some little-known Schütz. Selene Mills

Danse Royale: Music of the French Baroque Court & Theatre Chatham Baroque (Julie Andrijeski, Emily Davidson vlns, Patricia Halverson vdg, Scott Pauley theorbo, guit) with Danny Mallon perc 64' 55" Dorian DOR-90272 Music by Charpentier, de Lalande, Lully, Mouret, A D. Philidor

This American trio-sonata ensemble – with theorbo, not keyboard continuo – presents five suites (40 movements) of dances and arrangements of vocal pieces selected from the industrious André Danican Philidor's compilations, designed for Louis XIV's domestic delectation. Scanners of the box can be assured that the guest percussionist and, indeed, the guitar make few appearances and that the playing is all well-mannered, with some particularly effective shading within bars and a suitably grand approach to the two chaconnes, though inevitably these do miss their orchestral weight. Occasionally I felt that the gaps between the shorter movements (such as the *menuets* 27-29) were too long, though this hardly counts as a major blemish on a charming set of performances. The booklet is helpfully informative, even if the description of Charpentier as the composer of 'a few stage works (in addition to several religious compositions' scarcely gives the full picture. David Hansell

Legrenzi *Invenzioni e stravaganze: Italian violin music of the 17th century* Europa Galante, Fabio Biondi (L'Arte di Fabio Biondi, vol. 26) 60' 30" Opus 111 OPS 30-186

Farina *Capriccio stravagante*; Legrenzi op. 10, Sonatas 5 & 6 a4; Marini *Passacaglia a5* (1655) & music by Falconieri, Mazzaferrata, S. Rossi, Uccellini, Vitali

The title is curious. The only composer named on the front is Legrenzi: Rossi is added on the back and spine (though there is only 4' 33" of his music, *La moderna*: you can pretend you are simultaneously listening to a version of John Cage's silent piece instead). But the programme is a much more varied anthology, a disappointment to Legrenzi fans but worth hearing nevertheless. The most substantial piece (17' 41") is the Farina, played without letting the humour spoil some beautiful music. Like other items, though, the performers try just a bit too hard with the slow, quiet sections. But Marini's *Passacaglia* manages to keep both pulse and intensity. CB

The Organs of Willem Hermans in Pistoia (1664) and Collescipoli (1678) Lieve Tamminga Accent ACC 98129D Music by Babou, Cornet, van Dalem, Kerckhoven, Merula, van Noordt, B. Pasquini, Scronx, Sweelinck, Scheidt & anon

A fascinating collection of music from Italy and the Low Countries resulting from the foibles of two important survivals from the organbuilder Willem Hermans (1601-1683), a Limburg-born Jesuit priest who learnt his craft in French Flanders before moving to Genoa, where he combined the distinctive Flemish organ with that of northern and, later, central Italy. These two organs are the only survivals from Hermans' work, and are important to our understanding of the Italian and the little-known Flemish organ of the period. The music on this CD similarly encompasses composers from both traditions. Listen in the anonymous *Pastorali di Natale* and *Piva* for the evocative sound of the Voce Umana and Musetto in imitation of the southern Italian double chanter/drone bagpipe together with the Usignoli (nightingale) stop, and the better known *Pastorale* by Bernardo Pasquini for the rare Passeri (sparrow) stop. Although many of the composers are little known (Scronx, Merula, Babou, van Dalem et al), they are all well worth a listen, and the playing is exemplary, as with all Tamminga's CDs.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Rites of Spring Trinity Baroque 72' 46" Cantoris CRCD6031 Music by Le Jeune, Schütz, Sweelinck etc

This is an ingenious anthology, mixing secular and sacred music on the theme of Spring. I'm not sure if the verbal links are always completely convincing, but never mind: it makes a marvellous disc. I think I am growing tired of complete recordings of early prints: the four pieces from Schütz's *Geistliche Chormusik* are so much fresher here in a more varied context – and what

marvellous pieces they are, even if *Selig sind die Toten* may anticipate a Rites of Winter disc. The tone is Protestant, with Lutheran hymns and French vernacular Psalms: why do we usually hear so little monophony (other than plainchant) on choral CDs? It is good to have more *Le Jeune* than the ubiquitous *Revoici venir de printemps* and Sweelinck's French psalm settings are well worth rescuing from the obscurity in which they normally lie. The six singers produce fine performances and the disc is suitably vernal and refreshing. CB

A Roman Christmas: Italian Concertos and Cantatas Maya Boog S, Jürgen Schuster tpt, Stefan Schilli ob, Cologne Chamber Orchestra, Helmut Müller-Brühl 64' 21" Naxos 8.551077

Albinoni op. 9/2; Corelli op. 6/8; A. Marcello *Oboe Concerto in d*; A. Scarlatti *Cantata pastorale 'O di Bellemme'*; Stradella: *Sonata a8 in D* (tpt & str)

These decent, modern-instrument performances arrived too late for the December issue. But it doesn't matter too much; just as only two items are Roman, so only two are for Christmas (Corelli suggests that you omit the last movement if you play op. 6/8 out of season). Maya Boog makes far too much of Scarlatti's recitatives, and the cantata would sound more relaxed at Roman pitch, perhaps a tone lower. Pleasant background music, but the music deserves better than that. CB

Salve Reyna: musica española Capilla Peña-florida, Josep Cabré 71' 03" Glissando 779 005-2 Music by Cererols, García de Salazar, Hidalgo, Martín y Coll, Patino & anon

This is issued in conjunction with an exhibition *Velázquez, Rubens, Lorrain: Art at the Court of Philip IV* at the Prado and in Bonn, but is a valuable disc in its own right. The programme is built round a Mass a5 by Hidalgo, better known for his secular and dramatic works. There are two villancicos by Cererols, together with a third that quotes from his *Serafin*, though without the echoing *Ays*. I can't work out what the performers think *falset* means in *¡Ay, qué dolor!*, which sounds a laboured rather than sorrowful. (I write this while the sounds of *Serafin* and two other Cererols pieces are still ringing in my head from a concert I was playing in earlier in the day: strangely, the Spanish singers seem to be missing the rhythmic vitality that a group of amateurs from Suffolk were at least aiming at, if not always achieving.) Despite minor criticisms, I strongly recommend this nicely-varied selection of mid-century church music. I like the relaxed group picture which includes the performers' children. CB

The Violin's Menagerie: Baroque Animals and Rustic Scenes Elizabeth Wallfisch vln, Rosanne Hunt vlc, Linda Kent kbd 68' 25" ABC Classics 465 269-2

Music by Baltzar, Biber, Finch, Matteis, Schmelzer, Tartini & Walther

I played the version of Biber's *Sonata representativa* presented here back to back

VIRGIN BACH

Bach Kantaten – Missae Barbara Schlick, Agnès Mellon, Gérard Lesne, Charles Brett, Howard Crook, Christoph Prégardien, Peter Kooy SSAATTB, Chorus & Orchestra of Collegium Vocale Ghent, Philippe Herreweghe 238' 54" 4 CDs in box Virgin 7243 5 61721 2 8 £ (rec 1989-91) BWV 39, 73, 93, 105, 107, 131, 233-236, 238

Bach Harpsichord concertos Bob van Asperen, Gustav Leonhardt, Bernhardt Klapprott, Marcello Bussi, Carsten Lohff hpscds, Melante Amsterdam 230' 19" 4 CDs in box Virgin 7243 5 61716 2 6 £ (rec 1991 & 1994) BWV 1052-65 + 904, 971

Bach Well-Tempered Keyboard Books 1 & 2 Bob van Asperen (4 CDs) Virgin 7243 5 61711 2 1 £

Bach Brandenburg Concertos, Orchestral Suites Taverner Players [Brandenburgs], Boston Early Music Festival Orchestra, [Suites], Andrew Parrott 220' 45" 4 CDs in box (rec. 1989 & 1993) Virgin 7243 5 61726 2 3 £ Also includes Overture from Cantata 194, Concerto for fl., vln & hpscd BWV 1044 & Concerto in c after BWV 1029

The price category of £ does not indicate what bargains these sets are: four discs each for a retail price that is likely to be under £15.00. All the recordings are well above acceptable: indeed, it is arguable that some might be first choice of all the available versions. We haven't had a copy of the '48' (hence no timing and original release date in the details above), but I have enjoyed listening to the other sets, and can strongly recommend them to those who failed to buy them full-price when they first appeared. I have a few doubts about the Herreweghe cantatas: he devotes so much care to the details of phrasing that the ultimate effect is rather prissy, though he doesn't suffer from the fault of letting the detail get in the way of larger-scale shaping. The breaking up of lines in choral movements can be disturbing: it would be interesting to hear how differently he would deal with a one-to-a-part chorus performance (cf the advert on the opposite page). Irrespective of that controversy, any performer accustomed to 17th-century German music seeing a piece like Cantata 131 scored for violin, two violas and bassoon would be unlikely to assume that the strings should be doubled: but pass the landmark year of 1700 by less than a decade and put Bach's name at the top of the first page, and normal common sense departs. Similarly with the voices: the ornamented phrases on 'ich harre' in the middle chorus don't work with a choir, but if Bach had intended them to be sung by soloists with a tutti response, he would have clarified what the tutti voices should sing. I suspect that the organ part does not need to be doubled by cello or bass. The set is worth getting, especially for the four Lutheran Masses, where the absence of translations matters less. CB

with the version of the Dynamic disc reviewed above. The first thing I noticed was the much brighter recorded sound. The second was the way Elizabeth Wallfisch just dashes off the most difficult writing with the greatest of ease, much as the composer must have done – no point in writing such extraordinary music if you couldn't play it well, after all! Thirdly, the percussion was reserved for its rightful entry in the march. The rest of the programme is equally enjoyable – it's nice to have more Matteis and Baltzar on disc, and the unaccompanied Tartini sonata is lovely. The fiddler is not the only one here having fun – her cellist sister and Linda Kent join in whenever there's a chance, and elsewhere they provide excellent support. BC

LATE BAROQUE

Albinoni Complete Concertos Op. 5 I Musici, Op. 7 Berlin Chamber Orch. Vittorio Negri Philips 464 052-2 161' 55" 2 CDs ££ {£££}

Op. 7 was recorded in 1981, with Jeffrey Tate as harpsichordist. Op 5 comes from 1973, with Pina Carmielli as leader. The former is far preferable. I Musici seem to be giving the works a play-through: their recording isn't much more use than as a cheap reference if you need a way of surveying the opus. (Why can't publishers issue cheap study scores of standard baroque concerto sets?) Opus 7 comes as a relief: in some ways the style is a bit old-fashioned, and one would prefer period instruments, but at least we get proper performances with shaping of phrases and understanding of the music. So a strange pairing. CB

Bach Organ Works vol. 4 Gerhard Weinberger (1718 Seeber and 1778 Rommel organs in Haina and Zella-Mehlis, Thuringia) cpo 999 653-2 73' 36" ££ BWV 568, 569, 574, 578, 579, 632-644, 767, 770

The programme includes two of Bach's *Chorale Partite* settings, 13 choral preludes from the *Orgelbüchlein* and a number of early free works played on two little-known 18th-century village organs in Bach's homeland of Thuringia. Both are tuned in mildly unequal temperaments, although the full choruses sound tonally unsteady, possibly because of the player's use of an unaccommodating touch on a flexible wind supply (try tracks 1, 27 and 37). On both organs the distinctive combinations of 8' stops, such as Grossgedact, Viola da Gamba, Salicional, Quintathon, Flute Traversa, is part of Bach's central German tradition: indeed, one piece uses no fewer than six 8' stops drawn together – a lesson to the neo-baroque brigade! But overall, I am afraid that there is little to recommend this CD over the many others now flooding the market; apart from the Partitas, the two Bach Edition CDs reviewed below cover a similar repertoire with far greater distinction.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Bach The Young Bach: a Virtuoso Kay Johannsen (Arp-Schnitger-organ, Cappel) 70' 06" Hänsler (Bach Edition 89) 92.089 BWV 550, 563, 565, 568, 577-8, 690, 715, 718, 720-2, 725-6, 729, 732, 737-9

Johannsen is responsible for the programming of the Bach Edition organ CDs and is also one of the finest players represented. As with others in the series, the otherwise commendable programme notes suffer from omitting the track numbers from the text and using English translations of chorale titles (all texts are included in English anyway, so a translation of the title is superfluous). Bach's early works are unjustly neglected by many organists: apart from being examples of the youthful *virtuoso*, they also stand alongside other works by more mature composers of the generation before Bach in marrying the North German with the Central German styles of the Bach family. The CD includes a number of the Arnstadt chorales (examples of the young Bach's bizarre accompaniments to congregational singing) and the massive *Herr Gott, dich loben wir* (the German Te Deum) whose 27 lines of text are treated in straightforward chorale fashion but nonetheless manage to hold the attention for more than nine minutes. As a reward for listening to the Te Deum, the CD finishes with THE Toccata in D minor, with the currently almost-obligatory multiple mordents in the opening motifs. The playing is excellent, with articulation, ornamentation and rhetoric all avoiding the over-indulgent. Andrew Benson-Wilson

Bach Orgelbüchlein BWV 599-644. Wolfgang Zerer (organ of St Martinkerk, Groningen) Hänsler (Bach Edition 94) 92.094 72' 45"

The *Orgelbüchlein* is one of the hardest of Bach's collections to commit to CD – 45 chorale preludes, only 11 of which last longer than 2 minutes. The ability of the organist to make this into a coherent whole is limited: the order of the pieces is generally related to the church year, registration instructions are frequently given or implicit and the pulse and mood needs to be linked to the featured chorale. Zerer plays the pieces without choral interpolations, using a well balanced dynamic to give a direction to the recording. His choice of registrations displays a welcome understanding of the type of central German organ that Bach probably had in mind, with its wide variety of colour stops but with less prominence given to high-ranking mutations (which were generally a North German pre-Bach tradition). The acid test of most *Orgelbüchlein* recordings is *O Mensch, bewein dein Sünde groß*; a rather piercing Tierce or Nazard registration is often used, but Zerer uses the gently vocal sounds of the 8' Praestant (with Roerfluit) of the Rug positief against the 8' Octaaf of the Hoofdmanuel. The playing demonstrates a fine sense of musical integrity and is recommended. The recording is slightly woolly, possibly a result of too distant a microphone position in this large acoustic. The booklet notes are excellent. Andrew Benson-Wilson

EMI CLASSIC RÉFÉRENCES

Ten reissues commemorate the Bach anniversary, all far too ancient to qualify for our normal early-instrument and/or regard for historic performance practice criteria. Landowska's recording would creep in for her use of a semi-period instrument. Readers interested in these mid-price discs will probably know what they want without any comment from our reviewers, so we will just list them. All numbers are prefixed by CH 5 and followed by 2

67207 Mass in B minor *Karajan* 2 CDs
 67197 Sonatas & Partitas *Menuhin* 2 CDs
 67201 Vln Concertos *Menuhin, Enescu*
 67200 Goldberg Variations, Chromatic Fantasia & Fugue *Landowska*
 67202 Cantatas 158 & 203, etc *Fischer-Diskau*
 67203 Vln sonatas *Menuhin, Kentner & Landowska* [3 CDs]
 67214 Well-Tempered Clavier *Edwin Fischer*
 67210 Chromatic Fantasia & Fugue, Italian Concerto, etc *Schnabel, LSO, Boult*
 67206 Cantatas 51, 99, 202 etc *Schwarzkopf, Philharmonia Orch, Klemperer*
 1056 Brandenburgs *Cortot* 2 CDs

Bach *Inventions and Sinfonias* BWV 772-801
 Masaaki Suzuki *hpscd* 56' 43"
 BIS-CD-1009

Masaaki Suzuki has become one of the most promising Bach interpreters in the last few years of the 20th century. His recordings of cantatas and larger choral works have all been worthy – at the very least – and many have been among the finest available, characterised as they are by a warm, expressive vibrancy. He has produced at least two discs of harpsichord music before the present one, but, given the success of his recent choral recordings, it has been all too easy to forget that his fundamental training and career have been as a keyboard artist.

First, there is a sense of relief: Suzuki is clearly an outstanding musician on the evidence of this disc, and we can rest assured that his success as a conductor doesn't rest merely on good hiring practices and a favourable recording environment. What is immediately striking is the range of expression he can get out of the *Inventions and Sinfonias* – perhaps not the most accessible music to listen to – all delivered with tremendous facility. He is not shy to adopt a wide range of tempi (something that was, for a while, eschewed in early music circles, owing to the myth of the uniform *tactus*). The detail and subtlety of articulation and rhythmic flexibility betray his thorough Dutch training although, for my taste, the patterning sometimes becomes a little predictable (such as in the triplet figure that Bach added to the last version of the first *Invention*). But perhaps this is appropriate in a collection of pieces that is so patently didactic. This excellent recording is exhaustively supported by the booklet notes by Yo Tomita. *John Butt*

Bach *The Well-Tempered Clavier 1 & 2*
 Rosalyn Tureck *pf* 4CDs
 DG 463 3051-2

We are happy to draw attention to this reissue of recordings from the early 1950s, though won't review it; there is no sensible way of comparing Bach on the modern piano with Bach on early instruments. We will not seek out the influx of 'historic' Bach on the piano recordings that are likely to be reissued this year. But this is a classic recording, with a style that is clean but not neo-classically clinical, and I'm sure some readers will wish to know that it is now available again. *CB*

Bach *Complete Flute Sonatas Vol. 1* Karl Kaiser *fl*, Music Alta Ripa 63' 12"
 Dabringhaus und Grimm MDG 309 0931-2
 BWV 1031-2, 1034, 1038, 1079

This is an interesting disc representing a selection of Bach's chamber music for flute in a number of different guises. Of the three solo sonatas presented here (BWV 1031, 1032 & 1034), the sonata in E minor BWV 1034 is perhaps the most intriguing, not least because of its vast continuo team of harpsichord, organ, theorbo and cello. This is really very effective, especially in the fast movements, adding layers of depth and colour to this inherently rich and muscular sonata without drowning out the flute. Of the remaining works on the disc, the Sonata for flute, violin and continuo BWV 1038 is a short and melodically satisfying piece, played here with great expression and sensitivity by Karl Kaiser and Anne Röhrlig. The Sonata in C minor BWV 1031 (the violin and flute sonata from the *Musical Offering*) is here reworked as a solo sonata for flute with obbligato keyboard; the precedents for this are of course numerous, and the sonata gains as much as it loses in its new identity. The use of fortepiano accompaniment is also fresh and interesting idea, backed up by reports of Bach playing one by Silbermann fortepiano for Frederick the Great in Potsdam during the 1740s; however, the example played by Susanne Kaiser on this recording is a Viennese instrument dating from the 1790s, so a degree of authenticity is lost. Nevertheless the performing quality here, as on the remainder of the disc, is very good. An all-round safe bet. *Marie Ritter*

Bach *Flute Sonatas* Michael Form *fl*, Fabio Bonizzoni *hpscd* 75' 40"
 Raum Klang RK 9701
 BWV 1013, 1030, 1032, 1034, 1035

The recorder world was severely shaken by the news of instrument-maker Frederick Morgan's untimely death last Spring; amongst the tributes to this extraordinary man comes this recording of Bach's Flute Sonatas played by Michael Form. Using three of Morgan's recorders – altos in e' and f' after Bizet and a voice flute in D after Bressan, Form is able to play four of the sonatas (in A major BWV 1032, E major BWV 1035, B minor BWV 1030 and E minor BWV 1034) in their original keys, only transposing the A minor Partita into

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C minor for performance on an f alto. The lower instruments sound particularly rich, and the recorder-playing is expressive, full-bodied and musically interesting, if perhaps a little studied. The harpsichord-playing, though brisk and accurate, offers little support in terms of colour and overall sonority, particularly in the continuo-based works where a bass instrument is lacking – but this is perhaps a small point for what is overall an excellent recording.

Marie Ritter

Bellinzani Opera VI: Musica d'Amore [Madrigali amorosi...1733] Accademia degli Invaghiti, Francesco Moi dir 68' 21"

Tactus TC 682701

This CD comprises some very beautiful music – I've imagined Emma Kirkby and Evelyn Tubb singing the duet *Bellezza caduta* several times and almost cried. The four-part madrigals, too, offer many delights: as the booklet says, Bellinzani was a master of counterpoint and this, combined with seemingly endless chains of suspensions, neat inner part writing, lyrical melodies and dynamic bass lines, means that the ear is constantly drawn on and charmed. In addition to the vocal music, there are four preludes, three of them improvised by Francesco Moi, the group's director and author of the notes. The fourth is by the composer, though I cannot imagine that it was intended to be played as a prelude to a madrigal. The singing varies in quality – some of it is excellent, but some is rather wayward. The sopranos tend to squeeze their top notes, the alto is rich and plummy, which sometimes makes tuning 'interesting', the tenor has some nice lines to sing, but sound production makes him lose either control or time. I don't have any access to the music but it seemed quite high and I wonder if pitch might play a part in the difficulties they were having. Nice music, but handle with care. BC

Fasch Orchestral Suites [FWV K: D22, F7, a3] Capella Savaria, Pál Németh 72' 50" Dynamic CDS 233

This is a lovely CD with some stunning double-reed playing (are players becoming better anyway, or are there particular teachers showing the way?), here made even more ravishing by the addition of plucked continuo to the wind ensemble. The three suites (all from Darmstadt: the D major and A minor are Mus. ms. 1184/8 and 9 respectively, to correct the booklet notes) are scored for two oboes, two bassoons and strings and, obviously enough, consist of a French overture and a sequence of dance or character movements. The A minor (repeatedly referred to as A flat in the notes) is unusual in having three dance-pairings with da capos. Each of the suites has a *Plaisanterie*, a particular favourite of Fasch's. It's good to see that the record company is now aware of the International Fasch Society's existence and that there has been some collaboration in the shape of the notes by Stephan Blaut, the recognised authority on

this large part of the composer's output, which don't quite get the English translation they deserve; some readers may not know that Lipsia is Leipzig, and the libraries concerned are State Libraries not regional. Shouldn't a native speaker supply the translations? But don't let that put you off an excellent disc! BC

Handel Arias Yvonne Kenny, Australian Brandenburg Orchestra, Paul Dyer 63' 48" ABC Classics 456 689-2

This is a recital disc with a difference. Yvonne Kenny has played the roles she sings on stage (most of them more than once!) and she brings an air of the theatre to her performances. She ornaments da capos (some with more success to my ear than others) and she has a very definite presence. The Australian Brandenburg Orchestra, as ever, play beautifully – their three instrumental sets are very well done (especially the Allegro from Op. 6 No. 5). The booklet is very nicely done, too, with translations from 18th-century wordbooks, lavish notes about each of the works represented and copious photographs of Ms. Kenny in action. Handelians with record tokens left over from Christmas will enjoy it. BC

We also received a another copy of the Brandenburg Orchestra's Vivaldi Seasons, which we reviewed in Dec. 1997, p. 20

Handel Dixit Dominus The Scholars Baroque Ensemble 54' 30" Naxos 8.553208 £

+ *Nisi Dominus* HWV 238 & *Salve Regina* HWV 241

Handel Dixit Dominus Annick Massis, Magdalena Kozena, Sara Fulgoni, Patrick Henckens, Kevin McLean-Mair, Marcos Pujol SSATTB, Les Musiciens du Louvre, Marc Minkowski 78' 10" DG Archiv 459 627-2

+ *Laudate pueri* HWV 237, *Salve Regina* HWV 241, *Saeviat tellus* HWV 240

The Scholars' one-to-a-part *Acis and Galatea* for Naxos (EMR 44, p. 25) had some historical validity, but one wonders by what logic (exercised at least five years ago, apparently) a group of solo voices was thought suited to Handel's early Latin psalm settings, in which alternation of solo/tutti textures is part of the fabric of the music. There are moments in their *Dixit* which work (the alto solo 'Virgam virtutis', of course, nicely shaped by countertenor Angus Davidson, and the quietly enigmatic 'De torrente') but generally the effect is prissy, as is also the case with 'Nisi Dominus'. One-to-a-part instruments are apt for the *Salve regina*, but the solo soprano is a shade tremulous, and the organ obbligato is enfeebled by use of a watery flute stop. Minkowski's 'live recording' for Archiv (apparently derived from a Radio France broadcast concert) errs in the other direction, using over-strong choral forces (26 singers, presumably all professional, are listed), their every breath made audible by close miking. Low pitch (A=392) adds to the impression of weight and prompts the use of a fruity contralto

for the alto solos. (The pitch may be right for this music, but no explanation is given.) Minkowski's penchant for exaggerated effect makes for a lumpy *Dixit*. The shorter works are more successful, especially the Carmelite motet *Saeviat tellus*, with its flashy outer movements and dreamy second aria; Annick Massis, helped by the pitch, meets the vocal demands superbly. With this contribution the disc can just be recommended, but you need an alternative *Dixit* (not the Scholars').

Anthony Hicks

Handel Utrecht Te Deum, O be joyful in the Lord Ensemble Bouzignac Utrecht, dir. Erik Van Nevel 46' 28" de haske DHR 197.002

It is understandable that a Utrecht group might wish to tackle Handel's *Utrecht Te Deum* and *Jubilate*, though the works were written to celebrate the eponymous treaty of 1713, not the city itself. But why substitute for the *Jubilate* Handel's later STB version with reduced instrumental scoring, produced four years later for Cannons and usually thought of as *Chandos Anthem* no. 1? (No explanation is given.) In any case the pairing is short measure; both versions of the *Jubilate* could have been included. The performances are quite acceptable, however. Nevel favours legato lines for instruments and voices (the solos are taken by the lead choral singers) and his tempos are carefully judged to give due solemnity to the slower passages without losing overall momentum. Anthony Hicks

Handel Organ Concertos op. 7/8-12 Alfred Gross claviorganum, Rundfunkorchester des SWR, Klaus Arp 68' 32" Koch-Schwann 31122-2

These six-year-old performances of the last five of Handel's Opus 7 organ concertos (confusingly numbered 8-12 on the box) are sturdily conventional as far as the orchestral contribution goes. The novel twist is that the organ part is played on the claviorganum, a combination of harpsichord and organ operated from the same keyboard. According to the booklet, Handel is known to have possessed an English variant of the claviorganum, built for him by Tschudi in collaboration with Schnetzler, which would be interesting if true (it isn't, as far as I know), but would not justify the use of the instrument in this context. For the listener the effect is simply that the solo part is sometimes played on the organ, sometimes on the harpsichord and sometimes on both in unison – all of which could be achieved more easily and probably more imaginatively if the part were shared between two players. The organ element of the instrument used seems to be limited in power, and there is noticeable weakness in the solos when fullness of tone is needed (as in the later variations or the ground bass movement of Op. 7/5). A pointless exercise, though tastefully executed. Anthony Hicks

Pergolesi *Stabat Mater, Salve Regina* in F minor & in A minor Barbara Bonney, Andreas Scholl SA. Les Talens Lyriques. Christophe Rousset 60' 30" Decca 466 134-2

My heart sank slightly when this CD arrived for review: not only do I think the music over-recorded when there are many fine pieces out there waiting for proper attention, but I'm afraid I am not a fully paid-up member of the Andreas Scholl fan club. I generally enjoy Christophe Rousset and Les Talens Lyriques, and they are on very good form here, and Barbara Bonney, singing as she did for the recent recording of Schumann on Archiv, is normally utterly beguiling. Here, I thought she beefed her voice up to match Scholl's and in the process lost a lot of that clarity of line which I so enjoy. The solo motets come over far better, although there are occasionally some other-wordly high notes (from both singers). This sounds terribly negative and critical, but even I cannot deny that there is much which will charm aficionados of this style of singing. I was similarly out of step with the rest of the world with Cecilia Bartoli's Vivaldi disc. BC

Portell *Graduali* Concentus Musicus Faber-terminus "Josquin Depres", Orchestra della Accademia Romana "Archangelo Corelli". Roberto Tigani 53' 41" Bongiovanni GB 5071-2

Full marks for discovering a composer I have never heard of (nor has MGG or New Grove). The booklet note identifies the Giuseppe Portelli, whose gradual settings and a Magnificat survive at S. Maria in Trastevere in Rome and who was *maestro di cappella* there from 1727 to 1729, with a Josep Portell in Catalonia. The music is pleasant enough, and the performances would be acceptable if one came across them at a concert in S. Maria; but they are not strong enough to stand comparison with the wealth of good recordings of unknown baroque music that are now pouring out of Italy. A pity: I hope I encounter Portell again in more convincing circumstances. BC

Telemann *Orchestral Suites* Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra, Jeanne Lamon 67' 49" Analekta FL 2 3128 *Alster Overture, La Bourse, Burlesque de Don Quixote*

It's a pity that the CD market is driven by the cult of the individual (a known singer will always be chosen over an unknown, regardless of the quality) and nicknames (when I worked at Covent Garden Records, one of my customers refused to buy a CD of Beethoven's 5th Symphony, even though I played the opening to him after he'd made a gallant effort at singing it, because he'd been told it was the Pastoral he was after!). Telemann wrote dozens of very good orchestral suites without labels which will probably go unrecorded while the same few appear again and again. Not that the present set is not excellent: Tafelmusik's is possibly the best *La Bourse* I've heard. I

was particularly impressed by the beautifully smooth oboe playing, and I hope no one is upset by my confessing that I've never heard of John Abberger or Washington McClain. The character pieces in *Don Quixote* and the *Alster Overture* are well done without a hint of going over the top. Having established themselves as fine Telemanners, let's hear some less well-known music, please! BC

Telemann *Darmstadt Overtures (Suites)* Cologne Chamber Orchestra, Helmut Müller-Brühl 61' 23" Naxos 8.554244 £ TWV 55: C6, D15, g4

Here again it's the oboes who lead the way, logically enough, since these are the three works which contrast the string band with a double-reed band of three oboes and bassoon, which were recorded as a set by Nikolaus Harnoncourt in his early days with Vienna Concentus Musicus. Müller-Brühl has worked with period instruments and his experience shows; it also helps that the leader for two of the suites is Ingeborg Scheerer (a brilliant baroque fiddler) and that the harpsichord continuo is in the hands of Harald Hoeren; both of them also play for Michael Schneider's bands. Listen to the opening of Track 16 to hear some of the best overture playing ever. Although the sound is utterly different from that of the early-instrument Canadian band, I would direct anyone unfamiliar with this music to this Naxos recording first, so fine are the performances. The bass line might just be a little too prominent occasionally, but that aside, this is a fine recording. It's a little naughty of the company to refer to 'the three Darmstadt Overtures' as if they were conceived as a set and were the only ones from Darmstadt: is the only way to sell music without a nickname to invent one? BC

Zani *Concerti op. 4 (Vienna 1735) [nos 1. 4-7]* Cappella Palatina, G. B. Columbro 68' 33" Agorá AG 220.1

This is totally new music to me, and very nice it is too. The booklet caught my attention, not so much for its grainy, gloomy photograph of the players as for its numerous candidates for Pseuds' Corner: 'Rationalised emotional situations are not objective and, by their very subjectivity, are open to entirely personal responses.' What precisely does that say about Zani's concertos? Scored for solo violin (or flute) with strings and continuo ('produced extemporaneously or by solo violins' – huh!) five concertos are here recorded for the first time, some with the addition of oboes and bassoon, which seems sensible. The playing is not wonderful, although the solos are nicely done. The added oboe parts are a little freer than I would have imagined contemporary practice to allow, especially if the players were reading off the violin parts. BC

Il Barocco Strumentale Italiano Il Giardino Armonico, Ensemble Pian e Forte, Tripla

Concordia, etc. 145' 24" 2 CDs Nuova Era 7337 ££ Music by Bonporti, Castello, Corelli, Frescobaldi, Geminiani, Lanzetti, Molinaro, Pasquini, Platti, Porpora, D. Scarlatti, Stradella, Torelli, Vivaldi

The list of composers suggests that this is no conventional baroque sampler. Each of the 18 tracks (which comprise complete pieces, not single movements) is well and stylishly played on period instruments. This can be thoroughly commended to any listener who wants to move a little beyond Vivaldi (represented here by RV 98 & 105) and Corelli (a flute version of op. 5/12, which is sensibly complemented by a keyboard *Follia* by Bernardo Pasquini). A pity that the source discs are not listed: this is a good advert for them. CB

Sento Amor: Operatic arias David Daniels. Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Harry Bicket dir. 61' 10" Virgin 7243 5 45365 2 6 Arias from Handel *Partenope*, *Tolomeo*, Gluck *Orfeo ed Euridice*, *Telemaco*, Mozart *Ascanio in Alba*, *Mitridate* & K255

This is not a re-make of Andreas Scholl's *Heroes* CD of a few months ago. David Daniels has selected a wide range of arias in different styles. His voice is somewhat softer focused than Scholl's (slightly fluffy at the top, and taking special care over low cadences). But he carries the line well and gets under the skin of the texts – in which he's brilliantly assisted by the OAE. It strikes me as slightly strange to order the arias Mozart, Gluck (including, inevitably, *Che faro senza Euridice*) and finally Handel, although the virtuoso *Furibondo spirò il vento* makes a cracking finale to the CD, even if a woman would probably have made the wind sound even more furious. BC

The Sun King's Paradise Palladian Ensemble Pamela Thorne recs, Rachel Podger vln, Susanne Heinrich gamba, William Carter theorbo 56' 24" Linn CKD 100

F. Couperin *Musettes de Choisie & de Taverne Le Moine Prelude & Chaconne*; Marais *Tombeau pour M. Ste. Colombe* (1701), Suite in D (1692), Suite in D (1725); Rebel *Les Caractères de la Danse*

If in the past the Palladian Ensemble has exploited its reputation for virtuosity, flamboyance and youthful vigour, this new recording represents an entirely new approach. Choosing for the first time to explore the 18th-century French repertoire of Versailles, the ensemble creates a curiously beautiful air of melancholy in the slow instrumental fantasies, combined with an exquisitely restrained energy for the dance movements: perfect of course for the protocol-obsessed society of Louis XIV. Susanne Heinrich's soul-wrenching performance of the *Tombeau pour M. Ste Colombe* by Marais, and William Carter's magnificently paced *Prélude* and *Chaconne* by Etienne Le Moine are special highlights of the disc, but as ever all the members of this ensemble give performances which are mature, polished and stylish. Of the ensemble pieces, Rebel's extraordinary *Les*

Characters de la Danse deserves special mention, consisting of 14 short dance fragments rolled into one. The final movement on this recording, the plaintive *Symphonie* of Marais' Suite in D forms a perfect conclusion to this superbly conceived disc. Highly recommended. *Marie Ritter*

CLASSICAL

J. C. Bach Symphonies Concertantes Vol. 4
Anna McDonald *vln*, Julia Bishop *vln*, Sebastian Comberti *vlc*, Rachel Brown *fl*, Anthony Robson *ob*, Jeremy Ward *bsn*, The Hanover Band, Anthony Halstead 65' 42"
cpo 999 627-2
In C (C 36b) 2 *vlns* & *vlc*; C (C76) *vln*, Eb (C37) *fl*, *ob*, *bsn*; G (C Inc 5) *fl*, 2 *vlns*, *vlc*

The arrival of this CD fortuitously coincided with my own preparations to record some J. C. Bach on an original Kirckman harpsichord. But it is not just my current immersion in the early-classical idiom which predisposes me towards this recording. I've always had a soft spot for repertory straddling the chamber and the orchestral, especially the sunny *sinfonia concertantes* of Mozart and Haydn. Here, the ever-cheerful music of Bach has been given an enthusiastic account by the Hanover Band, which seems to have shed its earlier robust raucousness. The recorded balance is the most natural I've heard for a while, giving the soloists' sterling efforts room to blossom, especially those of Anna McDonald in the violin concerto (an odd but not unwelcome inclusion). Infelicities of detail mar the insert booklet, such as not aligning the track numbers with the corresponding movements and not mentioning the harpsichordist, who is presumably the director, Anthony Halstead. *Kah-Ming Ng*

Balbastre Pièces de Clavecin Premier Livre (1759). Jean-Patrice Brosse (hpscd by Kroll, 1774) 73' 02"
Pierre Verany PV799102

In the year that Rameau's second collection of harpsichord music appeared Balbastre was a mere babe-in-arms. His first collection of harpsichord pieces (1759) still owes much to the older style, though, and to François Couperin too. Balbastre's works are very attractive – real crowd-pleasers – and are memorable if not particularly serious or deep. The influence of Italian music is ever-present, as it is in the music of Royer, and certainly helps to keep things buoyant. Jean-Patrice Brosse's recording has a lot going for it although his approach is rather cool throughout. In *La Hericourt* the dissonant, dramatic held chords towards the end are passed over very quickly. Brosse also has a tendency to clip phrase endings – this gives a feeling of control and, in some situations, a heightened dramatic effect, but more often than not robs phrases of their lyricism just at the crucial moment. Certainly I found *La Segur* and *La Courteille* started to sound a bit weird because of this. Overall, though, I think this is a good recording which manages neither to get bogged down in Balbastre's thick textures

nor to trip up in the heavily ornamented slow numbers. *La Lugeac* is a romp.

Robin Bigwood

J. Benda Sonatas for harpsichord Tamara Franzová 73' 16"
Supraphon 81 9011-2 131
in D & d (1757), in a & c (1780/1), in C & c (1787)

Jiri Antonin Benda was brother of the better-known Frantisek [Franz]. Whilst the latter acquired widespread fame as a violinist, Jiri Antonin devoted himself largely to composition for the stage and church and also produced at least 30 symphonies. The harpsichord sonatas recorded here date from between 1757 and 1787 and, more than anything else, show the influence of C. P. E. Bach, whom Benda met in Berlin. They are insular works, lacking the energy and drive of Bach's sonatas, but still very interesting and full of drama. Certainly for anyone involved in the performance or study of C. P. E. Bach and Haydn they are worth a listen. Tamara Franzova is a sensitive performer, bringing considerable insight to the earlier works especially. I sometimes longed for a few more fireworks and some greater contrasts, but these are reliable performances nonetheless.

Robin Bigwood

Fürstenau Masonic Music Mario Carbotta *fl*, Aldo Martinoni *guitar*, Coro Maschile della Radio Svizzera, Lugano, Diego Fasolis *cond*
Dynamic CDS 250 57' 05"

Caspar (1772-1819) was the father and grandfather of two better-known Füstenaus. On this evidence, he had no more than a minor talent, but it is good to hear these pleasant if unmemorable compositions. There are two sets of six Masonic songs, one written for the 'Three Beams' Lodge at Münster, the other for the 'Brotherly Chain' at Soest. All are simple, strophic songs with choral refrain, accompanied by flute (Fürstenau's instrument) and guitar, the inference being that, unsurprisingly, neither lodge had the instrumental resources of the well-known Viennese lodges of the 1780s. The set of 12 short pieces for flute and guitar, op. 16, has no obvious masonic connection; its dance movements are not without charm and are well played. The small choir provides the variously-gifted soloists. The rather short programme is neatly recorded; awkwardly laid-out notes and song-texts are provided in four languages, of which clumsy English is one.

Peter Branscombe

Galuppi Gloria [etc] Ocsana Kobzeva, Elena Cioric, Beata Ganzel, Antonio De Lucia, Viorel Kojocaru, Pitòr Racovis SSmSTBB, Orchestra & coro dell' Accademia Nazionale Moldava, Silvano Frontalini dir 55' 11"
Bongiovanni GB 2239-2
Also includes Arietta Pastorale, Christe Redemptor, Et incarnatus est & Hymnus de Spiritu Sancto.

Before I deal critically with this CD, I have to say that it is far better than the Jommelli I reviewed in December. The culture clash I mentioned there is not at all apparent here. Most of the playing and singing is in

keeping with modern performances of this repertoire. There is a very nice duet for basses in the *Laudamus te*. Indeed, much of the music is extremely well written – I periodically consider devoting more time to editing some of Galuppi's music, but I fear that the market is not there (for Vanhal either, despite the beauty of his vocal writing). His use of flutes and horns is a pleasant change, too. 'Perplexing irregularities, atypical presences, baroque rhetoric': the booklet notes were here dealing with Tiepolo's frescoes in the Residence of Würzburg, but they seem equally applicable here. As a rule, the author of the notes is more interested in Tiepolo and Galuppi's opera than in saying anything about the music on the disc – Heaven forbid! In short, I think a complete re-appraisal of the product is required. In its present state, I could only recommend this to anyone planning to perform (and record?) more. On the technical side, the timings and track labels are faulty: track 5 should be deleted, and a new track inserted after the present track 13 (I think: in the absence of any texts and with my limited knowledge of Galuppi's hymn settings, it seems logical that this specimen should be in two movements.)

BC

Haydn Piano Trios: Complete Edition Vol. 1:
Hob. XV: 6-10 Trio 1790 (Matthias Fischer, Philipp Bosbach, Harald Hoeren) 67' 01"
cpo 999 466-2

The instruments in these performances are perfectly balanced, but the Beaux Arts Trio recording, using modern instruments, exhibits a higher calibre of musicianship. The first movement of the trio in F here has a robust and energetic quality, but the tendency to add extra accents on strong beats became mildly irritating. I would also have preferred a more leisurely minuet for the following movement: it sounded more rushed than graceful. If, however, you like your Haydn extrovert and with slower movements on the fast side, then this is the disc for you; there is excellent flow coupled with some pleasing tonal colour and lyricism to the lovely D minor andante. The Beaux Arts Trio can adopt a more reflective approach to slow movements because of the greater sustaining power of the modern piano. All the repeats are observed here, although the Beaux Arts omit the odd one in fast movements.

Margaret Cranmer

Jommelli Veni Creator Spiritus Roberta Invernizzi, Mysterium Vocis, Capella de' Turchini Antonio Florio dir 63' 24"
Opus 111 (*Tresori di Napoli* 9) OPS 30-254
Barbella *Ninna-nonna per prender sonno*; Cafaro *Septuaginta Dominus*; Jommelli *Veni Creator Spiritus*; *Veni sponsa Christi*, *Ciaconna* op. 5/13; *Sinfonia*; Porpora *Qui habitat in adjutorio*; Sabatino *Vola turtur de nido*

Another disc (cf the Legrenzi on p. 23) in which one composer (and only one of the four works of his on the disc) is singled out for the cover. In fact, by far the longest (21' 05") and most impressive piece is the motet by Sabatino, sung with enormous virtuosity and panache by Roberta Invernizzi. I

hadn't read the booklet note until after I heard it, so can independently endorse Dinko Fabris's claim that it is 'one of the most extraordinary works of the entire century', even if I would not rate it quite as highly as *Silete venti, Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen* or *Exsultate, jubilate*. Is it a sign of progress in the discovery of Italian 18th-century music that Jommelli is now a name that will sell a CD? Yet another revelatory issue in this fascinating series. CB

Mozart Piano Concertos No. 6 in Bb K. 238 & 9 in Bb K. 271 Patrick Cohen fp. Ensemble Baroque de Limoges. Christophe Coin 53' 31" Astree 8664

It is good to have a recording of these two early concertos on period instruments. The orchestral playing, under the direction of the cellist Christophe Coin, is superb, with interesting wind detail well to the fore. The piano, a copy of an Anton Walter, blends in well, though the prominence of the orchestra (4.4.2.2.2) required a little mental adjustment. The cadenzas are tasteful and well-proportioned, but I found the rubato from the soloist a little excessive, and it occasionally caused slight ensemble problems. The difference between two works written only a year apart, is remarkable, the galant style of the former contrasting with all the intensity of the mature Mozart in the latter. Ian Graham-Jones

CLASSICAL RE-RELEASES

C. P. E. Bach Oboe concertos Wq 164 & 165, Sinfonia Wq 177 Il Fondamento. Paul Dombrechts 55' 33" (rec 1997)

Vanguard Classics Passacaille 99718

Sons of Bach C.P.E. and J.C. (arr. Mozart) Concertos Trevor Pinnock hpscd, The English Concert 49' 35" (rec 1976) erd 3311

Mozart Don Giovanni Harmoniemusik von Joseph Triebensee Octophorus 53' 54" (rec 1994) Vanguard Classics Passacaille 99709

These three discs are all welcome returns to the catalogue. It would probably have been good to re-do the booklet for the Dombrechts C. P. E. Bach disc, as the promotional material about his orchestra is well out of date. Not only that, there's a sentence suggesting that the concertos were originally written for harpsichord, followed by discussion of the oboists at the Berlin Court. (Helm's catalogue suggests that the oboe scores are earlier autographs.) That aside, the performances are good, especially the symphony. Trevor Pinnock's keyboard concertos are good too, but some of the orchestral playing is not of the standard we're used to nowadays. The *Don Giovanni* arrangements are nice and the period instruments work well: I particularly liked the arias with oboe solo). BC

19th CENTURY

Beethoven Compositions for Piano and Cello: Sonatas op. 5, Variations WoO 45, 46, op. 66 Hidemi Suzuki vlc, Yoshiko Kojima fp DHM 05472 77519 2 76' 58"

This disc is generous in its length and the quality of the musicianship is exemplary with evidence of very careful preparation. Hidemi Suzuki plays a 1759 Guadagnini cello with a glorious sound and he brings the articulation to life; he also offers some interesting criticism of urtext editions in the notes. The staccato from both players has character, if not attitude, and short phrases are never chopped but part of something greater. There is an excellent sense of dialogue throughout, although I felt that the repeated chords in the fortepiano at the beginning of Variation XI in op. 66 were momentarily too loud – the cello part is low at that point but its melodic line is interesting. Very highly recommended. Margaret Cranmer

Field Piano Concertos Nos 2 & 3 Andreas Staier. Concerto Köln, David Stern 61' 42" Teldec Das Alte Werk 3984-21475-2

This disc is a delight in every way. In the 19th century, the second concerto was played by many virtuosos, as well as being taught and admired by Chopin. Field's piano writing has a romantic atmosphere and is highly original. His own outstanding pianistic talent gave him a marvellous awareness of effective sonorities across all registers of the piano, and Andreas Staier more than does him justice. The fortepiano is a Broadwood c.1802 from the artist's own collection and has been excellently restored. Although these concertos were published in 1816 it is likely that they were composed earlier and the third concerto may predate the second because its melodic quality and harmonic range are not quite as fine. The third concerto also only has two movements and the use of a nocturne here to provide a contrast to the two fast movements is highly appropriate, although perhaps the fortepiano would have benefited from being more forward in sound. The seductive charm of these works more than compensates for any structural weaknesses. Margaret Cranmer

Mendelssohn The Art of Mendelssohnian Song; Fanny Hensel & Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy Francine van der Heijden S, Ursula Dütschler fp Claves CD 50-9901 62' 56"

The programme consists of 15 songs by Felix Mendelssohn and 13 by his sister, Fanny Hensel. Roughly a third of them are claimed as first recordings, but even apart from that, there is much to enjoy and admire in the performances in this well-chosen recital. Francine van der Heijden has a charming light soprano, which she uses with fine musicianship and taste, though in matters of pronunciation and projection in three languages she still has much to learn. The fortepiano, by Henri Pape (Paris, 1821) is a good instrument, and it is very well played. I particularly enjoyed Fanny's lieder and songs, few of which had come my way hitherto. The pick of the Mendelssohn settings lie in the touching, reticent set of six songs, op. 71, here identified as 'Requiem for Fanny', which ends with an unaccompanied vocal trio. Texts in three languages are included (though the English

is at times inaccurate), and the recording is neat and clear.

Peter Branscombe

MISCELLANEOUS

Home to Thanksgiving: Songs of Thanks and Praise Paul Hillier 58' 06" Harmonia Mundi HMX 2907624

I've never been in the USA for Thanksgiving. Its ethos seems to be different from our Harvest Festival, and at least this has none of the UK's hymns for that occasion, most of which I dislike. I'm not sure if I'm any the wiser after hearing this anthology. But despite that, it is a delight for all who enjoy simple music – mostly strophic tunes. The dominant repertoire is shape-note, concluding with Elisha West's moving *The day is past and gone*. Other items extend back to Abelard, Notre Dame and Tallis and on to one of John Cage's three-note songs and a similar example by Paul Hillier himself. An odd programme, but it works – at any time of the year. If you don't have the discs from which it is drawn, try it. CB

The Mad Buckgoat: Ancient Music of Ireland The Baltimore Consort 60' 01" Dorian Dor-90279

The performers take *A Collection of the Most Celebrated Irish Tunes* by J & W Neal (1724) as their starting point, though some items come from as late as the 20th century. The consort is certainly successful in its aim of not becoming a modern traditional Irish band: perhaps they should have been, since the general effect is of a rather tame version of that. But neither do they sound as if they have pushed the music back to around 1600, when their rebec, lute, cittern and bandora might have been appropriate. They fall between two possible styles, and are just a little too polite. Perhaps that is right for 1724; but were the Irish so out-of-touch with fashions in instruments? The special-pleading of the booklet would be more relevant if the performances were a bit more characterful. CB

Star of the Magi Suzie Le Blanc, Daniel Taylor SA, Les Voix Humaines 54' 22" ATMA Classique ACD 2 2190

I'll resist reviewing this late Christmas offering as a contribution to the arrangement debate. It is certainly surprising and imaginative for such a seasonal programme to be built round a bass viol duo (the metaphorical 'human voices' are in fact Susie Napper and Margaret Little on violins). Who would expect *Riu, riu, chiu* to sound well on two violins? There is some fine music performed unadapted – the opening *There is no rose* and a marvellously soporific lullaby *Hor ch'è tempo di dormire* (seven minutes on a rocking, two-note bass) by Merula. The longest item is Byrd's *Lullaby*, deftly fitted with duet accompaniment. I don't think that this delightful disc was available here for 1999 (thanks, Suzie, for sending it), but do look out for it in December, when it will presumably be available from Harmonia Mundi. CB

LETTERS

Dear Clifford,

With regard to Venetia Caine's letter in the October issue, I certainly concur with her findings. For the past seven years I have been directing the choir of the American University of Beirut, during which time some 300 students have joined in one or more performances, and I would describe 80% of them as either mezzos or baritones. They are all Lebanese or Jordanian/Palestinians between the age of 17-25; nearly all of them have had no vocal training whatsoever, unless singing Byzantine chant in the local churches can be said to count. Only a few can read music in the beginning, though they quickly learn. For some reason the men seem to be drawn from the two most competitive faculties of the university - medicine and engineering, and are therefore from the most intelligent group, and pick things up extremely quickly. Happily they have no preconceived idea about how to sing, and therefore follow my example. None has ever produced a vibrato, except one soprano whose mother was Georgian (i. e. from the Caucasus) and had lived and trained a bit in Russia. She didn't last. There is no tradition of singing with vibrato in Middle Eastern music (except in Turkish music where thick trills are commonplace) and students actively dislike it (and make fun of it) when they hear it. Interesting.

Of the 20% who instinctively gravitate to a high or low register, nearly all simply have wider ranges than the others, and are happy to sing in the middle register as well. I have a first tenor this year who started out last year as a second bass. He is quite capable of singing either but has decided he prefers singing in a consistently high tessitura. The majority of every year's choir of some 60 students have come from Christian backgrounds as might be expected, but some of my finest singers have been and are Muslims or Druzes, especially the sopranos, and usually make up between a third and a half of the group. The results for me have been exactly those described by Ms. Caine. I too am amazed by my patience (NOT one of my virtues as anyone who knows me well will verify), but it is worth it. Next week we are performing, among other things, the Vivaldi *Gloria*, Britten's *Ceremony of Carols* and some challenging smaller works including the latter's *Hymn to the Virgin*, Jakob Handl's *O Magnum Mysterium* and the Franz Biebl's *Ave Maria*. It is quite astonishing really what one can achieve with a random group of amateurs, provided they are keen to learn and above all intelligent!

On another topic, having just received my copies of the 3rd and 4th recordings in The Cardinalls' Musick's excellent Byrd series, I was interested to note the review of the 3rd one in the October *EMR* where BC comments on the performance of the *Quomodo cantabimus*. I found it lovely, but nearly unrecognizable for the simple reason that they take it at a tempo some two-thirds that of either the Sixteen

or Tallis Scholars recordings, i.e. nine minutes instead of six. Having grown used to the quicker tempo I wonder if Carwood & Skinner have any particular reason for their much slower pulse?

Robert Betts

Dear Clifford

I must admit that neither Andrew Carwood nor myself have heard the other recordings of *Quomodo cantabimus*. We try to approach these works from a fresh perspective not only with regards to tempo, but also in matters of pitch, vocal scoring and the interpretation of the text. This latter point is paramount in everything we do. As for the tempo of *Quomodo*, I suppose that our chief concerns were the clarity of the text, the historical context of its composition (especially how the work might follow on from De Monte's more sombre setting), and the logic of the counterpoint.

Your observation that our 'performing decisions [seem] intensely subjective and practical' is spot on. How else could it be otherwise? We will never know precisely how our 16th-century counterparts would have performed a particular work, and I would imagine that no two performances would have been the same even in Byrd's time. The best we can do is try to be as historically informed as possible before making such decisions, but it is also imperative to have something interesting to say about the music itself: that is, to have an interpretation. For us, this happens after much consideration and deliberation. This is not to say that our interpretations of Byrd are any better or more valid than the next. When we took on the project, we were fully aware that most admirers of Byrd's music have their own - often quite clear - ideas of how his music should be performed. Some prefer the gutsy, passionate approach (which is largely a product of the scoring and our approach to the liturgical drama of the text), others do not (your review of Volume 4, Dec. 1999). But we do see Byrd as a passionate composer, and our chosen mode of expression seems to work well for us. The singers and our concert audiences certainly seem to enjoy the experience!

David Skinner

My own slight (very slight) unease at a few items in Vol. 4 came from a sense that sometimes the singers seem to be pushed from outside rather than generating the impulse from within the group. I'm all in favour of a gutsy, passionate approach. CB

Dear Clifford,

I have just read Robin Bigwood's acerbic review of my recent release of William Croft's *Complete Harpsichord Works*. I have also just seen for the first time the review in the January issue of *BBC Music Magazine*. It is hard to believe that both reviewers are describing the same product. While I readily grant that Mr Bigwood is entitled to his opinions,

your readers should be aware that these discs have been warmly received in many quarters. Indeed, the response from customers and critics has been overwhelmingly positive.

Two issues need particular comment. The '50s functional look which Mr Bigwood imputes to my discs might cause an unwary reader erroneously to infer that they come in plain cardboard covers with typewritten labels rather than in standard jewel cases with booklets printed on glossy paper showing full-page colour pictures of the harpsichord and spinet. Inside are two more full-page monochrome pictures of Croft and Julian Rhodes. There is, however, no sylvan nude such as appears on the cover of the rival Croft CD, which Mr Bigwood prefers. As for the 'throttled treble' of the spinet: all spinets have a dryer sound than any harpsichord or virginal since there is very little soundboard area in the treble. This is simply a characteristic of spinets and should be no cause for surprise or complaint.

J. Martin Stafford

Dear Sirs.

With reference to the review by BC in *EMR* 54, p. 24, we would like to draw attention to the choice of soprano recorder in Hugo Ruf's edition of Sonata VIII (not included on our recording). Frans Brüggen's recording for Telefunken has used the same option, supported by the option *Fluta di Quatre* in Roger's edition of 1715. It must be stressed that 'Violino osia flauto' is written on Bellinzani's sonatas, as in Veracini's handwritten sonatas (Venice, 1712). R. Valentine, B. Marcello, F. Barsanti, Bitti and Bononcini all wrote for recorder with the same or similar instrumentation on the titlepage. In this period in Italy *flauto* means recorder, and the flute is always indicated as *traverso* or *flaute traversiere*. The only problem with Bigaglia's XII Sonatas is the range of Sonatas I, II, VIII and XI suit the flute or violin but not the alto recorder. In *The Recorder and its Music* p. 62, Edgar Hunt sets out clearly why a soprano recorder is the instrument for Sonata VIII in A minor: *fluta di quattro* is a mistake for *flauto di quinta*, the soprano in C, which fits perfectly the range and the key. It was easier to prevail dissent on voice flute playing Sonatas VII & XI than on the well-known use of soprano for these sonatas. It is not clear what the reviewer does not like besides the squeaky soprano and the soprano with the bassoon (has he not heard also voice flute and alto recorder?) The other few 'bizarre' choices are all testified by contemporary descriptions of 18th-century performances in Italy and elsewhere; however, *Littera occidit, spiritus vivificat*.

Tactus

We may criticise details, but the amount of Italian music that Tactus is making available, often in the form of discs reproducing complete publications, is gratifying. The problem with instrumentation cannot be solved by too close a dependence on information from 18th-century publishers. Even when the composer is in the same town as the publisher, the latter is more concerned with maximising sale than indicating the ideal ensemble (Handel and Walsh provide an excellent). Most Italian

music was published a thousand miles north in Amsterdam, so the composer's influence on the publisher's decision is even more unlikely. Modern performers want to create the sound which the composer imagined: the publisher was more concerned with the instruments popular among amateur players. So we need to balance titlepage scorings with the intrinsic characteristics of the music. Some sonatas may be neutral, deliberately written for performance by a variety of instruments; others may demand a particular instrument, perhaps one not mentioned by the publisher. In the case of our review, BC was listening without a score, but was stating his own reactions to what he heard. Incidentally, our review refers to 8 sonatas in Bigaglia's set rather than 12; your letter gives 1715 as the publication date, while most recent writers give 1722.

CB

Dear Clifford,

Nancy Hadden wrote to protest at my remark, in a report on last summer's NEMA conference and York Festival (*EMR* no. 53, September 1999), that 'even specialist performers still employ instruments and techniques often far from the originals' (*EMR* no. 55, November 1999). She leaves out the 'even' and the 'often' to make this a more 'sweeping dismissal' than I intended, but, more substantially, I fear that her reply goes some way toward demonstrating my point that even very fine performers sometimes present music on 'period' instruments that are hardly 'original' and which therefore may recast the music in subtle ways.

Defending the decision by the Zephyrus flute ensemble, in a concert at the York Guildhall, to perform sets of early 16- and early 17th-century music on the same instruments, Ms Hadden suggests that I 'missed the point' of her conference talk, viz., that 'so-called "Renaissance" flutes did not fundamentally change in the course of 150 years or more'. It is my understanding that this point is far from proved, and it sounds to me suspiciously like the old notion that all Italian harpsichords are 'fundamentally' alike, whatever that might mean. But I am not a woodwind organologist, so I look to specialists to carry out searching inquiries into such matters. It is my understanding that the conference proceedings will be published, and I look forward to reading a closely argued demonstration of Ms Hadden's thesis.

Ms Hadden also defends the use of three different 18th-century flutes in some later French baroque flute trios played on the same concert. But the instruments that were used differ greatly from the 'French baroque flutes designed by Louis XIV's foremost maker Hotteterre' described in the programme notes, and which members of the audience might have supposed they were hearing. Disregarding the question whether any member of the Hotteterre family actually built flutes for Louis XIV, I suppose it is conceivable that the aging composers Jacques-Martin Hotteterre or Michel de La Barre, or their contemporaries, might have gathered together flutes by the German Denner, the Netherlander Hyacinth Rottenburgh, and Bressan, a Frenchman working in London, to play music written during the first quarter of the eighteenth century or earlier.

But I don't think that the mere existence of such a theoretical possibility places this combination of instruments 'within the sound world of the music', if by that Ms Hadden means a sonority one would have been likely to hear in 18th-century performances of these pieces. I did not have space to elaborate on the technical implications of the use of such instruments, but I would think that the ways in which notes are tuned and articulated, or the nature of tone production, will be different on, say, a French instrument of ca. 1700 which favours a low tessitura, as opposed to a later German or Dutch flute with an easier-blowing high register. And I wonder whether originals, as opposed to modern copies, could have all played at the same pitch level or in the same temperament.

I would not have been so 'preoccupied with instruments', as Ms Hadden puts it, had I not, after all, been reporting primarily on an organology conference. I apologize if I failed to make clear that I found the Zephyrus concert very beautiful – so well played, indeed, that I see no need for a doubtful appeal to historicism to justify the normal expedients of present-day practice, including the use of slightly inauthentic instruments. Ms Hadden believes that that 'the flutes we were playing were right for the music', but this seems to me a subjective assertion based on artistic conviction, not a historical interpretation supported by documentary evidence. It is not always possible to distinguish between the two, but I feel it is important to try, particularly at a time when the very concept of authenticity in performance is under attack, at least in my country, in response to exaggerated claims to historical accuracy.

David Schulenberg

Research Associate, America's Shrine to Music Museum

Dear Clifford

I don't know the extent of your interest in latinity but in case you don't already have the following, and in case your readers are interested, here is the address from which you can get details of *Nuntii Latini*, the regular Latin news broadcasts, as well as the volumes of *Nuntii Latini* which include English and Finnish précis versions of the full Latin texts. Among other gems you will find *dux narcoticorum* for 'drug baron', Pablo Escobar was described as *dux chastelli narcoticarum Columbianus!*

Bruno Turner

Radio Finland, PO Box 10, FIN-00241 Helsinki, Finland

I had heard about the Finnish broadcasts some years ago. Do the Finns collaborate with the Vatican in coining neologisms? Christopher Page was impressed that he was not the first reader to point out the misprint in his epitaph (EMR 56, p. 34): Anne Graf got there first. The last word of line 2, HONORE, should have had a line above the last letter making it the accusative HONOREM.

Latin enthusiasts may be interested in Carmina incuabulorum, an illustrated book of well-known nursery rhymes translated into Latin, complete with chant notation, is available from the Schola Gregoriana of Cambridge for £5.00: details from Mary Berry, 124 Cambridge Rd, Barton, Cambridge CB3 7AR.

JUNE YAKELEY

I was so very sorry to hear from Pat O'Brien in New York shortly after Christmas that June had died. He wrote: 'My old friend June Yakeley has died while visiting her oldest friends up in Massachusetts. She always spent the holidays with these folks here and they have made incredible efforts for her during her sudden illness these last two weeks. It had been only a few weeks earlier that I had met with her.' Pat told many, and since then, an incredible number of people have written to say how shocked they are and how much they miss her. She was loved by many. I was the external supervisor for her thesis at the Open University, and so I knew her mostly in that context and only occasionally met others who knew her. When I visited her, there were always books everywhere, and her cat, Mrs. Bracegirdle, and somehow it always seemed to be sunny there.

In the course of working on her thesis on seventeenth century Spanish music, she explored and described many primary sources, especially archival material in Madrid and elsewhere which had seldom been worked on before. She knew her way around this material in a clear and down-to-earth way, and set it down well in her work. Last year she gave a paper at the Lute Society in London which I attended. It is sad that she is gone.

It is hoped that there will be a memorial service for June soon. For details, please ask me (bj@tecla.com) or Pat (OBLUTE@aol.com).

Brian Jeffery

I had intended to send June Yakeley Brian's edition of Sor's *Seguidillas* (see p. 8), but knew that she was unwell. She sent me an e-mail a week or so before Christmas saying that she had been in pain, but was now feeling better, and that she would send me some reviews soon (I'm not quite sure what of: apologies to any publishers for omitting any reviews of Spanish material which she acquired on our behalf.). She went to the USA as usual for Christmas, and her last request from us was to order an *EMR* subscription for her host. She died on 28 December.

I can't remember for how long I have used June as my main source of information about Spanish music. We saw each other most when we were involved in a project to publish a 17th-century Spanish MS, which sadly did not work out as we both hoped. She regularly bought Spanish music for me and took King's Music editions to Spain – I don't know how she managed to carry all the stuff around. She never drew attention to her considerable physical problems but was assiduous in her sympathetic enquiries about our children. We were hoping that she would become a regular contributor to *Early Music Review*, and are sorry that our readers will be unable to benefit from her wide and practical knowledge of early Spanish music.

CB