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While reading Clive Brown's book (see p. 7) my mind turned to another area of performance practice, the role of the conductor. Received wisdom is that the first conductor was Spohr, which is near enough the truth, even though there is visual evidence of pre-1800 performances directed from the violin, or from the keyboard or by a rolled-up sheet of paper; and the story of Lully's death reminds us of the French operatic conducting pole. But there are few speculations on how such directors influenced performances and whether they practised the tricks of the modern conducting trade.

To achieve dynamic and rhythmic flexibility without a director is possible. One can play the game of breathing and nodding in time with quite large groups of people. But in the real world of performing a piece that one probably hasn't seen for a year (usually the case with liturgical music), from partbooks, and with minimal rehearsal, there is probably little attention spare for subtle ebbs and flows of tempo or for fancy dynamics. Phrases can go up and down in volume, cadences can be pointed a bit. But the subtlety with which one might sing a madrigal or play a string quartet would be very difficult to achieve with an ensemble of any size.

But was such subtlety thought desirable? Thirty years ago, a few of us were wondering whether conventional concepts of musicality were romantic inventions. We don't demand rhythmic and dynamic flexibility in all other sorts of music. I have no collection of ethnic recordings to study, but have heard Balinese gamelans on home territory, and they rely on complexities other than dynamics and rhythmic pointing of phrase-ends. Is Western Music really a continuum? The extent to which regular rhythm is now acceptable owes as much to pop as to Stravinsky (though, as I've said before, it is broader than that: I don't think that my taste depends on either). But why should we assume that it is a 20th-century phenomenon? The medieval mensuration system depends on a rigid metrical structure. It might have been just a theory imposed on music that didn't fit it? But if not, when did music become flexible? 1600, 1800 or 1900? I'm puzzled that there is so little discussion of this crucial aspect of performance practice. CB

BOOKS & MUSIC

Clifford Bartlett

TML

Thesaurus Musicarum Latinitatum: Canon of Data Files... Edited by Thomas J. Mathiesen. University of Nebraska Press, 1999. liv + 274pp. ISBN 0 8032 8233 8

The scheme of creating a net-accessible database of Latin-texted works of music theory emerged in 1989 and in ten years a considerable quantity of material has been assembled. This book acts as an advert for the project as well as a guide that gives a conspectus of the material available and the routes by which it may be obtained; it should be useful to have at hand when importing the files. The process as described here looks unnecessarily complicated. In fact, one only has to type <http://www.music.indiana.edu/tml> and click on the century of interest, and a list of texts appears. A further click produces the document. The bulk of the book is devoted to a catalogue of the 665 texts included in the files, roughly three to a page, to which the name *canon* is given: is this a medieval term or computerese? Most of the items are taken from the standard anthologies and collections: these are listed on pp. xxxvi-liv together with their file-names. It is ironic that the marvels of modern technology are devoted to inputting material mostly edited in the 18th & 19th centuries (by Gerbert & Coussemaker), so users have to exercise a degree of scepticism about the results of any searches made of the data; apart from sheer editorial errors, the degree of normalisation to classical Latin in the editions used as base varies enormously. The policy of TML is to follow a specified edition precisely (apart from minor normalisation), but to input several editions if available. This was no doubt decided after long discussion, but I wonder whether the rules for adding editions made direct from the early sources should be different. Each text should be entered twice: once preserving the original orthography as closely as possible and once normalised to some agreed standard to facilitate search and comparison.

CHAUCER

Nigel Wilkins *Music in the Age of Chaucer*. Second edition, with *Chaucer Songs*. D. S. Brewer, 1999. xii + 210pp, £25.00. ISBN 0 85991 565 4

This combines in one volume *Music in the Age of Chaucer*, published in 1979, and the companion from the following year of 14 Chaucerian poems editorially contrafacted to music by Machaut and others. I reviewed both in *Early Music News* 33 (July/August 1980), expressing slight suspicion about the songs: 'I'm not entirely convinced that any of Chaucer's poems would have been sung to this sort of music, in spite of the many signs of common culture between the French

and English courts; the surviving English songs, while few, suggest a different relationship of words to music.' The book is perhaps even more useful now in that, thanks chiefly to Gothic Voices, the international repertoire of the period is so much better known and can resound in our ears as real music (few performances before 1980 had the poise and graciousness that one associates with the poetry of the period). I was unhappy in 1980 with the legibility of the music, which must have discouraged performance: it really should have been computer-set for the reprint. But the publishers have done their best to make the illustrations and facsimiles more legible than in the first edition. The text still reads well, though one would, of course, now question even more strongly than the hint I dropped in 1980 doubting the assumption of instruments for untexted parts. A welcome paperback reprint at a reasonable price; a hard-back version is also available.

MONTEVERDI MADRIGAL TEXTS

Claudio Monteverdi *Songs and Madrigals* translated by Denis Stevens. Long Barn Books, 1999. xvii + 235pp, £16.00 ISBN 0 952 8285 5 3

Long Barn Books are new to me. We review two of their products this month; both are excellently produced and both fill obvious needs. Translations of most of Monteverdi's madrigals are now available in CD booklets, and Books IV, V & VIII are in Italian and English in the Dover reprints (not available in the UK, but the customs are unlikely to impound copies ordered from the USA). This book offers something different: a presentation of the poems as poems in a format appropriate for a book of verse. This is not the complete solution. There is, for instance, no mention of variants in the readings of the texts. With the present tendency for a somewhat indiscriminate use of facsimiles, one may well hear a tenor singing in the 11th line of Marino's sonnet *Tempo la cetra 'de la lira sublime'* (which is what is printed in the 1619 tenor part) rather than *tromba* (which is underlaid to the voice part included in the continuo partbook and which Monteverdi's music illustrates). Stevens, of course, prints and translates *tromba*.

More of a problem is the cultural gap between then and now, which has probably doubled or more in my lifetime. But most of the texts inhabit a vague Arcadia and specific allusions are surprisingly few; I suppose those who have never heard of Ariadne can look her up in a classical dictionary or on the net. (The *Lamento* is included because of the five-voice version, but the *Combattimento* and the ballets are omitted.) The whole amorous world represented by these poems is so remote from that of the modern

young lover (at least, as it is represented by contemporary arts and the media), and judging by renaissance art, Arcadian lovers were young. Stevens generally gets the tone right, avoiding the arch and archaic as well as the colloquial ('O happy birdie' for *O felice angioletto* is an exception). He manages to be quite literal (generally one line of English matches the line of Italian on the opposite page) yet to read well. The only blot is an irrelevant paragraph in the preface knocking believers in *chiavette*: he should present his arguments in detail to an academic journal. This is a commendable sequel to Stevens' translation of Monteverdi's letters and should enrich our enjoyment of his music.

BACH CANTATA TEXTS

Johann Sebastian Bach *The Complete Church and Secular Cantatas* translated by Richard Stokes with an introduction by Martin Neary. Long Barn Books, 1999. xviii + 378pp, £25.00 ISBN 1 902 42106 X

This second Long Barn translation adopts a different layout from the Monteverdi volume: with a far larger body of material to include, it has larger, double-column pages, and the price is kept down by it being in paperback. The layout, in fact, recalls Werner Neumann's *Sämtliche von Johann Sebastian Bach vertonte Texte* (Leipzig, 1974) and follows the neat typographical devices of its German model, with Bible quotes in italic, chorales in bold. Disappointingly, though, it is less generous with information about the sources of the text. Taking BWV 61 as an example, the English book merely gives the name of the writers of each movement, while the German tells us that Luther based *Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland* on *Veni redemptor gentium* and also identifies the incipit of the chorale whose conclusion Bach takes to end his cantata. I would have thought that was information worth including. It might, for instance, suggest turning to BWV 1, *Wie schön leuchtet*, which is based on the words and music of the complete chorale. I suspect that I will still use C. S. Terry's *Joh. Seb. Bach Cantata Texts Sacred and Secular* (1926), not for the translations themselves, which are far too free, but for the liturgical information: knowledge of the Epistle and Gospel for the day, for instance, which often influences the cantata texts and their musical interpretation. It would have taken very little space to have added them. I commented on the distance younger readers may feel from the world of Monteverdi's Arcadia; I suspect that Christian theology may be even more remote, yet the glossary explains Classical references but not Christian ones.

The cantatas (both sacred and secular) are arranged in BWV order, unlike most German reference books, which place the church cantatas in the order of the liturgical year beginning with Advent, (which is why I used 61 and 1 as my examples in the previous paragraph). The oratorios are included, which is sensible, since they are in cantata form, but not the passions, masses and motets. I would have thought that an alphabetic index of the German first lines of cantatas might have been helpful, perhaps with an index of familiar English aria titles, such as 'Sheep may safely

graze' and 'Sleepers awake', irrespective of the actual words used here. The translations balance the need for the user to work out the meaning of every word with the broader requirement of presenting a whole movement in a sensible way. Richard Stokes is a teacher at Westminster School, and in that capacity helped Martin Neary prepare the Abbey choristers to understand the text for a performance of the St. John Passion. Martin has contributed a useful introduction, so up-to-date that it is easy to see what he has been reading lately.

The editor of this magazine can hardly mock others for misprints, but as someone who has at least once got his name wrong on a title page, I am comforted by a page with six words, one of which has a misprint. But that isn't a sign of errors elsewhere, and this volume can be heartily recommended. There is, though, just one further omission: a fax or e-mail number which can be used for those requesting permission to use the translations in their own programmes. I have been discussing the matter with the publisher, who is interested in making them available; so if wish to use them, contact Susan Hill at hill@longbarn-books.demon.co.uk. It might be a tactful gesture to buy a copy of the book first.

RAVENSCROFT

John Ravenscroft *Sonata a trè, doi Violini, e Violone, ò Arcileuto, col Basso per l'Organo* Vol. I, Sonatas I-IV [Vol. II, Sonatas V-VIII, Vol. III, Sonatas IX-XII] edited by Richard Gwilt. RG Editions (RG113-4), 1999. £10.50 each vol (score & parts)

I first encountered this John Ravenscroft in the anthology at the end of Einstein's *A Short History of Music*, where an unnumbered sonata (in fact No 3) from his op. 1 is printed on two staves. A work by an Englishman that was so Corellian was intriguing, so I welcome a complete edition of the set. As always with Richard Gwilt's publications, the editorial principles (involving fewer modernisations than is normally the practice, but causing no confusion to the user) are excellent. The minor differences between the *violone* (assumed to be a cello) and the organ parts are sensibly squashed onto a single stave in the score, with the organ version omitted from the cello part. The figures have been omitted from it as well. The introduction suggests that an alternative with figures is available, but it seems a pity not to remind the cellist that he can indulge in chords if he wants to. No realisation is given: sadly, as I know to my cost, that will limit sales in the amateur world, but trios can always play these sonatas without keyboard.

??ALBINONI?? MAGNIFICAT

It is excellent that Eulenburg are reviving their former practice of producing parts to accompany their baroque miniature scores. I have recently been sent a set of Albinoni's *Magnificat*, edited by Felix Schroeder and originally published in 1968. According to Michael Talbot's *Tomaso Albinoni* (Oxford 1990) 'Since the style of this Magnificat is so different from that of Albinoni's other music... its authorship

must be challenged' (p. 41). I couldn't find my copy of the score, so cannot add any thoughts of my own on the matter, but assume that Michael Talbot knows Albinoni's style better than anyone; and the way the sole MS, a German one dated 1720, describes Albinoni as *Kapellmeister* in Venice arouses suspicion, since he is not otherwise associated with church music. As for the parts themselves, despite being marked © 1999 they look more like the Eulenburg style of 1968; had they been new, they would not have been adorned with bowings and dynamics that are not distinguished as editorial – though they are not smothered with them to such an extent as to make them unusable. The strings parts (EOS 1074-50) come in a set of 3.3.2+2.3 (the violas are divided), the problem being the cello-bass part, which serves duty as keyboard realisation as well, with the result the four of the five page turns don't work; I suspect that most players would rather have a single stave or at least a part above which shows something significant, not chords that a competent player won't play as written. This part can also be bought separately (EOS 1074-65), and there is also a set of parts for cornett & 3 trombones (EOS 1074-60), which presumably double the chorus. It is good that the parts are available: they are usable, but not ideal.

NEW EDITIONS

Various editions have arrived over the last few months that have so far avoided mention, so they are covered here in roughly chronological order.

Bärenreiter has produced a single volume containing violin & piano reductions of three of the dozen concertos which were published in vol. 23 of the Telemann Collected Works in 1973: violin concertos a1, D9 and g1 (BA 5876a; £9.95). The introduction is somewhat perfunctory: the user might, for instance, like to know that g1 was transcribed for harpsichord by Bach (BWV 985). They extend the number of not-too-difficult late-baroque concertos available, and are suitable for educational as well as concert use. It is not stated if orchestral material is available. They are fine pieces, with violin solo parts that are not too virtuosic. The Concerto in D minor for strings TWV 43:d2 (BA 5875; score and parts £8.95) comes from vol. 28, which contains a dozen ripieno concerti a4. An alternative scoring has a transverse flute substituted for the first violin; this comes from a Parisian edition of the 1750s, dating perhaps 40 or more years after the concerto was first composed. The edition shows the necessary octave transpositions for this. The introduction mentions differences in the viola part, but no alternatives are printed. It's a good piece, suitable both for single strings and for orchestras: are parts available separately or only in fours with the score? I wish the introductions to both these editions had been more specific about sources and the nomenclature of the parts, especially the bass.

Lotti's Trio Sonata in F for transverse flute, gamba and continuo received its first modern edition back in 1927, though transposed and no doubt modernised in other

respects. The same publisher has now produced an edition in accordance with modern expectations. It is certainly worth playing, if less virtuosic than the comparable Telemann sonata from *Essercizi musici*. Since it is not a very plausible Italian scoring, it was presumably written while Lotti was in Dresden in 1717-19. It is a wasted opportunity to reproduce the same page of facsimile in the English, German and French introductions. (Zimmermann ZM 33290)

Bach's organ sonatas have been fair game for transcribers seeking repertoire for ensembles neglected by Bach. My hosts in Israel were busy turning them into string trios, while another option is presented by Sándy Nagy in his arrangement of viola and piano of the Sonata No. 1 in Eb BWV 525 (Edition Consort C 02 001; £9.00 from Richard Schauer). Despite the mention of piano, the keyboard part is clean of any dynamics or phrase marks, so should not be scorned by authentically-minded readers: there's not much other Bach that viola players can use for practice, unless they read the unaccompanied violin music down a fifth. I am, however, less convinced by the need for the violin *Chaconne* arranged as an organ solo: there is hardly a shortage of genuine Bach organ music and part of the point of the piece is hearing a single violin play something that is so implausible! I can see no element in this version to replace that. Having just read Brown's book on performance practice (see below p. 7), I was curious how the accent signs here should be interpreted: what is the difference between a horizontal line and a V on its side like a short diminuendo mark? This is an unmodernised reprint from 1927 and I don't see why it has been thought worthy of republication (Simrock; Elite Edition 1830; £9.50 from Schauer).

Wagenseil's *Sinfonia – Sestetto* WV 487 probably dates from the 1740s. The editorial title is odd. In the MS chosen as the main source, it is called *Sestetto* and the style relates more to church sonatas than sinfonias, so why put first a different title which seems to be inferred rather than stated on the other source? String sextets are rare, if not unique, in Viennese chamber music, so that is probably the aspect to focus on, and the music looks enterprising and interesting. The scoring is for four violins, viola and cello, with no doubt a double bass added if played orchestrally. Robert N. Freeman's edition looks fine, and the one-column introduction gives more useful information than the more waffly comments in the Telemann editions described above. (Doblinger *Diletto Musicale* 1199.)

There is little new to say about the Hogwood/Bärenreiter editions of Salomon's chamber versions of Haydn's London Symphonies. They have been performed quite often, mostly from the 1790s editions. These are not perfect, so users of our facsimiles should at least check the new score, which is based on Salomon's autograph, and will probably prefer the new clear parts anyway. I learnt my Haydn symphonies by the traditional way of playing them in piano duet form: these versions are one step nearer the real thing and can be played either just with flute and string quartet, or with a piano added. (BA 4663; £17.50)

When reviewing a disc of music for early instruments by Josef Mons I concluded 'I hope Cornetto will publish some' (*EMR* 47, p. 29). Now they have: *2 Canzonen für Melodie-Instrument in Sopran- oder Tenorlage... und basso continuo* (Corn-10-1-0169). Entitled *La Margarita* and *La Lunatica*, they look from the distance like early-17th-century Italian pieces for cornetto or violin and continuo. Focusing on the actual notes, however, reveals progressions and modulations that don't quite fit the period. The problem with performing them on historic instruments may be the tonal variety of the second piece: F sharp major isn't normally in tune on instruments of the period the music seems to call on for inspiration. As a keyboard player I find it disappointing that the composer expects me to play his own 'realisation'. Modern instruments are also envisaged, and the score comes with parts for trumpet/clarinet in B flat and viola as well as in untransposed treble clef; there is also a continuo bass part. I look forward to playing it. The English version of the introduction needs considerable goodwill from the reader.

THEMATIC CATALOGUES

Karel Padra Franz Krommer (1759-1831): *Thematischer Katalog seiner musikalischen Werke*. Prague: Supraphon (H 7759), 1997. 425pp, £45.00 (from Bärenreiter). ISBN 80 7058 388 6
 Angela Evans/Robert Dearling Josef Myslivecek (1737-1781): *A Thematic Catalogue of his Instrumental and Orchestral Works* (*Musikwissenschaftliche Schriften*, 35). Munich & Salzburg: Musikverlag Katzbichler, 1999. 188pp. ISBN 3 87397 132 1

While hardly best-sellers, thematic catalogues are essential to the understanding of composers: they give a conspectus of their work and provide a basis for research and performance, and can also help to establish the status of their subjects. They cannot be compiled quickly, since material is usually scattered and it can take many years to be sure that no libraries or individuals have material that is relevant. Perhaps it is significant that both these catalogues are produced by scholars beyond retirement age. The introduction to the Myslivecek catalogue notes that New Grove mentions ('lists' would be too strong a word) about 100 instrumental works while this new catalogue includes twice as many (yet many musicologists assumed that most of the donkey-work of source-chasing had been done by 1980). Strangely, there is no section on Myslivecek in the thematic catalogue companion to Garland's *Symphony* editions, though vol. B.XIII includes three of them.

The Myslivecek catalogue is divided into ten sections by number of instruments: sections 1-8 run from solos to octets, 9 is concerti, 10 Symphonies and Overtures and 11, headed 'other orchestral works' includes a single *Kvartet* for four horns, two oboes, two clarinets and strings. Within the section pieces are arranged by key, then chronologically, giving identifications in the form *Symphony* in D, 10: D4. No letters (such as MWV or KWV) are suggested for identifying the numbering system in either catalogue. The Krommer catalogue uses roman numbers for sections,

then a single arabic number to identify the individual pieces, mostly then listed chronologically. So the *Symphony* op. 40 in D is I:2, with no space after the colon.

Both catalogues include the full details of sources that one expects, and extend to modern editions and recordings. A quirk of the Myslivecek is the indiscriminate mixing of old and modern printed editions: the word 'source' is used only to describe manuscripts. Is this sheer prejudice, or are the early printed sources all less authoritative than the MSS? Padra divides his printed sources into four groups, which gives the reader an immediate clue to their type. In most cases, the main sources are prints, which give a reasonably clear chronological basis to the output.

Padra's catalogue is preceded by a fifty-page biography. The language of the book is German, not Czech. I think that it would be a good policy for thematic catalogues to include a guide to the abbreviations and conventions in several languages, to enable them to be used without any knowledge of the language in which they are compiled: in this case, Czech and English might have been chosen. There are a variety of useful indices, including a thematic index. A flap on the cover even gives Padra's address. Evans and Dearling give only an index of other composers, but there is a chronological table of the composer's life and another of his music. Myslivecek's operas are listed: their overtures, to the extent that they circulated separately, are included in the catalogue, but the distribution of operatic material tends to be different from instrumental, so the omission is understandable. It is, however, a pity that other vocal pieces are not mentioned, and did he really write virtually no church music? It may be churlish to criticise the limitations of scope the authors have chosen, but concentration on instrumental and exclusion of vocal music was a tendency of the early discoverers of this repertoire which we have now outgrown. Nevertheless, both catalogues are extremely welcome and should be on the shelves of all academic libraries.

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

I'm not sure if I gave much more than moral support, but I used to attend assiduously the meetings at the international IAML conferences which Barry Brook used as a springboard for launching the *Repertoire internationale d'Iconographie musicale*. I did not know him well (though he appears in a family photograph album), but I was always impressed by the combination of organisational energy and wide cultural awareness; regrettably, I was too shy to interrupt his conversations with the Contesse de Chambure when we shared a hotel at a conference in Bologna in 1972. This volume somehow seems rather bitty to commemorate fully even the iconographical aspect of his life (or to review concisely, hence this very brief notice), but it is appropriate that its wide content requires the use of his other major bibliographical creation, RILM, for it to reach the wide variety of users who will need to consult it.

SAINT-GEORGES

Emil F. Smidak *Joseph Boulogne called Chevalier de Saint-Georges* Avenira Foundation, Lucerne, 1996. vii + 303pp, SFR59.- (+ post). ISBN 3 905112 07 8

J. Boulogne Chevalier de Saint-Georges *Symphonies and Violin Concertos* - CD5. Miroslav Vilímec vln, Radio Symphony Orchestra Pilsen, František Preisler Jr cond 79' 32" Avenira Foundation AV 9989-2E

Saint-Georges is an interesting figure with a double claim to fame as a skilled swordsman as well as composer, parallel to François-André Danican Philidor's prowess in the opera house and at the chess board. Saint-Georges's success was particularly remarkable because his mother was black, perhaps a slave in the household of his French-colonial father. With such a background, he had no legal rights in France until the Revolution, though ironically he flourished better under the *ancien régime*. He is remembered now for his music, and five discs containing 19 of his compositions (a dozen violin concertos, a symphony and six *symphonies concertantes*) are of considerable interest. I've only heard the last of them; the playing isn't absolutely outstanding but good enough for the music to make an impression. If it sometimes sounds Mozartian, we should remember that much of it was written in the 1770s before Mozart went to Paris. Sadly, Smidak gives little information on the music apart from a list of works less comprehensive than that in *New Grove*. I don't think I've read a book so full of irrelevancies. It is a bit Tristram Shandy-esque, in that the subject isn't born until page 112. Surmise appears everywhere, and I would only trust documents that are actually quoted (preferably given in facsimile). This is a fine example of the need for an enthusiastic amateur to work through a reputable publisher who employs intelligent and forceful copy-editors. But the CDs are worth hearing (unless you demand period instruments); will the Avenira Foundation, which has presumably subsidised the book and the CDs, produce scores as well? *Available from the Avenira Foundation, Haldenstrasse 22, CH-6006 Lucerne, Switzerland. tel +41 41 410 95 80 (fax ... 81)*

MUSIC AT WOMBOURNE

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

If there are any discoveries of unknown manuscripts and editions to be made, the likely places are English country houses that have remained in the family for generations. In some cases, they may have survived through neglect or ignorance, in others the owners may have found enquiries from scholars impertinent. (I first encountered this attitude when playing in an informal concert, after which I was shown a manuscript important for the carol revival to which a friend had not long before indignantly been denied access; fortunately, by the time it was needed for the *New Oxford Book of Carols*, it was safely in a library in Truro.)

The collection of the Shaw-Hellier family has already been briefly described by Percy Young, who contributes the introduction to this catalogue. The 18th-century material was acquired by Sir Samuel Hellier for use on his estate: musicians there were given a more sophisticated repertoire than rural psalmody (which is, alas, notably absent from the catalogue). There is plenty of Handel. I doubt whether any of the material is going to affect what an editor of a Handel work is likely to print, though I should have looked at the *Messiah* MS while working on my edition, since it seems to be based on a source from the 1740s; the catalogue does not give enough information to pin down the version and the opening of the Hallelujah chorus isn't the most indicative section to have chosen for a facsimile. More valuable is the image of the collection as a whole: the preservation of a cache of performance material is socially interesting and well worth setting forth in print. Ian Ledsham has done an excellent job, though his spirit must have wilted a bit over some of the detail. The separate listing of individual parts seems pedantic, but there was no other way to do the job properly. Occasionally a spot of humour creeps in: what is 'imaginative pagination' (p. 252)? It's a shame that the 'Hymn composed by the first converted Hindoo' has music by someone with the English name of Cotton (p. 260). I was puzzled by entries 657-667 for Arne's 'A soldier tir'd', the most famous aria from *Artaxerxes*, first performed in 1762. It is a MS score and set of parts, with the score dated [175-?]. Since it is placed after a whole lot of military band music (a later member of the family was commandant of the Royal Military School of Music at Kneller Hall from 1887 to 1892), is this from a century later? I did not notice any other such anomalies. The catalogue is well indexed, and shows the wide repertoire of mostly English music that was sung and played in a Staffordshire village.

HOW TO WRITE

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

I requested a copy of this hoping that it might be helpful to me as editor and writer. It is no condemnation of it to say that it has a different purpose – primarily for students writing essays or research papers – in a different place – the USA – so disappointed my expectation. Reading it stimulated various thoughts about whether students, and scholars in general, should spend so much time on bibliographical minutiae (telling the reader what he knows already or can find from any decent reference book) and also a variety of detailed comments, but I don't think this is really the place for writing about them. One rule puzzled me (p. 21), since I had never come across it: 'If the explanation following the colon is a complete sentence, begin with an upper case letter.' (I follow the rule here only because direct speech is involved.) There is a nice quotation showing the need to be flexible about commas in lists: 'Lerner and Loewe, Rodgers and Hammerstein, and Sondheim' must have a comma before the last item. But this isn't (as I heard stated on a

Radio 4 quiz recently) the Oxford comma, which is an unnecessary insertion in simple lists like 'Bach, Handel, and Fasch'. I suppose with American usage spreading, copies of this should be available in UK libraries.

CLASSICAL & ROMANTIC

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

One day in January I received, in separate packages, two fat books from Oxford, and a third of similar dimensions came a few weeks later: Kurtzman's study of Monteverdi *Vespers*. The last must wait till next month: I have been extremely virtuous and have avoided dipping into it until Brown and Caldwell have been read. Despite its wealth of music examples (many in facsimile), Brown's book presents solid reading matter: in fact, the only fault is that its sheer density (and I'm not implying that it is poorly written) may deter the performers to whom it is directed. In fact, many of them will have learnt aspects of it more directly, since the author has advised on many performance and recording projects. Such learning by word and mouth tends to be more memorable than by reading. But the printed page can offer a greater amount of information: quote sources precisely, accumulate the evidence on which conclusions are based, and also offer evidence from which to disagree with or qualify the generally simplified verbal instruction.

There is a wealth of information here. Even at a flippant level, you can parry attacks that playing without vibrato is lifeless by responding that the historically-aware performer has a choice of five different types (p. 536), or that over-dotting, far from being irrelevant after Handel, should be applied, according to its composer, to a passage in *Parsifal* and was practised by Elgar (p. 625-7). 150 years is a wide period, so do not expect Brown to lay down a set of precise rules. He sensibly balances the views of theorists and teachers (who tend to be old-fashioned, so are often more informative about the decades before they wrote) with what can be deduced from actual scores. See, for example, p. 146, where he shows Türk's lack of musical imagination. I was delighted to see Henry Wood pointing out that the octave duet in the *Agnus Dei* of Verdi's *Requiem* must be sing without vibrato (p. 522): it is almost invariably ruined now. But there are also sections that may undermine common assumptions. Brown cannot tell you how a piece should be played; but his book offers a wealth of advice and ideas, ideas which should be thought of as creative and enabling, not restrictive. Period style is not, as it is still so often parodied, a kill-joy matter of not doing something, but of finding different ways of bringing music to life.

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

This book rapidly moves from our area of interest, though in fact I have enjoyed the later sections of it rather more than the earlier: curiously, the balance seems to be more

satisfactory, despite the proximity of the subject-matter. Space seems shorter than in vol. 1, and the English trio sonata is despatched in just a page. There is an excellent chapter on folk and popular music, free of the common ideological slant. But there is a discrepancy in tone between the complimentary remarks on West-Gallery carols on p. 523 (based mostly on the *New Oxford Book of Carols*) and dismissive sentences on similar anthems on p. 157. It is difficult for an author of what is likely to be a standard work to balance objectivity with the need to convince the reader that he is writing from experience of the music. Caldwell does this very well, even if he has the scholar's natural skill at hedging his bets. He goes a long way to singling out *Giulio Cesare* as Handel's best opera, though cautiously qualifying it: 'for consistency of style and dramatic aptness [it] must be accounted Handel's masterpiece of the genre'. He has a gift for the neat phrase: I like the comment that Pearsall's 'imitations of the [madrigal] style are sufficiently distinctive (or insufficiently exact, depending on the point of view) for them to count as individual creations rather than pure pastiche' (p. 236).

This is in some way an old-fashioned book. I suspect that John Caldwell, like me, is a product of a world in which popular music impinged little. Oxford's next history of English music (up-to-date in separating England from the rest of Britain) will have very different subject-matter. Irrespective of modern pop, the Victorian popular culture which I still survived into my youth is underplayed: no mention, for instance, of the ever-popular *The Holy City* (which I last heard as muzak in a touristy quarter of Jerusalem), familiar from childhood in church and domestic music-making in a repertoire which also included Handel, Mozart and Schubert.

I'm not quite as enthusiastic about this as the quotation on the back cover from *Early Music News* shows me to have been about vol. I. But it is an amazing achievement and it is difficult to imagine anyone else being more successful.

Awaiting review next month

Lisa Fagin Davis *The Gottschalk Antiphonary: Music and Liturgy in Twelfth-Century Lambach*. Cambridge UP, 2000. xv + 316pp, £55.00. ISBN 0 521 59249 6

The Treasury of Petrus Alamire: Music and Art in Flemish Court Manuscripts 1500-1535 edited by Herbert Kellman. Ludion/Chicago UP, 1999. 179pp, £31.50. ISBN 90 5544 270 4

Jeffrey Kurtzman *The Monteverdi Vespers of 1610: Music, Context, Performance*. Oxford UP, 1999 [2000]. xx + 603pp, £55.00. ISBN 0 19 816409 2

Andrew Parrott *The Essential Bach Choir* The Boydell Press, 2000. xvi + 223pp, £15.00 ISBN 0 85115 786 6

[Advertised in EMR last month, a copy has just arrived.]

Luths et luthistes en Occident: actes du colloque organisé par la cité de la musique, 13-16 mai 1998. Paris: Cité de la Musique, 1999. 359pp, FFR 368,00. ISBN 2 906460 98 2

LONDON CONCERTS

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Philip Pickett's annual Purcell Room Early Music Series opened in grand style with a performance by Davitt Morony of Bach's six French Suites (9 January). As with most of Bach's works, there are numerous questions about sources and interpretation. Only the first five appear in an autograph manuscript (the Anna Magdalena *Clavierbüchlein*) and an early version of a sixth Suite appeared c1724. In 1725 Bach's pupil, Gerber, copied out all six Suites, together with some extra movements and two additional complete suites. Morony played the normal six Suites but added the extra movements from Gerber's manuscript and the profuse ornamentation that Bach himself seems to have added to his pupil's copy. Most of the Suites have similarly named movements, but Morony developed Bach's genius in reinterpreting the standard dance forms in a variety of ways. For example, the Sarabande of the 1st Suite was played in majestic style with a host of ornaments, whilst the similar movement in the 3rd Suite was restrained and limpid. It was good to hear the well-known Gavotte of the 6th Suite played in a way that showed where the pulse should be. Morony has a deceptively reticent stage manner, but he brings a wealth of expression and musical thought to his playing which he combines with a technique that makes the instrument sing. This was sublime playing. [For a reissue of his CD of the Suites, see p. 22]

A welcome addition to this series of concerts is the early evening platform performances by young players. Zeitgeist (baroque flute and harpsichord) played three flute sonatas, possibly by Bach (BWV 1030/32/34). Dorothea Seel's flute playing was quiet and undemonstrative. She revealed a well-developed musical sensitivity, for example in the gorgeous Andante of BWV 1034, although she occasionally added a disconcerting breath just before the final cadence of the faster movements. However, her playing was not always able to shine through some tenacious harpsichord playing by Sharona Joshua. Two of the Sonatas are more or less in trio format, and the harpsichord needed a more instrumental interpretation to compliment the articulation and flow of the companion flute voice and, in the central Sonata, a lighter continuo realisation would have been appropriate, particularly against the gentle strains of the flute. It was interesting to compare the programme space devoted to the music and performers in these two concerts. Whereas Bach warranted 41 lines against Moroney's modest 13 lines, just one member of Zeitgeist notched up 43 lines against a mere 21 for Bach.

More Bach instrumental and harpsichord music featured in The English Concert's *In Zimmermannen Kaffeehaus* series at the Wigmore Hall. Appropriately this concluded with a Sunday morning coffee concert (16 January) given by

violinist Rachel Podger and Trevor Pinnock. Like two of the flute Sonatas reviewed above, the obbligato Sonata in B minor has a written-out harpsichord part which, apart from the first movement, produces a trio sonata texture (although Pinnock also filled out a continuo part for the opening four bars of the first Allegro). These violin and flute chamber sonatas are of interest in showing Bach's increasing recognition of the harpsichord as an instrument with solo capabilities, and Pinnock showed just how it should be done, balancing and working with the violin line whilst recognising the individuality of his own solo voices. Both players had a chance to show their solo mettle in the 3rd violin Partita and 5th harpsichord Partita. Both had movements when Bach makes the initial rhythmic structure evasive, and neither player made it easier for us to work out the underlying pulse (violin Loure and harpsichord Sarabande). Both players also came up with similar interpretations with an emphasis on vigour: punchy and rhythmic in the case of Pinnock, while Podger veered from slightly restless (Preludio), occasionally breathless (Bourrée) to delightfully sensitive (Gigue). As is unfortunately the case with all the Wigmore Hall coffee concerts, the programme said nothing at all about the music.

The violin was also to the fore in the Queen Elizabeth Hall concert by its resident period instrument orchestra, the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment (26 January). As a self-managed group of players, they work with a variety of directors and soloists, including several from within their own forces, but also some that are not from the mainstream early music stable. In this concert, Catherine Macintosh directed from the leader's desk in Salieri's brief Overture *La scuola de' gelosi* and Haydn's moving *La Passione* (Symphony 49). But most of the audience had come to hear the Russian violinist Viktoria Mullova as soloist and director in two Mozart concertos. Although weaned on the romantic tradition, Mullova has already begun cutting her early music teeth with a Bach concerto recording, and is showing an increasing and welcome interest in the period instrument world. She even came gift-wrapped in a colourful sandal-length outfit that gave a nod towards the dress sense of some in the early music world. Her 1723 Stradivarius has not been returned entirely to its original state, but she is clearly becoming more than comfortable with gut strings and a baroque bow. She gave a commendable performance, with a warmth of tone and expression that belied her rather stark image, although her romantic roots showed through on occasions, with some snatches of portamento and over-emphasised attack. Her cadenzas were restrained but effective, as was her laid-back direction of the orchestra. Another very welcome convert to the wonderful world of historically informed performance.

The five recorder-wielding ladies of the Frideswide Consort joined with five members of The Cardinall's Musick at the Wigmore Hall (21 January) for a programme of Music for an Elizabeth Household. The first half concentrated on the reworkings of the chapel repertoire into chamber pieces found in such sources as the Gyffard partbooks, and began and ended with versions of the multi-versed *Ave Dei patris filia* by Fayrfax and the youthful Tallis. David Skinner gave a scholarly and quiet expansion on his programme notes during the first half, but disappeared, along with four of the singers, during the interval leaving Andrew Carwood, in ebulliently thespian mood, to introduce the pieces. Carolyn Sampson remained to sing some Byrd solo consort songs, reigning in her vibrato rather more successfully than she did during the first half. The recorders kept within a broadly vocal range, avoiding the shriek or draught of the sillier extremities of the recorder family, and there was a good balance of vocal and instrumental works. The spoken contributions seemed to go down well with the audience.

The Venetian contemporaries Caldara and Vivaldi were the focus of the Wigmore Hall concert by the eight players and countertenor of Kontrabande (24 January). The show was completely stolen by a stunning performance by Elizabeth Kenny of Vivaldi's D major Concerto for Lute, with its delightful harmonic and chromatic twists in the opening Allegro and deliciously lyrical central Largo. The two violins with cello, violone and organ continuo balanced the subtle tone of the lute perfectly, even in the rollicking final Allegro. I am afraid the weakest link in the evening was the director, countertenor Charles Humphries, who sang cantatas by both composers and Vivaldi's *Stabat Mater*. The move from choir singer to soloist is not an easy one and, although by no means unpleasant, Humphries exposed a few too many minor niggles. He melted into a tenor register without mishap, but with a large drop in volume. There were moments when the tone was unsteady or forced, and he tended to produce explosive opening consonants and audibly implosive breaths, particularly when time wasn't on his side. He occasionally struggled to keep a final held note steady, and didn't always treat ornaments as an integral part of the vocal line. There was some lovely continuo cello and organ playing by Richard Campbell and Laurence Cummings and it was good to hear the meaty timbre of the grandfather of the viol family, the 5-string fretted violone, played by William Hunt.

It was appropriate for the English Bach Festival to choose Handel's *Oreste* for the opening season of the new Studio Theatre in the resurrected Royal Opera House. It has not been staged in England since the first season of the new Covent Garden Theatre in 1734 and has suffered a bad press (or, to be more accurate, no press at all) because it is a pastiche, combining music from 13 other operas – the score wasn't even published until 1991. Although not in the 'rediscovered masterpiece' class, *Oreste* has a lot to offer those who are not upset by its second-hand origin. It lacks the big-tune aria that will stick in the audience's mind, and the plot suffered when Handel made some cuts in the

original libretto, but there is a healthy mix of musical and literary interest. The title role (written for the castrato, Giovanni Carestini) has two outstanding arias in Act 2 – 'Un interrotto' where, tormented by ghouls, he bemoans his fate, and 'Dopo l'orrore', which builds and builds, like climbing a mountain path, as things look up for our hero. The Act ends with the big love duet between Oreste and Hermione. Like *Alcina* (until recently showing at the ENO), this was one of the operas that Handel put on to counter the threat of the rival King's Theatre, who had booked Farinelli for the season. Handel used the imported French dancer Marie Sallé and her company. But the dances in *Oreste* are merely tagged on to the ends of the three Acts, and they do little to help the flow of the plot – a typical everyday story of life amongst the Greeks. This was a fully staged and period costumed performance with a period band. As such it set itself high standards, which it failed to meet on rather too many fronts. A wide range of vocal abilities was apparent. Established singers were jousting with younger entrants to the stage, but it was the youngsters who won the day, in more than just vocal style (and vibrato was yet again an issue). Victoria Simmonds was excellent as Filotete (*Philoktetes*) – she had one of the early chances to shine in 'Orgogliosetto va l'augelletto', with its jaunty recorder accompaniment. Louise Winter gave a convincing performance in the trouser role of Orestes, bringing emotional depth to the complex world of Greek heroes. John Rath's booming and blustering Toante (King Thoas) was an entertaining cameo role, if slightly too commanding for the small auditorium. Most of the rest of the singers were shaky, in various ways and to varying degrees. The orchestra was not on top form either, and the combined musical direction and harpsichord continuo were not in tune with the period credentials that the performance claimed.

It is not often that I have two chances to review an opera, but a commendable bit of imagination saw the six student singers from the Royal Academy of Music (who had been covering for the *Oreste* professionals) star in a performance themselves, along with their own Laurence Cummings as conductor. And what a difference! From the very first bars, the orchestra was tighter and crisper, with better tuning and timing and a more appropriate style. The singers were similarly impressive, in a number of cases outshining the more established singers of the main performance. But some issues were common to both, notably how to overcome the time lag between the orchestra and voice – some professionals and students alike had trouble with this. Overly operatic vibrato is still an issue with some of the singers – I wonder if this is this positively encouraged, not actively discouraged, or ignored as an issue altogether by the teachers of these promising young singers? I will avoid picking out individual students singers – all were good, some excellent, although there was the occasional weakness on the night. Their assured self confidence and ability to portray a character to the audience was admirable.

In complete contrast to Handelian opera was a delightful lunchtime concert, *Portrait of a Medieval Woman*, at St

Mary-le-Bow (27 January) given by Concanentes, one of the prizewinners in last years Early Music Network International Young Artists' Competition. The repertoire ranged from 12th-century troubadour songs to pieces from the Sephardic tradition. The focus throughout was on melody. Much of the concert was for solo voice, and the instrumental backing (using combinations of vielle, recorder, symphony, gittern and lute) generally did little more than pick out or echo the vocal line, producing a mood of captivating simplicity. Soprano Faye Newton has a beautifully clear voice, with just enough nasal buzz to add depth and centre her voice in the generous acoustic. Her ornaments were always appropriately straightforward and melodic and she projected the mood of each piece in beguiling manner. The pieces were grouped and interspersed with readings from contemporary texts. It is good to see young musicians with such convincing stage presence, and also to hear medieval music performed so simply.

Although clearly a god-like figure to lutenists, Weiss is little known outside the world of the pluckers. Lutenist Karl-Ernst Schröder has undertaken the tricky task of reconstructing the second part of Silvius Leopold Weiss's Dresden Lute

Duos and revealed some of his methods to The Lute Society before giving a concert of four of the Duos together with Robert Barto (Art Workers Guild, 29 January). With few other examples to inform him, he used the clues existing within the surviving first lute part (the one that Weiss would have played). He made it all sound quite easy, but I bet it wasn't – like a hand-knitted jumper, it all seems sensible when it is complete. Life was made slightly easier by the fact that both parts more or less shared a common bass line, producing a trio sonata texture. The opening C major Sonata included an unpromising arpeggio Allegro Primo part, into which Schröder had cleverly woven the bass line of the Allegro Secondo, and Weiss-versa. The style of the four sonatas changed noticeably during the concert with increasing evidence of the emerging galant style and a greater harmonic interest (including a lovely blue note in the A major Sonata) which helped to alleviate the sequences. The playing was impressive, each lutenist producing a resonant and full sound and a singing tone. An interesting insight into what lutenists get up to on a Saturday afternoon. [Barto's latest Weiss recording is reviewed on p. 20.]

UNSUNG HEROINES

Michelene Wandor

Following the performance of Francesca Caccini's opera *La Liberazione di Ruggiero dall'Isola d'Alcina* (see *EMR* 55, p. 24), Calliope Productions presented five more concerts during last autumn, all revealing and celebrating the works of women composers, from the medieval to the early 19th century. Some of the work, of course, is already abroad – names such as Hildegard, Barbara Strozzi and Elizabeth Jacquet de la Guerre are at least somewhat familiar to early-music audiences now: a decade ago, this was hardly the case.

The series expanded the early part of this landscape in Concanentes' *Portrait of a Medieval Woman* (17 October, Holy Innocents Church, N8), augmenting troubadour/courtly love numbers with readings sacred and secular. Julian of Norwich provided devotional passion, Christine de Pizan feminist allegory, folk heritage and some ironic thoughts on taking a husband. Musically, the repertoire ranged wide, from the extensive troubadour cache, through Spanish cantigas, and some wonderful swooping Sephardic pieces, in which soprano Faye Newton evinced lyricism and passion. The programme flowed organically in all respects. Everyone read, and all the music was played without recourse to written notation, leaving the company free to interact, respond with one another with eye contact and body language (in the best possible taste, of course, *double entendres* notwithstanding).

On 31 October Maniera presented *Femme Fatale* (St John the Evangelist, N10) in a rather more conventional concert form. Given that it was the last evening of the Early Music Exhibition at the Royal College of Music, the audience was probably rather more sparse than it might have been, but nevertheless Jacquet de la Guerre was well served, with the chance to hear her in dramatic mode alongside the already familiar harpsichord pieces. Two cantatas – *Jonas* and *Judith* – testified to her dramatic abilities, with mini-monothematic recit/air sequences. Lindsay Richardson's mezzo created gestural drama, supported by some effortless stylish obbligato baroque cello playing from Sophie Willis, and Emma Alter's violin producing a dream of a sound in the Violin Sonata in D.

Four Nuns and a Courtesan (14 November, Pond Square Chapel, N6) was focused on conventional women from the late 16th century to well into the 17th. Deborah Roberts, in an assured recital/lecture, guided us through the social context in which so many women pursued musical activities – the convents to which they were sent and confined and where they may or may not have accepted devotional commitment. Strozzi (the 'courtesan'), like Francesca Caccini, with an entrée into the musical world by way of her male musical relatives, had relative freedom to compose for secular subjects and performers. Roberts'

confidence and experience made the combination of talk and music seem like comfortable, well-trodden territory, of which the reminders were pleasurable and informative.

The final concert, Fifth Element's *Hildegard – Windows of Song* (12 December, St John the Evangelist, N1) had its own moments of drama, planned and not planned. Clare Norburn stepped in at the last minute to replace one of the singers, and fortunately her familiarity with the repertoire and production style made the substitution seamless. There was a text of readings (prepared by Joan Michelson) which Patience Tomlinson read from the back of the playing area, while the rest of the sacred programme was presented as if part of the progress of a religious service. Performers stood now before us, now came from behind the altar, processed up the nave, sang from the two side chapels, carrying candles, lighting them, snuffing them out. They sang in relation to one another, the audience, and on the move. Lighting (theatrically rather than devotionally determined) helped to focus the action. The audience was encompassed by the event as much as watched it in the normal way.

Backtracking to the penultimate event (28 November, Pond Square Chapel, N6), I must declare an interest. Clare Norburn, one of the driving forces behind Calliope Productions, had approached me to provide a script for *The Barthelemon Circle – Music by Women Working in London 1750-1830*. Knowing that the actress Patience Tomlinson was involved, I wrote a script which not only gave her lots of material, but was structured in such a way as to (a) engage the singer – and, in the event, also Leah Stuttard, the harpsichordist – in dialogue, and (b) bind the music together in a way which subverted the conventional concert format, which I dislike as heartily as I love much of the music which appears within it.

Having seen all the other concerts, it becomes all the more interesting to compare what is commonly called presentation but is in fact more than that. I should say first that working with the group enabled me to become familiar with some engaging music by Maddalena Lombardini and mother and daughter Barthelemon. It would be invidious of me to review this concert, but I would urge people to go and see and hear it when enlightened venues put it on.

My aim was to make the event seamless – creating a micro-story without producing a series of illustrative readings: i.e. a palatable lecture. None of the usual coming on, bowing, checking out the audience to see which mates are there, bowing again and going off between numbers, leaving great, cold gaps, and then starting the process over again. It can be argued that this format enables everyone to relax and chat between numbers; but, coming from a theatrical tradition, I think it disrupts rather than enhances concentration. The Maniera concert and, to a degree, the Roberts, did not always move smoothly between text and music or between direct contact with the audience and contact with fellow musicians.

Coincidentally, both the Concanentes and the Hildegard programmes had an approach similar to mine. The latter,

being devotional in form and content, kept the urge to applaud at bay, and the former, because the cast carried a spontaneity in their style, also challenged the clapping convention to an extent.

The issue raises an interesting question about the relationship between polemic and performance. This series clearly had a polemical purpose: to research and present unknown and little-known music by women. Many of the pieces were transcriptions from manuscripts, and the polemical purpose was represented in greater or lesser degrees within the format of the concerts themselves – most explicitly in Roberts and Maniera. At the same time, these are also ‘theatrical’ events, and the fact that the presentation in the Barthelemon, Hildegard and Concanentes programmes moved closer to theatre – both in the inclusion of text and in the modifying of the staging and the audience's focus – is very exciting. In the Hildegard programme, the performers wore tabard and priest-like robes, Concanentes wore period costume, and in the Barthelemon event, the stage furniture and audience seating were arranged to give a suggestion of a rounded, drawing-room setting.

I am not suggesting that all concerts should suddenly do this; but it seems to me no coincidence that, because we were all very well aware of the provenance and social context of the music (women composing), it was only a small step to begin to think also about the way music is presented in today's context – in other words, to bring something of the original context and issues onto the stage. It is, after all, something early music does already in a minor way: the MD or leader chats to the audience, informs or entertains, and then the music speaks for itself. And in the case of this series, it certainly did.

We were thinking about these things when early music was novel thirty years ago. Dressing up was rapidly restricted to dance programmes and medieval banquets: it was uncomfortable and quaint, and was felt to belittle rather than enhance the music. But the impetus to experiment diminished as early music became more integrated into the main-stream concert world and the pioneering performers became successful; reinvigoration is needed.

What's wrong with clapping, provided that it does not interrupt sequences where it is out of place? The audience is probably more attentive if it can cough, recross legs and chat after a piece; if this is prevented, it may well do so anyway during the next piece. Musicians, too, like the chance to tune, take a sip of water, clear their throats or wipe their sweaty brows without having every move under scrutiny. If there are a lot of short pieces, they need to be grouped in some way: too many gaps are as annoying as too few. But if you are trying to recreate a drawing-room atmosphere, more applause than is now customary is probably in order rather than less: between movements of a sonata, for instance. Audiences as well as performers might adopt historical performance practice. At a baroque opera, even if you don't chat during the recitatives, have no compunction about applauding the arias. Should facilities be provided for playing cards and flirting (or more) during the show?

CB

SOME THOUGHTS ON MESSIAHS AND SINGING IN ISRAEL

by a mis-spelt soprano

On a previous trip to Israel I had been told that singing wasn't one of the country's musical strengths. So, what with having to fix a baroque trumpeter because there aren't any there, it was with a little trepidation as to what these performances of *Messiah* might be like that I set off in early January. I need not have worried, as those who read Clifford's and Lydia's comments in the last issue of *EMR* will know.

It was very refreshing to work with a conductor and orchestra which had not only thought carefully about the music but were also prepared to put in so much time to achieve the desired results: such a contrast to our manic run-throughs (if you are lucky) on the day in England. All the rehearsing also had the spin-off of excellent ensemble and tuning. I was particularly impressed with the violins and very much enjoyed the chamber ensemble feel of singing 'Thou art gone up on high' and 'If God be for us' with solo violin (whether 'right' or not). All three of the various players used had a good feel, although all different, for the music.

The soloists had been asked to comment to the choir on their singing, in particular their pronunciation of English. In the event, we had very little to say as we all felt that they put a lot of English choirs to shame. The diction was excellent and mostly accurate. The 'a' sound, as in 'man' and 'Adam', was obviously a difficult one for them and there was an odd word here and there. Every member of the choir was totally committed, so it only took one singer to mispronounce a word for it to show, at close quarters anyway. But minor infelicities were completely outweighed by the good things. I particularly liked the relaxed tenor sound – none of that full-throttle quality when the tessitura is high – and we had balanced chording at cadences as the result.¹

There is no tradition of choral singing in Israel and the Galilee Choir is a rare beast. I had the distinct impression, though, that now they have a taste for choral singing and they have the ability – and the conductor – to go from strength to strength.

Both the choir and orchestra were very friendly and were keen to discuss the music and performance practice, etc. I had so many lovely comments about my singing and how I interpreted the music that the ego got quite inflated! However, it confirmed the lack of opportunities to hear live performances in Israel of earlier music sung in an appropriate manner.² The vocal training seemed to be opera-based and always with vibrato, and there is a lack of teaching of earlier styles. This was very much in evidence at a workshop I took in Tel Aviv at a training college specifically for music teachers. The participants were conductors ranging from

students to the experienced plus interested outsiders, and the topic I had been given (a week before I left when I was in bed with flu) was the English Madrigal. I had chosen three examples well-known to us – about four people knew 'Fair Phyllis' but that was all. I was told that what they really wanted to know was how to sing the English and in what style the pieces should be sung. Predictably, the diphthongs caused a few problems, but they got used to the idea of following the word stresses and ignoring the barlines of the modern edition. There was some interesting discussion on whether you should vary your vibrato on the repeat! One enlightened lady said very forcibly that you shouldn't be singing with vibrato anyway. The original questioner found this hard to grasp.

I was most interested to read the letter in last month's *EMR* from Robert Betts about voice ranges and his experience in Beirut.³ I took a workshop in Haifa with a children's choir from a secondary school which specialises in the arts, in particular art, dancing and music. They were very good and made a splendidly full sound. They were aged between 12 and 15, girls with a token boy or two, and I was particularly struck by how many of them were singing underneath parts and sounded as if they should be. My experiences with choirs of children (and adults) and my own experiences as a teenager have been that there are few genuinely low voices – those who have to sing the lower parts do so because they can hold a part and just happen to be able to get the notes, whether it is best for them or not. So why did the Israeli children have so many good altos? I don't think they were trained to be low singers: it was very natural, and I think that the nature of the language must come into it. A lot of their speech has depth, and think of all those Russian basses!

I have become very attached to Israel as a country and in particular I like the warmth of the people (rather like the weather – though not in January). The audiences were very different from place to place, but were always very enthusiastic and appreciative. In Tel Aviv they were intellectual – lots of shadow conductors, scores on laps and audience participation in the Hallelujah Chorus. In Haifa they were really warm, despite the temperature in the church. I did sometimes wonder what they were making of some of my bits, such as 'for now is Christ risen', but the music and performers seem to have triumphed, and of the many *Messiahs* in which I have taken part these will remain some of the most memorable.

Jenny Hansell

1. A curiosity in the diction of the fine Israeli tenor soloist, whom Jenny didn't hear, in 'Thou shalt break them' was that 'dash' always sounded terribly upper class.

2. In fact, Emma Kirkby visited Israel a few days later, singing with a modern orchestra conducted by Roy Goodman.

3. Although Haifa is only 80 miles south of Beirut, it is in a different country, and the racial mix is, of course, very different.

[Notes by CB]

Chançonne

8 Chan - çon - ne - te, va t'en__ tost au rous-si - gnol en cel bois:
 Ainc voir d'a - mors n'ai__ jo - ii si l'ai lon - gue - ment ser -
Mout sont vail - lant cil __ de Gant, plein de cor - toi - si -
 8 A la che-mi - ne - e el froit mois_ de gen - vier voil la char sa - le - e les cha - pons gras man -
 8 Par ve - - - ri - - - té vueil es - - - pro -

8 di, qu'il me voist sa - lu - er la dou - ce blonde_ au vs__ cler
 - vi, n'on - ques_ con - fort_ n'i tro - vai; mes quant a li
-e, large et__ cor - tois, des - pen - dant et de ri - che
 8 -ger, da-me bien pa - re-e, chan-ter et ren-voi - sier. C'est ce qui m'a - gre-e: bon vin
 8 -ver, que vin fran - çois pas - - - sent

15 et que je l'aim sans fau - ser, mes, cer - tes, ne__ l'os nom - mer.
 ple - ra, ce que ser - vi l'ai me se - ra me - ri.
vi - e. S'en ont li a - ver mout grant en - vi - e.
 8 a - re-mu - er, cler feu sans fu - me-e, les dé et le ta - blier sans ten - cier.
 roin - - - nas et touz vins au - cer - - rois.

This 13th-century motet exists in versions for three and four voices. There are minor differences in detail, but these are as likely to be quirks in copying as conscious changes integral to the version itself, so are not noted here.

3 voices. Bamberg Staatsbibl. lit. 115, f.6v. (Facs. ed. Aubry, 1908, modern edition CMM 75, no. 11.) *Omit second voice.*
 3 voices. Wolfenbüttel, Herzog-August-Bibl, 1206, f. 212v-213. (Facs ed Dittmer, 1960.)

Omit top voice; sing the italicised text (Mout sont vaillant) for Part II

4 voices. Montpellier Codex (Montpellier, Faculté de Médecine MS H 196) f. 39v-40r. (Facs ed. Rokseth, 1936, modern edition by Hans Tischler RRMMA 2-8, no. 25; all versions are also edited by Tischler in *The Earliest Motets*, 1982, no. 145; he plausibly flattens all Bs except in bar 12.)

This may be sung at any pitch. If anyone cares to offer a singing translation, we'll print it in a later issue.

TIRAMI SU

Eric Van Tassel

Monteverdi and more... *Che soave armonia* Tirami Su Erin Headley dir 73' 76" Vanguard Classics 99141
Archilei/Cavalieri *Aria d'Armonia* (1589); **Bertali** *Lamento della Regina d'Inghilterra*; **Cazzati** *Hor ch'ascoso*; **Legrenzi** *Sonata 6 a4* (1673); **Monteverdi** *A un giro sol, Con che soavità, La piaga ch'ho nel core, Lamento d'Arianna, Zefiro torna a2; Rigatti Nisi Dominus* (1640); **Sances** *Accentu queruli*; **Valentini** *In te Domine speravi*

Tirami Su is a new ensemble, organised by Erin Headley, and based on a rich and varied group (usually four players – chitarrone, bass viols or Headley's beloved lirone, and harpsichord or organ) together with two violins and gamba. The line-up evokes those old American movies about the Second World War in which the platoon – or rather, their grandfathers – always had to include an Italian, a Norwegian, an Irishman and a Jew. The instrumentalists on this CD come from Slovakia, Australia (by way of Sweden), England, Scotland, Germany and the USA; the singers are from Canada and Holland.

The repertoire on Tirami Su's débüt CD covers almost a century, from the prologue for the 1589 Florentine intermedi to a Legrenzi sonata published in 1673. Although I'm not wholly ignorant of 17th-century music, I was delighted to find that six of the twelve pieces – and 44 of the 73 minutes' running time – were completely new to me.

My only regret is the inclusion of four instrumental transcriptions of vocal pieces: a motet by Rigatti, and three pieces by Monteverdi (two madrigals from Book IV, and the ciaccona *Zefiro torna* from Book IX, with the two tenor parts taken by two gambas). Of course such arrangements were played, and enjoyed, in the 17th century; but so were Brahms's two-piano versions of his symphonies in the 19th century, and that's not a sufficient excuse to record them now. In these pieces, the words aren't just an attractive feature of the music: they *are* the music. When Artusi tried to make Monteverdi's madrigals seem both inept and tasteless, he omitted the words from the extracts he quoted because the words explain and justify every gesture in the music, and the form of the poem creates the form of the setting.

But the playing itself is marvellous. If there's less chewing of the scenery than we get with Reinhard Goebel or Andrew Manze, that's no bad thing. Goebel and Manze are exhilarating but can be rather wearing, and it would be unwise to assume that their brilliantly hectic ornamentation is the only way the 21st century can come to terms with the 17th. The 17th must have given at least as warm a welcome to this kind of playing, which gives prominence to lyrical beauty and a gentle, subtle interplay between parts.

I'm especially charmed by Alexander Weimann's harpsichord and Elizabeth Kenny's chitarrone: both sound the genuinely improvisatory note of responding sensitively to

the melodic parts (instrumental or vocal) and to the acoustics of the parish church where the recording was made – a warm and hospitable space in which the producer John Hadden, using a simple stereo pair, somehow achieves both roominess and intimacy.

In any case, though, it's the singing that lies at the heart of this repertoire. I include the singing of Tirami Su's string players, for they have learnt well from the 17th-century teachers' admonition to emulate singing. Of the two guest singers, the soprano Laurie Reviol gets the greater exposure, her two big pieces (Bertali's *Lamento della Regina d'Inghilterra* and the Lament from Monteverdi's *Arianna*) making up almost one-third of the playing time. She has a lovely legato, and I couldn't tell at first that her light-seeming lyrical voice would deploy such power in the two laments.

If the album has a centrepiece, it's Bertali's *Lamento* (it also appears on a CD, which I haven't yet heard, by Anne Sofie von Otter and Musica Antiqua Köln: that came out while this album was in post-production, which may explain why Tirami Su's release has been less widely reviewed than it deserves). According to one (British) reviewer, Bertali's protagonist must have been imaginary. Don't they teach English history any more? She is obviously Henrietta Maria: for Bertali, based in Catholic Vienna, and his librettist, the Archduke Leopold Wilhelm, a sympathetic piece honouring the martyred Charles I was a transparently politic gesture. *

In Reviol's other solos, the instrumental element is so important that they are really *concerti* for an ensemble that happens to include a soprano. The performers' enjoyment of Sances' *Accentu queruli* (on the familiar *Zefiro torna* ground bass) is obvious: they make it sound more like an improvisation than most improvisations do.

The bass Harry van der Kamp has just two pieces, but both make a powerful impression: the kind of virtuoso solos that have been a David Thomas speciality. I'd heard van der Kamp often in ensemble recordings but seldom as a soloist: he has an immense range, and he's both powerful and expressive. In a stunning 'serenata' by Cazzati, he gives a master class in the uses of vibrato as an ornament.

Tirami Su has everything an ensemble specialising in the early Baroque should have: a distinctive sound, a congenial sense of style, an instinct for finding good repertoire. The group deserves to thrive and make more recordings as imaginative as this; whether it will, in the barbaric current state of the recording business, is at best anyone's guess.

* As I commented when reviewing the von Otter disc in *EMR* 48, p. 20, ignorance of the circumstances of the *Lamento* has meant that the record companies missed the marketing opportunity offered by the 350th anniversary of Charles I's death last year. CB

RECORD REVIEWS

CHANT

Officium Beatae Mariae Virginis: Hamburg in the Middle Ages Die Singphoniker, Godehard Joppich 74' 40"
Glissando 779 007-2

Plainsong discs have been scarce lately, so it is refreshing that Glissando have chosen a recording by Die Singphoniker to be among their early releases. This takes two Vespers sets of propera from a Hamburg MS, reproducing each antiphon in the appropriate place among the text in the booklet as well as giving a colour reproduction of the whole page. The small group sings effectively, though I couldn't always catch the words when listening without the booklet in front of me. A commendable issue, both for the performance and the careful documentation. *CB*

MEDIEVAL

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

The companion score arrived from A-R the day this issue went to press, so our review will be delayed again until next month.

Messe de Tournai (XIV^e siècle) Ensemble Organum, Marcel Pérès 53'13"
Harmonia Mundi (Musique d'abord) HMA 1901 353 £ (rec 1990)

This bargain-price re-release of an anonymous polyphonic mass in the *ars nova* style of the 14th century performed in liturgical context is excellent value. The Ensemble Organum remain unsurpassed in their interpretations of this very early material, and the 1990 recording bears its years as lightly as the ancient music itself. The dense, highly focused sound of the voices seems to pack the generous acoustic with a very rich and yet edgy sound; the small chant ornaments and drones are thoroughly convincing, while the polyphony is as impressive here as it undoubtedly sounded to those who first heard it in Tournai Cathedral around 1330. Arguing sensibly that the manuscript source shows signs of regular use, the singers retain dissonances clearly indicated in the music but expunged from other performances. Of the several groups who claim to live the music they sing, the Ensemble Organum remain the most convincing, and this is to my mind the most persuasive recording to date of this important music. *D. James Ross*

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

15th CENTURY

Brussels 5557 The Clerks' Group, Edward Wickham '68' 42"
Signum SIGCD015
Bedyngham *Fortune alas, Mi verry joy, Myn hertis lust*; Bedyngham or Frye *So ys emprentid*; Frye *Alas alas, Missa Flos Regalis*; Plummer *Missa Sine nomine*; anon *Pryncesse of youthe*

Following their extremely accomplished Machaut disc for Signum, the Clerks' Group continue their exploration of important MSS with Brussels 5557, the original core of which contains music in the English *contenance*. The singing in the four-part Frye Mass is extremely expressive, while the charming three-part Plummer Mass is performed with great authority. The disc is filled with secular songs from the same manuscript by Bedingham and Frye. Given that the choir now sings from facsimile and that the manuscript is the focus of the project, it is a strange decision to perform these secular songs, not with the continental texts with which they have been supplied in the manuscript, but with their speculative English originals. However, they are generally well sung, with an intelligent approach to tempi which avoids the ennui which the secular song of this period can sometimes inflict. Just occasionally, and most surprisingly for this group, the intonation is less than perfect in *So ys emprentid* and at the opening of *Pryncesse of youthe*, where Lucy Ballard has to adjust the pitch of her first note. Retakes of these short pieces were called for, I think. However, these small quibbles apart, this is an informative, entertaining disc with an innovative and stimulating approach to programming. *D. James Ross*

Melancolia: Tears of the Soul: German Love Songs from the Late Middle Ages Ensemble für frühe Musik Augsburg 63' 31
Christophorus CHR 77225

12 of the 21 pieces here come from the Lochamer Liederbuch of c.1455, the others coming from the Rockstock, Schedel and Glogauer MSS. The Augsburg group – four singers who also play recorders, harps, lute and fiddle – play and sing with an agreeable poise and freedom. The original notation is mensural, but the singers are not too bound by the rhythm and avoid the earnest jollity that can be a feature of Germany monodic singing. The instrumentations support rather than dominate the singers. Texts are only in old and modern German, with English and French summaries. An enjoyable recording. *CB*

16th CENTURY

O Come Sweet Sleepe: Elizabethan lute songs Michael Sanderson T, Robin Thodey lute
Rose CD-6 66' 00"
Songs by Campion, Dowland & Danyel

This includes two songs by Campion, 17 by Dowland and four by Danyel. It is easily the most unusual-sounding lute-song disc I have heard in a while, not least because of the discrepancy between the closely recorded voice and very distant lute. Michael Sanderson's voice also has an unusual quality, pleasantly reminiscent of a home-counties vicar, with an unforced, melodious and unmistakably English voice. His intonation and diction are good, and the result has an honesty and intimacy which suits the songs well. The extremes of his lower register sound a little uncomfortable at times, exacerbated by rather pedestrian tempi, but his upper range is clear and sweet. There are often audible signs of strain in the lute accompaniments and a disconcerting change of lute sound for the solo passages, as if the player has leapt forward to perform the introductions, then retreated to the other end of the room. An interesting disc, but try before you buy. *Lynda Sayce*

This and other discs privately issued by Robin Thodey are now distributed by Discovery Records.

Elizabethan Songs and Consort Music Rose Consort of Viols, Catherine King mS 72' 47"
Naxos 8.554284 £
Music by Alberti, Bennet, Byrd, Farrant, Mundy, Parsons, Patrick, Tallis, Taverner, Tye & anon

The composer who chiefly features here is Robert Parsons, with several of his best pieces (*Trumpets, De la court & Pandolpho*, but not the influential *In nomine a5*). There are a couple of Tye's settings of that chant and one by Tallis along with the Taverner original. The highlight is the final item, Byrd's lament for Tallis *Ye sacred muses*. The music is more subdued than that from the 1590s and later that non-specialists usually think of as Elizabethan, so those to whom it is new may need a little time to adjust. Catherine King effectively adopts a slightly more sombre and heavier tone than she uses for lute songs. The Roses don't try to project the music out of its period, but those attuned to the style will find this a rewarding anthology. I hope that others will enjoy it as well. *CB*

O Lux Beata: Renaissance Harp Music Becky Baxter harp, Alan Austin vln, Therese Honey harp, Paul Shipper gtr, Grant Herreid vihuela, lute, Tom Zajac bagpipe, rec 73' 02
Dorian DOR-93193

The music is mostly from the first three-quarters of the 16th century. The title piece is a chant setting by Cabezón, which sounded far more appealing than the Cabezón I reviewed last month. The harp part of the disc, in fact, is attractive, though probably of more interest to harpists than to the rest of us: it hasn't quite the verve of AL-K (two more of whose recordings should be reviewed next

month). But I find the contrasting bagpipe tracks disconcertingly different, and a long anonymous *Folia* for violin played with lively continuo is out of scale and period. I was interested to hear this CD, but I suspect that only harpists will buy it. CB

The Victory of Santiago: Voices of Renaissance Spain The Concord Ensemble 62' 38"

Dorian DOR-90274

Flecha *La guerra*; Morales *Jubilate Deo*, *Veni Domine*, *Vasquez El que sin ti bibar*, *Lágrimas di mi consuelo*, *Ojes morenos*, *Quien dice quel' ausencia*; Victoria *Benedicta sit sancta Trinitas*, *Missa Dum complerentur*, *O sacrum convivium*

This group is the prize-winner in Dorian's first early music recording competition – a very laudable exercise for a recording company. The six male singers bring an enthusiasm and an energy to this music which sometimes spills over the boundaries but which is never boring. They are at their best in the Vasquez Villancicos where they have a real affinity with the music. I found some of their tempi in the sacred settings a bit fast, with the music being tossed off rather than being allowed room to speak. Flecha's ensalada is rumbustious but doesn't quite come off. The blend is excellent and the recording allows each voice to come forward in turn as the polyphony demands. Dorian's recording technique, eschewing dynamic-range compression, means that the voices are very much 'in your face' which becomes a little wearing, particularly in the mass. Overall, though, a very good debut album from a very promising group.

Noel O'Regan

17th CENTURY

Jean-Henry D'Anglebert Harpsichord Suites and Transcriptions Byron Schenkman Centaur CRC 2435 62' 45"

Suite in G minor, *Suite in C* (Gaultier & Mézangeau); *Courante in D minor 'L'Immortelle'* (Gaultier), *Gallicarde in C*, *Menuet 'Dans nos bois'* (Lully), *Prélude in C*, *'Ritournelle des Fées'* (Lully), *Sarabandes in D minor* (Gaultier) & in F *'O beau jardin'* (Chambonnières), *Tombeau de M. de Chambonnières*,

One of my abiding memories of my visit to the Boston Early Music Festival in 1997 is Byron Schenkman's solo recital, partly because I played a practical joke on a friend who had no idea I was in the States, let alone at the concert, and partly because it was a most spell-binding hour's entertainment, as if he sat at the keyboard improvising. The immediacy and intimacy of live performance is inevitably slightly lost, but for all that it is a very good CD. The unmeasured preludes are nicely done, as are D'Anglebert's reworkings (rather than straight transcriptions) of popular pieces by Lully and others. The Suite in G minor is exceptionally fine. BC

Biber, Walther, Böddecker Deutsche Violin-virtuosen des 17. Jahrhunderts Thomas Pietsch vln, Bob van Asperen hpscd, org 63' 20"

Used as we have become to performances of this repertoire with a wide spectrum of

continuo instruments, keyboard, plucked, bowed in the various permutations (even harpsichord and organ on the recent John Holloway disc), a whole CD played on violin and keyboard might seem a bit dull. If the truth be told, the fiddle playing did not set me alight, but my ear never grew tired of the actual sounds. The music is, of course, quite stylised. Both players more than have the measure of the styles involved, Pietsch's bright violin being complemented well by the keyboard instruments. Van Asperen's keyboard solos are also nicely done. BC

Corelli Opera VI: Concerti Grossi, concerti 7-12 Modo Antiquo, Federico Maria Sardelli Tactus TC 650308 64' 13"

Corelli's Op. 6 concerti have become a bit of a sacred cow and anyone departing from the norm can be seen as a heretic. I was quite critical of Fabio Biondi's recording, mainly because of the way he (in my opinion) distorts phrasing and tempo relationships. Putting my own ideal to one side, I have come to enjoy the CDs as entertainment now, and find some of the playing very exciting. This set, too, is likely to spark a controversy. Modo Antiquo seem to have read their Muffat and gone to town – not only do they double the string parts, they add oboes, recorders and trumpets. I anticipated hating it, but am happy to report that, on the contrary, I thoroughly enjoyed it. There is no way (as far as I can see) that it can possibly represent anything Corelli (or anyone else, for that matter!) ever heard prior to this recording in 1997. The wind players could not, for example, have read off the violin partbooks, and they would not have been able to 'opt into' phrases the way they do (they don't match ripieno string parts, for example). It's far more carefully planned than that, with trumpets, appropriately enough, playing fanfare figures, etc, and oboes simplifying violin parts, as if Corelli had sat down and 'orchestrated' his print. In the end, the proof of the pudding is in the eating, and I enjoyed the performances: the concertino features some lovely fiddling, the theorbo player delays his bottom notes by a micro-second, not enough to hold things up, but enough to point the cadences, and the wind players are exceptionally good. Italian orchestral period-instrument playing is clearly on the up. BC

Tactus are no longer represented in the UK by Chandos: negotiations for a new distributor are in progress. I was intrigued, on seeing a Tactus catalogue for the first time, to find that the disc numbers have a musico-historical basis. The first digit indicates that Corelli was born in the 1600s, the second in the fifth decade of the century; digits 3 & 4 show the first letter of the composer's name (anonymous works have 00 here), digits 5 & 6 show that this is the 8th recording of Corelli that Tactus has issued. I wonder whether other firms number their discs by any such principles. CB

M. R. N. Couperin *Livre de Tablature de Clavescin* (c1695) Davitt Moroney hpscd Hyperion CDA67164 79' 30"

This CD is a complete recording of the contents of a manuscript written by Marc Roger Normand, but using his mother's maiden name of Couperin. There are 57 tracks (the incomplete opening piece in the collection is omitted), ranging from a Gavotte lasting 25 seconds to a set of *Folies d'Espagne* lasting just under 12 minutes. It is difficult to fault Moroney's performance. He plays two 'sets' on 17th-century Italian virginals, which is extremely bright in the treble. For the remainder, he uses a harpsichord after an instrument of 1707 by Nicholas Dumont. The music ranges from pieces probably written for court entertainments in Turin, to transcriptions by D'Angelbert of Chambonnières (in various antique spellings). For specialists, really; interesting as a library 'document' and yet another wonderful example of Moroney's diversity and versatility. BC

Gesualdo I Tormenti d'Amore: anthology of madrigals Claritas, James Grossmith dir Etcetera KTC 1215 59' 42"

I've always thought Gesualdo dangerously close to being a one-trick pony, at least in his madrigals. Once you've seen the point of all those false relations and harmonic non sequiturs, you've seen too much of what he has to offer. True, a rounded picture (like the Consort of Musicke's early-80s recording of the whole Book 5) does reveal aspects that you miss if you only hear the most notorious shockers (though when Gesualdo is being sprightly, as in *Ardeita zanzaretta* in Book 6, his part-writing can come unstuck). But in any case this selection – half from Book 6, the rest from Books 1-4 – is just misguided. Not because choral performance is inauthentic (though I can't imagine why Grossmith writes that 'the performing forces and expertise for which [Gesualdo] was writing were largely obsolete' in 1611), but because if you give highly chromatic five-part music to ten singers their tuning must be preternaturally accurate, and here it isn't. The result is to present a Gesualdo who sounds less competent than we know he can be.

Eric Van Tassel

Jeffreys Whisper it easily: choral music by George Jeffreys Laudate, Howard Ionascu Meridian CDA 84414 57' 35"

Congratulations to Meridian for producing a disc devoted to Jeffreys, a too-little-known contemporary of Purcell who delighted in the 'bizarre, baroque twists of harmony' typical of English Civil War music. The young voices of Laudate present the quirky lines clearly, though without the comprehension I would expect of these Oxbridge singers. 'His stretched sinews' lacks any hint of lycra; 'Heu, me miseram' is sung in the same all-purpose style as 'Ecce quem diligo resuscitatum nunc video'. Christopher Adams is a pleasure to listen to in two devotional solos, with much more

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

character than the other soloists; however, the wide range (almost two octaves) is too much of a challenge, the voice slightly strained at the top and disappearing at the very bottom. There is no information in the booklet about Laudate beyond some of the performers' names (though only half of the number in the photograph), and precious little about Jeffreys. Numerous misspellings indicate hastily handwritten copy and an unchecked proof. But buy this for the music, whose gentle excitements are modest and an excellent restorative after the excesses of the 21st century.

Selene Mills

What excesses? Perhaps Selene is referring to her encounter with dragons and other social events, as one of five contributors to *EMR* who enjoyed an excess of music-making and good company one weekend in January.

CB

Marais *Pièces à 2 et à 3 violes* Jérôme Hantai, Kaori Uemura, Alix Verzier *gambas*, Pierre Hantai *hpscd* 62' 32"

Virgin Veritas 7243 5 45348 2 6

Suite à 2 violes in G, *Suite à 3 violes* in D, *Tombeau de Mr Meliton* Forqueray *Pièces à 3 violes*

Marais published his first book of *Pièces de violes* in 1686. The suites for solo viol include many lovely pieces, but it is at the end of the book, with the suite for two viols, including the massive *Tombeau de Mr Meliton*, that his real genius shines through. It is the undoubtedly centrepiece of this recording, marvellously performed by two well-matched players; but also listen for the Chaconne from the suite in G major, which concludes the disc. The suite in D from the fourth book, published 30 years later, has an independent continuo part, giving a richer sonority through the addition of a third bass viol. The texture, never too rich, is gorgeous throughout, and Marais' invention never flags. The three short movements by Forqueray are new to me, and it is certainly a convincing attribution. Attractive and intense, they include a galant Allemande, an Italianate Courante and a languid Sarabande. The playing throughout is impulsive and passionate, the music always enjoyable, at its best very moving.

Robert Oliver

Monteverdi and more... *Che soave armonia* Tirami Su Erin Headley dir 73' 76" Vanguard Classics 99141 see page 14

Purcell [Songs] Päivi Järgiö mS, Annamari Pöhlö, Eero Palviainen *lute*, Lauri Pulakka *vlc, vlc piccolo, gamba* 62' 19" Alba ABCD 131

I wrote last month of the possible embarrassment when readers send us recordings of themselves. Amy-Elizabeth Wheeler had no need to fear, but I am less happy with this. Fortunately, it was the cellist who sent it, and his contribution is fine, apart from being omnipresent: Purcell's songs don't have to have a cello or gamba (let alone a *violoncello piccolo*: did they exist in England?). But the power of his playing often weighs down the voice. Sadly, this encourages her to emphasize the heavier

side of her voice, and there is also a feeling of singer and cellist charging away on their own without really enough give and take in the ensemble. And despite her interesting ideas, she just doesn't convince me. It is interesting to hear a view of an English composer from abroad (and so abroad that if we use the new bulk postal rates, Lauri Pulakka's *EMR* is charged as non-European despite Finland being in the EC); but I prefer the lighter touch and understatement that English musicians typically adopt. CB

A. Scarlatti *Concerti da Camera* Musica Pacifica (Judith Linsenberg rec, Elizabeth Blumenthal, Ingrid Matthews *vlns*, George Thomson *vla*, Claire Garabedian *vlc*, Michael Eagen *archlute*, Byron Schenkman *hpscd* 64' 26" Dorian DOR-93192

Sonatas 7, 9, 12, 21, 22, 24 (1725), Sonata in F (Santini MS)

The playing on this disc is quite simply in a class of its own; each of the performers is renowned in his or her own right and together they produce an amazingly fluid response to Alessandro Scarlatti's *Concerti da Camera*, which are themselves a fairly diverse group. Some movements have no continuo, some are for keyboard alone (with that wizard of the keyboard, Byron Schenkman, in tremendous form), but all are beautifully conceived and executed with just the right amount of rubato, ornamentation and, yes, style, that the sleeve note's avowed aim of showing that these pieces are no poor relations to the composer's much more widely-known vocal output is easily achieved. All recorder players should certainly have this, and fiddle players, too – you rarely hear such perfect unison playing from two soloists!

BC

Schein *Psalmen Davids sampt etlichen Motetten und dem Te Deum* La Capella Ducale, Musica Fiata Köln, Roland Wilson 78' 22" Glissando 779 006-2

You won't find the title in any list of Schein's works: it is a guess at what the composer might have used had he been able to publish a collection of his large-scale works. There is a certain amount of 'might have' in the versions performed as well: added trumpet parts, for instance. Some of the music is from MSS once thought lost: the booklet thanks the relevant libraries but does not quote sources for specific pieces: about the only respect in which the Glissando production slips from the standards of Peter Czerny's former employer, Archiv. But it is nice to see that a new company (with WDR's help) can produce so lavish a recording, with a vast array of instruments and singers (though deployed in the proper way in groups of choirs, not *en masse*). The disc puts a new complexion on the image of Schein, with some quite close resemblances to Schütz's 1619 *Psalmen Davids*, and is marvellously performed. I want to be on the inside playing the music, so I hope Roland Wilson will publish the scores; and there are pieces with trumpets and timps to programme along with the Praetorius *In dulci jubilo*. CB

Tomkins *Choral and Organ Music* Oxford Camerata, Jeremy Summerly dir, Laurence Cummings org 66' 58" Naxos 8.553794 £

The voices of the Oxford Camerata (ten names are credited) are beautifully balanced; the sopranos sound very nearly as if they could be boy trebles, but without trying too hard. Tempos are well chosen, and are varied as little as I imagine was desired (or practicable) in the early 17th century. Perhaps the solos in the verse anthems sound a bit tame; the final six-part verse (SSAABB) in *Above the stars* has all the requisite vitality, and perhaps there could have been a bit more of that elsewhere. I think I understand the arguments for high pitch in Tomkins's day, but I do wish the alto solos could be taken by the kind of high tenor that the post-1660 generation would know as 'low countertenor'. I have a problem with the sublime *When David heard*: I'm not reconciled to the stiff declamation and almost unvarying tempo that are unavoidable in a choral performance (the more so as the piece is given – as authentic Jacobean practice surely requires – a discreet *colla parte* organ accompaniment throughout). There must be a reason why Tomkins included the piece in his 1622 madrigal book: the writing simply demands a subtle elasticity that is beyond any choir, even one this good. Nonetheless, this CD would be a must-have even if it had more competition than (alas) it has. Eric Van Tassel

English Lute Songs Robin Blaze ct, Elizabeth Kenny lute 70' 35" Hyperion CDA67126

Music by Banister, Blow, Campion, Danyel, Dowland, R. Johnson, W. Lawes, Locke, Purcell & anon

Don't be misled by the uncommunicative title to expect an entire recital of songs of the 'Dowland' era. The programme extends from that time to Purcell, a great bonus, for the later repertory is still too little heard, especially with lute or theorbo as opposed to keyboard. The disc includes such masterpieces as Dowland's *In darkness let me dwell*, Danyel's *Can doleful notes* and Purcell's *Tis nature's voice* (the composer's little joke, perhaps, setting these words for countertenor). Robin Blaze is a fine young modern exponent of the voice; Elizabeth Kenny is not only an excellent accompanist, but brings off the interspersed solos, several of them quite formidable, with great panache and style.

Kenny acknowledges her indebtedness to the late Robert Spencer, which is apparent when she writes about the 'utterance' of lute songs: the proper declamation of the words. One aspect of this, of course, is diction and the enunciation of consonants, which, alas, are rather lacking in these performances; although I could hear the words of songs I knew, the unfamiliar ones were less intelligible without the help of the printed text. Robin Blaze's fine and expressive voice has no problems with the considerable range demanded by the programme on the disc; one feels that he could easily go higher, and he descends to

low f and f♯ with subtle diminuendos that disguise or eliminate the 'gearchange' that can often sound so ugly. But was this the kind of voice that sung lute songs in the seventeenth century? We read in Campion's *Caversham Entertainment* (1613) of 'a song of five parts... The Robin-Hood-men feign two trebles, one of the Keepers with the Cynic sing two counter-tenors, the other Keeper the bass...' A 'feigned' voice was a falsetto, and only the two trebles were so rendered; the two countertenors and the bass simply 'sang'. Perhaps 'twas nature's voice, after all!

Ian Harwood

Festa Teatrale: Carnival in Venice and Florence: Masquerades, ballets and carnival scenes by Monteverdi, Vecchi and others Balthasar-Neumann-Chor & Ensemble, Thomas Hengelbrock 61' 56"

DHM 05472 77520 2

Music by Gastoldi, Giramo, Lambardi, Legrenzi, Merula, Monteverdi, Ortiz, Rossi, Vecchi

The contents list puzzled me: some pieces may have had a carnival connection, but the selection seemed unfocused. Only on examining the booklet was it revealed that this is the music from a staged anthology compiled by the conductor. There is some marvellous music here, such as the fine descending-fourth lament 'Lumi, potete piangere' from Legrenzi's *La divisione di mondo* – though I'm not sure that I believe the string parts; I'm also suspicious about the beefy choral sound in some pieces. It's an attractive disc, but I'm not convinced that the performers feel the music of the period as naturally as, say, those of Tiramassu (see p. 14).

CB

LATE BAROQUE

Bach Matthäus-Passion Ian Bostridge *Evangelist*, Franz-Josef Selig *Jesus*, Sybilla Rubens, Andreas Scholl, Werner Güra, Dietrich Henschel SATB, Collegium Vocale Gent, Philippe Herreweghe 161' 22" 3 CDs in box Harmonia Mundi HMC 951676.78

With additional CD-Rom of supporting information

Herreweghe's new recording of the Matthew Passion is remarkable for its masterly maturity, and perhaps deserves to stand – as so little in public consciousness has – to summarise many of the riches accumulated over the thousand years of high art between Hildegard of Bingen and today.

He has already proved an authoritative director of Bach's music because he perceives that this music comes from one who contemplates music for the church as requiring such a diversity of responses beyond, but because of, Luther's instruction that it should, indeed, be used to preach. The subtle success in Bach's music is ingeniously but also faithfully dependent on distinct vehicles: an effective, brisk narrative, at which the new international expert Ian Bostridge excels; masterly delivery of the *vox Christi*, here authoritatively supplied by Franz-Josef Selig, another soloist whose actual age will be far nearer those of Bach's 1727 student singers than has usually been the case;

disciplined arias and choruses having both operatic immediacy and some sense of context – once more the Collegium Vocale and the international solo team are just right – and, of course, appropriate qualities throughout the two orchestral ensembles. Often the chorales which intersperse and enrich the various scenes of the action spoil Passions for me because they are too similar to arias or commenting choruses; it has been the elegant detachment of Collegium Vocale's performances of these that have set standards for years now, and they maintain absolute authority here.

The most remarkable feature of this performance, however, is its manner of address. Just like any outstanding sermon, its opening and closing choral movements are not so much dramatically challenging as, in a natural way, somewhat personal and even intimate in appeal. The essential fact about Good Friday is that it commemorates the fulfilment of Christ's mission on earth and through this, the triumph of Resurrection. This is clearly stated in both of the Bach Passions, and it is these emphases that emerge with such authority in the new interpretation.

Stephen Daw

We will include a review of the Bach Collegium Japan recording of the work next month.

Bach The Neumeister Chorales Christopher Herrick (1979 Metzler choir organ of the Stadtkirche, Zofingen, Switzerland) 79' 30" Hyperion CDA67215

The publication in 1985 of the previously unknown early Bach chorale preludes from the Neumeister MS in Yale University created a flurry of interest from musicologists and organists, but the excitement has since died down. A shame, because many of these pieces are little gems showing yet again that youth does not necessarily imply immaturity. Although it could be, and has been, argued that early works like this are Bach's gropings for a style to develop, it is equally likely that they represent the idiom of the day, however old Bach might have been. Thus we get a glimpse of the world of the Thuringian organist in the late 17th century, combined with a tinge of Buxtehude (and Bach was not the only organist in central Germany to know and admire the Master of Lübeck's work).

Although Herrick is sticking to his affair with Metzler organs, he has chosen a seductive little one manual choir organ for this recording, double-tracking the solo line in two pieces. This more restrained pallet helps to focus attention on musical line and matters of touch and articulation. However, I am afraid Mr Herrick still has some way to go before he can gain entry to the highest level of historically informed players. There is still the occasional rather dated adherence to neo-baroque over-exaggeration of articulation (try track 25), and the tendency for insistent touch on faster notes can be a bit wearing (try track 16). But there is much that is pleasant about this CD, and the acoustic is wonderful – like bathing in warm honey.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Bach Choralvorspiele/Choralbearbeitungen Hans Helmut Tillmanns (1723 Wagner organ, Brandenburg Cathedral and 1974 Marcussen organ, Methler) 70' 02"

Danacord BDACOCD 527

Arnstadt: BWV 1090, 1092, 1105, 1108, 1113; Weimar: BWV 599, 601-3, 606-7, 613-4, 616-7, 619, 622, 625-6, 630, 636, 643, 727; Leipzig BWV 645, 648, 654-5, 659, 668

Unless you are very, very good, this is not the time to be releasing a Bach CD. For market success, there has to be something to lift your offering above that of the common herd. For a variety of relatively minor reasons, this CD does not manage that. The 1723 organ in Brandenburg might have historic interest (although it seems to be tuned in modern pitch and equal temperament), but it does not distinguish itself on this unfocused recording, sounding brittle and edgy. It does not matter too much, however, since most of the pieces are recorded on a modern Marcussen. One day these might also be of historic interest, but are not yet the ideal Bach organ. Mixing tracks from both organs is just perverse. The programme runs through the development of the chorale prelude from Bach's early Arnstadt days to Leipzig, including some of the (incorrectly BWV numbered) Neumeister Chorales, and a miscellaneous selection, in apparently random order, from the *Orgelbüchlein*. The playing is rather old fashioned.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Bach Suites I, II & III (BWV 1007-9) Robin Thodey lute 75' 42" Rose CD5

This features Robin Thodey's own arrangements, which are sparsely but effectively made. The recording is intimate and the sound for the most part is warm and gentle, though lacking in drama. This is a brave effort, but I have to say that it does not offer any challenge to Nigel North's version on Linn.

Lynda Sayce

Bach 6 Sonaten für Violino und Cembalo (BWV 1014-19) Marianne Rônez vln, Ernst Kubitschek hpscd 93' 45" (2 CDs) Basic Edition Winter & Winter 910 017-2

These works have now been recorded so frequently with period instruments (here to the extent of a Stainer violin such as Bach ordered for the Cöthen court and owned at his death) that the novelty of the earliest persuasive account (from Sigiswald Kuijken and Gustav Leonhardt) has somewhat paled, even though it remains special for its sense of creative collaboration. To state that this reading is so short in real baroque style (possibly owing to weaknesses in the performers' training and preparation) may seem harsh, but I must report rather serious shortcoming in these respects. Just as some modern-instrument players have of late developed very stylish approaches to Bach's music, so there remain those who use early instruments but lack any real authority, despite having been presented with the most delightful opportunities.

Stephen Daw

Bach *Complete Orchestral Works* Cologne Chamber Orchestra, Helmut Müller-Brühl Naxos 8.508005 £ (8 CDs) 533' 56"
 8.554602 Vol. 1: 68' 36" Oboe Concertos. BWV 1053, 1055-6, 1059, 1060
 8.554603 Vol. 2: 63' 44" Violin Concertos BWV 1041-3, 1052
 8.554604 Vol. 3: 63' 47" Hpscd concertos BWV 1052-3, 1055-6
 8.554605 Vol. 4: 74' 32" Hpscd concertos BWV 1054, 1058, 1063, 1064 (+ 1064 on 3 vlns)
 8.554606 Vol. 5: 64' 27" Hpscd concertos BWV 1060-1062, 1065 + Vivaldi op. 3/10
 8.554607 Vol. 6: 55' 12" Brandenburg Concs 1, 2, 3 & 6
 8.554608 Vol. 7: 68' 28" Brandenburg Concs. 4, 5; BWV 1044, 1057
 8.554609 Vol. 8: 78' 10" Overtures 1-4

The performers assembled here are all musical and lively, and considerable skill has been applied in the programming of several of the concertos in several versions, the four-harpsichord Vivaldi transcription being preceded by quite an authoritative reading of the Vivaldi original with solo violins. On the first disc, which claims to feature Bach's concertos for oboe, nearly every note is a modern reconstruction, and the last work is the first of three varying accounts of the Concerto for two violin. The fourth Brandenburg is immediately followed by the later adaptation in which Bach substituted a solo harpsichord for the violin in the concertino with the recorders. All are well played, gracefully ornamented and unusually stylish for performances using modern pitch and instruments (including natural trumpets, sounding a bit odd). Tempi in allegro movements are mostly a little fast for my taste, while occasionally the slow movements sound a little sluggish. The orchestra's regular harpsichordist is completely outclassed when Robert Hill leads in a really skilful quintet of soloists for the harpsichord concertos. The general result reminded me repeatedly of how much stylish players of modern instruments are learning by hearing their colleagues' examples on period instruments. This is a really enjoyable collection. *Stephen Daw*

Vol. 1 is available separately; the rest will presumably follow likewise.

Caldara *Missa Sanctorum Cosmae et Damiani* Monika Frimmer, Falf Popken, Wilfried Jochens, Klaus Mertens SATB, Westfälische Kantorei, Capella Agostino Steffani, Lajos Rovatkay dir 60' 06" (rec 1991)
 Virgin Veritas 7243 5 45387 2 8
 + Caldara *Benedicta et venerabilis es* (gradual), *Caro mea vere est cibus* (motet); Tuma Sonata a4 in e (1741), Sonata a5 in e (1742)

What an excellent recording! It may be nine years old, but the singing and playing is so fresh, the acoustic so bright and clear, the music so well written, that it's impossible to fault at all. Caldara really does not deserve the obscurity into which he has sunk: he rarely writes themes which don't lend themselves readily to some sort of contrapuntal treatment, and his choral fugues are extremely taut – he even manages some idiomatic trumpet entries in the mass. What struck me most about his music was the way he dovetailed

instrumental entries almost imperceptibly. The sleeve notes make much of an 'Adagio harmony' dominated by augmented and diminished chords, but I think concentrating on a single aspect belittles what is actually very good music indeed – good enough for J. S. Bach to copy some out. *BC*

Couperin *Concerts royaux* Bruce Haynes ob, Arthur Haas hpscd, Susie Napper gamba ATMA ACD 2 2168 54' 76"
Concerts 3, 5, 7; Prélude 5 & extraits du 15^e Ordre

This disc is both important as a document and most enjoyable as a recital, if a little short. Nine of the tracks are played on an oboe from the workshop of Pierre Naust (c.1700) equipped with a reed made to the dimensions suggested by Talbot for a Bressan, which is also used for a modern Hotteterre copy played elsewhere. Bruce Haynes' notes contain much interesting technical and historical information and his playing confirms his authoritative status. *Inégalité* and *agrément*s are all conspicuously in place, deliciously characterful trill fingerings abound: in short, I found the whole compulsive listening. The programme is not all oboe and continuo however. Some movements offer either a gamba (Norman, 1703) or harpsichord in the limelight and they do not disappoint. A final plaudit goes to the composer – these *concerts* really are lovely examples of *goût* at its most *bon*. *David Hansell*

Handel *Delirio amoroso: Italian Solo Cantatas* Deborah York, Collegium Instrumentale Brugense, Patrick Peire 77' 04"
 Eufoda 1297
Ah crudel (HWV 78), *Alla caccia* (HWV 79), *Delirio amoroso* (HWV 99), *Languia di bocca lusinghiera* (HWV 123)

This is a well-chosen programme of Handel's instrumentally accompanied cantatas for solo soprano. The little hunting cantata *Diana cacciatrice* receives its first recording, and *Ah crudel* is a first on CD (Dame Janet Baker's version of 1967, with Raymond Leppard, has not had a CD issue, as far as I know). The fragment *Languia di bocca lusinghiera* was probably also planned as a première, but has been overtaken by Christine Brandes' version on the recent Handel/Porpora Rivals disc from ASV (see *EMR* 54, p. 25); the new version is nevertheless the first with a correct text. The *Diana* cantata is treated rather oddly. It consists of a march, a recitative, a da capo aria and a brief finale with echo effects. (The autograph also contains a minuet, with vocal line, but its relationship to the cantata is unclear and it is omitted here.) The finale seems to be an envoi serving to mark the departure of the hunting party, but here – contrary to the autograph, the only source – it is inserted between the mid-section of the aria and the da capo. (The sequence is not tracked separately, so you cannot play it in another order.) Otherwise the disc presents a wealth of delightful music quite admirably. Deborah York sings with full but clearly focused tone, meeting the considerable vocal demands and always showing sensitivity

to words, though a touch more passion could occasionally have been risked. In *Delirio amoroso* the urgency in Magda Kalmár's interpretation of the sarabande-like aria 'Per te lasciai la luce' on a 1975 Hungaroton CD (where it takes 6 minutes) seems preferable to York's dreamier version (8 minutes). The delaying of many recitative cadences also adds to the impression of coolness, but this is not a major reservation, and Patrick Peire's direction is lively enough when it needs to be. A welcome issue. *Anthony Hicks*

D. Scarlatti *Stabat mater* Ensemble William Byrd, Graham O'Reilly 62' 09"
 Pierre Verany PV799111
 + *Iste confessor*, *O magnum mysterium* & *Messe breve* *La stella*

Beautiful music and beautifully performed. The *Stabat mater* is a real winner, full of Italian warmth and sweetness; maybe a bit cloying at times, which is perhaps why it has been so neglected in Northern Europe compared to vocal music by Bach and Handel, but so very responsive to the text and no less full of compositional artifice. The other pieces show different facets of both Scarlatti's work; the beautiful setting of *Iste confessor* is quite unlike anything else I know from this period and must reflect a popular piety (certainly not for performance by the papal chapel, as the notes suggest). The singers, almost all French, seem completely at home with the music which is always most effectively shaped by Graham O'Reilly and sensitively accompanied on the organ. Another splendid recording of Italian baroque music by a French group and another triumph of France Telecom's enlightened sponsorship of French recordings. *Noel O'Regan*

Telemann *Suite et Concertos* Les Boréades, Manfred Kraemer vln 60' 58"
 ATMA ACD 2 2193
Concerto in a rec, gamba & str; *Concerto a6* fl, vln, str; *Ouverture & Suite in a rec & str*

Les Boréades is a new ensemble to me, but Manfred Kraemer is not a new name; indeed, everything I've heard him play has had that little something extra that sets his performances apart. There's something of Fabio Biondi about him, but none of the mannerisms – here, the greatest care is taken with phrasing. A micro-second of space before starting that idea, a slight delay on a cadence, a subtle inflection of the melodic line – and all of the players do it. It is simply wonderful Telemann playing. At this point, it would be traditional to bemoan the fact that all three pieces on the relatively short disc have been recorded several times before, but I think the fact that these performances will be my first choice vindicates their choice of repertoire. Now that they have established themselves as firm favourites, perhaps Les Boréades will explore the extensive range of unrecorded material. *BC*

Vivaldi *Aria d'opera* Angelo Manzotti *S*, Orchestra Barocca di Bologna, Paolo Falda dir 74' 16"
Tactus TC 672214
Arias, + Sinfonias from *Il Tamerlano* & *Teuzzone*

This is a doubly interesting CD. It confirms, yet again, that Vivaldi's operas are full of wonderful arias just waiting for someone to come along and record them: there are several gems here, though I don't think the world is yet ready for a spate of complete opera sets. Secondly, it involves a male soprano, who, on first impressions, doesn't quite have the technique demanded to carry off some of the high passages. The more I listened and the more I thought about it, though, the less I was worried about that – it isn't that long ago that most female singers of this repertoire couldn't get their throats and their vibrati through a baroque run intact, and something tells me that what we hear on this recording is certainly better than that – and his bottom notes are less plummy (and considerably more audible) than most. Some of his cadenzas are slightly insecure and he should, of course, have paid more attention to his limitations where he has absolutely no support! The Orchestra Barocca di Bologna plays very well indeed – far better than the band on the recent Cecilia Bartoli disc (there's no blustering from the horns here, for example). All in all, although the singer's voice will not appeal to everyone, this is a very fine collection. BC

The voice reminded me of an old-fashioned contralto with a very upwardly-extended range. CB

Vivaldi *La Stravaganza*, Vol. 2. *Concertos for Violin and Orchestra* op. 4, Nos. 7-12
Andrew Watkinson vln, City of London Sinfonia, Nicholas Kraemer 45' 47" £
Naxos 8.553324

This is another extremely fine modern instruments Vivaldi disc. I prefer the 'second book' of Op. 4 to the first book, although some of the progressions do grow a little wearing by the last concerto. I remember the latter from my school days, I think an adaptation of it was a Grade 8 piece, and I really enjoyed hearing the proper version. The Concerto in D (No. 11 of the set) is also exceedingly fine. The soloist continues where he left off with volume one – not afraid to use open strings, happily ornamenting away, and easily skipping over the difficulties. It's a bit naughty that the other solo violinist (or were my ears deceiving me?) is not credited anywhere. Otherwise an excellent production all round. BC

Vivaldi – Handel *Sonatas & Trio Sonatas for Oboe & Basso Continuo* Marcel Ponseele, Ann Vanlancker obs, Ewald Demeyere hpscd, Richte Van Der Meer vlc 56' 30"
Accent ACC 99136 D

Handel: Oboe sonatas (HWV 357, 363a, 366); kbd suite in d (HWV 437/2-4); Minuet in g (HWV 540b); Air in F (HWV 464);
attrib Handel: Trio Sonata in Bb (HWV 380); Vivaldi: Oboe sonata (RV 53); Trio Sonata (RV 81)

Ponseele and his partner play on his own reproductions of instruments by Stanesby junior, ripe-sounding and characterful. The Handel sonatas seem to me model performances, phrased without excessive rubato and lightly embellished with perfect taste. I also enjoyed the Vivaldi items; the trio is concerto-like and makes a good contrast. The 'Handel' trio is from the set of six marked for oboes in the only source and once thought to be early works, but the second treble part must be for violin (a low-lying passage in the last movement has to be adjusted here to fit the oboe) and the composer, though clearly talented, is surely not Handel. (The booklet notes are silent on these questions, and do not discuss the Vivaldi works at all.) Perhaps the Handel keyboard pieces added as fillers could have been less arbitrarily chosen, but they make pleasant interludes under Demeyere's gentle touch. Anthony Hicks

Weiss *Sonatas for Lute*, vol. 3 Nos. 2, 27, 35
Robert Barto 79' 12"
Naxos 8.554350 £

Weiss's true stature as a composer is slowly being recognised outside lute circles, a process which can only be helped by recordings of this quality. Those who enjoyed vols 1 & 2 are assured of yet further delight with this wonderful disc. The featured sonatas are well contrasted and illuminate different periods of Weiss's career: no. 2 probably dates from c.1717, no. 27 from c.1720 and no. 35 is perhaps as late as the early 1740s. Barto's masterful performances are among the best available, and have been superbly recorded. A must for all lovers of the lute, and of 18th-century music in general. Lynda Sayce

Viola da gamba concertata: Werke für konzertierende Viola da Gamba Siegfried Pank gamba, Juliane Banse *S*, Robert Ehrlich *rec*, Mitteldeutsche Barocksoloisten Leipzig, Bläser Collegium Leipzig 62' 38"
Raum Klang RK 9806
Abel *Frena le belle lagrime* (from *Sifari*); Handel *Tra le fiamme* HWV 170; Telemann *Concerto in A* gamba, 2 vln, bc; *Concerto in a rec*, gamba & str; *Sinfonia in FTWV 50:3*

In this year of all years it is good to be reminded that the viola da gamba had a considerable and varied German baroque repertoire besides the great masterpieces of JSB. The veteran Leipzig-based gambist Siegfried Pank has assembled a lively crew of younger musicians to join him in presenting a fascinating survey ranging from small-scale chamber music to the opera house. In Telemann's A minor concerto with recorder and strings, Pank's self-effacing style is overshadowed by the more overtly affective Robert Ehrlich, and he seems unwilling to let his hair down in the quirky finale with its unexpectedly off-beat Polish folk-dance. He is more at home in the old-fashioned weaving counterpoint of the Sinfonia in F, whose academic style shows a fascinating glimpse into the world of Telemann's youth: the string parts are doubled by cornett and three sackbuts providing a strong link with the time of

Schütz but which unfortunately leads to a muddier texture than might be ideal. His account of the A major chamber concerto has some well-judged dynamic variety, but the sprightly violins frequently leave him plodding in the background.

Abel was one of the last gamba virtuosi, and his aria 'Frena le belle lagrime', written in 1767 for the pasticcio opera *Sifari* features his instrument in a flamboyant obbligato. Pank's dark-toned 1693 Hoffman viol goes well with the luscious velvety voice of Juliane Banse, though his precisely articulated phrasing is at odds with her rather modern legato vocal style. Here, and in Handel's extended Italian cantata *Tra le fiamme* the richness of Banse's voice sometimes overwhelms the text, but her thrilling evocation of the fable of Icarus seems to inspire Pank to greater flights of fantasy and he takes wing on Handel's virtuoso Italian melodies with greater élan than elsewhere on this beautifully produced CD.

John Bryan

CLASSICAL

C. P. E. Bach *The Solo Keyboard Music* vol. 4
Miklós Spányi clavichord 78' 30"
BIS-CD-963
H. 2, 3, 15, 19-21 (Wq 62/1,2, 65/1, 6, 10, 11)

These early sonatas seem to have been composed partly as teaching repertoire and partly as a vehicle for more highly-charged personal expression – maybe to perform for oneself, or as compositional explorations as a means of developing written music from improvisation, purposes which need not have been mutually exclusive. As usual, Spányi has secured an unusually good reproduction instrument (a clavichord after C. G. Hubert, 1772, by T. F. Steiner) and has the skill to play with maximum sensitivity. His acute sense of timing works especially well in the sixth sonata, where continuity is so well conveyed that it gives the impression of a well-disciplined improvisation.

Stephen Daw

C. P. E. Bach *Flute Quartets* Jan de Winne fl, Marten Boeken vla, Roel Dieltiens vlc, Shalev Ad-El fp 58' 42"
Eufoda 1281
Wq 93-4, 132, 133 (H537-8, 562, 564)

The stature as well as the remarkable human appeal of Emanuel Bach's large output grows on us apace as really expert performers deliver it in all its facets. This particular issue, apparently funded through Belgium's main publisher, presents a wide repertoire, from almost concertante chamber music through trios to the famous but seldom, if ever, better-recorded unaccompanied sonata for solo flute; because of its fine musical strengths, this makes an appropriate close to the programme. Those who, like me, are trying to keep up with Miklós Spányi's revelatory keyboard series on BIS would do well to add this similarly authoritative performance to his.

Stephen Daw

Boccherini: Cello Concertos Vol. 2 (G. 474-6,478) Tim Hugh vlc, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Anthony Halstead cond 75' 44" Naxos 8.553572 £

Vol. 2 of a set of three to give us all 12 of the composer's cello concertos, and what a lot of fine music there is. Tim Hugh, by now a familiar name to our readers, excels in Boccherini's high-ranging antics, with double-stopping thrown in as yet another virtuoso device. Although the SCO mostly accompany very well, I was a little disappointed by some of the scaled-down accompaniments to solo passages, and not always happy with the tone and intonation of the flutes. Still, these are overall very good performances, and it's especially nice to have both finales to Concerto No. 8. BC

Eybler *Christmas Oratorio 'Die Hirten bei der Krippe zu Bethlehem'* 1794 Sabine Ritterbusch, Waltraud Hoffmann-Mucher, Harry van Berne, Jelle Draijer SATB, Alsfelder Vokalensemble & Bremer Domchor, I Febrarmonici, Wolfgang Helbich 70' 11" cpo 999 667-2

Eybler's claim to fame is for not completing Mozart's *Requiem*. On the basis of this recording, though (I didn't hear an earlier set of his own *Requiem* setting), he is a fine composer, and one well worthy of further exploration. Indeed, this recording grew out of an inspired idea of Helbich's, where a whole evening in the cathedral in Bremen (where he is music director) is given over to the music even (including an oratorio) by an unknown composer. There are some interesting effects, like a single chorus doubled with trombones, and the piece could not really have existed without 'Zauberflöte' - Track 8 is the Queen of the Night with a new hat, and Sarastro puts in an appearance in Track 16. That said, this is not copying - Eybler is his own man, and I look forward to hearing more. Incidentally, Herr Helbich might consider Johann Wilhelm Hertel, whose Christmas oratorio at the Brussels Conservatory Library looked well worth investigating. BC

Gluck *Orphée & Euridice* (Berlioz version, 1859). Anne Sophie von Otter *Orphée*, Barbara Hendricks *Euridice*, Brigitte Fournier *L'Amour*, Monteverdi Choir, Orchestre de l'Opéra de Lyon, John Eliot Gardiner 88' 36" (2 CDs in box) rec 1989 EMI Classics 7243 5 568885 2 1 ££

Rezeptionsgeschichte is fashionable among musicologists but does not often impinge on early-music recordings. But Gluck's *Orfeo/Orphée* has had a very unusual history. In my youth, it was the earliest work in the operatic repertoire, keeping a foothold chiefly as a showpiece for singers like Kathleen Ferrier. What had survived, however, was a version combining bits of the original Viennese and Parisian settings. The standard score printed the text in Italian, French and German, so the linguistic basis of the versions was confused. The person chiefly responsible for this was Berlioz. He was infatuated by Gluck and prepared a conflation which was the basis

of what, until recently, was usually heard. In this recording, Gardiner revives Berlioz's version as authentically as he can with his Lyons opera orchestra, including a few mid-19th-century instruments. Of the singers, I preferred Orphée to Euridice, who isn't quite spot-on in her runs - but their presence is such a relief: Orphée's music is rather too subdued and beautiful for my taste. The orchestra is, as in any Gardiner performance, brilliant, though no doubt were this a fresh recording it would benefit from the period instruments of his revolutionary band. But this was well worth re-issuing, and is in a proper box with full notes and translations. CB

Gyrowetz *Symphonies* London Mozart Players, Matthias Bamert 64' 13" Chandos CHAN 9791 op. 6/2 in E♭, op. 6/3 in F, op. 12/1 in D

These three symphonies are recorded for the first time, which is amazing, for they would easily stand comparison with Mozart, let alone anything by the other contemporaries featured in this most admirable series. Gyrowetz's writing for winds in particular lends this recording the edge on its predecessors; the London Mozart Players are in excellent form and clearly the superior quality of the music helps them. I hope there will be a second volume devoted to Gyrowetz, and, if any of the record companies fancy signing up the brilliant Collegiate Wind Ensemble, who I heard live in Dundee last week, perhaps we could have a CD of his *Harmoniemusik* too? BC

Haydn *Collection Complette des Quatuors: Œuvre 1 [Artaria]: Les Quatuors Opus 9* Quatuor Festetics 135' 30" (2 CDs in box) Arcana A911

The complete set of six op. 9 quartets (his first so-called 'real' string quartets) are here recorded on period instruments. The first one on the disc (No.4 in D minor - they are not recorded in numerical order), is one of his finest of the earlier quartets. The cadenza passage for first violin was perhaps a little long for my taste and, as the listening went on, I became aware of a certain sameness of tone quality, wishing for the occasional real pianissimo. These are competent, secure performances; but the quartet, with a somewhat modern approach to vibrato, did not always achieve the subtlety and elegance that should characterise a stylish period performance. This set is perhaps best summarised as a sound, useful recording using period instruments rather than being in period style.

Ian Graham-Jones

Wagenseil *6 quartetti per 3 violoncelli & contrabbasso o 2 viole, violoncello & contrabbasso* Piccolo Concerto Wien 97' 19 (2 CDs) Symphonia SY 99168-9

The view of Wagenseil as being another minor galant composer is exploded by this stunning record of his set of six quartets for three cellos and bass or, as marked on the manuscript copy, for two violas taking the upper parts. This ensemble performs

these works in both ways, giving an interesting timbral change. The textures are interesting as they are true quartet works, with the third cello having an independent part much of the time. They are all in four movements, with the minuet and trio movements in varying positions. There are, of course, typically galant movements, varied by spirited allegros and emotional slow movements, and the occasional fugue. The quartets receive stunning performances on period instruments by this ensemble, who are never afraid of a real pianissimo effect. On two CDs and with all repeats, they run for little over 45 minutes each, but the music and the quality of performance is well worth it.

Ian Graham-Jones

MISCELLANEOUS

Guitar Recital Kevin R. Gallagher classical guitar 62' 03" Naxos 8.554444 £ Music by F. de Milan, Narvaez, Dowland, Guereau, Murcia, Bach & Weiss

Guitarists have become rather wary of this repertory of late, probably because so many early music reviewers attack them for inauthenticity, so it takes a fair amount of courage to release such a programme now. However, this music can work well on the modern guitar and Gallagher has treated his material with great sensitivity. The pieces were originally for vihuela, baroque guitar (a very different animal from the modern instrument) and both renaissance and baroque lutes. He has made his own arrangements (even of those pieces which can be played straight from the original tablature with a minor retuning), which show imaginative use of the instrument, even if the techniques used are not all strictly authentic. His campanellas in the Narváez, for example, do not reflect the original fingerboard location of the music, but add lightness and clarity in keeping with the vihuela's timbre. He is clearly at home in the varied styles, and adds sparing but tasteful embellishments. The performances are thoroughly enjoyable - clean, crisp and assured, revealing a fine technique and great musicality. The heavier timbre of the guitar will not be to everyone's taste, but if you are not an early-music fundamentalist, this disc is worth a hearing.

Lynda Sayce

BAROQUE HISTORY

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Secular Music 389' 02" (5 CDs)
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Sacred Music 384' 58" (5 CDs)
Harmonia Mundi 2958001.05 £
Instrumental Music 390' 16" (5 CDs)
Harmonia Mundi 2958001.05 £

I'm a little puzzled whom these are aimed at. As a companion to a history of baroque music, they could be extremely useful. But the information that comes with them isn't substantial enough for that, and the format of CD booklet, even if the print is

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larger than usual, is a bit clinical. But as pure listening, it is at the ClassicFM level of excerpts rather than complete pieces. Considered at price-per-disc, they may be warrant a single £ in our price code, but the total outlay on each set is quite substantial. The recordings themselves are mostly extremely good; they provide pleasant listening round the house and perhaps the car (though for driving I prefer substantial pieces or else far more varied anthologies), and they include some music that would tempt me to search out more of the like. Teachers who know their subject well enough to start with could find them useful, and the natural emphasis from a French company on French music redresses the normal national bias. CB

VERITAS x 2

The following reissues from Virgin Veritas all comprise two discs in a standard jewel-case at the bargain price of one mid-price disc. Shorter forms of the numbers are given except for the first disc.

7243 5 61644 2 0 Bach: *Cantatas 51, 82a, 84, 199, 202, 209* Nancy Argenta, Ensemble Sonnerie, Monica Huggett (rec 1993) 119' 02"
61647 Bach: *Magnificat, Easter Oratorio + BWV 4, 11 & 50* Taverners, Parrott (rec 1990/94) 113' 41"
61650 Bach *Sonatas for vln & kbd BWV 1014-19, 1021, 1023* John Holloway, Davitt Moroney (rec 1988) 130' 58"
61653 Bach *French Suites BWV 812-813 + 818 & 819* Davitt Moroney (rec 1990) 144' 09"
61656 Handel *Water Music, Fireworks Music, Concerti grossi op. 3* Linde Consort, Cappella Coloniensis (rec 1983-4) 140' 47"
61659 Haydn *Paris Symphonies 82-87* OAE, Kuijken (rec 1989) 156' 36"
61662 Monteverdi *Vespers 1610 (+ 5 Vesper Psalms & Salve 1641)* Taverners, Parrott (rec 1982-4) 147' 50"
61665 Mozart *Mass in C minor K427, Coronation Mass K317, Missa Solemnis K. 337 (+ Sonata K336), Kyrie K341* Soloists, Kölner Kammerchor, Collegium Cartusianum, Peter Neumann (rec 1988-89) 114' 33"
61668 Vivaldi *Il cimento...op. 8 (+ RV 516, & 546)* Monica Huggett, Raglan Baroque Players, Nicholas Kraemer (rec 1988-89) 125'16"
61671 English and Italian Renaissance Madrigals (rec 1987, 1991) 126' 22"

Many of the recordings in this batch are outstanding, all are far more than adequate, and all can be bought with confidence that you are acquiring performances that are well-considered, well-played and stylish. I had only heard before the fours sets with which I had some involvement, so listening to this batch was a pleasant duty.

I am often asked to recommend a version of Monteverdi's 1610 *Vespers*. I usually say the Taverner one, though must confess that I know it from original its LP form rather than from any more recent reincarnation. I am glad to find that I have not been misleading people, though I am now less certain that the publisher made a mess of the order, despite Andrew Parrott bending

my ear on the subject this very morning: more on that in my review of Kurtzman next month. The performance is the benchmark one, and as a bonus there is another set of Vespers psalms. The Hilliard's madrigals sound a bit solid, with attempts at expression feeling imposed rather than springing from the music. The English disc has many of the well-known standards, but with the spice of early pronunciation; the Italian disc is more recondite.

All the Bach discs are excellent; Davitt Moroney's French Suites was a pleasant surprise (cf the concert review on p. 8). The beginning of the Holloway/Moroney violin sonata set confounds expectations by having organ continuo. Violinists seem to have become mellower of late, and the sound now seems a little harsh. Nancy Argenta makes excellent chamber music with Trio Sonnerie; the irrelevant cover picture made me wonder whether all 15th-century Netherlandish ladies had dirty fingernails. Even if you already have a first-rate *Magnificat*, the Taverner *Easter Oratorio* is worth having, especially coupled with *Christ lag in Todesbanden*: the Sinfonia is taken very slowly in an attempt to get the maximum expression; elsewhere there is no hanging around and the powerful matching of Luther and Bach works marvellously.

There is a petty but revealing error in the Handel set: Linde seems not to know that the Bärenreiter edition of op 3/3 is defective and the flautist plays Hudson's conjecture rather than what Handel must have written at the beginning of the third movement. Generally, this is my least favourite of the batch. With so many recordings of Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*, I suspect that most readers will have more than they need. But the set is worth having for op. 8/5-12 as well as RV 546 (vln & vlc in A) and RV 516 (2 vlns in G), and if by mistake you begin disc one at the beginning, I'm sure you will enjoy it.

I made the mistake of playing K337 immediately after K317: they are rather too similar, though I enjoyed K337 (which I hardly know) more than K317 (which I got to know well in my student days). Both are overshadowed by the Mass in C minor, simultaneously archaic and more modern. Finally, the Haydn is irresistible.

There must inevitably be a catch in these bargains, and as so often, the booklets are cut back to the bare minimum. There are basic notes, but no texts or translations. All these discs will have had them originally, so the editorial work will have been done and record companies usually have full rights on them. So why not either put them on the net or include them on the CD itself? Is that very expensive?

Finally, one must ask: with such fine recordings available so cheaply, who is going to pay for full-price discs from the next generation of performers? Early music has not yet lent itself to the hype of the child prodigy or the nonagenarian maestro. Can ability alone succeed, new gimmicks, or preferably new repertoire? CB

PS ON BODENSCHATZ

An interesting coincidence. The day after we sent the last issue, with its references to Bodenschatz's anthology of double-choir motets on page 3, to the printer, Andrew Parrott asked for help assembling some older-style music that Bach might have known music for a course he was taking, and mentioned that there was a list of the contents of Bodenschatz's *Florilegium Portense* in the first edition of Grove, a useful piece of information mentioned by neither of the Bach Dictionaries reviewed. Many of the pieces listed are available in modern editions, and this could be a good source for devising programmes for courses and concerts. Terry's *Bach Cantata Texts* lists the motet for each Sunday in Leipzig from a document of 1694. The list was dropped from later Groves; I checked my fourth edition, where the article on Bodenschatz at least refers back to this feature of the first, but *New Grove* does not acknowledge that its originator had such useful information. Once the online version of *New Grove* is up and running, perhaps they might add to their files the earlier editions, useful not just for access to information once thought valuable but as a way of showing changes of taste and attitude from the late 19th century through the 20th.

One use of a conductor not mentioned on page 1 is to control the audiences applause. If he holds his arms up at the end of a piece, often he will manage to create a suitable silence till he drops them – generally a futile gesture at the end of any large-scale piece that ends quietly at the Proms! It rarely works in the opera house when voice-fanciers wish to applaud an aria as the closing ritornello sounds, but perhaps that's what the ritornello is for.

A subscriber has recently bought the following Naxos discs in Paris. We look forward to seeing them here soon, but if you can't wait, he recommends contacting www.fnac.fr.

8.55456-7 Boismortier *Serenades chez Marie Leczinska* (CD1: *Fragments, Simphonies, Concerti* CD2: *Suites pour le clavecin et pour la flute*)

8.553296 Boismortier *Ballets de Villages*

8.554397-9 Lully *Les Grands Motets* (3 CDs)

8.553648 Lorenzani Motets

My apologies for a rather inconsequential review of *Music in Art* (p. 5). I read some of it just after the February issue went to the printer, but then it disappeared and only emerged after pages 1-22 had reached their final format. It had been caught up in the disorder of a room of our house that is being cleared for demolition to make space for an extension, which we hope will accommodate King's Music, Early Music Review and us rather more spaciously. Also for omitting Lynda Sayce's review of the English translation of Andrea Damiani's *Method for Renaissance Lute*. We had more material arriving as hard copy rather than by e-mail or on disc this month, and with EB's arm in plaster, I didn't have time to type everything.

CB

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