

Early Music

REVIEW

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Until I started reading their more self-conscious theories, I had always assumed that the musicologist was a sort of back-room boy for music and musicians. He ferretted away in libraries sifting for unknown music to extend our musical experience, edited it, investigated the appropriate conventions for performance, analysed it to assist the listener in understanding it, and wrote histories, biographies and musico-social studies to give the music some context. But as the discipline of musicology developed, and as it needed to acquire greater academic status, it became an end in itself, dissociated from performers and the listening public. So now musicologists mostly address each other, using a language that (not always deliberately) excludes outsiders.

These remarks were prompted by Nicholas Temperley's remark (in *Georgian Psalmody* 2, p. 2: see review on p. 5) that musicology is a specialised branch of history, not of music. He continues that one of its functions is to elucidate how old music was performed, but not how it should be performed. This seems odd to me. Where is the line drawn? Surely it is the musicologist's duty to tell performers when there is a wrong note in the edition they are using and try to persuade them to play the right one? (We now usually hear the right note at the end of bar 7 of the Minuet in Haydn's *Surprise* symphony, but we never did in my youth.) What about slurs? The Bärenreiter score of Handel op. 4/4 slurs the first two notes, though the sources don't: shouldn't playing the slur be discouraged? What about tempi? If there is known to be a distinct, even if not precise, significance in the choice of time signature (e.g. between 3/2, 3/4 & 3/8), surely that affects how the music should be performed today? How about the variability of rhythmic notation? How about conventions of scoring? There are degrees of certainty that the musicologist can give on all sorts of performing issues. Arrogant performers can ignore what the musicologists can tell him, inventive ones can adapt old music to their own needs. But isn't the musicologist neglecting one of his major functions if he does not argue how music should be performed today? That's what we pay him for!

BOOKS & MUSIC

Clifford Bartlett

GOTTSCALK AT LAMBACH

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

This is the more modest and detailed of the two manuscript studies reviewed this month. The subject is a scattered collection of loose leaves which over the last few years have been conceptually brought together and found to be from a 12th-century MS which was in use for three centuries then used for binding more up-to-date volumes. This volume concludes with a facsimile of what has so far been discovered arranged in the original order. Ordering the fragments isn't too much of a difficulty, since antiphonaries follow the church year; but identifying the scattered leaves requires considerable persistence, serendipity and visual acuity. The chants are indexed, and an appendix lists the items of the MS and related other sources according to their tonal indications. (One feature of the MS is its use of a rare type of tonary letters.) Amazingly, quite a lot is known about the main scribe, Gottschalk, who seems to have been librarian, teacher, scribe, author and artist and was a member of the Benedictine Abbey of Lambach in Austria, on the pre-autobahn road between Linz and Salzburg; the text is full of monastery names familiar from studies of Haydn sources. The fact that an incomplete MS is worthy of a whole book while similar complete MSS are not reminds me a bit of the parable of the Prodigal Son: the other MSS have always been with us, but rejoice for a MS that was lost and is now found! But the author needed to find out as much as possible about the odd pages in Yale while cataloguing them, so completing the task was sensible. She doesn't have much to say about the music of the MS. The neums can only be deciphered if there are more precisely-notated concordances; but since a whole chapter is devoted to *Quem non praevalent* and its many versions, surely the music could have been brought into the discussion, especially as liturgical drama is a well-cultivated field of research? The reproductions look a bit drab at first, but are clear to read. It would, though, have been nice to have had one page in colour, perhaps as frontispiece or on the jacket.

FLORENTINE LAUDE

The Florence Laudario: An Edition of Florence Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Banco Rari 18 Music edited by Blake Wilson, Texts Edited and Translated by Nello Barbieri. (*Recent Researches in the Music of the Middle Ages and Early Renaissance*, 29.) A-R Editions, 1995. cv + 138pp, \$75.00. ISBN 0 89579 321 0
Legenda Aurea: Laudes des Saints au Trecento italien La Reverdie Arcana A 304 70' 00"

First, my thanks to James Zychowicz of A-R Editions who, when I ordered the music to accompany the CD, very kindly sent me a review copy. It is an important edition, since previously it had not been realised that the MS had been excessively trimmed in the 16th or 17th century, to the extent that the top stave of each page was partially or completely removed. The MS was repaired soon after, but the music that was added to the gaps seems to have been invented to look nice rather than with any concern for the meaning of the symbols. Blake Wilson shows that the recopying was not based on any reliable source and falsifies the strophic structure. So previous editions and studies of the MS are unreliable. The previous complete transcription by Liuzzi (1934/5) is doubly unsatisfactory: apart from taking the reconstruction as correct, it saddles the music with an unhelpful mensural notation. So this is important for the study and performance of *laude*, restoring a major source. There is a lengthy introduction and separate edition of the texts, with English translations alongside them. The music is presented in black blobs, leaving it to the user to sort out his own rhythmic interpretation. There is just one problem: it is not very user-friendly to have the words of stanzas after the first a hundred pages away from the music. The layout leaves large amounts of space between each stave, so could not all the texts have been underlaid? Where there are too many verses, the music could have been printed twice. Admittedly, the editor would then have had to decide how to underlay the later stanzas, but he ought to be able to do a better job than a non-specialist singer. How it is done, though, may relate to decisions of rhythmicisation, and would involve the editor imposing more of his opinion on the non-mensural transcription.

It is difficult to know whether seeing the edition has affected my reaction to the recording. There is no overt clash, since Reverdie uses it as the basis for the half of the disc which is taken from the Florence MS; the rest comes from the other main source, the Cortona *laudario*. It is helpful to know the extent to which the MS gives any clues to rhythms; in fact, it doesn't. The performances have a somewhat hypnotic quality, often with a slightly plodding vocal melody accompanied by scurrying instruments in the background, with rhythmic movement generated by the accompaniment rather than by the melodies themselves. After writing 'plodding' I realised that the intent was probably to suggest processions; so the performers at least succeed in implying movement, though of a too-solid kind. I would have preferred more faith to have been put in the melodies, with less accompaniment: irrespective of theories of performance-practice, it sometimes gets in the way. But Reverdie's strong vision of the music comes through, and this successfully conveys one way of bringing the bare bones of the MSS to life.

ALAMIRE

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

Alamire is a familiar name to anyone with more than a casual interest in music at the beginning of the 17th century. Over the last two decades, thanks largely to the work of Herbert Kellman, his activities have become far clearer. Not so much a copyist as an employer of copyists, he can be associated with 51 MSS and 10 fragments. (In my review of the Naxos disc of Alamiric music in *EMR* 57, p. 21 I exaggerated the extent of Alamire's own copying.) This handsome and surprisingly cheap volume is a companion to an exhibition held last year at Leuven. It comprises nine essays and a catalogue of the MSS. The catalogue gives a bibliographic description, lists the miniatures and musical contents, and has a page or two of description and one or two pages of colour facsimile for each MS. Bibliographical references are in abbreviated form: it would have been useful if complete facsimiles or major editions of a MS had been quoted more fully on the page, especially since not everyone identifies a facsimile by the author of its preface. The key word to me for the facsimile of the Chigi Codex, for instance, is Garland, not Kellman. There is a complete index of individual pieces included in the MSS. This does not, however, list Alamire's *T'Andernaken*, which survives in two sources from out of his orbit; my lazy attempt in connection with a CD review (see p. 21) to check here which one specified crumhorns instead of moving a few feet to find Taruskin's edition showed a weakness. I remember it being mentioned, but there is no general index.

It is, of course, the facsimiles that first attract attention. It is not for nothing that this is published by an art specialist. The observant musician will notice that they are nearly all Kyries. That, of course, is because the opening page of a mass received the most elaborate decoration; but it is perhaps a pity that there are not a few more reproductions of normal pages: it would have been nice to have had a motet or two that could be sung complete. But I'm not going to complain: this is a magnificent book. The pictures should not distract you reading the text, which may whet your appetite for the forthcoming proceedings of the international colloquium on the Alamire MSS.

LUTE CONFERENCE

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

This needs either a vast review commenting on each of the 25 contributions or else a brief and enthusiastic commendation. I am happy to give it the latter. I have been dipping into it over the last month with continuing interest but can think of no way to summarise it. I might pick a quarrel with Douglas Alton Smith on his suggestion that the lute became

popular then unpopular on the strength of its identification with the Greek lyre: purely musical reasons seem perfectly adequate, at least for its decline, and probably for its rise too. The A4 format makes for quite a heavy tome, and it was as difficult to read in bed as the Alamire catalogue. But the page layout is sensible. A4 is, of course, too wide unless the print is very large; here, the text takes about two thirds of the width, leaving a column for side-notes, a system that could perhaps be used for other publications. The index (there is one, of names at least) would be easier to use if the blank space had been on the inner part of the page for both recto and verso. The black-and-white reproduction of illustrations within the text is good; some distinctive paintings showing lutes are given in colour at the beginning of the book. Whether the glued binding will endure heavy use remains to be seen. Anyone interested in the lute will need to buy a copy, and even if your French isn't fluent, there is a fair amount in English.

THE DEATH OF ORPHEUS

Stefano Landi *La morte d'Orfeo: Tragicommedia pastorale*, edited by Silvia Herzog (*Recent Researches in the Music of the Baroque Era*, 98) A-R Editions, 1999. xxxviii + 133pp, \$65.00 ISBN 0 89579 444 6

This is a sort of sequel to Monteverdi's better known story. Nothing is known about its function; the only source (a printed score of 1619) gives no clues. There may have been a separate libretto in existence a century ago, since the text printed by Solerti has a few minor differences. The score seems a bit dull compared with Monteverdi (though Orfeo's aria in III, 1 looks fun); but I thought that about Rossi's Orphic opera while editing it, then found it worked brilliantly in performance. The editorial introduction is devoted chiefly to stylistic matters, with only brief and rather vague notes on performance. I'd have suggested care in the use of a bass string instrument and recorders. I am also not entirely happy with the editing. One serious failing is that original clefs are not shown. The easiest way to identify the range of a part is by clef, and it can give further information: an edition of Monteverdi's *Orfeo* that suppressed original clefs would hide the evidence for transposing the infernal choruses. Comparing the facsimile of the first page of the 1619 score with the edition reveals two mistakes in the bass figures. It is regrettable that the notation of sharps and flats in the figuring is modernised: most players involved in music of the period think of \sharp = major, b = minor, so using \flat is substituting a different system. I'm not confident about the accuracy of the time signatures. A note to the aria for Orfeo mentioned above says that it is transcribed in $4/2$ because the rhythmic patterns would be awkward in $4/4$; but the original signature is C , not $4/4$, so the ritornello has no mensuration change. $3/2$ seems to be used for 3 . I suspect that the edition was first made some time ago and has been overtaken by a great care in these matters which mean more to performers than they used to. It is, however, good to have the work clearly printed, prefaced by the text set out as verse and translation.

VOICEBOX

Thirteen Mad Songs by Purcell and his contemporaries edited by Timothy Roberts. 2 vols. Voicebox, 1999. ISBN 1 898131 23 6 & 1 898131 24 4

John Blow *Twelve Songs* edited by Timothy Roberts. Voicebox, 1999. ISBN 1 898131 25 2

These are the first issues in a series, an offshoot of Fretwork with Bill Hunt and Julia Hodgson as general editors, intended to present user-friendly but musicologically sound editions of baroque vocal repertoire at reasonable prices. Leaflets are being sent out with this issue, so I need not give details of each volume. £9.75 is certainly a reasonable price, especially since each volume is self-sufficient for singer and accompanist provided that, if you add a cello or bass viol to lute, organ or harpsichord, both players will share – there are plenty of illustrations to show that to have been a common practice, and I imagine that lighting and spectacles were both less good then than now. This idea of presenting the music twice, once just for voice and bass as in the source, and once with the editor's idiomatic realisations is a good one. The mad-song genre flourished for about twenty years, starting with Purcell's *Bess of Bedlam*. They make extremely effective concert pieces, though are perhaps easier for a singer with a smaller voice who can let him- (or more usually her-) self go without the problem of sounding extreme yet having to keep the drama within the appropriate stylistic restraints. The repertoire is now quite well-known, thanks to recordings and concerts, although it has been difficult for the non-specialist to get access to the scores. So these editions need no recommendation. Those who know Blow's songs chiefly from *Amphion Anglicus* will be pleased to find that only five of the dozen songs are taken from the composer's own anthology. Reaction to Blow's songs has been variable, as the quotes in the introduction testify. His music can certainly be unpredictable, but the examples here are all worth singing. All the songs are given at original pitch for high voice; the main problem of transposition for lower voices is in adjusting the bass, but the effort might be worthwhile, since countertenors (let alone female altos and baritones) may well want to use these volumes.

THE BACH CHOIR?

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

The world is full of Bach Choirs. They have, of course, been essential for the rediscovery and popularisation of the vocal works of Bach, and they are essential in giving the generality of singers a chance to perform his music. But as I am sure all our readers will know, Andrew Parrott has taken up Joshua Rifkin's suggestion that Bach actually performed his 'choral' music with one voice to a part. So, in the modern sense of the term, no Bach 'choir' is essential. Early-music practitioners have got used to 'choir' meaning, in polychoral music, one group of singers and/or players with just one person on a part; it is strange that it has taken so long

to extend this meaning through into the late baroque. It is self-evident in Bach early cantatas, especially the polychoral *Gott ist mein König* BWV 71, though I must confess that (even in *EMR*) I was prepared to accept that Leipzig practice might have been different. I knew Rifkin arguments (and his recording of the B minor Mass), but had assumed from the failure of others to adopt the same course that someone somewhere had demolished them. In fact, they had been virtually ignored. As restated here (most of the material was presented in Andrew's recent articles in *Early Music* but is set out again with additional material and with admirable clarity), the arguments are utterly convincing.

There is a curious parallel with the reaction to Andrew's proposition that *Lauda Jerusalem* and *Magnificat* in Monteverdi's *Vespers* should be transposed. There was general disbelief among other performers and musicologists, but virtually no coherent arguments to the contrary; yet the idea has won almost universal acceptance, as Kurtzman's new book, reviewed on p. 9, testifies. The response to the Rifkin/Parrott articles by Christoph Wolff and Ton Koopman has been amazingly ineffectual.¹ It is not impossible that evidence or arguments might be found to counter the conclusions reached here; but they have not been produced yet.

This does not, of course, sound the knell for Bach Choirs. Just as with Monteverdi's *Vespers*, utterly unsuited for the choral-society approach, performances by larger forces are to be encouraged as beneficial for the singers, if less so for their audiences. There is a serious institutional problem in the propagation of soloist-only Bach performances: most concerts of Bach's vocal works are promoted by choirs. But there is something very fishy about using every scrap of evidence to play the right instruments in the right style and then ignore the evidence about singers. Yes, I know that Bach used boys and Andrew Parrott doesn't; but where now do you get 15-year-old boy soloists with the musical and technical skill to sing Bach's music?²

The book is a pleasure to read, fluently written and clearly set out with many illustrations and music examples. It includes in full the paper by Joshua Rifkin that first set this particular cat among the pigeons, along with other useful appendices. The appearance is good and the price affordable. Congratulations to all involved.

1. I happened to receive recently from Oxford UP in error a proof copy of Wolff's forthcoming *Johann Sebastian Bach: The Learned Musician*, which includes a conventional table of performers based on Bach's 1730 supplication with a foot- (or rather end-) note referring to his own article in *Early Music* which was part of the series of article on which the Parrott book is based. But he does not mention that his contribution represented just one side in an ongoing controversy which questioned his assumptions: it's a very minor point in the context of what seems otherwise to be a fine book (I'll write about it properly when it is published), but symptomatic of the tendency of main-stream scholars, save John Butt, to ignore the issue.

2. Since writing that, I have heard the recording of Brossard by the fourteen-year-old Cyrille Dubois of Caen (see p. 21), and there have been recordings of Bach with impressive German boys. English boys somehow seem to be trained to be too precious, and how many of them can make even an attempt at a trill?

TELEMANN CANTATAS

PRB's publication of Telemann's *Fortsetzung des Harmonischen Gottesdienstes*, his second set of chamber cantatas, requiring two instruments, voice and continuo, has now reached vol. 4 (PRB BOO3D; ISBN 1 56571 087 8; \$95.00). Of the ten cantatas here, five are for soprano, five for alto. Seven are scored for two oboes and continuo. One, exceptionally, has only one upper instrument, labelled *violetta* (presumably viola) and notated in the alto clef; another is for violin and cello/bassoon (or even another violin); one is for violin and corno da caccia or second violin. I have described the layout of the edition three times already, so need not repeat it again. Suffice to say that likely eventualities have been anticipated. The set includes a voice-piano copy as well as score, so is self-sufficient. It should be unnecessary to commend the music or the edition, but I haven't noticed as many programmes featuring the music as I would have expected.

PRACTICALL MUSICKE EDITIONS

I've just been sent a couple of examples of Maurice Rogers' series *Practicall Musicke Editions*, demonstrations that the quality of the cottage-industry publisher is far better than it used to be. The layout is good, with an extra loose sheet included to cover an unavoidable impossible page turn. The typeface looks professional, adequate editorial information is given and the presentation is neat. The examples comprise two versions of the *Duetto à Flauti dolci, ò à Viole da Gamba* from Telemann's *Der getreue Music-Meister*, PM 119 having it in alto clef (playable by bass or tenor viols) and PM 120 in treble, from which, in addition to the recorders mentioned by the composer, it can also be played by tenor or descant recorders or by treble viols. Each costs £3.00 for one copy, £5.00 for two; two players can read one perfectly well, but both may be needed for separate practise. Maurice has concentrated on music for viol (Moulinié, Jeffreys, Hilton, etc), with a few items for recorder. On the evidence of the Telemann, it's worth getting hold of his catalogue. Details from Maurice Rogers, 9 Ocklynge Avenue, Eastbourne, E. Sussex, BN21 2QD. tel. & fax: +44 (0)1323 734207; e-mail: mau-conni@ocklynge83.freemove.co.uk

MUSICA SCOTICA

Musica Scotica III: Chamber Music of Eighteenth-century Scotland edited by David Johnson. University of Glasgow Music Department Publications, 2000. xvi + 210pp, £35.00. ISBN 0 952 8212 3 0

This is a fine continuation of David Johnson's work on 18th-century Scottish music, following his *Music and Society in Lowland Scotland...* (1972) and his anthology *Scottish fiddle music...* (1984). It contains 17 pieces, mostly sonatas and trios for strings and continuo, featuring chiefly McGibbon, Oswald and Kelly. The succinct introduction explains why in the 17th century Scottish music is scant but why at least chamber music flourished in the 18th. It is, though, surely wrong to single out as specifically Scottish the view 'that

art music... is pretentious and expensive, snobbish and unnecessary': it can't just be the influence of expatriate Scots that creates such an ethos south of the border. The music is certainly worth publishing, though like any good anthology, it makes one wonder whether the major figures should have had sets of their work edited complete. In fact, the Kelly trio sonatas are available thus in facsimile – it was included in King's Music's first batch of publications, which recognises the incompetence of the bass figures by leaving them unchanged in the cellist's copy but correcting them for the keyboard player. So we feel a bit miffed that no mention is made of this publication, nor of the facsimile of the 1775 Minuets. The editor has a knack for pithy phrases: I like his remark (p. xiv) that Kelly 'seems never to have written a continuo figure in his life; he probably never ironed his shirts either; he was an aristocrat.' At least I figure my basses! One point is missed in the statement of editorial method (p. xiii): the modernisation of time-signatures. Must *Musica Scotica* follow *Music Britannica* in assuming that C has to be corrected to 4/4? The volume is in score only; but the advertising leaflet mentions offprints, so I hope these include parts. The music is tempting, so I hope players (and not just Scottish ones) will try it.

PSALMODIC CONFERENCE

Georgian Psalmody 2: The Interaction Between Urban and Rural Practice. Papers from the Second International Conference organised by the Colchester Institute edited by Christopher Turner. SG Publishing, 1999. xi + 107pp, £26.00. ISBN 0 9529336 3 2

Georgian Psalmody 2... Music Anthology edited by Sally Drage. SG Publishing, 1998. 44pp, £16.00. ISBN 0 9529336 2 4

The first conference was an interesting experience, with far more aggro than one normally expects at such gatherings. The opening talk by Nicholas Temperley addresses some of the issues that lay behind the tension, but they don't emerge in the papers. I expect the dissidents stayed away: a pity, since a distinctive feature of the first conference was the long nights spent a-singing with them. I didn't attend this conference: I'd been dropped from the organising body, and I think we had organised our holiday before we knew the dates. (Curiously, the actual year of the conferences is not at all obvious from the publications, so I can't work out what we did that summer.) The focus is away from the public perception of the repertoire as seen through the eyes of Thomas Hardy. They are refreshingly readable compared with most musicological conferences: the contributors are not cursed with the compulsion to turn a fact-finding paper into a discussion of general principles, and there is no vast body of previous literature to footnote. I particularly enjoyed the account of hymns in the *Little House* children's books of Laura Ingalls Wilder; Gillian Warson's paper brought the world of their hymn-centred culture to life. (*The Little House on the Prairie* is such a familiar title, but I'd no idea what sort of book it was.) James Forsyth shows how quickly the liturgical reforms reached Sydney: a surpliced choir sung chants by Tallis, Nares, Farrant and Spofforth and a Te

Deum by King at the consecration of Christ Church in 1845, and the surviving music from the choir over the next few decades is in that tradition. Christopher Turner provides a good article on barrel organs, and I was interested by Winifred Stokes on methodism and Georgian Psalmody. It made me reflect on what I defined as 'old Methodist' tunes in my youth: I included fusing tunes (e.g. *Lyngham* and *Cranbrook*) and also slightly florid tunes like *Sagina*; earlier florid tunes, though, like *Carey's* (no 2 of the anthology) didn't fit, but that might have been because I knew it from the more respectable surroundings of the *English Hymnal*, where it is called *Surrey*. (It was chosen for the funeral of the widow of my former music teacher a couple of years ago for Addison's fine versification of the 23rd Psalm: sadly, I found myself virtually playing an organ solo, since no-one knew it.) Two papers focus on the Isle of Man. Fenella Bazin manages to bring a young musician to life by describing his MS anthology. Francis Roads studies a group of 14 MSS from a village choir. Two general points struck me. If the MSS are too fragile to photocopy, surely they should in fact be placed on a photocopier immediately so that their content at least can be preserved in its present state. I am amazed at his suggestion that editions should be amended to conform to the expectation of classically trained musicians. It is, of course, often difficult to decide whether an odd note is a mistake or intentional (try as an example the double-bass 12 bars before the end of the Pavane in Warlock's *Capriol Suite*: should the B flats forming the bass to a D major chord be put up a third); but emending to conform to an irrelevant style is surely out of court.

The accompanying anthology which we produced for the first conference (and is still available) was intended to provide material for singing during the event. It is not clear whether the music publication for the second conference had so specific a purpose. It has the advantage of being type-set and edited in a uniform style by Sally Drage, and includes a wide range of styles. Some space seems to be wasted: the SATB version of *Carey's* isn't particularly Georgian, *Cranbrook* is no longer a novelty, and *Vital spark of heav'nly flame* is in Temperley's book. It adds a dimension to the papers and extends the quantity of Georgian psalmody available: it is good news that Sally Drage and Nicholas Temperley are to prepare a *Music Britannica* volume. SG publishing is also producing facsimiles; I'll write about one of them next month.

A passage that particularly struck me was Sally Drage on the dilemma of modern performance (p. 15), in that when the music was performed originally, the words meant something, but that for concert use, they may often be an embarrassment, so that extra 'musical' input (e.g. *fs* and *ps*) is added to compensate, ironically following the practice of *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, which included in some editions dynamics in the text. All the references to the loudness of earlier singers (there is one whose page number I didn't note about a singer sounding as if he meant to be heard across a field) suggest to me that dynamic variety was not part of the tradition, at least in the more remote areas

CZECH ORGANS

Karel Blazej Kopřiva *Organ Works*. Artthron, 1999. xviii + 31pp. ISMN M-9004000-2-4

Skvosty varhanni hudby starých českých mistrů (Jewels of Organ Music of Old Czech Masters). Revidovali Vratislav Belský a Petr Koukal. Artthron, 1998. xiii + 48pp. ISMN M-900-4000-1-7

I examined these volumes some weeks ago, and thought that I had written about them last month. But I can't see anything there, so must have confused intent with action – something I'm doing rather too often with correspondence of late. Both comprise two-stave organ music of the second half of the 18th century in what appear to be careful editions, nicely printed in upright (rather than the traditional organist's landscape) format. The introductions and editorial commentaries are in Czech, English and German. Kopřiva (1756-1785) was born a fortnight after Mozart but died six years before him. He was organist and music teacher in his native Citoliby in north-west Bohemia, and wrote mostly for the church; 12 symphonies and 8 organ concertos are no longer extant. The music, mostly fugues, has some slight oddities, but is attractive and worth playing. The anthology has greater variety in the types of piece and includes more items in the classical style. Composers include F. X. Brixi and Vanhal as well as lesser names. One of Kopřiva's pieces is also included: no. 7 (nos 7 & 8 are swapped in the commentary) is the same as no. 1 in the Kopřiva volume. The anthology is the better buy for a poor organist.

CLASSICAL INSTRUMENTAL

Edition Molinari has issued the first three of *Six Quartetto concertant per flauto, violino, alto, violoncello...* op. 27 (published as Haydn's in Paris in 1777) in one volume with score and parts (ISMN M-500062-078-5; DM 59.00). The existence of a score will make it easier to evaluate their authenticity: New Grove omits them, as far as I can see, though Hoboken takes the French edition at face value and includes them as II:G6, C8 & A4; vol. 2 will contain D16, Es15 & XIV:F1. They look pleasing enough; the flute part is clearly the leading one, but the accompanying trio isn't too subdued. The score looks neat, the parts are very easy on the eyes.

Three of J. C. Bach's op. 6 symphonies (c.1770) have been published by Doblinger in their *Diletto Musicale* series: nos. 2 in D (DM 1242), no. 4 in B flat (DM 1243) and 5 in E flat (DM 1244). The editor, Hanspeter Gmür, has recorded them for Naxos (though it seems not to have been issued yet). They are scored for strings and pairs of oboes and horns, except that in Nos. 2 & 4 the oboes change to flutes for the slow movements; presumably bassoon(s) play with the bass. The same editor is responsible for Vanhal's *Sinfonie in C* op. 7 (C9) of 1776, also for oboes, horns and strings. It is nice that the 'minor' classical repertoire is being published and recorded, but sad that otherwise there are still so few other performances.

INSTRUCTION BOOKS: LUTE & STRINGS

Lynda Sayce & Ian Graham-Jones

Andrea Damiani *Method for Renaissance Lute*. English translation by Doc Rossi. Ut Orpheus Edizioni, Bologna, 1999. £17 60,000

Decades into the early music revival, it is still fairly unusual to find lutenists who did not start on the guitar. To some extent this reflects the considerable difficulty of obtaining instruments, materials and satisfactory tuition, but one striking and surprising facet is that there is still relatively little modern didactic material for the lute. Several Renaissance lute tutors have been published in recent years, but most contain very little in the way of technique-building exercises, and tend to move very swiftly onto pieces replete with difficulties. Consequently there are many amateurs who have been playing for years who have made little technical progress, and student lutenists arrive at – or even graduate from – music college with an inadequate and patchy technique which would be inconceivable on other instruments. The Lute Society has recently begun to address the problem of the poor availability of easy, graded study material, but there is still a large void to be filled.

This tutor, by one of the leading Italian players, has been available in Italian for a year or so, and has gained the support of many teachers for its thorough and detailed approach to the critical early stages of learning the instrument; so this English translation is particularly welcome in enabling a wider usage of the book. Damiani's text is clearly aimed at the intelligent, musically literate adult; a perfectly reasonable assumption, since the vast majority of beginner lutenists are adults coming to the lute as a second instrument, often from the guitar. He assumes a knowledge of staff notation, but starts from scratch with just about everything else, including those vital stages which the other tutors all but ignore. There is a short but useful and carefully written section on holding the lute. I felt there was room here for one or two other options, such as using a strap, but the common pitfalls are pointed out thoroughly, and most heartening of all, Damiani does not merely dictate; he explains clearly *why* one should or should not do a particular action. The all-important reasoning is usually all that most adults need to devote time and energy to acquiring a good technique; the absence of it can make short-cuts appear attractive.

Most useful of all are the extended and detailed sections on acquiring the foundations of good right- and left-handed techniques, which all the other tutors either tackle inadequately or not at all. The book teaches the basic 16th-century 'thumb-inside' technique, but there is a section on the historical development of right-hand technique, which addresses some late fingering solutions. The text is very thoroughly and extremely carefully written; so much so

that it really requires repeated reading and much careful thought. It is supported by well-conceived line drawings. Every significant point is presented clearly, but many are covered so concisely that they are easily missed on a first reading. This is definitely a book for the thoughtful, thorough student.

It is more systematic than most of its rivals, beginning with single-line exercises in considerable detail, encompassing shifting techniques and using the whole fingerboard. Two-part polyphony and its attendant difficulties follow, then three-part textures. In each case, the various textures one will encounter are all described, and their technical challenges covered in detail. Each stage is rigorously separated and technique explored to quite a high level within these limits. There are copious amounts of practice material, most of which has been specially written, or chosen with rigorous care from the existing historical repertory. One does not find 'easy' tunes with four-part chords thrown in in chapter one, nor are there tiny fragments of pieces, chopped down because the subsequent passages were too difficult to include. It is not a repertory anthology, but the later selections, covering more difficult techniques, have repertory lists indicating suitable follow-up pieces.

There are several noteworthy points among its many strengths. The text is written from the Renaissance musical viewpoint, so the student is introduced to such concepts as fingerings related to musical stresses, ornamentation and division playing, improvisation, modes, rhetoric, and basic musical structures such as the principal grounds and dance forms; most are introduced early, as befits their fundamental role in the repertory. There is a valuable section on ornamentation, including quotations from many 16th- and 17th-century writers. A chapter on counterpoint analyses some early tablature examples and also gives valuable advice on constructing one's own.

Many practical matters have been addressed in some detail, Italian and French tablatures are introduced simultaneously, and though the early exercises are all in French, introducing the important Italian system early on should prevent the all-too-common fluency gap whereby even quite advanced students fluent in French tablature can read only haltingly in Italian. Many exercises are presented in parallel staff notation and tablature, so the student never loses sight of what notes he is actually producing, and gains a clearer insight into counterpoint than the tablature can provide. A section discusses the technical transition from guitar to lute, a common situation neglected in other tutors. Also unique and valuable is an emphasis on ergonomic use of the body, avoiding both hand strain and damaging posture. There is an extensive section on scales, in both one

and two voices, and the tutor concludes with a discussion of temperaments, where the emphasis is on the practicalities – the effects they produce, and how to set your strings and frets so as to obtain them.

The publication of this book was a significant event in the lute world, and its availability in English can only enhance its usefulness. The translation, by Doc Rossi, is fluent and accurate, though compulsive proof-readers should be warned that there is no distinction between principal/principle and practice/practise. It is full of admirable good sense, and penetrating insights. I found myself disagreeing with Damiani on only one point: he advocates beginning with an octave-strung six-course lute. Whilst this is certainly the correct instrument for the repertory and style which he is covering, and also the cheapest and apparently simplest lute, I feel that the octave stringing is best avoided by beginners as it complicates tuning and the touch for both hands. However, one has to learn to handle it sometime, and one could not wish for a better guide. *Lynda Sayce*

Judy Tarling *Baroque String Playing for ingenious learners*. Corda Music, 2000. xii + 296pp (pb), £25, incl. CD ISBN 0 9528220 1 6

For any string player who intends to perform 17th- and 18th-century repertoire this new publication, the ingenious title of which comes from the 1731 treatise of Prelleur, is indispensable. For the violinist there was until now only David Boyden's mammoth *The History of Violin Playing from its origins to 1761* (Oxford UP, 1965) and the more up-to-date general books on baroque performance practice, such as Mary Cyr's useful *Performing Baroque Music* (Scolar Press, 1992). I must confess that Boyden has remained unread on my shelf for many a year, partly because of the awful little vinyl disc of illustrations played by Alan Loveday, where there is virtually no difference in the playing style of baroque and modern violins apart from the semitone pitch difference and a weedier sound! I remember wondering when I first read the book (probably about 1970) whether Boyden had any idea of what stylish baroque violin playing was really about, in spite of the detailed contents of the 500 or so pages.

Judy Tarling's book is essentially a practical, comprehensive, yet easily accessible guide from someone with a wealth of experience of baroque performance, and it provides a valuable source of reference both for the string player new to baroque style and performance and for the experienced. It deals not only with the solo violin but also ensemble and orchestral performance, and has helpful sections for the viola (what else can be said about the baroque viola?) and the double bass, as well as continuo performance and interpretation of recitatives, and thus is a book for all string players, not just the violinist.

It is sensibly arranged by starting with general principles of baroque rhetoric and how to communicate it through the violin by articulation, dynamics, tempo and ornamentation,

before dealing with the technical points. It then moves on to national styles and concludes with chapters on pitch and temperament, the bass continuo playing and the viola, with a final section on the historical development of the instruments, and some very useful hints on playing from facsimile.

The author backs up every point that she makes with historical evidence, quoting liberally from the early treatises from Ganassi through to Leopold Mozart and Tartini, in translation. Music examples, some in facsimile, some computer set, illustrate every point. Readers will have to note carefully the many facsimile examples using French violin clef, and my reading of this clef has considerable improved over the last few days because of this! It is unfortunate that the computer-set examples, which I understand used the Sibelius program, could not satisfactorily be imported into the text, and appear somewhat crude by today's standards, with jagged beams and ill-positioned slurs. (This is something that needs to be urgently addressed by the Sibelius team, as it has proved a fundamental weakness of a generally excellent music-notation program). The facsimile examples are so much gentler on the eye, though requiring a little more effort from the brain at times.

During the course of discussion, case studies, such as a Corelli slow movement, the opening of an unaccompanied Bach Partita, and the first section of the overture to *Dido and Aeneas*, are analysed in detail, which is an invaluable approach. One could only wish that some of these had been recorded on the CD, which comprises a useful collection of nearly all 17th century solo and ensemble music taken from existing Hyperion recordings.

Judy Tarling has deliberately (and rightly, I feel) not been dogmatic in discussing the thorny problem of note values in French overtures, perhaps the most problematical of forms for the baroque ensemble player to interpret, as ideas on these seemingly change every decade. I would, however, have welcomed a few more examples of the different types of French overture and hints on performing these.

The production is in A4 format, with the CD attached to the inside back cover. This is such a valuable and useful book that I would have willingly paid more for a hardback version. It is available from Corda Music Publications, 183 Beech Road, St. Albans, Herts, AL3 5AN (01727 852752), or you may collect direct from Judy if you are in the vicinity of Heathfield, East Sussex (01435 830839). *Ian Graham-Jones*

Ian offered this review the day my copy arrived; so with rather too much to read and write (it is the next item in the queue), I gratefully accepted his suggestion that we print what he was writing for the Southern Early Music Forum Newsletter. I gather that Judy Tarling would also welcome my comments, so I may come back to it next month: what I have read so far seems spot on, and the book is very good value, especially with the CD. I'm puzzled at the poor quality of the Sibelius output: one would think it was a different programme from the one we used for the Oxford UP Messiah. CB

KURTZMAN'S VESPERS III

Clifford Bartlett

Jeffrey Kurtzman *The Monteverdi Vespers of 1610: music, context, performance*. Oxford UP, 1999. xix + 603pp, £55.00. ISBN 0 19 816409 2

This is the third and last instalment of Kurtzman/OUP's publication of the 1610 *Vespers*: I wrote about his edition in *EMR* 51 and the commentary/continuo part in *EMR* 55. I have anticipated it eagerly. Some of it matches expectations, but there are also some disappointments.

The subtitle does not reflect the order of the three sections of the book. 'Context' comes first. The opening chapter 'Sources, Controversies, and Speculations' should be read by anyone interested in the work and by all who conduct it. It surveys previous editions and studies (including notes that accompany recordings, which scholars often ignore) and gives the basic facts about the origin of the work. A quirk that impinges in various places through the book is the assumption that the Magnificat a6 is an integral part of the *Vespers*, and in the very thorough list of recordings in Appendix D notes explicitly 'Magnificat a6 not included'; yet there is no reason to include it on a recording with instruments, and the discography does not list separate recordings of it.¹ (I first heard it around 1960 as the sound track of a French film – Godard, perhaps: can anyone tell me which?) There is one embarrassing slip: not even the San Marco calendar was so odd as to celebrate the Ascension four days before 19 August: a slip for Assumption (p. 53).

The next chapter discusses the vespers service and the antiphon problem. As is now well-known, it is virtually impossible to match chant antiphons with the modality of polyphonic settings: the attempts I made for some of the offices in my *Liturgical guide* make that clear. Kurtzman shows that this problem is not confined to the 1610 *Vespers*. He offers various suggestions, the most fruitful being the implication that modern scholarship is rather too pedantic about the strict observance of liturgical practice. I suspect that our difficulty is in trying to integrate Monteverdi's music too closely into the liturgy. We might extend the antiphon substitute idea and think of the whole work as a substitute for the liturgical activity. We don't, of course, know where the *Vespers* were performed. But it is quite likely that the musicians (almost certainly different from the singers who regularly sung chants and *stile antico* polyphony) were placed in rear or side balconies separate from the chancel; the liturgical vespers took place there, while the concerted music, performed in parallel, was not perceived as being part of the liturgical proceedings. (A modern concert performance with chant has precisely the opposite effect.) Monteverdi, of course, subverts that by his use of *cantus firmi*, but intellectually rather than practically.

Two chapters give detailed information about the history of vespers polyphony in the 16th and in the first two decades of the 17th century. The first of these can be skipped by the non-specialist; the second has useful illustrations of contemporary style, though it is a pity that it is not integrated more with the following section. More could perhaps have been said about when and why liturgical texts are set in a different way from less specific motets; I doubt, for instance, whether anyone studying Giovanni Gabrieli's works would feel that his Magnificats were a distinct category. Reading 'seventeenth century' and 'late Cinquecento' within ten words makes them seem much further apart than they are (p. 112).

The 160 pages devoted to 'The Music' disappointed me enormously. The author stays firmly within academic mode. There is a lot about chords, harmonic progressions and scale passages, but it is short on pin-pointing any of the reasons why this is probably the most popular choral (to beg a question) work earlier than Bach's Passions. I am puzzled why he is so concerned about what he calls 'functional harmony' (or, more explicitly, 'functional cadential harmony'). Mountains seem to be made out of mole-hills here. It hardly needs saying that there are problems in fitting *cantus firmus* settings to dominant-tonic cadences: what is missing is a comparison between Monteverdi's way of dealing with them and those of earlier and contemporary composers; the wealth of settings mentioned in the historical chapters is not called upon. The melodic analysis is too concerned with modality. *Nigra sum* may 'begin and end with a G major triad, defining a *finalis* of G' (p. 311 – note the terminological mix of major and *finalis*); but the interesting feature to the listener is not the modality *per se* but the fact that the voice enters so low in its compass. For a monody to start on the fifth of the tonic chord is not unusual, but for it to start a fourth below the tonic rather than a fifth above is striking (cf *Audi coelum*). Is it fanciful to imagine a sultry, sexy (to translate *formosa* a little freely) Queen of Sheba quietly enticing King Solomon and the listener? Yes, I know that it is sung by a tenor; despite Kurtzman's statements that solo motets are often described as being for soprano or tenor, the fact that this is given to tenor, *Pulchra es* to sopranos, seems a sign of intent. This is the opening of the motet and the three Ds on 'Nigra sum' are its first musical statement, and a meaningful one: how can anyone write a whole chapter on it and not mention it?

There is a lot about harmony, but not enough about the clarity of Monteverdi's handling of chords. I happened to play at a weekend workshop on Gagliano's *La Dafne* last summer. Written in 1608, its harmonic control seemed weak (or was not on Gagliano's agenda) compared with that of Monteverdi in *Orfeo* (1607) and the *Vespers*. To

describe it practically, I had to think very hard and play awkward progressions to avoid blatant consecutives; in Monteverdi, that is never a problem. Moving on thirty or so years, one way to distinguish the non-Monteverdian contributions to *Poppea* is that they cannot be figured simply in the way that genuine Monteverdi can.

As I have frequently mentioned in CD reviews, what is particularly characteristic of Monteverdi is the way in which he gives life to the words, taking the essence of their sound, shape, accent, colour and meaning and providing music that illuminates them. This whole aspect, a vital part of 'The Music' is absent – truly *Hamlet* without the Prince. I suspect that those without a professional academic interest will skip straight from chapter 1 to part III: 'Performance Practice'.

The *Vespers* is an ideal work on which to base a discussion on the performance of early-17th-century music, partly because of the wide variety of styles that it encompasses, partly because it is the work of the period that is most widely performed. This is a valiant attempt to bring vast quantities of early evidence to bear on the multifold problems. Not all topics are covered conclusively, and I am not always convinced by the author's recommendations. In particular, I think that he probably encourages twopenny-coloured scorings rather than the penny-plain style which the puritan streak in me prefers. So read to be stimulated. But this part of the book is extremely valuable, summarising research and making provocative suggestions.

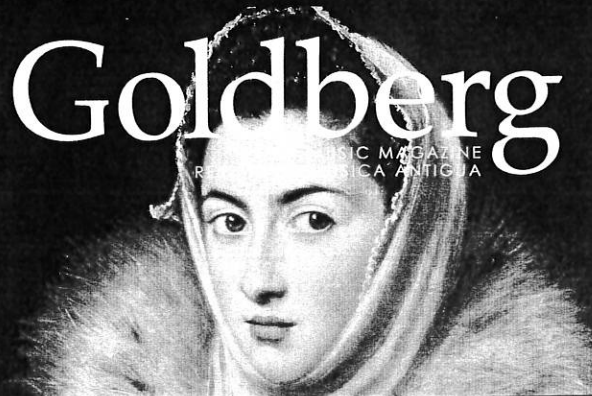
1. The paragraph on the King's Music edition (p. 36) is most curious in its comments relating to the Magnificat a6. I take the word 'omitted' to imply criticism for its absence from the edition, though am later in the same paragraph praised for having edited it separately so providing, for the first time since Malipiero, the complete Vesper music of the 1610 print. But there were several separate editions of the Magnificat a6 available before 1990, and there was no point in adding to the weight of a score of the full *Vespers* with instruments by including an extra 21 (KM) or 56 pages (OUP, allowing for two pitches) to make it even more uncomfortable to hold. [To digress, Emma Kirkby phoned me recently to order a vocal score of my OUP *Messiah*, but said she would never use it because the format and weight was bad for vocal posture. *Messiah* is 40g lighter than the *Vespers*.] He mentions no edition of the whole *Vespers* available in a version for performance without instruments, omitting the opening response and the Sonata and substituting the Magnificat a6 for the usual setting; King's Music has, in fact, a master copy set out thus (prepared for Robert Howarth), but we seem never to have advertised it.

Andrew Parrott recently reminded me that my concern about the key sequence if *Lauda Jerusalem* was transposed down a fourth was irrelevant if the Sonata (which follows *Lauda* in the 1610 edition) was moved to be the antiphon substitute after the Magnificat so that an instrumental piece in an appropriate key can follow *Lauda*, avoiding the direct move from E to G. What worries me about the various attempts to change the 1610 printed order is the failure of those who have addressed the problem to reach a consensus; so I am inclined to accept the unusually precise printed order until there is a self-evident reason for changing it. Our knowledge of the liturgy is inadequate to invalidate the specific evidence of the print, and we do not know how closely paraliturgical musical events had to reflect the prescribed office. The publisher might have lost instructions as to where to print the motets and imposed his own system, but I would have thought it far more likely that he would have placed them together at the end unless he had received explicit instructions from the composer or editor. (We have no idea whether the composer or an assistant assembled the copy that the printer received.)

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ITALIAN PUBLICATIONS

Barbara Gogolick Sachs

Recercar Vol. IX – 1997, 302pp; Vol. X – 1998, 390pp. Lucca: LIM Editrice, each £it. 45,000. ISBN 88 7096 060 9 and 88 7096 272 5

As usual, issues of the Libreria Italiana Musicale's 'journal for the study and practice of early music' appear long after the date on the cover and are well worth waiting for. The studies, 'on Italian music and musical culture or on the musical relations between Italy and other countries from the 15th century to the first half of the 19th', are mostly in Italian or English (with summaries in English or Italian), though texts in German, French and Spanish are considered. The 1997 and 1998 issues are much longer than previous ones, and articles vary in length from 10 to 70 pages. No other journal presents such in-depth articles on a broad spectrum of early music.

Vol. IX includes three studies of interest to violinists: 'Divorce, dismissal, but no disgrace: Biagio Marini's career revisited' in which Roark Miller assembles some new 'scandalous tidbits' which help make some order in the previously known, contradictory, biographical information; Paolo Peretti, in 'Le sonate per violino e basso continuo di Aldebrando Subissati *sonator famosissimo* (Fossombrone 1606-1677)', gives many musical examples and the incipits and other details of 19 sonatas from a possibly autograph manuscript; and Mimmo Peruffo, in a long study on 'Italian violin strings in the 18th and 19th centuries: typologies, manufacturing techniques and principles of stringing' offers conclusions which argue against the type of strings used for baroque instruments today.

Nicholaas Waanders, in 'The restoration of pipe organs: some reflections on theory and approach' shows how many profound decisions are involved. Preserving the original instrument while restoring it functionally are obviously frequently in such opposition that the historic parts must be stored somewhere else; even more problematic are: the question of treating a unique object by analogy to different ones; interpreting the language of the perplexing documents we may have about a particular instrument; and assuring the reversibility of the interventions.

A study on the *genus humile* of the lullaby, 'Fare la ninnananna: Das Wiegenlied als volkstümlicher Topos in der italienischen Kunstmusik des 17. Jahrhunderts' is by Joachim Steinheuer. The Topos, sometimes using much older texts, occurred from the first decades of the 1600s, in sacred as well as secular contexts, and eventually found its way into Venetian opera. Other articles concern the Teatro Del Fondo di Separazione in Naples between 1809 and 1840; Bellini's *Norma*; 'Lorenzo Tracetti, alias Lorenzino,

suonatore di liuto'; an Umbrian family of organ builders, the Caterinozzi; and a Venetian fortepiano by Luigi Hoffer from the end of the 1700s or the beginning of the 1800s.

Vol. X is very long, almost exclusively in English, and dedicated to Nino Pirrotta (1908-1998). He is remembered by Pierluigi Petrobelli, Elena Povoledo, Fabrizio Della Seta, Jean Duron, and Graham Dixon. John Nádas discusses Simone Prodenzani (ca. 1355-1440), who revealed his familiarity with a repertory of musical works from northern Italy in the second book (the *Mundus placitus*) of his sequence of 186 sonnets on an imaginary society, *Il Saporetto*. Pedro Memelsdorff also cites Prodenzani for evidence in his examination of a motet intabulation from the Faenza Codex, which he analyses in connection with Pirrotta's work on Ciconia. Blake Wilson's 'Song collections in Renaissance Florence: the *cantasi come* tradition and its manuscript sources' undertakes to follow Pirrotta in comprehending this rich practice by examining sources from 1380-1430, from 1430-1500, and from the laude from the time of Savonarola to Serafino Razzi. Bojan Dujic traces hypothetical literary and compositional influences in 'Palestrina, Willaert, Arcadelt and the art of imitation', noting similarities in the settings of Petrarch's *Amor, Fortuna et la mia mente schiva*. Pirrotta also inspired Donna Cardamone and Margaret Murata: the former, in 'A Colorful Bouquet of Arie Napolitane', to study and transcribe the cantus and tenor parts (the bass is lost) of arias attached to a miscellaneous print of 1537-8; the latter to compare four published versions of Pietro Cesti's aria *Intorno all'idol mio* as it has come down to us from Burney (1789) to Parisotti (1885), and as it can be heard on a 1992 Decca recording sung by Cecilia Bartoli. Franco Piperno, a former pupil of Pirrotta, contributes 'Musiche in commedia e intermedi alla corte di Guidubaldo II Della Rovere duca di Urbino', indicating untapped documentation on musical and theatrical activity in Renaissance courts other than the Florentine. The summary in English does not even begin to indicate the amount of information given in the article, which in turn is only a fraction of what Piperno will eventually publish about the age of Guidubaldo II (1514-1574).

The historical relations between Commedia dell'arte and opera in Venice and Mantua (Ferdinando Carlo Gonzaga was the most important patron of Venetian opera) between 1675 and 1710, including the rivalry and crises of theatres and troupes, and the military and political events of the time, is described by Eleanor Selfridge-Field in 'La guerra de' comici: Mantuan comedy and Venetian opera in ca. 1700'. Pirrotta is acknowledged to have hinted at the correspondences between the genres. Claudio Annibale contributes a short theoretical article in English, 'Towards a theory of

musical patronage in the Renaissance and Baroque: the perspective from anthropology and semiotics' challenging Howard M. Brown's view that it is difficult to demonstrate the relationships between types of music and society; an approach concentrating more on the music and the artistic sensibility of the patrons than on contracts, thus closing the gap between music history and analysis.


16th-century documents, including a ceramic plate (ca. 1520) in the Victoria and Albert Museum, confirm a hypothesis about the rarely investigated practice of having one (usually high) voice sing to organ accompaniment, according to Arnaldo Morelli's study '*Cantare sull'organo*: an unrecognized practice'. It is not clear, as claimed, that the dog in the scene is actually offering musical criticism by 'howling ... on the organist's left' but the frottola shown does suggest a distinction between performing diminutions and singing a very simple part. Morelli recalls Pirrotta's warning that until we reconstruct the music of the past we cannot begin to write about its history.


A thorough, technical, and amply illustrated article on 'The acoustics of Italian opera houses and auditoriums (ca. 1450-1900)' by Patrizio Barbieri is the longest study presented. The volume concludes with contributions from Danilo Costantini on documented transposition mechanisms in 16th-century keyboard instruments and Norbert Dubowy on 'Partenio's *Flavio*: thoughts on a recently discovered opera score' [he found two acts of *Flavio Cuniberto*, performed in 1682, miscatalogued, in Vienna].

Edizioni Moderne di Musica Antica - sei letture critiche edited by Marina Toffetti. LIM Editrice, 1997. x + 200pp, £150, ISBN 88 86765 03 7

This miscellaneous collection of studies by the participants in a seminar at the Scuola di Paleografia e Filologia Musicale in Cremona in 1994-5 illustrates the problems encountered by musicologists in reconstructing and transcribing early music, with examples from the first polyphony to Caccini's *Amarilli*. Although it does this by comparing various editions of each musical example, the studies are not intended as critical reviews of the editions discussed. It does not presume musicological expertise in the reader, but it must be admitted that no general reader would be presented with such unresolvable dilemmas of transcription. Each study follows the same procedure (in case the reader wants to compare the studies in themselves, as the subject of the investigation!) and contains facsimiles and a basic bibliography. The music used for the purpose is from (1) the 12th-century polyphony of Saint Martial and the Calixtinus codex; (2) three and four-part organum (Perotinus?) ca. 1200 from Notre-Dame; (3) an anonymous 13th-century motet from the Montpellier Codex; (4) Landini's *Poi che da te mi convien partir via*; (5) Filippotto da Caserta's Ballade *Par les bons Gedeon*; and (6) Caccini's *Amarilli mia bella*.

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Martin Renshaw

Never was a festival more aptly named – ‘crazy days’ indeed! This mid-winter festival was in fact the sixth so-called, but it was the first to be held for three instead of two days and the first ‘baroque’ one. Although the statistics are impressive – over 200 events (including 171 paying concerts) with over 90,000 tickets sold and a budget of over nine million francs – the atmosphere in the conference complex and the excitement of the public have to be experienced to be understood. A poll two years ago revealed that nearly half the tickets were purchased by people who had never been to a formal paying concert before, and indeed the founding idea of René Martin (a former jazz drummer who was converted to classical music by the quartets of Bartok) has been to introduce people to music using a recipe of high-quality, generally short concerts and an informal atmosphere.

More statistics: to provide for recitals (and an excellent backdrop for the other concerts in the hall), one new 18-stop organ built by Bernard Aubertin was brought in on its way from Burgundy to Japan and placed in the largest hall, the 2000-seater concert/opera hall, with a tuner to look after it; 14 other small organs were hired for rehearsals and concerts, along with 21 harpsichords. In addition, the Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra brought along four harpsichords and a tuner, and La Petite Bande also brought their own harpsichord and tuner. A total of nine tuners serviced the remaining 35 instruments. Three of these were French, two German, two English and two ‘Franglais’; two of the tuners brought their own-made harpsichords. This team worked 18 hours a day for four days, organised into four basic teams, each of which provided the instruments for two of the concert halls from an adjoining dedicated tuning/maintenance room. (Actually it was more complicated than this because of rehearsals during the Thursday before the festival and for the first two days of the festival, and because the musicians/ensembles/orchestras themselves performed at various times in different rooms throughout the complex, and on a public ‘bandstand’ in the main concourse. Five full-time ‘porters’ helped to ease what might have been a nightmarish logistical puzzle...) It must be said that René Martin fully appreciated the hard work these tuners did, and it’s pleasant to recall a notice in the adjoining hotel which indicated the way to a permanent buffet-restaurant which ran throughout the festival for (in this order) ‘soloists, tuners and conductors’ – though one must add that finding any time to eat after a very early breakfast was very difficult; I lost nearly three kilos during six days’ work, and I am sure I was not the only person to do so... One weary tuner was heard to refer to the Café Zimmermann (named, like all the concert rooms, after Bach’s friends and contemporaries) as the ‘Café Zuckermann’.

Every performer or ensemble was asked in advance which type of harpsichord or organ they would prefer to use and at which pitch and temperament. Inevitably there were some who did not reply in advance and there were some who could not be given exactly the instrument they may have wanted. The festival, indeed, very clearly showed how few Germanic harpsichords are actually available for hire. We decided that the default pitch and temperament would be Valotti at 415 Hz., as these were the settings most in demand. It became clear that the French have for some years, thanks to Asselin’s book, been labouring under the delusion that a perfect-fifth tuning descending from C is Valotti’s (some players even asked for ‘Valotti from C’) whereas all we British (and other well-informed races) know perfectly well that this is Thomas Young’s temperament! Some performers asked for equal temperament (at 440 or 415) and one even demanded a harpsichord at 397 Hz! There were a few requests for Werkmeister III, and some performers (Davitt Moroney, for example) chose to tune for themselves. Fortunately, these latter were in a small minority, because in the smaller concert halls there was normally a concert every 90 minutes (from 9am to midnight on the Saturday, the other days being slightly shorter), so tuning was usually done in the preparation rooms for the concert-after-the-next, the instruments for the next concert being placed in their concert room to acclimatise themselves during the current concert, and any final adjustments had to be done as soon as the previous concert could be cleared and before a very short warm-up for the next – so tuners had to work quickly and on instruments which they had taken care to prepare thoroughly. The fact that the festival went with scarcely a hitch is a tremendous tribute to the enthusiasm and – above all – intelligence and expertise of the whole tuning team: Philippe Humeau and Anthony Sidey, with Laurent Soumagnac and Nicholas Toussaint, Karl-Friedrich Wieneke and Rainer Thiemann, Malcolm Greenhalgh and Robert Howarth.

I was in charge of planning the logistics for René Martin, and tuned for all the concerts in the 2000-seater hall and in the four rehearsal places outside the complex – and even found time to sing in the St John Passion; but actually once the basic strategy was worked out, it was really only a matter of talking through with each team what had to be done and then letting them get on with it, keeping in touch by mobile phone or by running the several hundred metres around the concert halls as and when time allowed.

Thirty-five concerts were recorded for radio or television, and you became used to finding a camera peering over your shoulder as you tuned, or seeing a gang of porters being

pursued through the crowds by a television crew, or being waylaid for a spontaneous interview (in French, of course) by a radio reporter. The last concert in the large concert hall was taken live by Arte TV, a Franco-German channel; during this there was a pre-recorded interval talk by Davitt Moroney which lasted 4 minutes 40 seconds, during which time a harpsichord had to be taken out over a camera railway line and an organ moved into place over high platforms, connected and checked – we rehearsed these moves and did the exchange and a tuning check in 2 minutes 30 seconds during the actual transmission.

Having so many instruments together in one complex made for interesting and revealing comparisons between them. At one level, the most basic perhaps, it was quickly obvious that some harpsichords had either poor voicing or unreliable actions or (in two instances) structural problems and (in another) a very distressing propensity to breaking strings for no apparent reason; some organs had electric blowers that were very much noisier than others and so not much use for recorded concerts. But just as importantly, some instruments took much longer than others to tune: in the case of organs, usually because their pipework was placed where it was either difficult to find or reach or was not logically set out. Two organs were not much used because of these problems and because they were heavy, as well as having separate blowers and wind-trunks. Some harpsichords had tuning pins that were tight or illogically laid out in the bass, and one (belonging to a soloist) was in such bad mechanical condition that I replaced it with a better one just before a TV recording. When time is so much at a premium, anything that is working less than perfectly becomes a real nuisance, so as soon as the instruments arrived on the Wednesday before the festival they were all carefully tested and evaluated. In the end, one organ and one harpsichord were not used at all, and we could probably have managed with two fewer organs and perhaps two fewer harpsichords than we actually had at our disposal – not, I suggest, a large safety margin in the circumstances.

At the end of the third and last day, a huge buffet supper was put on for everyone involved. Someone remarked that a well-placed bomb would have wiped out much of European early music, and with some truth. Here are some of the better-known names: Anner Bylsma, Richard Egarr, Celine Frisch, Kenneth Gilbert (and his lute-harpsichord), Pierre Hantaï, John Holloway, Andrew Manze, Beatrice Martin, Davitt Moroney (who had written a life of Bach, published for the festival), Lars Ulrik Mortensen, Juan Manuel Quintana, Bob van Asperen, Kenneth Weiss; Berlin's Akademie für Alte Musik, Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra and Ton Koopman, Armonico Tributo Austria, Capella Brugensis and Collegium Instrumentale Brugense, Collegium Vocale de Gand and Philippe Herreweghe (performing the B minor Mass twice!), Ensemble 415, Ensemble Explorations, Ensemble La Fenice, Ensemble Vocal de Nantes and Paul Colleaux with the Stradivaria Orchestra, Freiburger Barockorchester, Gabrieli Consort and Players and Paul McCreesh, La Petite Bande and Sigiswald Kuijken, RIAS Kammerchor and Marcus Creed, Ricercar Consort, and The Rare Fruits Council.

Some of these will come together again just after Easter, because a shortened version of the Bach festival (only 80 concerts in two days, and only about half of these 'baroque') will be given in the beautiful Belem complex on the waterfront in Lisbon on 29 and 30 April. Further exports of the Folle Journée idea have been proposed for Japan and even Britain; the next Nantes Folle Journée, in early 2001, is to be dedicated to Russian music. I wonder if René Martin realises that the 250th anniversary of Handel's death is not far off...



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Luigi Rossi – Introduzione *Ergi lamenti il sole*

This musical score is for a three-part setting (treble, alto, and bass staves) of Luigi Rossi's 'Introduzione Ergi lamenti il sole'. The piece is in 3/4 time and features a key signature of one sharp (F#). The score is divided into systems, with measure numbers 6, 11, 16, 23, and 31 indicated at the beginning of their respective systems. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, accidentals (sharps and naturals), and fingerings (e.g., 7, 6, 4, 3#). The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots at measure 34.

LONDON CONCERTS

Andrew Benson-Wilson

The Newberry Consort is based at Chicago's Newberry Library where it gives concerts of repertoire from the music collection. The three American members (Ellen Hargis, soprano, Mary Springfels, viol, and David Douglass, viol/violin) were joined by three local players (Sarah Cunningham and Susanna Pell, viols and Jacob Heringman, lute/viol), for their London debut concert at the Purcell Room (4 February). Their programme of solo songs and instrumental Elizabethan music was built around a rather intense exposition of the interrelationship between the liberal arts, emblem books, patronage and the neoplatonic magical philosophy of courtly masques, and featured white and black magic in turn. It started with Byrd's *Prelude and Ground* – one of those pieces that takes you to the point when you feel it must tangle itself irretrievably into knots before it quietly relaxes into its cadence. The gently interlocking rhythms of Pickforth's *In nomine* for five viols and Jacob Heringman's exquisitely lyrical and expressive playing of an anonymous *Passamezzo Pavan*, contrasted with Dowland's *Sorrow, stay* and *Campion's Lighten, heavy heart, thy sprite* with its change of mood from sloth, through depression to violence and murder. The second half opened curiously, as the tuning up slowly turned into the anonymous piece *The Devil's dream* in a way that took most of us some time to recognize. This duo, with melodic interest switching back and forth between treble and bass viol, was played by the core instrumentalists of the group and showed up some of the weaknesses in intonation and quality of tone that had affected their playing throughout. The three local players showed themselves far more at home with their instruments. The extended anonymous setting of a revivalist morality tale from the late-16th-century Roxburghe Ballads, *The Judgement of God showed upon one John Faustus, Doctor in Divinity*, was an amazing piece with a wonderfully dramatic text, ending with some memorable last words – '...my bowels gone, this is the end of me.' It was sung with clear enunciation and expressive communication by Ellen Hargis, although I found her voice generally difficult to place – a rapid but shallow vibrato gave it a nervous edge which made the tone unsettling to listen to. It's not quite what I would consider an 'early music' voice, and has a slightly old fashioned timbre – but it suited the encore perfectly, a slinky Broadway number sung with full viol accompaniment.

As part of the Millennium String of Pearls Festival, London's Banqueting House is hosting a monthly series of lunchtime concerts, mostly early music, but with a range of performing styles. I avoided last month's concert of Purcell accompanied on the piano, but February's offering was The City Waites in a lively programme of 16th and 17th century bawdy ballads (7 February). The opening *Brooms for Old Shoes* from a 1611 collection of street cries was performed

very effectively as an in-the-round processional and was shortly followed by the original, but somewhat sanitized, version of *Lavenders Green* from Pepys' collection, *The Elizabethan Jigge*. The *Downright Merry Wooing of John and Joan* included some very saucy stage antics as violinist Roderick Skeaping played his instrument by rubbing it up and down against a bow held behind Lucie Skeaping's back. This was a tight, professional performance and, as such, was possibly a bit at odds with the tavern origins of some of the pieces, but some earnest little conversations between pieces suggested a degree of improvisation. Douglas Wootton's sardonic introductions were entertaining, as was the ritual of 'describing the instruments'. This produced one of the worst early music jokes I have heard for a long time from Michael Brain, who spoke about the curtal as being one of the 'oon' family, of which the bass is the best known member today – most of the audience must still be trying to work it out. Other instruments included violin, rebec, lute, cittern, guitar, recorders and crumhorns. Great fun.

I went to the BBC recording of two programmes of Music Restored (St Giles Cripplegate, 7 February) for an evening off, but it was so good, it deserves a mention. The Band of Instruments (directed from the harpsichord by Gary Cooper) with soprano Rachel Elliott from The New Chamber Opera gave a magnificent performance of no less than seven versions of the story of Dido and her demise. The first programme sandwiched cantatas by François de Blamont and Michel de Montéclair between selections from Purcell's setting. Blamont's bucolic *Didon* dwelt on Dido's bewitching of Aeneas, whereas Montéclair concentrated on the rage of the scorned woman, full of furious passion. The second programme took the Italian viewpoint, with extracts from an opera by Leonardo Vinci and cantatas by Alessandro Scarlatti and Benedetto Marcello. Marcello's *Didone* was a real test piece for Rachel Elliott, with its astonishing vocal range and vast leaps from note to note. Music of this intensity really suits Rachel Elliott's beautifully flexible voice – she portrays an emotional depth that is unusual to hear in young singers away from the opera stage. Equally impressive was the violin playing of Caroline Balding, notably in Tartini's virtuosic *Didone Abbandonata* Sonata and in a number of the cantatas where the violin had equally billing with the soprano. Sadly, and not for the first time, the poor quality of the BBC recording was exposed in the subsequent broadcasts on Radio 3 (18/25 February): the levels between voice and harpsichord were completely unbalanced, with the harpsichord sounding far more remote and quiet than it did when heard live.

I held over a review of Mozart's *La Clemenza di Tito* (Royal Opera House) from last month so that I could compare it

with the return of *The Magic Flute* to the English National Opera, the latter a well known production some 10 years old, the former a new production bought in from the Salzburg Festival and directed by Ursel and Karl-Ernst Herrmann. *La Clemenza*, whose composition was sandwiched between work on *Die Zauberflöte*, has had a chequered history as a late example of the despised *opera seria*, but *Die Zauberflöte* was a success from the start and remains one of the best-loved of all operas: a strange fate for two virtually-contemporaneous operas. Most people with any musical interest will have some knowledge of the latter, although many fewer will know the former. This raises questions about the degree to which familiarity with the music breeds enthusiasm, a phenomenon well accepted in the pop or Classic FM world. Newspaper reviews for *La Clemenza di Tito* have ranged from 'catastrophically awful' to 'a top quality product', with much being made of Nicholas McGegan's conducting. But if there were faults, they must be shared amongst all involved in this awkward production. A clash of cultures is part of the plot, but it strayed into the production itself. This did not feel like a meeting of minds, and I detected a hint of backstage conflict between director, conductor, instrumentalists, soloists and chorus. McGegan is well versed in period performance, but he clearly only went part way towards winning over the rest of the team. The stage direction frequently conflicted with musical impulse resulting, for example, in frequent gaps where the music had to pause for no apparent reason, although the well known teething troubles at the ROH may have been responsible for one or two of the gaps – after *Se a volta mai ti senti*, for example? McGegan's continuo playing during the recitatives, on a fortepiano, left much to be desired, with its quirky and occasional silly twiddles. The staging was curiously dated, with its stark white box enclosure that deconstructed itself rather awkwardly – the 10 year old ENO set seemed bang up to date in comparison. Both sets made use of objects – the ROH evening opened with a pink slipper spotlight in front of the curtain that was only paired with its companion, and a foot, well into the first act. A suggestive-looking object (possibly a water melon) waited stage left for the inevitable thrusting knife to pierce its gaping slit. The placing of chairs took on great importance, as did the removal of gloves. In the 1960s, this would probably have been considered terribly clever. Both the ENO and the ROH tend to make much of some young female soloist in their pre-launch publicity; this time it was the turn of the Bulgarian, Vesselina Kasarova, the latest pin-up amongst male opera goers, and the one who revealed the man-who-yells-BRAVO (who normally seems to sit rather too close to me). This rather Betjemanesquely youthful, matron-like mezzo, playing the trouser role of Sesto, clearly raised much ardour amongst some. She sang with much passion, albeit with frequent slips of register, while Ruxandra Donose (as Annio) produced a far greater consistency of tone. *La Clemenza* is not the most approachable of Mozart's operas, so a comparison with *Die Zauberflöte* is probably not fair; but the ENO still managed to win hands down with the latest return of its much-loved performance – and, yes, the top F's were hit cleanly and clearly.

One of the most impressive finalists in last year's Early Music Network International Young Artists Competition was the Parisian group, L'ensemble la Coloquinte. They returned to England for a lunchtime concert at St Mary le Bow (10 February). They specialise in French chamber music (for combinations of two flutes, gamba and harpsichord) from the court of Louis XIV in the years around 1700, and bring to this repertoire those hard-to-define qualities of refinement and taste that are so essential to French baroque music. The 3rd *Sonata en Trio* by Jacques Hotteterre le Romain showed how the players concentrated on projecting the broad sweep of the musical line, although they left rather too large a gap between movements as they sorted out their music. Georges Villeneuve's *Conversations en maniere de sonata* for two flutes was superb, with a gentle ebb and flow and fluidity of line that set the complex ornamentation into the broader context. The harpsichord continuo was outstanding, responding elegantly to the changing moods. La Coloquinte are one of the finest young groups around – they deserve more bookings in this country.

A writer in last month's *EMR* wrote in praise of the use of period dress in performance of early music, a practice that CB noted was much thought about, but rapidly dismissed 30 years ago in the fledgling early music movement. I don't have a problem with stage dressing – after all, practically all musicians change into something other than their street clothes for a performance, even if the final appearance is not always too different from their everyday wear. But it does help if the appearance has some relevance to the music in question, which leaves me in some doubt about the uniform of long white smocks and leafy headbands of Mille-Fleurs in their performance of a medley of well known medieval pieces (St George's, Hanover Square, 10 February). Their distinctly New Age, if not pagan, appearance seemed rather at odds with the overtly Christian theme of the concert. The gentle, and occasionally synchronised, swaying of the three singers added to the rather alternative mood. Their appearance clearly caused the concert organisers (The Friends of the London Handel Society) some amusement, and much mention was made in the ritual encore speech of the black boots that had peeped from beneath the smocks in an earlier concert – there seemed to be some relief that these had been reduced to only one pair (which appeared to have caught measles). Dress and boots notwithstanding, this was a pleasantly laid back evening. Although there are all sorts of technical issues I could raise about the three contrasting voices (not least intonation and articulation of runs), the overall effect was effectively simple. An Arabic feel emerged in some pieces, including the lament *Planctus ante nescia* which started with a low, meandering melisma before slowly developing a rhythmic pulse. There was some delightful harp playing by Jan Walters on a gothic harp (whose brays were used most effectively in the bass alone at times) and a smaller double strung harp, which allowed rapid same-note repetitions and a melody and accompaniment at the same pitch. [Our advocate of concerts in costume was also unhappy about the smocks. CB.]

The latest star to cast his light upon the early music scene is the dashing young Siberian violinist, Maxim Vengerov. His first foray into the world of gut took place under the watchful eye of Trevor Pinnock and a packed Barbican Hall (13 February) in a programme of Bach, Handel, Corelli, Mozart and Beethoven. So what would the king of the virtuoso encores get up to with period performance? Well, for a start his conversion is only partial. I wasn't close enough to the stage to be certain, but I was not convinced that the not-a-Stradivarius violin that he used in the first half was entirely as Bach might have known. Did I detect the glint of tuning screws? A chin rest? Was the bow just a trifle long and curiously concave (even if it was held away from the nutty end)? Bach's B-minor Sonata was an interesting opening choice, as was Mozart's K301 Mannheim Sonata in G – both give the keyboard player at least equal billing, and there are moments in both when the violin is merely supporting the keyboard. But that rather summed up the evening: both players were venturing into unknown territory, with Pinnock given a huge concert grand piano for Mozart and Beethoven rather than the expected fortepiano. Pinnock turned out to be no mean pianist, carefully keeping the dynamic range under control for the Mozart and delving the emotional depths in Beethoven's heart-wrenching *Adagio cantabile* from his Violin Sonata in C minor. Indeed, in the clash of styles, Pinnock made a better fist of playing Beethoven on a concert grand than Vengerov did of playing Bach on a baroque violin – I hope they got equal fees for the evening. Although clearly making an effort, Vengerov was reluctant to stray too far from his romantic style. He generally avoided too much vibrato in the Bach and Corelli (but not Mozart), but seemed frightened to let the violin speak for itself, forcing the tone and volume and producing rather too many snatchy-scratchy opening transients – particularly noticeable in Bach's solo chaconne (with a horrid screech as the bow was lifted on the final note) and Corelli's *La Folia*. In the interests of solidarity, Pinnock gave more than a nod to the romantic tradition in a powerful performance of Handel's harpsichord chaconne, with the opening bars played (understandably) at half speed and the first few of the minor key variations (which started with a clear break from the previous variation) also much slower. Despite the fact the most of the audience must have come to hear Vengerov, Trevor Pinnock was deservedly received extremely well by the audience – indeed, in the battle of the chaconnes, he got more applause than Vengerov. Similarly impressive was the more-than-continuo role of cellist Jane Coe in the Corelli. Keeping up the contrast of styles theme of the evening, she appeared in a purple dress that clashed magnificently with both the blue of the harpsichord case and the orangy-red of the lid. A colourful evening, in every sense.

The Wigmore Hall Song Recital Series rarely includes early music, so it was good to hear Annick Massis devote the first half of her recital (24 February) to 17th and 18th century music, complete with harpsichord accompaniment (by Jory Vinikour). I had rather expected a fortepiano for the Rossini pieces in the second half, but, bizarrely, we got a huge

concert grand – singularly inappropriate for Cherubini's Piano Sonata in G as well. Known as a Rossini opera specialist, Massis nonetheless shown an understanding of the different styles needed for Monteverdi, Cavalli, Rameau, Handel and Gluck. But this was still very much an operatic performance, with some slipping and sliding between notes and prominent vibrato. The volume was huge in the intimate surroundings of the Wigmore Hall, and approached screech proportions on some of the highest notes, but there was a consistent tone over her wide range. Arias from Handel's *Cleopatra* closed the first half, with some effective da capo ornamentation. The accompanist demonstrated the folly of using unbound photocopies by scattering his music all over the floor after a fluffed page turn – but he managed to keep going.

Florilegium opened their series of Bach concerts at the Wigmore Hall on 17 February with two cantatas for the Purification, the First Orchestral Suite and Brandenburg Concerto No. 1. The orchestral pieces were played in punchy and rhythmic style. Their habit of stressing the first beat of each bar is one that is slowly dying out amongst many Baroque interpreters but, if not overdone (which it was on occasion), it can certainly grab the attention. They showed their sensitive sides in the gorgeous closing bars of the *Adagio* of Brandenburg I. The 1727 cantata *Ich habe genug* is one of Bach's most moving works, with its almost Pietist sentiments, based on the Song of Simeon, and sublime central lullaby, *Schlummert ein, ich matten Augen*. The cantata exists in separate versions for soprano, mezzo and bass, and the young Scottish soprano, Susan Hamilton, made a very convincing case for the soprano version, with her exquisite depiction of simple devotion and yearning for the joy of death. Susan Hamilton is not the tallest singer around, and her lack of stage presence was not helped by her being placed right at the back of the semicircular Wigmore Hall stage in line with the rest of the musicians – a few steps forward would have made a huge difference. This is not a cantata to be belted out, so her rather diminutive, but quite beautiful, voice suited the mood. She was joined by Sally Bruce-Payne, James Gilchrist and Roderick Williams for *Mit Fried und Freud ich fahr dahin*. The sighing repeated bass notes of the first aria, performed without continuo harmonies, were spoilt by some tuning problems in the bass instruments, but Sally Bruce-Payne's rich alto voice more than made amends, as did the oboe and flute playing of Katharina Spreckelsen and Ashley Solomon.

Bach performances by three of our leading period bands drew capacity crowds to the Queen Elizabeth Hall during February. On 3 February, The King's Consort returned to Bach's B minor Mass three years on from their CD of the work. Although not reaching the emotional depths of Gardiner or the musical insight of Koopman, this was a performance full of interest, not least in the choice of choral forces and in the fascinating combination of neo-baroque and romantic interpretations. Despite opining in his 1997 CD notes that '... any performance that tries to follow historical precedents must use boys' voices in both the soprano and alto lines of the choir and in the upper-

voice solos if it is to have much validity', Robert King used women's voices throughout. [But surely it is a sign of maturity to be able to change your mind if there is good reason to do so? CB] I was sitting within striking distance of the platform and from there, articulation sounded emphatic, with some insistent bass lines in, for example, 'Patrem omnipotentem'. The *coll'arco è staccato* marking at the beginning of the 'Qui tollis peccata mundi' was treated in an almost 'omm-pa-pa' style and the solo cello playing approached the aggressive at times. Instrumental phrasings and bowings were very clear, but often produced a rather mannered effect when carried over to vocal lines. The flute obbligato in the 'Benedictus' was unashamedly romantic, with rubato, rhetoric gesture, breathing and articulation pauses that challenged most baroque conventions of metrical pulse or melodic contour. In similarly romantic style, King pulled most final cadences well back from the underlying pulse (which itself was not always consistent) and a number of hairpin crescendos crept in – most noticeably in the opening of the 'Crucifixus'. The publicity made much of the Czech mezzo Magdalena Kozená, although she was overshadowed on the night by the home-grown Carolyn Sampson, James Gilchrist and Michael George. The contrast between Kozená and Sampson was most noticeable in the duet 'Christe eleison', when the pure colour and texture of the latter's voice shone through the rather pinched and inexpressive sound of Kozená. James Gilchrist combined a healthy understanding of baroque style with emotional depth in the 'Benedictus'. There were many fine individual contributions from both players and chorus, although the 23-strong King's Consort choir is not alone in allowing rather too much vibrato from the fledgling soloists among its sopranos.

The Sixteen, with The Symphony of Harmony and Invention, directed by Harry Christophers, contrasted two Bach cantatas with the Magnificat in D and the Suite in D. Using a slightly smaller choir than The King's Consort (18, but with women's voices only for the soprano line), the overall sound was coherent, but with similar problems of soprano vibrato. The most prominent feature of the concert was the combination of soloists from the choir together with a 'big-name, big-voice' soloist, Catherine Wyn-Rogers. This didn't work at all – the contrast in volume and style was far too great. Generally speaking, the choir soloists made a pretty good job of it, particularly Carys Lane in her two opening solos in the Magnificat, Simon Birchall's clear and articulate 'Quia fecit' and Matthew Vine's agile and precise 'Deposuit'. But they were no match for the operatic presence of Catherine Wyn-Rogers in her two Magnificat solos and a beautifully sung aria in Cantata 34 (*O ewiges Feuer*). The contrast in styles between Robert King and Harry Christophers couldn't be more different: whereas King concentrated on the detail of articulation, with a strong and emphatic, if occasionally jerky, pulse, Christophers took a larger scale view, building up smaller baroque motifs into a broader sweep and allowing the music to flow. One day I will write a review based on overheard comments – both King and Christophers seem to generate remarkably strong reactions from some members of the audience.

Philip Pickett has done more than most to search out new approaches to early music. His latest target was Bach's Brandenburg Concertos, performed in their entirety at the Queen Elizabeth Hall on 29 February with a background of slides and an explanation of how the music might have been interpreted at the time. Pickett's theory (published last year in *Harpsichord and Fortepiano Magazine*) was built on the fact that Bach presented the concertos to the Margrave of Brandenburg as a score rather than a set of performing parts (and the score remains in more or less pristine condition today, with no evidence of ever having been used for performance). He sees that score as a musical example of the sort of homage to a leader that is well understood from paintings and from contemporary records of triumphal pageants and entertainments. Bach honours the Margrave as an Ancient Hero, with symbols and tableaux that could be read like Vanitas paintings, setting out both to glorify the subject and to set that glorification in the context of the transience of human existence. So the use of hunting horns in the first concerto was not a nod towards the pastoral pursuits of a princely court, but a symbol of a Roman triumphal entry, reinforcing the ancient nobility of the Margrave – the hunting horn (in an actual hunt, as well as in Bach's work, according to Pickett) was a visual and aural recreation of the horns seen in Roman reliefs. Each concerto was set in a context of allegory and rhetoric which explained both mood and instrumentation. Concerto 2 represented Fame (trumpet), meeting up with Homer (violin), Virgil (oboe) and Dante (recorder) on Mount Parnassus; Concerto 3 the Nine Muses and the Harmony of the Spheres; Concerto 4, the contest between Apollo and Marsyas (like a naughty schoolboy, Pickett proudly explained the phallic symbolism of his smaller-than-average recorder before performing beneath a slide of a naked Marsyas displaying his own even smaller instrument); Concerto 5 depicted Hercules (harpsichord) tossing up between Virtue and Vice, and the final Concerto, with its sonorous textures and use of two deathly viols, illustrates the meeting between the quick and the dead. So there we are! Despite reservation above about The Newberry Consort's learned exposition, I was happy with this one – perhaps I was just in the right mood! But what of the music? It was difficult to tell just how seriously the players were taking the interpretations, but they certainly turned in a splendid performance. With the exception of the Concerto 1, which never quite got into its stride, the playing and the musical insight was superb. This was particularly noticeable in the 'conversation pieces' – sections of dialogue between the various solo instruments such as the Andante of Concerto II, where flute, oboe and violin throw ideas back and forth, interjecting, countering, interrupting, building and ultimately coalescing. Conversation seemed to be at the root of some of the rhetorical interpretations, particularly from violinist Pavlo Beznosiuk (pulling the pulse well back in the first series of solos in Concerto IV, for example) and David Roblou, in his staggering harpsichord cadenza in Concerto V and enlightened continuo realisations. An excellent evening that, despite its length, held the capacity audience enthralled.

RECORD REVIEWS

CHANT

Salve Regina: Gregorian Chant Benedictine Monks of the Abbey of Saint-Maurice & Saint-Maur Clervaux 46' 37" Philips 420 879-2 ££ rec 1960

An odd reissue, for various reasons that can be stated without considering the merits of the singing or selection: it's a very short programme (even if it is a minute longer than the figure on the box), much of the chant is given an organ accompaniment, and the booklet has no texts and a single, unhelpful page of introduction. The singing is, in fact, often impressive and well-recorded, and the organ-less *Salve regina* works pretty well (though not the *Stabat mater*). The quasi-modal harmonies placed around the music are too much of a distraction for me. But fine if you want to hear what monastic chanting was like just before the liturgical reforms. CB

MEDIEVAL

Cluny: la Vierge: chants de Pierre le Venerable Venance Fortunat, Anne-Marie Deschamps L'empreinte digitale ED 13109 49' 51"

I found the two pages of notes in the booklet unhelpful. We are expected to know who Peter the Venerable was: the ninth Abbot of Cluny, in office from 1122-1156 and notable for commissioning the first Latin translation of the Koran. In the third paragraph, a Peter I is mentioned, which might lead us to wonder whether he was different from the Peter mentioned elsewhere; but the I isn't in the French text so is presumably a misprint, as is the date 1100 for 1200 at the foot of the first page. But don't be put off: Peter's poetry gets a bad write-up in the only book I can find that mentions it,* but the music is effective and the singing is convincing, especially for its marvellously flowing and flexible rhythm. Anyone who enjoys Hildegard and wants to try something similar will feel at home here. CB

*F. J. E. Raby *A History of Christian-Latin Poetry*, Oxford, 1927/53. I remember him chiefly because, during the term in which I presented him with a fortnightly essay on some medieval Latin topic, he always offered a barley-sugar with the remark that they were good for rowers, though my aquatic activities were restricted to the gentler punt.

D'Amours loial servant: Chansons d'amour françaises et italiennes des XIV^e et XV^e siècles Gérard Lesne, Alla Francesca (Brigitte Lesne, Emmanuel Bonnardot, Pierre Hamon) 65' 11" Virgin Veritas 7243 5 45357 2 7 Music by Caserta, Ciconia, Cordier, Landini, Machaut, Molins, Senleches & anon

I have just written (in the next review) that most ensembles now are circumspect in their use of percussion. This tries to be,

but however restrained the playing, it tends to get in the way of the words. That apart, this is a nicely varied selection of secular music of the period. I was a little worried that some of the quicker notes in Senleches's complex *La harpe de melodie* seemed to skate over the surface and the voices sound a bit as if they are being squeezed out of the mouth. But otherwise this is an enjoyable disc, notable for some subtle instrumental playing: the flute and rebec in the Faenza version of Machaut's *Honte, paour* is delightful. CB

Legenda Aurea: Laudes des Saints au Trecento italien La Reverdie 70' 00" Arcana A 304 see p. 2

Music of the Gothic Era The Early Music Consort of London, David Munrow 60' 31" £ Deutsche Grammophon Klassikon 469 027-2

This is a selection from a three-LP Archiv set from 1975, 135' cut to an hour: perhaps if this sells well, we'll get another hour. The packaging is drastically reduced: just a list of pieces and performers, and a single paragraph of introduction, with no texts or translations – another example of what is lost in cheap reissues of early repertoire. The original set was fully supplied with full texts, notes, and a table showing who sang and played in each piece. This isn't a very full disc: how much effort is it to include all the information from the original booklet on the disc itself? The feature that most dates it is the excessive use of percussion: most ensembles now (except the folkier ones) are a little more circumspect. David Munrow had a fine ear for singers, and there are some marvellous performances here: certainly enough to justify buying the disc. He was moving away from multi-coloured instrumentations, and if he had survived it might not have been necessary to invent Gothic Voices! CB

15th CENTURY

La Rue Missa cum iucunditate Henry's Eight Etcetera KTC 1214 + *Clemens Ego flos campi, Pater peccavi*; Josquin *Absolve quaesumus*; Ockeghem *Ave Maria*; Willaert *O crux splendidior*

Henry's Eight bring their superb musicianship to some well-known and some less familiar corners of the Franco-Flemish repertory. They sing with great confidence and excellent tuning which brings this music off the page in a very convincing way. La Rue's mass is a somewhat curious piece, based on a five-note ostinato with constantly changing rhythm, and suffused with repetitions of all sorts; it does, however, contain some very effective moments. The motets are all splendid pieces and, presented like this, offer a very useful opportunity to make stylistic comparisons over the first half of the 16th century. Noel O'Regan

16th CENTURY

G. Gabrieli In festo sanctissimae trinitatis Choeur de Chambre de Namur, La Fenice, Jean Tubery 63' 35" Ricercar 207412 *Benedictus* es a8, *Confitebor tibi* a13, *Domine Dominus noster* a8, *Dulcis Jesu* a20, *In ecclesiis* a14, *Jubilate Deo* a10, *Omnes gentes* a16; *Canzon I toni* (1597), *Canzon II a6*, *VII a7*, *XVII a12* (1615)

A nice programme, beginning with the first Gabrieli piece I encountered (*In ecclesiis*, printed in the *Historical Anthology of Music*) and including the first I was involved in editing, *Dulcis Jesu*. Both are slightly disappointing: the cornetts skate over the descending quavers in the former as ornaments rather than characterise them as thematic, and important chords change without the solidity that gives them presence. I miss the awe of the opening of *Dulcis Jesu*. What is the point of the blaring bass at the time-change in *Canzon 7*, obscuring the semiquavers in the cornetts? I find just too many minor irritations here. I'm disappointed, since La Fenice are usually more convincing; but others who are less involved in the music may find this a useful introduction to the composer. CB

Guerrero Missa Puer natus est, Canciones y Villanescas Espirituales Capilla Peñaflorida, Josep Cabré 59' 03" Almaguira DS-0126

It is interesting to hear Josep Cabré, contributor to so many Iberian recordings including those directed by Jordi Savall, directing his own ensemble. The large acoustic of Seville's Loreto Monastery makes for a full choral sound, supported by *bajón* and organ, and the attack errs on the side of sponginess, with the sopranos on the top line demonstrating the tight but persistent vibrato so familiar from Savall's discs. The result is not unpleasant, although very different from the pure virginal tone cultivated by most English choral ensembles. The performance of the Mass is somewhat melodramatic, an approach better suited to the sacred villanescas which separate the mass movements, and which have been cleverly selected for their Christmas connotations. Where these are accompanied by vihuela, the singers clearly have difficulty hearing the instrument and tend to wander slightly in pitch. (I have heard this phenomenon so often in live performance and recordings that I question whether large choral groups can ever have been matched successfully with a single lute or vihuela!) The Mass incipits and chant, the latter sung metrically and supported by *bajón*, must be of Spanish origin, although the accompanying booklet makes no mention of this and, more seriously, fails to supply texts, essential for the full appreciation of the vernacular material.

D. James Ross

Marenzio *Missa super Iniquos odio habui* & motets Claritas, James Grossmith dir 64' 03"
Etcetera KTC 1225

The extremely worthwhile exploration of Marenzio's sacred music marking the four-hundredth anniversary of his death continues with this recording of the two surviving movements of his *Mass Iniquos odio habui* and a selection of motets. The music is of a very high standard of invention and technical polish, and as the programme note points out, illustrates how Marenzio incorporated compositional techniques encountered in his travels through Europe into his music. Singing one to a part, Claritas emphasise the madrigalian dimension of the writing and sing with great commitment and varied expression. Annoyingly, a slight quaver in the soprano and tenor permeate the whole choir in fortissimo sections, and emphatic passages such as the declamatory opening of *Cantate Domino* are very muddy indeed. I found that this feature interfered with my enjoyment of this otherwise fine disc.

D. James Ross

Palestrina *Music for Good Friday* Musica Contexta, Simon Ravens 71' 29"

Chandos Chaconne CHAN 0652

Crux fidelis, Improperia, Lamentations (Book III), Vexilla Regis

I had a minimal input into the preparation of this recording, a follow-up to the successful 'Music for Maundy Thursday' disc (CHAN 0167, reviewed *EMR* 39 p. 15); it follows the same pattern of interleaving polyphonic lamentations with plainchant responsories and including other *alternatim* items from the liturgy of the day. The lamentations are once more beautifully judged in pitch, blend and tempo; the third lamentation in particular contains some of Palestrina's most interesting writing and is very movingly performed here. There is again a lot of plainchant which has more subtlety in declamation and a more resonant acoustic than in the previous recording; pacing is good, apart from *Ecce lignum crucis*, which sounds rushed. It is certainly good to have a group take on such reconstructions, restoring the limbs, as it were, to polyphonic torsos.

Noel O'Regan

Peter Philips *The English Exile* Colin Booth hpscd 65' 25"
Soundboard SBCD 992

Colin Booth plays one of his own instruments, a copy of an anonymous double-manual Italian-style harpsichord now in the Germanisches Museum, Nuremberg whose upper manual plays a single 4' register. Pitched at A=392 this instrument sounds good, its strongly sustained sound recalling the Ruckers instruments which Philips would have been so familiar with. It makes me wonder how it would sound if it was pitched even lower. Philips's continental slant on the virginalist style is fascinating, and there are some good pieces here. The *Pavana Pagget* (named after one of his employers) has some lovely dissonances, and, like the *Pavana* and *Galliarda*

Dolorosa, is given a rich and generous treatment. Booth allows the music to speak for itself but does enough so that a piece like the *Fantasia* (no 84 in the Fitzwilliam book) remains interesting despite its unrelenting texture and metre. Throughout the recording the harpsichord sounds quite distant. This probably contributes to the sheer scale of sound on offer, but one or twice I longed for a little more intimacy. This, though, is a minor criticism of an otherwise very enjoyable disc. Even the cover photograph is unforgettable...

Robin Bigwood

... though lacking the ambiguity of the figure on Colin Booth's last disc, which certainly did not deserve selection in the BBC Music Magazine's anthology of bad covers, though it probably sold a few more discs. The new Musica Britannica edition of Philips keyboard music arrived in mid-March and will be reviewed next month.

CB

A Flemish Feast: Flemish renaissance wind music Piffaro: the Renaissance Band, Joan Kimball & Robert Wiemken dir 64' 34"
Archiv 457 609-2

Calling themselves the renaissance band is a bit arrogant, but they are certainly among the best. A fair amount of the programme comes from the Susato dance collection, but the repertoire is far wider and goes back a century. I am normally suspicious of vocal music without the words, but the performances work well. Alamire's sole piece is more effective here without the crumhorns specified in one source (cf *EMR* 57, p. 21 and *supra* p. 2); crumhorns on this disc are rare and in tune. The thorough listing and description of instruments reminds one of much earlier Archiv LPs, but the playing is far better than most of those old early-wind discs and the music is nicely varied.

CB

Vox Virginalis: English Keyboard Music under the Tudor and Stuart Reigns Rachelle Taylor virginal & hpscd 65' 23"

Atma ACD 2 2197

Music by Bull, Byrd, Farnaby, Gibbons, Morley, Newman, Philips, Tomkins + *My Lady Careys Dompe*

This is an extremely enjoyable CD taking in a sweep of English virginal music from *My Lady Careys Dompe* to Tomkins. Rachelle Taylor is a communicative and stylish player and she gets a great sound from a Ruckers copy by Beaupré and muselar virginals by Philip Tyre. I particularly liked her dignified and unhurried approach to Byrd's *Hugh Aston's Ground*, with its expressive and varied decoration and nicely handled section endings. Bull's *The King's Hunt* is exciting, energetic and technically faultless, as is the opulent *Ground in G* by Tomkins. Gibbons' *Fantasia in C* is given two readings, one on harpsichord and one on virginals – a revealing exercise and well worth doing with such a superb, if understated, piece. I'm not sure who'd buy a disc like this, but as broad introduction to virginalist music it is probably unsurpassed.

Robin Bigwood

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

17th CENTURY

Biber *Missa Bruxellensis* La Capella Reial de Catalunya, Le Concert des Nations, Jordi Savall 51' 30"
Alia Vox AV9808

Unlike the previous two large-scale Biber mass recordings, this CD presents the *Missa Bruxellensis* as the bare bones – there are no plainsong inserts, no sonatas as substitutes for the various missing parts of the liturgy. The huge acoustic of Salzburg cathedral has been tamed by the recording engineers to favour the singers; the brass carry well enough naturally, but the middle strings tend to be rather distant and the fiddles do not cut through the texture as I think they ought to. The music, of course, is wonderful – Biber in top form. The singing is very good indeed, and I only wish that some means of padding the programme out had been found: some motets or mass propers by Hofer, for example, would have been nice.

BC

Biber *Sonatae tam aris, quam aulis servientes* (1676) The Parley of Instruments, Roy Goodman & Peter Holman dir 59' 34"
Hyperion CDH55041 ££ rec 1983

It was over 30 years ago when Peter Holman first introduced me to the music of Biber, and one of the first concerts in which I played with him was devoted to Biber (we're back together for the *Missa Salisburgiensis* performances in Suffolk this summer). His music is now quite common on disc, but this must have been the first extensive recording by an English group: as so often, Ted Perry was happy to trust the proposal of an enthusiast. Recent Biber recordings are more effervescent, but I was pleasantly surprised how well this has survived – and I have been playing it in alternation with the Purcell Quartet's version. It is certainly worthy of reissue; midprice doesn't indicate second-best.

CB

Brossard *Petits motets* Solistes de la Maîtrise de Caen, Cyrille Dubois dessus, Hervé Lamy taille, Alain Buet basse-taille, Juan-Sebastian Lima theorbo, Jean-Marie Quint vlc, Robert Weddle, org, dir 55' 28"
Assai 207582

I spent an enjoyable few days in Caen with Robert Weddle in 1992 when he commissioned an edition of one of Cavalli's 1675 Vespers for performance with his boys' choir and professional adults and instruments (including Lynda Sayce as theorbist). He moved there from Coventry Cathedral to create a boys' choir on the English model – and very successful he has been. This disc begins impressively with an extensive motet for the treble. One might carp and say that intonation is not always spot on; but Cyrille Dubois (quite a mature treble at 14) sings musically and stylishly with a good awareness of French baroque conventions – he can even trill! He is also strong enough in a duet to balance Alain Buet, who makes the most of his solo *Extremum Judicii descriptio*. The whole disc

is a delight: the repertoire is new to me (I should have paid more attention to the Fuzeau facsimile of *Promodus musicalis*, from which the first two items are taken) and well worth hearing. English singers of French Latin could learn a lot from listening to the pronunciation. Very highly recommended. CB

Buxtehude *Harpsichord Music*, vol. 3 Lars Ulrik Mortensen 54' 24"
Dacapo 8.224118
BuxWV 162, 168, 238, 243, 250

This disc only confirms my already high opinion of Mortensen's playing. It presents some superb pieces, amongst them two very fine suites in A and F. There is something rather reminiscent of Handel's 1720 collection about these two pieces, and Mortensen teases out a wonderfully warm and sonorous sound from his Ruckers copy by Mandrup-Poulsen. The A major suite is notable for its sections of Couperin-like harmonic indulgence in the Allemande and for its beautiful, unassuming Sarabande. The F major Sarabande is equally enjoyable, especially for its brisé figuration and fragile, fragmented melody. The fugue in this suite is well handled – lyrical, expressive, and rhythmic too. The Prelude in G major BuxWV 162 could pass for Frescobaldi, with its succession of highly concentrated and strongly contrasted sections. The arpeggio section is particularly breathtaking. Perhaps the most interesting piece on the disc is the Aria *La Capriciosa*, not least for its obvious parallels with Bach's Goldberg variations. Buxtehude doesn't have a theme and variations as such, but a sequence of 32 'Partitas' spanning a wide range of style and tempo. Partita 1 unfortunately doesn't contain the same harmonic tension as Bach's Aria and, in comparison, the work as a whole lacks depth. It's still very enjoyable, however, and something of a showpiece. The playing throughout this recording is of the highest quality. In fact I'd say Mortensen's Buxtehude survey represents some of the best harpsichord playing currently available on disc – intelligent, communicative, warm, emotionally and intellectually satisfying. Who could ask for more? Robin Bigwood

Marais *Pièces de Violes III^e Livre* John Dornenburg *gamba*, Malcolm Proud *hpscd*, Lynn Tetenbaum *gamba* 74' 48"
Centaur CRC 2429
Suites in D, g, a, G; D'Anglebert Préludes in d & F Couperin Passacaille in b (Ordre VIII)

That Marais' third book, published in 1711, contains some of his most appealing suites is well-known to viol players, though not to the general public. This recording should bring four of them to a wide audience, provided that they buy it. To generate sales, record shops should play, for example, the Rondeau and Chaconne from the D Major suite, *Le Moulinet* (for those in the know so like Forqueray) from the G minor suite, the fabulous flurry of semiquavers in the Gigue à l'angoise from the A minor suite, and the glorious Sarabandes from the G major and A minor

suites. The playing is straight to the point, free of mannerism, rhythmic, lyrical and deft, with the loveliest phrasing in the slow plaintive movements which pour from Marais' imagination. Malcolm Proud contributes a D'Anglebert *Prélude* in D minor, and a beautifully judged and articulated rendering of Couperin's great B minor *Passacaille*. Robert Oliver

Marais *Pièces pour viole de gambe et basse continue* Juan Manuel Quintana *gamba*, Dolores Costoyas *theorbo*, Attilio Cremonesi *hpscd* 65' 45"
Harmonia Mundi HMC 905248
Suite in e (Livre I), D (III), Le Labyrinthe (IV), a (V)

The more Marais the merrier. Juan Manuel Quintana is a new name to me, and he is an exceptional player. Not yet 30, he has an assured technique and sense of style. The most striking aspect of his playing is his tone – full and resonant, never forced, the sound drawn out. In a sympathetic acoustic and with accompaniment of theorbo and harpsichord, the softest and sweetest sounds are clear. Where he needs it he is very forceful and virtuosic, with brilliant passage work and assured articulation. In *Le Labyrinthe* – an extraordinary piece consisting of a series of episodes modulating to remote keys, culminating in a majestic chaconne – he plays with consummate ease, perhaps lacking a little in that operatic drama of the grave sections. Opera is also lacking in the great *Tombeau pour Monsieur de Sainte-Colombe*, but there is so much to enjoy in this recording that it is a minor disappointment. Robert Oliver

Sances *Sacred & Secular Songs* Musica Fabula, Jan Walters harp & dir 64' 16"
ASV CD GAU 193
Sances Extases baroques: motetti e cantade a voce sola Maria Cristina Kiehr, Concerto Soave L'empreinte digitale ED 13119 63' 21" £
+ Kapsberger *Toccata V & IX; L. Rossi Passacaille*

Here is much to delight the listener; the out-of-tune singing of the gorgeous duet *Che sperasti, cor mio?* which opens the Musica Fabula disc is not representative of the delightful singing which follows. (For a much more satisfactory performance of this piece, listen to the Sances recording by Le Nuove Musiche, reviewed in *EMR* 53 p. 31, with gamba and organ.) Both Liliana Mazzarri and Sarah Pillow have attractive and virtuosic voices; they are well-matched, and sing with vigorous eloquence. Pillow, however, lacks the control over tuning and vibrato that is particularly needed for a solo recording – except in a delightful mixture of baroque and jazz improvisation over a passacaglia, in which she sounds exceptionally well at home. On the whole I found the continuo department (Steve Player, guitar, and Jan Walters, harp) disappointing: too well-behaved, too little gusto, giving adequate support but not much more – until it comes to the four-note ostinato bass of *Usurpator tiranno*, where every opportunity is taken by the harp and guitar for self-expression. Pillow is also at her best in this piece – a really lively performance. This is an enjoyable disc

(apart from the first piece), but distantly recorded and somewhat uneven and unpolished: the live performances would have worked better.

Maria Cristina Kiehr's performance of *Usurpator tiranno* differs totally from that of Musica Fabula: the former takes almost two minutes longer, and has the advantage of a bass viol playing the ostinato line, giving the harp and archlute more liberty for decoration – however, they are quite restrained, in keeping with the feeling of tragedy which permeates the *cantada*. Kiehr's lovely voice can sound slightly old-fashioned: a warm, internalised yet bright sound somewhat recalling Ferrier, in contrast with the young, open voices of Mazzarri and Pillow. Her control is marvellous and she can invoke any atmosphere or emotion; her sensuous diction, dynamic control and expression draw the listener right into the music, whether secular or sacred. The continuo band plays sensitively, with plenty of variety of instrumentation and tone. It is hard to imagine Sances being given more advantageous treatment. A serious drawback is the lack of a booklet: the disc comes in a cardboard folder with a catalogue of L'Empreinte Digitale, but no texts and not a word about the music or performers. Selene Mills

A. Scarlatti *Cantatas* vol. 3 Brian Asawa cT, Arcadian Academy, Nicholas McGegan DHM 75605 51325 2 64' 14"
Clori vezzosa e bella, Ferma omae, Nel silenzio comune, Non se qual più m'ingombra, Piango sospiro e peno

I first heard this without knowing what it was, and found it very difficult to work it out from the instrumental introduction, which sounded much earlier. Scarlatti's music isn't performed very often (though current activities in Palermo may change that), but one has an image of it as the prototype of late-baroque Italian opera, beautiful but not very eventful. The music here belies that. Admittedly it is not so eventful as the late cantatas by his son (see p. 26), but Brian Asawa chooses a manner that makes all the dramatic points with due regard to stylistic decorum. His voice sounds plumper than most countertenors and suits the music well. A fine recording. CB

The booklet notes are by the multitasking Lionel Salter, who died aged 85 early in March. His musical activities included conducting and playing the harpsichord. His linguistic skills are apparent from the number of operas he translated to accompany recordings, and he had a particular interest in the music of Spain. He was involved with the recording industry in many ways; readers will know him as a regular reviewer in Gramophone. My first meeting with him was when he was the senior member of a BBC appointments board that gave me the job of Deputy Music Librarian in 1970; my last was a few months ago when, while waiting for the lift to take us to the Early Music office in Baker Street, we mutually deplored the BBC's apparent neglect of its invaluable library. CB

Schütz *Chorwerke* Sächsisches Vocalensemble, Matthias Jung 55' 18"
Tacet TACET 99
SWV 24-5, 28-9, 35, 372-3, 378-80, 388-9, 391, 433, 494

Back in 1965, when I was helping a small record label bring Baroque to the American masses, I'd have jumped at the chance to release this recording. But it reflects few of the ways Schütz performance has changed – mostly for the better, historically and artistically – in 35 years. The fast tempos now seem too fast. Instead of 20+ voices there should often, if not always, be one per part. (Oddly, some interpretative decisions would be dead right with one per part – especially some modest mid-stream tempo changes, but also the delicately madrigalistic variations in declamation in response to the words. Even some of the too-fast tempos would work better.) This isn't the first time I've heard a recording that displays 'authentic' style with inauthentic performing forces – though the disparity is more often the other way round. Few if any pieces should be sung *a cappella*, and the continuo (when it's used) should be more diverse than cello and organ. But there's much to enjoy here. It's not wholly bad to avoid the overbearing sackbuts that dominate some of (e.g.) Weser-Renaissance's Schütz recordings. The slower tempos are well judged; the choir, who obviously love their work, sing with expression and vitality. The next time I want to hear a 1619 Psalm, or the late Magnificat SWV 494, I just might bring out this CD rather than one of the more with-it versions. *Eric Van Tassel*

A doi tenori: Duetti da chiesa nella Roma del Primo Seicento: Sances, Carissimi, Frescobaldi, Foggia Bruno Boterf & Gilles Ragon TT
L'empreinte digitale ED 13115 63' 57"
Carissimi *Immensus caeli conditor, O dulcissime Jesu, O ignis sancte; Foggia In tribulationibus; Sances Stabat mater; anon O angelorum panis suavissime. Frescobaldi Canzona 17 a 2 bassi La Diodata, Toccata VII, Toccata e Ricercar...con l'obbligo di cantare la 5 parte; Kapsberger Toccata arpeggiata (1604), Toccata II (1640)*

At an initial glance, one might fear a disc of educational bicinia, since no details of accompaniment are visible until the shrink-wrap is removed and the booklet examined. That lists an appropriate ensemble of gamba, triple harp, theorbo, violone, organ and harpsichord, which supplies an effective and idiomatic accompaniment (though readers must weary of my mentioning so often that string bass instruments need not be so omnipresent in music of this period). There is also a fair amount of instrumental music, making this an anthology of broader interest than the title might apply. An unusual feature is the inclusion of the Frescobaldi piece with an additional, textless part to be sung. The singing is stylish and exciting, though I don't exactly warm to either voice. The highlight for me (others may prefer more variety) was Sances' solo *Stabat Mater*, mostly over the chromatic descending fourth. It is easier to read a poem if it is set out with spaces between the verses, and it helps to show discrete sections in the music in non-stanzaic texts similarly. With two CDs of Sances this month as well as this more varied selection of similar repertoire, it is difficult for the poor record-buyer to know which to prefer: this would be my choice. *CB*

Organ Landscape: Holstein – Lübeck Wolfgang Baumgratz [on historic organs] 74' 47"
Dabringhaus & Grimm MDG 319 0962-2
Music by Buxtehude, Flor, N. Hasse, P. Hasse, Heydorn, Kneller, Kortkamp, Steffens

CDs featuring a number of organs are often worth avoiding, but this is an exception. Of the six organs on this recording, only one is well known – the gorgeous 1636 Stellwagen organ, with pipes from a late Gothic organ, sited on the side wall of Lübeck's Jakobikirche. But the rest (dating up to 1759) are well worth a listen, and the usual problems of differing acoustics, pitches and temperaments are minimal. The chosen repertoire is also fascinating in its exploration of lesser known composers of the region as well as two pieces by Buxtehude. Wolfgang Baumgratz (organist of Bremen Cathedral) plays with an enlightened sense of musical rhetoric and melodic structure, although a few of his registrations break the normally accepted rules of the North German organ school. Worth a listen. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

Sacred Songs of Sorrow Rodrigo del Pozo, Charivari Agréable Simfonie 72' 18"
Signum SIGCD018
Music by J. Christoph (or Heinrich) Bach, Fiocco, Fischer, Geist, Kindermann, Nicolai, Schedlich

Solo laments are interspersed with suitably austere instrumental music, mainly from the German-speaking lands. The exception is Joseph-Hector Fiocco, whose beautiful first lamentation for Maundy Thursday is a particularly highlight. Johann Erasmus Kindermann supplies three pieces (one of them played twice). Christian Geist appears twice, with the puzzlingly titled *Es war aber an der Stätte* – puzzling, because that's the opening text of the second section. I'm not sure what the connection is with Johann Nicolai's sonata for three gambas, but I'm glad it was included. As for the performances, I've long wondered what the vocal pieces would be like sung by a high tenor rather than a countertenor but, while some of the singing is very nice indeed, a couple of passages just seemed too high (track 1, for example), and others too low. The playing is very good indeed. *BC*

Seconde stravaganze: Il Concerto di viola tra scuola veneziana e napoletana: Arte dell' improvvisazione e retorica degli affette - vol. II L'Amoroso, Guido Balestracci dir 63' 04"
Symphonia SI99170
Music by Del Buono, De Macque, Gesualdo, Legrenzi, Montalbano, S. Rossi, B. Storace, Trabaci, Valente, Waesich & anon

This is Volume II of Venetian and Neapolitan music for Consort of Viols, and I shall immediately acquire Vol I. Some is arranged from lute or keyboard, including a marvellous version of *Ma belle si ton âme* by Piccinini, most is from dedicated publications such as Trabaci's *Ricercate, Canzone...* (1603) or Legrenzi's *La Cetra* published in 1682 with two sonatas for four viols. Some has percussion, some is sober polyphony, but all is played with brilliance, flair, and an uncontrived

intensity which enchanted me. There is a lot of extravagance here: a *Pastorale* by Bernardo Storace with wind machines, birds and bells; the harmonic extravagance of a Gesualdo madrigal very well suited to viols. Music by Trabaci and Rossi will be familiar, but what about Waesich and de Macque? There is a lot which is new to me, and I shall want to get hold of the music as well. Highly recommended. *Robert Oliver*

A Varietie of Lute Lessons (Robert Dowland, 1610) Nigel North 77' 53"
Linn CKD 097

This selection from Robert Dowland's 1610 anthology includes some of the finest and most famous pieces from the 'Golden Age', together with several works by continental contemporaries. It also contains some of the most notorious misprints in the entire lute repertoire, which, happily, North has remedied here: I hope this indicates a forthcoming edition. The anthology is also subdivided by genre, so the listener is assured a true 'varietie'. North's selection includes some old favourites, but also a number of unduly neglected works – the magnificent *Fantasia* by Diomedes Cato, for example. The compelling performances are of exemplary clarity, crisply ornamented and dramatically voiced. Especially welcome are a number of volts and corantos, often dismissed as slight space-fillers, but which emerge in North's persuasive hands as attractive jewels exemplifying the latest fashions of 1610. The lute used is a large and sonorous nine-course tenor instrument – perfect for the music, and a welcome relief after the smaller, higher altos often used for this demanding music, whose very brightness of timbre can become wearisome after a few tracks. The recorded sound is superb, and the booklet notes (by North himself, in unusually laid-back mode) are lengthy and informative. Highly recommended. *Lynda Sayce*

Il viaggio di Lucrezia: Mara Galassi arpa doppia 61' 56"
Glossa Nouvelle Vision GCD 921301
Music by Dentice, Frescobaldi, M. Galilei, Giovanni L. dell' arpa, Kapsberger, Luzzaschi, Mayone, Monteverdi, Piccinini, Trabaci & anon

This sounds much more robust and forthright than last month's harp solo disc; the music is stronger as well as the playing, and fits the harp well, despite being borrowed from various other media, mostly keyboard, but with a version of Monteverdi's *Ch'io t'ami* (Book V), fundamentally transformed to become an idiomatic harp piece: not just a transcription but a re-creation. The whole package is imaginative with original pictures by Héctor Ortega: a portrait (perhaps of the player) on the cover and four variants of a Neapolitan church in the booklet. The notes take the form of an imaginary exchange of letters (one is footnoted as genuine, unless that is part of the spoof) from Lucrezia Urbani. This is the most convincing of the several harp discs we have had lately. *CB*

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

LATE BAROQUE

Bach *Cantatas from Leipzig 1723/IV* Midori Suzuki, Kai Wessel, Makoto Sakurada, Peter Kooij SATB, Bach Collegium Japan, Masaaki Suzuki dir 67' 59"

BIS-CD-991

Cantatas 46, 95, 136, 138

I am a fully signed-up fan of Suzuki's Bach cantata series and this latest volume has all the qualities I've enjoyed from previous issues – marvellous solo singing (Kai Wessel and the wonderful Japanese tenor, Makoto Sakurada, long overshadowed by his now-departed counter-tenor colleague, Yoshikazu Mera, are the outstanding voices here, particularly the latter's amazing enunciation), a taut, bright chorus, mellifluous oboe playing (matched latter by the recorders) and incisive strings. The continuo is shared between harpsichord and organ. The disc also features a new *corno da tirarsi*, which sounds surprisingly cornett-like and doesn't cut through the texture as other substitutes sometimes have done. As an atheist, I am continually surprised by the ability of the non-Christian Suzuki to move me. Long may he continue to do so! BC

Bach *Lutheran Masses Vol. 2* Nancy Argenta, Michael Chance, Mark Padmore, Peter Harvey SATB, The [augmented] Purcell Quartet 64' 59" Chandos *Chaconne* CHAN 0653 Masses in F (BWV 233) & G (BWV 236) + Trio Sonata BWV 529 (arr Boothby)

As on the Purcell Quartet's first CD of Lutheran Missae (see *EMR* 53, 9/99 p. 32), the chorus movements are sung by just the four soloists. This instalment demonstrates even more vividly than its predecessor that Bach's chorus writing expects the same technical command and 'presence' as his solos and duets. Padmore and Harvey are as good as before; if Argenta is just a bit more dramatic and less airborne than Susan Gritton, that difference suits the repertoire. Of the four, only Chance disappoints, his low-lying phrases revealing a certain strain that I didn't hear in Robin Blaze. Once again there are just five strings (where Bach apparently wanted up to 11); but even in *tutti*s like BWV236/vi, or – with an energetic pair of horns – BWV233/ii and 233/vi, balance simply isn't a problem. The intimate acoustic and close miking aren't authentic: Bach's church was more reverberant, and his congregation heard the music from a greater distance. But the more musical among them were, I suspect, more used than we are to picking up the detail of Bachian counterpoint; and in any case they could see the performers, and were hearing them in three dimensions not two. We probably need this kind of clarity, this analytical soundscape, more than they did. This recording – with each singer or player sounding comfortable inside her/his own skin, and the whole group seeming stylistically at one – is both enjoyable and instructive: I shall return to it often. Eric Van Tassel

Congratulations to Eric for the success of his editorial labours on The Essential Bach Choir (see p. 4).

Bach *St. Matthew Passion* Eric Greene evangelist, Gordon Clinton Jesus, Pauline Brockless, Nancy Evans, Wilfred Brown, John Carol Case SATB, Eric Gritton pf, William Cole org, Ralph Vaughan Williams cond 151' 14" Pearl GEMS 0079 ££ 2 CDs rec 1958

Vaughan Williams first conducted the *Matthew Passion* with the Bach Choir in 1923; the first of many performances with the Leith Hill Festival was in 1931 (with nearly 800 singers). This was his last performance of the work, on 5 March 1958; he was 86 and died the following August. The recording was presumably a professional one; it was later broadcast, though has had to wait over forty years for the hoped-for commercial release. Listening to it is a curious experience, especially for a former VW fan. The style seems so unrelated to that to which we are now accustomed that it is probably nearer to what Mendelssohn produced in 1829. (The booklet is surely exaggerating by comparing the two.) Did the *Matthew Passion* really sound like this when I first heard it? (That was a leaner performance from Tobin, probably also in the late 50s.) I find the piano continuo rather endearing, and I'm not worried about the use of an English translation; for some performances at least we should give meaning precedence over sound. But the words are not as audible as one would like. The evangelist and Christ are impressive; the other soloists range down from Wilfred Brown to Nancy Evans (she surely sounds better on early Britten recordings). There is nice playing from the anonymous orchestra in some arias. But the whole effect is so foreign that it is difficult to react positively to the music: the performance continually gets in the way. This is probably how the work was normally heard in the first half of the last century – perhaps since the early performances of the Bach Choir; but as a composer, VW was prepared to take more liberties than the normal conductor; unfortunately, they are mostly in the opposite direction from that in which we have moved since. It is salutary to think that it meant as much to the audience as the leaner ones current at Leith Hill do now. Certainly worth hearing, but for a performance of our time, go to Herreweghe or perhaps the new Suzuki set (which hadn't arrived for review at the time of writing.) CB

The Matthew and John Passions are still sung on alternate years at the Leith Hill Festival, with a choir of about 250 assembled from smaller local choirs, conducted now by Brian Kay. Perhaps this does not qualify as an essential Bach choir (see p.4), but a period band is now used (Canzona) and in other respect the performances conform to current expectations (which may, in 42 years time, sound as quaint as the 1958 performance does).

Bach *Organ Works Vol. 10* Ton Koopman (Bader organ 1639 at St. Walburgiskerk, Zutphen) 154' 08" (2 CDs in box) Teldec *Das Alte Werk* 3984-24828-2 Breitkopf (Kimberger) Chorales & other chorale arrangements

57 organ chorales, most unknown even to organists (and a few probably unknown to

Bach) might seem a bit daunting. But, as ever, Ton Koopman spins his captivating magic spell. Koopman could make people listen if he played a piece of sliced bread. He is losing some of the excesses of articulation and over-dominant touch, but the inner pixie still peeps out on occasion (try track 4 for some exuberant ornamentation). The Zutphen organ (much of it dating back to 1638) is new to me. Although it might seem rather early for Bach, its emerging North German baroque characteristics suit the early Bach repertoire very well. Most of the pieces probably dated from Bach's Ohrdruf, Arnstadt and Mülhausen days, and show the influence of Pachelbel, Reincken and Buxtehude. In his intelligent notes, Christoph Wolff argues that these pieces probably stemmed from Bach's early teaching days, but were put aside after compositional styles changed around 1710, only to resurface when the publisher Breitkopf obtained the MSS from the posthumous papers of Anna Magdalena Bach and the widow of her son-in-law, Altnickol. About half the pieces (BWV 690-713) were formerly known as the Kimberger chorales, after Bach's pupil who, it is now assumed, copied from the original MSS owned by Breitkopf. The CD includes the Arnstadt 'congregational chorales', possibly examples of the sort of accompaniments that got the young Bach into trouble for confusing the congregation. English readers who would like to hear Bach's treatment of a chorale that they can recognize should try track 16. Andrew Benson-Wilson

Bach *on the Lute: the complete works for solo violin & solo cello in new transcriptions by Nigel North* Nigel North baroque lute 4 CDs Linn CKD 128

Linn has put the four separate discs into a single slip-case, which is a bit tight so probably will split if the discs are played as often as they deserve; the packaging of the individual discs is unchanged from their original releases as Linn CKD 013, 029, 049 & 055 in 1994-96. Most of Bach's lute music is equivocal in some way or other, so it is only natural for a lutenist to turn to the dozen solos and suites for unaccompanied violin and cello. The art of such transcription is to make the necessary adaptations without losing the character of the original. What is sometimes lost here is the way that Bach gives a full harmonic picture from single-line writing; but in other respects these discs are valuable for the way they enable us to hear the music from another perspective. CB

We will review a transcription by William Hazelzet for solo flute next month.

Clérambault *Le Triomphe d'Iris* Le Concert Spirituel, Hervé Niquet 77' 41" Naxos 8.554455 £

Anyone still unconvinced of the charms of the French baroque should risk a fiver on this latest in Naxos's substantial and important series of releases. Discs of Clérambault's cantatas and instrumental music are now complemented by this

charming one-act pastorale, which captures and keeps the interest by combining high quality musical invention, variety of timbre and texture, plenty of delightful dances and robust choruses and the occasional harmonic asperity. An almost negligible plot requires minimal recitative. The female soloists are delightful and the men have much more character than has been the case in several previous Niquet presentations. As in much later Rameau, the orchestra is also a principal participant, and it rises to the challenge, not least in the obligatory chaconne – a really fine example of the genre. The recording followed live performances at Versailles and Nancy and thus dramatic pacing and continuity are major strengths, important when the individual items are often short. The booklet (20 pages) gives the full libretto with parallel English. You really should go and buy it now. *David Hansell*

Couperin Messe pour les Convents Gunnar Svensson (organ of St. Nikolaj Church, Marcussen 1931) 60' 23"
Danachord DANOCD 515
Concludes with three improvisations

This must be the worst organ CD I have ever had to review, surpassing even Mr Svensson's previous effort. The organ is a audibly ageing example of the 1930s organ-reform movement, which attempted to recreate the North German organ of around Bach's time. To play Couperin on it is simply perverse and to play it with so little understanding of French baroque performance practice merely adds to the torment. There is no attempt at subtlety of touch or articulation, and the music is given no real sense of structure or melodic line. The interpolated chants, sung by four women, set the convent mood, although the rambling improvisations (in an indeterminate style) that conclude the CD rather take it away again. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

J. C. F. Fischer *Musical Parnassus* Vol. 1
Luc Beauséjour hpscd 60' 15"
Naxos 8.554218 £

Fischer's oft-cited forerunner to Bach's 48, *Ariadne musica*, was published a full 36 years before the suites on offer here, and occupies a somewhat different world. The *Musicalischer Parnassus* is a series of nine dance suites, each named after one of the Muses, but not really reflecting anything of their roles or qualities. The layout of each suite owes much more to Rameau than, say, Froberger, and actually there is a high degree of French influence, going as far as a full blown Lullian overture in *Calliope*, suite no. 2. The *Musical Parnassus* is pleasant enough but it is by no means great harpsichord music. In fact there's almost nothing in the way of true idiomatic writing save for the odd movement here and there. Whilst there are some enjoyable moments I found it all a bit vacuous, and Beauséjour's playing, which is effective and reliable, is a touch wooden. *Robin Bigwood*

Handel *Judas Maccabaeus* Fritz Wunderlich
Judas, Ludwig Welter Simon, *Eupolemus*,

Agnes Giebel *Israelite*, Naan Pöld *Israelite*, Julia Falk *Messenger*, Choir & Symphony Orchestra of Bavarian Radio, Rafael Kubelik 91' 46" (2 CDs in box)
Orfeo C 475 992 1 (rec 1963)

The main reason for issuing this radio recording of a much-cut *Judas Maccabaeus*, sung in German and dating from October 1963, is Wunderlich's commanding presence as Judas. His voice coupled sensitivity with athletic power, and it is the latter that is especially valuable in this role, one of Handel's most demanding for the tenor voice. Giebel also gives pleasure in what little remains of her part, but Welter is taxed by the higher notes in his. Kubelik's direction is inevitably of its time, but not everything is slow and ponderous, and the chorus 'Fall'n is the foe' at the start of Part 2 is impressively fiery. There is, however, another reason why the performance is historic, hinted at in the claim that it is 'In der Fassung und deutschen Übersetzung von Friedrich Chrysander'. Unfortunately the author of the inadequate booklet note fails to clarify (or indeed to understand) that the reference is not to the relevant volume of Chrysander's *Händel-Gesellschaft* edition, but to his performing edition. (He made several such editions of Handel's oratorios, but they are little known outside Germany.) The British Library has a vocal score of his *Judas* (dated 1906, though Chrysander died in 1901), which is indeed close to the version recorded here. I have not been able to make direct comparison of score and recording, but the cuts are identical (with exceptions noted below), the freely adjusted recitatives seem to be the same, and such quirks as the few bars of organ solo covering a massive cut before the chorus 'Hear us, O Lord' and the single chord replacing the orchestral introduction of 'Never, never bow we down' are all present. On the other hand Chrysander did not cut 'Father of Heav'n' and Eupolemus's recitative from Act 3, but they are missing here, despite the presence of 'Enpolemus' (*sic*) in the cast list. And his translation is not always followed, especially in the choruses. So this set has a wider relevance to Handelian *rezeptionsgeschichte* than first appears, but is spoiled by poor documentation of its contents. *Anthony Hicks*

Conductor's should beware of these Chrysander editions. Apart from cuts, the orchestral material is heavily marked with slurs, hairpins, etc. The sets I have seen were accompanied by the Urtext HG scores, which give no idea what is in the parts. CB

Handel *Susanna* Elisabeth von Magnus
Susanna, Sytse Buwalda Joacim, Ruth Holton
Attendant, Daniel, John Elwes 1st Elder, Tom Sol Chelsias, 2nd Elder, Kölner Kammerchor, Collegium Cartusianum, Peter Neumann dir 157' 48" (3 CDs in box)
Dabringhaus und Grimm 332 0945-2

This is a welcome follow-up to Neumann's *Saul* (see *EMR* 41, p. 18). He adopts Handel's first performing text of 1749 (as in the HHA score, lacking some passages printed by Chrysander) with the additional and

forgivable omission of two arias in the long exchange between Susanna and her husband Joacim in Act 1. Magnus nobly conveys the spiritual strength of the heroine, and in general the cast is excellent. A partial exception is the countertenor Buwalda as Joacim, a role written for the mezzo-soprano Caterina Galli. The vocal line lies high for the voice and he gives the impression of being permanently startled. (He clearly found the florid aria 'On the rapid whirlwind's wing' especially taxing, as 18 bars are discreetly omitted from the da capo.) Drew Minter on McGegan's 1990 *Harmonia Mundi* recording is preferable here, but otherwise there is little to choose between the interpretations, Neumann some times shaping the orchestral accompaniment more carefully and giving it richer tone, but also occasionally muddying it with organ continuo. Both conductors seem to me to misread Susanna's 'If guiltless blood' by adopting far too slow a tempo for the Andante main section; this is an aria of defiance, not resignation. Neumann's slightly warmer approach and his judicious curtailment of Act 1 makes his version a good introduction to the work for a non-specialist, but McGegan's presentation of the complete score, with several of Handel's pre-performance cuts opened up, remains the library choice. *Anthony Hicks*

Handel *Agrippina condotta a morire, Armida abbandonata, La Lucrezia* Eva Mei, Il Giardino Armonico, Giovanni Antonini 54' 57"
Teldec Das Alte Werk 3984 24571 2

Handel's depictions of three women in desperate straits are brought vividly to life by Eva Mei. Without sacrificing accuracy, she varies tone and dynamic to bring out the nuances of the text, and in the *Agrippina* and *Armida* cantatas Antonini sets apt tempi and sustains continuity across Handel's mixtures of recitative, arioso and formal aria, despite occasional and seemingly random use of delayed cadences. 'Dunque sarà pur vero' (i.e. *Agrippina condotta a morire*), which has a tendency to sprawl, is more coherent here than I have ever heard it. Mei's *Lucrezia* is also convincing, but the ending as she swears vengeance on Tarquin is rushed: it is more chilling in strict tempo. This is directed by the archlutenist Luca Pianca, whose questionable presence (and that of a theorbo as well as a harpsichord) in a continuo-only cantata makes for an overblown accompaniment, with various tricky effects. A solo violin unexpectedly appears to play the instrumental treble line closing the *cavata* 'Alla salma infedel', though this is a standard *si suona* line for the right hand of the harpsichordist. Nevertheless the disc is a fine addition to the recorded repertory of Handel cantatas. *Anthony Hicks*

Handel *at the Opera* Collegium Musicum 90, Simon Standage 66' 34"
Chandos Chaconne CHAN 0650
Instrumental music from *Alcina Ariodante*, *Arminio*, *Berenice*, *Rinaldo*, *Rodelinda* & *Serse*

This is an unusual disc in that it highlights Handel the opera composer without usi..g

any singers! Where we've had various recital discs from the leading sopranos and counter-tenors of the day, here we have much the same pattern (a mixture of overtures and miscellaneous instrumental music – the dream sequence from *Alcina*, for example – and a variety of arias in instrumental arrangements). As a programme, it works rather well, with a big string orchestra, double oboes and bassoons and a continuo section with one keyboardist and a solitary plucker. A flute and three recorders lend added colour. It's a logical enough follow-up to the group's Opus 6 set on Chandos, and I hope we'll soon have an Opus 3 recording from them, too. **BC**

Handel (attrib) Trio Sonatas Convivium (Elizabeth Wallfisch *vln*, Anthony Robson *ob*, Richard Tunnicliffe *vlc*, Paul Nicholson *hpscd*) 64' 15"
Hyperion CDA67083
HWV 380-385 & 393

The pedigree of the music is not the important issue here. Convivium have added the second sonata of the 'Dresden' sonatas to the dubious half-dozen 'oboe' trios to present seven pieces in unashamedly fine performances. With four such accomplished players, this was never really in doubt, and, indeed, it is their very advocacy that lends the music a new authority. The recorded sound and balance is masterful, and I can happily recommend this to Handelians (even if the music is by someone else) and chamber music fans alike. It's a real pleasure. **BC**

Pergolesi Il Flaminio Danieli Dessi *Flaminio*, Gennaro Sica *Polidoro*, Elena Zilio *Giustina*, Orchestra del Teatro di San Carlo di Napoli, Marcello Panni 151' 52" (2 CDs in box)
Warner Fonit 3984 29179-2 rec 1983

This will be more useful as a reference document than a source of aural pleasure. The recording is of a live performance and there are the usual hazards of coughing, clapping and stomping across the stage. The singing is not what most readers of these pages would consider stylistic (or stylish!), and some of the playing (particularly on the first of the CDs) is rather shaky. That aside, there is some nice music here (the notes make some attempt at highlighting the cuts made, and hint at additions – such as a bit of Stravinsky at the end of Act II), and, though utterly unintelligible without a translation of the Neapolitan sections into Italian (let alone an English version!), some of the opera is quite entertaining. As it's unlikely that the work will ever be recorded again, fans of Pergolesi will simply have to bite the bullet. **BC**

D. Scarlatti Cantatas Cyrille Gerstenhaber S, XVIII-21. *Musique des Lumières*, Jean-Christophe Frisch *dir* 70' 05"
Aavidis Astrée E 8673
Che vidi oh Ciel, O qual meco Nice, Pur nel sonno

We so rarely hear anything other than harpsichord music by Domenico Scarlatti that a disc of his cantatas is intriguing,

especially so in that this contains three late works, written after he settled in Spain and possibly intended for the great castrato Farinelli. These are extremely dramatic (far more so than those of his father, at least as demonstrated on the new McGegan disc reviewed above), and show hints of his harpsichord style. Cyrille Gerstenhaber meets the challenge magnificently. Sometimes she dramatises arias in a way which, on musical grounds, cannot be sustained right through, but it is a nice touch to surprise the listener by avoiding an expected cadenza. A further point of interest is the use of a Cristofori-style fortepiano such as Farinelli owned; how much of the almost Chopinesque solo line in the Sinfonia to *Pur nel sonno* is notated? The dating of the cantatas is not quite as recent as one might think from the notes: Malcolm Boyd's book was published in 1986. Why are the texts printed orange on orange? – this is one of the worst examples of design defeating legibility I have seen. But despite the packaging, buy it. **CB**

Telemann Keyboard Fantasias John Butt *hpscd* 73' 58"
Harmonia Mundi HMU 907176

I was very disappointed when I bought the Bärenreiter edition (probably in the year John Butt was born): the music seemed thin and the idea of repeating the whole of one fantasia after the next seemed very lazy, especially since each fantasia itself had the opening movement played twice anyway. So I don't think I've looked at it since, apart from writing the TWV number on the cover. But then I was playing it on the piano, and this recording shows it to be excellent harpsichord music, the two-part writing sounding very full. The use of two excellent original instruments helps, the Edinburgh Goermans/Taskin (1764/83) and Hass (1764), both of which just fall into Telemann's lifetime, though he published the fantasias back in 1732-3. The playing is lively and sensitive and makes a very good case for these three dozen pieces. 20 of them are recorded here; it is left to the player of the disc to engineer the repeat of the first fantasia for the five pairs that are included. **CB**

CLASSICAL

J. C. Bach Endimione Vasiljka Jezovsek *Diana*, Anna Monoyios *Nice*, Jörg Waschinski *Amore*, Jörg Hering *Endimione*, Vokalensemble Köln, Cappella Coloniensis, Bruno Weil *dir* 106' 05" (2 CDs in box)
DHM 05472 77525 2

'... you think it is a newly discovered work of Mozart!' proclaims a caption on the back of this boxed-set 'world premier recording'. I think not, is my response. Fine music, I'm sure, but nothing I'd ever mistake for Mozart, and rather a naughty bit of advertising! It is an interesting serenata for four soloists (including a male soprano in the role of Cupid), choir and a full orchestra, with aria obbligati for flute, oboe and horn. The pacing seems just

right, so Bruno Weil's affinity with this 'damn good' music is genuine enough. The singing (both solo and tutti) is excellent. In the final analysis, though, the piece just did not set me alight – it's all very nice, and it was extremely interesting to read the booklet notes explaining the political and historical background, but there was just no spark of excitement. **BC**

W. F. Bach Das Orgelwerk Wolfgang Baumgratz (Holzhay organ, 1797, Kloster-kirch Neresheim) 78' 34"
Christophorus CHR 4006 (rec 1991)

In his day, Wilhelm Friedemann was seen as the finest of Bach's musician sons, with a reputation as a brilliant organ improviser. History has not been kind to him, and his few surviving organ works can appear worthy but rather dull, without any of the quirkily appealing character of his brother Emanuel or of his father's favourite pupil, Krebs. But this CD is not to be too lightly dismissed. The chief attraction is the magnificent Neresheim organ, spread liberally over the west wall of a vast South German Abbey with around eight seconds of reverberation and a console that allows the player a view of the entire church. Although relatively closely recorded, the acoustic makes itself felt. Those who are sensitive to the pitch of the chime will have some trouble with the opening note of track 11 – it took me three goes before I could stop myself from hearing the piece start an octave and a fifth higher than it did! Baumgratz makes an effort to relieve the tedium of 16 fugues with a generally sound choice of registrations, although using an undulating sound for a fugal chorale prelude (track 15) produces some odd effects. The slithery fugue subject of track 6 is worth a listen. **Andrew Benson-Wilson**

Cartellieri Wind Concertos Vol. 2 Dieter Klöcker & Sandra Arnold *cl*, Kornelia Brandkamp *fl*. Czech Philharmonic Chamber Orch, Pavel Pranti *leader* 59' 44"
Dabringhaus & Grimm MDG 301 0960-2

Cartellieri wins this month's award for the most astonishing opening – the concerto for two clarinets begins with a single (very loud) timpani. Then we're off on a mad flurry of semiquaver runs in thirds and sixths (though that's far too simple a description). Like von Schacht, whose concertos for one, two and three clarinets were championed by Dieter Klöcker on a CD I reviewed a few years ago, Cartellieri is a gifted melodist, clever harmonist and knows when the listener has had enough of a good thing. These are modern-instrument performances and the clarinets are as mellifluous as you like, but they are thoroughly enjoyable, and I don't think there'd be any serious gain from period instruments – they're light-hearted party-pieces, brilliantly played and tremendous fun. **BC**

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

Clementi 3 *Sonatas op. 40, 4 Monferrinas*
op. 49 John Khouri (on Clementi pf c.1806-7)
Music and Arts D-1055 66' 09"

John Khouri takes a distinctly robust approach to this music, with the opening allegro showing that he can exploit its fun and character as well as its energy. Tempi are appropriate throughout and the presto at the end of the second sonata has splendid zip. There is a good description of the Clementi fortepiano from the Frank De Bellis collection in San Francisco in the notes; it has been excellently restored and regulated and its sonority is outstandingly fine. The forte chords at the opening of the third sonata are, however, rather forced instead of offering breadth of sound, and the dolce in the allegro does not quite offer a soothing contrast. Margaret Cranmer

Dussek *Music for harp* Elena Zaniboni
Arts 47221-2 ££ 79' 04"
Sonatines 1-6, Sonatas in Bb, c (by Madame Dussek),
E♭ flat (op. 34/1) & F (*The Lass of Richmond Hill*)

Dussek's harp music provides an ideal background for sitting back and enjoying a good book – there's nothing too demanding on the ear, and, in these performances, where the harp's somewhat watery, dreamy sound is exploited to the full, it's perfectly relaxing. At nearly 80 minutes, you might expect to get tired of it all, but I listened to it twice right through, in fact, without even noticing! BC

Solo concertos by Johan Agrell, Ferdinand Zellbell, Hinrich Philip Johnsen Maria Bania fl, Asa Akerberg vlc, Lars Henriksson ob, Anders Danman hpscd, Mats Klingfors, Christian Beuse bsns, Concerto Copenhagen, dir. Andrew Manze 67' 08"
Musica sveciae MSCD 411 rec 1994
Agrell *Flute concerto*, Oboe concerto; Johnsen *Concerto for two bassoons*; Zellbell *Movement from Bassoon concerto*, Cello concerto

This is a welcome re-issue. The music is light late baroque, and the playing very good. The strings accompany their wind and keyboard soloists with heaps of style. The concerto for two bassoons (the second I know for this combination, after the one attributed to Vanhal) was perhaps the most successful, but the others are very enjoyable, too. The double bass just occasionally growls in the cello concerto, but otherwise another testament to the high quality of music making in 18th-century Sweden and 20th-century Denmark. BC

The State Funeral of Horatio, Lord Viscount Nelson The Choir of Portsmouth Cathedral, David Thorne org, David Price dir 76' 24"
Herald HAVPCD 232

A fine idea for a concert in the naval (or is it now ex-naval?) city of Portsmouth. Nelson's funeral service in St Pauls early in 1806 was a monumental affair, with a choir of 100 or so professionals, but no orchestra. In fact, most of the service is a normal evensong, and the interest in the disc is as much in the chance of hearing a Mag &

Nunc by Attwood and responses by Ayleward than for the historic commemoration. The effect is diminished by the spoken sections being too quiet. One senses that the trebles are stretched beyond their limit, and this is amply confirmed in the concluding piece (Haydn's *Te Deum* for the Empress Marie Therese, which was not part of the original funeral service but which had been performed in Nelson's honour when he visited Vienna in 1800). It is an interesting disc. I doubt if I will play it right through again, though I may look out individual items; but the booklet, by Colin White of the Royal Naval Museum, is first rate: substantial and informative. CB

19th CENTURY

Chopin, Field Helge Antoni pf 57' 37"
Etcetera Crossfire KTC 1231

The cover of the booklet with this disc is striking in its design, but it does not list any of the works or explain that the Crossfire Series (of which this is the first recording) presents familiar and unknown works by different composers who influenced each other, or who are connected in some other way. The performer is laid back but not casual, and his playing is smooth with a good sense of line. Although Helge Antoni plays a Fazioli (modern) grand piano, his additional ornamentation fits the style of the music and is highly effective without being obtrusive. Listen out for the decoration on the second phrase of sighs at the end of Field's C minor nocturne and the way that ornamentation leads the phrase upwards in Chopin's posthumous A minor waltz. Margaret Cranmer

20th CENTURY

Debussy *La musique de chambre* Sigiswald vln, vla, Veronica vln, Sara vla, Wieland vlc, Barthold fl Piet Kuijken pf, Sophie Hallynck hp 71' 00"
Arcana A 303

I'm not sure if we should be reviewing this here. Despite expectations that the names of the performers give, Sigiswald states in the booklet: 'we are not presenting a historic or historicising or historically authentic Debussy'. This is undermined by the listing of the instruments each player uses: one doesn't normally hear Debussy on an 1894 Erard piano, and the maker's number is given for the 1926 harp from the same firm, and on a normal Debussy disc they wouldn't be mentioned at all anyway. Another Kuijken creeps in as maker of the cello (dated 1999), but the booklet does not answer the obvious question: where does Sophie Hallynck fit in.

I haven't been listening in any historic frame of mind. I am very glad to have the major chamber works on one disc – the string quartet, *Syrinx* and the three late sonatas – since I've written programme notes on them without having heard them for years. The performances are fully satisfying, and one wonders whether the slight emotional distancing that is so often just

right for Debussy might be used a little more in place of the in-your-face manner favoured by some early-musicians. CB

VARIOUS

Ama: *We the Basques* Coro Easo 62' 53"
Opus 111 OPS 30-271

This comprises a 96-page, hard-back book (trilingual and well-illustrated) in CD format with a CD of Basque music sung by a male-voice choir. The musical remarks are devoted to traditional music, with no links to the music on the CD. This is entirely 20th-century; it would be nice to have been told something about it and its relationship to folk music. The choir, established with difficulty in 1937 during the civil war, is in command of its material. If we had followed our first idea of a weekend trip to Bilbao last half-term, this would have made a pleasant souvenir: but there were no convenient flights, so we went to Dublin, where there's no shortage of local recordings showing a much more varied approach to traditional material. CB

A Thousand Years in Thy Sight: a celebration of sacred music for the Millennium The Choir of Guildford Cathedral, Geoffrey Morgan org, Andrew Millington dir 60' 02"
Herald HAVPCD 240

This skips through the token first half of the millennium in ten minutes. The 16th century is represented by Parsons: the *Ave Maria*. Two pieces justified the disc for me. I was very glad to be reminded of Cavalli's male-voice *Salve Regina* (confusingly listed as Pietro rather than Francesco); the *violoncino overo tiorba* prescribed in the 1656 edition is omitted (a change at my normal complaint at superfluous string bass instruments in early baroque music). Gibbons' 'record of John' is equally valid with organ as with viols, but it seems a bit pointless to have Handel and Haydn choruses with organ rather than orchestra – though the Gloria for the St Nicholas mass is at least sung better than the *Te Deum* on the Nelson Funeral disc reviewed above. The other highlight is Jonathan Harvey's *Come, Holy Ghost*, an imaginative setting based on chant. The director's Millennium Hymn which follows is, in the context, a let-down. The individual performances are fine, but the millennial theme is not enough to sustain so disparate an anthology. CB

I have a conscience about Herald. They sent us several discs this month, but the two that were relevant for review happened to be the weakest. I was much more impressed by O be joyful in the Lord: 175 years of English church music (HAVPCD 241) recorded at St Luke's, Chelsea by its current choir and directors of music. It is a fine and well-performed anthology of the best of English church music of the last two centuries, including an anthem by the church's first organist (Goss's *The Wilderness*) and one by a subsequent organist there, Ireland's fine Greater love; curiously, I once sang it at St Luke's in a service which also included Taverner's *Missa Gloria tibi Trinitas*. Most pieces sound very Anglican, but the Tippett (two of the Child of our Time spirituals) and Taverner (*A Hymn to the Mother of God*) come from another world. CB

The Ultimate Recorder Collection including music by Vivaldi, Satie, Handel, Grieg, Bach [etc] Michaela Petri (with various accompaniments) 147' 19" (2 CDs) BMG 74321 59112 2

The first disc starts with a Vivaldi's *Spring*, for which a recorder isn't an adequate substitute for a violin (George Malcolm does his best to turn sections into a harpsichord concerto) then a piano piece by Satie for recorder and guitar, and a song and dance from Grieg's *Peer Gynt* music, before we reach Handel's a genuine recorder sonata op. 1/2. Other recorder music follows, but I suspect that our readers will be put off by the arrangements, despite the brilliance of the playing, while Petri fans will have the recordings from which they derive. But a useful present for a child who doesn't know whether the recorder is worth taking seriously. At least there are booklet notes with information on each piece – a rarity on such repackagings these days. CB

JORDI SAVALL EDITION

Twenty of Jordi Savall's recordings for Auvidis have been reissued at mid-price – far too many to review, but many of them obviously bargains that are worth seizing. Personally, I'd concentrate on the discs featuring Savall as solo gambist and as exponent of Spanish music: I'm not always entirely convinced when he moves into other repertoires; but his vitality always shines through, whatever he is recording.

- ES9919 Hume *Musical humors*
- RS9920 Handel *Water Music suites I & II, Fireworks Music*
- ES9921 Locke *Consort of Fower Parts*
- ES9922 Purcell *Fantasias*
- ES9923 Coprario *Consort Musicke*
- ES9924 Cererols *Missa pro defunctis, Missa de Batalla*
- ES9925 Enzina *Romances & Villancicos*
- ES9926 Morales *Officium defunctorum, Missa pro defunctis a5*
- ES9927 Milà(n) *Fantasies, pavaues & galarades*
- ES9928 Sor *Ariette italiane, seguidillas & variaciones*
- ES9929 Charpentier *Canticum ad BVM*
- ES9930 Couperin *Pièces de Violes*
- ES9931 Du Caurroy *XXIII Fantasies*
- ES9932 Marais *Pièces de viole, livre IV*
- ES9933 Sainte Columbe *Concerts à deus violes esgales*
- ES9934 Purcell *Fairy Queen & Dioclesian*
- ES9935 Haydn *The Seven Last Words (orch)*
- ES9936 Monteverdi *Vespers 1610*
- ES9937 *Cançons de la Catalunya millenària*
- ES9938 Joan of Arc

Peter Berg has pointed out three misprints of disc numbers last month:

- p. 16 Biber/Walther CHR 77222
- p. 17 Marais: 7243 5 45458 2
- p. 18 Bach 6 Sonaten 910 047-2

Readers should find it easy to detect the last section of *EMR* to be written by the frequency of misprints. Apologies for last month's page 23.

LETTER

Dear Mr Bartlett,
I found Stephen Daw's dismissive review of the new recording of BWV 1014-1019 by Marianne Rónez and Ernst Kubitschek bordering on the offensive. Leaving aside our strongly divergent assessments of its musical merits (I think it the finest recording yet of these works), his remarks give the impression that the performers are scarcely more than amateurs at baroque performance practice. He may not be aware that Marianne Rónez has conducted more research on baroque bows and bowing techniques than perhaps any other scholar. She is also a world-renowned expert on the viola d'amore. Her husband, Dr Kubitschek, is a leading Biber authority and has edited his music for DTO.

This is not the first time Stephen Daw has rubbished ground-breaking Bach recordings. His hostile reaction to La Stravaganza Hamburg's amazing Brandenburgs (Virgin) a couple of years back made me just as angry. As with the new review, he implied on that occasion that the conductor, Siebert Rampe, was hopelessly out of touch with recent musicology – apparently in ignorance of Rampe's scholarly publications on Bach, Mozart and Froberger.

Returning to the violin sonatas, the new recording might be criticised for its poor documentation and awkward packaging, but I found Rónez's uncompromising authenticity (a word I still find useful) very refreshing. I strongly recommend *EMR* readers to listen to it and make up their own minds.
Andrew O'Connor

I didn't play any of the recording before I sent it for review, so cannot make a personal comment. However, a couple of other magazines arrived with reviews of the disc soon after Andrew's e-mail, and neither were enthusiastic. In BBC Music Magazine (April 2000), Graham Lock writes: 'In comparison [with Andrew Manze etc.] Rónez and Kubitschek seem gauche'. In Gramophone (April 2000), Nicholas Anderson calls it 'A cheerless account', though is also unenthusiastic about Manze: in fact, he has yet to find a version that he likes. CB

Information from Bruno Turner:

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NUNTII LATINI

www.yle.fi/fbc/latini
nuntii.latini@yle.fi

Europe: normally via Hotbird 5 (13 deg. e)

MORE ON MESSIAH

Over Christmas I had sight of a local paper which commented on the 'exaltation' (sic, but unintentionally appropriate) of the 'soprano' who ascended the pulpit to sing 'The trumpet shall sound'. That doesn't appear to be an option in your excellent edition.
Ann Bond

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