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One of our readers recently phoned to order a few scores, saying that she was no expert but wanted to follow them while listening to recordings. It surprises me how rarely this happens now. I built up my own large collection of scores because, from my late teens till I was in my thirties, I generally tried to get hold of a score of everything I heard. It wasn't always possible, though fortunately my interest in the remoter corners of early music overlapped with my working in a library with a good music collection and the invention of photocopying: I've xerox copies going back to 1963 on my shelves. I find it easier to perceive the shape of a piece of music if I have it visually before me, and it is often instructive to see what a performer has done to interpret the notation. I also like to keep scores as a souvenir of music I have performed, and used to be very annoyed when contemporary pieces were only on hire and had to be handed back after the concert. But non-specialists seem not to buy scores now – most of our sales relate to performances, not general curiosity.

Strangely, my use of scores now is very different. I still play from them, of course. But now listening to the music and consulting the score tend to be different activities, unless I need to follow the words when reviewing CDs; if the language is one of which I have a smattering of knowledge, I'd rather see them underlaid than set out in small print with translation in a CD booklet. Otherwise, I often use scores without converting what is on the page mentally into music. There is much information that is more efficiently obtained visually than by playing a recording – scoring, vocal distribution, degree of difficulty and formal aspects that people phone to ask about or which I need to check for writing programme notes. Scores are now one of the tools of my trade. I wonder what has happened to young enthusiasts and whether it is a good thing that money is spent on CDs to the almost complete exclusion of scores. But perhaps my own relationship to printed music is an aberration.

This is the shortest issue we have had for some time, chiefly because the number of CDs we received during January was so small. The post-Christmas period is notoriously bad for sales of books and recordings, but the number of releases relevant to us does seem to have been exceptionally low. We hope that is only a temporary phenomenon. *CB*

BOOKS & MUSIC

Clifford Bartlett

ISTAMPITTAS

Michele Temple *The Middle Eastern Influence on Late Medieval Italian Dances: Origins of the 29987 Istampittas.* (*Studies in Dance*, Vol. 2.) The Edwin Mellen Press, 2001. xi + 153pp, $79.95. ISBN 0 7734 7428 5

The most substantial collection of medieval instrumental music before the Faenza Codex is the group of dances included in a late-14th-century Italian manuscript now in the British Library (Additional 29987) – substantial not only for the number of pieces (15) but for their length, which vastly exceeds the length of those in the next-biggest collection, Paris BN français 844, a century or so older. The London pieces are certainly unlike any other extant medieval music, and it is quite reasonable to wonder whether the difference might be attributable to some exotic influence: sometimes the accidentals give quite an oriental or Arabic feel. As the author rightly states, the number of scholars who are familiar both with medieval European music and with Arabic language and culture is minuscule, so her remarks on the characteristics of Arabic music are of interest and to a certain extent suggestive. However, the arguments are not nearly rigorous enough (and are not helped by most of point 5 at the foot of p. 61 being excised by the typesetter or printer – there is also an omission of footnotes 10-14 of chapter IV at the foot of p. 133) and many of the alleged common features could have origins other than direct imitation. One continually finds her citing limited or dated literature on the Western aspects of her study, so one wonders how much to trust the breadth of her Arabic scholarship. Ironically, her list of features of Islamic music actually comes from a book that many musicologists will own: the report of the 1977 IMS congress. I would be happier, too, if the study were based on more scholarly transcriptions. She is concerned with the use of accidentals, so the editions should be meticulous in showing every accidental in the source: there is no way the reader can tell if the various editions quoted here suppress 'superfluous' accidentals within a bar or represent the original accurately, apart from checking the murky facsimile of *Tre fontane*. The three examples of Machaut and Landini quoted as a basis for comparison with the Istampitta style (a fairly naive exercise anyway) are barely-legible reproductions of old editions. I would have thought that a better, if historically more remote, model would have been the Notre-Dame organa, where the music shares one important feature in common with the istampittas: the absence of text. So a disappointing book (and expensive at nearly $2 per page): promising enough if it was (as the blurb may imply) an MA thesis, but not strong enough to make its by-no-means-implausible case and not professional enough either in its writing or its publishing to be presented as a scholarly monograph.

SCIENCE & MUSIC

Jamie C. Kassler *Music, Science, Philosophy: Models in the Universe of Thought* (*Variorum Collected Studies Series*, CS713). Ashgate, 2001. xvi + 301pp, £55.00. ISBN 0 86078 862 8

I was reading an article in a *Sunday Times* colour supplement recently in which the author claimed that the first Mrs Hawkins was wiser than Stephen. His folly is his certainty that science was about to solve all questions (presumably with a more complicated answer than 42). I suspect that this book, devoted to musical aspects of the history and philosophy of science, would only confirm his belief in contemporary superiority. But a notable feature of Kassler's writing is an absence of any such comparison. The ideas of Harvey and Hobbes, for instance, touch on important and universal matters and are discussed with care and attention. I must confess that my own scientific knowledge is inadequate to evaluate (indeed, sometimes to understand) what Kassler is writing about. I'm not in any way blaming him. His writing is clear and no more technical than it need be. With time and patience, the non-specialist will learn much about the importance of music in the history of science and about scientific aspects of the history of music. I have come away from it with a far greater respect for the ideas of the past and a greater scepticism of our own certainties (though the latter is my own gloss: it is not a point that Kassler is explicitly concerned with). Unlike other volumes in the series, the articles from which it is compiled have been reset and, to an extent I have not checked, rewritten. I found it stimulating, if somewhat remote from my normal historical interests.

VICTORIA

Eugene Casjen Cramer *Studies in the Music of Tomás Luis de Victoria* Ashgate, 2001. xxiv + 320pp, £42.50. ISBN 0 7546 0241 9

The standard English book devoted substantially to Victoria, Robert Stevenson's *Spanish Cathedral Music in the Golden Age*, is now forty years old and there is room (indeed a need) for a new and comprehensive study. This, however, does not quite fill the gap, since it is more in the nature of Ashgate's Variorum series: a collection of eight individual chapters that have not been turned into a coherent account of the composer. The nearest it comes is the closing chapter 'An overview of Victoria's Life and Work', which interspersed biography with analyses of sample works. I would have thought that it should have come first. Elsewhere, two themes predominate: Victoria's widespread reuse of musical fragments from one work to another, and his more functional liturgical music. For the former Cramer uses the word 'intertextuality', though the phenomenon is musical

and not necessarily dependent on verbal relationships, so it doesn't seem to be a helpful term. I was surprised that there was no attempt to compare Victoria's practice with that of the most studied 'borrower', Handel, whose practice has been debated since his lifetime. The music examples would have been easier to follow if they had been set out with a lot more ingenuity so that parallel passages were on the same opening; and I suspect that the tables would be more readily understood if they had been squashed so that they did not extended beyond a page. It seems a pity that so much effort is devoted to the rather workaday *falsobordone* settings and identifying new attributions that are unlikely to add much to Victoria's stature or to be sung, though they merge into the Passions, which have been exceptionally highly regarded by music historians.

I am puzzled that Cramer treats a pair of *alternatim* Magnificats in the same tone with different scorings as a single work, though the odd and even verses were printed separately. (I would have thought that anyone reaching p. 244 of this book wouldn't need a translation of the text; the one feature useful for his discussion – the numbering of the verses, which may well not be in the reader's head – is omitted.) Cramer is assiduous in stating the original clefs of each piece he mentions, though it hardly impinges on what he writes about them. Odd references, however, suggest that he believes they give some idea of the different voices for which they are written, and he rejects the usual theory that high and low clefs come out at the same pitch-level, whatever that be. Unfortunately, he does not present any arguments on this. Despite the final chapter, this is primarily a book for specialists.

JENKINS

John Jenkins *Fantasia-Suites: I* Transcribed and edited by Andrew Ashbee. (*Musica Britannica* 78.) Stainer & Bell, 2001. xxxiv + 151pp, £78.00. ISBN 0 85249 866 7

This contains 10 fantasia-suites for two trebles, bass and organ and 15 fantasia-air sets for the same combination. They correspond to the Viola da Gamba Society Index Group II & VII, though MB gives its own numbers (running on from 11-27) to the Group VII pieces, the extra two items being two extra airs in e minor which the VdsGS numbering appended to No. 7 [MB 17]. It is sensible for the volume to number its contents consecutively, but I hope musicologists and performers will stick to the VdGS numbers. The editor reckons that the treble parts of Group VII were written for violins (though that does not, of course, stop treble violists from playing them), while he leans towards viols for Group II. Group II includes written-out organ parts, mostly *colla parte* when the other instruments play, but with solo sections. Group VII has a sparsely-figured single-line part. In view of the theory that organists often played from scores and were expected to double the parts (as the part of group II does), it should have been made explicit in the 'Notes on Performance' that the music survives in parts, not score, so the organist would only have had the bass part in front of him. One cannot postulate that he played from a score in a different format that hasn't survived, since, if so, there would have been no purpose in the surviving organ part. Although the MB score does not contain a realisation, there is one included in the parts which are published separately. Before I leave the matter of instrumentation, it seems unscholarly to me that instrument headings to the staves that are not supported by the sources are printed in normal type rather than indicated as editorial.

These are, however, trivial criticisms in comparison with the excellence of the music and its presentation. I'm not sure if I would want to listen to all Group VII in one sitting, as one can do with a recent CD by the Locke Consort from Channel Classics CCS 17698, though I'm looking forward to hearing it more selectively (we haven't had a review copy yet). But it's marvellous music and only the dearth of chamber organs makes one pessimistic at the prospects of good sales for the instrumental parts that have been produced in conjunction with the volume. Group VII is good value at £25.00, including an editorial organ part. Group II looks better value at £20.00, but it has no organ part so the player needs to buy the score, at nearly four times that price, or buy offprints of individual pieces from the publisher. The organist needs a part to avoid page-turns in the fantasias anyway, and the bound MB volume is a bit hefty for the music stands of some instruments, so why not a complete set of parts? There I go – being critical again. The lack of instruments will no doubt eventually be remedied when a skilled enthusiast has created a plausible sound that can be called up by any old keyboard through a PC. So far, I've just been gazing at the score in frustrated admiration.

MUSIC AT BURGHLEY

A Descriptive Catalogue of the Music Collection at Burghley House, Stamford Compiled by Gerald Gifford. Ashgate, 2002. x + 432pp, £55.00. ISBN 0 7546 0460 8

The book is inscribed to the memory of Charles Cudworth, who first investigated the library at Burghley House forty or more years ago. Gerald Gifford has been working on the collection for over 20 years – he has, in fact, recorded some of the music there – and has produced a careful and thorough catalogue of its contents. There are over 50 pages of introduction on the musical activities at the house, mostly in the second half of the 18th century. The key figure is the ninth Earl of Exeter (1725-93), who was an amateur musician with an involvement in various professional events, such as the Ancient Music and the Handel Commemoration. His collection was extensive, though not particularly startling. Not many manuscripts, for instance: some Pergolesi, five operas by Vinci and a few other items (presumably not major sources, though the catalogue does not step beyond describing the objects themselves), but none of the wealth of Italian music that Lord Fitzwilliam was acquiring at roughly the same time. The printed collection looks quite substantial, but is mostly of London editions. The cataloguing is thorough – perhaps unnecessarily so for this type

of collection. I wonder, for instance, whether the detailed breakdown of part-distribution of *Six Overtures... from the Late Operas... by Hasse, Vinci, Galuppi & Porpora* will be used by anyone except those who will need to see an original or facsimile anyway. And it would surely have been adequate to state what sections of the Arnold Handel edition are missing rather than catalogue each item separately. I'm puzzled by the relationship between bibliographical entity and physical volume. Arnold volumes are listed with individual 'accession numbers', though it is clear from the description that some groups are bound together: there's a batch on pp. 216-217, for instance. But the grouping is not always unequivocal, so the catalogue, despite its detail, is confusing. There is no relationship between the numbering and the layout on the shelves. That is kept as a private matter, since the collection is inaccessible. But one use of a catalogue is to describe a collection as a whole, not just its contents, and scholars centuries hence would find this a defect. 'Accession number', incidentally, is a misnomer: they are merely arbitrary even numbers of convenience added in the order of catalogue entry.

Knowing about Burghley (which is just off the A1 south of Stamford) made me curious about other country house libraries. I once, in my music-librarian days, tried to get the National Trust interested, but the one meeting we had didn't get very far. (There seems to have been more success in Scotland: see p. 12.) Our nearest big house, Hinchingbrooke, features here, since the Sandwiches and Exeters shared musical tastes; but the family moved out at roughly the time Charles Cudworth got interested in Burghley, so no music is left. This is a handsome volume. Apart from revealing the wealth of an inaccessible collection of music, it will be useful for the detailed bibligraphical information on a cross-section of 18th-century music (the 19th century music, mostly for piano, is not covered with the same detail). It is perverse for the cataloguer not to tell us whether an isolated Purcell bass part contains 10 or 12 *Sonata's*.

BÄRENREITER TELEMANN, HANDEL & MOZART

Bärenreiter published two volumes of 'Paris quartets' in vol. 18 & 19 of the *Musikalische Werke* in editions by Walter Bergmann. The description of the first set, the *Quadri* of 1730, as Paris Quartets was misleading, and the volume has apparently retrospectively been renamed (though, unlike a car with a manufacturer's modification, you can't return it for a new title page and cover). A performing edition of vol. 19 has just appeared (BA 5881 & 5882, each £27.00), with the original title *Nouveaux Quatuors en Six Suites (Paris 1738)* chosen as the main title (though the latest Bärenreiter catalogue still lists them under Paris, which for this set is reasonable, though it will be a lot less confusing if the Paris name is abandoned in favour of the specific titles). The set is available in facsimile, but for those who prefer modern print, this is a fine edition. Each of the two volumes has three quartets, and includes, in addition to the expected parts, a figured copy of the bass part, which keyboard players should try to use; it does, however, seem a waste to print the realised part separately as well; players who can't read the bass might as well use the score, and an unused bass part might encourage a superfluous cellist to play the continuo line which, of course, mostly doubles the *basse de viole* or *violoncelle* part. Curiously, despite being a pioneer of authentic performance practice, Bergmann didn't believe in harpsichordists playing from the bass. His realisations in the score are modest and sensible.

Flavio has not been among the most-frequently revived of Handel's operas, perhaps because the plot is quite difficult to follow and the tone is rather more varied than the conventional image of baroque opera – modern directors seem to prefer a serious work that they can make fun of rather than one whose tone is more complex. Merill Knapp's full score appeared as HHA II/13 in 1993 (£120.50); the recent vocal score (BA 4046a; £26.00) is more accessibly priced and would be a convenient substitute for most purposes, though a note at the beginning of each aria listing the instrumentation would save a lot of bother for those compiling recital programmes. The footnotes on performance practice are a bit hit-and-miss. In the Overture, it isn't only bar 2 where upbeats might be shortened, and in no. 3, a more general note is needed on the extent to which dotted rhythms might be softened to triplets and equal notes made unequal, not just a note on bar 31; compare the violin in bar 3 with the voice in bar 15 and with the bass in both bars, for instance. The text is in Italian with a modern German version. The information on the back of the title page is wrong, giving editor and volume number of *Rinaldo*, though the right BA number.

I don't want to seem obsessed about weight, but the new *Figaro* (BA 4565b; £29.50) is much heavier than the Novello and Boosey vocal scores I knew in my youth, and much longer. They benefited, too, from English alternatives to the Italian, though at least Bärenreiter has the Italian on top of the German. But this stays open easily on a piano stand (provided it is strong enough) and the hard-back version will enable it to stand heavy wear. It includes two additions from the 1789 production (K 579 & 577). Would a version with an English underlaid text be worthwhile? This, if any Italian opera, benefits from translation.

Two Mozart study scores reproduce the NMA text with extensive new introductions. The plural in *Trios for Strings* (TP 319; £5.00) is a bit of an exaggeration, since the main work is accompanied by two movements of an incomplete trio for two violins and bass K 266 and two fragments. Sadly, the trio preludes to and arrangements of fugues from Bach's '48' are not included: I don't know of an accessible edition so, despite some doubt of their authenticity, their presence here would have been useful. There is no authoritative source for the *Divertimento* and the editor is suspicious of the dynamics and articulation of the first edition. He writes: 'On the grounds that a reconstruction of Mozart's original markings is completely illusory, we have therefore dispensed with the NMA's customary typographical distinc-

tion between original markings and editorial additions.' That would, under the circumstances, be acceptable if the NMA critical commentary were included, but it isn't. So the user has no idea whether the markings date from 1792 or 1975.

Normal editorial practice is followed for *The Thirteen Early String Quartets* (TP 318; £16.50). Most editions only have the later ten. This comprises one isolated early piece written in an Italian pub on 15 March 1771 and two sets of six from 1772-3 which would probably be performed rather more if Mozart had not gone on to write the later ten. The popular divertimenti K 136-8 (which are often played as quartets) are not included here. This is a substantial, 200-page volume, useful in its own right as well as an incitement to buy the parts (BA 4847-50; £9.50 each set).

BREITKOPF MOZART & BEETHOVEN

Breitkopf has enlisted a leading Mozart scholar, Cliff Eisen, and the scholar/performer Robert Levin to provide a new edition of what is usually thought of as Mozart's first mature piano concerto, K. 271 in E flat (PB 5300; €30.00). Its nickname *Jeunehomme* refers to an obscure lady of that name who may have commissioned it. The editors, however, suggest that the name is a joky corruption of a lady named Williaume or Villeaume who played a Mozart concerto in Paris some years after K.271 was written: the name may have sounded like *vieil homme* and was flippantly changed by the Mozarts to *jeune homme*. The Bärenreiter Collected Works (NMA) editions of the concertos were issued before the autographs were rediscovered in Krakow, so an edition based on them, and with some different editorial principles, is welcome. The most obvious change is the order of instruments on the page: Breitkopf retains that of the autograph, with the piano part between the viola and the bass, sensible if the piano is playing continuo. I'm puzzled, though, why the solo part is given in small print in the sections when it plays a continuo role. The editors rightly complain that older editors undervalued evidence of performance material; but the piano part they print seems to be extrapolated from the autograph rather than based on the one copied by Mozart's sister that survives with the Salzburg material. The figures from the autograph have been transferred to the small-print part, which makes them look editorial. Before leaving the bass, it is worth passing on the editors' suggestion that the orchestra had double basses but no cellos. As with other recent editions of classical music, articulation is not standardised between parallel passages nor between instruments. So in the opening unison, the horns' first two quavers are not slurred to match the strings and oboes. Comparison of bars 8, 32 & 93 of the slow movement is interesting, both between themselves and with the readings of NMA. It is difficult to decide whether such differences are deliberate variation, or whether slurs indicate legato but not necessarily that it should be achieved by a single bow-movement. Is the notation a blueprint for performance (different slur patterns leading to different manners of performance), or does it show different aspects of how the composer was thinking of the phrase, in which case the execution should be similar each time? At least the evidence is clearly presented. There is a good introduction (in German and English) and an extensive commentary (in English only): It is sensible to leave the latter in the language in which it was written, and I expect more Germans read English than native English-speakers read German. Much of any critical commentary isn't language-dependent anyway, especially if the description of sources and sigla is given bilingually.

The commentary to Peter Hauschild's edition of Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony (PB 5236; €39.00) is in German; it is rather shorter than that to the Mozart concerto as well as Jonathan Del Mar's for his Bärenreiter edition. I'm probably repeating myself from my review of the recent new Breitkopf Symphony 2, but it is very difficult to make a helpful comparison of this with the Bärenreiter edition when the differences depend on marginal revaluation of the same evidence. The serious conductor and scholar will need Del Mar's more extensive commentary, and the choice of score could depend primarily on the clarity and convenience of the orchestral parts, neither set of which I have seen. One quirk in this edition (and the Mozart) is that the movements are not numbered in the score, though they are in the commentary. Fortunately, such pedantic following of the sources does not extend to the omission of bar numbers. It is a pity that the metronome marks (which date from a decade after composition) are printed without qualification.

In a covering note with the study score of Beethoven's Choral Fantasy (PB 5258; €9.90), I was told that it really is a new publication, despite the copyright date (1993). Here the numbering of movements does not apply, since it is a single movement. The designation *Finale* at bar 27 (the orchestral entry) is because the piece was designed as the conclusion of a concert. Here the bilingual introduction by the editor, Clive Brown, is not complemented by a critical commentary: I presume that will appear in the full-size score. (The 2002 Breitkopf catalogue lists one but gives no price, so it is probably not yet available.) There are problems in establishing a text, since it is likely that a full autograph never existed. An interesting sign of that in the edition is the note that the pianist gives a sign to the orchestra or the conductor when he has finished his introduction. That note is included in the previous standard edition (Breitkopf's old Collected Works); this differs most obviously in the notation of staccato with wedges rather than dots (though isn't able to indicate the variety of the composer's usage) and preserves some inconsistency of slurring.

We have also received cadenzas to Mozart's Concerto for flute and harp K 299 by Michael Kuhn (EB 8736; €5.75), designed for use with early instruments, and the Ton Koopman Handel organ concerto op 4/2 (PB 5382; £12.50).

MORE FROM VERLAG DOHR

Quite unexpectedly, I received a second box full of books from Verlag Dohr covering a range of subjects. As most of them are already several years old, I will only touch lightly on them.

Thomas Daniel's *KONTRAPUNKT: Eine Satzlehre zur Vokalpolyphonie des 16. Jahrhunderts* (1997. 419pp + Notenbeiheft (inserted in book cover) ISBN 3 925366 43 1 €39.80) is a thorough coursebook for anyone wishing to learn how to compose 16th-century music, starting with the fundamentals of two-part writing. 'Golden rules' are printed in bold throughout a text which is richly illustrated with examples from pieces, facsimiles of originals and some harmonic analysis.

Marcel Dobberstein's *Die Psychologie der musikalischen Komposition*, 1994. 247pp. ISBN 3 925366 32 6 (pb) €19,80) is the author's dissertation and I have to say I found it very hard going. 20 pages of bibliography show that Dobberstein has clearly read widely, and what he says is well thought out. The study is very wide ranging though, so entries in the index like those for Beethoven on pp. 182-5 and Schubert on pp. 161-3 are not, as I'd expected, miniature case studies, but a run of pages on which they are mentioned several times in the context of making a broader point. I suppose, in the end, I was disappointed because rather than explore the psychology of composition, the author attempts to examine the psychology of dead composers, which is surely impossible.

Rolf Dietrich Claus's *Zur Echtheit von Toccata und Fuge d-moll BWV 565* (1998 (2nd Edition). 144pp. ISBN 3 925366 55 5 €16,80) is an expansion of the notes I mentioned when I reviewed the Dohr facsimile of the Toccata and Fugue. His conclusion, after discussing all the available material at length, is that the piece was written by someone of his sons' generation. The second edition also discusses the suggestion that it might be a harpsichord piece; he rejects the theory of Peter Williams that it was originally for unaccompanied violin.

Kirchenmusik in Geschichte und Gegenwart is a Festschrift written for the 65th birthday of Hans Schmidt (1998. 360pp. ISBN 3 925366 62 8 €49,80). It concludes with lists of the Dissertations and Magisterarbeiten that he supervised, including Kuei-Mei Wu's Doctoral thesis which appears as another Dohr book reviewed later. The 22 essays cover a wide range of repertoire from a study of medieval tracts (St Gallen 359 was the subject of Schmidt's thesis) to a discussion of the *Congregatio pro culto Divino* of November 1987. Roland Jackson on the authenticity of masses attributed to Marenzio is the only non-German article. The diversity of the subject matter attests to Schmidt's wide-ranging interests.

Kuei-Mei Wu's *Die Bagatellen Ludwig van Beethovens* (1999. 280pp. ISBN 3 925366 75 X €34,80) is a detailed study by movement of the composer's two dozen published works in that genre. It combines analyses of the pieces in their finished state and as they appear in Beethoven's sketchbooks and other manuscript sources. For my tastes, there was a little too much analysis – perhaps German musicologists see their work as more scientific than historical.

Der Choralsatz bei Bach und seinen Zeitgenossen: eine historische Satzlehre by Thomas Daniel (2000. 412pp. ISBN 3 925366 71 7 E39,80) is part documentary and part instructive. I remember, as a 17-year-old, learning how to harmonise chorale melodies in the style of Bach, and having to learn the fundamentals of harmony and of elementary part-writing (skills which, sadly, seem no longer to be required of school pupils, and even university students). Daniel covers many more rules than I ever had to learn in considerable detail with literally hundreds of examples. As for the 'and his contemporaries' part of the title, it's scarcely evident at all. Telemann does get a mention (there are even extracts from his chorales to show how the settings differ from Bach's), but there's nothing by Stoelzel (who was a gifted chorale composer, often adding instrumental parts, or making canons out of chorale melodies), Graupner (who frequently set chorales as extended concertato movements) or Fasch (who writes strange modal chorales, often featuring chords without thirds), and this was a little disappointing. Nonetheless, an essential tool for anyone teaching Bach-style simple harmony. *Brian Clark*

PIBROCH

The MacArthur – MacGregor Manuscript of Piobaireachd (1820) Edited by Frans Buisman. Performing text by Andrew Wright. Consulting Editor Roderick D. Cannon. (*The Music of Scotland*, 01). Universities of Glagow & Aberdeen, 2001. lxiii + 164pp, £30.00. ISBN 0 8526169 3 7

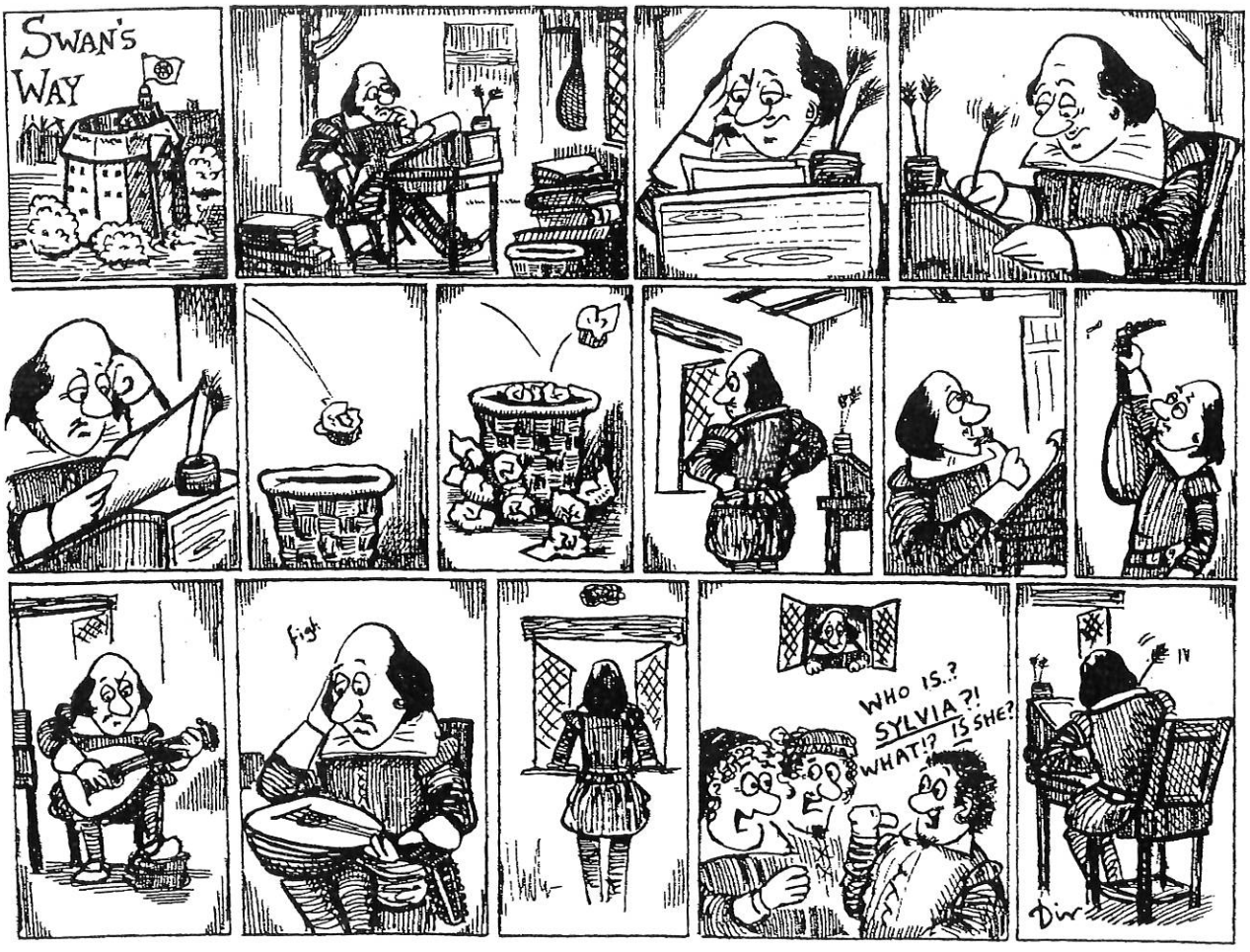
Available from Cawdor Book Services Ltd, 96 Dykehead St, Queenslie, Glasgow G33 4AQ. Tel +44 (0) 141 766 1000, fax +44 (1)141 766 1001 information@cawdorbooks.com

This is the first volume of a new series of publications of Scottish music. The project it embodies began over a decade ago under the auspices of The John MacFadyen Memorial Trust and The Piobaireachd Society, and is published in collaboration with them. It should reach a wider audience as part of a more general musical series: only music libraries with a very strong interest in matters Scottish would be likely to buy an isolated collection of old bagpipe music. It is odd, though, that Glasgow's Music Department should be involved in publishing two series of musicological editions, the other being Kenneth Elliott's *Musica Scotica*; perhaps it looks more productive when University funding depends on evaluation by statistics of output. The list of forthcoming titles in *Music of Scotland* shows that it is not going to be devoted only to the Highland aspects of Scottish culture, despite the parallel Gaelic title (*Ceòl h-Albainn*). The superfluous zero in the volume number is odd: perhaps it is to reassure subscribers that their commitment is not to more than 99 volumes.

This is a comprehensive publication of one of the most significant early attempts to notate what is usually anglicised as pibroch; the editors, however, preserve Gaelic terms. (For a brief historical comment, see below p. 12.) It was commissioned by the Highland Society of London and involved the dictation of the music by one piper to another. The original manuscript is reproduced complete with two pages on one, probably in a reduced size, though I can't see any dimensions in the extensive description of the MS. This

is followed by a critical edition, transposed to the normal pitch of bagpipe music. Each of the 30 pieces is printed on a right-hand page, with editorial remarks opposite, a sensible layout that could be adopted in other editions of shortish pieces. Then follows a performing version. These three formats of the music are preceded by thorough discussions of the MS, the pipers who were responsible for it, and the music itself. The modern piper is associated with a whole image of Scotland that is fostered by nationalists and the tourism industry; it is difficult to decide whether the presence of a pair of pipers as Princess Margaret's body was driven from one part of London to another was moving or sentimental. But the existence of this thorough study and edition in a comprehensive musicological series will draw attention to the piobaireachd form/style (I'm not sure which is the right word) – though it is quite difficult to imagine the sound from the notation, and a companion CD would have been useful. The edition will provide players with a historical bent a snapshot of what the music was like two centuries ago. On a trivial note, I could not help trying to imagine some of the distinguished members of the executive committee and advisory editors of *The Music of Scotland* piping: I associate Warwick Edwards and Margaret Bent more with viols than pipes. And can we expect an analysis by Philip Brett of the gender significance of the highland pipe?

A Midsummer Night's Party for bagpipers (of all sorts), hurdy-gurdists and other droners is being planned by Eastern Early Music Forum. Contact e.j.forbrooke@btopenworld.com



SCOTTISH MUSIC MSS

Richard Turbet

On 12 January, King's College, Aberdeen, was host to the first Scottish Music Manuscripts Colloquium, sponsored by the Music Research Group of the University of Aberdeen. Covering traditional and art music from the 13th century to Haydn and beyond, it took the form of presentations by a panel of nine speakers. The first was Warwick Edwards. My extensive experience of keynote speeches has left me jaundiced about them. They are usually patronizing, superficial and irrelevant. Warwick's was the opposite: collegial, knowledgeable and above all inspiring. Having briefly referred to his own work on the Inchcolm antiphoner, he went on to review past and present research on the subject in hand, and to suggest an agenda for future research: the question of a Scottish identity – how contemporary figures saw 'Scotland' from the 12th-16th centuries; the need for a documentary history of music in Scotland; an inventory of sources and catalogues of contents; an evaluation of the Wode MSS, of non-Scottish sources within Scotland (for a European dimension) and of fragmentary sources such as the William Stirling MS.

Patrick Cadell spoke on the Panmure MSS of mainly c.1640-1720 (except Clement Matchett's virginal book, dated 1612). He gave some consideration to how this arrived in the Panmure collection, and also mentioned the MSS of Duncan Burnett and Lady Jean Campbell, both seeming to originate in the 1640s. French lute music and Italian opera also feature in the collection, which includes Robert Edward's commonplace book.

Matthew Spring concentrated on lute sources, mentioning the Balcarres, Rowallan, Straloch, Campbell, Wemyss, Ruthven and Panmure MSS. These contain mainly French music, except Balcarres, Rowallan, Straloch and Panmure which contain Scottish material. The owners were predominantly female. The lute was perceived at this time as a French instrument. It was expensive, and carried an aura of cosmopolitanism. This perception of it as French caused it to lose favour earlier in England than in Scotland. [His *The Lute in Britain*, reviewed in *EMR* 76 p. 5, devotes a substantial chapter to Scottish lute music.]

Roger Williams spoke on his work cataloguing the musical holdings of National Trust properties in the former Grampian region of Scotland: Brodie, Leith Hall, Drum and Fyvie. (He has already published a catalogue of the holdings of Castle Fraser: *Catalogue of the Castle Fraser music collection*, Aberdeen: AUL Publishing, 1994, ISBN 1874078033.) There are no MSS at either Drum or Leith Hall, only printed music.

David J. Smith spoke on the Thomson MSS of James Thomson, MS 2833 in the National Library of Scotland. It was begun around 1702. There are 18 scribes, the first of whom seems to have been copying around this time. Work seems to have continued well into the 18th century.

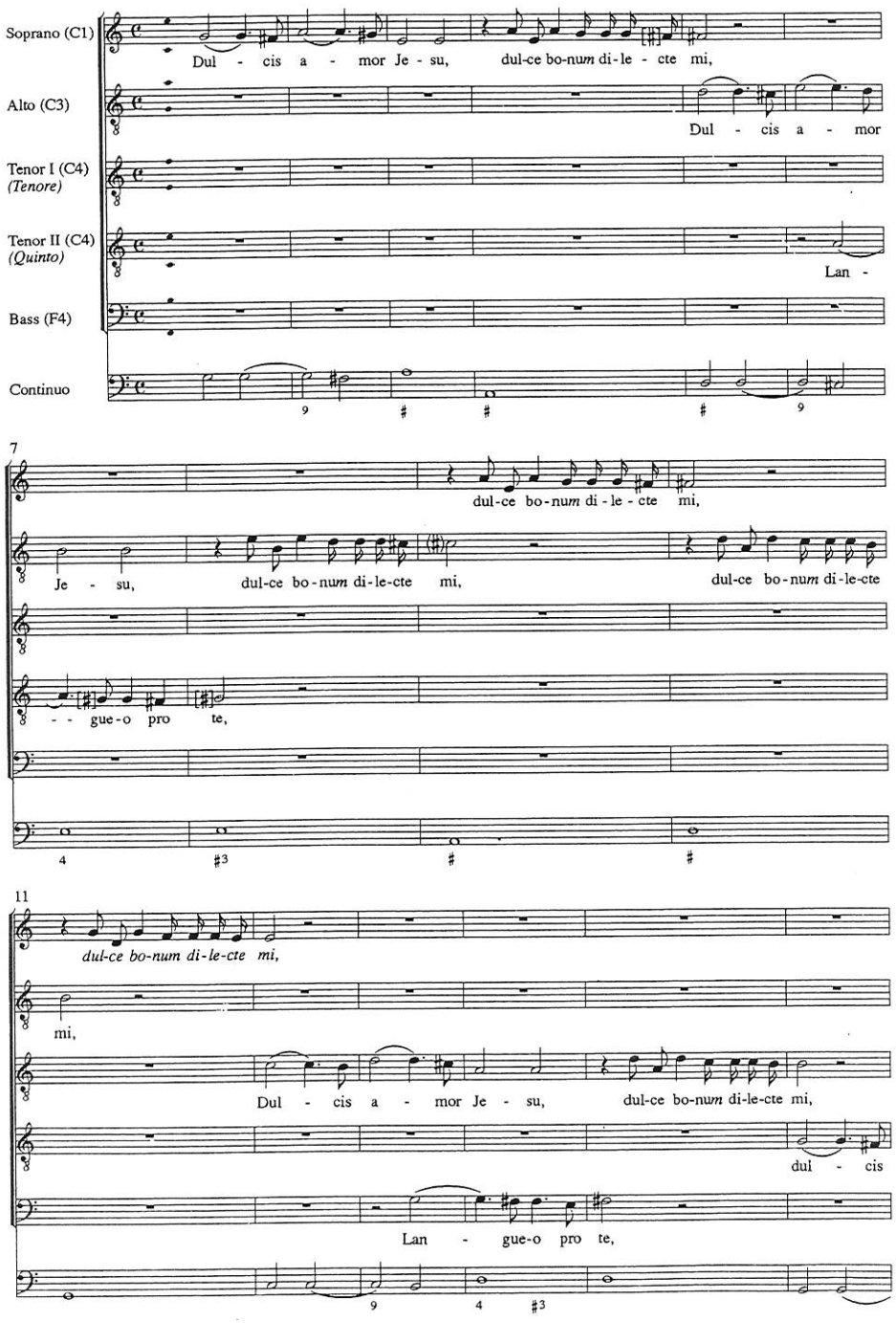
James Porter reported on the Agnes Hume and Margaret Sinkler MSS, of respectively 1704 and 1710. Agnes Hume herself has proved elusive, though a tentative identification has recently been made; her MS contains very varied material, while Margaret Sinkler's MS is for viola da gamba and keyboard.

Mary Anne Alburger is working on three MSS of Scottish gaelic song: the Maclean-Clephane MS of 1807, the Eliza Ross MS of 1813 and the Angus Fraser MS. Roderick Cannon spoke about pibroch. This is classical Highland bagpipe music, a repertory of ceremonial music from the 17th century onwards, comprising variation sets of 5-15 minutes' duration. About 330 such pieces survive from 1600-1750, passed on by individuals and not notated until 1800-40. Since these editions are relatively recent, Roderick explained why we need new editions: scholarship has moved on in respect of what we know of authenticity, and there is the need to make the music itself accessible. [For an example of this happening, see the review on pp. 6-7 above].

Finally, Marjorie Rycroft spoke about editing Haydn's Scottish songs for the new complete Haydn edition. These arrangements were commissioned by the Scottish publisher George Thomson, who also commissioned Beethoven, Pleyel, Weber and other prominent contemporaries for such settings. [Beethoven's settings were described at length in Barry Cooper *Beethoven's Folksong Settings*, Oxford 1994.] Marjorie outlined the decisions that had to be taken in respect of what to include in the Haydn *Werke* (many settings attributed to Haydn were composed by his star pupil Neukomm, but they may have been approved by Haydn himself before being sent to Thomson) and how to present it.

This was a most rewarding event, organized by David J. Smith of University Music at Aberdeen University. It benefitted from the chairmanship of James Porter, who performed deftly the difficult task of giving everyone their say but keeping a substantial programme ticking over briskly. Delegates were well fed and watered, and one of the joys of such a meeting is the opportunity to speak to people who are all too often at the end of a telephone or a computer screen. For instance it was a pleasure to welcome the acting editor of the journal Early Music, John Milsom. Most of all – and here I return to a word I used at the beginning of this report it was inspiring: reassuring us that others are working in the same field, telling us who is doing what, and enabling us to focus on what needs to be done.

Ignazio Donati – Dulcis amor Jesu



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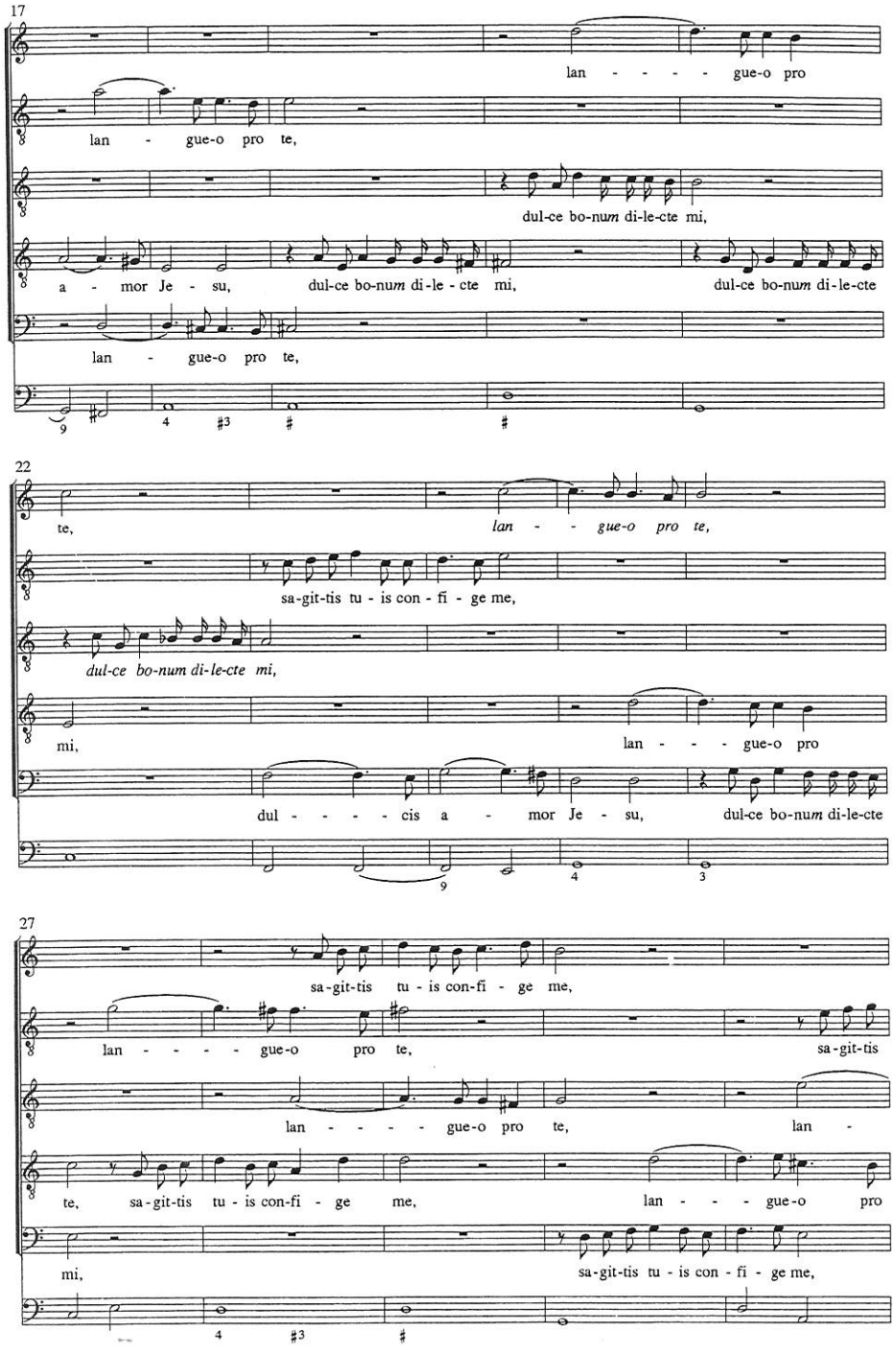
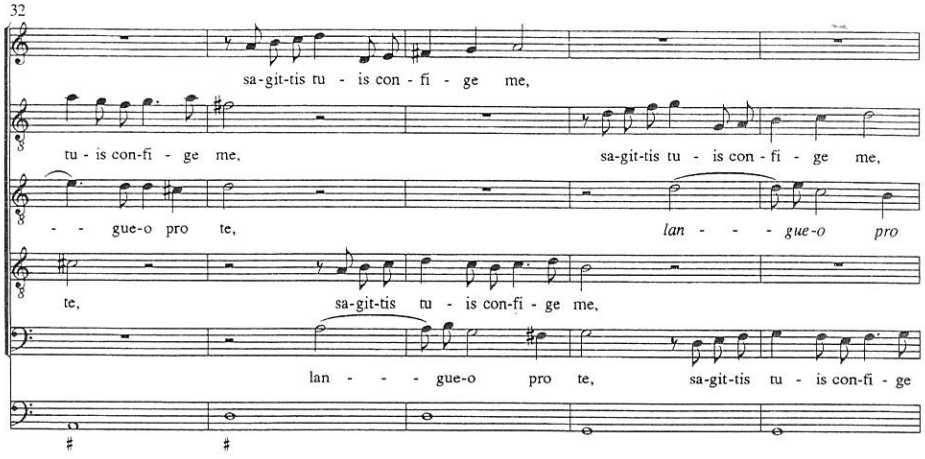
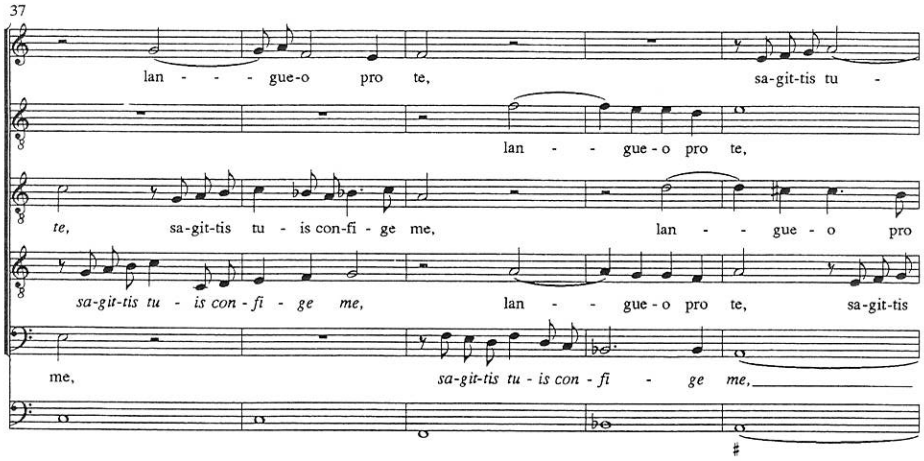
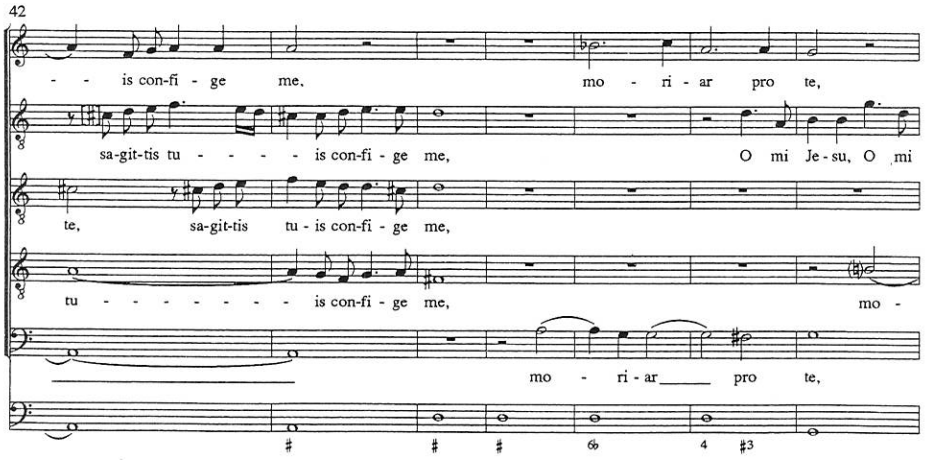
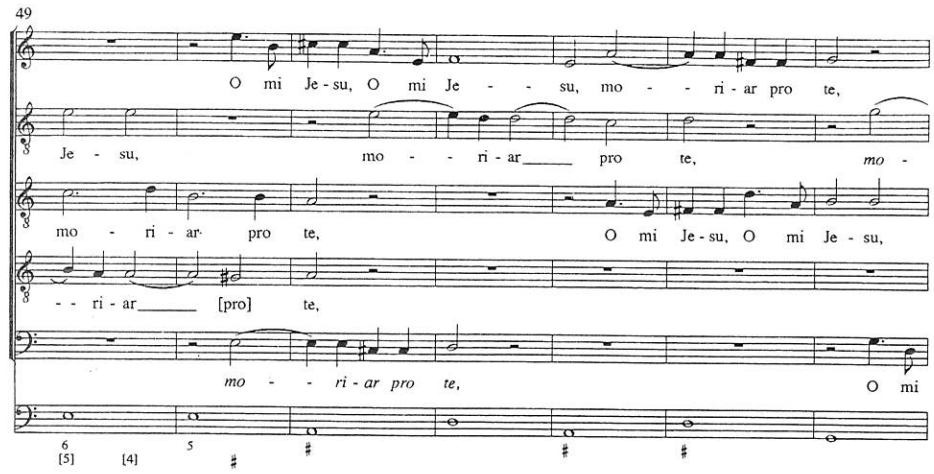
edited by Brian Clark

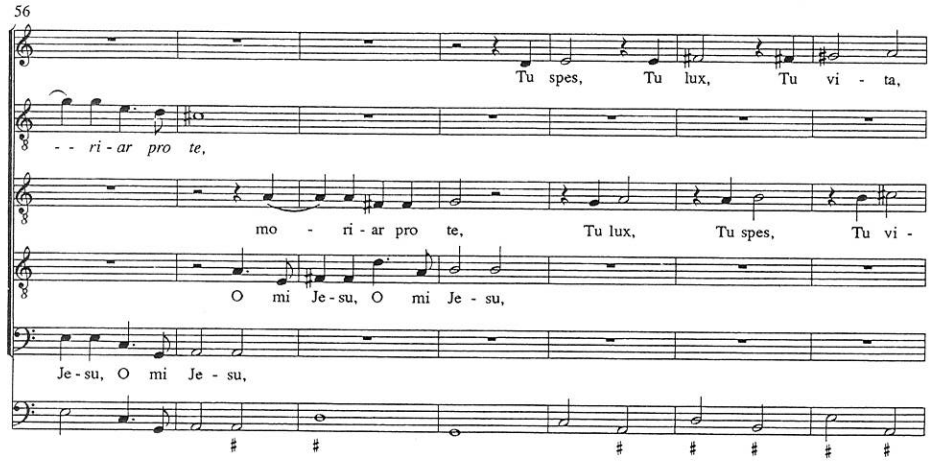


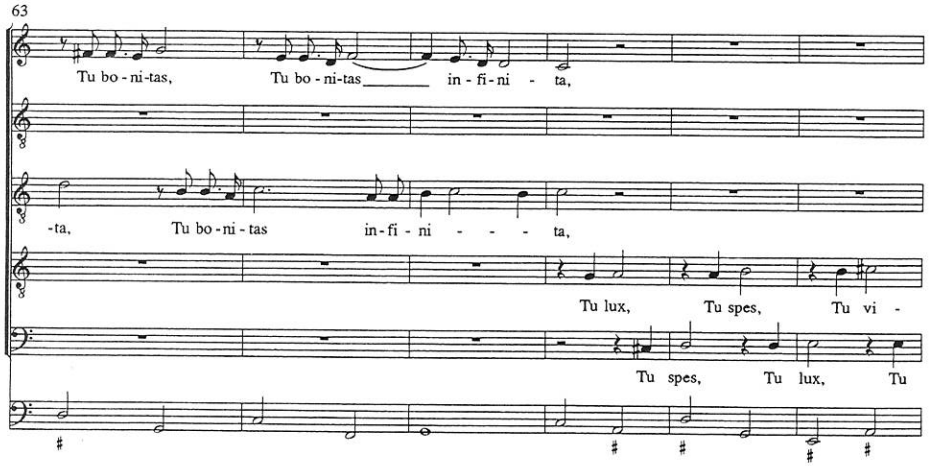

32
sa-git-tis tu - is con - fi - ge me,
tu - is con-fi - ge me, sa-git-tis tu - is con - fi - ge me,
- - gue-o pro te, lan - - - gue-o pro
te, sa-git-tis tu - is con-fi - ge me,
lan - - - gue-o pro te, sa-git-tis tu - is con-fi - ge

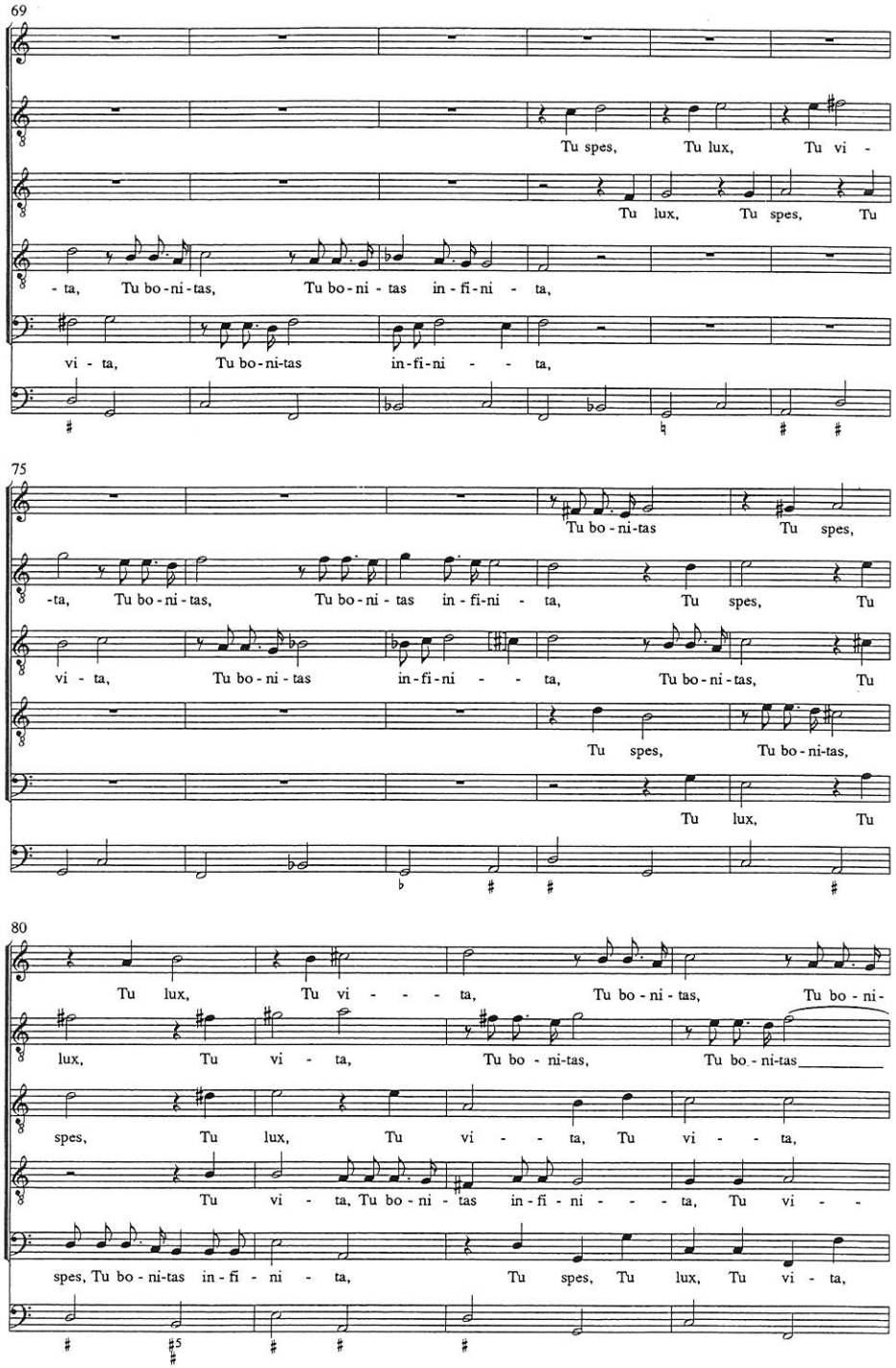

37
lan - - - gue-o pro te, sa-git-tis tu -
lan - - gue-o pro te,
te, sa-git-tis tu - is con-fi - ge me, lan - - gue - o pro
sa-git-tis tu - is con - fi - ge me, lan - - gue-o pro te, sa-git-tis
me, sa-git-tis tu - is con - fi - ge me,

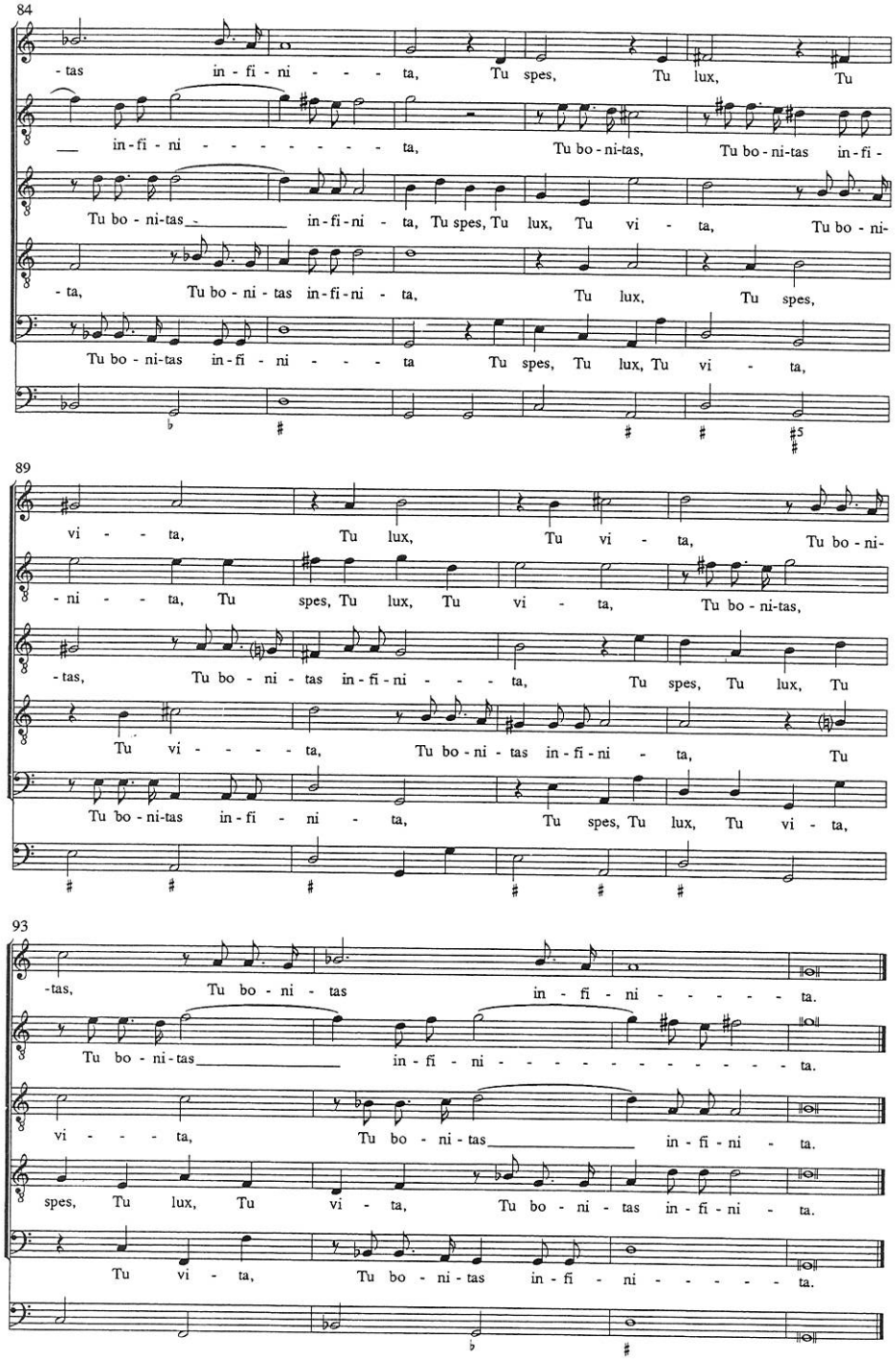

42
- - is con-fi - ge me, mo - ri - ar pro te,
sa-git-tis tu - - - - is con-fi - ge me, O mi Je - su, O mi
te, sa-git-tis tu - is con-fi - ge me,
tu - - - - - - - is con-fi - ge me, mo -
mo - ri - ar pro te,


49
O mi Je - su, O mi Je - - su, mo - - ri - ar pro te,
Je - su, mo - - ri - ar pro te, mo -
mo - ri - ar pro te, O mi Je - su, O mi Je - su,
- - ri - ar [pro] te,
mo - - ri - ar pro te, O mi


56
Tu spes, Tu lux, Tu vi - ta,
- - ri - ar pro te,
mo - ri - ar pro te, Tu lux, Tu spes, Tu vi -
O mi Je - su, O mi Je - su,
Je - su, O mi Je - su,


63
Tu bo - ni - tas, Tu bo - ni - tas in - fi - ni - ta,
-ta, Tu bo - ni - tas in - fi - ni - - - ta,
Tu lux, Tu spes, Tu vi -
Tu spes, Tu lux, Tu


69
Tu spes, Tu lux, Tu vi -
Tu lux, Tu spes, Tu
-ta, Tu bo-ni-tas, Tu bo-ni-tas in-fi-ni -ta,
vi-ta, Tu bo-ni-tas in-fi-ni -ta,
75
Tu bo-ni-tas Tu spes,
-ta, Tu bo-ni-tas, Tu bo-ni-tas in-fi-ni-ta, Tu spes, Tu
vi-ta, Tu bo-ni-tas in-fi-ni -ta, Tu bo-ni-tas, Tu
Tu spes, Tu bo-ni-tas,
Tu lux, Tu
80
Tu lux, Tu vi - - ta, Tu bo-ni-tas, Tu bo-ni-
lux, Tu vi-ta, Tu bo-ni-tas, Tu bo-ni-tas
spes, Tu lux, Tu vi - - ta, Tu vi - - ta,
Tu vi-ta, Tu bo-ni-tas in-fi-ni - - ta, Tu vi -
spes, Tu bo-ni-tas in-fi-ni-ta, Tu spes, Tu lux, Tu vi-ta,


84
-tas in-fi-ni - - - ta, Tu spes, Tu lux, Tu
in-fi-ni - - - - - - - ta, Tu bo-ni-tas, Tu bo-ni-tas in-fi-
Tu bo-ni-tas in-fi-ni-ta, Tu spes, Tu lux, Tu vi-ta, Tu bo-ni-
-ta, Tu bo-ni-tas in-fi-ni-ta, Tu lux, Tu spes,
Tu bo-ni-tas in-fi-ni - - - ta Tu spes, Tu lux, Tu vi-ta,
89
vi - - ta, Tu lux, Tu vi-ta, Tu bo-ni-
-ni - - ta, Tu spes, Tu lux, Tu vi-ta, Tu bo-ni-tas,
-tas, Tu bo-ni-tas in-fi-ni - - ta, Tu spes, Tu lux, Tu
Tu vi - - - - ta, Tu bo-ni-tas in-fi-ni-ta, Tu
Tu bo-ni-tas in-fi-ni-ta, Tu spes, Tu lux, Tu vi-ta,
93
-tas, Tu bo-ni-tas in-fi-ni - - - - - ta.
Tu bo-ni-tas in-fi-ni - - - - - - - - - - - ta.
vi - - - ta, Tu bo-ni-tas in-fi-ni - ta.
spes, Tu lux, Tu vi-ta, Tu bo-ni-tas in-fi-ni - ta.
Tu vi-ta, Tu bo-ni-tas in-fi - ni - - - - ta.

LONDON MUSIC

Andrew Benson-Wilson

The Wigmore Hall got in quickly to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the birth of William Lawes with a series of three concerts put together by Mark Levy. The first two featured members of Mark Levy's own group, Concordia, with Robin Blaze and Emma Kirkby, and I Fagiolini gave the final concert. It would take many more than three concerts to tire of the idiosyncratic music of Lawes: from the frankly odd to the clearly inspired, he always seems to come up with the unexpected. He is perhaps best known today for his viol consort music, and the three six-part Setts (three or four movements suites) played in first concert (9 January) showed why. The opening Fantazy of the Sett in F features a theme which rises almost endlessly by intervals before tumbling down again – a magical evocation of pastoral calm that, this being Lawes, is shattered by his characteristic harmonic intrusions into the second Fantazy. The concluding Aire, despite being seemingly placed to relax the mood again, cannot resist an odd ending, with an abrupt pause before a final round of slithers. The Sett in B♭ has Lawes transposing the ubiquitous In Nomine theme into the major, creating a mood far removed from other In Nomines of his time. After the intensity of Lawes' consort music, the relative conservatism of a Purcell Fantasy a 4 (reflecting rather the style of Lawes' predecessors Tomkins and Gibbons) and Byrd's Fantasy in G minor provided welcome moments of harmonic calm. The simple clarity of Robin Blaze's innocently boyish countertenor voice somehow made the intense emotion of Purcell's 'In the black dismal dungeon of despair' sound more deeply felt than the more histrionic performances we sometimes hear. In this and other pieces by Purcell, he needed to make much use of his tenor register, the gear-change negotiated with admirable ease. It is rare that I manage to find anything to criticise Blaze for, but the awkwardly lengthy pause while he tried to get the music of his encore into order at last gives me a chance. He is one of the finest younger singers around, so he needs to get used to giving encores. In the last issue of *EMR* I commented on the difficulty of accompanying Purcell on the organ. Matthew Halls (a very welcome newcomer on the London keyboard continuo scene) gave an object lesson in just how to do it. Fully aware of when the context demands a thinning of the texture, and with impressive insight into Purcell's harmonic byways, this is a player to watch out for. My only quibble was in *An Evening Hymn*, when the organ was a little to busy for my taste, and introduced a little too early the dotted rhythms that come to dominate the latter part of the piece. It was nice to hear a continuo organ with an English stopped diapason, rather than the less harmonically defined tones of the Germanic Gedackt, even if the bass of the instrument lacked presence.

The second concert of the Lawes series (24 January) featured the unusual combination of bass and lyra viols, harp, theorbo and violin in examples of his 'severall sorts of musick'. Much of Lawes' music achieves its frequently dissonant affect by the addition of passages or passing notes that defy conventions of harmony (or occasionally sense). The two Harp Consorts, in which the composer added complete additional parts for violin and viol to pre-existing pieces, were good examples of this. The songs in the programme included some of Lawes' more straightforward settings in simple verse structure, one being 'O my Clarissa' (which we also heard as the Saraband of the Harp Consort in D minor), with its rather pathetic ending pleading that the said Clarissa should 'At least not prove unkind to me'. Although Emma Kirkby's voice is no longer in the straight-as-a-die mould (and is not quite as secure as it should be at its extremities), she has lost none of her powers of expression and textural insight. Her ability to apply ornaments to music of this period is outstanding, even if one or two cadences were approached in a rather roundabout way (Locke's *Lucinda* in particular). One of the star turns of the evening was Thomas Baltzar's divisions on 'John come kiss me now' played by Kati Debretzeni – one of the best of the younger generation of violinists around. Her technical mastery of her instrument is apparent, but there is also something exotic about her playing, not only in her use of expression but also in her adventurous use of tone colour. I learnt after the concert that she was unwell, which makes her performance all the more impressive.

The final concert in the Lawes series (5 February) featured vocal music from the new edition by Gordon Callon of about 140 previously only available in facsimile. Amongst the usual subjects versified in this period, we had songs about tinkers, cats, cheese on toast and a naughty ditty about the use of holes on holydays, all given the distinctive I Fagiolini treatment. In recent years, they have turned their talents to staged interpretations of Renaissance music and although there were no such theatricals in this perfomance, theatre was never far away. At times one could follow the context of the songs from the facial expressions alone. This was one of the best performances I have heard from I Fagiolini – I usually moan about their unrestrained use of vibrato, but it seemed unimportant this time round. Their cohesive tone colour and sheer exuberance was spot on – and the sopranos even managed to rein in the volume of their upper registers to retain the blend. Baritone Matthew Brook was the most prominent and expressive singer, rarely without a twinkle in his eye and voice and a master of the raised eyebrow. As an Uncle Matthew figure, he must go down a treat in I Fagiolini's educational work with children. Carys Lane and Anna Crookes also impressed. As with the earlier concerts other, less intense, sides of Lawes' personality were revealed, including a nice selection of comic songs. His darker emotions were apparent in three

moving works, 'In the subtraction of my years' (revealing the intense harmonic twists of his instrumental works), the painfully wrought 'I am weary of my groaning' and the gentle elegy for John Tomkins, brother of Thomas and a close friend of Lawes, 'Music, the master of thy art is dead'. David Miller was, as ever, a sensitive accompanist, demonstrating his thoughtfully restrained and elegant playing in solo works by Lawes' contemporary, John Lawrence. Thomas Tomkins showed himself to be not above a bit of word painting – indeed he laid it on with a trowel in 'Weep no more', with lines like 'Laughs and weeps and sighs and sings' running through the complete gamut of vocal expression. The concluding cry of 'Ti-hy' was given the full I Fagiolini range expression with a competition for the widest grin.

In the countertenor world, I have to admit veering more towards the focused clarity of the Andreas Scholl school than the operatic style represented by David Daniels, but I found myself being increasingly won over during Daniels' concert of works by Handel and Vivaldi at The Barbican (11 January). His vocal style is at best androgynous, if not womanly, in his use of deep operatic vibrato and the harmonic and resonant purity of his tone. Possibly closer to the sound world of the castrati, it is a sound that I have taken some time to get used to. Daniels shone most notably in the Largo 'Descende, o coeli vox' movement from Vivaldi's motet *Longe mala*, a gorgeously mellifluous prayer with a theme based on octave leaps – almost a concerto for voice in its use of extended melismas, notably on the word 'maerorem'. Handel's 'Stille amare' from *Tolemeo* was another bittersweet moment, although it drew one of my first moments of concern about the accompaniment of Fabio Biondi's Europa Galante. What the programme note correctly suggested should have been a 'quiet, pulsing accompaniment' was given an angry appoggiatura on each beat. Although superbly tight and stylish in performance, there were just too many oddities from the band for my taste. The seemingly random accenting of individual notes and a number of curious hiatuses disrupted the flow of the suite from Handel's *Rodrigo*, and some aggressive playing from the cellos and violone produced unwanted mechanical noise from the instruments. Harpsichord player Sergio Ciomei was a sideshow all by himself, with his expansive gestures and leaping fingers and attempt at space flight at the end of Corelli's Concerto Grosso in D. Fabio Biondi's solo violin playing was in similar vein, like a nervous driver he braked frequently and then accelerated too rapidly for comfort. But that said, this was certainly exciting singing and playing which clearly went down well with the audience.

Unfortunately for London audiences, the Birmingham-based choir Ex Cathedra only make a couple of visits a year. But London's loss is the Midlands' gain, and they have built an impressive reputation for their concerts and educational work in the region. Their St John's, Smith Square concert on 30 January was given the title 'The Genius of Rome', focusing on oratorios by Anerio (*Respondi Abramo*) and Carissimi (his well-known *Jephte*). Ex Cathedra has nurtured some impressive young singers and although the solo line up for this concert was not as strong as in some of their past performances, there was much to impress. Perhaps this was the moment when I learnt to love vibrato – a number of the singers applied it sensitively and musically. The *favoriti* choir in Allegri's *Miserere* was an early example, the singers generally settling on a note before applying tonal colouring. However, the soprano used as the main soloist throughout the evening was not, in my view, the most effective 'early music' voice available in the line-up. I wasn't too sure about her tone colour and her vibrato was particularly noticeable in the rapid pulse of 'Incipite in tympanis' from *Jephte* – as she wasn't on a note for long enough to establish any stability of pitch, her vibrato translated into intonation problems. But she was far more effective in the gentler movements, notably the daughter's moving lament (supported by some excellent chitarrone playing by David Miller, who also contributed solo lute works by Kapsperger). The star composer for me was Luca Marenzio, with his moving *Qual mormorio soave* (with its delightful swaying movement on the third line of text) and his vigorous but tiny *Gratie renda al Signore.* David Ponsford played Frescobaldi's 1615 *Toccata ottava* on the main organ of St John's, not usually my favourite instrument, although a neat bit of registration (and a few out-of-tune notes) produced a suitably early Italianate sound. Frescobaldi's *Capriccio di obligo di cantare* was played on an attractively bold chamber organ and included the sung vocal lines hinted at in the score. As ever, Jeffrey Skidmore's direction was sympathetic and encouraging, producing a good blend of sound and consort from a mixed group of singers.

Concerto Cristofori is a flexible new group formed by pianist Sharona Joshua. For the second of their three Purcell Room concerts (2 February) she was joined by violinist Pavlo Beznosiuk and cellist Anthony Pleeth for music by Beethoven, including the second and third of his three Opus 1 piano trios. Reinforcing his already established position in Viennese musical society, the young Beethoven shattered the rather cosy mould of chamber music with these works, symphonic in scale, construction and emotional intensity. The opening movements in particular demonstrate the power of architectural thought that Beethoven was already capable of. Although the repeated-note first theme of Finale of the G major Trio is planted solidly in the baroque, as to a lesser extent is the arpeggio figures of the second theme, their expansion during the development section moved Hadyn's symphonic thinking to new heights. Haydn attended a performance in 1793 (possible the first), and would certainly have been familiar with the sound of the fortepiano used in this performance – a fine copy by Christopher Barlow of the Schantz instrument in Bath. Although it is more usually Haydn who is associated with Schantz pianos, Beethoven owned one, and the restrained tonal palette worked well in these early pieces – the almost continuous filigree of piano sound could easily become too dominant with a chunkier piano sound. Beethoven's happy-go-lucky Violin Sonata in A (Op12/2) saw the violin and piano playing tennis with a variety of motifs, some as tiny as a

simple mordant or appoggiatura. Pavlo Beznosiuk must be one of the most versatile violinists on the scene, equally at home on medieval fiddle and early romantic violin. Both as soloist and consort playing, he retains a well-mannered sense of blend and cooperation with his partner musicians, never dominating the show. Sharona Joshua combined a delicacy of touch and eloquence of expression with an impressive technique (in works that are far from easy to play). Beethoven frequently uses the piano to provide transitional or bridge passages, and the timing of these has to be carefully controlled to indicate a change of mood without losing the flow – these were managed impeccably. I wasn't too sure about elements of the cello playing though. A rather forceful playing style kept the volume slightly too high for comfort and also affected both tone quality (with frequent buzzes) and intonation, particularly when playing high on the neck. All in all, an impressive debut for a welcome new group.

The Academy of Ancient Music continued their increasingly successful residency at St John's, Smith Square, with a concert (6 February) of Handel and Bach featuring two winners of the 2000 Queen Elisabeth International Music Competition of Belgium, the Ukrainian soprano Olga Pasichnyk and Romanian tenor Marius Brenciu (who topped his Belgian success by winning last year's Cardiff Singer of the World). This was another of the all too frequent examples of a pairing of specialist early music instrumentalists with not so specialist early music singers (although they had both sung with the AAM during the competition finals). Although both had an impressive grasp of the baroque fireworks thrown at them, it was Marius Brenciu who managed a better control of the tone of his voice over the whole of his range. Olga Pasichnyk had some horrifyingly high notes to negotiate, tossed in almost at random in Handel's youthful motet *Saeviat tellus inter rigores*, but she performed them in a startlingly can-belto manner. Her tone is harmonically rich and focussed, with a reedy oboe-like sound, and she uses the intensity of her timbre rather than its resonance to project, producing a sound that one can tire of after a while. Although Marius Brenciu's operatic credentials are as strong as Olga Pasichnyk's, his voice (given a working over by excerpts from *Samson*), seemed more effective on this occasion. With a rounder and more resonant tone and less of the intensity of timbre created by too rapid a vibrato, he put on an impressive performance, particularly in the aria 'Torments, alas!' The vocal showpieces were set within a sandwich of Bach, starting with a nicely conceived 'Suite of Sinfonias' put together by conductor Paul Goodwin. As he explained, these impressive works are rarely heard outside the context of their own cantatas, so are thus rarely heard at all. A neatly balanced sequence of six instrumental cantata movements included the well-known 'organ-concerto' Sinfonia to Cantata 29 (with Alastair Ross making an impressive job of the endless flurry of semi-quavers) to the little known introduction to the early Cantata 150. David Blackadder's low-register playing of a slide trumpet in the Sinfonia from Cantata 75 was only just audible above some rather heavy-handed string playing, a problem that also upset the balance with Katharine Spreckelsen's sensuously lyrical oboe playing in the Adagio from the opening Sinfonia to the Easter Oratorio. The first section of the same Sinfonia was also spoilt by over-accenting the barlines, something that rarely adds much to Bach's music – any gains in punchiness were offset by a loss in fluidity.

Somebody once commented that the role of a critic is to slaughter the weak. Although some may think I relish an occasional bout of slaying, I do try to be particularly sympathetic to younger performers. But specific invitations by younger performers to two concerts this month have left me sadly struggling to accent the positive. The star of the harpsichord concert at St Bartholomew the Great (11 January) was undoubtedly the new Malcolm Rose copy of the important 1579 Lodewyk Theewes harpsichord (without its original organ parts) at the Victoria & Albert Museum. The distinctive sound of the instrument is reminiscent of an English virginal, as are some aspects of the construction, with particularly resonant bass and tenor registers and a treble that carries the slight buzz characteristic of the presence of the uneven-numbered harmonics. But I had problems with the performance. Neil Coleman's playing of the opening Byrd *Fancie for my Ladye Nevell* (with a clearly audible use of early fingering in the opening upward scale) became increasingly at odds with the underlying mood of the piece. The carefully avoided overstatement of the later keyboard flourishes and runs produced an attempt at lyricism that just didn't work. The continuation of this unending restraint and lack of emotion in the playing reduced all the other pieces (by Gibbons, a mis-spelt Scheidemann, Bull and Sweelinck) to a monotony that neither they nor the instrument deserved. Technically, the playing was far from lacking in mishap, but I can forgive anybody the occasional slip if the playing convinces: I fear this didn't. To succeed in performance, music needs to be projected to an audience with conviction. Playing the notes, however successfully, is just not enough.

The Musicall Compass were extremely lucky to gain access to the Royal Opera House's Linbury Studio Theatre for their first-ever staged production, *Dido and Aeneas* (18 January). Recently formed by Crispin Lewis from students at two London music colleges, the group intends to specialise in baroque music theatre, particularly pre-Handelian English masque, semi-opera and opera. Their fully staged production was not short on personnel, with 13 singers, seven actors, a 14-strong band, a creative team of five and a production team of 13. How was it all funded? The opening sequence of instrumental pieces from *The Fairy Queen* threw up the first problem. Almost without exception, the players sounded so timid that they struggled to produce any sound at all. I assume that this was not the result of musical direction, for the conducting style seemed vigorous enough. But such lack of confidence threatened other aspects of their playing. Intonation was variable to say the least, any idea of consort playing seemed to be abandoned early on, and it seemed increasingly unclear what sort of direction the conductor was attempting to give. That said, there were nice touches

from the lead violin and theorbo players. Then with *Dido and Aeneas* we heard the singers. Their lengthy programme CVs did not suggest lack of experience, despite their youth, but an embarrassingly lengthy list of problems quickly became apparent. Diction was an early casualty, with vowel sounds either fixedly round and undefined (Aeneas) or pinched and narrow (Belinda). Vibrato was rife, causing havoc with pitch definition and tone. The ability to trill convincingly seemed non-existent (vocal wobble notwithstanding). Deportment and posture was generally inelegant or contrived, and the plethora of standers-by seemed ill at ease and unsure what to do. Only one – two at a pinch – of the singers came close to youthful professional standards, one being a coquettish First Witch (doubling as Second Woman) and the other the Second Witch. The stage direction was curious to say the least, starting with the decision to split the performance over an interval. With far too many people on stage for most of the time, the staging quickly became confusing. A few particular oddities included a curious tussle between Aeneas and Belinda when the former nudged the latter off a bench, a flirtatious Second Women who seemed to be coming on to Aeneas, and Aeneas' 'Behold, upon my bending spear' being sung directly to Belinda rather than Dido or the gathering in general. Musically the more-or-less accepted convention of having the Sorceress sung by a tenor in drag or the sailors singing in Borsetshire accents were both dropped, although one strong selling point was the theorbo's solo bass-line opening to the final lament. Clearly a lot of effort went into the production, so I am reluctant to be so critical. The most positive thing I can say is that these young performers have time on their side, as does the group as a whole. I am sure I will have a chance to respond more positively in the future.

RECORD REVIEWS

MEDIEVAL

Magister Leoninus *Sacred Music from 12th-century Paris - 2* Red Byrd (John Potter, Richard Wistreich), Yorvox 74' 33"
Hyperion **CDA67289**

Although Leonin and Perotin are as linked in the music student's mind as Eric and Ernie, they were probably of different generations and Perotin has fared rather better in modern performance, chiefly because his music is less chant-dependent: often the chant sections of the four-part organa sound like embarrassing interludes. One strength of this disc is the complete integration of chant (sung by students from York Univeristy, where John Potter now teaches) and duophony ('poly-' is inflationary for music for two voices). I had this on my bedside player for several weeks before Christmas;* it made a thoroughly enjoyable night-cap, and the fact that it sometimes sent me to sleep is no criticism – I wouldn't recommend listening to it in one go anyway. There's a marvellous flow in the Leonin, which sounds like real music, not, as so often, a historical demonstration, and the chant fits perfectly. There is an excellent booklet note by Mark Everist. *CB*

** But I hadn't entered details on the computer, and in the rush of getting the last issue out it was forgotten.*

16th-CENTURY

Philips *Cantiones Sacrae Quinis Vocibus* The Tudor Consort, Peter Walls 70' 12"
Naxos **8.555056** £

Although he knew I had a New Zealand connection, when Clifford asked me to review this disc he hadn't spotted, in the booklet's biographies, the small matter that I had in fact founded the Tudor Consort. Listening to them again has been rather like meeting up with a long-lost child. I'm relieved to find myself recognising all their good qualities – fresh, cool sonorities and alert ensemble: and Peter Walls, their director since I left, is a fine communicator. One reservation I have is the recorded sound, which is too distant for us to taste the textures and leaves sibilants skittering around the chapel walls. My other reservation is the music itself. Perhaps Philips's madrigalian touches would be better served by a more domestic approach, but even so, his music always strikes me as a caricature of Renaissance style rather than the real thing. I hope that the generous spirit of John Steele, the editor of all the music presented here, won't mind me relating a conversation we had at his house in Dunedin. He asked me whether I had would consider programming any of the Philips he was then working on. I said, as politely as I could, that I didn't really rate him, and that I was more interested in Sweelinck. 'Hmm', John replied, 'that's probably because Sweelinck's a better composer.' *Simon Ravens*

Music of Tudor and Jacobean England Peter Watchorn *hpscd* 92' 48" (2 CDs in box)
Musica Omnia **MO 0104** ££
+ 23' 53" commentary by Howard Schott
Music by Bull, Byrd, Gibbons, Munday, Philips, Randall, Tisdale & anon

This is our first sampling from a new American company which began with five issues last summer and four in the autumn, mostly comprising 18th and 19th century music, often on period instruments. It is one of two sets of earlier repertoire, and its player is also executive director of the company. I'm not sure if I would want to hear performances by the executive directors of most CD companies (the title is appropriate for those who lead ensembles from the keyboard or viol); but Peter Watchorn is an experienced and skilled player, and it is excellent that the company has a fine musician in a senior position. The publicity is rather cringe-making, and Gothic Voices popularised Hildegard long before Anonymous 4. I suppose *Early Music Review* would be more successful if it blew its trumpet as loudly as Musica Omnia – no doubt our experts on Latin grammar will have their say about the disagreement of noun and adjective. Each recording I have seen comes in a box, even if it only comprises one main disc, with an extra disc of spoken commentary. Howard Schott knows what he is talking about, but I'm not sure if the attempt at a casual tone is really convincing. There are two problems. First, the possibility of using sound to illuminate the commentary could be exploited far more creatively, as is done on the Cozzolani disc reviewed below. Secondly, one is unlikely to play the commentary disc more than once, while a written text can be consulted as and when required, just at a glance. Since the spoken text is fairly general, the booklet notes could have been far more specific to complement it.

The programme leans more towards the Tudor than most recitals of Tudor and Jacobean music, going back to *My Lady Carey's Dump* and with some pieces from the Dublin Virginal Book. I would have enjoyed it a touch more I had not recently been playing John Toll's posthumous anthology of Gibbons (see *EMR* 77 p. 15), which is more musical, has a better harpsichord, and offers contrast by having some pieces on the organ: such a change in texture would have been welcome change in this two-disc set. The playing is stylish, but both the instrument and the performances seemed a bit stiff. One can either play this music with the sort of rigorous tempo that bottles up enough energy to create tension, or one can use the more delicate expressive devices that the style also accommodates. This is somewhere between the two, and for me doesn't quite do the music justice. But it's an interesting label and at present sells quite cheaply (though that may not last). *CB*

Thus spak Apollo myne: the songs of Alexander Montgomerie, poet to James VI of Scotland Paul Rendall *T*, Rob MacKillop *lute* 74' 15"
ASV *Gaudeamus* **CD GAU 249**

This long-overdue recording features anonymous settings of sacred and secular verse by the leading poet at the Scottish Court of James VI performed by two of the leading lights in the Scottish early music scene. Paul Rendall's voice has just the right blend of lightness and profundity to allow him to give full expression to Montgomerie's rich writing, while Rob MacKillop's arrangements for lute of the original four-part settings do a masterly job of preserving the polyphonic interest while sounding utterly idiomatic. The performances are expressive and technically deft, and if I occasionally felt that some tasteful decoration of the vocal line might have provided more variety in the strophic songs, the performers are to be applauded for presenting a substantial sequence of these verses. Further variety is provided in the form of arrangements by MacKillop for the Mandour (a diminutive member of the lute family popular in Renaissance Scotland and France) of various psalm tunes current in Scotland at the time. The performances are greatly enhanced by the thoroughly convincing pronunciation of the Scots texts, supervised by Dr Jim Baxter, further underlining Montgomerie's status as a poet of European significance. *D James Ross*

17th-CENTURY

Bachiana: Music by the Bach family Musica Antiqua Köln, Reinhard Goebel 75' 34"
Archiv **471 150-2**
Heinrich Bach *Sonata I & II a5*; **J. Christoph Bach** *Aria Eberliniana pro dormente Camillo*; **J Ludwig Bach** *Ouverture in G*; **J. S. Bach** *Concerto in D after BWV 249*, **Sigr. Pagh** *Sonata & Capriccio in g*; **Cyriacus Wilche** *Battaglia 1659*

The Bach family started out as itinerant fiddlers but by later generations had risen to fill some of the leading musical posts in Germany. Because Johann Sebastian held church posts for most of his life, we've tended to investigate the church music by the older family members. But there is also much string music, which Reinhard Goebel espouses with his usual boldness on this CD. The programme is shaped around the cheerful if not very profound Overture and Concerto by Johann Ludwig Bach, the Concerto being newly discovered. There are several 17th-century string sonatas, including a Battaglia played with great verve. The disc is rounded off by a Sinfonia adapted from Johann Sebastian's Easter Oratorio Musica Antiqua Köln play with their trademark energy that some listeners may find invigorating and others a touch neurotic. An interesting disc even if some of the pieces are not the most inspiring. *Stephen Rose*

Cozzolani *Vespro della Beata Vergine* Magnificat, Warren Stewart 92' 13"
Musica Omnia **MO 0103** (3 CDs in box)
+17' 28" introduction by Warren Stewart

If I was a little less than enthusiastic about the issue in this new series reviewed on the preceding page, I have nothing but enthusiasm for this one. The conductor ends his introductory disc by claiming that Cozzolani is one of the finest composers of all time. That may be overstating a little – I found the solo motets overstayed their welcome slightly and by the end of the psalms I was beginning to recognise a few tricks – but the music is certainly extremely good and the ladies of Magnificat sing it brilliantly. I was particularly intrigued by the way the Gloria was used to structure the *Dixit Dominus* (a point picked up both in the booklet and commentary – why are they not more different?) Music and recording are highly recommended. Readers with a single-sex choir should buy it then get hold of the music – it presumably works for male ensembles if transposed down; those who just listen should buy it. If you need convincing, try the duo motet *Venimus in altitudinem maris.* *CB*

www.musicaomnia.com.
Available from Lindum Records.

Muffat *Concerti Grossi 7-12* Musica Aeterna Bratislava, Peter Zajicek 67' 27"
Naxos **8.555743** £

This completes Music Aeterna Bratislava's survey of Muffat's Concerti Grossi, and many of the remarks I made about Vol. 1 (*EMR* 74, Oct 2001) hold true for this second set. The recording dates from 1994, but in no way does it sound dated: the performances are full of life, with the concertists adding little roulades between sections, and I have absolutely no hesitation in recommending it and hoping, again, that the group will now be invited by Naxos to record the two sets of Florilegia! *BC*

Festive Hanseatic Music Weser Renaissance Bremen, Manfred Cordes 74' 00"
cpo **999 782-2**
Music by H. Albert, D. Becker, C. Bernard, Clemens non Papa, Dulichius, Hakenberger, Lassus, Obrecht, Pevernage, J. E. Rautenstein, Weckmann, J. A. Weiland

Like many of Manfred Cordes recordings, this CD is full of nice things. The Weiland *Laudate Dominum* which opens it, for example, is a gorgeous piece. Similarly Obrecht's instrumental *T'Andernaken* a3. Unfortunately, I found the CD uneven: there were four recording sessions (tied in with Radio Bremen broadcasts) and the cast list contains 40 names, no more than 16 of which appear in any single piece. Most of the singing is very good, and the playing is always stylish, but, frankly, some of the singing is not as good as Cordes normally draws from his forces. I also wondered who would listen to the music – nice as all of it is, there's such a diversity. The first eleven tracks are what one would call baroque, while the next seven are renaissance. Why not follow a chronological design? A programme from which to select individual pieces, not for background listening. *BC*

Musicke & Mirth: Music for two lyra viols Jane Achtman, Irene Klein 54' 03"
Raum Klang **RK 9906**
Music by Ferrabosco II, Ford & Hume

This is a brilliant debut CD from the young German gamba duo of Jane Achtman and Irene Klein, both of whom have studied with Pandolfo in Basel and reached the finals of a number of prestigious competitions. The programme is excellently planned and paced, balancing fleet-fingered witty character pieces imitating bagpipes and the like with seriously sensuous music that frequently coaxes the ear into believing that there must be more than just two viols playing. The choice of a high pitch for the viols neatly avoids the problem of indistinct bass strings that can sometimes beset the widely-spaced lyra tunings, and the natural room acoustic of the recording aids the players' deft clarity of articulation. Besides pieces by the eccentric Tobias Hume and Alfonso Ferrabosco II, the central figure on this recording is Thomas Ford, who emerges as a composer of the greatest subtlety and inspiration. Not only does he write pavans to rival the melancholy of Dowland or Tomkins, but he can also entertain with jigs and country dances that include strategically placed 'thumpes' (open strings plucked by the left hand). The players of Musicke & Mirth respond with passionate playing, phrasing suavely and articulating the contrapuntal details with elegance. Avoiding any hint of crunchiness in their multiple-stopped chords, they are powerful advocates for a repertory whose range of colour and diverse moods deserve to be more widely heard. My only slight cavil is the rather short timing: with playing of this quality and inventiveness another ten minutes' music would have been more than welcome. *John Bryan*

LATE BAROQUE

Avison *Concerti from Opus 9* (nos. 1, 4, 6-9) The Georgian Consort (Simon Jones, Rebekah Durston *vlns*, Duncan Druce *vla*, Rachel Gray *vlc*, Jane McDermott *vlne*, John Traherne *hpscd*, John Green *org*) 46' 29"
The Divine Art **2-4108**

King's Music is currently involved in negotiations with The Avison Society about producing scores for a Complete Edition of the composer's output and I've already typeset and edited several of the concertos 'after Scarlatti', so it has been an especial pleasure to hear some Avison on real instruments! The Georgian Concert is not an ensemble with which I am familiar, but I certainly hope there are further recordings planned, because I've listened to this CD more often than most of those I've had for review this month. It's partly the music, and partly the utterly natural sound of the instruments and the generally relaxed, 'having a good time' feeling. Concerto No. 4 is played without continuo, and the writing is such that it isn't missed at all. Highly recommended. *BC*

Bach *Cantatas from Leipzig 1723 (Vol. 16): 119 & 194.* Yukari Nonoshita, Joshie Hida, Kirsten Sollek-Avella, Makoto Sakurada, Jochen Kupfer, Peter Kooij *SSATBarB*, Bach Collegium Japan, Masaaki Suzuki 62' 50"
BIS-CD-1131

Volume 16 of the Bach Collegium Japan series presents two of the typically sumptuous cantatas that Bach performed in his first months at Leipzig in 1723: Cantata 194 celebrates the new organ and church renovations at the nearby village of Störmthal, and Cantata 119 marks the change of the Leipzig town council, which took place in August each year. The first contains delightful secular elements, derived from a Köthen work, including a pastorale, gavotte and minuet; the second is notable for its striking trumpet effects (such as in the second recitative) together with gentler movements, including one for two recorders and alto.

The virtue of Masaaki Suzuki's account lies in the sense of ensemble that he has developed over the last few years: both rhythm and sonority are directed to an expressive momentum and phrasing, and even though there are considerable differences of personnel between the two cantatas, all performers sound entirely comfortable. The choruses, built upon the solo team, are vigorous and shapely, and Jochen Kupfer (baritone), Jukari Nonoshita (soprano) and Kirsten Sollek-Avella (alto) are particularly commendable for their expressive diction and integration with the instruments. Indeed, the duet for Nonoshita and Kupfer (together with excellent oboe playing) in Cantata 194 is one of the highspots of the disc. If none of the soloists seems absolutely outstanding, this might be an effect of Suzuki's overall musical approach (and the microphone placement which tends to embrace the soloists within the instrumental texture) by which all elements are directed towards a common end. *John Butt*

Bach *Partitas BWV 835-830* Blandine Verlet (1624 Hans Ruckers at Colmar) 121' 05"
Naïve *Astrée* **E 8849** 2 CDs

I first heard Blandine Verlet playing Bach in these very Partitas about 30 years ago on LP, and was, even then, struck by the high sense of authority in her playing, which for me stems both from her idiosyncratic flexibilities of timing and decoration and from her otherwise generally disciplined control. In this context, the label name Naïve is somehow both positive and apt. She now advertises what is essentially a complete Bach harpsichord recording series with Astrée, and is considered by the rather journalistic note-writer as one who has established herself clearly in Paris as a respected advocate of the composer. To state that I am, in general, sympathetic to her interpretations does not mean that I prefer them, say, to those of Lucy Carolan [on Signum SIGD012], which for me are recorded on slightly more suitable instru-

ments than even the original Ruckers used here. But there is a similar sense of intellectual refinement about much of this account. *Stephen Daw*

Bach *Complete Violin Sonatas 1 (BWV 1014-1016, 1021, 1024)* Musica Alta Ripa 61' 32"
Dabringhaus & Grimm **MDG 309 1073-2**

Bach *Six Sonatas for Violin and Harpsichord BWV 1014-1019* Emlyn Ngai *vln*, Peter Watchorn *hpscd* 103' 30" (2 CDs in box)
Musica Omnia **MO 0112**
+ 27'39" commentary by Peter Watchorn

Bach *Complete Violin Sonatas 1 (BWV 1014-17)* Elizabeth Blumenstock, John Butt 58' 29"
Harmonia Mundi *Capital Express* **HCX 3957084**
£ (rec 1991-2) [vol. 2 due later this year]

Writing CD reviews is not as easy as it seems. Finding something different to say from one article to the next, remaining impartial even when one knows the artists involved, writing about material with which one is not familiar – there are many reasons why it can get a little daunting month after month. Being confronted by three performances of the same material is an interesting exercise, especially when they are as different as these!

The Blumenstock/Butt version is a re-release and will be followed by the other sonatas in due course; the Musica Alta Ripa (their name comes from the Latin version of Hannover, their base) set is vol. 1 and includes some dubious pieces; the Ngai/Watchorn includes the six standard sonatas for violin and harpsichord (BWV1014-1019) and a third CD with the harpsichordist discussing the performances and giving historical background to the pieces, which was mostly sensible and will be welcomed by anyone new to the pieces. As far as the performances themselves go, they vary widely. My favourites are the German versions (Anne Röhrig plays three sonatas from the set, while Ursula Bundies plays BWV 1021 and 1024), followed by Ngai/Watchorn, and then Butt/Blumenstock, which I found quite quirky. BWV 1021 opens with organ, theorbo and cello continuo, above which Ulla Bundies weaves a lovely, ethereal melody, beautifully ornamented on its repeat, and thus it goes on. My flatmate was utterly smitten by the recording: it was playing when I left for work one morning, and still on when I returned nine hours later! Ngai/Watchorn eschew the use of artificial aids in restoring the violin-harpsichord balance by using a copy of a big Harraß instrument, which I have to say makes a gorgeous full sound. For one of the canonic movements, the lute stop is used on the bass (following Bach's staccato indication), and it's almost bearable – regular readers will be familiar with my aversion to this practice. The violin playing is generally very sweet, with darker tones for the more pathetic movements (the F minor's opening is heart-rending). Just occasionally, position changes were a little too audible for my liking. Butt and Blumenstock are technically brilliant, but I felt sometimes that they were trying too hard to be different from other performances. There was much to enjoy, and perhaps it was the up-close miking that caused some of the problems – the German recording takes place in a slightly echo-y room, which makes the sound softer edged without any loss of detail. If, like me, you already have several recordings of the violin sonatas, you'll have your particular favourites (mine will remain the Podger/Pinnock sets), but any of these three is well worth investigating. *BC*

Bach *Orchestral Suites 1 & 2, Harpsichord Concerto in E BWV 1053, Sinfonia BWV 42* Norwegian Baroque Orchestra, Ketil Haugsand *hpscd, dir.* 69' 15"
Linn **CKD 181**

This was the first time I'd heard the Norwegian Baroque Orchestra. I particularly enjoyed their one-to-a-part account of the B minor Orchestral Suite, by turns spirited and delicate. The E major Harpsichord Concerto, by contrast, was rather brittle; the semiquavers didn't have the bubbling energy that usually makes this piece such fun. In some of the movements of the C major Orchestral Suite, there was too much emphasis on the first beat of every bar, which could dampen the dance feel. If the orchestra danced these movements, they would soon establish a hierarchy between the different bars. But on the whole, a pleasant release and an ensemble worth watching. *Stephen Rose*

Facco *Amor es todo invención: Júpiter y Amphitrión* Soloists, Ensemble Albalonga, Anibal E. Centangola *con* 192' 07" (3 CDs in box)
Pavane **ADW 7446/8**

Recorded in 1999, this is a world premiere set. It's a characterful performance of an interesting piece: the strings (four violins, viola, cello *and* gamba with contrabasso) are joined by pairs of recorders and horns, and four oboes. In addition, there are archlute/guitar, harpsichord, percussion, nakers (a separate player) and 'serpentone'! 'The opera tells the story of the double and Alcmene, the lady deceived by intrustive Jupiter that pretends to be her husband, the soldier Amphitryon ... [it] was adopted from Plautus, so often sung and staged' – in other words, tells the same story as the play for which Purcell wrote incidental music, and if you have a recording of that, the booklet notes will be far clearer than the present ones! The performance is enjoyable enough – the opening chorus is very nicely done, and some of the arias are delightful. There is also some strange rustic music which sounded a little odd in context and might have made much more sense in the theatre (as most opera would, of course). There are, though, some uneven moments, and some strange musical passages. But since it's most unlikely ever to be recorded again, (especially in the present financial climate), fans of early 18th-century Italian (or is it Spanish?) opera should listen to this. *BC*

£ = bargain price ££ = midprice

All other discs full price, as far as we know

Facco *6 Concerti a Cinque, Op. 1. Libro II: Pensieri Adriarmonici* Ensemble Albalonga, Anibal E. Centangola *dir* 60' 30"
Pavane **ADW 7434**

The six concertos are the second part of Gaicomo Facco's *Pensieri Adriarmonici*. It was recorded in July 1999 and, I presume, was intended as the second part of a project for the DHM since they issued Libro I in June 2000 (See *EMR* 61, June 2000, p. 24). I thoroughly enjoyed the music and the performances. I've sometimes been a little unsympathetic to the varying styles of the two principal violinists (Federico Guglielmo and Carlo Lazari, who take turn about, as far as the solos go), but there was nothing of that nature here. I wonder why there's a bassoon in the orchestra, though – although the cello is given a concertante role at various points, surely the violone, theorbo and harpsichord are support enough. Had they added oboes to the tuttis a la Pisendel, it might have made more sense. The booklet is spoiled by the absence of the last two characters on each line of the right-hand page, and although there is undeniably a Latin American link to the composer's output, I think that aspect of his career is overplayed here. Surely the title suggests this is European music par excellence. Nice music, nicely played. *BC*

D. Scarlatti *Complete Sonatas*
Vol. 1 The Spanish Influence Emilia Fadini *hpscd* 78' 43"
Stradivarius **STR 33500**
K. 91-2, 99, 105, 115, 119, 144-5, 156-7, 163-4, 184-5, 187, 239

This very full disc is the first in a series to be recorded by a number of artists on a variety of instruments. Emilia Fadini, who has developed her own numbering system following the Biblioteca Marciana source (she also gives the more familiar Kirkpatrick numbers), here plays a selection of sonatas in which she sees Spanish/gipsy influence. Her choice seems a bit arbitrary, apart from the obvious strumming in K 239 with which she ends; her liner notes take what seems to me a rather simplistic approach to such influence in this very *galant* music. That said, I thoroughly enjoyed this recording which seems to me to strike the right balance between virtuosity, care for the musical line, and expression. The playing is beautifully clean and done on two very fine sounding instruments, copies of a 1738 German (Vater) and a 1785 Portuguese (Autunes) harpsichord; the rich sonorities of the two instruments are exploited to the full in this fine recording. *Noel O'Regan*

D. Scarlatti, *Complete Sonatas Vol. 2 La maniera italiana* Ottavio Dantone *hpscd*
Stradivarius **STR 33501** 69' 42"
K. 21, 37, 43, 46, 51-4, 56, 59-61, 67, 69, 77, 87

There can be no doubting the Italian influence on Scarlatti, and Ottavio Dantone's choice of sonatas here displays a variety of styles, from the expressively melodic through

the violinistic figuration of the concerto idiom to the Neapolitan toccata of the earlier 17th century. Dantone uses the same Portuguese harpsichord copy throughout as Fadini and it comes even more alive in his playing. He has the same virtuosity and rhythmic flexibility as she but displays a greater sense of daring in the fast sonatas. This volume benefits too from a wider stylistic diversity than Vol. 1, with some very beautiful aria-like sonatas and a preponderance of pieces in the minor mode, all played very idiomatically. Dantone's playing makes the strongest possible case for this music as having been conceived for harpischord. *Noel O'Regan*

Vivaldi *Juditha Triumphans* Magdalena Kozená *Juditha*, Maria José Trullu *Holofernes*, Marina Comparato *Vagaus*, Anke Herman *Abra*, Tiziano Carraro *Ozias*, Academia Montis Regalis, Chamber Choir of the National Academy of Santa Cecilia, Alessandro de Marchi *cond* 3 CDs 165' 30"
Opus 111 Naïve **OP30314**

I had my suspicions when I saw the cover. The recent Opus 111 recording of Vivaldi's powerful and ambivalent oratorio *Juditha Triumphans* has lost its way with a vengeance. The soloists continually indulge in protracted flights of decorative fancy, in a jumble sale of styles – Verdi, Wagner, Puccini, a dash of Gluck, even a hint of Wright and Forrest – and not a bargain among them. I gather that this mistaking of ostentation for virtuosity is a current trend. Here it is endemic. Instrumentalists too, and even the chorus are infected by the same refusal to let the note be itself. The musical and narrative momentum is dumped in favour of endless self-indulgence and the text is gagged.

In his notes in the CD booklet, De Marchi make much of the choice of voices that distinguish the roles, stating that they were chosen for their different tessitura and timbre. But in practice the aproach he adopts has the effect of making all the characters sound the same. Kozena's magnificent voice does come through in places, but even she is tainted by the prevailing relish for florid and inept display. She shares with her maidservant Abra a rash of melodramatic *glissandi*, presumably intended to communicate moments of emotion. In the case of Trullu's Holofernes, wayward variations on the vocal line do at least disguise some ugly vibrato. Her version of the Assyrian general is not so much *en travestie* as *à la* pantomime dame – is that noise at the end of 'Tormenta mentis' intended to be drunken flatulence?

The extreme shifts in tempo are disorienting. 'Noli o cara', for example, is moribund and the following 'Plena nectare non mero' is manic: Holofernes anaesthetised and the chorus on amphetamines. Michael Talbot's notes in the booklet are, of course, impeccable, but have for the most part appeared elsewhere. De Marchi's own comments prvoke a distinct lack of confidence.

Of the other available versions, I find Robert King's (Hyperion CDA 67281/2) cold and monochrome despite its instrumental brilliance. The Philips account (426 955-2, cond. Negri) is much richer. It offers a more humane and complex characterisation and has a warm sensitivity to the musical and dramatic imperatives. Birgit Finnilä is a Juditha of truly heroic stature and tragic power, for she reveals extraordinary pathos in the role – the ambiguity at its heart. A version probably less familiar to readers (on Amadeus) was recorded at the 2000 Barga Festival with Modo Antiquo conducted by Sardello. History comes to us partial, fractured and prejudiced: we are all speculators in this territory. But this comes closest to my imagination of the first *Juditha* at the Pietà. Barbara, for whom the part of Vagaus was first written, was clearly a favourite of Vivaldi or his audience (or both). This recording is worth geting just for Nicki Kennedy's gentle steward, every vocal and emotional colour of the part sensitively articulated; 'Armatae face' is simply stunning and could not be bettered.

I've returned to the De Marchi recording trying to find some mitigating detail: I can't. *Sue Powell*

CLASSICAL

Boccherini *String Quartets op. 32.3-6* Quartetto Borciani 78' 58"
Naxos **8.555043** £

Composed in 1780, about the same time as Haydn's op. 33 set, these four quartets are attuned to the tastes in Vienna at the time. They are slickly written, though without the emotional content of either Mozart or Haydn; it is the style of the latter that they most closely resemble. Perhaps the most interesting of the four here recorded is the three movement quartet no. 4 in C major. I was expecting something unusual from the opening Allegro bizzarro, but it had little of the eccentricity of many of Haydn's quartets. The slow movement was the most emotionally intense of the collection, followed by a sparkling finale. Knowing the peaks that both Mozart and Haydn reached in their G minor works, the quartet in that key, the longest of the works on the disc, had little in comparison. The minuet and trio, however, had some interesting writing and the finale's unusual cadenza, marked *Capriccio ad libitum*, proved a welcome point of interest. The playing of the Borciani quartet, on modern instruments, is generally stylish and inoffensive to those that prefer period performances and the cheap price of the Naxos label may attract those interested in broadening their library of classical string quartets.
Ian Graham-Jones

Haydn *The London Symphonies vol. 2 (95, 96, 98, 100, 101, 104)* Orchestra of the 18th century, Frans Brüggen 152' 11" (2 CDs)
Philips **468 927-2** (rec 1987-1993) ££

I was somehow expecting Brüggen's performances to be over-phrased and fussy, so was pleasantly surprised to find that they felt just right. Well worth reissuing, and worth buying if you missed them first time round. *CB*

Mozart, Stadler & the Basset Horn Colin Lawson, Michael Harris, Timothy Lines
ASV *Gaudeamus* **CD GAU 246** 71' 48"
Mozart K439b/1, 2 & 4; Stadler *5 Terzetti, Duettino 4*

Simple, charming pleasures! It was a good idea to frame two pieces by Mozart's clarinettist friend ('der Stodla') with divertimenti (three of the five for winds) by Mozart himself; and Stadler doesn't come out of the comparison at all badly. The performances are smooth, nimble and stylish, with due attention to the occasional hint of something more profound in the music. The second Stadler terzetto is taken marginally too slowly, elsewhere there is a nice sense of tempo – and of fun. The recording is intimate, a bit over-resonant, yet spacious. *Peter Branscombe*

Mozart, Gluck, Myslivecek *Le belle imagini: Arias* Magdalena Kozena, Prague Philharmonia, Michel Swierczewski 68' 15"
Deutsche Grammophon **471 334-2**

The selling-point here is not Mozart or Gluck but Myslivecek. The four dramatic arias dominate the recital; they demand, and receive, singing of the most virtuosic manner, and are musically a reminder of how much we lose by ignoring Metastasian opera (as David Levy's reviews are showing, that is the current big discovery in early music.) There is obviously a nationalistic element in the young singer linking her success to the revival of a compatriot, but the risk was worth taking; both she and her composer pass the test of comparison with Mozart (though 'Voi che sapete' is an odd choice when everything else is in the *opera seria* manner). I'm not entirely comfortable with the singer's continuous rapid vibrato, but one adjusts after a minute or two. *CB*

Myslivecek *Abramo ed Isacco* Vladimir Dolezal *Abramo*, Tatiana Korovina *Isaaco*, Hye Jin Kim *Sara*, Ivana Czaková *Gamari*, Victoria Luchianez *Angelo*, Sinfonietta Praha, Ivan Pacik, 141'58", (2 CDs)
Supraphon **SU 3209-2 232**

This is the last and reputedly the finest oratorio from the pen of Josef Myslivecek (1737-1781), known in his lifetime to the opera lovers of northern Italy as 'Il divino Boemo'. The nickname, which recalls the earlier designation of Hasse as 'Il caro Sassone', may have saved Italians from getting their tongues around an exotic Czech surname but it also pays eloquent tribute to their consistent appreciation of Myslivecek's quasi-Mozartian melodic gifts as an adopted master of Italy's most highly valued vocal and dramatic forms. Among the sources of Myslivecek's oratorio, first given in Florence in 1776, there is indeed one that even attributes it to Mozart – a misattribution that on grounds of the work's overall style and quality is rather less absurd than most such posthumous puffs. However, despite its sometimes overwhelmingly Mozartian resonance, *Abramo ed Isacco* is an original work of sacred drama

that has touches that are distinctively the composer's own: and among these I was particularly struck by the aria, in the oratorio's second half, in which Abramo expresses his relief at being saved from the pain of sacrificing his son. This is accompanied by two obbligato bassoons in a way that is certainly no less effective for being quite un-Mozartian in its overall instrumental feel. This is only one of many beautifully crafted arias and ensemble pieces that were obviously intended for the best singers that Italy could then provide: and though in this revival there are times when the soloists seem a bit stretched by the considerable challenges put in their way, on the whole they cope very well with the composer's long lyrical lines in a finely judged performance worth considering by anyone interested in vocal music of the classical period. One might ideally have preferred the extra edge that period instruments would have given to the imaginative orchestration. But since we are unlikely to have another recording of this musically distinguished oratorio, I have little hesitation in warmly recommending these discs to readers of *EMR*.

David J. Levy

Paisiello *Socrate Immaginario* Christophoros Stamboglis *Don Tammaro*, Claudia Marchi *Donna Rosa*, Yolanda Auyanet *Emilia*, Filippo Pina Castiglione *Ippolito*, Domenico Colaianni *Antonio*, Matteo Peirone *Calendrino*, Orchestra Sinfonica di Savona, Giovanni Di Steffano *cond* 151' 36" (2CDs)
Bongiovanni GB 2259/60-2

Revivals and live recordings of operas such as this are evidence that in the provincial theatres of Italy they are seen not as relics of a fossilised past but as elements in a vibrant tradition capable of drawing an appreciative audience to works long absent from the appallingly limited range of the standard repertoire cultivated in the larger houses. *Socrate Immaginario* (1775) is the fourth such work by Paisiello to appear from Bongiovanni and though no rediscovered masterpiece is at least a lively and melodious example of the comic genre as practised by one of its most gifted and prolific exponents. The central conceit is the folly of Don Tammaro, who imagines himself as a second Socrates, living out a succession of increasingly absurd philosophical fantasies at the expense of all about him and being suitably repaid by his numerous relations and servants. Before the opera is out, this device gives Paisiello the chance to provide, among other pleasures, a cunningly apt parody of the underworld scene from Gluck's *Orfeo*, complete with demons and a plangent minstrel's harp, in a tableau in which the demented hero imagines himself as somehow transported into the courts of Hell.

Authenticity in performances of works like this has less to do with the use of particular period instruments than with the skill of the cast in making the stylised comedy of opera buffa as dramatically alive as it was when the piece was originally composed. This requires, not great vocalists, but competent artists – actors as much as singers – capable of holding a musical line while making their characters as believable as possible in ever more ludicrous situations. This is something that the present cast manages rather well under the direction of Giovanni Di Steffano, and the result is a worthwhile addition, slight but welcome, to the range of Italian musical comedies available to those who like this type of entertainment as an occasional diversion from more weighty artistic fare.

David J. Levy

Wranitzky *Symphonies* London Mozart Players. Matthias Bamert 71' 13"
Chandos CHAN 9916
op. 11 in c, op. 31 in C *Grand Characteristic Symphony for the Peace with the French Republic*, op. 36 in D

This valuable project continues with symphonies by Paul Wranitzky, born in the same year as Mozart, and composer of the once-popular Singspiel *Oberon, König der Elfen* (of which a recording would be more than welcome). A curiosity that I cannot unravel concerns the C-minor Symphony; the Supraphon CD of 1993 labels a quite different, three-movement work as op. 11, and its companion disc of 1991 identifies the piece on the new Chandos recording as 'Symphony in C minor, sine Op.'. Caveat emptor! After which, it is a pleasure to turn to the music itself, which in the case of the first two works is sonorous, richly scored, in these performances well paced and attractive. The third symphony, scored solely for strings, is the most interesting: *Grand Characteristic Symphony for the Peace with the French Republic*, op. 31 (1797). If the identity of few of the programmatic episodes would be guessable (apart, perhaps, from the great sweeping figure betokening the guillotining of the French royal couple!), it is a welcome addition to the discography. By comparison with Bamert's no-nonsense approach to op. 11 and 36, Bohumil Gregor's Supraphon readings with the Dvorák Chamber Orchestra are leisurely, almost self-indulgent. I warmly recommend the new Chandos.

Peter Branscombe