

Early Music REVIEW

Number 96 December 2003

ISSN 1355-3437

Price £2.50

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Published on the first of each month except Jan.
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<http://www.kings-music.co.uk>
UK: £22.50 Europe: £22.50 [£27.50]
Rest of World: £35.00 [£40.00] (air) £22.50 [£27.50] (surface)
From June 2004, foreign subscribers only receive the diary
if they pay the higher sum
Sterling cheques payable to King's Music
US\$ & French € cheques payable to Clifford Bartlett

Whether the words come first or second, I always make sure that any printed programme in which I am involved presents them in a way that relates to the musical form and with translations set out so that the listener can identify crucial words with their English equivalents. Similarly, I complain when a CD of vocal music lacks texts and translations. Curiously, however, my listening behaviour can be quite different. Much as I expect to have the texts to hand, often I don't look at them the first time I hear the music (especially if I'm not sitting at my desk when I do so), and find that I can enjoy even the repetition of multi-verses medieval songs without following their sense. I am glad that, the first time I heard Benjamin Bagby's *Beowulf* performance, it was in a gloomy crypt – if I had been able to read the texts provided, I would have had to juggle between Anglo-Saxon and Dutch (with the former being the more comprehensible): the atmosphere and effect overrode the specific meaning.

At the Monteverdi weekend at the South Bank early last month (reviewed on p. 10), Mark Tucker was asked after his lecture about singing *Orfeo* in English. The whole tenor of the argument made his answer obvious; the use of surtitles was the best compromise. And, indeed, usually it is. But then he and Lynton Atkinson gave a stunning performance of Monteverdi duets that was so dramatic and expressive that the need for a translation vanished. There were enough recognisable words like *baci* to confirm that one's mind was on the right wavelength, but the singing and presentation was so gripping that any intrusion might have spoilt the atmosphere. Someone in the audience who was on a different wavelength asked for the house lights to be raised so that the programme could be read, but the management sensibly ignored the request. The concentration of performers and audience produced a moving event such as one rarely encounters. The other highlight of the weekend (despite Mark's *Possente spirto*) was the stunning performance of the outstanding role in the work, the messenger's announcement of Euridice's death, sung from among the audience by Julia Gooding. She phoned me a few days after the concert to buy some music, and seems genuinely to have been surprised when I told her how moving her performance was.

CB

EDITIONS AND BOOKS

Clifford Bartlett

Apologies. This issue suffered two mishaps, which have delayed its production. I managed to lose two files. Perhaps my Microsoft Publisher has become corrupted in some way – alternatively, since I never learnt properly how to use it, I may have stumbled upon a pitfall. The result was, first, that I lost the list of CDs I had sent out then, at a late stage after I had written them, all the book and music reviews. An attempt to retrieve them from the hard disc was unsuccessful, so I had to write them again. This was frustrating, and I fear that these quickly rewritten versions are not as good as the lost ones. I could use that as an excuse for not including reviews of all the books that have arrived over the last couple of months; in fact, those listed on p. 5 (perhaps for use as a Christmas present list) have been put aside for what I hope will be a more leisurely period over the next couple of months.

CHINS OFF

Elizabeth Wallfisch *The Art of Playing 'Chin-Off' for the Brave and the Curious. A Treatise on one Technical Aspect of Baroque Violin Playing in the Year 2003.* King's Music, 2003. 31 pp, £7.50. [Special offer: £12 + post together with Geminiani's *The Art of Playing on the Violin.*]

It is now thirty years since I discarded my shoulder and chin rest and it took me quite a few of those to feel comfortable with the new way of 'holding' the violin and getting around the fingerboard. Brave souls who travelled to Holland to study the Baroque violin were initiated into the secrets of the chinless method and returned confident and somehow superior in their new-found freedom. For those (and I include myself) still looking for new ways to manage the apparent disadvantage, Elizabeth Wallfisch has written a detailed technical analysis of the problem. While testing this booklet's method, I found myself doing things with the violin which had never occurred to me – and they have definitely paid off.

To use Libby's Treatise you need: two music stands, a copy of Geminiani's *The Art of Playing on the Violin* and the Treatise itself. Written in a friendly style which brings the writer into the room with you, it is the next best thing to a one-to-one lesson with a good teacher. Having analysed the holding of the violin, the player is led through position changing exercises step by step. It would be impossible not to feel the benefit of these movements which contribute to the freedom towards which all players aspire when playing. After leading us by the hand through Geminiani, Libby doesn't hold back from more technical workouts with Kreutzer, Sevcik and scales, all with a 'period' gloss.

This is an excellent booklet which all *da braccio* players should try out. Technical help with period playing has definitely lost out to the stylistic up until now, but this will help to restore the balance and demystify what is to some an insuperable problem.

Judy Tarling

PERFORMANCE PRACTICE AND IMAGINATION

Peter Walls *History, Imagination and the Performance of Music.* The Boydell Press, 2003. xiv + 184pp, £40.00. ISBN 1 84383 005 1

Dorotya Fabian *Bach Performance Practice, 1945-1975: A Comprehensive Review of Sound Recordings and Literature* Ashgate, 2003. xiv + 314pp + CD, £52.50 ISBN 0 7546 0549 3

Perhaps living in the Antipodes provides a more detached view of historic performance practices: certainly both these authors (from Wellington and New South Wales) avoid the over-enthusiastic or over-philosophical approaches that have often made studies of performance practice so unhelpful. Both authors are familiar with the polemic and critical literature, but are more concerned with detailed examination of the data. In Walls's case (I'd better stick to surnames, since I've never met Ms Fabian, though it seems very formal not to refer to Peter), his major concern is what a score (or so often, the parts) tell us about how a piece of music could have been performed, and it is interesting that he takes as examples both Corelli and an opera of which he conducted the first performance. 'Authenticity' was primarily a word bandied around by record companies; practitioners used it as a convenient short-hand until it became untenable – the advantage of the HIP acronym is that in its full form it is less pretentious and as an abbreviation it can more easily represent a series of interlinked attitudes rather than something too explicit. Walls takes as his starting point his distillation of attack on HIP from the 1980s (p. 3), and counters each point during his book. It is founded in a host of specific examples. The accumulation of these details leads to a variety of approaches, some perhaps contradictory, but giving a rich view of the considerations which lie behind musical performance, all of which should enhance, not replace what Geminiani called 'Genius'.

Fabian has a problem: her point of view is that of the better HIP performers of the last few years, yet they are beyond the scope of her book. So she is to some extent judging her victims, whether historically aware or not, partly by criteria that were appropriate at the time, but also by current ones, which may, of course, seem wrong in a decade or two. Despite the air of objectivity, this is in some ways a very personal assessment of the thirty years that included the early stages of authentic performance (using the word appropriate to the period).* The author takes as her test cases the Brandenburgs, the Goldberg Variations and the Matthew & John Passions. Through the period there was a change in ideals of the ideal performance, irrespective of the use of early instruments, which in many ways is shown to be irrelevant to what Fabian

sees as the fundamental qualities of good performances. There is no consistent pattern in tempi, for instance, and since hardly any harpsichordists used historical-style instruments, they are found to offer few advantages to outweigh the generally more sensitive playing of pianists. Much of what she has to say is just and the detailed comparison of many recordings is fascinating. The discussion on musical controversies of the time shows that most of them collapsed rather than came to any agreement: one example, which she doesn't use, is that double-dotting ceased being a major issue when editors stopped notating it and when, with faster tempos, it was easier for players to feel what they should do without much outside input. What she feels is the most important issue, phrasing/articulation, was rarely discussed: if there were to be a sequel covering 1975-2000, it would be interesting to trace its spread. Its pervasive importance overshadows the topics into which the discussion here is – tempo & dynamics, ornamentation, rhythm and articulation. The accompanying 76-minute CD offers 76 excerpts from the recordings studied: enough to put some sound to the argument and check (generally confirm) the author's judgments. It will be interesting to compare this with a similar study being done by an Israeli scholar at King's Cambridge whom I met in Haifa three years ago.

* I'd like to see a thorough study of the terminology. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, I think that 'authenticity' is chiefly a word of the record industry, and as I've said several times before, 'early music' may relate to 'frühe musik' and appeared in English in the title *British Union Catalogue of Early Music*, published in 1957 but begun in 1946.

JOSQUIN'S AVE MARIA

Joshua Rifkin 'Munich, Milan, and a Marian Motet: Dating Josquin's *Ave Maria... virgo serena*'. *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, Vol. 56, No. 2 (Summer 2003), pp.239-350.

I single out this article for special comment for two reasons. It is about Josquin's most-sung motet (it is, for instance, on the Tallis Scholar's Christmas compilation reviewed on p. 28), but also it is a marvellous example of an old-fashioned, rambling journal article, cram full of parenthetical material, with footnotes (in smaller print) taking on average over half of each page. Ideally, it should be a book, so that it would have had a thorough index, and perhaps with some of the lengthy notes turned into appendices and given the benefit of more spacious layout. But as it stands, it is a cornucopia of information relating to North Italian (and other) motets of the decades before (and just after) 1500, and an ideal means for any budding student to see the variety of information that can be brought to bear on a single topic. Rifkin addresses the consequence of two biographical discoveries: that the Josquin is not the one documented at Milan in the 1470s, though he did work there in the 1480s, and the apparently unequivocal dating of *Ave Maria* to 1476, which would have been fine with the older birthdate of c.1440 but surprising if he was up to 20 years younger. The solution is that *Ave Maria* was added to the MS dated 1476 about nine or ten years

later, so the Milanese style of the motet still has biographical plausibility. As an example of other reasons for reading the article, those interested in the Ferrara 'wind-band' MS (Rome Casanatense 2856) will find that it now seems to date from a decade or so later and isn't the MS catalogued as being 'a la pifaresca'. The article gives the impression of a vibrant scholarly community, interchanging information among itself informally; Rifkin mentions a *samizdat* circulation of the first version of this paper going back to 1978. It is easy to assume from many current journal articles that musicology has retreated into jargon-filled idea-pieces that are so full of fashionable concepts that one assumes they will be outmoded so soon that it is hardly worth reading them. Much of the information here will inevitably need correction, but it is refreshing to encounter so impressive a survival of old-fashioned musicology! The main concession to current practice is the first half of the title.

LUTE SOCIETY

As well as his CD (see p. 28), Chris Goodwin has sent me a batch of recent Lute Society publications.

The Folger 'Dowland' Manuscript is important because of its personal connection with Dowland, even though the bulk of his contribution is the much-reproduced page with *My Lady Hunsdon's Allmande* [or Puff]. Its 75 items (some quite short) include a dozen by Dowland and six by John Johnson, whose signature appears after his *Delyght Pavin*. Ideas of progress are undermined by the fact that most plates derive from pre-war photographs of the MS. This facsimile is clear but monochrome; there is an alternative colour facsimile published by Alain Veylit at <http://cbsr26.ucr.edu/dmscontents.html> at a slightly lower resolution than this. The introduction is followed by a list of contents with concordances, supplemented by a series of footnotes to other settings – these might have been easier to use if instead of numbered notes they had been cued to the piece numbers. The size is reduced a bit from the original (86%), but should be large enough to play from.

David Humphreys, with Stewart McCoy and Ian Harwood, have edited Philip van Wilder's music for one and two lutes. There are two substantial 'original' works, a *Dump* and a *Fantasia*, plus two more short pieces. The rest of the volume is devoted to versions of chansons, some for solo lute, one for two lutes, and six for solo voice with lute, including three versions of his best-known song, *Je file*. Van Wilder was an important lutenist in England in the second quarter of the 16th century; it may be doubted whether these arrangements can be traced back to him, but his music must often have been performed thus.

The title *40 Easy to Early Intermediate Pieces for Renaissance Lute* (£4.00) makes one wonder what educational quango defined the grading system of lute pieces. I'm in no position to judge, but it seems sensible to collect short pieces from three sources widely spread by date and location: Jüdenkünig's treatise from c.1519, Cambridge UL

Dd.2.11 and Negri's *Le Gratia d'Amore* (1602) and print them in clear French tablature. The edition is by Chris Goodwin; left-hand figuring has been added by Jessica Gordon. Practical comments are included after some pieces.

Finally, the ninth Lute Society Booklet is *Baroque Guitar Stringing: a Survey of the Evidence* by Monica Hall. The point at issue isn't the actual pitch or pattern of tuning but whether the fourth and fifth courses continue the sequence downwards, are in octaves, or are re-entrant. Monica provides a thorough survey of the sources, sometimes correcting earlier translations. One moral is that arguments from apparent harmonic logic are irrelevant, and 'eliminating all the supposed anomalies may actually eliminate the characteristics which give the music its individuality' (p. 32). Incidentally, the October *Lute News* has a list by Monica of vihuela music in print.

VIVALDI FOR VIOLA D'AMORE

Vivaldi *Concerto[s] for Viola d'Amore and strings* [RV 97, 392-397, 540] ed. Leon King. Quall Publications, 2001. £20 per set of score, solo parts & strings (1.1.1.2).

I have rarely sensed that passengers (as we used to be called) on the late train (or service – a word freed for a new use now that churches have acts of worship) from Kings Cross to Huntingdon have been attending cultural events in the capital. But one night a year or so ago I found myself sitting opposite a couple with a Royal Festival Hall programme, while across the gangway was a group with Covent Garden programmes, and diagonally opposite was someone studying a photocopy of Vivaldi manuscripts. This was Leon King, returning from playing viola with the OAE and working on his edition of the viola d'amore concertos. These have now appeared (though unless I've telescoped time, I would guess that the copyright date quoted above is of the first draft, not the final one) – I've been slow with this review, but not that slow! Considering that most of the concertos survive in just one autograph source, the length of the critical commentary testifies to the thoroughness of the editorial sensitivity. The typesetting is very clear, and the instrumental parts are well set-out (though rather more compact than would be customary for standard repertoire: our readers can take 12 staves on an A4 page, but symphony orchestras prefer fewer staves on large pages – I can't be too critical, though: there are 13 staves on one page of our edition of RV 540!). Scores and solo parts are bound in blue card. The prices for extra copies is amazingly low. Leon is also preparing further music involving the d'amore: good luck to him.

FUZEAU – FACSIMILES

Louis Marchand *Pièces de clavecin...* Fuzeau (5761), 2003. 57pp, £20.76.

Christoph Graupner *Monatliche Clavir Früchte* (1722). Présentation par Oswald Bill. Fuzeau, 2003. 134pp, £37.82

Giovanni Benedetto Platti *Sonate à 3 cioè Violino, Violoncello e Basso*. Présentation par Frohmut Dangel-Hofmann. Fuzeau (5856), 2003. £29.57.

In 1699, Marchand began a series of publications, intending to alternate a suite for harpsichord and a suite for organ every three months. This plan was evidently too ambitious, and the claim on the title page of the first keyboard suite was removed from the reprint of 1702, reproduced here. *Livre Second* is dated 1703, and is prefaced with a commendatory poem by Saint Lambert. These two books offer suites in D minor and G minor, and a couple of other pieces are added to make the book complete. Jean Saint-Arroman's introduction draws attention to the erratic printing of the ornament signs, though we may wonder whether the fault is not the printer but the composer being less systematic than other clavecinistes. Philippe Lescat offers information on French harpsichord makers of the period, and also lists the instruments Marchand owned at his death, the quantity suggesting that perhaps he really was a 'marchand'.

Graupner's collection is not a programmatic illustration of the months of the year but a series of suites published monthly, rather more efficiently than Marchand managed. They seem to have been home-engraved. The lay-out may be to make best use of space without page-turns, so the movement-order may be adjusted in performance. The introduction is by the Darmstadt music librarian Oswald Bill, though the copy used doesn't come from the local collection but from Yale. The music is attractive and entertaining: its acceptability to non-specialists depends on the ability to cope with the C₁ clef. (The bass clef is the standard F₄, whereas the Marchand has a normal treble clef but F₃ for the bass.)

Platti was born in 1697 (or possibly earlier, though the registry entry for his death in 1763 states that he was then 64). He worked for the Prince Bishops of Schönborn from 1722. The library of another member of the episcopal family survives, and includes 30 MS trios for violin, cello and continuo, 19 by Platti. This publication includes six of them, chosen on grounds of legibility. Each piece is printed in an eight-page stapled booklet, putting together what must have been four separate sheets, a title page and three parts. So the user will need to cut them apart to make them playable. There is a useful introductory booklet, which gives the surprising information that Platti copied orchestral parts for a Monteverdi Mass.

FUZEAU – MÉTHODES & TRAITÉS

11. *Série I: France 1600-1800. Violon.* Fuzeau (5850-3), 2003. 4 vols, £211.09

14. *Série II: France 1800-1860. Hautbois.* Fuzeau (5861-3), 2003. 3 vols, £162.94

16. *Série II: France 1800-1860. Alto.* Fuzeau (5858-60), 2003. 3 vols, £100.28

Prices quoted are for the complete sets; individual volumes are available at rather more than pro rata.

Fuzeau's collection of treatises is progressing rapidly. It is strange that, in contrast to the firm's facsimiles of music, which have helpful introductions, here the sources are presented raw with no comment on why these particular items are included, how good they are, what the instruction pieces (which make up most of many of the publications) are meant to teach, and how effective they are. One wonders sometimes whether the music is actually written for the instrument in question or borrowed from tutors for other instruments. There is also a problem that, at times when techniques and styles are changing quickly, instruction books may well be the products of conservatives. A practical difficulty is the weight of each volume: you will need a substantial music stand before working seriously with any of these volumes, and even then they don't stay open very easily; it will be difficult for a French student to read Libby Wallfisch's book on Chin-off (see review on p. 2) in conjunction with the French version of Geminiani, included in vol. 1 of the Violin series. It would be useful if the reader were told whether it is just a translation or has any changes; similarly with the translation of Leopold Mozart, which, with the English edition being out of print, may well be used by English-speakers whose French is better than their German. Whose annotations are on the copies of Corrette's *L'art se perfectionner dans le Violon* and Berlioz's *Grand traité*? The inclusion of excerpts of more general works is particularly useful, especially in Série I, so the violin volume has 124 pages of Mersenne. It also has a MS treatise on violin playing by Brossard. All students concerned with historical performance on their instruments will need to acquire the relevant volumes, and music shops catering for academies with early-music courses should have copies in stock.

LOST BENDA

A few days ago I was looking through a box of material assembled in connection with the Oxford UP *Messiah* edition and came across a packet containing two volumes of keyboard music by Georg Benda published in October 1997, which were sent to me for review and must have got mixed up with the proofs. It's a bit late to print a review, and I haven't had time to look at them in any detail. But I owe it to Oxford UP at least to mention them. One volume contains 17 Sonatas edited by Christopher Hogwood. One is explicitly for clavichord, and it is likely that the instrument may have been the composer's first choice for the others. The editor places the music thus:

Overall Benda is expressive and rarely abrupt, more Italianate and vocal than J. C. F. Bach or E. W. Wolf, less volatile and self-willed than Müthel, less 'fantastick' than Philipp Emanuel Bach. It is not difficult to see why Mozart wrote to his father that 'of all the Lutheran Kapellmeisters, Benda has always been my favourite' (12 November 1778).

The other volume, edited by Timothy Roberts, has 35 Sonatinas, single-movement pieces, again probably

intended primarily for the clavichord. At the time, each cost £45.00. Sadly, a search of the Oxford online catalogue under the composer and under the ISBNs produce no hits, so they may no longer be available.

AWAITING REVIEW

We hope to review these in the next issue. Some of the Cambridge books were published early in the year, but only reached us a month or so ago.

Leo Treitler *With Voice and Pen: Coming to Know Medieval Song and How it was Made*. Oxford UP, 2003. xxx + 506pp, £95.00. ISBN 0 19 816644 3 + music CD

Marco Bizzarini *Luca Marenzio: The Career of a Musician Between the Renaissance and the Counter-Reformation...* translated by James Chater. Ashgate, 2003. xvii + 370pp, £49.50. ISBN 0 7546 0516 7

The New Way of Making Fowre Parts in Counterpoint By Thomas Campion and Rules how to Compose By Giovanni Coprario. Edited and with an Introduction by Christopher S. Wilson. Ashgate, 2003. x + 122p, £39.95. ISBN 0 7546 0515 9

Downing A. Thomas *Aesthetic of Opera in the Ancien Régime, 1647-1785*. Cambridge UP, 2002. viii + 411pp, £55.00. ISBN 0 521 80188 5

The Keyboard in Baroque Europe edited by Christopher Hogwood. Cambridge UP, 2003. xviii + 244pp, £50.00 ISBN 0 521 81055 8

W. Dean Sutcliffe *The Keyboard Sonatas of Domenico Scarlatti and Eighteenth-Century Musical Style*. Cambridge UP, 2003. xi + 400pp, £55.00. ISBN 0 521 48140 6

Daniel Heartz *Music in European Capitals: The Galant Style 1720-1780*. Norton, 2003. xxiv + 1078pp, £65.00

The Cambridge Companion to Mozart Edited by Simon P. Keefe. Cambridge UP, 2003. xvii + 292pp. hb £47.50 ISBN 0 571 80734 4; pb £17.95 ISBN 0 521 00192 7

Victoria L. Cooper *The House of Novello: Practice and Policy of a Victorian Music Publisher 1829-1866*. Ashgate, 2003. viii + 210pp, £45.00. ISBN 0 7546 0088 2

Andrew Mayes *Carl Dolmetsch and the Recorder Repertoire of the 20th Century*. Ashgate, 2003. xxv + 338pp, £55.00. ISBN 0 7546 0968 5

Performing Brahms: Early Evidence of Performance Style Edited by Michael Musgrave and Bernard D. Sherman. Cambridge UP, 2003. xx + 391pp, £60.00. ISBN 0 521 65273 1 + CD

The Cambridge Companion to the Orchestra Edited by Colin Lawson. Cambridge UP, 2003. xiv + 297pp. hb £45.00 ISBN 0 521 80658 5; pb £15.95 ISBN 0 521 00132 3

RAVEN'S VIEW

Simon Ravens

There is a temptation to think of the compact disc as a universal currency. Regardless of whether I am in Ilkley or Italy, if I pop a CD into the slot – *ker-ching!* – out falls precisely the same sound. But although these musical coins may seem the same, such appearances can be deceptive. Pick up Rolf Lislevand's recent CD *La belle homicide*, for instance, and it is clear that we are holding a euro. It is difficult to tell whereabouts in Europe it has been minted, but it is patently obvious that this CD wasn't Made in England.

To say that the cover of this CD is provocative – by anglophilic standards – is an understatement. For a start, that title 'La belle homicide' begs us to ask the question, what could be beautiful about death? And the image – a butterfly on a female breast – is similarly enigmatic.

I'm trying to imagine the way this CD would be packaged by the main early music labels in the English-speaking world. In truth, it doesn't take much imagination. Above a mousy reproduction of a seventeenth-century painting, we would be given the name of the performer, his instrument, the various composers' names, the title of the manuscript they appear in, and an explanatory sub-title. To compare these stereotypical covers is to pose a basic question: is the purpose of a CD cover to ask questions or to answer them? Neither, I would suggest. Surely its sole purpose is to get you to pick the thing up (the retailer in me would like to point out that you won't be buying it otherwise). If this is the case, the English-speaking world has much to learn.

A digression... When I did my first Palestrina CD, I asked the company involved that we avoid the kind of 'English' cover I have described above. I pleaded for something evocative but non-specific: I also pleaded for minimalism. If a certain word wasn't going to sell the CD, it had no place on the front cover, I argued. To show willing, I suggested that my name be left off the front cover, on the grounds that it would only mean something to my family and friends, and I was counting on them buying it anyway. I even sat at the shoulder of the graphic designer, as he played around with images and fonts. As the cover took shape on the screen in front of me I saw my idea metamorphose into something which, frankly, evokes not so much the incense-smoked mysticism of a Sistine Chapel service as the tobacco-smoked mayhem of a heavy metal gig. *Mea culpa.*

But a CD such as *La belle homicide* is 'foreign' below its cover. Open the booklet and read, not a blow-by-blow account of the Barbe Manuscript (which forms the material for the CD) but a 'letter from a lutenist'. The lutenist, to be specific – Rolf Lislevand, who writes...

Somewhere in the countryside south of the northern Italian Alps, I am spending a few days alone with my lute... Over and over again I play the pieces of Gaultier, Dufault, Mouton, until suddenly something very special, some wizardry, happens to the sound, and beauty emerges – like the Italian spring day itself. And so I carry on a musical tradition...

Is this self-indulgence on the part of Lislevand? I don't see it that way. Read the whole essay, and it's obvious that this man has virtually abased himself in front of Barbe and the very specific notation of his manuscript – 'a lesson in humility', Lislevand says. It's certainly difficult to imagine an English lutenist (or, at least, one of Rolf Lislevand's quality) writing in this highly personalised manner.

The presentation and the written words could not be less anglicised. What happens when we insert the disc itself? Isn't music a medium that knows no boundaries? Perhaps it is, but for that we have to wait. The first thing we hear on the disc is bird-song. These sounds may send us scurrying back through the CD booklet, where Lislevand tells us that these sounds were captured at the night-time sessions in the South of France. Whether we like them or not, they are justified as part of an overall conception.

Another digression... I remember proposing, to a British record company, a similarly ambient introduction to a CD. My idea was to begin a recording of a clandestine Byrd mass reconstruction with the sound of bird-song being terminated by the thud of a heavy door: then the mass would start. Now, I'm not making any unequivocal claims for this idea: it's the kind of thing which, done well, might have appealed to some and would certainly have appalled others. But the one thing I would claim for this idea is that had I mentioned it to A&R at Naïve or Opus III, they wouldn't have given me that fraught, faintly embarrassed look I received here.

And what of the playing on *La belle homicide*? Well, however much Lislevand's words set out to justify his performance, to me it is that which justifies his words. It even justifies the image on the front cover. In fact, there's little I wouldn't be prepared to forgive for playing of this beauty.

La Belle Homicide, Rolf Lislevand. Naïve E8880

I've just been listening to an anthology of harpsichord music by d'Anglebert, three Couperins and two Bachs entitled *Dark Harpsichord Music* (SBCD 203) played, and the packaging no doubt determined, by the very English Colin Booth. It begins and ends with blackbirds and song thrushes, with a striking picture on the front (not this time a naked lady in the undergrowth). It will be reviewed in the next issue. CB

MUSIC IN LONDON

Andrew Benson-Wilson

SCHÜTZ at SOUTHWARK

The concert in Southwark Cathedral on 3 October was like entering a 30 year time warp, with Sir Roger Norrington conducting Schütz and Gabrieli with the Orchestra and Choir of the Age of Enlightenment. An awkwardly presented pre-concert talk didn't quite manage to explore what it was supposed to have done, though at least showed how difficult it is to give such talks. But there were no such qualms with the inspiring playing, singing or direction of the main event. Norrington was on good form and, apart from doing his best to make everybody giggle as two basses sang of the toil and trouble of being threescore years and ten (in Schütz's *Musikalische Exequien*), he generally behaved himself. He bought out some revealing details, including the impassioned litany of *Herr, ich lasse dich nicht*, and also produced some particularly fine shaded cadences, notably in the Amen of *Das ist je gewisslich wahr*. The diction and articulation of the singers was spot on, at least from my seat very close to them. Of the soloists, Grace Davidson and William Towers impressed, although all the solo voices had real character and demonstrated how vibrato can be used effectively to colour the texture of a note. Instrumental pieces by Gabrieli were played with a compelling sensitivity that hinted at a vocal rather than ceremonial instrumental mood.

PALLADIAN'S REBEL

The Palladian Ensemble has successfully survived a change of personnel, bringing in Rodolfo Richter as violinist alongside Pamela Thorby's recorders. The new line up gave an impressive showing at The Wigmore Hall (5 October) with a programme of Marais and Rebel. They opened with their own arrangement of Rebel's *Les Caracteres de la Danse*, a whistle-stop rummage through some tiny baroque dance forms, the extended and gently bucolic Musette being the most impressive. Susanne Heinrich is one of our finest viola da gamba players, and she gave an excellent performance of two suites of Marais pieces. She produced a beautiful tone and coloured the texture with some delicate and exquisitely timed ornaments. William Carter provided a sensitive theorbo accompaniment and also some excellent guitar solos. I think this is the best I have heard him play: he avoided his hallmark percussive effects and concentrated instead on delicacy of colour, texture and rhythm. Very impressive. Rebel's *Les Elemens* is a curious piece, opening with *Le Cahos*, his interpretation of the chaos before the Elements adopted their true place. The piece starts with every note of the octave sounding at the same time. Succeeding movements depict the four elements and the arrival of birds, animals and man. Indeed, it seemed that no sooner had one creature been created when along came another

one to hunt it. Such is life, it seems. This chamber version has some credence, as the only surviving version is a short score intended for small-scale performance. It was good to have a concert where the usually supporting instruments were centre stage. The Palladians remain a force to be reckoned with.

ST JOHN'S, SMITH SQUARE

The Academy of Ancient Music seem to have swopped one violin virtuoso for another, as their 30th anniversary season opened under the direction of Giuliano Carmignola, the Italian violinist who made such an impression at last year's Proms. In a programme of Vivaldi and Tartini (9 October, St John's, Smith Square), he showed off his prodigious technique, one that owes rather more to the romantic violin tradition than that of Andrew Manze. He uses more vibrato than is usual, and plays in very high positions far up the fingerboard. His produced a mellow tone, which he controlled well, and plays in a very expressive style, occasionally accompanied by some foot-thumping. Of a few mannerisms, the most prominent was tugging at the lowest note of the arpeggios in Vivaldi *Il Grosso Mogul*, a piece that is mostly cadenza and was played extremely fast. The Academy's season features a number of different directors, and they are even venturing into the world of Mendelssohn and Schumann.

The Nonsuch Singers are a 40-strong amateur choir that, although not specializing, include a lot of early music in their concerts. At St John's, Smith Square (25 October), they gave a programme of 16th century choral works, and 17th century organ music by Spanish composers, contrasting with the present day composer James MacMillan. The music was centred around his extraordinarily powerful *Cantos Sagrados* (1989), based on political struggle and repression in Latin America. Of course, the music in the rest of the programme was written at a time when Spain was doing its best to repress the population of the same region – so much for learning from history. But, despite the carnage that Christian Spain wreaked on the hapless native Americans, it did produce some sublime music, not least the works by Victoria and Guerrero in this programme. The choir managed a good blend of voices although there were a few 'older' voices whose vibrato became a bit prominent at times, and I would have much preferred to have heard some of the younger sopranos in Guerrero's duet *Trahe me post te, Virgo Maria*. In a number of pieces, the soprano line was a bit high for comfort, or perhaps a lack of confidence got in the way of a clear tone. Graham Caldbeck was an impressive conductor, bringing a focus to the largish forces. He made good use of the stage, although in Guerrero's 12 part *Duo Seraphim*, the spacing of the performers was a bit too wide

to be meaningful to the listeners. I am not sure why the organ music wasn't chosen from composers contemporary with Victoria and Guerrero – although the later repertoire can sound more dramatic, it is in a totally different idiom. Richard Pearce chose brighter registrations than I would have expected for Cabinilles's *Tiento de Falsas de 6º tono*, and also played in a rather relentless and slightly too fast tempo. His *Tiento de Batalla de 5º tono*, played on the large west-end organ, was far more effective. Pearce couldn't resist the temptation to employ far too much organ sound for Correa's jaunty *Segundo Tiento de quarto tone – à cancion*, and the ornamentation felt more Italian or French, than Spanish.

NIGHT MUSIC AT THE WIGMORE

The English Concert opened their new season at the Wigmore Hall (28 October) under new management and with some interesting programming – three pieces from the mid-1770s (by CPE Bach, Mozart and Haydn) and *Eine kleine Nachtmusik*. The last is ubiquitous in lifts and shopping malls, but is the sort of piece that music lovers have often not really listened to since their teens. I do wonder how closely works like this were listened to at the time of their first performance – perhaps they had a similar role then as they do today, as background music. Whereas most of us could happily hum the treble line of all four movements, it is not often that we get a chance to appreciate the inner parts. Andrew Manze didn't see this as an extended lullaby – in a vigorous interpretation, the *Nacht* was clearly still young. He was particularly good at dealing with transitional moments, notably the huge diminuendo that closed the first movement exposition and the move into the coda of the Rondo. He caught, and contrasted, the varying moods of the work. Manze's performance of Mozart's Violin Concerto in A didn't do it for me. Using what seemed to be a very high position on the fingerboard (and in some cases going beyond it altogether), there were too many lapses of intonation and some inconsistencies from the other string players. Far more successful were Haydn's *Symphony 64 Tempora mutantur*, with its curious time-warping in the second movement, and CPE Bach's extraordinarily inventive (or possibly merely perverse) *Orchestra-Symphony No 1 in D* – the latter a nice reference back to the Pinnock days, when the English Consort recorded all CPE's Bach string symphonies). Both were given confident and revealing readings with all instrumentalists on top form.

VIEWING THE INSTRUMENTS

Marais's *Le Tableau de l'Operation de la Taille* was the inspiration for a curiosity event at The Royal Institution (29 October) under the title of 'Viewing the Instruments – a musical theatre production inspired by a surgical operation'. This depicts an operation to remove stones from the gall bladder. This theatrical production aimed to compare surgical life then and now, with a real-life gastro-enterologist describing what is still quite a risky operation. Musically the focus was on six new works specially

composed for the event, although the Marais piece itself got several airings, played by Mark Levy *gamba*, Ashley Solomon *flute*, and Jonathan Tilbrook *harpsichord*. All three were integral to the story telling, and made a pretty good attempt in their acting roles. One fascinating section compared surgical instruments used in the operation with instructions on how to play the viol. A very detailed programme not only included the score of the Marais piece, but also a complete text of the play. An interesting use of early music in contemporary theatre.

OPERA

Orlando at Covent Garden

A busy month for opera started with the Royal Opera House's first ever production of Handel's *Orlando* (6 October). For years, I have been suggesting that the ROH orchestra be given some time off so that one of the period instrument orchestras could be bought for early operas and, at last, it has happened. And very successfully too. The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment is the most obvious choice, not least because of their appearances at the Glyndebourne Festival, and they took full advantage of this opportunity to show themselves off to the hard-bitten London opera crowd. Harry Bicket, also used to the OAE at Glyndebourne, made his ROH debut, and produced a compellingly straightforward account of the score, aided by some stylish playing. The clarity of the tone of the period woodwind, and the articulations of the strings, were particularly noticeable in the vast auditorium. The OAE worked closely with members of the ROH orchestra during the development of the production, and there has undoubtedly been considerable cross-fertilization. It was interesting to see how well they interacted in the enlightening ROH study day. The singing was slightly less successful, although there were very strong performances from Alice Coote in the title role (illness prevented her appearing in later performances) and Camilla Tilling as Dorinda. Alice Coote has an amazingly rich mezzo voice, sounded close to a countertenor timbre, and this was balanced with some powerful acting, notably in the mad scene. Camilla Tilling presented a clear, unaffected and fresh voice, with outstanding diction. Bejun Mehta was an impressive actor although his voice lacked presence, and Jonathan Lemalu was an authoritative Zoroastro. Barbara Bonney was a big disappointment as Angelica. Her prominent vibrato, pulsating at the speed of ornaments, a lack of security or clarity on runs and ornaments and some wayward intonation were not compensated for by an astonishing array of fancy frocks. Good to see where our tax and lottery money goes! The period staging and direction was the weakest element of this production, going for overkill, rather than insight. A creaking revolve produced some giggles when characters had to run through the continuously revolved doors: just one of a generally wasteful pile of unnecessary effects. Three dancers were added to the plot, representing Eros, Venus and Mars. Of course, it being the London opera stage, Venus had forgotten to put her blouse and bra on.

Ariodante (English Touring Opera)

The English Touring Opera (formally Opera 80, and now in its 25th year) is touring Handel's *Ariodante* alongside Britten's *Turn of the Screw*, using period instruments and conductor Laurence Cummings for the former. Although James Conway's production started life in Ireland, the debut of this version was in the impressively ornate Richmond Theatre (15 October). I have not heard opera in this venue before, but it was ideal for this small scale production – like the Britten Theatre attached to the Royal College of Music, these intimate venues generally have better acoustics and are also closer to the scale of original productions than events at Covent Garden or The Coliseum. The story was reset, with some hatchet work on the libretto and score, in the oppressive world of the Scottish Reformed Church, with a powerfully moving subplot of the rejection by a stern and unforgiving father of his distraught daughter, who doesn't understand the plotting that is going on around her. Any sensitive fathers or daughters present couldn't have failed to have been moved when, at the end, Ginevra kisses her emotionless and remote father – who doesn't respond. Although Handel might not have recognized the plot, I don't have too many problems with the retelling of opera in modern settings, even if the text is changed to suit. Of the singers, Ashley Catling and Claire Ormshaw impressed but, overall, it was all a bit 'operatic' for my taste, and for the clarity that Handel's music demands. The period instrument players generally failed to impress, perhaps because of their being chosen for their ability to play Britten on modern instruments as well, and Laurence Cummings' direction was not as focused as usual.

Glyndebourne Touring *Idomeneo* & *Theodora*

The Glyndebourne Touring Company are taking Handel's *Theodora* and Mozart's *Idomeneo* on the road, but opened in the comparative safety of their home territory. Using a younger and less glittering cast than the Summer Festival performances, and with a modern instrument band rather than the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and conductors like Sir Simon Rattle, these touring productions are also shorn of the Summer Festival's fancy frocks and penguin suits, giving a pleasantly relaxed atmosphere at Glyndebourne. Peter Sellars, who directed both operas, did his best to challenge the audience, for example, by gleefully telling us in his pre-performance talk that we must think of Anish Kapoor's striking blackcloth for *Idomeneo* as 'art', rather than 'representing a vagina'. Right! Sellar's contemporary interpretations of early opera can seem like being slapped around the face with copies of The Guardian – *Idomeneo* opened with the Trojan princess Ilia, dressed in a burka and standing beside the body bags of her family. Idamante, prince of Crete, appears in American combat gear and his father, Idomeneo, King of Crete, is in a presidential suit. Some pruning brought this lengthy work down to a manageable length. Keeping Kapoor's static, but variably lit, backdrop (using a similar orange-red fabric as in his recent Tate

Modern installation, although with just the one orifice) throughout the first two Acts focused attention on the front stage action. Conductor Kenneth Montgomery kept a reasonable pace although there were limited attempts by the modern instrumentalists to adopt a 'period' style. I guess it was inevitable that the singers would feature full-blooded operatic vibrato but, setting that aside, there were some impressive performances from Marie Arnet, Julianne de Villiers, Cara O'Sullivan, Peter Bronder and Andrew Foster-Williams.

Glyndebourne's *Theodora*, a return of Peter Sellars' 1996 production, was not for the squeamish. Although we were spared anatomically correct stage sets, the concluding execution scene was pretty harrowing, although the use of lethal injection spared us the sight of blood. As ever, Sellars uses the (relatively basic) libretto to present his view of contemporary America, although the vision of an execution-hungry and morally corrupt government seems rather more in line with present day America, rather than the 1996 version. Although the State gets a bit of a pasting, the Christians (a very WASPish and well-scrubbed bunch, with the smart suits, sensible shoes and glazed eyes of brainwashed fanatics) emerge from Sellars' tale looking particularly stupid and well deserving of a bit of persecution. There was a strong vocal cast, with the usual reservations about vibrato, with Henry Waddington as Valens, Stephen Wallace as Didymus, Paul Nilon, Septimus, Anne-lise Sollied Theodora and Christine Rice as Irene, the Christian leader. Emmanuelle Haïm was an economical but convincing conductor, keeping careful control of the momentum of the work, adapting broader tempos than others might, but to great musical effect. Of course, this being an oratorio, there was no music provided for scene changes – occasionally the periods of silence were powerfully telling, but sometimes just caused a loss of momentum. In both productions, Sellars' hallmark use of hand gestures to represent words became rather irritating after a while, as did some of the other mannered aspects of the direction. But that aside, these were both effective demonstrations of the power of opera to reveal truths about life today, much as Handel and Mozart were doing in their day.

Paris & Helen at the Barbican

Paride ed Elena is not an ideal introduction to Gluck's music although, set against his two other, and earlier, Italian reform operas (*Orfeo ed Euridice* and *Alceste*), it reveals another side to his musical talent and has been unjustly overlooked since its premier in Vienna in 1770. One of the problems is Gluck's use of pastiche to portray the two principal protagonists – the Phrygians/Trojans, with their gentle and sophisticated music, and the Spartans with their awkwardly angular 'rude and savage' music (Gluck's own description). This inevitably results in music that is not always of the best, although there is a delightfully subtle switch of the music of Elena (Helen of Troy) from Spartan roughness to Phrygian sweetness as she succumbs to less than subtle wooing of Paride (Paris)

and the machinations of Erasto (actually Cupid/Amore in disguise). Paul McCreesh is to be commended for recognizing the importance of this work, for bringing it to The Barbican (21 October), and for directing an impressive performance by the Gabrieli Consort and Players. The striking Czech mezzo, Magdalena Kožená, sang Paride (written for a castrato and beyond the range of most countertenors). Although she did wear trousers, the superimposed layers of stylish fabric combined with her flowing golden locks and general demeanor made her a less than unconvincing choice for a male role (in a demisemistaged production), although her gorgeous voice more than made up for the visual incongruity. She carries her mezzo timbre into her higher registers, and demonstrated a wide range of vocal expression, including some delightful *sotto voce* moments, notably in *Quegle occhi belli*, as well as more impassion moments, like *Mi fugge spietata*. Susan Gritton, as Elena, had an awkward role to project. Despite the musical depiction of the Trojans as being sophisticated, she has an alarmingly insensitive and precious response to the lovestruck Paride (Oh, isn't he rough!). She actually carried this off well, although it is not the most endearing of roles. Her final 'will she, won't she' aria *La potrò!*, with her indecisions neatly expressed in the music, was one of the highlights of the evening. Carolyn Sampson was born to be cast in cheeky Cupid roles, and she gave a convincingly light-hearted and saucy interpretation, with some very effective communication with the audience. As this wasn't a staged production, having the interval break just before the end of Act Three worked well, leaving the final instrumental piece to act as an introduction to Act Four.

INSIDE MONTEVERDI

The South Bank's 'Inside Monteverdi' weekend (Nov 1-2) was an exploratory peep into the world of Monteverdi as the composer of opera, church music and solo voices through three concerts, assorted lectures and a foyer display. It started with two extraordinary talks, first by Phillip Pickett and then Dr (and now, Sir) Jonathan Miller, the conductor and director of the later performance of *L'Orfeo*. Pickett emphatically reiterated his view of *L'Orfeo* as being a product of the Renaissance neoplatonic tradition, noting, for example, that it was the magical powers of Apollo, rather than the musical talents of his son, Orfeo, that opened the gates to the underworld. Pickett associates the character of Orfeo with a singer of Monteverdi's acquaintance who was apparently a difficult, arrogant, proud and egotistical man, with very few friends. Pickett clearly seeing himself as standing alone amongst all other musical interpreters ('I don't care what academics say'), and claimed his interpretation as the only one for 400 years where 'everything made sense'. Never before, he told us, with frequent thumps on the table to reinforce his point, has anybody looked at the neoplatonic background to the work. 'Take my word for it' was something of a theme for his talk. When a member of the audience asked whether he had discussed his views with Jonathan Miller (the rest of the question was drowned out

by laughter, and Pickett's reply), he responded by telling us he had specifically chosen Miller to direct as he (Miller) 'has the intellect to understand' his theories and that he (Pickett) needed somebody 'on his own wavelength'. He confirmed that Miller agreed with every one of his ideas and he was also 'very bright'. Jonathan Miller was erudite, charming, humble and humorous, holding us spellbound with one of his scattergun monologues. He told us that approaching *L'Orfeo* from a neoplatonic perspective was nonsense and was equally dismissive about 'big theories' about the work. Miller's approach was entirely human and psychological, based on an understanding of the human response to situations and the observation of social behaviour. As an example (and always willing to acknowledge his influences and references), Miller referred to Irving Gothman's study of embarrassment in social behaviour as a model for the 'silent inarticulate embarrassment' that follows the Messenger's revelation about the death of Eurydice – an extraordinarily powerful scene in Millar's staging of the opera.

In the event, it was Jonathan Miller's interpretation that won the day, and the hearts and minds of the singers and audience. As Miller insisted on calling it, this was a 'fully staged' performance, but with no scenery, minimal props and no costumes other than designer drab jerkins. That in itself was enough to focus the attention on the protagonists as real people; but the accompanying gestures and body language (something that Miller seems to understand implicitly and referred to as the 'phraseology of movement' and 'kinetic melody') also served to draw us into the depth of human emotions and some very human responses. One of the most moving moments came at the end. Neoplatonists would see Apollo arriving in glory to translate his son, Orfeo, into the heavens. But Miller had Apollo appear as a rather embarrassed and awkward Dad, sliding in to sit right at the back of the stage, and then slowly attempting to engage his distraught son, sitting on the front edge of the stage. This was an incredibly powerful scene. Mark Tucker played the title role with conviction, drawing on depths of emotion and using gentle inflexions in his voice to portray the varying moods of Orfeo. In fact, the entire cast of singers were excellent. Mark Chambers and Andrew Tortise were very effective in their prominent roles as Pastori, and Faye Newton provided a nicely focused, and surprisingly powerful, top line to the chorus as well as in her incarnation as a Ninfa. Revital Raviv was a striking, if short lived Eurydice, and she sang her two short pieces with compelling simplicity. One telling moment in Miller's direction was when Orfeo started to leave the Underworld. At first it seemed as though he had forgotten to bring Eurydice with him – she only joined him right at the end, just as he turned to look at her. She then quietly turned away and sang her concluding aria as she slowly left the stage – and Orfeo's imagination. Julia Gooding was a powerful Messenger, overwrought with the awfulness of her message, and Michael George and Simon Grant also gave strong performances as Plutone and Caronte. The only weaknesses amongst the singers was the strong vibrato of Andrew King, who otherwise

produced a nice tone and acted well, notably as Apollo in the final scene, and the knitted brow and ever-so-concerned expressions that suggested some self-conscious over-acting by Joanne Lunn. The players of the New London Consort added little to the proceedings, rather supporting Jonathan Miller's view of opera orchestras as 'acoustic central heating'. They played all the right notes in the right order, but were clearly not inspired by some rather forceful conducting. The strings lacked cohesion and their sonorities were frequently rough, and the tinny little sound of the two 'pochettes' was frankly not worth the bother. However, David Roblou and Robert Howarth were nicely circumspect in their keyboard continuo realizations, avoiding the frequent changes of harmony that some editions propose and allowing Monteverdi's dissonances to shine through. Equally telling was their omission of the often heard 4/3 suspensions at cadential points. Elizabeth Pallett also did well in her opening lute accompaniment of *La Musica*, following her around the stage as her *alter ego*.

It is not often that I use the word 'outstanding' to describe a concert, but the Sunday afternoon concert of Monteverdi Tenor Duets given by Mark Tucker and Lynton Atkinson is one that deserves that accolade. It was preceded by a fascinating talk by Mark Tucker outlining the roots of rhetoric in language and music from the Greeks to the present day. Making full use of the space of the Purcell Room (one piece was sung from the audience seats at the back of the hall), Tucker and Atkinson gave a superbly polished and professional performance that must have taken many hours of rehearsal. Their coordination, both vocally and theatrically, was excellent – they even managed to make the slight vibrato in their voices coincide with each other – and both were careful to differentiate vibrato from the tremolo ornaments that they used most effectively. Their opening piece, *Interrotte speranze*, was awe-inspiring, as the two voices revolved around, and occasionally touched, unisons. The interplay between them was apparent throughout, but particularly in *Tornate, o cari baci*, where their repeated cries of *baci, baci* (kisses, kisses) sent shivers down the spine. David Roblou accompanied well on harpsichord, avoiding the exaggeration that often spoils Italian continuo realizations. My only tiny quibble was the late addition of the major third above the voices at the end of *Ohimè, dov'è il mio ben* – if it was going to be sounded, I suggest it should have come earlier and below the solo lines. Roblou's performances of extended solo works by Claudio Merulo was carefully articulated, with a gentle pairing of notes on scale runs and some neat ornaments. He controlled the transitions from the free toccata sections into the stricture quasi-fugal passages with conviction.

The weekend also included two open rehearsals, for *L'Orfeo* and for the Sunday evening church-music concert, to compare the way that three different directors dealt with people. *L'Orfeo* was a fully staged run through, rather than a rehearsal. The few stops were for some gentle adjusting of singer's stage positions and encouraging

glances and comments by Jonathan Miller and some stern exchanges between Philip Pickett and his instrumentalists, even involving finger wagging at one stage. The Cardinall's Musick rehearsal was a laid back and good humoured gathering of friends. Their later showed the benefit of this approach to music making, even if they only just manage to avoid a fit of giggles at the repetition of the word *peribit* in *Beatus vir*. Andrew Carwood's conducting style is getting increasingly responsive and eloquent, and he explored the dramatic possibilities music well, particularly *Dixit Dominus* and *Confitebor tibi Domine*. His singers served him well, with some excellent solos from Nicholas Mulroy, Robert Macdonald and, particularly, David Gould, whose unaffected tone avoided the affectations that can bedevil countertenor voices. The sopranos, Cecilia Osmond and Rebecca Outram were on lovely form, and there was some impressive string playing from Simon Jones and Anthea Morris. Robert Quinney's continuo organ playing included some nice ornaments and flourishes, although the articulation and phrasing was rather too neo-baroque for my tastes, with too many short chords, clipped, staccato notes and, in contrast, smooth legato.

Further comment on the Monteverdi in the editorial.

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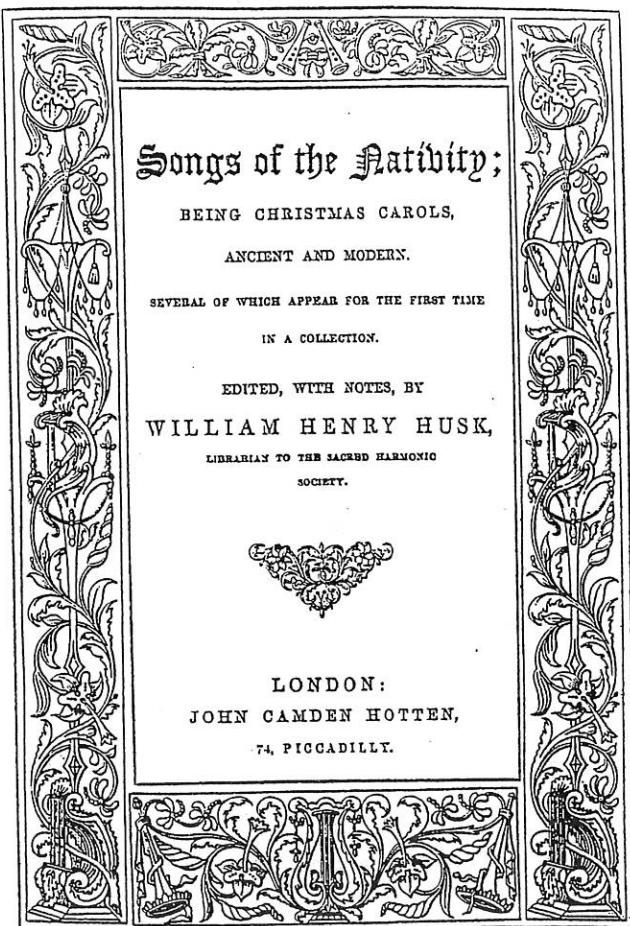
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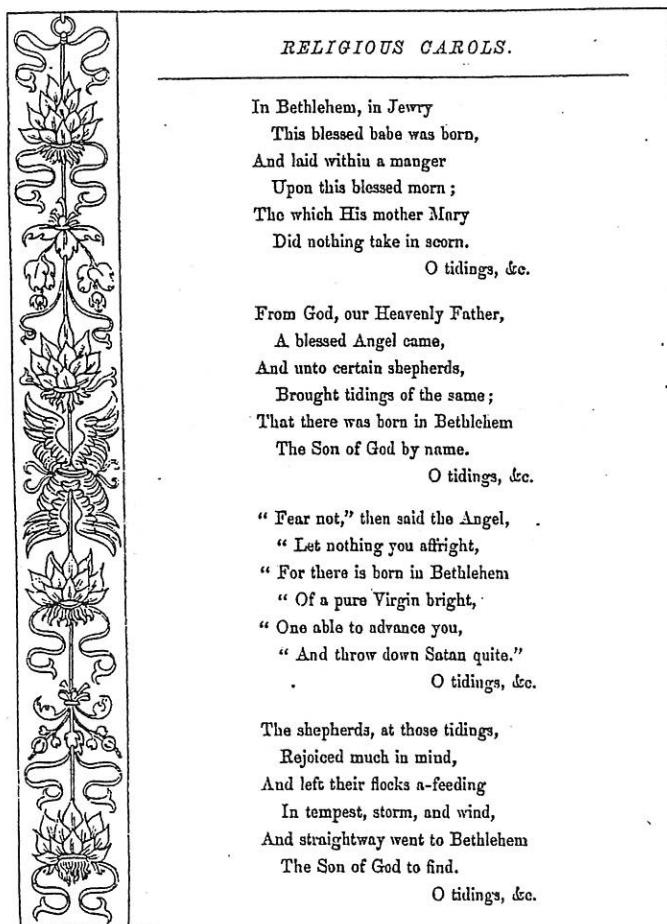
GOD REST YOU, MERRY GENTLEMEN.

THERE is no carol, perhaps, so universally known as this. Many, who have heard no other carol, are familiar with "God rest you, merry gentlemen," and speak of it as *the* Christmas carol. The only carols which at the present time in any degree approach it in point of popularity are "The Seven Joys," and "The Sunny Bank," which many of the broadside printers annually associate with it on the same sheet; accompanied of late years by an English translation of the Latin Christmas hymn, "Adeste, fideles," under the title of the Portuguese Hymn, or as one worthy printer calls it "A favourite Christmas Hymn, translated from the Portuguese," ignorant of the fact that its title of "Portuguese" was given to it by an English nobleman who was a director of the Concerts of Ancient Music and introduced the hymn there, having previously heard it sung at the Chapel of the Portuguese embassy in South Street, Grosvenor Square, and assuming it to be a Portuguese composition. As may be expected of a piece so often printed and sung in districts so widely separated there are several variations in the different copies of this carol, but the version here printed seems the most generally received, and is perhaps the most genuine.

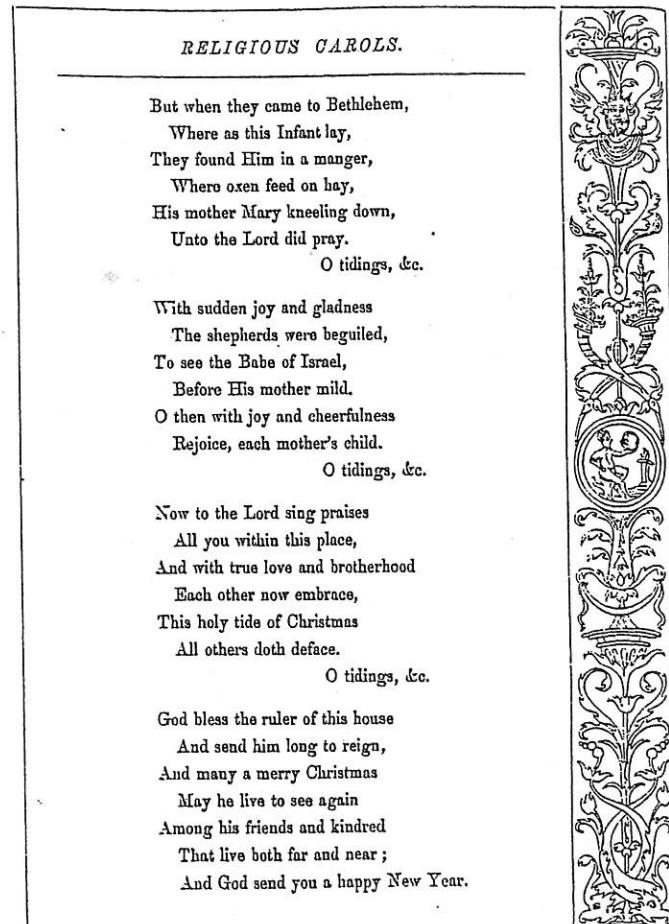


OD rest you, merry gentlemen,
Let nothing you dismay,
Remember Christ, our Saviour,
Was born on Christmas day;
To save us all from Satan's power,
When we were gone astray.
O tidings of comfort and joy.

27



28



29

God rest you merry

I was phoned recently by someone working for the BBC hymn programme *Songs of Praise* who want to check a few points for a Christmas script, just to make sure there were no clangers. She mentioned three carols that she thought were Victorian innovations, one being 'God rest you merry, gentlemen'. This surprised me, my off-the-cuff reaction being that it was one of the few carols that had a long popular history and was the archtypical carol that was known before the Dickensian invention of Christmas. She quoted *The New Oxford Book of Carols* back at me, so I checked it and found that the text was only traced back to an early 19th-century broadside. I was puzzled, but expressed confidence in my intuition. So I was pleased to see confirmation in Husk's anthology of 1864. He might have been incompetent musically, but was probably remembering pre-Victorian times (he was born in 1814). It was popular enough to have been parodied in 1820.

The earliest version usually quoted is from Sandys pioneering collection of 1833. Out of curiosity, Husk's text and music are reproduced here. The former is plausible, but even if the tune is notated correctly, the accompaniment is curious to say the least! Also shown is the standard Victorian version which begins *Christmas Carols New and Old* (1871) by Rev Henry Ramsden Bramley and John Stainer, both of Magdalen College, Oxford.

1 God rest you merry, Gentlemen.

CHRISTMAS CAROL TUNES.

God rest you, Merry Gentlemen.

191

- 2 In Bethlehem, in Jewry,
This blessed Babe was born,
And laid within a manger,
Upon this blessed morn;
The which His Mother Mary,
Did nothing take in scorn.
O tidings, &c.
- 3 From God our Heavenly Father,
A blessed Angel came;
And unto certain Shepherds
Brought tidings of the same:
How that in Bethlehem was born
The Son of God by Name.
O tidings, &c.
- 4 "Fear not then," said the Angel,
"Let nothing you affright,
This day is born a Saviour
Of a pure Virgin bright,
To free all those who trust in Him
From Satan's power and might."
O tidings, &c.
- 5 The shepherds at those tidings
Rejoiced much in mind,
And left their flocks a-feeding,
In tempest, storm, and wind;
And went to Bethlehem straightway,
The Son of God to find.
O tidings, &c.
- 6 And when they came to Bethlehem
Where our dear Saviour lay,
They found Him in a manger,
Where oxen feed on hay;
His Mother Mary kneeling down,
Unto the Lord did pray.
O tidings, &c.
- 7 Now to the Lord sing praises,
All you within this place,
And with true love and brotherhood
Each other now embrace;
This holy tide of Christmas
All other doth deface.
O tidings, &c.



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MEDIEVAL

Ave praesul Barcinonae: Musica de la Catalunya medieval Isabel Aragón voice, Taller d'Estudis Medievals, Montserrat Oliveras dir 72' 19" (rec 1999) La Mâ de Guido LMG 2034

When I first learnt the trade of a book cataloguer, a central principle was to follow the details on the title page. When I moved on to cataloguing music, it was soon obvious that the principle was flawed (though it doesn't stop some of the major music dealers filling their orders with lots of irrelevant information when all that is needed is composer and opus number). The problem with listing CDs is to quote what is likely to be visible to someone looking for it in a shop. In this case, the first three words are on the front, but not on the back nor the spine. The repertoire is mostly unpublished music from libraries in Barcelona (Barcina). The small female ensemble (including four Montserrats) is excellent, but the only qualification the soloist has would seem to be the proximity of Aragón to Catalunya — a pity that she sings in the two longest and most powerful items. The texts are accompanied by Spanish translations, not set out conveniently opposite the Latin. Worth buying if you are a Catalan nationalist or interested in medieval song; but if you are less of a specialist, the disc reviewed below is more appealing. CB

Hildegard von Bingen *Hortus deliciarum* Discantus, Brigitte Lesne 67' 05" Opus III OP 30390 (rec 1998)

Selene Mills enjoyed the original release (*EMR* 46, p. 20) and I am also impressed. It is nice to hear Hildegard's music in context rather than on one-composer discs. Try playing the game of not looking at the contents list and spotting particularly Hildegardic phrases, then check if you are right. There's an excellent booklet. My only problem is that I find over an hour of high voices tiring. CB

Hildegard von Bingen *In portrait; Ordo Virtutum* 250' (2 DVDs) BBC/Opus Arte OA 0874 D

The musical part of this compilation was reviewed in *EMR* 36, reading which confirmed what I had guessed (or half-remembered): that it began as Dartington summer workshop. I was a little more impressed by *Anima* (Ansby Boothroyd)

than I was originally, but the star of the show — the only singer who makes one believe in the music (and whose words are really clear) is Humilitas (Evelyn Tubb). [Since writing this, I've found my review of the video (*EMR* 40 p. 14) and see that my judgment is consistent.] It is strange how one image can stick in the mind: my recollection of the video that I also reviewed was of the cast walking around outside the church (in fact, outside a different church, since the interior is St Bartholomew the Great, the outside is in Sussex); but that was just a brief shot. The movements are throughout a bit school-play-ish.

Of the remaining two hours, the most interesting item is a BBC documentary play about Hildegard with Patricia Routledge convincing in the title role if one could keep away images of a different 'lady of the house'. The chronology is confusing. This made an attempt to place Hildegard in her time, but an American documentary was more concerned with fitting her into ours, with an interest that was religious, not artistic. What seems to be an amateur video of a live lecture on the pictures of her visions is embarrassing. There is nothing here beyond the *Ordo* that I would want to see again or would wish on anyone else, though if your agenda is religious rather than musical, you may disagree.

The booklet is peculiar. We are given a full, though not fully accurate, list of performers — our culinary correspondent also sang *Hope* and the harpist who appears briefly was Jan Walters. Full marks for including the Latin text, but there is little about the rest of the set. CB

Istanpitta: Musiques de fête à la cour des Visconti, xiv^e siècle Pierre Hamon fl, dir, Carlo Rizzo tamb, voice, Alla Francesca Opus III OP 30325 64' 49"

You have to be a very new convert to medieval music not to have heard the dances from BL Add. 29987 in a variety of interpretations. As the decades pass, performers feel that they have to make them more intense or more original, and these performances are not free from that fault. And some may prefer the instrumental pieces to alternate with song, whereas here there is just one folksong. The title follows Kurt von Fischer's suggestion that some of the titles may refer to the marriage of Isabella of France and Gian Galeazzo Visconti in 1360, though as the note-writer says, 'such references are totally arbitrary'.

These might be called third generation performances: the first sounded dull, the second tended towards speed, these achieve variety and subtlety, but at the cost of a loss of impetus. CB

Música medieval Capilla Antigua de Chinchilla 56' 49" Ars Harmonica AH 124

This disc has two components: first, five of the *Cantigas* of Alfonso the Wise performed with considerable freedom. These are followed by an anonymous 15th-century Passion: 30 vernacular stanzas sung monophonically in procession on Good Friday at Chinchilla (about 150 miles SE of Madrid, if I've looked up the right town). The wind accompaniments are enjoyably coarse. The text is delivered slowly in a way that would probably work in a live performance but seems a bit mannered in the enclosed space of a sitting room. It builds up to an impressive climax (just voice and bell) and I'm sure it would be most effective in situ; as it is, it needs imagination from the listener. The booklet is in Spanish only. CB

15th CENTURY

Obrecht Missa Sub tuum praesidium Salve Regina & Motets The Clerk's Group, Edward Wickham 69' 41" ASV Gaudeamus CDGAU 341
Beata es Maria, Benedicamus in Laude, Factor orbis, Mille quingentis, Salve crux, Salve Regina a 3

This disc has assembled some of Obrecht's most ostentatious music, ironically including the Mass *Sub tuum praesidium* in which the composer professes to place himself submissively under the protection of the Virgin, and the motet *Mille quingentis*, ostensibly a work to mark the passing of his father, but a piece which in fact shamelessly celebrates the gifts of the son. This is the Obrecht of the epic *Mass Maria zart*, the slightly arrogant young man supposedly caught in prayer in the superb portrait by Hans Memling. The Mass *Sub tuum praesidium* is a complex masterpiece, which expands movement by movement from three parts (of the Trinity) to seven (joys of the Virgin), in which the cantus appears as a symbolic umbrella in the upper voice part and in whose troped *Agnus Dei* a degree of musical and textual complexity is attained which bears comparison with passages in the ten-part Mass of Robert Carver composed shortly after Obrecht's death. The singing of the Clerk's Group

is suitably bold, and their handling of the dense textures admirably confident and clear.

D. James Ross

Johannes Prioris *Missa pro defunctis*
Capilla Flamenca, Joris Verdin 70' 25"
Eufoda 1349

Prioris *Alleluia Ofili o filiae, Ave Maria, Consumo la vita mia Dei genetrix, Requiem + Amerbach, Attaingnant, Buus, Compère, Kotter, Schlick*

There can be few composers less well documented than the 15th/16th-century master Johannes Prioris, but one of the few biographical facts we have is that he worked at the French Court of Louis XII. Whether he knew Ockeghem or not, he was clearly influenced by his long-breathed vocal lines, and the motets featured here are masterpieces of melodic invention. The Requiem, which takes up the bulk of the disc, pays clear homage to Ockeghem's setting. The choral music is beautifully sung by the four voices of the Capilla Flamenca, and generally brisk tempi and a rather brash recorded sound ensure that the stark magnificence of Prioris music is well captured. A series of intabulations by, among others, Pierre Attaingnant of related music by familiar and unfamiliar contemporaries of Prioris is expressively played by Joris Verdin on the organ of the Reformed Evangelic Church in Utrecht, built in 1660 but incorporating earlier stops. The choral music is recorded in Leuven, and just occasionally the difference in acoustic and the unrelated tonalities of adjacent pieces cause a slight jolt. However as part of Eufoda's ongoing project presenting the music of obscure Flemish composers in authentic performances, this disc is not only very important but also extremely enjoyable.

D. James Ross

Canti e danze alla Corte Estense nel XV secolo La Rossignol, Domenico Baronio dir
Tactus TC 400003 52' 02"

This represents the social music of the Ferrara court – for a more sophisticated repertoire, try *Musica Antiqua* of London's *A Songbook for Isabella* (see *EMR* 92). That has polish, this doesn't quite have the compensatory panache, and the sole singer, an alto, isn't up to the exposure he gets here. It's pleasant background listening, though.

CB

Le Jardin de Plaisance: Songs from Late Fifteenth-Century French Manuscripts La Morra (Michal Gondko, Corina Marti dir)
Raum Klang RK 2301 58' 54"

Chansons by Barbingant, Binchois, Busnois, Delahaye, Dufay, Frye, Hayne, Karl der Kühne, Ockeghem & anon

Despite its academic pedigree (both recording and ensemble are associated with the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis), one wouldn't guess from this disc that a fair number of scholars reckon that this is primarily vocal music, demonstrating one of the points of the book by Daniel Leech-Wilkinson reviewed last month: that the 'a cappella heresy' has hardly impinged on the continent. I doubt if any academically-linked UK ensemble would undertake a disc of mid-15th-century, mostly three-part French song with only two singers. A consequence is a high pitch which, while not so disconcerting as the Hildegard CD reviewed above, somehow makes the whole culture of the time feel insubstantial. That apart, this is a fine recording, beautifully played (perhaps a little self-consciously so). Instrumental tuning is better than vocal. CB

16th CENTURY

Ingegneri Feria Quinta in Cœna Domini ad Matutinum: Musica per la liturgia del Giovedì Santo Il Convitto Armonico, Stefano Buschini dir 56' 26"
Tactus TC 540901

Marc'Antonio Ingegneri (1547-1592) was born in Verona and died in Cremona. A madrigalist and church musician taught by Rore, he was one of Monteverdi's teachers at Cremona Cathedral. This recording puts some of his beautiful music for Holy Week into a quasi-liturgical context of psalms and sung 'readings' (lectioines) from the Lamentations. The *Responsoria Hebdomadae Sanctae* were for a long time attributed to Palestrina, but the colourful influence of Venice is apparent; this music is rich but not over-egged. The *Lamentationes Hieremiae* are written in a more solemn vein, the words being of prime importance.

This performance is nicely understated: there are no big egos on display and it seems that it is the music which speaks through the singers, rather than the singers who perform the music. The sound is pleasing both from the male quartet and schola gregoriana who perform respectively the psalms and *lectioines*, and from the mixed choir of eighteen. The plainchant psalms are sung particularly beautifully, although I was puzzled by the *tonus peregrinus* whose final note rose each time to a major-sounding dominant, instead of falling, as I would have expected, to its relative minor. In the psalms there is no attempt at elaboration or variety: the notes are simply a vehicle for the words.

The reconstruction includes the *fragor et strepitus* – the brief clattering noise made by the congregation to symbolise

the disturbance of the natural order at the death of Christ. This forces us to remember the true purpose of this music, which (though it certainly succeeds in this) is not for our entertainment.

Selene Mills

Tallis *Spem in alium: Music for Monarchs and Magnates* The Sixteen, Harry Christopher 71' 37"

Coro CORSACD 16016

Byrd *Deus venerunt gentes; Gibbons Great King of Gods, O all true faithful hearts; Tallis Sing and glorify, Spem in alium, Te deum; Tomkins Be strong, Know ye not, O God, the heathen are come*

You wait for ages for one *Sing and Glorify* and then two come along at once! Hot on the heels of a performance by La Chapelle du Roi of *Spem in alium* and its *contrafactum*, *Sing and Glorify* (Signum SIGCD 047) comes this new recording of them both on the Sixteen's own label in surround sound and two different formats CD/SACD and DVD Audio with video. Knowing nothing of such things and having recently lost the DVD player software from my iMac, I had to rely entirely on my ears. *Spem in alium* is a work which is increasingly performed throughout the country, and having recently participated in an Inverness performance (the northernmost ever, perhaps?) I can only comment that the present CD experience is the next best thing to being there. The sound is vivid, balanced, clearly defined and very definitely placed, allowing the listener to revel in this remarkable polychoral work. The Sixteen last recorded the piece for Chandos in 1990, and since then, like a good wine, the sound has matured and grown fuller and richer. This disc ends with a sumptuous recording of *Sing and Glorify*, adding wind instruments and organs to the texture to create a completely overwhelming sound. This is a recreation of a performance of the work on June 4th 1610 when James I celebrated the investiture of his popular son Henry as Prince of Wales, thereby securing the future of the Stuart dynasty. The Sixteen's performance is highly evocative of this bombastic state occasion. A suitable contrast is supplied by Thomas Tomkins' *Know ye not* performed at Henry's funeral only two years later, where the wind instruments accompany the voices in music of mourning. Happier times are invoked with Gibbons' *O all true faithful hearts*, composed to celebrate James' recovery from serious illness while the same monarch's state visit to Scotland in 1617 is marked by Gibbons' *Great King of Gods*, again magnificently supported by wind instruments. It is interesting to see how much fine early 17th-century British

choral music can now be directly associated with James I, although this should be unsurprising in the light of his lavish patronage of music and arts in his native Scotland prior to 1603. *D. James Ross*

This is also available as CORDVi: a double-sided disc with surround-sound DVD on one side, high-definition DVD audio on the other, each containing the music programme as sound along with 'video interviews and extra features' whose identity remain a surprise until you put the disc into your player. It is packaged in the standard DVD video format: I would have expected vision for the whole programme had I seen it in a shop, but perhaps that is normal for DVDA. Not being film buffs, we have so far seen no need to acquire surround sound, so I cannot comment on its technical brilliance, though in principle, if any piece would benefit from it, it is *Sperm in alium*. I've never found recordings of it satisfactory. In my youth, playing the score on the piano was more enjoyable than the Tippett pair of 78s; my score reading ability has declined, but I'd still rather participate than listen to even the best recordings. There are three interviews, of increasing interest. The one with Harry Christophers is too much of a PR job, a discussion between Mark Brown and Mike Hatch (producer and engineer) is interesting as far as it goes. But, despite sounding rather artificial, the conversation between Sally Dunkley (singer and editor of *Sing and glorify*) and John Milsom (programme-planner and reconstructor of incomplete pieces, especially *O God, the heathen*) is fascinating. But why wasn't it illustrated by photos of the MS? *CB*

Tallis *The Complete Works Vol. 6: Music for a Reformed Church* Chapelle du Roi, Alistair Dixon 77' 53"
Signum SIGCD022

This is a disc that will probably sell on the strength of the series as a whole rather than for its own merits: not that the performances are weak, but the music itself is mostly functional – enjoyable to sing, effective in liturgical context, often moving when heard in small doses, but a somewhat monotonous if played from end to end unless you are a Tallis freak or reviewing it: perhaps I should have played only a few tracks a day. It sounds less Anglican than one expects, perhaps because the music is sometimes rather brisk. The tunes for Archbishop Parker's are disappointing, sung artfully with only one verse. But buy this anyway: you may be surprised that an anthem that sounds drab one day will come vividly to life on another. *CB*

Willaert Motetti et Ricercari Academia della Selva José, Hernández-Pastor A Luigi Collarile organ/cond 63' 20"
Stradivarius STR 33656

Willaert Angelus Domini, Ave Regina caelorum, Inviolata, O Domine Jesu Christe, O magnum mysterium + Bassano La Rose; Buus Recercar Sexto; Cavazzoni Recercar I, II, O Stella maris, Salve Virgo Folgliano Recercharre

The Academia della Selva consists of young graduates of the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis. Despite the title, none of the *ricercari* are by Willaert himself, although the most interesting and also by far the most substantial is by Jacobus Buus who was first organist at St. Mark's while Willaert was *maestro di cappella*. In fact, of the 12 items, only 5 are by Willaert and many of the seven discs of the so-called 'Complete Works of Willaert' so far available show a similar proportion. A case for the Trades Descriptions Act? The forces used for this disc (Vol.2) are alto voice, cornetto, three trombones and organ. There is ample evidence that motets and even masses were sometimes played instrumentally even before the establishment of a regular instrumental group at St. Mark's. It is good to hear some of the motets from the 1539 *Musica quatuor vocibus* with one voice and three instruments, especially when the trombones are played as musically as this. Less convincing perhaps is *Angelus Domini* with the upper voice sung and the remaining voices intabulated for organ. The Bassano divisions on the anonymous chanson *La Rose* are about 50 years later than anything else on the disc but something was needed to show off the virtuosity and musical sensitivity of the excellent cornettist. The recording was made in the *Duomo di Valvasone*, which houses the stunning early 16th century organ of Vincenzo Colombi, who was also responsible for the organs in St. Mark's. On such an instrument the director of the group, Luigi Collarile, makes the somewhat formulaic works of Cavazzoni sound vital and convincing. *Alan Lumsden*

We've enlisted a new reviewer, since Alan is busy hunting pre-Gabrieli Venetian music for his Beauchamp summer school next year.

Go from my Window: English Renaissance Ballad Tunes for the Lute by John Dowland & his Contemporaries Nigel North 67' 11"
Linn Records CKD 176

One of the characteristics of English lute music at the time of Queen Elizabeth was the extensive use of popular melodies. These ranged from simple statements to complex variations full of elaborate divisions, often ending with gay, jig-like

triples. Where Continental composers might have chosen a chanson or a madrigal to display their intabulatory skills or as the basis of a fantasy, English composers delighted in the use of simple, popular ballad tunes to create highly sophisticated art music. Nigel North's playing reflects the seriousness of this repertory, squeezing as much expression out of the music as he can. I believe it is no accident that so many composers (all Catholic?) wrote variations on Walsingham, and if one has in mind Henry VIII's rape of the shrine at Walsingham, these settings take on an alarming piquancy.

Four ballad tunes are played here in more than one version, for example *Go from my window* set by Dowland and by Collard. The most extensive divisions – six minutes of virtuosity – are from Daniel Bachele's variations on *Une jeune fillette*. One of the characteristics of Bachele's style is to exploit the darker tones of the lowest strings. Unfortunately this increases the amount of 'squeak' from North's wound bass strings, though it is less noticeable elsewhere.

There are considerable contrasts in mood: from Dowland's static, yet intricate variations on *Loth to depart*, to his *Welcome home for Lord Willoughby*, so sprightly, that it seems to forego the victory celebrations for the sake of dashing home; from John Danyel's intense setting of *The Leaves be green* (requiring a special tuning), to the anonymous Gregory Walker-esque variations on *John come kiss me now*. North's playing is fresh, fluid, clear, ever varied, and always expressive. It really is a lovely CD.

Stewart McCoy

La época dorada del Villancico: Cancionero musical del Duque de Calabria Capilla Virelai, Jordi Reguant dir 67' 26"
Arsis 4178

This contains 17 items from the 1556 Venetian collection of Villancicos that used to be known as the *Uppsala Cancionero* after the town in which a copy was found a century ago, but is now named after the court from which the repertoire came. The original looks like any other collection of vocal polyphony, but is here performed in a variety of ways, successfully mixing up to four voices and eight instruments. There is a slightly pretentious but informative booklet note in Spanish and English, though the texts are not translated. Well worth hearing. *CB*

Meisterwerke der Spätgotik und der Renaissance auf dem Clavichord Vol. 2: Spanish Renaissance at the Court of Karl V, Tablatures of Bonifacius Amerbach and Matthäus Waisel René Clemencic, clavichord 181' 23" (3 CDs)

Arte Nova Classics 74321 99053 2 £
Music by Buchner, Cabezón, Hofhaimer, Isaac,
Kotter, Mouton, Senfl, Vecchi & anon

René Clemencic offers a survey of keyboard sources from the start of the sixteenth century, including the tablature copied for the Swiss humanist Bonifacius Amerbach. Many of the pieces are intabulations of vocal movements and so are distinctly tuneful: I particularly enjoyed the versions of three songs by Paul Hofhaimer, where the upper part is wrapped in delicate ornamentation. The subtlety and intimacy of these pieces is suited to the clavichord, particularly in Clemencic's graceful and authoritative performances.

Stephen Rose

17th CENTURY

Buxtehude *Organ Music Vol 3* Wolfgang Rübsam (1976 Brombaugh organ, Central Lutheran Church, Eugene, Oregon) Naxos 8.555991 £
BuxWV 146, 180, 182, 159, 184, 185, 218, 183, 161, 186, 142.

Another of Naxos's inspired 'complete works' series, this volume includes Buxtehude's five-verse setting of the Te Deum, one of his major works, alongside three of his most extended Praeludia and the intense Ciacona in C minor. The organ is a fairly early work (1976) of John Brombaugh, an American organ builder who, through his new organs based on historical models, has done much to inform players in the USA of the riches of the North German organ world. This example avoids the neo-baroque edginess and chifff of many organs of the 1970s, and has some very impressively voiced stops. Rübsam's playing is by turn delightfully insightful and irritatingly mannered – the latter mostly in the more powerful works, the former revealing itself in the more subdued pieces. He frequently adds quirky flourishes and ornaments, and often spreads chords in harpsichord style, making for a rather indistinct and hesitant pulse. Some pieces might grate with readers, although there are probably enough good moments to warrant spending a fiver – but you might need to keep your finger on the track-skip button. Andrew Benson-Wilson

Carissimi *Judicium extremum* I Madrigalisti Ambrosiani, Gianluca Capuano dir 55' 06"
Stradivarius STR 33653

+ Missa *L'homme armé* & motets *Exurge cor meum*, *O vulnera doloris*

This is a knock-out performance – really full-on baroque. The music is fabulous, combining rhythmic punch in close proximity with oozing chromaticism, anticipating Scarlatti's *Stabat Mater* but with the added bonus of instruments.

We all know the tune of *L'homme armé*, but this three-choir setting, attributed with some reservations to Carissimi, is startlingly original – a very long way from Busnois or Josquin. Each choir, of SATB soloists, is accompanied by a different continuo group, and it sounds as though each singer and instrument is individually miked, and their spatial separation is dramatic. The massed effect is sometimes quite confused, in the manner of a pitched battle, but the solo lines are brilliantly set off as they cut through the texture. It is nice to hear the harp and cellos so clearly, as well as the lower voices. The sopranos sometimes flag on their long sustained cantus firmus lines, but the vitality of the performance is more than enough to compensate.

Between the two principal works we are given the motets *Exurge cor meum* and *O vulnera doloris*. Bass Salvo Vitale could do with more smoothness of line, and the sound is stodgy where the organ is doubled by harpsichord. I loved the sparkling violins illustrating the words of the fine Japanese tenor Makoto Sakurada, and the continuo playing is always imaginative and usually sensitive.

An almost Verdian trumpet fanfare sets the scene in the 'Last Judgement' before St John begins to tell of his apocalyptic vision, in the narrative style of *Jephtha*, whose battle scenes share a lot of material with *Judicium extremum*. The terrifying nature of the Day of Judgment is in no doubt, and although the sinners use all their vocal powers to persuade Christ not to cast them into hell, their words come too late. This is a splendidly dramatic oratorio, and although the music is not as fine as the best parts of *Jephtha*, it deserves to be performed, and enjoyed.

Selene Mills

Froberger *Hommage à l'Empereur: The Suites of the Libro Quarto* Bob van Asperen hpscld 97'
Aeolus 10064 (2 CDs).
Suites VII-XII, XV, XVII, XXI

This is the third volume of van Asperen's Froberger series, completing his recording of the suites. He brings great authority and experience to the playing and to the booklet notes which reflect an extensive preparation for the project. Froberger's music generally combines Italian lyricism with French sensibility and ornamental figuration. The French influence is particularly strong in these later suites, written after Froberger had spent some time in Paris in the early 1650s. Played on an anonymous French harpsichord of c.1700 in the Villa Medici in Rome, van Asperen brings out the French character of the Gigues and Courantes in particular. I find his playing

of the Allemandes and Sarabandes a little tame and perhaps too reflective, though there are moments when he breaks loose from a self-imposed restraint. Van Asperen is an intellectual player whose agenda here is perhaps more to document the complete works in a literal way than to enjoy the quirkiness and improvisatory potential of much of this music. The second CD is completed by a trio of works attributed to Froberger in manuscript, played for contrast on an Italian harpsichord from the Kenneth Gilbert collection. I couldn't help wishing he had played more of the music on this, to my ears, much more interesting sounding instrument for this music. That said, these are well-recorded and solid performances of some unjustly-neglected music.

Noel O'Regan

Andreas Hammerschmidt *Sacred Works* Weser-Renaissance, Manfred Cordes dir cpo 999 846-2 75' 06".
Music from *Kirchen- und Tafelmusik* (1662) and *Motettæ unius et duarum vocum* (1649)

Around 1700 Hammerschmidt had rather a bad press: one theorist said his motets were pieces for Thuringian peasants who'd inherited their boots from their forebears. I was therefore pleasantly surprised by the quality of the music on this disc. Most of the pieces are vocal concertos for a handful of singers, augmented by a pair of violins or a choir of brass. Although Hammerschmidt is never as harmonically adventurous as Schütz or Rosenmüller, there are many moments to enjoy. Sometimes he uses a ground bass of almost Purcellian imagination, for instance to suggest expectant waiting for the Lord in *De profundis*. The disc also gets us into the Christmas spirit with two grand settings of the seasonal chorales *Gelobet seist du* and *Vom Himmel hoch*. Best of all are the vibrant performances by Weser-Renaissance. The singers have just the right amount of presence and energy, while always remaining subtle; and the continuo team add rhythmic buoyancy, particularly to the walking basses that are so characteristic of Hammerschmidt. Scholarly advice for the disc was provided by the Stiftung Kloster Michaelstein, a recently opened centre in Sachsen-Anhalt for Baroque music; a member of the centre wrote the long and informative booklet-note on the composer. An exciting discovery; highly recommended.

Stephen Rose

Merula Anthonello 59' 48"
Symphonica SY 02201

The 13 tracks on this CD cover most aspects of Tarquinio Merula's secular output: there are canzonette, canzonas

and a sonata, a toccata and a capriccio. The performances seem highly improvisational – the singer, known to me from BIS Bach cantatas project, uses a sort of tonal sliding from note to note that I associate more with Spanish music, but which works, if one is in the mood. The first time I listened to the disc, I hated it! Repeated listening, though, was the correct approach, and I'm glad now to recommend a disc that features one or two recorders, cornetto (played by the excellent Yoshimichi Hamada), guitar or theorbo, harp or harpsichord (yes, played by the same lady!), and gamba. The music is enjoyable, and the sound quality (it is a 24-bit 96 KHz recording) is very realistic. Recommended – even the overblowing in *La Gallina!* BC

Michna Messe de Saint-Wenceslas, Requiem
Franco-German Choir of Paris, Bernard Lallement
BNL 112758

I'm afraid this disc will not attract much interest among *EMR* readers: the claim that this is a first recording of the Requiem is not true, unless the 2002 copyright line on the cover is inaccurate (Studio Matous released a far superior CD in 1992), and the modern instrument, large choir, big acoustic is just not what we expect. For the record, the Mass is accompanied by the Jean Barthe Chamber Orchestra and the Requiem by the Philharmonic Orchestra of Radio France. Somehow Michna has so far managed not to be recorded to best advantage. BC

Monteverdi Sacred Music Vol 1 The King's Consort, Robert King dir 75' 45"
Hyperion CDA67428

Selva morale: Dixit I, Confitebor I, Beatus I, Laudate pueri I, Laudate Dominum I, Christe Redemptor, Magnificat a8, Messa a4

Psalms, a Mass and a hymn from *Selva Morale* form the first volume of a series. Wonderful music, including the famous *Beatus Vir* and the 4-part *Messa à 4 da Cappella*. The approach is large-scale, with choir, sackbuts, violins, plucked and organ continuo. This works very happily for many of these pieces, most notably the massive 8-part *Magnificat*, and the contrasts between solo and tutti sections are exploited to the full. The sackbuts are also in the Mass (taken out for the Crucifixus, back in for the Resurrexit). Soloists and choir adopt a full-voiced approach. The voices are not always matched – the two solo sopranos have quite different tones, though the two tenors (including the marvellous Charles Daniels) match better. Fans of this ensemble and this approach will love the accomplished

performances, and the music is simply stunning. Robert Oliver

Monteverdi Madrigals La Venexiana
Glossa GCD P30912 64' 18"

The disc's title is 'La Venexiana live'. The outline drawings round the package is neat, but I wonder how often they paddle in the sea in their concert garb. The Corsican audience is very well behaved and is audible only in the right places. The expressive and free performances go a little beyond English good taste; as with the group's complete-book discs, I can enjoy a performance once, but have no wish to hear it sung that particular way for a long time. I'm sure I would have enjoyed the concert, though. It is an anthology of some of Monteverdi's better-known pieces, including Arianna's lament as a solo, not as might expect from the disc's title, in its five-voice form: it is stimulating and certainly worth buying. There are no translations of the texts; many listeners will have most of them elsewhere, but their absence prevents me recommending this as an introduction to the Monteverdi's madrigals. CB

Rebel Les Elemens; Marais Suites in a & G, Folies d'Espagne Palladian Ensemble
Linn CKD 221 69' 24"

At the age of 69 Rebel retired from both composing and the directorship of the *Concert Spirituel*. Had it not been for the persuasive powers of Prince Carignan he would never have again taken up his pen and the amazing opening bar of what has become his most famous piece would never have seen the light of day. *Les Elemens* was intended as an orchestral work and perhaps ought to be first heard thus, though the Palladians' adaptation is in the spirit of the original publication and it is in any case difficult to argue against such inspired playing, technically breath-taking at times. Marais' prefaces also suggest that his *pieces de violes* can be adapted for other forces and here two suites have been created which provide a satisfying experience for all concerned, not least the players who are a truly formidable ensemble. For those with the necessary equipment, this is a SACD, but it still sounds pretty good for the rest of us. David Hansell

Scarlatti Griselda Dorothea Röschmann
Griselda, Lawrence Zazzo *Gualtiero*, Veronica Cangemi *Costanza*, Bernarda Fink *Roberto*, Silvia Tro *Santafé Ottone*, Kobie van Rensburg *Corrado*, Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin, René Jacobs 181' 51" (3 CDs)
Harmonia Mundi HMC 901805.07

Alessandro Scarlatti's last opera was

produced in Rome in 1721, with a dedication to Handel's former patron Prince Ruspoli. In her booklet note Silke Leopold hints that it was Ruspoli himself who altered Zeno's old libretto for Scarlatti's setting, and in an interview also printed in the booklet Jacobs treats this unlikely conjecture as a significant fact, though I am not aware of any evidence to support it. The story is the unpleasant one of 'Patient Grizell', first recorded in Boccaccio's *Decameron*, in which a queen from a humble background is repudiated and humiliated by her husband to prove her worth to his sceptical subjects. Zeno's elaboration of the plot gives Gualtiero (the king) more plausible reasons for his actions while keeping our sympathies firmly with Griselda. Despite its late date, Scarlatti's style retains a toehold in the 17th century, with arias built on quirky concatenation of brief motifs, flecked by touches of chromaticism and only occasionally hinting at more assured Handelian nobility. The music is characterful without depicting character in the dramatic sense, and is best at tender moments, such as the scene in which Costanza (Griselda's daughter, though neither woman knows it) meets her banished mother and the two form an instant bond.

The basis of the new and welcome recording, made in 2002, is what seems to have been a straightforward stage production in Berlin two years earlier, and Jacobs' general respect for Scarlatti's score here is in marked contrast to his recent treatment of Handel's *Rinaldo* (see *EMR* 91, p. 24). There are several cuts, including nine of the arias in the main text of Donald Grout's Harvard edition and a good deal of recitative, but these are excusable, given the exceptional length of the opera, and Jacobs adds back two items deleted by Scarlatti before performance, an orchestral movement and Corrado's aria 'Non lasciar' in Act 1, the latter being well worth rescuing. (Seven of the missing arias are present in whole or part on Bruno Maderna's recording of 1960, issued in 1991 on Arkadia 3CDMAD 015. His version retains some interest, despite its use of baritones and basses in the *castrati* roles, and the overall ponderousness typical of its era.) As usual with Jacobs, there is plenty of instrumental colour on the continuo line, but the only major superfluity is the slightly risible use of organ for 'solemn moments'. Though tempos tend to extremes, they seldom reach them, and Jacobs' many added nuances of dynamic or pulse work with the grain of the music. The cast, all high voices except for the tenor Corrado, is excellent and well chosen for the listener, with the bright voices of Röschmann and

Cangemi (the former a touch creamier) designating the female roles, and the high male roles made distinct by Fink's warm mezzo as Roberto, Zazzo's proud countertenor as Gualtieri and the throatier, not always pleasant, timbre of Santafé as the treacherous Ottone. All are sensitive to dramatic situation in recitative, and meet the dual demands of Scarlatti and Jacobs in the arias with remarkable assurance. Whether *Griselda* is in itself the ideal introduction to Scarlatti as an operatic composer is debatable, but a brilliant case is made for it here, and it should surely inspire further exploration of his contribution to the genre. *Anthony Hicks*

Scheidemann *Organ music* Gwendolyn Toth (1651 organ Jacobuskerk, Zeerijp, Holland), Jessica Tranzillo S 78'29" Zefiro ZR103

Includes *Kyrie sumnum, magnificat 6 & 8. toni, chorale preludes, Praeambulum ex D*, setting of Hassler *Alleluja laudem dicite Deo nostro*

Scheidemann is one of the key composers in the development of the mature North German organ school that culminated in Buxtehude. Noted for his founding of the style of extended choral fantasias, he was one of the most famous of the pupils of Sweelinck. The CD gives a nicely representative selection of his works and is played with integrity on a fine organ. Although the Zeerijp instrument is a great deal smaller than that which Scheidemann would have played in Hamburg, it has a good range of tone colour and is in the Michael Praetorius quarter-comma meantone that is appropriate for the music – track 2 includes a nice example of a Nachtegaal (bird song). The Magnificat 8 toni is a fine example of the extended chorale fantasias that developed under Scheidemann's hands, with the lines of the chant receiving a range of often virtuosic treatments, including echo sections and interplay between two manuals. It is played throughout on a single registration, which I find far more satisfactory than making frequent changes in timbre and is, I suggest, rather closer to the mid-17th-century style of registration. The use of a single soprano voice to sing the chant in the *Kyrie sumnum, Magnificat 6. toni* and *O lux beata Trinitas* may help in alerting the listener to the melodies, but it is hardly an authentic approach. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

Sweelinck der Organistenmacher Léon Berben, organ (1999 Schumacher organ, St Jacques zu Lüttich, Liège) 67'32" RaumKlang RK2205
Music by Jan Pieterzoon & Dirck Sweelinck, Scheidemann, Schildt, Siefert.

This fascinating CD focuses on the music

of Sweelinck and his pupils and followers Heinrich Scheidemann, Melchior Schildt and Paul Siefert. The organ was built in 1999 in the style of Niehoff, and in an original Niehoff case of 1600. It has a distinct sound, with mellow foundation stops and bright, if slightly brittle, upperwork, and speaks into a generous acoustic. The registrations are well chosen, producing some very effective tone colours (try track 6 – Sweelinck's Psalm 23 variations). The meantone tuning makes itself felt in several of the pieces – pieces that were probably written for organs with split-semitones, so the edgy sound is a bit unauthentic. But the gentle roundness of the pure thirds more than compensates for this. Léon Berben plays with a pleasing flexibility of touch and articulation, and with musical integrity. Some curious rattles impinge on several of the tracks: I am not sure if this is a fault of my copy of the CD or something in the church joining in with the organ (a common occurrence – I once had to get my page turner to lean against a panel in an organ case to stop it rattling every time I played a particular pedal note). *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

Amours, zéphyrs & sirènes La turbulente Astrée Naïve E 8884 55'03"
Music by Bassano, Buonamente, Castaldi, Cima, Falconieri, Frescobaldi, Merula, Rossi, Selma y Salaverde, Uccellini

Not being a great fan of discs of early baroque repertoire recorded on recorders, I approached this disc with mixed feelings. I was soon persuaded by La turbulente, a group with which I was unfamiliar. The recorder players Susi Möhlmeier and Frédérique Thouvenot (who play five different instruments between them) are joined by Claire Giardelli on cello and cello piccolo, Mirella Giardelli on harpsichord and organ, and Pascal Monteilhet on theorbo and archlute. The programme is far more diverse than I had anticipated, with theorbo and organ solos, as well as pieces with just one recorder. Even the cellist gets a solo spot, courtesy of Frescobaldi. Even if you share my wariness of such discs, don't miss this! *BC*

LATE BAROQUE

Actus Tragicus Theatre of Early Music, Daniel Taylor 50'36" ATMA ACD 2 2288
Bach BWV 106 & 200; Telemann *Du aber Daniel gehe hin*

This is possibly the best disc I have heard by Theatre of Early Music. The three tragic cantatas are well known, so the performances have to be exceptional for the disc to succeed, and I expect it will do just

that. Of the solo voices, Suzie LeBlanc and the director of the group are best. The tenor, Ian Honeyman, finds some of the higher lines difficult to control and I felt that Stephen Varcoe struggled a little with the faster passages of his solos. The instruments are beautifully balanced, and the opening of BWV 106 is simply beautiful – it is difficult to imagine a more emotive way to begin to funeral piece. It is a pity, though, that a little searching could have been done for another, more substantial third piece than the fragmentary BWV 200 – there are many effective funeral settings from the German baroque, as I'm sure Mr Taylor knows, that would have better filled the disc. *BC*

Bach Christmas Cantatas The Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra & Choir, Ton Koopman 215'34" (3 CDs in box) (rec 1994-2000) Challenge Classics CC72230
BWV 40-1, 63-5 91, 121-2, 152, 190-1
Bach Cantatas Vol. 2 Barbara Schlick, Kai Wessel, Christoph Prégardien, Klaus Martens SATB, The Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra & Choir, Ton Koopman 182'29" Challenge Classics CC72202 (rec 1995)
BWV 12, 18, 61, 132, 152, 182, 199, 203, 524

It is good that Koopman's series has been rescued and returned to the control of musicians and a small company that believes in music. 'Antoine Marchand' and Challenge are reissuing the earlier volumes of the series and continuing it in tandem, and have also put out a seasonal offering, which is a fine trailer as well as a seasonal gift for yourself or your relatives. I won't repeat the virtues and limitations of the series. Even if you don't like all the decisions and performances, there's a vast amount of inspiring music-making here to justify every reader having at least a sampling of the Koopman cantatas. *CB*

Bach Cantatas 82 & 199 Lorraine Hunt Lieberson, The Orchestra of Emmanuel Music, Craig Smith 50'40" Nonesuch 7559-79692-2

The selling point of this is that the soloist was involved in what sounds like a sick stage production by Peter Sellars of these two cantatas. Fortunately, this is just an audio disc and a more inspiring story is that the disc is a reminder that in Boston all Bach's cantatas have been performed liturgically on the appropriate days in Emmanuel Church in the Back Bay. In the early 1980s Lorraine Hunt participated in the project as a viola player. As a singer, she reminds me too much of Janet Baker – in a way a compliment, but it's a slightly nostalgic style with which I'm not entirely comfortable. The playing needs just a bit more individuality to make this

a must-buy, but the disc should sell well to Bostonians who remember the series with affection and to those who are happy with singing that is marvellous in its way but too smoothly-beautiful for my taste. CB

Bach *Die Moteten* Norddeutscher Figuralchor, Baroque Brass of London, Bach-Orchester Hannover, Jörg Straube *dir 132' oo* (2 CDs) Thorofon Classics CTH 2481/2.
BWV 38.i, 118, 225-30 + motets by J. C. Altnikol, J. C. Bach, S. Knüpfer, J. Kuhnau, G. P. Telemann, G. G. Wagner

This recording puts Bach's familiar six motets in the context of apocryphal pieces and motets of other composers he is known to have performed in Leipzig. There are pieces by his predecessors, including a sonorous funeral motet by Knüpfer and a Passontide adaptation of Kuhnau's *Tristis est anima mea*. There are also motets by his pupils and contemporaries, with intricate melismatic writing like Bach's own motets. Peter Wollny contributes a useful essay to the booklet, giving the latest scholarly verdicts on the authenticity of such pieces as *Ich lasse dich nicht*, once ascribed to J. Christoph Bach but now believed to be by the young Johann Sebastian. Wollny's advice may also have led to the historically accurate scoring of the Bach motets used here, for instance with a woodwind choir and strings doubling the singers in *Der Geist hilft*. The choir contains 42 singers but does not sound its size; the phrasing is supple and the diction excellent. Fast-moving lines are buoyant and energetic, particularly in the Telemann 'Amen' on CD2. And as often with German choirs, you sense that the music is highly meaningful to the performers. Recommended.

Stephen Rose

J S Bach *Orgelwerk* Gisbert Schneider (1714 Silbermann organ, Freiberg Dom) Cybele SACD030202 69'46"
BWV 546-7, 582, 659, 663, 768

The Gottfried Silbermann organ in Freiberg Dom is one of the finest organs in the world, and is one of the best vehicles for interpreting the music of Bach. It has a monumental grandeur in its choruses, aided by an appealing acoustic and some of the sensuous solo registers that characterise the central German organ of Bach's time. It is heard to very good effect in this well-chosen programme of mature Bach. The playing is powerfully assured with a rock-solid sense of pulse and with none of the gimmicks that can make repeated listening awkward. Schneider allows the music to shine through with little by way of imposed 'interpretation' – usually the best approach for Bach. He gives the organ time to

speak and plays with a clear sense of the articulation needed to project the sound into a large acoustic. The playing of the *pleno* works, notably the concluding Passacaglia (played, as it should be, on a powerful chorus throughout), is particularly impressive. Recommended.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Bach *Clavierübung III* David Ponsford org Guild GMCD7262/3 123' (2 CDs)
BWV 552, 669-689 + 768

David Ponsford has chosen an ambitious programme to play on one of the best organs built in Britain in the last few years at Greyfriars, Edinburgh. His performances have poise and style, most particularly where, as is frequently the case in these works, Bach seems to have been reflecting his own affection for French music and style, which is one of Ponsford's scholarly specialities. The partite on 'Sei gegrüsset' make a stylish filler to disc 2, although I would myself prefer to hear instead choral versions of the *Clavierübung* settings, as on Suzuki's recording of the work on BIS. I think that I just prefer his reading overall as well.

Stephen Daw

Bach *French Suites* Masaki Suzuki hpscd BIS CD-113-114 140' 08" (2 discs)
+ associated suites and movements, BWV 818a, 819a

The Swedish BIS company has already featured Dr Suzuki as a dedicated and expert director of Bach's passions, oratorios and many cantatas and made apparent his skills as an organist in his spirited recording of *Clavierübung III*. Here we find him displaying his rich power of expression as a solo harpsichordist. As always, this significant scholar/performer supplies us with extras which some people still rarely expect from the familiar repertoire, which is broadened and deepened through his imaginative awareness of the source-materials and apt Bach performance – unpredictable ornaments and expressive timings, as well as allowing the music to unfold under his hands, as must have happened when Bach himself played this music. A very rewarding listening experience.

Stephen Daw

Bach *Goldberg Variations* András Schiff pf ECM New Series 1825 472 185-2 70' 54" (concert rec 2001)
Bach *Goldberg Variations* Gwendolyn Toth (Lautenwerk) 83' 06"
Zefiro ZR 103 (rec 2000)

It would be unfair to review most Bach players in conjunction with András Schiff and this is no truer than in the case of the present pairing. In the context of an early

music journal one would have to draw attention to Gwendolyn Toth's use of the 'Lautenwerk' (the 'Lute-harpsichord', its 8' choirs strung in gut, its 4' in brass). Although no instruments survive, it was clearly beloved of Bach (he left two) and its lute-like tone seems well represented by Willard Martin's 1988 instrument used here. Schiff is unrepentant in his use of the 'big, bad piano' ('hands on heart, can you listen to the harpsichord that long?' he taunts in his lively sleeve note) for this apparently unrehearsed concert recording from Basel. If I only had this pair of recordings to go by, I would perhaps find it hard to disagree with his comment. Yet far from demonstrating the total failure of the early music movement, Schiff's new Goldberg recording could prove the very opposite. It is unlikely that any pianist would ever have conceived of playing with this subtlety and attention to detail without the pioneering work of keyboardists in the Leonhardt mould over the last forty years. If, like me, part of your early attraction to historical instruments was antipathy to that hideous, nauseating banging sound that most concert grands seem to emit, here is an artist who seems to reproduce the very best qualities of the clavichord on the modern instrument (to paraphrase Debussy, one forgets the piano has hammers). What Schiff achieves is a stunning sound, articulated both by space and local (finger-tip) dynamics, and ornamented with a superlative spontaneity that never seems to debase the music. One might grumble at this speed or that, but the whole seems hard to beat, light-years from the studied modernistic mechanism of the last Gould recording, for instance. To get playing approaching this quality on the 'Lautenwerk', one would probably have to turn to Robert Hill's recordings on one of his brother's instruments.

John Butt

Bach *Sonata in G minor* BWV 1001, *Partita in B minor* BWV 1002;
Barry Guy *Inachis* Maya Homburger Maya Recordings MCD0301 66' 22"

This is a first of three discs pairing two of Bach's violin Solos (why is Bach's title always avoided?) with a new work by her partner, a distinguished double bass player (see p. 26) as well as composer. Unlike that disc, this separates new and old, and I find the collocation far more stimulating than the mixture. I'm not sure that I would have guessed the butterfly connections of the new piece, but a description of it could well use the word 'fluttering' accidentally. It seems to fit the instrument very well and I can see other violinists taking it up. There's no point in comparing Maya's performance

in detail with rival discs since it is the coupling that will decide on whether to buy this or not. She clearly has her own view of the music – individual but not revolutionary – and she gives fine performances that present the music in a rather more rounded way than the booklet note. Ruth Tatlow, author of a devastating book demolishing Smend's theory of Bach's use of the number-alphabet, sets forth a Pythagorean interpretation of bar count and proportions. It's interesting, but it's not a good idea to count the bars while listening. CB

Bach *The 6 Cello Suites* Phoebe Carrai
Crear Classics AV 0021 138' 36" (2 CDs)

This is yet another version of Bach's cello suites that will have to be on my shelves. I don't know why they have such an attraction for me, as the only experience I have of playing them is in versions for viola when preparing a pupil for Grade 8, and I find some of the dance movements rather dry and uninteresting. But in the hands of someone like Wispelwey or now Carrai, they are transformed into something special, something ethereal. I cannot put my finger on what exactly it is that sets these performances apart from others that I've heard; maybe they just strike a chord with some inner sense of how things should be. Whatever the reason, I can recommend these two discs without any reservations at all. BC

Chedeville *Les saisons amusantes* (Paris 1739) Les éclairs de musique 54' 15"
ARTS authentic 47669-2

This was always going to seem slightly tame after hearing Red Priest's version! It's too much of a simplification to say that Chedeville arranged the music for hurdy-gurdy (as I've often heard): the arrangements are much more (for want of a better word) subtle. For a start, there are six seasons (harvest time and St Martin's pleasures – Indian Summer is, I suppose, the best English translation), and the music he uses is from a far wider selection than just the four concertos of the original set. To be honest, the hurdy-gurdy was hardly an issue (except when the drone was the subdominant, which is rather unsettling), and I enjoyed most of what I heard – although the idea that Chedeville had made the violin part possible for French amateurs of his day suggests that the average standard was rather high. BC

£ = bargain price ££ = mid-price
All other discs full price, as far as we know

Couperin *Apothéoses: Le Parnasse ou L'Apothéose de Corelli, L'Apothéose de Lulli, Sonade en quatuor La Sultane, Sonade en trio La Steinkerque* London Baroque 65' 40"
BIS-CD-1275

Despite the stiff competition from the Palladian Ensemble Rebel and Marias (see above), this is my disc of the month, if only because of the incomparable greatness of the music. However, one could with some justification apply the same epithets to the performances, which really do bring out the very considerable best in London Baroque. Every phrase is shaped with unanimity, every ornament admirably executed and every interpretational nuance delivered with absolute authority. A nice touch is the decision to speak the programmatic titles (Charles Medlam as the voice of Couperin). The two sonatas are more than fillers, the quartet in particular being a really lush extravagance, full use being made of an extra *basse de viole* in the tenor register. Compelling. David Hansell

Couperin *L'apothéose du goût français*
Jean-Paul Lécot (organ) 72' 03"
Arion ARN 63615

Organ transcriptions of keyboard and chamber works, including *La Françoise* (Les Nations), *Le Rossignol en amour*, *Passacaille*

I seem to have been selected by CB to listen to remarkably little music played in accordance with its composer's first thoughts this month (see reviews of Rameau and Rebel)! In the note to the Palladian Ensemble's disc, William Carter observes that he would love to hear Marais played on a large Baroque organ and here he sort of gets his wish as we are presented with a sequence of movements drawn from a wide range of sources showing what can be done with the music of Couperin by a sympathetic player and an instrument that is definitely in the 'wow' category. Whether this kind of transcription works (and JSB thought that it did) is largely a matter of taste and opinion, of course. For me, most of the time it did and the sound of the organ (four manuals, 77 stops) is such that it has to be listened to even when the basic aesthetics of instrument and musical idiom seem to be in conflict. The reeds and such relatively rare beasts as the Grosse Tierce make this a must for organ buffs who might also want to know that the nightingale also makes an appearance. But the recital also makes serious points about the universal stature and nature of Couperin's music. Make it your Christmas novelty this year. David Hansell

Dupuy *Cantates de Noël* Soli, Groupe Vocal de Toulouse, Baroque Ensemble, Alix Bourbon dir 65' 38" (rec.1993)
Arion ARN 63612
Noël 'Au milieu de la nuit', *Cantate Domino*, *Magnificat*

Good to have a regional ensemble championing one of their own, so to speak, Dupuy having been one of the most prominent Toulouse musicians of his time. It does require some effort to discover this, however, as both this and the Mondonville issue reviewed below suffer from a mediocre translation of the original French note which has been very poorly proof-read – Dupuy was a choirboy rather than a chairboy and can we really predict his employment for 2727? There are several other such infelicities which is a shame as the performers deserve better support for so wholeheartedly endorsing this music, which is always thoroughly competent if only intermittently compelling. The highlight for me was an aria with serpent and oboe obbligato, though the instrumental contributions feature some athletic violin playing. The choral and solo singing are all well-mannered and disciplined and make the disc well worth exploring. David Hansell

Geminiani *Concerti Grossi Op. 2* Auser Musici 48' 51"
Symphonica SY 02200
Gasparini Overture *Antioco*

Auser Musici is a newish Italian period group, based in Pisa (close to Geminiani's home town of Lucca). If not (yet?) quite as polished as the more well known bands, their ensemble is good and they play in a spirited, no-nonsense fashion. I'm afraid I have a few quibbles about the details of this performance, though. Geminiani's Op.2 concertos were almost certainly meant to be played one-to-a-part: not surprisingly, the divided (single) violas are rather lost in the second movement of No. 1, with eight violins playing the top line in unison. The title-page (reproduced in facsimile in the programme booklet) does not sanction the use of flutes instead of solo violins in the full versions of Nos. 4-6, but only when those concertos are played as trio sonatas, without the ripieno violins, viola and double bass. And I doubt if Geminiani would have used theorbo and organ continuo in his performances at Hickford's Room in the winter of 1731-2. Nevertheless it's good to hear some very interesting and unjustly neglected music, and despite my reservations I can recommend this recording – even if just under 50 minutes is rather short measure. Richard Maunder

Graupner *Cantate, Sonate, Ouverture* L'Ensemble des Idées heureuses, Geneviève Soly *hpscd*, dir, Ingrid Schmithüsen *S*, Hélène Plouffe *vla d'amore* 64' 46" Analekta FL 2 3180

This is the second volume of Soly's series of discs devoted to the Instrumental and Vocal Music from Darmstadt: a cantata for soprano and instruments, an orchestral suite with solo viola d'amore, an aria from another cantata, and a sonata for harpsichord with violin accompaniment. There are several curiosities: it seems strange to label the overture as being for viola d'amore, strings, harpsichord and bassoon as if the latter two instruments were solo, and also to include a cello in the performance of the sonata — if a continuo instrument was involved at all, would there not have been a second harpsichord? The playing and singing are of the standards we've come to expect from the performers, although there were some occasional rough edges in the suite. The cantata *Die Krankheit, so mich drückt* has some lovely movements. BC

Handel *Giulio Cesare in Egitto* Marijana Mijanovic *Giulio Cesare*, Magdalena Kožená *Cleopatra*, Anne Sophie von Otter *Sesto*, Charlotte Hellekant *Cornelia*, Bejun Mehta *Tolomeo*, Alan Ewing *Achilla*, Pascal Bertin *Nireno*, Jean-Michel Ankaoua *Curio*, Les Musiciens de Louvre, Marc Minkowski 219' 18" (3 CDs) Archiv 474 210-2 ££

Minkowski's recording was made live in the Vienna Konzerthaus in November 2002, though only a few distant coughs betray the presence of an audience. Bafflingly, it is not complete: Minkowski omits Cleopatra's aria 'Tu la mia stella sei' and its introductory recitative from Act 1, as well as two other brief scene-setting recitatives (before Cornelia's 'Nel tuo seno' and before Cleopatra's 'Venere bella'). Now *Giulio Cesare* is a long opera, a few arias do not show Handel at his best, and some pruning for stage productions is understandable; but it is hard to see any justification for the omissions here, and especially for the loss of 'Tu la mia stella', surely superior in quality and more important in context than (for example) Cleopatra's 'Tutto può donna veziosa'. The cuts amount only to about seven minutes of music, and the opera would still fit on three CDs if they were restored. They are symptomatic of a general indifference to Handel's musical portrayal of the characters and to dramatic situation. Minkowski can show sensitivity at moments of pathos: the duet for Sesto and Cornelia at the end of Act 1 has great

tenderness and he allows Kožená to pull the heartstrings in Cleopatra's 'Piangerò'. Ceasar's 'Aure, per pietà', following upon it, is appropriately consoling. But for the quicker arias, and for anything he seems to find uninteresting, Minkowski's approach is invariably the same: fast and furious, with an aggressively emphasised bass line that challenges everyone else to keep up with it. (An annoying idiosyncrasy is the holding of the upper note at the end of an aria when the violins have an octave drop, surely a misreading of Handel's conventional fermata indicating the close of an A-section.) The minuet aria 'Venere bella' is not great Handel, but (as Valerie Masterson shows on the Mackerras English-language recording) can be nicely pointed to bring out the flirtatious side of Cleopatra. Here it is deprived not only of its recitative but of any sense of character: it sounds like a run-through. Only a vastly superior set of singers could give this set an serious advantage over René Jacobs' *Harmonia Mundi* recording of 1991, but the balance is fairly even. Kožená's more intense Cleopatra, Sophie von Otter's eager Sesto and especially Mehta's Tolomeo, hinting at a nobility within the villainy, have the edge over their equivalents for Jacobs, but Mijanovic does not excel Bernarda Fink in the title-role, and I did not find Hellekant's laboured *Cornelia* and Ewing's boomy *Achilla* likeable. So the clear choice is still Jacobs, with the sad implication that the immense effort put into this recording has been misplaced. Anthony Hicks

Handel *Harpsichord Suites 1-8* Ludger Rémy *hpscd* 124' 44" (2 CDs) cpo 999 940-2 ££

Rémy's survey of the 1720 set of Handel's harpsichord suites is a generally attractive mid-price issue, but does not quite match Paul Nicholson's version of 1994, now available as a Hyperion 'Dyad' at similar price. Both use a Bruce Kennedy copy of a Mietke original of around 1700, Rémy for the whole set, Nicholson alternating with an original Kirckman of 1778. For me Nicholson scores most distinctively with his more cantabile style in the slow movements — Rémy's lumpy treatment of the Sarabande of no. 4 in E minor is especially hard to take — and I find his embellishments more idiomatic. Rémy is sometimes more energetic in the fugues, though not consistently so. Nicholson keeps to the published order of the suites, in this case almost certainly the composer's own, while Rémy departs from it to no obvious advantage, and his odd decision to introduce the well-known Passacaille of the G minor suite by play-

ing the bass line on its own is likely to annoy after more than one hearing. Nicholson's set also includes the Six Fugues published in 1735 and two other fugues, and so must be the clear recommendation, but if the Rémy comes to you as a gift, it will provide a very acceptable introduction to this repertory.

Anthony Hicks

Maichelbeck *Kammermusik* Raimund Hug *org*, Slobodan Jovanovic *hpscd*, Christian Ostertag *vln*, Verena Fütterer *rec*, members of the SWR-Sinfonieorchester, Raimund Hug *dir* 65' 26" Ars musici AM 1353-2

The most successful performances on this CD are those not involving the orchestra: their symphonic approach to music that is essentially rather simple is heavy-handed, and they seem to have little HIP awareness. The keyboard music fares slightly better (harpsichord more than organ), and the solo instrumentalists are mostly fine. The music is slight, and should not be taken for anything more than it is. Franz Anton Maichelbeck (1702-50) had a very clear understanding of counterpoint, as his fugues in six, seven and nine voice show, and he had something of a melodic gift — maybe a period instrument group would like to take up the cause? BC

Mondonville *Pièces de Clavecin en Sonates Op. 3* Christoph Rousset *hpscd*, Florence Malgoire *vln*, 60' 07" (rec. 1990) Arion ARN 63609

Had there never been a Rameau we would value Mondonville very highly. He was an innovative composer in several fields — these pieces pre-date Rameau's comparable 1741 collection and may even have inspired it — and at his best is absolutely the equal of his contemporaries. Several of these movements have a contrapuntal energy worthy of Bach. The performers really commit themselves to both the music and the style and are supported by well-recorded and balanced sound. As with the Dupuy (see above), the booklet is shoddy, one crucial phrase being entirely omitted from the English translation in addition to there being several mistakes. David Hansell

Rameau *Six Concerts en sextuor* Les Talens Lyriques/Christoph Rousset 71'49" Decca 467 699-2 *Pièces de Clavecin en Concert* arr. Decroix (1768) Yes, it's Rameau but not as we know it! J. J. M. Decroix (1746-1826) was a high-ranking lawyer in Lille for whom amassing Rameau-related manuscripts and other documents was a consuming enthusiasm.

These arrangements (for orchestral rather than chamber forces) seem to have been made by him for the Concert de Lille, a society for which he provided much performing material. Transcription would actually be a better word, for Rameau's original harpsichord and solo string/flute lines are pretty literally re-allocated to string ensemble with no changes of figuration or tessitura. Even in these expert hands, this does lead to some thick textures and moments where interweaving melodies, defined by timbre in the original, are hard to distinguish though, equally, there are also places where careful dynamic shading in the ensemble does clarify matters. Decroix created his own sixth concert from the solo harpsichord works — rather a 'greatest hits' as it includes *La Poule*, *L'Enharmonique* and *L'Égyptienne*. I have enjoyed these performances and missed the colours of the originals in almost equal measure and have concluded that while they can be regarded as an interesting complement to the 1741 publication and an indication of how an amateur sustained interest in his by then unfashionable hero, in the end they are no substitute for the elegant chamber sonorities of their source. *David Hansell*

Scarlatti and Vivaldi Marie-Nicole Lemieux *alto*, Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra, Jeanne Lamon *dir*
Analekta FL2 3171
D. Scarlatti *Salve Regina* Vivaldi *Stabat mater* RV621; Concerti RV149 (G), RV158 (A); Avison/Scarlatti Concerto 7 (g).

It is a pity that the all titles of the works on this excellent disc are not given either on the front cover or in the CD itself. The 'Scarlatti *Salve Regina*' proved to be not one of the five settings listed in Grove under Alessandro Scarlatti, but the superb short work by Domenico for alto and strings. It is a real gem, and the disc is worth buying for this alone. It is paired with the better-known Vivaldi *Stabat Mater* in F minor, again with strings. Marie-Nicole Lemieux sings most stylishly, with an almost counter-tenor-like timbre and her subtle vibrato does not impinge or affect the purity of her intonation. These works are centred round two Vivaldi string concerti played with assurance and verve by the Tafelmusik Baroque. Not listed on the cover is the other filler, one of the set of twelve string concertos arranged by Charles Avison from Domenico Scarlatti's keyboard sonatas, published in 1744. The opening *adagio* is probably by Avison himself; the other movements are fuller-textured transcriptions of identifiable sonatas, exploiting, in the English manner, the interweaving of two solo violins with the tutti strings. *Ian Graham-Jones*

Telemann 6 concerti et 6 suites Thomas Indermühle *oboe*, Claudio Bixi *hpscd & org* 146' 37" (2 CDs)
Camerata CM-581-2

I was not looking forward to this recording at all, given that I had previous experience of these two performers in months gone by; but I am happy to report that I was pleasantly surprised! Although claims to be a world premiere recording (as is happening with increasing frequency — is this a trend only in early music?) are exaggerated: Michael Schneider and his group made a fantastic recording of the set as published by the composer years ago; and I doubt really if anyone will want to follow suit. The reworkings for keyboard and oboe work well, although just sometimes I missed some fuller harmony. I still recommend the cpo set as first choice, but this is not the horror I anticipated: not by a long way! *BC*

Vivaldi L'Estro Armonico Op. 3 Accademia Bizantina, Ottavio Dantone DVD Arts 45002-6 (Vol. 1) 45003-6 (Vol. 2)

These two DVDs have the same 24-bit, 96 Hz recording as ARTS released on CD after the recording in 2001. The performances met with general approbation then, and having now heard them for the first time, I can only endorse what was said: they are absolutely wonderful! They take all sorts of liberties with the musical text in terms of ornamentation, but somehow they manage not to overstep the boundaries of my definition of good taste, unlike some other Italian groups. The recorded sound is astonishing: I have listened to other discs on my computer before, but never has there been such a depth of sound — it was quite breathtaking, and extremely exciting. If you missed the CD release, make sure at least to hear this version! *BC*

Red Priest's Vivaldi The 4 seasons 50' 33" Dorian DOR-90317
+ Corelli *The Christmas Concerto* (op. 6/8)

If you're prepared to let your hair down and have a good time, this new version of *The Four Seasons* will certainly open your mind — I'd never imagined the slow movement of 'Winter' as a tango, for example, nor that of 'Autumn' as an unmeasured prelude à la Louis Couperin, but both work, as do the bird sounds at the opening of Spring, the bagpipes of the final movement of Corelli's Christmas Concerto, and all the other effects used. If Red Priest's avowed aim of re-inventing the audience reaction to original performances by Vivaldi is genuine and all four tongues are not firmly lodged in the

players' respective cheeks, I'd be slightly dubious — at the end of the day, like it or loathe it (I'm firmly in the former camp, I'm slightly embarrassed to say!), it's all great fun. *BC*

The French Harpsichord David Pollock hpscd LIR 006 49' 42"
Chambonnieres *Pavane L'Entretien des Dieux*; L.Couperin Suite in F; D'Anglebert *Tombeau de M. de Chambonnieres*; Le Roux Suite in F; Couperin *Les Moissonneurs, Les Baricades Mysterieuses, Le Mouschon*; Royer *La March des Scythes*

This relatively brief recital is a debut recording for the player, a one-time pupil of John Toll at the RAM. Although he is an advocate of contemporary repertoire for the harpsichord, on this occasion he sticks to his favourite *clavecinistes* in wide-ranging though balanced programme which takes us from the elevated nobility of Chambonnieres to the incipient decadence of Royer, a good introduction to their sound-world. The playing is thoughtful and well prepared with many neat ornaments and judicious *inégalité*, though this is sometimes a little stiff. I particularly enjoyed the enigmatic *Baricades*, which displays the instrument (modern copy of Ruckers/Hemsch) at its best — even the plucking sounds beautiful. Full details of the programme are to be found on the case inlay and not in the booklet as well. The helpful essay is in English only.

David Hansell

Música barroca Catalana Diatessaron La Mâ de Guido LMG 2056 49' or"
Music by Barter, Garcia, Pla, Pradas & Seixas

Being resident in Catalunya (with its new ultra-nationalist government) makes me the ideal person to review this disc. The instrumental playing is fairly fluid (particular the gamba and continuo players), but the singer sometimes finds the demands on his voice a little too much, and sometimes the rhythms cause some problems with coherence within the group. These may, of course, be the fault of the composers. Some of the vocal lines simply lie too high. That said, the music is mostly enjoyable, particular the trio sonatas by one of the Pla brothers (it's unclear which, as is often the case) and Reixac. Joaquim Gracia is also a composer worth investigating: his *Facta est quasi vidua* ends the disc in style. Pity there are no texts for the vocal pieces. *BC*

£ = bargain price ££ = mid-price
All other discs full price, as far as we know

CLASSICAL

C. P. E. Bach Organ Concertos & Sonatas
 Rainer Oster (1844 organ at St Adelph in Albestroff, Moselle), Ensemble Parlando, Margarete Adorf dir 120' 12" (2 CDs)
 DHM 82876 51863 2

Concertos H 444, 446; Sonatas H 84-7, Sinfonia for Strings & Bc H 659

A recording featuring CPE's music for the organ is certainly very welcome. Rainer Oster is a gifted soloist who is able to sense as well as project the spirited as well as the questioning side of the music in a really positive way in both the concertante and the sonata movements. Ensemble Parlando plays in a similarly effective way, and my only serious reservation lies with the odd balance of the tiny, period-instrument orchestra recorded as though it were a larger, modern band with twice as many players. Dialogue effects between the orchestra and organ tend to sound odd and even brusquely competitive in music which is really far better-mannered and conciliatory than it sounds here. *Stephen Daw*

Boccherini *La Clementina* Elena Rizzieri *Clementina*, Karla Schean *Damiana*, Maria Grazia Ferracini *Narcisa*, Luciana Ticinelli *Cristeta*, Ugo Benelli *Don Urbino*, Fernando Corena *Don Lazar*, Coro e Orchestra della Radiotelevisione della Svizzera Italiana, Angelo Ephrikian 72' 31" Nuova Era 1181 (rec 1965)

This reissue after nearly forty years of a recording of Boccherini's only zarzuela, though sung in Italian translation and stripped of its original recitatives and dialogues, bears its age lightly and is welcome for musical more than historical reasons. No period instruments for sure but an exceptionally well-paced and balanced orchestral accompaniment under the baton of a conductor who had a finely attuned, dare one say 'historically informed' sense of what music like this requires to be heard to full advantage. Boccherini's score is marvellous, much more accomplished than most by contemporary Italian-based musicians; and if the soloists on this performance have voices that may seem a trifle heavy, they are all nonetheless accomplished artists with a secure grasp of musical and theatrical technique. Perhaps one day we will have a new and complete recording of this imaginative piece in its original Spanish incorporating the fruits of modern research and practice in the performance of 18th Century opera. Given the quality of *La Clementina* that would be an occasion for rejoicing. In the meantime this venerable reissue requires no apologies

and will give great pleasure to discerning readers of *EMR*. Of how many issues of Early Music recorded so long ago could that be said?

David J Levy

Bortniansky *Musique instrumentale* Orchestre Léopolis de Lviv, Jean-Pierre Loré Erol ER 200005 58' 02"

Recorded some four years ago, this programme of music by the Ukrainian composer, Dmitry Bortniansky, by one of that country's leading chamber orchestras (a web search found them doing much more contemporary music that baroque or classical) is thoroughly enjoyable. The music is much easier to listen to than the later sacred music: when reviewing it, I've always doubted how close what I was hearing was to the composer's actual style. This is another of those discs that I find myself listening to repeatedly, much to my own surprise. It seemed initially strange for the pianist to choose a copy of a 1790 piano, when the other instruments were modern, but I soon got used to the idea. Apparently the orchestra has also recorded his opera *Alcide*, which would be interesting to hear.

BC

Galuppi *Messa per San Marco*, 1766
 Aethesis Chorus, Academia di li Musici, Filippo Maria Bressan 63' 21" Chandos *Chaconne* CHAN 0702

I enjoyed this disc very much. The two concerti a quattro by Galuppi are excellent pieces, and very well performed. The mass (Kyrie by Bertoni – First Organist at San Marco in Galuppi's day – with Gloria and Credo by Il Buranello) is no less impressive, with delightful arias and duets alternating with finely constructed choruses. Some of the solos are very well executed, but I had a real problem with the male alto, whose voice was so unlike any of the others that it really did grate on occasions. A pity, as this is a fine CD.

BC

Haydn *Piano trios with flute Hob: XV, 15-17*
 Classical Chrome (Douglas Mews fp, Penelope Evison fl, Euan Murdoch vlc) 56' 06" Concordance CCD04

The New Zealand ensemble Classical Chrome perform here Haydn's three indubitably authentic trios for keyboard, flute and cello, which date from around 1790. The well-balanced and attractive instruments are modelled on an Anton Walter fortepiano, a six-keyed flute of c1780 by the Potsdam maker, F G A Kirst, and an original Reichel cello from the Tirol of a few years earlier. Alert, spirited and witty playing presents these very attractive works in the most favourable light, and there are numerous touches to

indicate that Haydn was taking his task seriously (after all, he was being sly enough to pass them off to two publishers simultaneously) – there is nothing casual or merely workmanlike here. All three of the players are clearly enjoying themselves, and the results are delightful, even if the recording is occasionally on the close side. The flautist provides a good, lively insert note.

Peter Branscombe

Haydn *Concerti e Divertimenti* Claudio Brizi dir & claviorgan, Paolo Franceschini vln, I Solisti di Perugia 70' 44" Camerata CM-28014

Kbd concertos in C Hob. XVIII:1, in F XVIII:7, vln & kbd in XVIII:6. Divertimenti for kbd & strings in F, XIV:3, in C, XIV:8

Label and booklet fail to identify the scoring of the works, hence the fuller than usual details below the heading. The choice of music and the performances are alike fine, though it may initially come as a surprise to many listeners to find that Claudio Brizi favours now the harpsichord element, now the organ, of his instrument (built by Franco Barucchieri and by Pinchi and Sons respectively; no date given, but it is illustrated on the label, and technical details are supplied). The ensemble of a dozen or so players is good: athletic and warm-toned, though the recording is over-resonant, and articulation is at times smudged, with plodding bass line in XVIII:7. In the double concerto I found the keyboard player's approach a bit restless, inclined to distract attention from the fine violinist. Few of the works are exactly familiar, though this issue should see to it that they gain in popularity, with the keyboard player displaying versatility, even if his choice of stops isn't always successful, and Haydn showing that even in his early years he could be relied on for wit and charm as well as skill.

Peter Branscombe

Mozart Sonate, Fantasia, Variazioni, Suite
 Andreas Staier fp 70' 58" Harmonia mundi HMC 801815

Suite K.399, Gigue K.574, Sonata K.282, Variations K.455, Phantasie K.475, Sonata K.457

I have to say that I found this CD rather disappointing on the whole. It's partly the instrument, which has a duller sound than the one Brautigam uses on his Beethoven recording (see below), and is also less resonant, so that forte passages are not rich and sonorous but just, well, loud. And I don't believe for a minute that it's copied from a Walter of c. 1785, when it obviously has knee-levers for raising the dampers and for the 'moderator', which as far as I know are not original features of any Viennese

instrument made before Mozart's death. Staier is a good player but, like his instrument, is rather too 'modern' in style: he quite often uses the damper lever like the sustaining pedal on a modern piano, to prolong a bass note while the left hand crosses the right, or to 'warm' a rapid scale passage – an effect that sounds faintly vulgar to my ear. But there are some good things on this recording, and I particularly liked the crisply articulated and fiery outer movements of K.457, even though the finale sounds a bit like Beethoven in a bad temper. There's also some nice extra ornamentation on some of the repeats. One production oddity: the CD says that the total length is 66' 29", but you actually get over five minutes' worth more.

Richard Maunder

Mozartiana Works by Liebmann, Mozart, Wölfl and Hummel Sebastian Comberti vlc, Maggie Cole fp 59' 07" Cello Classics CC011

This is a very interesting and enjoyable CD. It opens with a *Grande Sonata* by Hélène Liebmann (probably written soon after 1810), the first movement of which sounds distinctly Mozartian; the finale is a set of variations on 'Là ci darem la mano'. The great man himself is represented by the fragmentary Andantino in Bb, K374g, in a plausible completion by Annette Isserlis, thus making available Mozart's only surviving piece for cello and piano. The Salzburg composer Joseph Wölfl, unjustly neglected, is here with his D-minor Sonata op 31, a sprightly piece, and the Hummel work included is his Variations *alla Monferrina*, an ambitious and attractive work (the *Monferrina* is a country dance from Piedmont). There is a useful three-language booklet, with details of the period instruments employed as well as notes on the music. Recording is fresh and well-balanced, and the playing first class.

Peter Branscombe

Naumann Zeit und Ewigkeit Simone Kermes, Britta Schwarz, Marcus Ullmann, Gotthold Schwarz SATB, Körnerscher Sing-Verein Dresden, Dresden Instrumental-Concert, Peter Kopp 67' 15" cpo 999 955-2

+ *Heilig ist Gott der Herr* & Psalm 149

This is one of the most enjoyable discs I have had to review this month. I repeatedly wax lyrical about Naumann's music and the scores recorded here are no exception – to get the flavour of the man, listen to the bass accompagnato, Track 2, where he is accompanied not only by the strings, but by a pair of horns (and the

band get extra authenticity points by hiring Czech-sounding players!) Each of the soloists has at least one aria, and each of them is first rate – Simone Kermes and Gotthold Schwarz deserve a special note, as do the choir and the orchestra. Naumann's *Heilig ist Gott der Herr* deserves to be far better known!

BC

F-A Danican-Philidor Le Sorcier, Udo Reinemann Julien, Jean-Claude Orliac Blaise, Bernard Boudier Bastien, Peggy Bouveret Agate, Judith Mok Simone, Chantal Reyjal Justine, Orchestre de Rennes, Marc Soustrot 107'48" (2CDs) (rec. 1980) Arion ARN 263608

Philidor's *comédie lyrique* dates from 1764 and is engagingly written in the straightforwardly melodic style characteristic of the tastes of a time – can we imagine it? – grown weary with Rameau. About half the length of the present discs is occupied with spoken dialogue, which although well-done, without recourse to the affected accentuation I have encountered in some similar productions, will probably limit the appeal of this vivid if not always historically idiomatic set to francophone enthusiasts for the light but not inconsequential musical theatre of this period. Do not get me wrong. There is much to enjoy in this reissue of what was obviously a worthwhile revival of an estimable work in a still neglected genre. But only the reader of this review will be able to judge whether he or she is the person to share with the reviewer the particular pleasures involved. David J Levy

Rosetti Concertos for Two Horns Klaus Wallendorf, Sarah Willis hn, Bayerische Kammerorchester, Johannes Moesus cpo 999 734-2 ff 64' 38"

There are three concertos on this disc, as well as a Notturno for two flutes, two horns and strings, which is here recorded for the first time. The singing quality of the modern horn makes them all very easy to listen to and to enjoy: there is nothing too demanding on the ear, and – despite the quite bland orchestral colours – I quite enjoyed listening straight through. Although I understand the reasoning for programming discs of similar works (here the orchestra had to pay for two of the Berlin Philharmonic to travel to play solo), I wish someone somewhere would suggest to those in charge of complete sets of things at least to consider varying programmes – Rosetti already has several themed discs on Naxos, and more than a couple of concertos for any instrument (no matter how well they are played!) are just a bit much.

BC

G. B. Serini Sonate per il cembalo solo F. Bianchi *Capriccio per il cembalo* Marco Ruggeri hpscd MV Cremona MVS 002/010

The Giovanni Battista Serini di Cremona studied with Galuppi and served the British Ambassador Robert D'Arcy in Venice in the 1740s before moving to Bückeburg in Germany and then to Prague. The three sonatas recorded here were published in anthologies of Italian music in the 1750/60s in Nuremberg. They are in the Italian galant idiom which was so influential on the German Classical style but which has tended to be ignored. Lots of formulaic figuration give way at times to some subtle melodic writing and contrapuntal invention which helps hold the listener's interest. Ruggeri plays on a copy of a 1736 Hensch harpsichord whose brightness suits the surface brilliance of this music; his playing carries an authority and virtuosity which keeps it alive. Franceschi Bianchi was a prolific opera composer who ended up in London after the fall of Venice to Napoleon in 1797. His capriccio is a show-off piece in Haydn-esque style, played here with great panache.

Noel O'Regan

From the Music Collection of Anders Chydenius Keski-Pohjanmaan Kammarorkesteri, Juha Kangas dir, Mikael Helasvuori, Kokkol-kvartetti 70' 15" ALBA ABCD 186

Music by Graaf, Pugnani, Richter, Rosetti and Sacchini

This is a very interesting collection of music from a Finnish priest's library, which was renowned for including the very latest printed music available from all over Europe. The performances are stylish and well-paced, and clearly reflect an awareness of HIP. It is most impressive to imagine Chydenius and his townsfolk enjoying concerts at his home in the late 18th century. It's also an interesting programme, that combines two string quartets with two symphonies and a flute concerto – I would have thought the concerto would have been better at the centre, though. Very enjoyable stuff!

BC

Musica de estilo galante Pere Ros gamba Josep Borràs bassoon 61' 47" Arsis 4176

Music by Abel, Hammer & Lidl

Music by Abel, including some of the unaccompanied pieces, is the central focus of this unusual combination, flanked by the less known, but delightful music of Hammer and Lidl. The combination is more successful than one might imagine.

Andreas Lidl wrote several sonatas specifically for 'viola da gamba and violoncello' (described here as for 'Viola da gamba and bass') and they still await a recording in that combination. Hammer is new to me. The choice of bassoon as sole accompanying instrument does allow great clarity for the articulation of the bass viol, and the resonance of the room in which the recording is made (we're not told where) plays a big part in the sound. At times I missed the steadiness of pitch and tempering which a keyboard would have brought. I also found the tone of the viol somewhat too bright for music of this period. The instrument is a Tieffenbrucker, very bright and forward, even toned throughout, but without the body of, for example, French instruments. Pere Ros's left-hand technique is fully up to the demands of this wide-ranging repertoire, but his bowing arm is sometimes less flexible than the music demands, particularly in passages of detached notes. Slurred passages fare much better.

Robert Oliver

Villancicos al Nacimiento Estil Concertant, Juan Luis Martínez dir 70' 47"
Arsis 4080

This contains six pieces lasting between 8 and 15 minutes for double choir and orchestra by three composers from Valencia Cathedral: José Pradas (1689-1757), Pascual Fuentes (1721-68) and Francisco Morera (1731-93). The music is charming, and well sung with a period orchestra. My Spanish is improving: I'm not too worried by the lack of translation. If you want something to cheer you at Christmas (probably 2004 by the time it is), try it. BC

19th CENTURY

Arriaga Symphony in D Algarve Orchestra, Álvaro Cassuto 57' 36"
Naxos 8.557207
Also includes music by Carvalho, Moreira, Portugal and Seixas

Juan Crisóstomo Arriaga was one of those unfortunate promising composers who died tragically young, when he was quite clearly destined for great things. Both the Symphony in D and the Overture to his opera *Los esclavos felices* (which was often used as a prelude to Rossini operas in Spain, even with the composer's apparent agreement) compare very favourably with contemporary works from elsewhere in Europe. Seixas's Symphony is essentially a late baroque work, and like the overture by Carvalho and the other pieces that follow it on this disc, simple but enjoyable. BC

Beethoven: The Early Piano Variations
The First Piano Sonatas Ronald Brautigam
Globe GLO 7002 146' 20" (2 CDs)
Variations WoO 66, 68-73, 75, Sonatas Op.2/1-3,
Op.49/1-2

I had a few reservations both about Brautigam and his instrument when reviewing his Haydn and Mozart discs in the September 2000 and May 2001 *EMR* but both are superb in this early Beethoven recording. Paul McNulty's copy of a c. 1800 Walter has a beautiful and well-balanced sound, bright in the treble, clear in the tenor and resonant in the bass; and Brautigam plays intelligently and with plenty of exciting virtuosity, capturing all the subversive jokes – I laughed out loud several times. His use of the knee-levers is very restrained, and the resulting clear articulation is a joy to hear. A very satisfying two-and-a-half hours' worth – strongly recommended. Richard Maunder

Beethoven Mass in C major, Elegischer Gesang, Meerestille und Glückliche Fahrt,
Rebecca Evans, Pamela Helen Stephen, Mark Padmore, Stephen Varcoe SmSTBar,
Collegium Musicum 90, Richard Hickox
Chandos Chaconne CHAN 0703 56' 02"

Hot on the heels of their prize-winning Hummel recording comes this exceptionally fine disc of Beethoven. I remember the first time I played the piece – with one rehearsal – and how exciting (and challenging!) I found it on a period violin: I'm sure that Esterhazy's doubts over the Mass ever being performable must be based on his own players' and singers' similar experiences. Collegium Musicum 90 and their first rate team of soloists, of course, have no problems – they manage to convey the sense of excitement without any technical difficulties. There is much to praise – the fine wind playing, the excellent chorus, the performance overall, which is possibly the best I've ever heard of any of the three pieces. At under an hour, it's a little short on duration, but I cannot imagine anyone complaining at this standard! BC

VARIOUS

The Dowland Project: Care-charming sleep
John Potter voice, Stephen Stubbs chitarone, baroque gtr, John Surman, s.sax, b. clar, Maya Homburger baroque vln, Barry Guy db 66' 15"
ECM New Series 1803 476 052-2

How time passes! I remember so clearly the first time I played the previous disc by this team (songs by Dowland, hence the series title, though this disc has nothing by him) and tried looking

through *EMRs* from a couple of years ago to see what I had written about it. I eventually found it in December 1999 – back in the days when you could put a well-filled CD on the car player and drive from Huntingdon to Ipswich before it finished. On arrival, with still one track left to play, I tested it on the couple I was visiting (contributors to *EMR* and, like me, great admirers of John Potter's singing and musicianship); to quote the back-handed praise I offered then, 'we found it agreeable background music'. The balance between old and new is a problem. At times, the appearance of the sax/clarinet is just irritating, whereas the contributions of the other instruments, which are imaginative within the stylistic and aural ambience of the music, is invigorating. One can imagine a successful programme in which the original material is treated far more freely in a post-modern style, or alternatively one without the sax in which the musicians can operate unself-consciously within the improvisatory constraints of the 17th-century; but there isn't enough added value to make up for the disruption of the stunning melodic lines of songs like 'Care-charming sleep' and 'Weep, weep, mine eyes'. If John were a less good singer, I'd probably be happier with the versions, just as I would if I didn't know the songs so well. Ignorance is bliss?

CB

A CD that has just arrived is apposite to the apparent problem John raises about men singing ladies' songs, though no-one seems to have any discomfort with mixed-voice madrigals. Is it different from any other situation in which a singer pronounces words that he doesn't believe in? John himself once wrote that, in his experience, only about 10% of those singing in collegiate choirs were believers. Does it matter? Countertenors sing Frauenliebe und -Leben (though that is rather more extreme than just swapping sexes in a love song.) Is being the right sex any more important than being a virgin if you record a disc of music from a nunnery entitled Temple of Chastity? Unless Joseph Cassidy is the outcome of a virgin birth, at least one of its singers can't be.

CB

Les Moines de Zagorsk à Paris Choeur de La Laure de la Trinité Saint Serge et de L'Académie Ecclésiastique de Moscou
Pierre Verany PV703091 55' 46"
Live concerts, Paris 16 & 17-2-1988

I visited Russia in 1960, the first year Western tourists were allowed without being accompanied by a guide. We were kept to a strict itinerary (with some excuse, since Russian petrol had a much lower octane content than Western cars could tolerate), but we were allowed (if

we notified the police) to make a day trip to the monastery of Zagorsk, 44 miles from Moscow. According to the guide book I had at the time, it was the site of the Red Army Electro-Technical Academy and famous for hand-craft toys. The Abbey had been turned into a museum in 1920, and one of the cathedrals on the site contains the tomb of Boris Godunov. At least one of the churches on the site was functioning then, with the sort of chant one expected to hear from Russian churches emanating from it and monks (unless they were guides in monkish habits) wandering around. My recollection is that the music was deeper and slower than what is on the disc – but that may be an exaggeration of my memory. My knowledge of Russian church music was then even less than it is now, and it isn't helped by the booklet, which tells us that the recordings were made at the Choir's first visit abroad, but is a bit vague about the music – though implies that it is 20th-century settings of old melodies. It is interesting as an attempt to revive a broken tradition, and certainly sounds impressive. CB

The Last of Old England: Elizabethan lute songs, Folk songs, Songs by Shakespeare and other English poets. Jeni Malia S, Christopher Goodwin lute, bar 56'55" JRECoor

The last disc of this sort I listened to was that of Andreas Scholl; but less famous though Jeni Malia may be, she shines while he was embarrassing. She has a voice that is pleasing, confident but unassuming, which delivers the words effectively without detriment to the vocal quality. There is no self-conscious attempt to seek a beautiful sound: it is there anyway, but doesn't get in the way. Tempi are faster than one gets from the Dellar-Pears-Scholl tradition, word rather than voice-based, which suits all these songs perfectly. The texts are audible without any consonantal exaggeration, so there is no need to check them on the web site. There is no booklet with the disc; they are available online, or if you don't have a computer you can request a copy, which is a neat folded-A3 sheet with an excellent introduction by Chris Goodwin: the problem is where to put it, since it won't fold up to store with the disc. Chris has supplied appropriate arrangements of the folk items, respecting the 17th-century harmonic basis that underlies some of them, and accompanies with good effect; his singing isn't quite up to Jeni's standard, but perfectly acceptable. The mixture of lute-song and folk works brilliantly, helped by the selection of lute songs that relate to the folk idiom. There

is a good mixture of well-known and less familiar songs. I found the title slightly off-putting: but be assured, the disc is not quaintly olde-worlde. CB

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CHRISTMAS

An American Christmas: Shapenote Carols from New England & Appalachia The Tudor Choir, Doug Fullington dir 78' 20" Loft LRCD 1060

This is our favourite disc this Christmas. Both EB and I like it. We very pleased to be given this magnificent successor to the choir's *The Shapenote Album* (see *EMR* 49) when we met Doug Fullington in Seattle earlier this year, and it has been played often in our household. He manages to get a balance between the sing-songy shape-note style, which can be powerful but which also has become routine, with the sophisticated sound of a professional choir, though keeping a bit nearer the form style than Psalmody does to the English equivalents. I like the way they sing some tunes through to the shape-note syllables as introductions. The disc includes the best-known Christmas pieces of the repertoire and is supported by an excellent booklet. This is my Christmas recommendation. CB

Gabriel's Greeting: Medieval English Christmas Music Sinfonye 63'08" Hyperion Helios CDH55151 (rec 1993)

And this is my second recommendation: medieval carols etc. performed with a bit of an edge, with more character than Anonymous 4, and without the enforced jolliness that is sometimes imposed by other groups on medieval carols. It includes our cartoonist's favourite piece, *There is no rose* and the mesmerically beautiful 16 verses of *Lolay.. Als I lay.* CB

The Naxos Book of Carols: An Advent Sequence in Music Tonus Peregrinus, Antony Pitts 78'59" Naxos 8.557330 £

The information given in the Naxos 'New Releases' booklet for November made this look worth hearing: a programme of 'carols both new and old', with just one piece described as 'real. Anthony Pitts'. But the reality was rather different. None of the carols have tunes less than a century old (apart from one by the conductor) but all of them are arranged in a fussy style by him. The more I heard, the more irritated I became. Sometimes he uses parodies of archaic styles (like the false relations in

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his, but not any early version of *Winchester Old*), sometimes there is an excess of post-Victorian slush. His one original piece is more vigorous than most of his arrangements and far more successful. I'd much rather have had most of the programme in the usual (or original) settings interspersed with genuine new pieces. The music is published by Faber: I thought they had higher standards. The subtitle is misleading: only the first of the four sections is relevant to Advent, and the information that Pitts has arranged everything, while on the list of titles, is concealed by the card outer cover. CB

King's Singers Christmas 70' 49"
Signum SIGCD502

Like the Naxos disc, this opens with an arrangement of *Veni Emmanuel*, but far less obtrusive. Everything is performed with the suave professionalism that one expects, but I'd welcome just a little more bite. The problem is that the King's Singers haven't changed in essence, even though none of the original singers survive remain, whereas my taste has moved on. Neither the mild updating of

the arrangements here or the more drastic versions on the Naxos disc reviewed above work for me – but I'm sure other readers will disagree! CB

SEPHARDIC

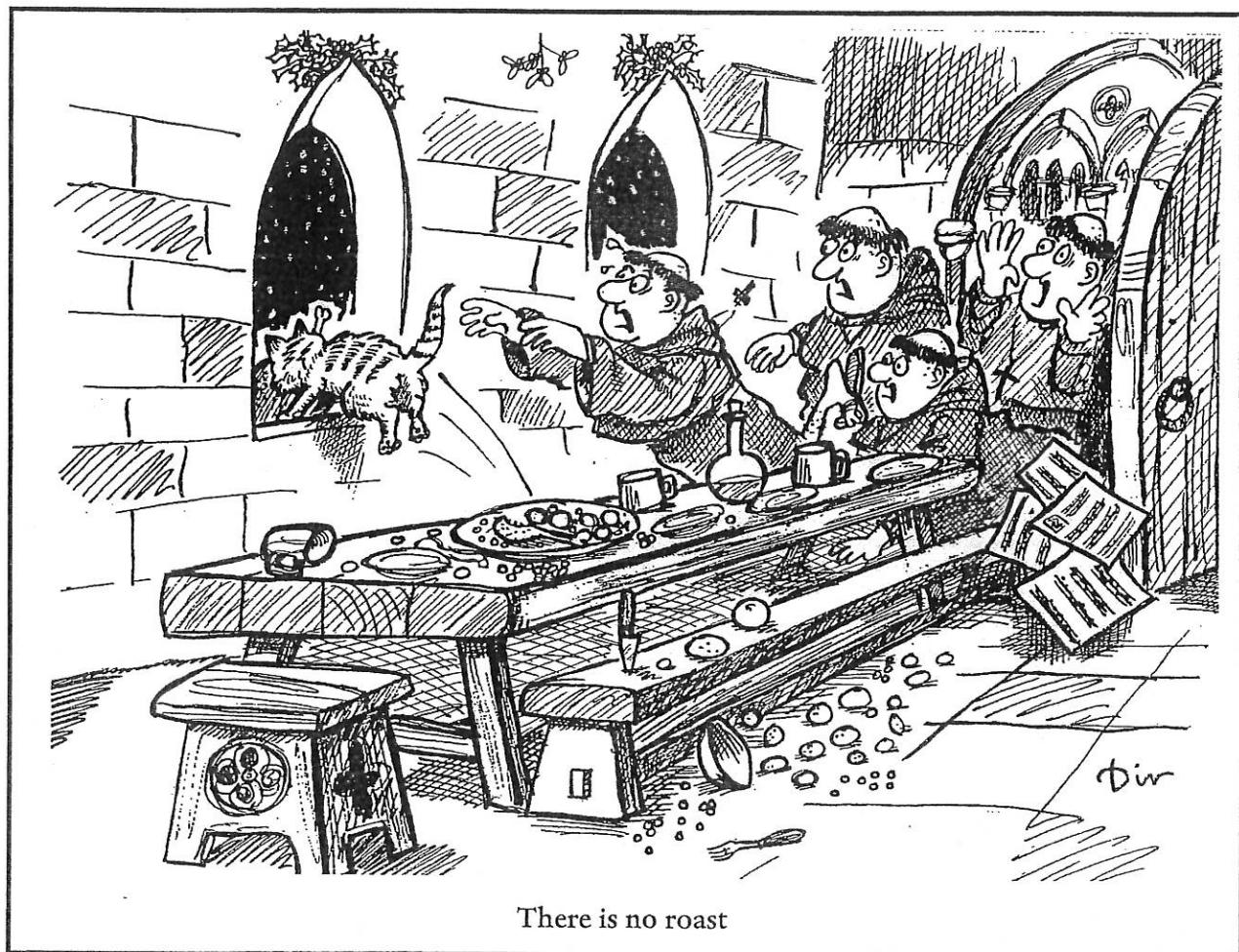
La Rosa Enflorece: Sephardic Song – Rhythm & Romance Anima: Medieval Music Duo 66' 20"
Anima AMMD2

Although sephardic music is often performed by early-music groups, since the article we published a few years ago by the Canadian scholar Judith Cohen (not the same lady as the medieval scholar of the same name whom I met in Tel Aviv), I have been hesitant about reviewing recordings of it here. But I was persuaded by Pat Unruh, the instrumental half of Anima, whom I met at the Early Music Exhibition, to listen to her CDs. We had almost met before: we discovered in conversation that we had both attended the same concert in Seattle in February. The booklet does not claim 'authenticity' for the performances, either as representing a hypothetical medieval form or

how they are performed now. So they must (and can) be enjoyed for themselves, and as such they stand up well. The basic duo is supplemented by an oudist (Douglas Hensley) and percussion (Peter Maund). There's a bit of a feel of a house-tamed North-African sound. Texts are printed in the original (which looks amazingly like Spanish for a population that was expelled from the county in 1492) but paraphrased, not translated.

I was also sent an earlier disc *Medieval Song for Christmas* (no number). If I didn't know the sources, I'd have enjoyed it more, since the performances are good in themselves; but there seems little point in adding 'improvised' accompaniments to pieces that survive intact; the carols in *Musica Britannica iv*, for instance, are not thought to be art-settings of folk music, and the carefully-notated rhythms don't make any sense when sung by a solo voice with a freely-invented accompaniment. A running time of 48' 39" isn't very good value, anyway, and when you exclude such unsuitable pieces, however good the rest is, there isn't much of it. CB

Available from anima@shaw.ca



NEW FROM LIM

Barbara Sachs

Recercare XIV 2002 journal for the study and practice of early music LIM Editrice, 2003. 245 pp, €24.00. ISBN 88 7096 350 0 ISSN 1120 5741
 recercare@tin.it; lim@lim.it

The present issue is another hefty one, with two articles in English and English abstracts of the other five.

I was disappointed not to read the second half of Marco Gozzi's essay, 'New light on Italian Trecento notatio', the first half of which appeared in *Recercare XIII*. We have to wait another year, it seems, for the conclusions. Instead this issue concerns mainly the 17th and 18th centuries.

Five longer articles are presented in chronological order. In '«La sventurata musica ... si veloce nel morire». Rapporti fra musica e arte della memoria tra Cinque e Seicento' Stefano Lorenzetti has made observations relating 16th century musical theory to the contemporary art of memory – both in the technique of improvisation (with figures learned by memory) and in the transmission or visualization of musical knowledge (by schematic devices). His conclusion about oral and written traditions, that one presupposes the possibility of the other, is thought provoking. [The next issue of *Leading Notes* will have the text of the annual Margot Milner lecture by Stephen Rose on 17th-century music and memory given at the NEMA AGM on Nov. 29th. CB]

Claudio Annibaldi wrote in *Recercare XIII* about Frescobaldi's early stay in Rome and his patron Francesco Borghese, dedicatee of the extraordinary *Fantasie*. He continues in 'Frescobaldi's *Primo libro delle fantasie a quattro* (1608): a case study on the interplay between commission, production and reception in early modern music' (in English) with his analysis. The title is misleading: the present article goes much further into a discussion of the distinction between *Fantasia* and *Ricercare*, giving the Frescobaldi *Fantasia* the place it deserves and recommending, in performance, greater contrasts between internal sections with changes of pace – as opposed to the 'boring' attempt to unify the pieces as sets of variation. Behind these conclusions the reader will find a useful mathematical tool which measures the 'identical entry ratios' to establish the proportion of identical entries of a subject to the totality of entries. This is a measure of motivic diversity in which the *Fantasia* is shown to differ (in having more diversity) from the *Ricercare*. The concept is enlightening, even if the method (involving strings of numbers) is off-putting. [This is a contribution to the important controversy on 17th-century performance: does a proportional notation still operate or does tempo depend on more intangible factors? CB]

Robert L. Kendrick's 'Intent and intertextuality in Barbara Strozzi's sacred music' examines the textual borrowings from M. Cazzati and their modification for compositional reasons, with the motett *Mater Anna, quisquae personat* (dedicated to Anna de' Medici) primarily under analysis. Though not referred to in the title, a large portion of the article concerns the portrait of Strozzi and what it reveals about her social status. The questions are related because it is unclear why she composed any sacred music at all, and whether it shows her as a libertine (she was an unmarried single mother), an 'honest' courtesan, or in the pose of a virtue such as *Caritas*. In the end the intent of her sacred music cannot be ascertained (in the 14 solo pieces of the *Sacri musicali affetti* Op. 5) but it is admitted that the church in 17th century Venice harboured numerous persons with irregular personal lives and religious sentiments.

A very long historical article by Barbara Nestola, 'La musica italiana nel *Mercure galant* (1677-1683)' documents the surprising extent to which that journal documented Italian music at the court of Louis XIV and covered musical and operatic events in Italy, at a time when there was still considerable hostility toward Italian music. There are 44 pages of extracts (in French) as well as plates of operatic scenes and Italian arias printed in the journal.

Proceeding into the 18th century in 'Monsieur Campion e padre Martini: un «armonioso segreto» fra lettere e ritratti' Gabriele Giacomelli identifies as Campion the musician holding a work of Padre Martini's portrayed by Angelo Crescimbeni in 1776, attesting to the disciple-master relationship also documented in their letters.

A briefer essay introduced by Eleanor Selfridge-Field provides new biographical information uncovered by Gastone Vio on eight 17th century Venetian musicians (F. Spongia Usper, G. Picchi, G.B. Grillo, G.B. Marinoni Giove, G. Rovetta, G.B. Montanini, M. Neri, A. Fontana Formenti) with associations to musical idioms and institutions. Elena Previdi presents the keyboard instrument maker Gaetano Elli (1740-1809) who alternated political activity (from 1796-99 and after 1800 when Milan was under French control) with instrument making (in 1799-1800 under the Austrians).

The issue concludes with 15 reviews of 'recent' (from 1998, '99, 2001 and 2002) Italian books, a catalogue [Petrucci exhibition], proceedings of various conventions, or monographic compilations, giving the titles of the essays therein, a critical edition [Brunelli], a treatise [M. García], etc. It is always worth glancing at these pages if only to know about items perhaps not reviewed elsewhere.

Following suit, mention should be made of other items from the LIM catalogue:

Giovanni Giacomo Gastoldi *Canzonette a tre voci libro primo, libro secondo (Didattica della Filologia musicale "I testi", I)* ed. Isabella Grisanti Grassi, 2002. xl+57pp €30.00. ISBN 88 7096 341 1

20 and 21 *canzonette* respectively (1-2 pages per piece) in original values (except for final notes and triple meters where the original values and proportions are not preserved but at least indicated) with introduction and commentary on texts and music in Italian.

Agostino Pisa *Breve dichiaratione della battuta musicale (1611), con alcuni estratti da Battuta della musica (1611) (Musurgiana, 26)* ed. Piero Gargiulo, 1996. xxviii+51 pp. €21 ISBN 88 7096 119 2

Pisa's brief tract is given in its entirety in facsimile, followed by extracts from the complementary work (the introductory sonnet and preface to the reader, chapters 6, 7 and 11), included to give a complete rendering of Pisa's teachings on rhythm, with an index to his mention of numerous composers and works. Gargiulo's introduction is in Italian and English.

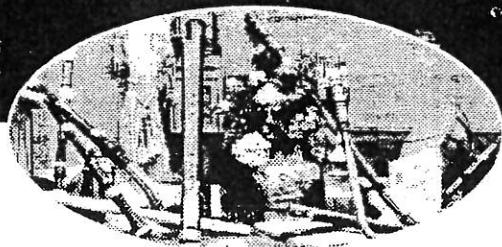
Giovan Battista Fasolo e la "Barchetta passagiera" ed. and with Introduction by Ottavio Beretta, Foreword by Mariangela Donà (*Quaderni di San Maurizio*, 4) 1994. xxxix+21 pp. €11 ISBN 88 7096 097 8

This is a facsimile of Chilesotti's transcription of the only print (1627), lost in WWI, of the charming work previously erroneously referred to as *Misticanza di vigna alla bergamasca* (which is only the first piece) consisting of arias for 1-3 voices with the guitar accompaniment realized from tablature. The Foreword and Introduction are in English as well as Italian and thoroughly discuss the work and document the confusion over its authorship which persisted through the *New Grove* and *DEUMM*.

Angela Romagnoli 'Fra catene, fra stili e fra veleni...', *ossia Della scena di prigione nell'opera italiana (1690-1724)* (*Studi e Testi Musicali*, 2) 1995. 473pp. €50 ISBN 88 7096 052 8

A monographic study based on a doctoral thesis on the prison scene, after it became one of Baroque opera's most frequented *topoi*. Written in fascinating depth for readers interested in opera and theatre generally (main chapters: dramaturgy, poetic text, music [53 musical examples], stagecraft [13 plates]), and with appendices containing an anthology of 7 arias, an alphabetized list of the circa 500 operas studied, a list of characters from the repertory analyzed, the time frame is from the libretto reform in Rome to Metastasio, a transitional period in which Italian literature thrived mainly in the demand for librettos.

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LETTERS

Dear Clifford,

I recently spent a week teaching and lecturing in the Moscow Conservatoire. We have had a steady stream of excellent students, mainly from the Conservatoire's Early Music Department, attending our summer courses in Italy for the past 3 years and on my visit to Moscow I discovered that they formed what can only be described as the tip of an impressive iceberg. The general idea that Russia is falling to bits needs some correction in view of the high standard of musical culture. While nobody can do much about the unfairness of the situation in which a society that continues to nurture young musicians is rewarded by their later emigration for economic reasons, help of the sort which many *EMR* readers can easily provide is urgently needed. The Conservatoire Library has no money to purchase anything and, as may be imagined, its holdings of early music editions are virtually non-existent. Teachers lend their own material, but with their monthly salaries at around \$100 their resources are limited. If you have even a tattered copy of the Fitzwilliam Virginal Book or anything similar that you can dispense with, please let me know. Relevant books or periodicals would also be appreciated; nearly all students have an extremely good grasp of English. (Apart from instrumental teaching, I lectured for some 8 hours in all – in English; only occasionally was translation necessary.) There is also a desperate need for instruments. A gentleman in the South of England has already given me a clavichord to pass on and more such donations would be enormously appreciated and, I assure you, put to very good use.

If you would like to help, please let me know

Christopher Stenbridge

Dear Clifford,

Simon Ravens has hit the nail firmly on the head in his last two essays. When I was getting interested in Early Music and the harpsichord in particular, it was at a time when thousands of others were too. It was NEW. It attracted young people, who were, as always, interested in new things. It's not new now. We can't expect a fresh generation of prospective music enthusiasts automatically to take over from us. Indeed, we should expect a large proportion not to do so, specifically because Early Music is not new. So I have no beef with fair play (and air play) being given to areas of musical exploration which really are new - like World Music, for example.

What I can't understand, though, is the inclination in some quarters to kick the poor dog when it's down. Simon illustrates from the new Penguin CD guide, a tendency which is parallel to that at work in the broadcast media. Rather than treat HIP as a genuine advance (which has a long way still to go, but which continues to produce thrilling performances of increasingly high quality – by

any really objective standard), some seem to find it necessary to attack it by innuendo, as if it were some McCarthyite tendency in the world of music, which needed to be exposed and mocked into oblivion. Careful neglect (as I have previously pointed out) is another useful weapon in the armoury of such people, as it gradually removes from the ears of ordinary music-lovers, the very soundworld which we find so rewarding, and which they might too, given the chance.

We may laugh it off, or moan among ourselves, but we ignore this state of affairs at our peril. Such attitudes need to be challenged, and persistently.

Colin Booth

Dear Clifford,

Thank you for mentioning the Scarlatti website in your review of my edition for Saraband (*EMR* Nov. 2003). I'd like to mention that the editions on the website, which now number about 50 works by Alessandro Scarlatti, are available in hardcopy, not just through electronic transmission as your review suggests. Though customers place their orders by email, they may choose to have editions sent to them either in hard copy or electronically. By printing copies only to order, we are able to offer a much greater number of works than could be contemplated in conventional print run format. In fact the Scarlatti project forms one branch of the Cantata Editions (general editor James Sanderson), which offers music by a very wide range of Italian baroque vocal composers, with particular focus on Bononcini, Porpora and Leo. [A feature of the Cantata Editions catalogue is that the range of each vocal part is given, so that distinctions within voice ranges can be clearly seen, e.g. high soprano d'-a" or more modest soprano range d'-f".]

The few published cantatas of Scarlatti give little idea of the range of expression and style, since the editor is almost invariably confined to works with some obviously saleable quality – and there are more recorder players than violinists interested in finding chamber new repertoire with voice. It is essentially in the cantatas with violins by Scarlatti that the most interesting and imaginative music is found, and we are pleased to have contributed editions of this repertoire, many otherwise unavailable. In defence of 'Bella Dama di nome Santa' – the Saraband edition reviewed – it has a playful virtuosity that is not associated with the serious intellectual Scarlatti which musicology texts have portrayed, but it is effective and exhilarating in performance. For those interested in the piece – by an oversight, the voice type in 'Bella Dama' doesn't appear on the title page: it is in fact for alto, recorder, violins and continuo – not soprano. There are two countertenor recordings now available by Kai Wessels and James Sanderson (founder of Cantata Editions).

Rosalind Halton

SEASONAL FARE

Jennie Cassidy

SHRED PIES OF THE BEST

The Christmas mince pie is a medieval invention and originally included a good portion of lamb, tongue, chicken or beef as well as the fruit and spice. Victorian and Edwardian recipes usually still included a proportion of meat but added sugar and rosewater. Nowadays the only reminder of its savory past is the suet. Thomas Tusser's* list of seasonal 'must-haves' includes mince or 'shred' pies:

*Good husband and huswife, now chiefly be glad
Things handsome to have, as they ought to be had...
Good bread and good drink, a good fire in the hall,
Brawn, pudding, and souse, good mustard withal.
Beef, mutton and pork, shred pies of the best,
Pig, veal, goose and capon, and turkeys well drest,
Cheese, apples, and nuts, joly carols to hear,
As then in the country, is counted good cheer.*

Thomas Tusser *A hundred Good Pointes of Husbandrie* 1557

These mince pies show the Arabic origins of European cooking. Throughout the centuries the mixture of meat and fruit has been very popular in Middle Eastern cooking, and in Argentina they still serve small spiced fruity meat pies called empanadas.

Just as the music of the Courts across Europe vied for supremacy throughout the Renaissance and took inspiration from each other, the nobility also endeavoured to show their worth, wealth and power by the excellence of their cuisine. Some dishes became international, and so it was for the not so humble mince pie. It was then, as now, associated with the Christmas season though December 25th was a minor feast compared with Twelfth Night – January 6th, the chief day of the whole year for parties. It was customary to eat one shred pie on each of the 12 days of Christmas to ensure 12 happy months ahead.

The pies are not really 'meaty' but the meat provides an unusual texture and sophistication to these festive morsels. You can use left-over lamb from a joint or you could try using beef, chicken or even turkey! The recipes we use for pastry nowadays have basically remained unchanged so use whatever sort you like. A friend of mine recently gave me a copy of *Songs unto the Violl and Lute* (1630) – I was intrigued to see written on the backs of the pages of music a fine collection of recipes including one for 'puff paste' made in just the same way as one would today.

NB There is NO issue in January – libraries that regularly send a claim when it doesn't arrive, please note!

5 oz lamb (cooked, or if raw parboiled for 15 mins)	
1 oz suet	
salt & pepper	3 oz currants
pinch of cloves	3 oz raisins
pinch of mace	3 oz prunes
½ tsp nutmeg	3 oz dates
1 tsp cinnamon	3 oz candied orange peel
1 tsp ginger	1 lb pastry of your choice

Cut any fat, gristle and bones from the cooked lamb. Place all the ingredients apart from the pastry in a processor and buzzle until you have a firm paste.

Roll out the pastry and use to line greased mince pie tins. Put a blob of paste in each, pop a pastry lid on the top and seal. Brush with a little milk or rosewater and sprinkle on some sugar. Bake at 180°C (350°F-gas mark 4) for about 12-15 minutes until the tops have bronzed.

* Thomas Tusser *A hundred Good Pointes of Husbandrie* 1557

This is one of the dishes that will be served at the Easter Early Music Forum Epiphany Party at 10.30 on Saturday 3 January 2004 at the Methodist and United Reformed Church Hall, Beccles: the musical fare will be music for voices and instruments by Heinrich Schütz, directed by Philip Thorby. Details from and bookings to Jennie Cassidy at 79 Humber Doucy Lane, Rushmere, Suffolk, IP4 3NU; jennie.cassidy@btinternet.com. NB space is not unlimited: please book early.



Christmas and New Year greetings to all our readers.
Our apologies for the late completion of this issue.