Early Music REVIEW

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One still comes across snide remarks from critics and the like about the 'authenticity police'. The irony is that currently performers on early instruments tend to play much more freely than those playing the same music on modern ones. I suspect that you are more likely to hear trills starting on the note rather than the one above from harpsichordists than pianists, and few of the latter are prepared to bend the rhythms as much as the former. In some ways, 'modern' players are more orthodox than early ones. Apart from a few exceptions, unless arrangements can be ascribed to the original composers* or later ones of significance, modern players would not dream of playing a work in a different scoring from the original; but how often do we hear recorders playing music that is evidently (whether explicitly or not) intended for strings? And modern players, except in some contemporary styles, are not very good at adding notes, bending rhythms or improvising.

More serious are allegations from HIP performers who feel that critics are agin them. Having won the battle of the instruments, there is now a feeling that, provided you use old instruments, anything goes. We see it in the rhythmic excess of some Italian groups. (I reckon that, whatever flexibility may be appropriate, if you don't distinguish minims from semibreves, except under certain conventional circumstances, you are ignoring the point of mensural notation.) We also see it in the assumption that, if you are using old instruments, you can play what music you like. But just as learning an instrument is a matter of discipline, so there are disciplines derived from scholarship and historical sensitivity of how that instrument is to be used, what is appropriate for it to play, and with what other forces. There are, obviously, wide options for some sorts of music; but to take one very obvious example, if Praetorius, the source of much of our information about late renaissance instruments, suggests that his edition of dance music is for strings, isn't playing it on crumhorns as much an arrangement as playing Schoenberg on recorders? And if the evidence suggests that 'choirs' often only had one voice or instrument a part, let's assume that's how the music was intended to work. *CB*

* I once heard at a party *Till Eulenspiegel* played in a wind quintet versions that was apparently by Strauss himself – it was incredibly funny, particularly with the players standing up for their solos.

REVIEWS OF MUSIC

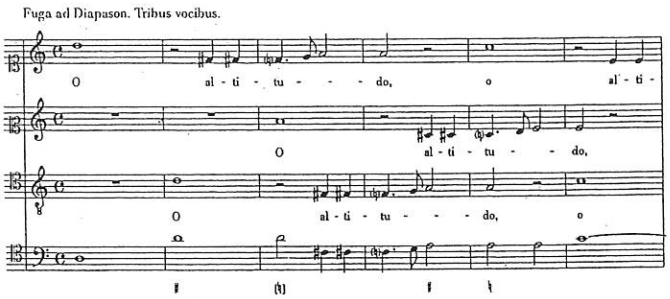
Clifford Bartlett

D'INDIA MOTETS

Sigismondo d'India *Motetti concertati a 2, 3, 4, 5 e 6 voc[:] Novi concentus ecclesiastici e Liber secundus sacrorum concentuum (1610)*. A cura di Giuseppe Collisani. (*Musiche Rinascimentali Siciliane, 24*). Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 2003. xxviii + 11 facs + 242pp, •69.00. ISBN 88 222 5239 X

Another magnificent volume in the Olschki Sicilian series, though this time of a composer who worked chiefly in north Italy. The lengthy title of the volume is a little confusing: the section before the editorial colon is a collective title for two collections: the *Novi concentus...* and *Liber secundus*, both from the memorable year of 1610 – yes, I was looking at Cima's *Concerti ecclesiastici* only yesterday. (A further book of motets a4 & a5 followed in 1627.) One only has to glance at the pages to see that these motets look different from d'India's five marvellous books of *Musiche* (published together in vol. 9 of this series – all singers of music of this period should have a copy!) or his madrigals (especially Book VIII – vol. 10). Everything looks far more regular, and there seems to be a constraint in dealing with sacred texts that is particularly noticeable when compared with what Monteverdi does with his 1610 *Sacris concentibus*.

But it is as well not to think of Monteverdi anyway, since in these pieces d'India lacks his mastery of harmonic clarity and movement. Take, for example, the duet *Memento nostri* (X of Book I), where in bars 22 and 24 the two voices imitate each other, except that the second voice is harmonically weaker than the first, making the passage flop rather than increase in tension. I'm also puzzled by the edition in this piece. The cantus part, stated to have been originally notated in the C1 clef, goes up to top A and is much more likely to have been originally in G2, while the lower part (labelled) is in the tenor clef, though the continuo which doubles it most of the time is in F3: I would deduce that the preliminary C1 clef is a mistake and that the chiavette notation implies downward transposition. In the original index (of which there is a facsimile) the piece is described as for C. & Basso. There seems to have been no continuo part for the five- and six-voice motets. Unless I've missed it, there's no explanation given, though a part is included in nos. XI-XIII from a German reprint. But there are places where an organ chord is needed, eg in *Domine, Dominus noster* (no. IX) bars 25-26 and *Timor et tremor* (no. XV) bar 28. (This isn't the text set so memorably by Lassus and G. Gabrieli.) In the five- and six-voice pieces, the way the lowest sounding note skips so much between the tenor and bass parts also suggests that an organ would help harmonic clarity. Were I a teacher of composition (a job for which I have no skill or experience), there are many places where, presented with pieces like these as exercises, I would point to weaknesses which are not compensated for by striking originality in other respects. I find the contrast with d'India's other music very strange. To quote another example, *O altitudo divitiarum* (IV of Book II) is a three-voice canon. It begins with a striking phrase, but can a singer using just a partbook really be expected to trust the printer so much as to assume that after two sharpened Fs the absence of a sharp sign really means sing a natural? (In one of the two pages of music shown in facsimile, there is a cadence #f g [#]f e #f f g which shows that the reader is credited with some common sense.) The opening phrase is so odd that the first two appearances would surely have been sung with all three Fs sharpened. But what is there to tell the alto that the third C has to be natural? And would the soprano, sensing a C sharp coming from the alto, really have the confidence to sing a C natural? Is this a striking opening or the work of a composer not in control?



Book I has music for 23 motets for two voices and eight for three. Book II has another four for three voices, four for four voices, nine for five and three for six (counting bipartite pieces, which only appear in book II, separately). The editor has traced under half of the texts to liturgical sources; however, the references given are to standard modern ones, and I suspect that a survey of local uses would pin down a few more; it would seem likely that *ecclesiastici* in the title implies church use. As usual with this series, the large page allows a lot of music per page, without loss of legibility. In fact, even apart from the failure to give triple-time semibreves the equivalent space of duple-time minims or crotchets, the horizontal spacing is often lavish. I can, however, imagine some organ consoles which will not take a book 13 inches high.

It is possible that the music will come to life more convincingly in performance: perhaps I'll use this volume for those seeking continuo experience at the Beauchamp summer school in July, and report back if I change my mind. D'India is, though, a composer of a status which requires all his music to be published, so no blame to Olschki for including it in the series.

ALF JUNIOR

Alfonso Ferrabosco the Younger *Consort Music of Five and Six Parts* transcribed and edited by Christopher Field and David Pinto. (*Musica Britannica* 81). Stainer & Bell, 2003. liii + 253pp, £89.50.

A hefty volume this (over 2 kg), which brings together a significant body of music by one of the creators of English chamber music. Both editors are players as well as scholars, and the editions conform with the expectations of players – including the availability of parts. Stainer and Bell provide sets of the five-part pieces for between £24.50 and £29.50 (depending on whether UK or abroad and whether you are a member of the UK or USA Gamba Society – if you need a score or organ part, you'll need the MB volume). The six-part pieces are published by Corda Music. Readers will expect me to mention organ parts, so I'll start there; extant ones are included in the volume, even if from later sources, and they are editorially supplied for fantasy-style pieces that lack them. I'm not, however, sure that there is much point in including editorial parts in the score – players who want to read the score don't need a part as well. But sets of parts should include an organ one, whether original or modern. It puzzles me that a couple of the old organ parts end with bare fifths – the modern player is likely to play just octaves if for any reason a third must be avoided.

The edition contains three In nomines a5 and three a6, nine Pavanes a5, ten Almaines a5 and two a6, and nine fantasies a6 (surprisingly none a5: with the larger number of extant sources for his other music, it is unlikely that they were written and lost). In addition, there is the two-section Hexachord piece in its a4 and a5 versions, now accepted as Ferrabosco's rather than by an Italian Alfonso half a century earlier. The introduction is substantial, with rather more stylistic comment than many previous MB volumes as well as remarks on instruments and performance practice. The editorial process is complex, in that there are lots of sources but no autographs or clearly authoritative copies. The stemmas (or stemmata) that I presume the editors drew up for each piece are not printed; the sources are sorted into groups, but the chosen readings are eclectic. Luckily, few variants are substantial. The three-column layout makes consulting the variants less painful than in early Musica Britannicas. The commentary gives concise information on each source and an introduction to each piece. The music is clear. Barlines are as modern players like them – four minims apart – the MS parts were, of course unbarred; commentaries should state the normal frequency of barlines in the early organ parts, even if listing every irregularity is unnecessary. Each piece has three numbers: a consecutive one through the volume, a consecutive one within each category, and that of the Gamba Society index; I think I would have followed the Society and not reordered their sequences – any order is likely to become outmoded, so one might as well stick with the one that already exists. There is a strong ethos among viol players that scores are unnecessary – it is certainly good to play with one's ears. But the existence of this fine collection will help to strengthen the reputation of the composer and make the music more accessible to those who don't play the viol.

Coleman: Peter Ballinger has just sent a supplement to the PRB edition of Coleman's Six-Part Fantasias (VCO 46): the organ part of nos. 1-3 from Christ Church MS 436. It is, of course, sensible to have such parts when they exist, and PRB will include them in the sets they sell from henceforth; those who have the set already and want to add the organ part can buy it for $3.00.

MAZZOCCHI MAGNIFICAT

Mazzocchi *Magnificat...* edited by Bernhard Schrammek. Carus (27.202), 2004. 31pp, €9.00

Scored for double SATB and organ, this was published in Mazzocchi's posthumous *Psalmi Vespertini* (1648). It only needs eight voices, though there is a clear alternation between the editorially marked solo and tutti sections which allows (though doesn't demand) more than one a part in the latter. The editor draws attention to the use of instruments in the Cappella Giulia at St Peter's Rome (where Mazzocchi was *maestro di cappella* from 1629 until his death in 1646). After the d'India reviewed on page 2, this is refreshingly competent – and more. It fits modern voice-categories better than most music of the period and should be extremely enjoyable to sing. Try it.

HANDEL – SONG FOR ST. CECILIA'S DAY

Handel *Ode for St. Cecilia's Day, HWV 76. Text: John Dryden...* edited by Christine Martin. Full score. Carus (10.372), 2004. 96pp, €32,50.

I can still remember the impression made on me when, I suppose about 45 years ago, I bought a World Record Club disc of this and was bowled over by the alternating soprano solo and choral chorale that begins the final chorus – luckily I don't still have the disc, since I suspect that I'd now find that Teresa Stich-Randall's voice lacked the precision of the trumpet fanfare that arose under her final top A. I don't remember ever hearing a live performance, their rarity perhaps being because of the lack of decent orchestral material (though the Kalmus set isn't as bad as usual). We were thinking of doing a set ourselves during the next few months, but that has been made unnecessary by this fine new edition from Carus. As well as the full score, the vocal score is already available (10.372/03; €14.00, about £9.50) and parts are promised in a couple of months. There are two obvious editorial decisions to be made. One is the title. As with Purcell's *Hail, bright Cecilia*, the term Ode refers to the form of the poem, while the musical term is *Song*. Handel's autograph is headed *Ouverture to the Song for S^t^ Cecilia's Day by Mr Dryden 1687*, and the first two editions of the work have the usual title for selected solos, *Songs from/in* continued

with the word Ode referring to the poem: *in the Ode wrote by Mr Dryden for St. Cecilia's Day Set by Mr Handel.* In the first full score (1771) the title is more ambiguous: *The Complete Score of the Ode... Set to Music by Mr Handel.* HWV uses the opening line 'From Harmony, from heav'nly Harmony' as the main title, but undermines it by having *Ode for St. Cecilia's Day* as the running heading for the relevant pages. Modern usage should probably be either the first line or *Dryden's Ode...*

The other problem is what to do with the minuets that end the *Ouverture.* The autograph has one in D minor followed by another in D major, with the D-minor one crossed out. The *Ouverture* is missing from the conducting score. I haven't had a chance to check the early sources, but it is curious that the three pre-Chrysander editions I have (Arnold c.1792, The Handel Society, 1844-5, and Vincent Novello's vocal score from the 1850s) all have the related Minuet in D major that Handel used to end op. 6/5 (whose first two movements are taken from the Overture to the St Cecilia's Day Song). I would guess this to have been normal 18th-century manner of performance. The Carus edition ignores Handel's deletion, reverses the MS order, and prints them as Minuet and Trio, not Handel's normal treatment when minuets end overtures. I'd be happier if the suggestion were footnoted, not buried in the commentary. The editor misses that in the D major Minuet, the middle line is allocated to violin 3 as well as viola: at least, that's how it reads to me, both on the facsimile in the edition and on my microfilm.

Were this a thorough critical edition, I would expect a slightly more precise commentary. I can't see on my film, for instance, the words *Liuto* and *Org.* at bar 39 of No. 7, although as suggestions they are sensible enough. But I have no hesitation in recommending this to customers. It is good value (about £22), clearly readable, with no cluttering German translation underlaid; instead, the poem is printed the introduction with a German version alongside.

PREPARING FOR *MESSIAH*?

Handel *No, di voi non vo' fidarmi, HWV 189.* Edition HH (HH 26 040), 2003. xii + 11 pp, £10.95.
Handel *Quel fior che all'alba ride HWV 192.* Edition HH (HH 26 041), 2003. xii + 8 pp, £10.95.

No demonstrable reason has been found to explain why Handel decided to write two Italian duet cantatas in July 1741. An interesting result was that, being reluctant to waste anything, he reused their outer movements in Messiah, thus creating a new, remarkable open choral style: one may wonder whether he was already thinking of how the material might be reworked a few weeks later when he got round to setting Jennens' text, which he may have received by then. Be that as it may, these are excellent pieces to perform, not just in their own right but because audiences always react well to them. Most performances I know about have been from photocopied Chrysander scores, so a nice new version will be welcome. This is better value than it looks from the heading above, since each set comprise a score containing a keyboard realisation, preceded by an introduction and commentary, stapled inside a cover; enclosed with it are three further copies of the score without realisation. The keyboard player, therefore, has a choice whether to read or realise his part, while the singers will not have to test their conscience about photocopying extra copies. But there is no separate cello part, and the page turns don't work (and no layout of the score could have made them do so). An unusual feature is that, as well as the usual list of variants, there is a list of rewritings and corrections made by the composer. I doubt whether this should be a regular practice for Handel editors – the serious student can consult the microfilms – but it is worth having in print for some sample pieces. The conscientious editor is the Vivaldi scholar Paul Everett.

?BACH?

Bach *Trio Sonata for Oboe (Flute), Violin and Basso Continuo in B flat major based on BWV 1015* Reconstruction and continuo realisation by Klaus Hofmann. Breitkopf & Härtel (KM 2287), 2003, €13.50. Score & parts.
Bach(?) *Sonata for Flute (Violin) and Harpsichord in G minor BWV 1020/H.542.5* edited and with a commentary by Barthold Kuijken. Continuo realisation by Siebe Henstra. Breitkopf & Härtel (EB 8740), 2003. 23pp + part, €11.00.

This is by no means the first time that editors have tried to increase Bach's output in the classic late-baroque trio-

sonata texture which occurs so often in his music but so rarely in the form of purely instrumental music. Prime candidates have been the organ sonatas. Here, Klaus Hofmann draws on the only one of the six sonatas for violin and keyboard that has a trio texture throughout and restores it for what, if the editor's guess that it must be for oboe and violin is correct, must from the instrumental ranges be the only possible transposition, from A to B flat. (I'm not, incidentally, convinced by the suggestion based on a couple of secondary sources that the violin/harpsichord scoring needs a gamba as well – unless the latter has an inadequate bass; and Hofmann doesn't justify his assumption of one part being for oboe.) Be that as it may, the result is a useful piece for the combination. Whom, incidentally, is Klaus Hofmann (Herbipol.) so worried about being confused with that he so assiduously gives his home town after his name.

BWV 1020 is a mysterious piece. The name of the editor suggests that the flute is the favoured soloist, though Barthold Kuijken isn't too insistent on the point. As for authorship, the question mark isn't just a substitute for the initials JS or CPE but a questioning of the attribution to any Bach. There are strong grounds for suspicion of both attributions, and the usual get-out of an early work of CPE under the influence of JS doesn't make sense stylistically. The editor tries the idea of another composer, but notes that the music is too good for either JS or CPE Bach but not good enough for Quantz. So the matter is left open. The doubt over authorship should not hinder playing the piece, whether with flute or violin, especially by harpsichordists who like to have an independent right-hand part, not just a fill-in.

MORE VIVALDI

Vivaldi *Concerto in E major RV 762*. Edition HH (HH 50), 2002.
Vivaldi *Sonata in C major RV 801*. Edition HH (HH54), 2001.

I should have written about these before, but I couldn't find them, despite looking everywhere, until I opened a box underneath my 'waiting for review' table and found them. I wrote about a slightly more recent edition of RV 801 last June, part of the Ricordi Collected Works and edited by Paul Everett. HH's version is from Rebecca Kan. She (and other scholars) make rather too much of the distinctive *quadro* genre: from the early 17th century, Italian music distinguished between music for two trebles and continuo and music for two trebles, bass and continuo. It seems odd that both editors favour a melodic bass on the continuo part; if you are going to print one, at least include on it the editorial figures from the score for the benefit of chordal instruments who don't want to bother with the page turns of the score. At £15 for score and parts, this wins hands down on price.

The violin concerto in E RV 762 is a better version of RV 223 (in D), a number that has been abolished. It is based on a MS set of parts from the Ottoboni/Jennens collection in Manchester, probably copied by and under the supervision of Vivaldi's father. The composer added to the title page the information that it was written for Anna Maria, a leading violinst at the Pietà. The edition is available in several formats: full score, with or without continuo realisation (£10), miniature score (£5), piano reduction & violin part (£8) and parts in sets of 4.4.2.2.1 (£35) with additional parts as a smaller set of 2.2.1.1.1 (£18.50) – I'm pleased to see that the orchestral set also included a solo violin part. The orchestral parts are sensibly set out, but the turn at the end of the first page of the solo part is awkward: had the part begun on the back of the title page, the turn could have been at bar 69 in the long tutti, with the second movement given a page to itself and the last movement made a bit more spacious but with the turn in the same place. A feature of the score is the lavish provision of editorial bass figures. The editor (Paul Everett again) seems a bit fussed about minimally-figured basses, not at all uncommon in Italy, and doesn't seem to be able to put himself in the position of someone playing from a bass part. His first figures, in bar 3, suggest playing 5/3, 6/4, 7/5 and 6/4 on the first four quavers; but the bass just has two crotchets, and there is absolutely no need for chords on the second and fourth quaver. Bar 7 unfigured might have the harpsichordists playing a tonic chord while the violins played 6/4 5/3 quavers – no great harm done, but the player would probably hear what was happening and play the 6/4 anyway. It would obviously be boring to carry on with this detail, but editors should realise that if you are playing from the bass, there is no need to follow in any detail what the upper parts are doing between the bass notes. Apart from quibbles, though, an excellent package: if only the rest of Vivaldi's concertos were available thus!

I've also seen a score of Zani's violin concerto in E minor in its miniature (A5) format (HH 029 £5.00; other formats at the same price as RV 762). It would be useful if the cover & title page stated what it was a concerto for: the absence of this information, like the name of the editor, seems to be HH policy. This is a fine-looking work from the Pisendel collection in Dresden, and survives with solo and 3.3.2.1.1 parts + cembalo and two bassoons. Recommended.

Apologies: there were slips in the address given for HH last month (and I took the liberty of quoting only one of the two addresses they give). They are shown below. In addition, the music is distributed by Schott in the UK, BMG Publications in Italy, Spain and Portugal

Edition HH Music Publishers

68 West End,
Launton, Bicester, Oxon,
OX26 5DG
tel: +44 (0)1869 241672
fax: +44 (0)1869 323509
launton@edition hh.co.uk

46 Laurie Crescent,
Henleaze, Bristol,
BS9 4TA
tel: +44 (0)117 923 2734
fax: +44 (0)8701 379 819
bristol@edition hh.co.uk

HASSE LITANIES

Hasse *Litaneien und Tantum ergo...* herausgegeben von Wolfgang Hochstein. (*Werke*, IV, 2.) Carus (50.703), 2004. xxxiii + 163pp, € 106.00.

Hasse was a major figure of the 18th-century whose music is only gradually reaching the awareness of listeners and non-specialist scholars. This magnificent score includes two sets of the Litany of Loreto, one in F minor the other ing G major. Each has a setting of *Sub tuum praesidium* appended, the G major setting also has a *Salve Regina*, and the volume also includes two further *Tantum ergos*. These works probably date from the 1750s and 1760s, and the F minor Litany was still in use in 1815. This is a substantial piece for SSAATTB soli, chorus, 2 oboes and strings – though the only solo movements are for soprano and tenor. Non-authoritative parts survive with only single parts, so small-scale performance is viable, though the Dresden court had available for festive occasions 16 voices, 12 or 16 violins, four violas and an ample continuo section. Both BC and I were so impressed by the piece that we fancy trying to get some people together to for a play-through some time. The scoring of the Litany in G is intriguing: SA (soli and chorus) and organ. This was not, as one might guess, written for a Venetian ospedale but in Vienna in the early 1760s for the Empress of Austria and female members of her family; the solo sections were distributed to various singers, whose names are given in one source; there were apparently two organists, Archduke (later Emperor) Joseph and Hasse himself (though there is only one organ part). Boys or girls schools might move on to this when they have exhausted Pergolesi's *Stabat mater*. This is an impressive edition of music that was well worth exhuming: I hope performance material will be made available.

For Carus's edition of Graun's Der Tod Jesu, *see p. 21*

WHAT IS A RECONSTRUCTION

Werner Breig

In his review of my reconstruction of the first version of Bach's Overture in B minor (BWV 1067) recently published by Breitkopf & Härtel, Tassilo Erhardt agrees with me that there was a version in A minor. He is convinced, however, that it had an independently notated part for solo violin that has fallen victim to an arbitrary excision in my reconstruction. Hence the heading of his review *Transposition Good – Excision Bad.*

Certainly the arguments in favour of one or other solution are open to further discussion. But when Erhardt ends his review with he statement that my edition is 'rather an ingenious arrangement than a reconstruction', it is clear that his underlying verdict is a different view of the principles of reconstruction, an issue that moves me to respond.

First let me address Erhardt's concern that 'editorial suggestions are not marked in any way.' As explained in the *Rekonstruktionsbericht*, the performance indications in the B-minor version were entered by Bach almost entirely after the copying of the parts, and thus tell us nothing about the first version. Strictly speaking, then, all of the performance indications in the reconstruction are 'editorial suggestions'; giving them special treatment would be misleading. The editorial decisions can in any case be checked by consulting the new edition of the standard version published at the same time.

As to the main point. Since the reconstruction of a lost first version is always hypothetical, all the deviations from the traditional shape of the work must be justified. This applies as well to Erhardt's hypothesis that the flute in BWV1067 replaces a violin in the original. This means that the peculiarities that would arise in such a case in the interaction between the solo violin and the first ripieno violin (which I pointed out in my accompanying text) should also be discussed, something that Ehrhardt apparently feels is unnecessary. If Bach took ideas from the G-minor Overture of Johann Bernhard Bach—which I consider quite possible—that does not mean that he also had to take over the same scoring.

When Erhardt expresses apprehension that my 'logic' could lead to the reduction of the number of parts in other Baroque solo concertos, he surely must mean this ironically. Nevertheless I should like to point out an interesting case. Let us imagine that the Sinfonia in F major (BWV 1046a), the early version of the first Brandenburg Concerto (which has fortunately been preserved for us by Christian Friedrich Penzel), had been lost. A musicologist had reconstructed it, and in doing so had been guided by the hypothesis that Bach had added the Violino piccolo part only in reworking it. Would the reconstruction with only two violin parts have found favour in the eyes of Tassilo Erhardt? Or would his verdict have been: 'excision bad'?

Granted, this is a unique case. But the Overture BWV 1067 is also a unique case, and I would have wished that its special problems could have been discussed under this condition.

I must confess that the heading was editorial: an attempt to entice readers with a half-baked mixture of Animal Farm and the curate's egg. Tassilo mentioned in his review that he would like to consider the matter further when he had seen the source, so I hope he will cover the points raised above as well. CB

RAVENS VIEW

Simon Ravens

Here's a question: which A-list pianist has won the Gramophone Instrumental Award, in the last two years, for a recording of pre-twentieth century music made on a period instrument? By gaining such prestige the recording in question certainly made a stir in the wider musical world, but I wonder what ripples it caused in the early music scene? I wonder, because although I have certainly sold a lot of this CD in Grove Music, I don't think I have sold a single copy to one of my 'period' purchasers. Anyway, without keeping you in suspense any further, the answer is that it was Leif Ove Andsnes, playing the Lyric Pieces of Grieg, not only played on the composer's own piano, but recorded in the front room of Edvard's old villa. Now *there's* HIP!

I can't be the only person in the early music fraternity to regard period pianos as something of a final frontier, and a few recent releases have set me querying, yet again, why my heart has been so reluctant to follow my head on this score. The standard dismissal of the early piano, of course, is simply to say that the sound is simply not beautiful enough. I can't quite buy this. Yes, there are recordings of poorly made, badly tuned early instruments (though this is increasingly seldom) but profound ugliness of sound hasn't exactly held back Evgeny Kissin's career as a singularly smashing modern piano player, has it? And for sheer beauty of sonority, the sound of Steven Lubin's fortepiano in Mozart Trios (HCX 395 703 4), or Lambert Orkis's Walther copy in Beethoven's Archduke (560 007 2) take some beating. Is it a coincidence that my favourite fortepiano recordings are piano trios, where the keyboard is mounted on a cello plinth and varnished by the sound of the violin? Perhaps not.

I certainly can't get excited about Arthur Schoonderwoerd's disc of Chopin dances on Alpha (Alpha 044). He plays an 1836 Pleyel that Chopin himself probably played. Sounds interesting, doesn't it? And Schoonderwoerd, judging by his excellent booklet note, has certainly done his homework on the antecedents of Chopin's dances, adding features such as the anticipation of second beats in the waltzes (has nobody had the wit to try this before?). Sounds very interesting, no? Actually, it sounds very interesting until the moment that the disc starts when – *psssst!* – all anticipation deflates. There may be some signs of life in the Pleyel's treble, but the instrument sounds dead below the waist. And rapid decay – an acoustic element which I would often kill for when playing early romantic music on my Steinway – here just makes the instrument sound plain disinterested.

Then there is the sound of a Arthur Schoonderwoerd's Walther piano accompanying the guile-less voice of Johannette Zomer in Schubert songs (Alpha 044). Less clumpy, and more wiry than the Pleyel, there is no doubting that this an instrument (and a voice) of the salon. Perfect, I thought, and in theory this recording should work, but to my ears it simply fails to take off. (As with the London bus, you wait ages for me to write a negative comment on an Alpha disc, then two come at once!) Compare Schoonderwoerd's Walther with the truly magnificent sonority of Arcadi Volodos playing Schubert on a modern Steinway (SK 89647) and... well, there isn't a comparison to be made. But which performance would Schubert recognise? Hmmm.

The greatest concert I have ever seen was Fischer-Dieskau and Brendel performing *Die Winterreise* at Covent Garden. It was as convincing and powerful projection of intimacy as I could ever imagine. Yet, of course, a 'projection of intimacy' is a contradiction in terms. Call to mind that famous drawing, by Moritz von Schwind, of Schubert at the piano – the one in which thirty people (a number of them seemingly determined to drape themselves between Schubert and the keyboard) are crammed into a smallish drawing room. If I imagine the performance style of a Volodos or Fischer-Dieskau in that environment, I might as well imagine the detonation of a small bomb. No salon could withstand such forceful projection. Does that suggest that Schubert would more likely recognise the approach of Zomer and Schoonderwoerd? Not exactly. A great performer will simply distil a communicative ability into any context. Ultimately, whatever the instrument, I would suggest that Volodos and Fischer-Dieskau have infinitely more to communicate about Schubert (certainly more to communicate about infinity) than Schoonderwoerd and Zomer.

The catalyst for me thinking, yet again, about the fortepiano's unconsummated relationship with the microphone, is actually a recording of Beethoven on a modern piano. It is Stephen Kovacevich's now-completed set of the Sonatas on EMI. It really is good – witty and profound by turns, and always brilliantly incisive. I have, eventually weakened, and bought it for myself. And yet I've done so with a measure of regret, because at the same time I have been listening to Andreas Staier's recordings of Schubert (2564-60442-2) and Clementi Sonatas (2564-60676-2) on Elatus, and wondering where on earth are the period recordings of Beethoven of this standard. Well, I notice that Staier has just moved over to recording with Harmonia Mundi, and I'm hoping that someone in Arles might be brave enough to spot that, of over ninety available recordings of Beethoven's opus 111, there is precisely none on a fortepiano. Shame!

In the final analysis, the success of the fortepiano will depend on its exponents – whether they arrive at the instrument via a Ruckers or a Steinway.

I remember Grieg's house and piano well. One of the most boring concerts I can remember was at the 1976 Music Librarian's conference of the International Association of Music Libraries: a programme of Grieg's songs in that very room accompanied by that very piano. Perhaps the singer should take the blame. CB

MUSIC IN LONDON

Andrew Benson-Wilson

McCREESH REQUIEMS

I wouldn't normally associate the Gabrieli Consort, or Paul McCreesh, with Mozart performances, so I wasn't quite sure what they would make of Mozart's Requiem. Their programme (Queen Elizabeth Hall, 3 February) coupled it with Biber's Requiem in F minor, possibly written for the 1687 funeral of his first employer in Salzburg. The Biber is a wonderful mix of the old and the new, with some very baroque moments amongst the *stile antico* polyphony, notable in the Sequence. The opening few verses of this were particularly effective, the tremulo strings avoiding the jaggedness that is sometimes heard in such passages, and the choir articulating their consonants beautifully – the *Lacrimosa* was particularly moving. The lack of harmonic interest (from ears used to music of later periods) was made up for by the rhythmic and textural variety. One oddity was the placing of the performers on the stage, exacerbated by a detailed description in the programme notes about how the various elements would have been positioned in Salzburg Cathedral, with three organs supporting three spatially distinct groups (in recent years all four of the galleries surrounding the large central space have acquired new organs). But rather than having a separation of the five soloists, the string ensemble, and the choir and brass, each with their own continuo organ, there was one central organ with all the instruments gathered around it, a solo group just right of centre and with the choir spread across the stage from left to right. Shame. The Mozart Requiem received an extraordinarily powerful performance, led by four excellent soloists – Marie Arnet (demonstrating the acceptable face of vibrato), Susan Bickley, Mark Le Brocq and Christopher Purves. The work was performed in the very effective version completed by Duncan Druce, with its neat avoidance of many of the problems of the Süssmayr completion. With a change of violins and bows and, in one case, a change from chest to chin position, the instrumentation of the Mozart led us to a different sound world, and one that many would not be used to hearing even in other period instrument performances. Paul McCreesh carefully balanced the different tonal forces and took good care of the overall structure of the work. Although his manner of conducting does not always represent the utmost in style and sophistication, he imparts a genuinely musical interpretation. I have noticed his increasing use of a fluid pulse over the past few years, and I think this has worked well for him.

IMPERIAL MANZE

Andrew Manze led The English Concert in a performance of Muffat, Vivaldi and Schmelzer that was about as far as one could get from the Trevor Pinnock days as is possible to imagine (Wigmore Hall, 5 February). Grabbing the music by the scruff of the neck and giving it a good going over produced a concert of immense vitality and excitement, but I was left wondering if this style of performance is one that would stand the test of time in the way that Pinnock's rather more refined and musically respectful performances have done, taking into account, of course, the difference between recording and live performance. But the performers joined in the fun with relish, so Manze seems to have won them over. In many duo violin passages, for example, Walter Reiter seemed very much a partner in crime rather than an unwilling accomplice, and the result produced some thrilling moments. Having said that, in fact, by his standards, Manze was relatively well-behaved on this occasion and didn't get quite so close to hurling himself over the top as he is occasionally wont to. The programme included some curiosities, notably Schmelzer's rather silly descriptive ballet suite *Die Fechtschule* (The Fencing School) and his equally daft *Serenata*, a curious choice of piece to end the programme with, with its depictions of tinkly little funeral bells *(Campanella)* adding a sheen to the concluding *Lamento*. A member of the audience joined in the latter work with an extremely well-timed sneeze and a cough in two of the silences between the opening chords. The scene depicting the fencing lesson had more of an air of a battle royal than a lesson, with echoes of Spanish *Batallas*. The final movement depicts the barber, whose job it apparently was to put them all back together again. Schmelzer wouldn't have won prizes for harmonic inventiveness for either of these works, but what matter. Muffat showed himself in a much better light, successfully combining the French and Italian styles but with more than a nod to his friend, Corelli. The *Passacaglia* that ends the Sonata V from *Armonico Tributo* doesn't exactly evolve seamlessly, but it is nonetheless overflowing with ideas. Three Vivaldi concertos completed the play list, the common link for all but one of the works being that they were composed for the Holy Roman Emperor.

PERMANENT CHANGE OF STYLE

The Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin are increasingly regular visitors to London, and until last year got rave reviews from me. But their concert of Schiefferdecker, Telemann and Handel at the Wigmore Hall (10 February) reinforced some doubts that I had raised in the May 2003 issue of *EMR*. I concluded that review by writing that I hoped that performance 'does not represent a permanent change of style'. I now fear it might. As with The English Concert, reviewed above, and a great many Italian groups, they seem to be joining the rush to over-exaggeration. In their case, this is evidenced by playing far too fast, adding

stylistically inappropriate mannerisms (vibrato, portamento and other romanticisms) and pushing the tone, particularly of the violins, to breaking point and beyond, with consequent havoc in intonation and timbre. It has to be admitted that audiences often seem to love this sort of thing, which says far more about audiences than it does about the musicality of the performers. In the early days of this phenomenon, gutsy Italian performances, particularly of Vivaldi, seemed to bring a breath of fresh air into what had often become rather staid and terribly English performances by a number of our domestic groups. But for my taste, this is now going too far. I am sure there were occasions during the baroque era when music was played in a burlesque manner, but probably not quite so many as there are now. Generally speaking, chamber music, in particular, was a relatively genteel activity, often acting as a backdrop to some form of rather more important social or religious occasion. I doubt whether an aristocratic and enlightened social gathering would have appreciated one of these grab-you-by-the-throat performances from the resident band. The other, related, issue which arose from this concert was the extraordinary look-at-me stage antics of a soloist – in this case a recorder player. Again there are precedents for this style of presentation, but, frankly, it gets up my nose. He even managed to dominate proceedings when he was supposed to be playing as a minor part of the overall band. Having endured a whole evening of this, and being just about ready to reposition the little man's recorder, the final piece was just revenge. Telemann's Concerto in F for recorder and bassoon brought the bumptious little recorder player (who also couldn't resist coming over all Irish, as recorder players are wont to do) up against a massive bassoon player, who managed to play with the utmost musicality and completely outshone the young upstart at his side, to the extent that the recorder player spent much of the time looking to the bassoon soloist for the leads. I am not sure if it was just in my own mind, but did I detect the bassoon player turn to the recorder player with a wonderful 'up-yours' gesture just before the big-tune in the final Allegro? I do hope so. Having got all that off my chest, there doesn't seem to be space to review the rest of the concert. Shame.

OAE –AX– NORRINGTON

The Orchestra of the Age of the Enlightenment occasionally call in to Basingstoke's impressive new concert hall, The Anvil, on their way to or from the South Bank, giving me the chance to hear them in vastly superior acoustics (warm and enfolding, but allowing for clarity of detail), just five minutes walk from home. They arrived with Sir Roger Norrington in tow (or vice-versa) for another of their Beethoven Piano Concerto series, this time with Emanuel Ax as soloist for the 'Emperor' concerto (11 February). This was an outstanding performance by a pianist not normally associated with the fortepiano, aided and abetted by a conductor whose recordings and performances of these works have become the gold standard for period performance. The concert illustrated a recent direction in period performance that I feel comfortable with – the increasing acceptance and incorporation of some elements of performance that performers of a later era would call romantic. Of course, that does not imply reinterpreting baroque or classical music as though it were romantic, but the incorporation of certain performance elements that have for many years been deemed inappropriate. Rubato is one particular example, in the sense of the application of a gentle fluidity to point up motifs and phrases and structural aspects of the work. Emanuel Ax is a master of this, bringing an entirely appropriate romanticism to a performance that I can still thoroughly approve of with my hard-line historically inspired performance hat on. A key moment in the work is the transition from the Adagio to the concluding Rondo. A languid semitone drop from a solo bassoon leads to what could be a new theme in the slow movement, but is, in fact, the Rondo theme played very slowly. In strict tempo, this can sound trite. In overly romantic mode it can become slushy. But the Norrington/ Ax partnership (together with Andrew Watts on bassoon) turned it into the magical transformation of mood and tonality that I am sure Beethoven intended. The acoustics of the hall, and a very fine piano, exposed the inner thoughts of the piano part, notably in what is often though of as idle filling in. A spectacular performance by pianist, conductor and orchestra. The opening work was Beethoven's *Creatures of Prometheus*, with a cleverly reinterpreted outline of the story of the ballet interjected by a narrator, Oliver Cotton. I fear this is not Beethoven at his finest, but it was a work worth airing and made a good companion to the 'Emperor'. There were some particularly magical moments for the woodwind. Although the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment are perfectly capable of churning out decent performances in automatic pilot, and also do pretty well when directed by one of their number, they are consistently at their best when working with an inspirational conductor. This was one such occasion.

PURCELL QUARTET'S 20th BIRTHDAY

People are not always on their best behaviour on their birthdays (or on Valentine's Day, for that matter), and the 20th anniversary concert of The Purcell Quartet proved to be one such occasion. This biggest problem was string intonation, which was less than perfect for much of the concert. The heat and dry atmosphere (in the Wigmore Hall, 14 February) cannot have helped. Another oddity was Robert Woolley playing a solo harpsichord piece while almost completely hidden from much of the audience by music stands. His choice of the Bach's organ Fantasia in G minor (the *Pièce d'Orgue)* was slightly curious (although there are arguments for performance on a harpsichord), as was his interpretation, with an air of insistence rather than unfolding in the central section and an irritating hesitancy at the beginning of each arpeggiated figure in the final section. Of the instrumental pieces, the group of Purcell works was the most impressive, starting with the yearning Pavan in B flat, then the Sonata in 3 parts in C (described by Richard Boothby as 'pretty damn clever') and the powerful G-minor Chaconne from the

other set of trios, given an expressive reading. The string opening to the 'Cold Genius' scene from King Arthur was also impressive, the strings of the two violins hardly sounding at all, but merely producing harmonics. Peter Harvey, who had sat through the Prelude huddled up in a corner, was an excellent singer and actor. Susan Bickley's singing of *'A Dio Roma'* from Monteverdi's *Poppea* was another highlight, the slightly metallic tinge in her voice bringing an air of heartfelt expression. The harpsichord continuo was a little too consistent in the use of chord spreads for my taste, but certainly didn't get in the way. The concert finished with Bach's Lutheran Mass in F, with its wonderful outpouring of praise in the opening of the Gloria. Peter Harvey's singing of the 'Domine Deus' was another highlight, as was Anthony Robson's oboe playing during the 'Qui tollis'.

PUNCHINELLO PRODUCTIONS

Punchinello Productions might seem a curious title for a new youngish group on the early music scene. The fact that their name sounds more like a theatrical production company than a music group is not without foundation, for their aim is to explore theatrical repertoire of the baroque era. Their concert at St Mary's, Walthamstow, (21 February) was based on music of the Court of Louis XIV, with music by Lully, de Visée, Marais, d'Hervelois, Charpentier and Couperin and drama by Molière, with two actors and five musicians playing flute, recorder, violin, gamba and theorbo/guitar. One key issue was the extent to which the combination of music and theatre worked as a whole. On the basis of the information in the programme, this was far from clear. A 'Letter to Agnus', which I think might have been by one of the actors rather than Molière, seemed to set the scene in Versailles, but the link from that to Lully and Molière's *Le bourgeois gentilhomme* and Charpentier's *Le malade imaginaire* (combined with text from Molière's *L'ecole des femmes*) seemed rather tenuous, at least to me. The notes were not clear as to who the actors were supposed to be portraying. Several issues arose with the instrumentalists, not least the question of intonation – which was an issue more or less throughout the evening, either in consort or solo roles. In the *Quatrième Suite in F* by Louis de Caix d'Hervelois, the gamba lost its tone occasionally, as well as suffering some wayward intonation above the frets. The theorbo accompaniment, in this and other pieces, was extremely restrained – the lack of a harpsichord meant that it could have made a much more positive contribution. The choice of instrumentation was slightly curious, with Couperin's instructions for the second of his *Concerts Royeux,* for example, being ignored to fit the available instruments. If this is going to be done, I would personally either admit as much in the programme notes, or avoid giving the original instrumentation in such detail. The violin had a curious role, spending much time on the G-string in a substitute viola role below the flute and recorder – who otherwise balanced pretty well. Quite early on, a couple of the players got lost completely. It is difficult to know what to do in these circumstances, but the rest of the group chose to carry on regardless, allowing the hapless pair to join in later on. The fact that my companion didn't notice anything wrong suggests that this might have been a successful strategy, but the fact that I did notice (through the funny looks and fumbling through the music, rather than detailed knowledge of the piece), might suggest otherwise. There were a couple of nice quotes, I assume from Molière, about the horror of being 'criticized by some uncultured fool' and how 'to be praised by the deserving mind is exquisite'. Uncultured fool that I may be, I am afraid that Punchinello Productions will need to wait a little bit longer to receive their exquisite praise.

SCHOLL STILL SHINES

Some of my earlier comments about overdone performances of Baroque music apply to the concert headed by Andreas Scholl (Barbican, 25 February). His accompanying band, Accademia Bizantina, is not known to me, but I found their lush, almost romantic sound, their use of extremes of expression (including treating more-or-less every note to a hairpin dynamic), and their very broad cadences stylistically inappropriate. They also featured a look-at-me player whose sinuous body movements went way beyond that physically necessary, or desirable, to give fluidity to playing. I guess getting them to accompany Gasparini's *Destati, Lidia mia* with its crowing cocks, little birds and calling sheep was asking for trouble – their Biberesque [or Farinacious? *CB*] animal noises and the daft little echo at the end just sounded silly. But I don't think many people came to hear the orchestra. The programme was based on the chamber cantata in the 'Arcadian' period, apparently reflecting Scholl's recent discovery of the shelf-loads of books on the Knights Templar, the Holy Grail and such-like, many of which build theories from Poussin's *Et in Acrcadia ego* painting in the Louvre. I am not sure to what extent this concert reflected this esoteric world of secret societies and best-selling mystery stories, or whether it was just a bucolic romp through the ins and outs of passionate encounters with Irene, Lydia, Amaryllis and Dorilla. But what matter. I have consistently praised Scholl's singing, whose position in the countertenor world seems to be unassailable. Over recent years, his voice has developed a greater fluidity and emotional depth, but he still retains that tell-tale focus of tone and projection. Perhaps because of his increasing opera experience, he has now developed a slightly more relaxed stage demeanour, with more upper body flexibility and rather more believable arm movements, although his feet still remain firmly fixed to the ground, giving him an appearance of slightly lurching from the hips and knees. But although I guess that some in the audience came to admire his physical appearance (he seemed to have a large fan club gathered in the seats near the stage), it is his singing that inspires. His ability to clearly articulate runs and ornaments of the utmost complexity is exemplary, as is his control of vocal timbre. There were several moments when he needed to slip into the tenor register, which he did with apparent ease, and always in a manner, and at a place, that made musical sense. One practical staging point – if a standing

singer is to take sips of water during a performance, it is slightly ungainly for him to have to reach to floor level to find it, especially in the middle of a piece. And it was also rather cheeky of the Barbican to print an advert for a David Daniels concert right in the middle of the Scholl programme notes, rather than with the rest of the adverts.

POOR SCHOLARS

I would have thought that a group as successful and long standing as The Tallis Scholars could have avoided the need for a fund raising concert, but apparently that is not the case. So the ten singers were persuaded to give freely of their time for a concert of Palestrina and Allegri, built around Palestrina' *Missa Papae Marcelli* and Allegri's *Miserere* (24 February, St John's, Smith Square). The former, with its combination of old and new styles, demonstrated the characteristic tone that has become the consistent hall mark of The Tallis Scholars over so many years. Their rather hard-edged timbre works far better in a larger acoustic than St John's (which has always been far better for Baroque and Classical, rather than Renaissance, music), so the blend that generally comes over in their recordings was somewhat lacking on this occasion. This revealed the metallic edge to the soprano voices, and made exposed entries all the more critical. Perhaps acknowledging the acoustic, the choir as a whole seemed to be straining at higher volumes, and the occasional 'catches' at the start of some notes gave a percussive effect that would have been reduced with more spatial resonance. Although there were some nicely lilting ornaments, the high soprano in Allegri's *Miserere* sounded rather strident and forced. That said, the choir demonstrated their ability to think architecturally, projecting the music in broad sweeps, rather than concentrating on the detail. I am never quite sure of the role of the 'conductor' in groups like this. In Peter Phillips' case, giving the beat seems to be a minor consideration, but setting the mood also doesn't seem to take on much importance – his rather jagged and erratic conducting style is at odds with the sound world of the singers. But one key role for conductors is letting the audience know when to clap – or, more importantly, when not to clap. Applause between movements of orchestral works is frequently an excuse for withering looks from the knowing towards the ignorant, but it is not often that applause breaks out in between movements of a mass – indeed, it is often tricky to get an audience to applaud at all after such overtly religious works. So, one conducting role that Mr Phillips might practise is giving a clear indication to the audience that there is more to come.

Hence, leaden care

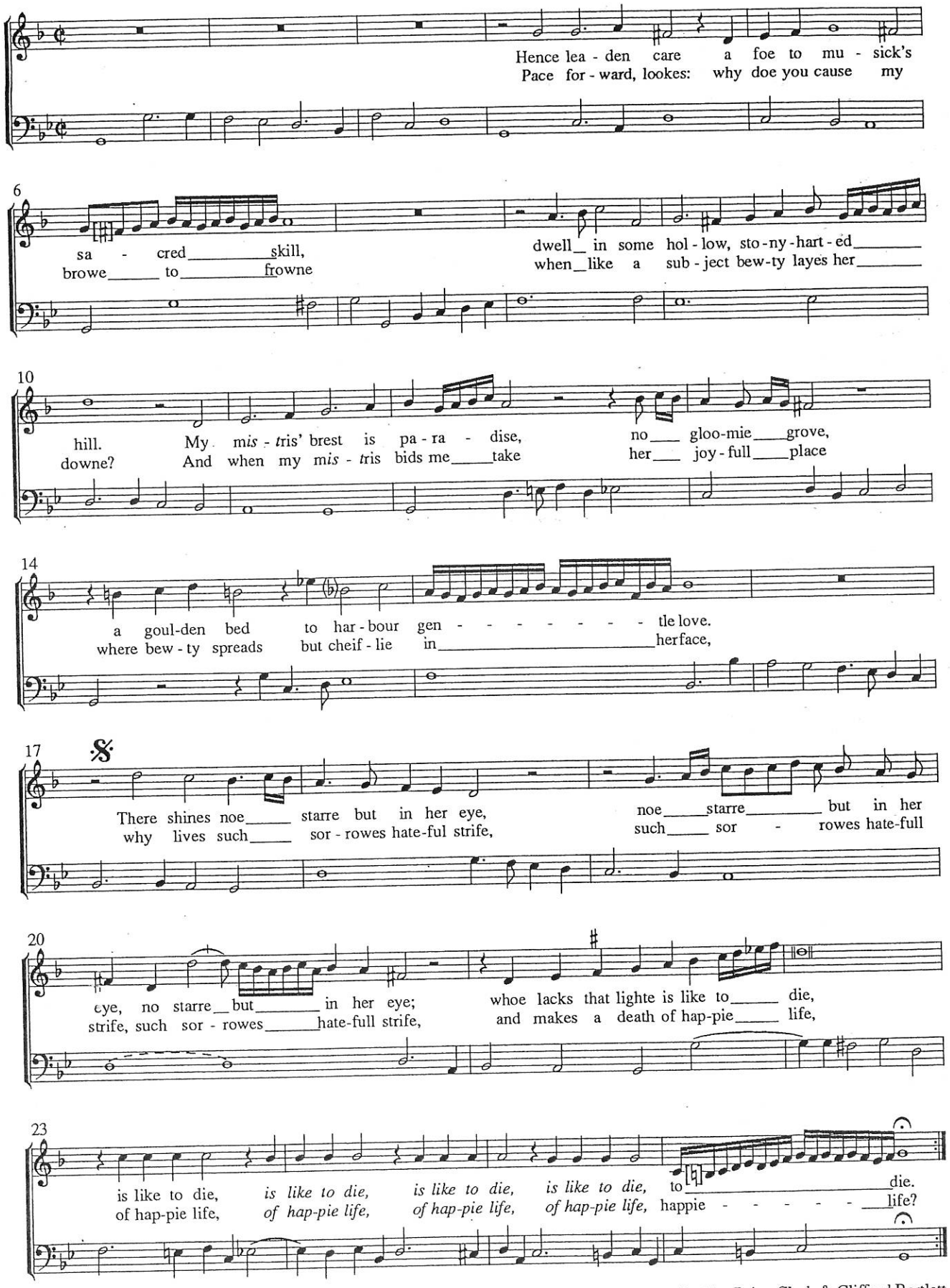
This anonymous song survives in two MSS in the British Library. It is edited here from Egerton 2971. It also appears in British Library Add. MS 24665, f. 31, but the voice part and the words of verse 1 are missing. It has verse 2 set out as verse, whereas both verses in Egerton are underlaid.

The edition preserves the original note-values and spelling, but light punctuation is added. Bar lines have been added regularly; there are fewer barlines in the MS, but they do not contradict the editorial barring in four minims. Bar 20 is printed as in the MS, including the dotted tie in the bass. The tied minims in the bass at bars 21 and23 represent dotted minims in the MS: there are no barlines in either place. The bass in Add. 24665 is unbarred. Note the different key signatures in the two staves.

Bar 5, verse 2, last word *her* in Egerton, *my* in Add. 24665. The first two notes of the voice part may perhaps be sung either with the E flat or the F sharp.

Other differences between the texts of verse 2 can be seen in the facsimile *English Song 1600-1675*, vol. 1 (Garland, 1986).

Anon (c. 1615) – Hence leaden care



Source: British Library Egerton MS 2971, f. 23v-24r.

edited by Brian Clark & Clifford Bartlett

REVIEWS OF BOOKS

Clifford Bartlett

AFTER THE ADVENT PROJECT

Western Plainchant in the First Millennium: Studies in the Medieval Liturgy and its Music. Edited by Sean Gallagher, James Haar, John Nádas, Timothy Striplin. Ashgate, 2003. xix + 523pp + CD, £59.95. ISBN 0 7546 0389 X

The conference in January 1999 from which this book derives must have been a moving occasion, planned to honour the retirement of James McKinnon, rescheduled so that it could take place while he was still alive, and watched (through daily video reports) by him from his death-bed. As always with conference proceedings, the publication is not an exact representation of what took place at the conference – I can't imagine how some of the papers here could have been presented orally, however brilliant the handouts or visual aids – and some items were not part of the event. The list of contributors is in itself almost a roll-call of the leading chant scholars, and their presence makes it superfluous to draw the attention of those interested in the subject to the book: there's no way they would miss it. Those whose interest is more peripheral will find some chapters worth reading – Joseph Dyer on psalmody in the monastic desert settlements in the late 4th century, for instance, which had little to do with how psalms might of been said/sung by more sociable Christian communities. I've been fairly conscientious in my reading, but many of the chapters with detailed discussions can be top and tailed, leaving out the central detailed, and on those terms the book is (as McKinnon would approve) surprisingly readable.

A bonus is the CD containing a recording of Richard Crocker singing the Gregorian communions for Advent and Christmas (the starting point of *The Advent Project*) and examples from three other chapters. He also contributes some comments on how to read the *Graduale triplex*, giving up his detailed description of the notation of a couple of lines of chant with the comment 'I find the foregoing description virtually unreadable': the singers of the time realised that the nuances of performance could only be demonstrated, not notated – fine for them, but if only their unreadable descriptions had survived! Crocker's singing is hardly that of a professional singer, but is convincing; I wonder, though, how such flexibility could be achieved by a choir. Mention of Crocker leads to Calvin M. Bower's contribution on Alleluias and Sequences, based on the information lying behind the massive tables of East and West Frankish repertoires. (Did the author treat his Christian name as a challenge to study the Catholic liturgy?) I was amused by Thomas Forrest Kelly's chapter, which turned out to show an 18th century liturgical practice rather than one from a millennium earlier.

THOMAS OF CANTERBURY

Kay Brainerd Slocum *Liturgies in Honour of Thomas Becket* Toronto UP, 2004. xii + 379pp, £42.00. ISBN 0 8020 3650 3

I'm not sure whether it is easier to investigate the life of a medieval saint than a medieval composer. For the latter, one is snatching at casual references in manuscripts scattered across Europe and corrupted by decades of careless transmission. But for Thomas [no longer à] Becket the first life (by his friend John of Salisbury) was written within a few weeks of his death and was quickly followed by the accounts of four other clerics who were present at the martyrdom at Canterbury on 29 December 1170: an embarrassment of contemporary evidence, though all sharing the same viewpoint. The historical survey which forms Part One of the book is not intended to be a dispassionate account of Becket's life but to explain the history and politics behind the version that was incorporated in the liturgy for his feast, which was composed soon after his canonisation in 1173. So there is no attempt to counter the ecclesiastical bias that these historians and the liturgy presents – though I couldn't help feeling that Becket was on the wrong side: giving political power to the religious is on the whole a recipe for disaster. One often hears that 'the cult of Thomas Becket became one of the most celebrated and widespread examples of popular devotion in the Middle Ages' (p. 98), though no statistical evidence is adduced.

Part Two comprises an edition of the Office for the Feast Day of St Thomas Becket and that of his Translation – the commemoration of the transfer of his relics to the new apse of Canterbury Cathedral on 7 July 1220. The former is from Fitzwilliam Museum MS 369, a breviary/missal from the Cluniac priory of St Pancras at Lewes. The five relevant pages in the source are given in facsimile (a pity they are even smaller than the original when the page size would have accommodated 7 ½ x 5 ¼ inches) and expanded into 40 pages for a black-blob transcription, plus the text set out separately as verse and with a translation alongside. This is followed by the rather longer lessons in the later Sarum and other uses, in Latin and English. A similar treatment is given to the Translation office. If nothing else, this brings to those who are not chant specialists music that was familiar throughout Europe for several centuries and is otherwise only accessible in facsimile. Perhaps the Southern Early Music Forum should consider a course on it at Canterbury some time.

This cross-disciplinary treatment of history and liturgy should interest a wide range of medieval scholars. All that is missing is a CD with a performance of the music.

TAVERNER

Hugh Benham *John Taverner*. Ashgate 2003. xv+ 332pp, £52.50. ISBN 0 7546 0142 0

Despite the neglect of centuries, Taverner was quite well served by 20th-century scholars and musicians. Revived by Terry at Westminster Cathedral, his music formed vols. 1 and 3 of *Tudor Church Music* in the 1920s and more recently was re-edited for *Early English Church Music* by John Benham, whose book abandons the reduced note-values of EECM. This is the third book on him to have appeared since I started my monthly reviews, the others being by David Josephson (UMI Research Press, 1979) and Colin Hand (Eulenburg, 1978). Biographically, there is less information than before, since the identification with a John Taverner recorded in London in 1514 is now thought implausible. So the life is dealt with in one short chapter, leaving a dozen to concentrate on the music. These show the author not only to have an excellent understanding of his composer but a remarkable ability to describe what is happening in his music in a way that is as meaningful to the enthusiastic amateur singer as to the professional scholar. (If the budding musicologists attending the course on 2 April on how to write are given a bibliography of models to emulate, I hope it will include this (as well as McKinnon's Advent, Holman's four-and-twenty fiddles and Heartz's Rococo.) Not that there is any dumbing down. Benham can write about music in a way that draws the reader into the sort of detailed description of how the music works that from other hands would be unreadable. Nothing, though, is quite as forceful as the excerpts from TCM on p. 268; despite their vagueness, they have a spirit which makes me wonder whether they are by Sylvia Townsend Warner.

A few specific comments.
pp. 43-4. There isn't much point in discussing ficta just in terms of a single line; singers may not have had scores, but they could hear the other parts and anticipate where the harmony was going.
pp. 50-58. This seems an odd place for a list of works: one would normally expect it as an appendix.
p. 78. The comment that 'Filium' in *Gaude plurimum* is an example of a melisma on the last syllable of a word when the penultimate syllable is weak is undermined by the facsimile on p. 76, which shows the mean part having it on the penultimate: Benham is relying on his edition (EECM 25, p. 35-6).
p. 99. Benham is generally careful to explain technical terms, so the reader may be puzzled by 'neuma', which is explained only in a footnote to an earlier passage of text that does not use the word.
p. 100. The statement 'there is no reason to doubt that Taverner's tenors sang a more or less fully-texted version' of a cantus firmus which is not fully underlaid needs substantiation and is not self-evident. At the end of the same page, a comment about the CF in an Amen moving in equal notes 'perhaps to mimic contemporary performance of plainsong' begs the question of what that was like: as far as I can remember from Mary Berry's thesis, most of the evidence is from how it is treated in polyphonic and organ music, thus making the argument circular.

Unlike Hand's book, this is unlikely to appear as a paperback. But it is definitely worthy of a wide readership than I suspect most Ashgate publications get, and if the price is a bit high for those who just sing the music, it is worth persuading your library to buy a copy.

DAMN LIES AND STATISTICS?

F. M. Scherer *Quarter Notes and Bank Notes: The Economics of Music Composition in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*. Princeton UP, 2004. x + 264pp, £22.95. ISBN 0 691 11621 0

This comprises a series of chapters, each of which begins with the sort of anecdotal approach that any music historian could produce quite easily (and might occasionally make a little more convincing). Such matter leads to a statistical analysis based on the data that the author has assembled. The conclusions on all sorts of financial matters concerning composers born between 1650 and 1850 feel plausible, but I'm not entirely convinced about the statistics. I've no knowledge of the mathematics, but am worried that insufficient data is being pushed too hard. The sample of 646 composers was chosen on the strangely unhistorical grounds of their music having been recorded and appearing in a 1996 CD catalogue (*Schwann Opus* vol. 7, no. 4); but that brings in a bias of modern taste and the workings of the US record business. And it is indirectly modern taste that is used to select the sample of 50 composers drawn on for more detailed information. It would have been an interesting check to see whether the results would have been the same had some of the calculations been based on a sampling from a catalogue of fifty years early or based on biographical dictionaries of the 18th and 19th centuries.

The other danger is in important factors being excluded. By definition, one cannot know what such factors are. It seems obvious, for instance, that Scherer is right in assuming that the decline of American sales of pianos in the 1920s was caused by the spread of radio and gramophones; but there might have been other reasons – pianos rarely wore-out, and the next generation had different tastes, so the market stagnated; or there could just have been one performer who was so successful with an instrument other than a piano that taste changed. In England, the significant change was probably caused by the growth of pop, guitar-based groups (professional and amateur) in the late 1950s and 1960s, though I doubt if piano manufacturing recovered after the war. A non-musical example of how a faulty assumption of cause and effect leading to faulty statistics has been prominent in the UK over the last year or so. Several people have been convicted of murder on the grounds that, if one cot death in your family may be a sign of carelessness, the chances of two or even three being accidental were statistically so

remote that they must have been deliberate. Recently, the statistical opinion has been reversed, and if you have one cot death, the chance of another is thought higher, not lower, without assuming that the parents are criminally responsible. No-one is going to prison if Scherer has missed a factor; but taking just one example, he simplifies the cost of printing and publication of music. Some elements can relate directly to the cost per page, while other costs (promotion, accounting, etc) vary little whether the publication is 4, 40 or 400 pages long; consideration of this would presumably affect some conclusions in the chapter on publishing. That chapter, incidentally, contains a useful summary of the growth of copyright protection.

What I have written reads rather negatively. But I don't want to disparage the book as a whole. I enjoyed reading it, and various disparate ideas are brought together in provocative ways. Despite being written by a musical amateur (in the best sense: Scherer says that it was her beautiful playing of Mozart that drew him to his wife, a descendent of Gottfried Silbermann), its musical matter is sound. I'm not questioning the use of statistics on principle. But I think they could be refined. It is both alarming and refreshing to see musical behaviour described in standard economic terminology. It is interesting to have all the various currencies converted to GBP (though not LSD) to enable international comparisons across the period to be made. I suspect that for that alone this book will be regularly used – and, by the standards of UK academic books, it is amazingly cheap.

CHARPENTIER'S FLUTES

David Hansell

This is a topic I've always meant to research but have never got round to. The questions are how were they played (end-blown or transverse) and at what pitch did they play in relation to the strings and voices (unison or at the octave)?

The usual modern approach, as exemplified on any number of recordings that have passed through these pages, is to use recorders. Where the range fits and the keys are convenient these are altos/trebles playing at 8 foot pitch, especially when the music is lightly scored and/or quiet. However, when the range of the part goes below the treble's or is generally low in treble terms, the parts are usually put up an octave and played on soprano/descant instruments especially if the music is any combination of fast, loud or fully scored. My purely subjective reaction to this is that its initial attractiveness and brilliance soon palls.

My instincts are that these parts should always sound in unison with the violins/voices though I am less certain about the recorder/*traversière* issue. My suspicions are that recorders were the usual choice and that wide use was made of the now relatively rare Voice Flute/Tenor in D which has the low notes necessary and which can play comfortably in the sharp keys alien to C and F recorders. In *EMR*-land there must lurk Someone Who Knows!

Please enlighten the rest of us, and let's have the Tercentenary on the right instruments and at the right pitch.

CD REVIEWS

CHANT

Quand le chant grégorien s'appelait chant messin Scola Metensis, Marie-Reine Demollière *dir* 66' 44"
Ligia Digital Lidi 0202132-03

This is one of a batch from an enterprising French record company new to us based at Vichy (further details from ligia.digital@wanadoo.fr). Metz is important in the early history of Western European chant, though maybe not quite as much as the booklet implies: Metz isn't even in the main index of Western Plainchant in the First Millennium reviewed on p. x. There are two didactic messages in the performances: the importance of reading the neums rather than the square notation and the grouping of chants by three families (based in D, C and E) rather than the more systematic modal system that was imposed on them. The singing flows impressively, though the lilting triple-time of the hymns feels half-a-millennium later. Whether you are convinced by the arguments or not, this is really a very fine recording. I was particularly struck by the marvellous singing of the director on track 4. *CB*

There is also a chant disc with Western Plainchant in the First Millenium: *see page 8.*

16th CENTURY

Diruta *Toccate, Ricercari, Canzoni & Inni di autori vari da 'Il Transilvano'* Marco Ghirotti (1981 reconstruction of 16th cent. organ, Spilimbergo, Italy) 69' 02"
Tactus TC 555401
Music by Banchieri, Bell'Havere, Diruta, Fattorini, Guami, Merulo, A. & G. Gabrieli, Luzzaschi, Mortaro, Quagliatti

It is rather fun to write a review that combines Mancini with Transylvania. The Mancini in question is Girolamo Mancini, better known as Diruta, after his birthplace. His 1593 treatise on organ and other keyboard performance was dedicated to Zsigmond Bathory, Prince of Transylvania, hence its name 'Il Transilvano'. As well as performance advice, Diruta included the 13 toccatas and various ricercares, hymns and canzonas on this CD, many that he knew from San Marco, Venice. Only one of the pieces on the CD is likely to be known to the average early music lover – Giovanni Gabrieli's Canzon *'Detta la Spiritata'*, intabulated by Diruta. This is the sort of CD that ought to appeal to *EMR* readers, although it might appear rather academic. With 28 pieces, all but two less than four minutes long and most played, as expected, with the basic renaissance notion of a regular tactus, there is an air of inevitability about the CD as a whole. The pulse is measured, leaving room for the semiquavers to speak clearly and with identity, and Marco Ghirotti makes good use of subtle inflexions and articulation to add definition. The accompanying chords are cleanly placed and detached, allowing the flowing lines to run round and through them. It is an ideal introduction to the world of pre-Frescobaldian Venetian organ music. The organ is a modern reconstruction (albeit in a superb historic case), with no original pipework, but it sounds very authentic. It includes a lovely Cornamusa stop, countering the theory that Italian organs did not have reed stops. An oddity in the programme notes (this CD is not the only transgressor) is the retention of original quotations in Italian, even though the rest of the text has been translated into English. When the Italian text can easily be found in the Italian programme, it seems perverse not to offer a translation of key passages.
Andrew Benson-Wilson

Or put another way, if you can read Diruta's Italian, you can probably read that of the note-writer, so why provide an English note at all? CB

Mouton *Anna requiescat in pace* Ensemble Jacques Moderne, Joël Suhubiette *dir* 54' 15"
Ligia Digital Lidi 0202122-03

This is a very intelligently chosen selection of the motets of a composer who deserves to be better known today than he is. Jean Mouton's compositonal star was very much in the ascendant at the time of his death in 1522, and much of his music was printed in the fifty years after he died. During his lifetime his prestige was sufficient to secure him the post of Maître de Chapelle to Anne de Bretagne, wife of King Louis XII of France, in 1510, later serving the King after Anne's death in 1514. It is the death of his patroness which is marked in his déploration *Quis dabit oculis nostris*, a sombre masterpiece given a moving performance by the viols and voices of the Ensemble Jacques Moderne. This group has a long and distinguished discography of early music for voices and instruments, and their performances of Mouton's music are thoroughly idiomatic and committed. There is some lovely solo singing from Edwige Parat, Catherine Greuillet, Frédéric Bétous, and Philippe Froeliger, and if the full ensemble occasionally sounds a little opaque, the *a capella* choir is admirably focused. The real treasures of the collection are the opening *Quis dabit* and the extraordinary concluding eight-part setting of *Nesciens Mater*, in which four *dux* parts lead four *comes* parts in consistent canon throughout the work's duration. The disc clearly indicates the diversity of Mouton's talents, although the attribution of *Maria virgo prescripta Angeli* to Constanzo Festa is surely more plausible than Mouton's abrupt conversion to the more animated Italianate style of the period. *D. James Ross*

Nesciens mater *is published by King's Music at £1.50. Unlike other editions, we have set out the canonic voices as a separate choir: it is easier to see what is happening, and might be interesting to perform thus.* CB

Tallis *The Complete Works Vol. 7: Music for Queen Elizabeth* Chapelle du Roi, Alistair Dixon 61'07"
Signum SIGCD029

Most of the music included here comes from the 1575 *Cantione Sacrae*, music by Tallis and Byrd dedicated to the Queen, There is also an English-text version of *Absterge Dominum*, two settings of Psalms (*Domine quis habitabit* & *Laudate Dominum*), *O salutaris hostia* and, to conclude, *Spem in alium* – i. e. music from the latter part of the composer's life, though direct connection with Elizabeth is lacking. I detect a slight stylistic inconsistency: the fast speeds would seem to me to need a less emotionally-pointed performance and rather less obvious dynamic shaping, whereas that variety would work better at a slightly slower tempo. But I don't want the music any slower, and feel that when the singers make a strong move towards the cadence, the effect is better. The number of recordings I have of *Spem...* must be approaching the number of times I've sung or played organ in it: this one is spoilt slightly by individual voices sticking out when they having nothing particular to contribute: but hearing it at home is a poor substitute for singing it or hearing it live (or even playing it on the piano: cf p. 17). No reason, though, for not continuing to buy this invaluable series. *CB*

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

Victoria *Et Jesum* Carlos Mena *cT*, Juan Carlos Rivera *lute & vihuela*, Rubio Galleco *cnt* 65'
Harmonia Mundi HMI 987042

Taking their cue from a couple of early manuscript sources in which motets by Victoria are arranged for solo lute or for lute with a vocal top line, these performers present 23 motets or mass-sections in one or other arrangement. It is a legitimate exercise from which much can be learned, not least how easily Victoria's music adapts to this process. Mena's fluid voice and excellent breath-control brings out the flowing quality of the vocal line, as well as the close matching of text and music, and rises to ecstatic heights in pieces such as *Senex puerum*. For my taste he is a bit too closely miked and some added echo-chamber effect makes him rather dominant over the lute, whose polyphonic lines are not always allowed to emerge in full balance. The cornett adds an occasional second soprano part which both blends with and inspires the singer; such duets are a hallmark of Victoria's writing. Mena adds some effective ornamentation to the two Marian antiphons but restrains himself in the motets, allowing Victoria's melodic lines to make their impact; Rivera might have been more adventurous in applying ornamentation. Well worth acquiring for its convincing reminder that Victoria's music should not just be seen in terms of unaccompanied choral performance. *Noel O'Regan*

17th CENTURY

Buxtehude *Complete works for organ, vol. 1* Bine Bryndorf (c.1641 Lorentz and 1658/63 Fritzsche organ St Mary's, Elsinore, Denmark) 65' 36"
Dacapo 8.226002
BuxWV 137, 148, 149, 159, 160, 161, 182, 189, 190, 197, 198, 199, 200, 202, 208, 209, 217, 221

You cannot get more authentic than performing Buxtehude on an organ that he actually presided over (1658/68) – or, at least, what is left of it, for the 1997 Marcussen reconstruction includes very few original pipes. But it is nonetheless a magnificent organ (and a joy to play), speaking with that forthright but refined boldness and presence that so characterises the 17th century Northern European organ. This CD includes all Buxtehude's ostinato pieces (the two Ciaconas, the Passacaglia and the Praeludia that include ostinatos) as well as a selection of the more straightforward chorale preludes and Praeludia, including the two well-known large scale G minor Praeludia. Bine Bryndork has established herself as a leading authority on the performance of early music, and her playing on this CD is exemplary. She eschews hollow mannerisms and empty rhetoric and concentrates on the subtle but unbelievably musical delivery of a melodic line, helped by her meticulous articulation and superb control of touch. She uses well chosen registrations, and matches her touch accordingly – listen to the fugue on track 11 (BuxWV148) where the repeated notes of the subject, played on the Brustwerk regal, are articulated in an way that almost imitates a tremulant. The only slight oddity, to my ears, was her use of a rather French-sounding suspension at the end of the E minor Ciacona, but without the trill that I think Buxtehude (or, indeed, the French) might have envisaged. The informative programme note includes the melodies of the chorale preludes – a nice touch.
Andrew Benson-Wilson

Carissimi *Jephté, Jonas* Monique Zanetti *S*, Hervé Lamy *T*, Ensemble Jacques Moderne, Joël Suhubiette *dir* 58' 42"
Ligia Digital Lidi 0202129-03
+ toccatas by Frescobaldi & Pasquini; Sabbatini *Intermedio* III

I have a problem with *Jephté*. When I was a student, there was a group of pieces which I got to know chiefly from playing through over and over again on the piano: some were ones I'd sung (*Spem in alium*, *The Dream of Gerontius*), others ones I had only heard, like *Jephté*; the result is that these pieces are richer in my memory than any performance can make them. This recording does come very near; Jephtha's daughter, though, isn't quite virginal enough (taking purity of sound as a relevant metaphor) and the final chorus is milked a bit too much. I'm more relaxed over *Jonas*, and Sabbatini was a welcome discovery. The biography is a bit hagiographic, and you'll need to know either Latin or French to follow the texts (as in other Ligia issues). *CB*

Charpentier *Messe à quatre choeurs* (H4) Ex Cathedra, Jeffrey Skidmore 73' 12"
Hyperion CDA67435
+Le Reniement de St Pierre (H424), Salut de la veille des 'O' (H36-43), Salve regina à 3 choeurs (H24)

This M-AC tercentenary offering from Ex Cathedra includes two of his finest works, arguably his most monumental, and a typically craftsmanlike and expressive set of miniatures. I enjoyed it very much, though I do wish that they'd really gone overboard and given the mass a fuller liturgical context, complete with its doubling strings and a *grande orgue* for the specified interludes. It still comes across as rich and impressive, however, and one can only assume that the riotous Agnus Dei set Jesuit feet tapping with approval, as there is no record of the composer having been excommunicated – though perhaps the early performances weren't quite as fast as this one. I have previously extolled the virtues of H24 and H424 in these pages and these performances are certainly worthy of the scores, with the conclusion of H424 (also the end of the recital) very fine indeed. The set of Advent antiphons are attractively done, though I doubt that there should be quite so much choral (in the modern sense) singing in them. *David Hansell*

Corelli *Sonates op. 5 no 1 à 6* Musica Antiqua Provence (Christian Mendoze *rec*, Philippe Foulon *vlc*, Brigitte Tramier *hpscd*) 59' 26"
Integral *Classic* INT 221.129

My reaction to this disc more than any other this month depends on my mood. As a violinist and recorder player, I can enjoy (or not) these stylish and effortless-sounding performances. But, at the end of the day, I just long for the excitement of the double stops and the cross-string writing which, regardless of the virtuosity of a recorder player's fingers (and/or tongue), one can never get from anything but a member of the violin family. Yes, these are based on period transcriptions (or rather, later ones for traverso), and, as I've already said, there is nothing lacking in the performance, but, on balance I cannot ever see myself listening to this before I listen to Sigiswald Kuijken, or any one of a dozen fine fiddlers who have recorded this benchmark set. *BC*

De Grigny *Premier Livre d'Orgue (1699)* Olivier Vernet (organ at Saint-Antoine l'Abbaye). Ensemble Jacques Moderne 130' 00" (2 CDs)
Ligia Digital Ligi 0104125-03

The recent cluster of De Grigny releases (cf *EMR* 98 p. 17) may have been stimulated by his 2003 tercentenary – another one we missed. This lavish issue nails itself firmly to that particular mast and does the composer proud. This *Livre d'orgue* (sadly an only rather than the first of several owing to the composer's untimely death in 1703 at the age of 31) is one of the French Baroque's most splendid and succeeds both in being part of the established tradition and in lifting it to new heights of grandeur and expressiveness. The first disc contains the organ mass and the second the five hymns, 43

movements altogether. As AB-W observed, these *versets* are often quite extended movements and benefit considerably from being heard in company with the alternating plainchant sections so that the composer's full vision is revealed. (It also occurred to me while listening that they give time for the organist to change the stops: setting up a delicate *Duo* following a *Grands jeux* movement can be a time-consuming business when, as here, it has to be done by hand on a four manual organ.) The chant is taken from a contemporary source and sung in the measured style of the period, sometimes crossing to the wrong side of the line between dignified and ponderous, but always with impressive unanimity. The organ (magnificent and well-tuned in every sense) and the player are the heroes, though. The playing throughout shows dedication and immaculate judgement with excellent clarity in the often five-voiced textures, though he is not so awed by his material that he eschews a few additional *roulades* in the lively *Duo* movements. JSB admired this music: this issue supports his view. *David Hansell*

Erlebach *Ouvertures, Sonatas* Berliner Barock-Compagney 64' 54"
Capriccio 67 074
Ouverture V & VI (1693); Sonata 2 & 3 (1694 for vln, vdg & bc)

For some years now I've been working on editions of a few of Erlebach's church cantatas, and been thoroughly impressed by his melodic gifts, contrapuntal abilities and sense of overall shape. I have known some smaller-scale vocal pieces for a long time, and heard some of his trio sonatas (violin, gamba and continuo). Although I knew of their existence, I'd only ever 'heard' the overtures in my head while looking at scores in Cambridge University Library and at a New Year's Day fun playing session, so this utterly wonderful recording by Berliner Barock-Compagney is something of a dream come true. The one-to-a-part playing is beautiful, lucid and crisp. I would be interested to know exactly what the instruments described as *violetta* and *Tenor-Viola* actually are. The third of the viola parts is taken by a violoncello piccolo, and the bass by a violone in B [flat], presumably what we call a bass violin. If the overtures themselves are stylish and grand, it is the chaconnes that reveal Erlebach at his most majestic. The sonatas, as already mentioned, are scored like many North German sonatas of the period for violin (in scordatura for one piece), gamba and continuo. The opening sonatas are followed by a sequence of dances. This is a delightful disc: shamefully unknown music in the hands of skilful musicians whose loving care bears real fruit: maybe Erlebach would get better press if one of his 'beautiful courantes' got some Classic fm air time... *BC*

Foggia *Psalmodia Vespertina* Cappell-Antiqua, Bernhard Pfammatter 68' 03"
Divox Antiqua CDX 70207
+Victoria, Massenzio & chant

When this disc arrived, my heart sank: for the past three years or so, I have been working away in fits and starts on a set of Vespers psalms that Foggia wrote for San Giovanni in Laterano in Rome, and the thought that someone had beaten me to it – and recorded the service – was extremely disappointing. Much to my relief, it turns out that this fine CD is based on a printed source, and – unlike my manuscript set which involves various voices and instruments – is scored for SSATB and continuo. CapellAntiqua supplement the psalms with chant, as well as a *Domine ad adiuvandum* by Victoria, a hymn by *Massenzio* (with a Ritornello by Foggia), and three further motets by Foggia. I first encountered his music in a concert Noel O'Regan organized in honour of Jean Lionnet in Edinburgh some years ago, and I'm as impressed by the music here as I was by the mixed programme then. He uses the voice very well, and within what is essentially a homophonic sound world, he manages to introduce imitation without feeling the need to write in strict counterpoint. He is not afraid, either, of bold harmonies where the text suggests. The more or less one-to-a-part performances (some pieces are listed as 'tutti a5', for example) are enjoyable. The continuo is taken by cello, violone, organ and theorbo, but this never seems too much. Recommended to anyone interested in mid-17th-century Italian music. *BC*

Lonati *Violin Sonatas (nos 2-4, 10-12)* Christoph Timpe, Accademia per music
Capriccio 67 075 72' 35"

Anyone unfamiliar with either Lonati's violin sonatas or with the playing of Christoph Timpe is in for double delight here. The six sonatas the latter has chosen from a set of 12 are fantastic, somewhere between the formality of Corelli and the virtuosity of Biber. It's difficulty in the absence of a score to say what is Lonati and what is improvised by Timpe: some of the scrunchy harmonies must surely derive from the latter (and his harpsichordist colleague), but there is certainly no suggestion that they are inappropriate – quite the reverse. Clearly a virtuoso himself, Lonati exploits the technical possibilities of the violin to a far greater extent than Corelli, and Timpe is more than a match for the difficulties the music poses for fiddlers. This is a disc I have listened to several times this month, and to which I will continually return for excitement. Sonata XII of the set is an incredible 22 minutes of Chaconne on the descending fourth, which does not flag for even a moment. *BC*

Lully *Le Triomphe de l'Amour LWV 59* La Simphonie du Marais, Hugo Reyne 129' 06" (2 CDs)
Accord 476 1053

The first performance of this blend of ballet de cour and opera must have been quite an event even by the standards of the court of the Sun King. 39 days of rehearsal (including Christmas Day), 64 dancers, including most of the Royal Family, 48 singers and an orchestra of 75 must have satisfied even Lully's megalomanic inclinations. The subsequent public performances were doubtless not quite so lavish but they did mark the first appearance of female professional dancers on the Parisian stage. Hugo Reyne's essay, one of two in the booklet, makes it clear that the production of this fifth volume of his *Musicien du Soleil* series was quite special for his ensemble, and there is a sense of all concerned giving their best in what is a live recording. This manifests itself in the form of opening and closing applause and a very few untidy moments in large ensembles but there is a tremendous sweep to the whole performance, succesfully knitting together what are often short movements – 40 tracks on disc 1. The players savour the imaginative sounds Lully requires of them, including a movement for flutes of both kinds and the use of muted strings, and the singers are all very confident, with a very young-sounding *soprano enfant* (echoing the presence of a nine year old in the original cast). I enjoyed the singing of the men, especially the velvet bass of Philippe Roche, more than that of the ladies, whose vibrato is sometimes in conflict with the sound-world of the violins and, in the case of the chorus, with each other. All the usual suspects are here – Neptune, Venus, Jupiter, Amour etc – in a not-too-improbable scenario which it would be even easier to enjoy had the elegant packaging found space for a translation of the libretto, which appears in French only. *David Hansell*

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

Pachelbel *'D'Erfurt à Nuremberg': Anthologie de ses plus belles pages pour orgue* Olivier Vernet (1999 Rémy Mahler organ, Baigorry, Aquitaine) 75' 09"
Ligia Digital Lidi 0104117-02

The organ is a modern reconstruction of what a South German organ of the early 18th century might have sounded like, although it is about as far away in France as one can get from Germany. It produces an effective sound, although readers might prefer recordings from historic instruments in Germany itself. The unequal temperament makes itself felt in the opening F minor Chaconne, and the mixtures can sound a trifle brittle. I assume that the unsteadiness of pulse, evident in many of the pieces, is a deliberate attempt to impose romantic notions of rhetoric or rubato onto music of an earlier period, rather than just unsteady playing. But, either way, I fear it will grate with most *EMR* readers, as will one or two other romantic notions, for example, in the often less than clear articulation. Although the booklet suggests that it is the innovation of the performer, the practice of grouping Pachelbel's organ pieces into short suites is a common one, and is sensible considering that few of his pieces exceed three minutes in length. However, longer gaps between the groups might have helped transfer the idea from paper to sound. Some of the pairings are a bit odd – such as the bombastic (in this performance, at least) Toccata in F coupled with the delicate chorale prelude on *O Lamm Gottes unschuldig.*

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Pasquini *Sonate per gravicembalo* Roberto Loreggian *hpscd, spinet* + Francesco Ferrarini *vlc* 75' 37"
Chandos Chaconne CHAN 0704

Last year James Johnstone recorded the music of Ercole Pasquini; now here an Italian player offers a disc devoted to Bernardo Pasquini (1637–1710). Bernardo was not related to Ercole (active in the second decade of the century), but he also worked in Rome, where he was the foremost keyboard player at the time of Corelli. This disc offers a cross-section of his output, including variations on popular tunes such as the Folia, a witty toccata on the cuckoo's call, and contrapuntal studies in the tradition of Frescobaldi. Two pieces are particularly unusual. There is a 13-minute ricercar on a single theme, an impressive feat of compositional ingenuity; and there is one of his sonatas for basso continuo, where only the bass line is notated; here the harpsichordist's realisation is supported by a cello. Roberto Loreggian's playing is admirable, with a subtle sense of rhythm and an ability to project the most intricate part-writing. In the long ricercar, he reels off the virtuoso figuration with complete ease. Keyboard enthusiasts will find this a rewarding release.

Stephen Rose

Purcell *The Fairy Queen* Carolyn Sampson, Gillian Keith, Rebecca Outram, William Towers, Andrew Carwood, Robert Murray, Michael Bundy *SSScTTTB*, New English Voices, Accademia Bizantina, Ottavio Dantone 133'02" (2 CDs)
Arts 47679-2

This recording of a live performance from the 2001 Ravenna Festival brings together a group of experienced and stylish English singers and an often extrovert Italian orchestra and director. As with all live recordings, there are a few moments of poor ensemble and intonation that a studio session could have retaken, but also a sense of living 'on the edge' that the repeated takes of a studio might so easily have ironed out. There's very little extraneous noise, apart from the director's occasionally sniffed up-beats, but the solo singers do tend to be overpowered by the orchestral sound in the overall balance. That's a pity, as there are some fine contributions from them, especially Carolyn Sampson's flexible and intelligent response to the text, and the range of colour Andrew Carwood brings to his high tenor role. Michael Bundy is less successful in finding appropriate vocal characterisations, especially in those movements where the continuo team is unnecessarily (and almost certainly inauthentically) beefed up with bassoon and double bass. The most effective instrumental playing is when single strings (with 8' bass line) and theorbo take over from the full band. There's also some graceful oboe playing and enthusiastic trumpeting; but why, oh why, does a tambourine have to spoil so many of the dances? The chorus contributes efficiently, with a firm masculinity in the alto line, and despite a few strange tempo choices, Dantone keeps the sequence of short movements moving along effectively. This is not the definitive recording of Purcell's *Fairy Queen*, but there's plenty of enjoyable music-making along the way.

John Bryan

Barocke Orgeln in Thüringer Dorfkirchen Sebastian Knebel (1737 Gerbard organ Untergneus, 1765/6 Rommel organ Wohlmuthausen, 1699 anon organ Friedelshausen, 1728/31 Theilemann organ, Gräfenhain) 77' 37"
Raum Klang RK9907
Music by JB, J.Christoph & JS Bach, Böhm, Buttstett, Pachelbel, Vetter, Walther

This has the makings of becoming one of my favourite CDs. A tour of four smallish Thuringian village organs, it does more to bring me closer to the sound world of the time of Bach than many a grander affair. The well-chosen programme includes music of Bach and his central German contemporaries and relatives, including Johann Christoph and Johann Bernhard. Sebastian Knebel's interpretations shed a new light on many works. In less musical hands, there is a risk that this could become mannered, but Knebel gives me the impression of having thought long and hard about what he is offering, and he does so with a very high degree of musical integrity. Examples include a number of pieces that are played on manuals alone, rather than in the more usual pedal versions, including Pachelbel's Ciacona in F minor. In Bach's *Erbarm dich mein, o Herre Gott,* the single stop used does not give the treble chorale melody enough prominence to be heard clearly – something that North German and Dutch organs, and many of the more substantial Central German instruments might have done. Johann Heinrich Buttsett is represented by two works, including a fugue with a repeated note theme that was used by a number of German composers of the time, and the chorale *Von Himmel hoch* with a very effective use of a rather rustic Glockenspiel. The Bach Praeludium in E minor is played with nice freedom and some very good structural ideas. The concluding work is an extraordinary interpretation of Bach's Praeludium BWV549, usually interpreted as a bombastic pleno but here played on very quiet pedal stops and Quintatön. Strongly recommended.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Venezia Stravagantissima Balli canzone e madrigali, 1550-1630 Capriccio Stravagante Renaissance Orchestra, Skip Sempé 53' 35"
Alpha 049
Music by Canale, G. Gabrieli, Guami, Incerto, Lappi, Mainerio, Picchi, Vecchi, Zanetti

With the obvious person to review this disc (Stephen Cassidy) otherwise occupied, it falls to me to make what I can of it. I confess that I had never heard or played any of the music before (save, perhaps, the Picchi and the Gabrieli, which may have featured in late-night sessions at the hugely enjoyable Beauchamp Summer Schools), so my remarks may stem from ignorance. My immediate reaction was to the rich array of instruments, which I should have expected from the title of the CD, I suppose. I have seen enough iconographic evidence of large, mixed ensembles at his time, but I do not recall one where there are whole families of instruments

involved at the same time: here, we have recorders, various strings, cornetto and sackbutts, not always, but sometimes all playing the same piece. While I harbour no misgivings in principle to this approach – I like to have fun, just like everyone else (perhaps *more* than anyone else, some of my colleagues I'm sure would say!) There were occasions when the different instruments appeared to be playing at different speeds: I'm sure that has more to do with the actual making of the sound and projection of it, rather than any spatial difficulty; but just once or twice the pulse felt slightly uneasy. Another minor worry was the difference in virtuosity (from an improvisational point of view) between the cornettist and the recorder player who had to 'compete' (if that is an appropriate verb). This all sounds very negative: the disc is an excellent selection of music, played mostly stylishly (the recorder consort on its own is delightful), but I had some reservations. *BC*

LATE BAROQUE

Bach *Clavier-Übung O: Un album pour la jeunesse* Olivier Vernet (1999 Aubertin organ, St-Cyr-sur-Loire) 67' 30"
Ligia Digital Lidi 0104123-03
BWV 553-560, 591 & assorted preludes & fugues.

The slightly misleading title of this CD is the cover for a collection of tiny pieces, all less than four minutes long, most of which are probably not by Bach at all. It includes the 'Eight Short Preludes and Fugues', so beloved of baby organists and really rather good pieces. As with the Pachelbel CD, reviewed above, Olivier Vernet applies an anachronistic rubato in a number of pieces, and changes speed more or less at will. His lack of articulation of individual notes often clouds the texture, making for a less than historically informed performance all round. That said, I suppose that some of his additions to the musical text are quite fun, and the organ certainly sounds good.
Andrew Benson-Wilson

Bach *Variations Goldberg BWV988* Pierre Hantaï *hpscd*
Mirare MIR 9945

Hantaï here returns to the Goldberg Variations ten years after first recording them. This rendition is memorable for the sharp characterisation of each variation. Variation 6, for instance, is flowing yet with weightiness on each note; then the dotted rhythms in Variation 7 are clown-like in their bouncy energy; and in Variation 8 the semiquaver arpeggios are as regimented as an army on parade. Continuity between variations is superbly judged, in particular the suspense-laden gap at the half-way point of the cycle, between the ethereal close of Variation 15 and the punchy entrance of the French overture. Virtuosity is assured and sounds effortless, especially in Variations 14, 17 and 28. In the repeats of each variation, Hantaï inserts some ingenious ornaments and often delays a pivotal note (such as the lowest bass note) for dramatic effect. No details of the harpsichord are given, but it offers an appropriate range of colour, with a mellow stop that comes into its own for the lyrical melody of Variation 13. Most importantly, Hantaï always carries the listener with him, ensuring an engrossing and panoramic journey through the Goldbergs. Strongly recommended. *Stephen Rose*

Bellinzani *Dodici Sonate da Chiesa a tre* I Solisti dell' Ensemble Respighi 59' 52"
Tactus TC 682703

Having been not very complimentary about the Ensemble Respighi last month (Tartini flute concertos), I am glad to be able to write more favourably about them here. Bellinzani's trio sonatas, which survive in a manuscript in Bologna, are written *ad imitazione di qulle di Corelli* (like most others of the period!) but are never pale copies: his experience of counterpoint in writing copious amounts of church music (he took his vows in 1717 and worked in various Italian centres until his death forty years later) is obvious throughout each of the 12 four-movement sonatas. The playing is light and stylish: there is no extraneous bassoon to complain about here – just four fine musicians enjoying some very high-quality music. *BC*

Duphly *Pièces de clavecin Premier Livre – 1744* Jean-Patrice Brosse *hpscd* 60' 36"
Pierre Verany PV704011
There was a time when the bolder harpsichordists would include a piece or two by a Forqueray or Duphly in a mixed programme. Now as we become both less overawed by the biggest names and more intrigued by the context in which they worked, recordings and performances of whole *livres* are far from rare, and no-one has been more assiduous than this artist in promoting the music of the later *clavecinistes* as this release joins its predecessors featuring A-L Couperin, Balbastre, Royer and Corrette. The music more than repays his devotion – often being the equal of Rameau in interest and invention – and I enjoy most of the playing, with choice of basic tempo being a particular strength though sometimes the deviations from this are not entirely convincing. There are also one or two lumpy edits. The supporting essay by J-PB is thorough and one expects his book on the French keyboard music of this era to be an invaluable supplement to his recordings. *David Hansell*

Fasch *Concerti & Sinfoniae* main-barockorchester frankfurt 63' 17"
Aeolus AE-10017
Concertos FWV L: A2, B1, d4; Sinfoniae FWV M: a1 B2, g1

This, I believe, is the CD debut of the main-barockorchester frankfurt, and what a fine show they give! Clearly, I am biased in favour of an all-Fasch CD (and there are at least two more on the way – one from cpo and another by Paul Dombrecht and his excellent il fondamento – which I am eagerly looking forward to). Back to the present, though, and a programme of sinfonias and concertos. The former is arguably the most neglected part of Fasch's output: strange, in some ways, because they are surely among the most forward-looking of this pieces, yet understandable in another because, frankly, the music looks rather boring on the page. Here, though, the performers relax into some 'light music', not trying to make it sound like a symphony; they enjoy the rich harmonies of the slow movements and the excitement of the final dances. Even I was surprised how 'lovely' they are. The concertos are altogether more serious, and they fair equally well. It's a shame that the group felt the need to include the chalumeau concerto in the programme, given that it has already been recorded (well) elsewhere, while the D minor suite remains unrecorded, and the orchestral fantasia that does indeed include two movements of the concerto is similarly unrecorded. Nothing to complain about the other pieces, though: I played the wonderful D minor violin and oboe concerto in Edinburgh in 1988 (300th anniversary of the composer's birth) — it's available from King's Music as KMF10 – and I rate the major solo violin concerto as among Fasch's most modern pieces. Listening to this performace, I was frequently reminded of Leclair, something that had never occurred to me before. I hope it won't be too long before the group's next CD: they are a very welcome addition to the catalogue. The booklet exploits a picture of people dancing, and includes several close-ups of sections of it: exasperatingly, there is no close-up of the musicians who are playing the accompanying music. *BC*

Antoine Forqueray *Pièces de Viole* Prosper Lugassy & Christine Plubeau *vdg*,

Sébastien Guillot *hpscd* 59' 44"
Integral *Classic* INT 221.119

Despite the booklet's claim that these suites in D minor and C minor are by Antoine Forqueray (père), the portrait on the front is that of Jean-Baptiste Forqueray (fils) who published what he claimed was his father's work in 1747, two years after the older composer's death. Indeed there is no consensus on quite who wrote what, but both father and son were celebrated by their contemporaries as amongst the last great virtuosi on the bass viol. Forqueray père was said to have played 'like the devil' and was obsessed with showing the viol's capacity (in his hands, at least) to emulate the flashiest Italian violin music. Unfortunately this recording rarely rises completely to the challenge: tempi tend to be careful and the swagger and verve of the more flamboyant movements are undermined by a lack of light and shade. The rather dry acoustic emphasizes the often tight sound of Lugassy's upper notes, and the continuo team tend to give a flat-footed account of the dances. The best moments are in the more dreamy pieces, but for much of the time I longed for the real Italian flair that a player like Pandolfo brings to this ebullient and extraordinary music. *Jo hn Bryan*

C H Graun *Der Tod Jesu* Uta Schwabe, Inge van de Kerkhove, Christoph Genz, Stephan Genz *SSTB*, La Petite Bande, Ex Tempore, Sigiswald Kuijken 101' 17" (2 CDs, one free)
Hyperion CDA67446 ££

This was arguably Graun's most famous piece during his lifetime. Nowadays perhaps thought of more as a composer of mid-18th-century opera seria, and otherwise well known for his symphonies and chamber music (although there are invariably difficulties in definitively ascribing pieces to him or to his brother, Johann Gottlieb), he wrote several Passion oratorios (at least one of which Handel knew intimately). *Der Tod Jesu* is a meditation on rather than a graphic account of the Passion story. The four soloists are simply that: they do not represent characters from the drama, but rather their recitatives and arias are used to break up a sequence that also includes chorales, 'tuttis' and a final chorus, which, at just under seven minutes, is one of the longer numbers. There can be no denying Graun's qualities as a composer: it is immediately obvious why his operas were so popular, and why his arias and duets were so highly thought of. His choruses, though perhaps lacking the dramatic impact of Bach's, are by no means unimpressive in their own way. It is not for nothing that this piece stayed in the choral repertory well into the 19th century Congratulations to Hyperion for releasing such a splendid performance! *BC*

I have an early Novello octavo vocal score, which attests to popularity in England in the later 19th century. We also recently received a new vocal score from Carus for review (CV 10.379/03; €20.00, coincidentally the same price as Breitkopf's; there is also a full score, which I haven't seen. It's difficult to review it without a copy of the obvious rival at hand for comparison. It's a neat, well-printed book of 96 pages that won't tire the singers' arms nor strain their eyes. *CB*

Handel *Organ music, Deutsche Arien, Dalla guerra amorosa, Mi palpita il cor, etc.* John Shirley-Quirk *bar*, Yvonne Kenny *S*, Sara Watkins *ob* 59' 17"
Meridian CDE 84461 (1990 & 2004)

This would have sounded a bit archaic in style even when it was new (1990), with names I remember from the 1960s. It is a bit four-square, but is worth hearing. Except when duetting (when they are a bit too competitive), the singers are stylish, and Sara Watkins plays the oboe sonata HWV 366 delightfully. *CB*

Keiser *La Bella Cantatrice Cantatas* Susanne Rydén *S*, Capella Orlandi Bremen 65' 44"
cpo 999 956-2

While working as an opera composer in Hamburg, Keiser began introducing Italian arias within German-texted works. His experience at setting both Italian and German words is evident in this anthology of his secular cantatas. The German works, including a version of Psalm 52 and a paean to music, have a melodic simplicity that can be quite beguiling. More impassioned are the Italian pieces, portraying the pains and pleasures of love, where the vocal writing is more ornate. The continuo players on this disc underscore the stylistic difference by using organ for the German works and Baroque guitar for the Italian ones. Rydén's singing is captivating, bringing a raptness to the German works and a more extrovert character to the Italian ones. Just once or twice I felt that Keiser was retracing his musical steps; otherwise, this disc is an attractive insight into a repertory well worth reviving. *Stephen Rose*

Martini *Sonate d'intavolatura per l'organo e il cembalo (1742): Sonate IX-XII* Susanna Piolanti *hpscd* 73' 05"
Tactus TC 701303

If the prospect of over an hour's harpsichord music by an 18th-century priest, theorist, historian, teacher and music collector strikes you as a potentially dry experience, then put your preconceptions to one side: this disc, which concludes Susanna Piolanti's recording of all twelve of Padre Martini's sonatas, is well worth investigating. Martini corresponded with all the leading composers of his day, and taught J. C. Bach and Mozart amongst others, but his own music is not now so well known. These sonatas were published in 1742 and provide sharply focused snapshots of the transition between baroque and gallant styles. Each has five movements, the first two a toccata-like prelude and a terse fugue exploiting Martini's undoubted contrapuntal skill and belonging firmly in the world of Bach senior and Handel. Then comes a cantabile adagio with highly embellished melody line, and each sonata concludes with a pair of dance movements or variations in an elegant rococo style that look forward to the younger Bachs and Haydn. Piolanti is a persuasive advocate for these sonatas: the fugal movements are portrayed with great integrity and clarity of texture, while she trips lightly through the elaborate figuration of the more decorative pieces or lingers lovingly over chromatic twists and turns. Her instrument is a full-toned copy of a Sodi of 1782 with plenty of colour in its resonant tenor range and a sparkling treble, recorded in an immediate way that captures all the flamboyance of the more rhapsodic movements as well as the charm of the elegant dances. So don't dismiss this as a recording of merely academic interest. *John Bryan*

Vivaldi Sacred Music – 10 Carolyn Sampson, Joanne Lunn, Joyce Didonato, Suva Semmingsen, Robin Blaze, Hilary Summers *SS mS mS cT A*, Choir of The King's Consort, The King's Consort, Robert King 76' 37"
Hyperion CDA66849
RV 589, 642, 803, RVAnh. 23

This completes another of the Hyperion/King extended series – until further new pieces emerge. The 'new' *Nisi Dominus* appeared just in time for inclusion. Not that it was unknown: BC had a film of it for some years (it's from a Dresden MS ascribed to Galuppi), looked at it, decided it wasn't very plausible Galuppi, and did no more about it. But Janice Stockigt drew to the attention of Michael Talbot to the work. He found logical as well as musical ground for a change of attribution, and it can now be heard as excellent Vivaldi. The other reason for buying this (if you're not getting the series) is for RV Anh. 23 – not Vivaldi, but a Gloria dated 1708 by Giovanni Maria Ruggieri. It is recorded here because

Vivaldi borrowed from it in both his own settings of the Gloria (more in RV588, but in the 'Cum sancto spirito' fugue of RV 589). Perhaps I've heard the Vivaldi too often; I've no complaints about the performance here, but it wouldn't in itself make me buy the CD, and anyway most likely purchasers will already have recordings of it. But I was extremely impressed by what Talbot calls Ruggieri's 'naive boldness' (which seems a bit harsh) and would like to hear more. I also enjoyed *Ostra picta*, a free-standing *introduzione* which is here placed before the Ruggieri. The orchestral playing is brilliant, the singing stylish but with occasionally some distracting vibrato on higher notes. *CB*

Vivaldi *Laudate pueri (RV 601), Nisi Dominus RV 608* Lynne Dawson *S*, Christopher Robson *cT*, The King's Consort, Robert King 47' 36"
Meridian CDE 84497 (rec 1986) £

This is a predecessor to the ten-disc set now completed by Robert King for Hyperion. It is, however, worth getting for the two outstanding solo performances, Lynn Dawson in the virtuosic *Laudate pueri* – and Christopher Robson in the usual *Nisi Dominus* as well. The orchestral sound is a little more laid-back than in the recent disc: a different style that makes an interesting comparison. *CB*

Vivaldi *Cantatas* (RV 670-1, 683-5) Max Emanuel Cencic *cT*, Ornamente 99, Karsten Erik Ose 60' 35"
Capriccio 67 072
title on front *The Vivaldi Album*

This is another disc where I am glad of the opportunity to balance a previously negative review. I did not enjoy Mr Cencic's recent recital disc, in which he sang arias by Handel and Vivaldi. This set of five cantatas, however, is in a totally different class. The singing is less forced, and less forceful. Perhaps without the ghost of the operatic stage to contend with, he feels rather more comfortable; that is certainly how it seemed to me. The instrumental playing was not an issue in the previous case, and I'm happy to report that ornamente 99 match Mr Cencic for drama, musicality and style. While I am by no means converted to the countertenor cause, this is among the more enjoyable discs of the kind I have heard - what a shame it is subtitled à la Cecilia Bartoli. There is more music from the period than Vivaldi, and it's about time we heard some. What a pity, too, that the commercial world needs to hang these things on some sort of handle, like the Farinelli recordings of a few years ago. *BC*

Zipoli *Cantate e Sonate* Elena Cecchi Fedi *S*, Luigi Cozzolino *vln*, Bettina Hofmann *vlc*, Gian Luca Lastraioli theorbo/chit, Alfonso Fedi *kbd* 62' 59"
Tactus TC 682603

Zipoli, who trained under Florentine patronage in Rome with Alessandro Scarlatti and Pasquini, was best known in his own time for his 1716 keyboard publication *Sonate d'Intavolatura*, but is probably more famous in ours for becoming a Jesuit missionary in South America, where his church music continued to be copied until late in the 18th century. This disc puts the spotlight on his secular output, with three solo cantatas (one of which has been discovered since the compilation of the *New Grove* worklist), together with his solitary, unpublished violin sonata and a good cross-section of harpsichord music. The music, while never less than polished and engaging, does sometimes resort to conventional formulae and sequential passages that demand more imaginative performances than these to breathe excitement into them. Elena Cecchi Fedi works hard to portray the tormented Lucretia following her ravishment by Tarquin, but is all too often smothered by the gallumphing continuo section: why the performers feel the need for head-banging strums on a closely miked guitar as well as an overactive harpsichord realisation defeats me. Balance is also a problem in the violin sonata, where the solo line seems distant and lacking in colour. The interplay between soprano and continuo is more effective in two short pastoral cantatas, and there's some sensitive and thoughtful solo harpsichord playing as well as an appropriately athletic restless energy in faster movements. It is a pity that many of the dance movements are robbed of their repeats: there's room here for them and the suites feel less well rounded without them. *John Bryan*

CLASSICAL

Manuel Blasco de Nebra *Sonatas and Pastorelas* 76' 21"
Carole Cerasi *hpscd, fp*
Metronome MET CD1064

Younger than Soler, the Sevillian De Nebra (1750-84) comes across as a post-Scarlatti composer of binary movements arranged as two-movement sonatas or three-movement Pastorelas. The latter have an individual arrangement of slow Adagio, followed by a fast and rhythmically quirky Pastorela and completed by a sensitive minuet. Cerasi uses a 1785 Portuguese harpsichord by Antunes and a 1793 fortepiano by Lengere, both from the Finchcocks collection. The disc is beautifully recorded and there is very good contrast between harpsichord and piano playing which shows both instruments as equally appropriate to this music. Cerasi's harpsichord playing tends to emphasise the quirkiness in some the music, which I found a bit queasy initially but which has grown on me; her piano playing is poised and does full justice to the music's pre-Classical qualities. This is altogether a very interesting window into the keyboard music of pre-Napoleonic Spain.
Noel O'Regan

Bon *Sonatas from the court of Bayreuth* Umbach & Consorten 60' 05"
Aeolus AE-10086

Two keyboard sonatas, two flute sonatas, two sonatas for two flutes and continuo, and a trio for flute, violin and continuo make up this enjoyable recital of Anna Bon's music. When listening to it, one would do well to remember that she was little more than a girl when she composed it, and that she had only recently left Venice for southern Germany. The music is certainly pleasant enough, if not exactly taxing intellectually. The performances are thoroughly enjoyable, with the solo harpsichord music played on a genuine Taskin in a Hamburg Museum. Like the Fasch disc, this has a booklet whose designer is obsessed by the idea of large grey text behind printed black text: for me, apart from obscuring the text, it's a conceit we can well do without. *BC*

Gossec *Symphonies* Concerto Köln 63' 12"
Capriccio 67 073
op. 6/3 in c; op. 13/3 in D La Chasse; *from ballet* Mirza *in D; in 17 parts in F (Brook nos. 33, 62, 90b, 91)*

This beautifully played programme comprises symphonies dating from around 1762 until 1809, and although one cannot, strictly speaking, claim that on this evidence Gossec made steady progress from his late twenties into his mid seventies, all four works are interesting and worthy of attention. The Concertante from *Mirza* (1784) is an uncharacteristically small, oddly proportioned piece, scored for solo flute and violin plus normal orchestra. The minor key symphony is a lithe, forceful work, and the hunting one (like most in the genre) is a genial winner. The latest symphony played is quite richly scored, and Concerto Köln here numbers 32. The CD is nicely packaged and presented with good documentation, warm and clear sound, and notes in the three expected cisalpine languages. This is an impressive and very enjoyable issue. *Peter Branscombe*

Mozart *Quartets and Quintets with Flute* Christian Lardé *fte*, Quatuor Rosamonde: Marie-Claire Jamet *hpsd & harp*, Agnès Sulem-Bialobroda *vln*, Jean Sulem *vla*, Xavier Gagnepain *vcl*
Disques Pierre Verany PV704012 63' 57"
K285, 285a, 285b (Anh. 171), 298 & 617)

The unusual entrant in this recital, naughtily advertised as *Quintette pour flûte, harpe et trio à cordes*, is K617, the miraculous piece for musical glasses, flute, oboe, viola and cello. It sounds lovely done as on this disc, yet more celestially beautiful by far in the original scoring. The notes are brief but useful, though Mozart's most whimsical tempo indication is brushed out (the finale of K298 is marked *Rondieaoux* in the autograph, before a string of contradictory speed-indicators). The performances are enjoyable: sprightly, affectionate and quite stylish. No information is given about the instruments used – period strings and, to judge by a photograph of the artists with the tools of their trade, a wooden flute of later date. The recording is quite close and well balanced. *Peter Branscombe*

Philippo & Ignazio Prover *Sonate per l'oboe* Jacques Vandeville *ob*, Jean-Michel Louchart *org*, Michel Thiolat *gtr* 58' 27"
Arion ARN 68628

This disc, played on modern instruments, warrants just a mention in *EMR*. It includes five sonatas by Philippo (on the outside of the booklet, Filippo inside) Prover and four by his father, Ignazio (No. 2 of what is presumably a set is omitted). The notes tell us much about the dynastic intricacies of French and Savoyan court life in the 18th century, but little about the music, which is charming enough – one can imagine why the younger composer was such a success in mid-century Paris. *BC*

Piccini *Le donne vendicate* Vincenzo Di Donato *T*, Giuliana Castellani *S*, Mauro Buda *Bar*, Sylva Pozzer *S*, I Barocchisti, Diego Fasolis 103' 21" (2 CDs in box)
Chandos Chaconne CHAN 0705(2)

This recording of an early Piccinni intermezzo comes from Swiss Italian Radio, a source of previous welcome sets of 18th-century operas. *Le donne vendicate* ('Women avenged') was staged in Rome at Carnival 1763. It is a simple story of two girls in a country villa, who ultimately end up engaged – not quite as they or we expected: the heiress to an eccentric count (tenor) who is taught to respect women, her friend to the lady's uncle (baritone). In the process, both gentlemen turn out to be cowards when there's talk of a duel, whereas the girls are thoroughly resourceful. The music is attractive, with mainly brief, busy arias, and several ensembles. I Barocchisti, who here number 17, are a lively, musicianly period-instrument band, and Diego Fasolis directs with light hand and sympathetic spirit. The best of the singers (none of them outstanding) are Giuliana Castellani in the mezzo role, and Mauro Buda as the uncle; all however contribute to the general pleasure, more by power of characterization than beauty of voice. A handsome booklet contains an Italian and English libretto and useful notes in English, German, French and Italian. The recording is on the close side, but thoroughly acceptable. *Peter Branscombe*

Sack *Lieder: Autour de la Berliner Liedertafel* Kai Wessel *cT*, Christoph Hammer *fp* 68' 50"
WDR 3 222302
music by J.P. Sack, C.H. Graun, C.G. Krause, J. F. Agricola, F.W. Marburg, C. Nichelmann & C.F. Schale

Here is an unusual and very interesting CD. Most of the 29 tracks are short songs by Johann Philipp Sack (1722-1763), with a sprinkling of his menuets and polonaises; the rest of the programme includes three Marburg tracks (his *An die Deutschen* makes a good conclusion), and one item each by Graun, Krause, Agricola, Nichelmann and Schale. If few of the strophic songs are at all memorable, the keyboard solos (neatly played by Christoph Hammer on a modern reconstruction of a Silbermann original) are distinctly pretty. The disappointment for me is that Kai Wessel, though musicianly and clear in enunciation and the author of a lengthy and helpful insert note, turns out to be a dull and rather monotonous countertenor. Neverthless this issue gives us a valuable tasting of the work of Berlin's *Musikübende Gesellschaft* in the 1750s.
Peter Branscombe

VARIOUS

Baroque Delights/Plaisirs Baroques Tafelmusik, Jeanne Lamon 59' 09"
Analekta AN 2 9760
Music by Bach, Handel, Marcello, D.Scarlatti, Telemann, Vivaldi

As compilations go, this makes a very pleasant change from the norm: no Pachelbel Canon, no 'Albinoni' Adagio, and no Water Music. But the *Air on the G string* is there, as well as the pair of Gavottes from the same suite, and a selection from the Coffee cantata; Handel is represented by arias from *Alcina* and *Agrippina*, Vivaldi by extracts from a concerto and some church music, and Telemann by movements from *Don Quixote* and the Alster overture. The first movement of Domenico Scarlatti's Salve Regina and two movements of Alessandro Marcello's popular D minor oboe concerto make up the programme. If there is a frustration, it's only that the pieces are incomplete. Not wanting to go on another Classic fm rave, this is slightly off-putting: if you fancy everything on the CD, you're looking at serious money! But, for all that, I doubt if any of the complete recordings will disappoint: Tafelmusik truly are one of the world's top baroque orchestras, and this disc merely highlights the fact for anyone who hasn't yet noticed! *BC*

Sapphire Night Hildegard von Bingen, Patricia van Ness (b. 1951) Tapestry 76' 43"
MDG GOLD 344 1193-2

Five songs by Hildegard frame a 44-minute work by Patricia van Ness, *The Nine Orders of the Angels*, to Latin translations of words by the composer. While not as simply striking as the modern pieces on the disc below, I can imagine that those whose interest in Hildegard comes from the feminist or mystical angle (or both) will welcome the disc. The four singers (Laurie Monahan, Cristi Catt, Daniela Tosic and guest Carolann Buff) make a marvellous sound. Unlike the curate's egg, this is good in any part (try the flowing counterpoint in track 4 at *Gabriel Praedicator*), but I found an hour and a quarter of it a bit much. In fact, I enjoyed it much more when, after written the rest of this review, I just used it as background music. Maybe this insults the composers, but there are many ways of using music. *CB*

Soir, dit-elle Trio Mediaeval (Anna Maria Friman, Linn Andrea Fuglseth, Torunn Østrem Ossum) 62' 56"
ECM New Series 1869 476 1241
Power *Missa Alma redemptoris mater* & music by Gavin Bryars, Oleh Harkavyy, Ivan Moody, Andrew Smith

Normally it's the modern end of mixed discs that disappoint me, but here it's almost the other way round. The tessitura of the Power lies a bit high, and while the contemporary composers also use high notes, they are for effect and are less of a strain for the listener (and perhaps the singers). Having been less than enthusiastic about Gavin Bryars recently, I'm glad to report that I found his monophonic *Laude novella* hauntingly beautiful: timeless! The opening of the disc is amazing, too: just play it without looking at the running order. Ivan Moody's music is a bit more complex, but still immediately attractive, thanks to the marvellous sound these three singers make. If you dislike 20th & 21st century music, you'll probably enjoy this: try it. *CB*

LETTER

Dear Clifford,

I wonder if it is perhaps time to have an International Convention to establish the true date of Twelfth Night? My thoughts are prompted by a very belated reading of Jennie Cassidy's Christmas recipe, but she is not the only one to make the assumption that Twelfth Night falls on 6th January – Peter Walls does the same in his *Music in the English Courtly Masque.*

The OED is rather confusing on the matter. It defines Twelfth-day as the 12th day after Christmas, ie 6th January, but it also defines Twelfth-night as the evening before 12th day, and synonymous with Twelfth-eve, though if this were the case, we should celebrate Bonfire Night on 4th November, and as for the Wedding Night, that would have to be before the ceremony itself!
The concept of the 'twelve days of Christmas' (as celebrated in song) must have had its origin in liturgical practice. Most of the major festivals of the church are celebrated for 8 days, beginning on the day of the feast itself, and ending with the 'Octave', exactly one week later. Christmas, on account of its importance, is celebrated for 12 days, beginning, of course, on December 25th. The Octave is the feast of the Circumcision, on 1st January, and the 12th day (lords a-leaping, etc) is 5th January. Thus, 12th Night coincides with the Eve of the Epiphany, which is celebrated on 6th January, and commences a totally new season.

Since the liturgical calendar governed all walks of life up to the Reformation, I'm sure that was what held, with jollifications being held at the end of the last day of the feast, on the night of the 5th/6th. However, I suspect that some 'temporal slippage' subsequently occurred – by the late 16th century, when the church's festivals had less of a hold over everyday life, the confusion of 'night' with 'eve' possibly led to the assumption that 12th day was the 6th (12 days after Christmas), thus neatly identifying with Epiphany and by further slippage at a later date, 12th night itself also got shifted to the 6th.

Whatever the current practice, I shall still continue to take my decorations down on 5th January, but it would be interesting to know just what happened in earlier times.

Simon R Hill

Simon and I have already had some correspondence on this (eg checking that Shakespeare's eponymous play was probably performed on Jan 6th, 1600/01), so I shall add nothing at this point and await comment (apart from wondering whether the new century was celebrated on March 25th 1600 or January 1st 1600 or 1601).

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We were amused by a spam email from the King of King's Publishing Company (in India). Perhaps they should issue cricketing books under the imprint Lord of Lords.

Un trancio di Roberto
(A Helping of Hollingworth)

We've got a bit less than a week
In which to make this music speak
And reach some sort of modest peak.

No 'English' consonants, then, please:
Discard those wet, obtrusive Ts,
Those clumsy, thickly-plosive sounds
In which our native tongue abounds.
Just let the lines more fluid grow
And, as you sing, resolve to show
(Throughout this 'sacred conversation'
From choir to choir in syncopation –
Despite the presence of antiphony)
The smoothness crucial to polyphony.
The pulses are organic,
So try to be less manic –
No need for any panic.
Stretch out those vowel sounds with care
Then, at the bar line, spring for air.
But be not loth, tenacious Second Bass,
To let the hapless dotted minim go;
Relinquish it with rather better grace
And don't obstruct the forward lyric flow.
Seize not the notes in such a vice-like grip –
As if they meant to give you all the slip!
And let us have 'an Ely m'
When we are singing words like *Spem-m*
In alium-m
(Or *lilium convalium* ?)
Vigilias requires more vim: Guami *In die tribulationis*
This man's sleep has eluded him,
All rest denied, and spirits dim...
Here, grief is desolate and deep,
So *plangite* must yearn and weep... Croce *O triste spectaculum*
First Sops, a littly 'mousy', that;
Be bright and resonant, not flat.
Just focus forward t'wards the nose,
Or Andrew must once more transpose!
Don't force me yet again to stop,
You'll know I'll register each flop.
Remember always as we go:
Soft palate high and larynx low.
If you persist in breathing late,
You'll find the music will not wait,
And if you take a quaver rest,
The train will not stop on request.
But, at the risk of sounding petty,
Your lumpy phrasing's like spaghetti;
There mustn't be excessive stress,
your accenting must be much less.
What's more, your Ss are a mess.
To spread and splodge them isn't nice:
They must be neatly clean, precise.
So keep me constantly in view
That you may pick up every cue,
And, as I wave my arms above you,
Project to me: 'Dar-r-ling, I love-a-you!'

Jill Mitchell

Reflections on a Lacock course in Venice in March 2004 directed by Robert Hollingworth (as difficult a name for a rhyme as Wilkinson, so Jill is excused by the Poet Laureate's precedent). Robert confirms that the poem catches his style. CB