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One of our Christmas presents to each other was Alan Bennett's *Untold Stories*. He is more into art and architecture than music, though we both have a sentimental attachment to hymns. His diary entry for 26 August 1999 interested me. He catches part of Elgar's first symphony on the radio, and it 'transports him back to boyhood walking up Headington Lane on a summer evening after a concert in Leeds Town Hall. The evocative power of music is, I suppose, greatest when heard in live music. This is a recording, but it still casts a spell because I heard it by accident. Had I put on the recording myself the spell would have been nowhere as powerful because self-induced.' This squares with my experience. Radio music I enjoy serendipitously: I never look to see what is on. Similarly with CDs, I load half a dozen into the cartridge of the player in the car and hope I've forgotten what they are by the time I play them. It's a good way of reviewing. This month, for instance, I has no idea where the Monteverdi Book VIII disc (see p. 39) had come from, so was utterly uninfluenced by any past experience of the performers in my evaluation of it; I enjoyed it the more because of the surprise. In fact, I'm now even suspicious of concerts, where there is rarely any surprise: who knows what makes one inspiring, another tedious. It isn't just the performers or the occasion.

My mind is full of fragments that are in some way evocative irrespective of context. There's the opening of what I think must be Dvorak's Romance for violin and orchestra, though I have no recollection of ever hearing the complete piece, or a few chords in the middle of Butterworth's *Banks of Green Willow*, which I was thinking about as I drove to the bank one day recently then was amazed to hear it on Classic FM as I drove home. I mention in the review of the Monteverdi disc one bar of *Hor ch'el ciel* that haunts me, or there's the Messenger in Orfeo (see p. 46). The problem is that my personal obsession with a passage and how it should sound distorts my assessment and is inevitably going to make other performances of these passages disappointing – especially since in the mind a performance can be transformed into something ideal. So it was very gratifying to find that my memory from student days of Teresa Stich-Randall's 'As from the pow'r of sacred lays' survived nearly half-a-century of possible idealisation (see p. 44). *CB*

REVIEWS OF MUSIC

Clifford Bartlett

GERMAN RESPONSORIA

Die Handschrift des Jodocus Schalreuter (Ratsschulbibliothek Zwickau Mus.Ms. 73) Zweiter Teil: Abteilung II und III. **Herausgegeben von Martin Just und Bettina Schwemer (*Das Erbe deutscher Musik* 115a),** Breitkopf & Härtel (SON 386), 2005. 239pp, €144.00

Dritter Teil: Abteilung IV. **Herausgegeben von Martin Just und Bettina Schwemer (*Das Erbe deutscher Musik* 116a).** Breitkopf & Härtel (SON 387), 2005. 159pp, € 99.00

I was surprisingly impressed by the music in the first volume (see *EMR* 104 p. 2). Vol. II, with the 2nd and 3rd sections of the MS, contains 20 settings, mostly of psalms, (Abteiling II, nos. 45-64) for five voices and 11 pieces (Abteilung III, nos 65-75) for six; Vol. IV, with the fourth section of the MS, has 36 Responsoria, numbered 76–111, for four voices. To avoid further confusion, I have omitted from the heading that these are Band 20b and Band 21a of the sub-series of *Das Erbe Deutscher Musik: Abteilung Motette und Messe*; furthermore, each piece is identified by a roman number for its Abteilung within the MS then its number in that sequence, starting with 1 for each Abteilung. I hope that's clear: it does seem unnecessarily complicated. For the benefit of English readers, I'll refer to 'vol' rather than 'Teil'.

I wrote the following paragraph about vol. III several weeks before vol. II, which arrived only a few days ago. A quarter of the contents of Vol. III are by Senfl. Quite a lot of the music is chant-based. Martin Agricola's Christmas *Verbum caro factum est* (87) seems to be playing games with note-values, as does Senfl's setting (92). Both composers set 'Verbum' as dotted minims within cut C time, creating a disturbing rhythmic ambiguity at the beginning of the piece: I can't think of a rhetorical reason, so perhaps one was imitating the other. (I'm quoting the halved note-values of the edition.) As I wrote of vol. 1, like most music of the period in C1 C3 C4 F4 clefs, it looks as if it is for ATBarB, and is sensibly set out with octave-treble clefs for the middle two parts. Modern choirs with trebles will need to transpose up a tone or so. This adds to the wealth of 16th-century liturgical music available: it would be easy to ignore it because it is a mixed anthology by mostly minor composers; but there is plenty to enjoy, even apart from the musicological interest in the edition, which can't really be discussed without the commentary in the final volume.

Vol. II has two pieces by Jachet of Mantua, some possibly by Clemens non Papa, one each by Arcadelt, Morales and Verdelot (or Hellinck), though most of the music is by more local composers. Some of the psalms are complete settings with Gloria, some lack Gloria, some are incomplete, though not alternatim. Texts have minor textual changes from the Vulgate/Liber usualis, which I suppose may show their origin. Some are in German. Some have an extraneous cantus firmus, like Schöckler's *Deus venerunt gentes* (61) whose tenor sings *Salva nos, Domine. Exsultent, saliant, plaudant* (63) is a jolly, five-voice wedding piece (G2C2C3C3F3) for the daughter of King Fernandus. I hope that the commentary in Vol IV will supply some context for such motets: with so much good music around, it is always more interesting to programme music with some story attached.

DAMAN & FERRABOSCO

Two Fantasies of Six Parts **William Daman *Fantasia di sei soprano &* Alfonso Ferrabosco I *Fantasia di sei bassi.* Edited by Virginia Brookes.** PRB (VC065) 2005. 10pp + parts, $15.00

Six-part pieces for treble or bass are unusual (the other one that immediately comes to mind is Lichtlein's for six cornetti), but are challenges (and useful ways of disposing of surplus players) at courses. The advantage of having both of these in the same book is that it is multi-purpose – even more than one might expect, since the parts also contain each piece transposed into alto clef for tenor viols. Both were published a quarter century ago by Mapa Mundi, a firm not associated with vocal music, with the result that they did circulated very widely. So this pairing is very useful. I don't remember playing either of them, and evaluating such intertwining music is tricky, so I am recommending this primarily for its convenience. The parts are not very difficult, so both should be good tests for playing in tune. I imagine they were intended for viols, but whenever 6 cornetts or 6 sackbuts are together, they would work. The Daman fits 5 recorders in C and one in F; the Ferrabosco needs five basses in F and one instrument going down to D.

MARENZIO GAGLIANO D'INDIA

D'India *The First Five Books of Madrigals For Mixed Voices in Five Parts...* Edited by John Steele and Suzanne Court. New York: Gaudia Music and Arts, 1997-2000. 5 vols, each $18.00, ISBN 1 888471 15 8

Gagliano *The Complete Five Voice Madrigals For Mixed Voices...* Edited by Suzanne Court. New York: Gaudia Music and Arts, 2002. 6 vols, each $22.00. ISBN 1-888471 30 1

Marenzio *The Complete Six Voice Madrigals For Mixed Voices...* Edited by John Steele and Suzanne Court. New York: Gaudia Music and Arts, 2002. 6 vols, each $22.00. ISBN 1-888471 23 9 (from office@shaffnerpublishing.com)

Enthusiasts for the Italian Madrigal will probably have come across the series *Renaissance Voices* from Gaudia Music and Arts, which is part of Shaffner Music. I've reported on various of their editions over the years, most recently the Marenzio a5 in *EMR* 52, July 1999, pp. 3-4, though I've not been on the circulation list for review copies since 1992. Fortunately, as a result of a chance email contact with Suzanne Court, the younger member of the editorial pair at the University of Otago, Dunedin, the 14 volumes listed above unexpectedly arrived a few days after Christmas – a very welcome present. Like previous volumes, all are sturdy red paperbacks in the old-fashioned vocal-score octavo format. They sit well in the hand (though less well on a music stand) and are easy to read. Original note-values are retained, barring is regular. Chiavette pieces tend to be transposed down a tone – more on that later. There are excellent introductions, poetic sources are listed, and the handful of variant readings are noted – in most cases, the first editions are authoritative and accurate. While there is an attraction in heading each madrigal with the Italian poem set beside a verse translation, it is no reflection on Barbara Reynolds' excellence as a translator to wonder whether singers might prefer more literal versions.

The tardiness with which Marenzio's madrigals have reached modern editions has been a handicap to understanding the whole form in its maturity, and he is still too rarely sung and recorded. Unlike the five-voice sets in the series, which had two books per volume, each book is separate: only two systems of six staves can fit onto a page. Despite the cover telling us twice that each book is for six voices, several books end with larger pieces: Book I has *Vieni Clori gentil* for SATTB SATTB, Book IV has *Donna, il celeste lume* for SATB SATB with a ninth part (soprano) ad lib. repeating 'Stravaganza d'Amore'. Book VI is unusual in containing two multi-sectional pieces, 'Giovane Donna' and 'Se qual dolor', which together make up 17 of the 21 individual items in the book. (The edition consistently, unlike traditional practice, gives just one number to multi-section works.) Vol. VI also includes six-voice madrigals from other books. Allocation of the six voices varies, clearly shown in the contents lists. There is no need to commend Marenzio's madrigals here: he is a master of vocal textures, and is particularly stimulating with the extra voice to play with. The introduction mentions (with some reluctance) the possibility of accompanying voices with instruments. Except in some of the ceremonial pieces, I don't think it would work; but I can imagine some of the madrigals sounding excellent on a viol consort – more so than the five-voice pieces – despite their verbal basis.

Gagliano's six madrigal books (issued here two-to-a-volume) appeared between 1602 (when he was about 20) and 1617. A few pieces vary the five-voice pattern. Book II ends with four settings for the obsequies of Jacopo Corsi in 1602: in three of them, the five voices were accompanied by five viols, while Giovanni del Turco's 'Corso hai di questa vita' was performed by a wooden organ, a flute and a soprano. It seems odd to transpose this from E minor to F sharp minor when there is no need to accommodate five voices. The edition sensibly retains the madrigals by associates of Gagliano, but it is a pity the names are not included in the contents lists. Book III ends with 'Mentre con mill' amori' (SATTB SATTB) by Luca Bati for the wedding of Maria de' Medici, Queen of France, and Book VI includes 'Ove sì lieti' (SATTB SATTB). The Bati is in high clefs, and transposing it down only a tone leaves it with a different tessitura from the other ten-voice piece. Although in general the policy of putting chiavette pieces down a tone works, the Bati needed to go down a fourth to match the Gagliano. The last piece of Book V, 'Altri, di beltà vaga' is for seven voices (SSSATTB), with sections for a smaller ensemble during which the bass part functions as continuo (with no underlay, except in bars 26-28, where it is probably a mistake). Book VI has a drinking song, with three duets framed by a chorus, and ends with 'Sul' Affricane arene' (SATB SATB) in praise of Cosimo II.

Curiously, two editions of Book I appeared in 2003. The other, by Edmond Strainchanps for A-R (RRMBE 104), has a more substantial introduction and no transpositions. The extraordinary writing of 'O Sonno' certainly looks better as notated, and probably sounds better, since sopranos are not normally taken up to top G in low-clef pieces; despite being standard-clef, Gaudia has it up a tone, presumably because of the bass bottom E. One danger in putting chiavette pieces down only a tone is to give the expectation that top Gs are frequent in the repertoire. A-R notates the alto parts in octave-treble clef: altos often moan at this, but soon settle down to it, and it doesn't seem too difficult to find ladies who are happy down to F (or below). The conflict of ranges for the alto reveals misprint in bar 78 of the Gaudia edition: the second note should be the same as the bass, which gives the untransposed bottom alto note E. This is a marvellous piece; the opening would be a good audition example for facsimile singers (soprano starts on top E, alto comes in a seventh lower together with the bass on A). There is a wide range of styles here, from the expressive to the ceremonial to the light.

D'India is better known for his monodies: indeed, the one-volume edition of his five books of *Musiche* should be in every early singer's library (*Musiche Rinascimentali Siciliane* 9: Olschki, 1989; €116.00). The madrigal book of his that I know best, VIII, is ignored in this new series, since it is mostly of concertato pieces and is anyway available in vol. 10 of the Olschki series. (Vol. 24 of the series has the two 1610 volumes of concerted motets.) Book VII lacks the alto part – which shouldn't be a serious obstacle to a plausible completion. There is no book numbered VI: the gap is filled by a set of vocal dances, which I transcribed in the early 1970s though I don't recommend my handwriting to anyone. Of the five books in this series, III is also available as MRS 15, though its large format would make it difficult for ensemble singing; I don't have a copy at hand. Book I was edited complete in 1942 in an edition adorned with

dynamics but useful if you want to see the untransposed notation. Each book has its own volume in this Gaudia series. D'India brings more of the originality of the monodic style to his madrigals than Gagliano, though there is less stylistic development within the five books than one might expect, apart from a group of pieces in Book III for which continuo is essential. There is one trait in the realisation that I find irritating: the insertion of a right hand chord when there is no bass, eg in 'Donna, quanto più a dentro' at bars 39 (where at least it is tonally innocuous) and 57, where a change from F major to D major is anticipated – though I see that a player might try to avoid having to play chords for the three semiquavers of 'Un sco-lo-(rir)'.

These series are extremely useful and good value. Musicologically they are sound: the only worry is the transposition, but the alternative editions ignore the chiavette problem completely. They are fine for singers and the website www.schaffnerpublishing.com lists prices for each madrigal individually.

WILBYE 1609

John Wilbye ***Three-Part Madrigals "apt both for voyals and voyces" from the second set, 1609*** **Edited by George Houle.** PRB (VC060), 2005. 18pp + parts. $25.00 (score & parts); $12.00 (score only)

John Wilbye ***Four-Part Madrigals "apt both for voyals and voyces" from the second set, 1609*** **Edited by George Houle.** PRB (VC052), 2005. 25pp + parts. $26.00 (score & parts); $14.00 (score only)

We generally reckon that Wilbye's madrigals are pretty well-known to singers, so I was surprised to see how unfamiliar these three- and four-part examples were. As with the five-part set (see *EMR* 107, p. 4), this can be recommended to singers – using single parts is easy when they are regularly barred – as well as players, and for combinations of the two, even though none of the pieces seem inherently suitable for mixed ensembles. The three-part set has the two upper parts in treble clef (some have equal parts, the other have lower second parts), while the Bassus is far more in alto or tenor range, with partbooks in alto, octave-treble and bass clefs – the last being down an octave, in accordance with the suggestion that the music can be played and sung an octave lower (or as SSB with a continuo fill-in?). The four-part set has two parts in treble clef, one in bass, with the tenor in both octave-treble and alto. I won't repeat my regret that original clefs are not shown (though it still exists), but the compass of each part is given. Singers should be able to transpose to a suitable pitch, though few viol-players have that skill. Original spelling is maintained (though not to the point of leaving differences between parts), as is the use of italics for names – confusing, since italics usually indicate editorial repetitions: *Cloris* and *Amintas* in the first madrigal a4 are not the editor's suggestion for a gap in which you add a name appropriate to the performers!

SALZBURG KEYBOARD

Orgel– und Claviermusik am Salzburger Hof 1500-1800... Edited by Siegbert Rampe, Bärenreiter (BA 8499), 2005. xix + 80pp, £19.50.

A boxful of new editions arrived from Bärenreiter early enough for review in the December issue: apologies for the delay. This is the only publication among them that offers music that is new. I have some sort of edition of all the rest (see below) though the new ones are, of course, improvements. This anthology contains 21 mostly-unpublished pieces ranging from Hofheimer to Michael Haydn. The most substantial is a four-movement Sonata in A by Eberlin, which concludes with a fugue. Readers may remember that in 1782 Mozart asked his father to send some of Eberlin's fugues to play to van Swieten, but then changed his mind, since they were 'far too trivial to deserve a place beside Handel and Bach': spot on! Leopold Mozart's Sonata in B flat is rather better. I found the earlier pieces a bit erratic: they had good bits, but also included what seemed to me to be patches that didn't convince: written-down improvisations, rather than carefully thought-out compositions. The first successful piece in the book is an early version of the *Toccata Prima* from Muffat's *Apparatus Musico-organisticus*. The following Parthia in B flat by F.X. Neumüller is also impressive. Michael Haydn is represented by a series of cadenzas and versetti in the eight modes, fine objects for imitation as short improvisations. The editing is precise, veering at times towards the pedantic and avoiding editorial accidentals at several places that should probably be sharpened in anticipation of a sharp a couple of notes later. Since in the Hofheimer pieces the ornamentation sign that looks as if it implies a note a fifth below the main one evidently doesn't mean that, why confuse the reader by printing it thus, and preserving black semibreves for the top part adds no musical meaning. But better for an editor to be cautious than over-enthusiastic in his modernisation. It's an interesting anthology; the earlier pieces are primarily for organ, but some later ones (especially the sonatas) are presumably intended for harpsichord, and the format of the volume is upright, not oblong.

PASQUINI

Bernardo Pasquini ***L'Oeuvre pour clavier. 'Sonate per gravecembalo composte dal Sig: Bernardo Pasquini, e scritte di sua mano in questo libro. A. D. 1702 Aprile.' Manuscrit autographe L.215 (Berlin).*** **Présentation par Emer Buckley.** Fuzeau (5919-20), 2005. 2 vols, €95.00.

Pasquini ***Oeuvre pour clavier: extraits du manuscrit autographe de Berlin, 1702.*** Emer Buckley, *hpscd*
Fuzeau **5904** *€19.50*
Order number for 2 vols + CD: 5950; price €111.00

This didn't arrive in time for me to pass on the message on the accpmpanying leaflet: 'Ideal present for the festive season'. But this would be welcome at any time. Pasquini

is a significant figure in the history of keyboard music, and it is valuable to have such a publication of a substantial autograph collection of his music. The notation is spacious, without much thought for easy turns (did early players always have a pupil available to help them?), clear to read, and offers few problems apart from the multi-lined staves. There is also a recording of 15 items by Emer Buckley, which is certainly an enticement to play the music. She doesn't push it with beyond it's weight, but make it feel like music that it would agreeable to have under ones hands. I don't want to over-praise him, but as a result of the facsimile, and recording his music has certainly gone up a notch or two in my estimation.

CHARPENTIER

Charpentier *Te Deum H 148* Edited by Helga Schauerte-Maubouet. Score. Bärenreiter (BA 7591), 2005. iv + 39pp, £7.00.
Charpentier *Messe de Minuit H 9* (Edited by Helga Schauerte-Maubouet) Piano Reduction by Martin Focke. Bärenreiter (BA 7592a), 2004. xv + 39pp, £10.00.

Charpentier describes the small Te Deum in C as for four voices, and in the autograph it never needs more than four vocal staves and continuo. But at one point the treble part is divided and marked *tous*, which would seem to imply at least four trebles, although only two voices each are necessary for the alto, tenor and bass (my excuse for the English terminology is that I am describing clefs, not voice-types). The treble duet at bars 247-251, however, is on two staves, each marked *seul* – which the edition omits. The remark in the introduction about tie/liaison/Bogen in the treble (and tenor) of bars 6-10 is incomprehensible, since the series of shorter slurs in the autograph are replaced in the edition by a long slur covering the whole five bars. Confirmation from a systematic study of Charpentier's autographs would be necessary before believing the statement that the placement of a sign above or below the note in bars 143 and 168 is significant. One further point applies to the Midnight Mass as well: Charpentier generally writes remarks like *Suivez apres un peu de Silence* in a gap within the system: adding it as a tiny footnote doesn't have the same visual impact. This is a useful work for a small choir, especially since there are no virtuosic solos.

There have been several editions of the Midnight Mass, including one in vol. 2 of the Masses published by Éditions du Centre de Musique Baroque de Versailles, which I haven't seen. Nor have I seen the Bärenreiter full score (£12) or parts (£5.50 each), so cannot make any detailed comment on the vocal score. It has an interesting introduction on the structure. There are no serious editorial problems – as so often with Charpentier, there is an authoritative and clear autograph, readily accessible in facsimile. It might have been helpful for conductors who don't look at a full score till just before the orchestral rehearsal to have been given some information about what the term *flûtes* means – that two are needed, that they are recorders, and that the second flute has a low E in bars 87 and 88 of the 2nd *Christe*. (I use the title of the autograph. This edition doesn't have a 2nd *Christe*: the 'Une jeune pucelle' movement is called *Second Kyrie* and the editor christens the organ repeat of the noel *Troisième Kyrie*.) The compass problem isn't evident from the vocal score. An article by Andrew Mayes in *The Recorder Magazine* 25/4 (the first issue edited by our Diary editor, Helen Shabetai) draws attention to the two Es and suggests that the lower part be played by a traverso. This strikes me as implausible: surely if the exceptional scoring of two different sorts of instrument was required, the composer would have been specific, rather than just writing *fl seules*, and one expects *fl[auti]* to mean recorders. How do players generally solve the problem? I will return to this when I've seen the full score and its editorial comments. It would also be useful if there was a note to say what clef the hautre-contre de violon part is in: the King's Music set of this and other French music of the period has both treble and alto for parts originally notated in C1 or C2 clef. The price is puzzling: why two pounds more than the *Te Deum*, when there are rival editions to undercut for the *Midnight Mass* but not for the *Te Deum*?

PLATÉE

Rameau *Platée: ballet bouffon en un prologue et trois actes... Version 1749; Version 1745 (Compléments)* édition de M. Elizabeth C. Bartlet, réduction clavier-chant de François Saint-Yves. (*Opera Omnia* IV.10.) Bärenreiter (BA 8852a), 2005. xii + 352pp, £34.50.

Platée is one of Rameau's more popular stage works. I first heard it in the mid-1960s, and I've a programme of a BBC/EBU concert performance from 1983 – though all I remember of it is arriving late and, entering the back way via the dressing rooms, was surprised to find the conductor, Nick Kraemer, still rehearsing a singer who was standing in at the last minute for an indisposed soloist. I suspect that I was less aware of the elements of parody than I would be now, and it really does need staging for the musical points to make their full effect. The new vocal score has no introduction whatsoever; since it includes two versions, one would expect a modicum of explanation. It seems sensible to make the 1749 version the main text, since that was the one which was the success. Music from the 1745 version is added in a 92-page appendix: this is well cued to the main sequence, but the page numbers in the contents list are wrong: the mistake begins with the final item in the 1749 work and gets progressively worse. The vocal score is, even apart from the presence of the appendix, a great improvement on the 19th-century one published by Michaelis – I don't have the Durand one from a century ago; but I would have thought that a few clues on instrumentation could have been given without cluttering the reduction too much. For reasons that I have completely forgotten, I've a photocopy of what I've called on the cover '1749 Theatre Score' of the work. That ends with the cue 'on reprend le choeur et la danse', which I would assume to mean the *Symphonie* that begins the last scene as well as the chorus, but the edition just prints out the chorus. No doubt explanations will appear in the full score. It must be remembered that not all operatic directors are musically literate and they may well work just from a vocal score; so they need all the information they can be given to prevent them making staging decisions before the conductor can explain what is really in the score. (One conductor told me that a director of an opera at a major Handel festival had no idea what da capo arias were.)

BÄRENREITER HANDEL

The following are all related to recent volumes of the *Halle Händel-Ausgabe.* At last a good vocal score of ***Giulio Cesare***: existing ones have, I'm told, been poor, with octave transpositions of vocal parts and other problems, though I've never bothered to look at them. The full score from which it is derived isn't yet published, though the hire material advertised is based on it. There are now three editions to choose from with performance material available on hire: Oxford UP, King's Music and Bärenreiter – all fine if you want the 1724 score, though only OUP has all the alternative settings. The cheapest is King's Music (£30.00), which is a full score, but taking up just 196 pages instead of the Bärenreiter vocal score's 318. I doubt whether the latter's larger print is particularly helpful, since even for a concert performance the singers are likely to have memorised their parts. Irrespective of giving other instrumental information, the stage band should surely be distinguished. The OUP full score is £110; its excellent musicology is overlaid by too much editorial performance suggestion and the vocal score produced for last year's Glyndebourne production isn't on sale. The cheapest score is the Dover reprint of Chrysander ($14.95).

I mentioned when reviewing Donald Burrows' excellent *Handel and the English Chapel Royal* last June that Bärenreiter had produced performing editions of some of the anthems. These are available with full score, vocal score and parts for sale (I have not seen the parts and are taken from HHA III:9, *Anthems for the Chapel Royal,* edited by Gerald Hendrie. The full scores are numbered BA 4263-4266, the vocal scores 4263a-4266a. The fact that we hear so many performances of Chandos Anthems from largish ensembles when Chapel Royal anthems would suit choirs far better must chiefly be because of the absence of performable editions of the latter, so these are welcome and will, I hope, be widely used. Not that the Chapel Royal had grandiose premises, but the orchestra includes viola(s) as well as two oboes, presumably with bassoon continuo, and the choir is SATB. The relationship with the Chandos anthems of the same titles usually only applies to some of the movements.

O sing unto the Lord (HWV 249a; £9.50 score, £5.00 VSc) has a pair of trumpets in the last movement and a flute in one air. (All these anthems have two oboes, ad lib bassoon and strings, including viola – unlike the Chandos Anthems). It probably dates from 1714, so antedates the Chandos version: Burrows suggests that it is Handel's first anthem with orchestra. It corresponds with Chrysander's Anthem IVA, printed at the end of HG36. There are only two soloists, named in the autograph 'Eilfort' (Richard Elford, alto) and Baker (Thomas Baker, bass), who have a fine duet for 'O worship the Lord' as well as solos. I like the way Chrysander included the singers' names in his score rather than relegating them to commentary or introduction: it reminds us that the music was written or adapted for specific performers. The alto air 'Sing unto the Lord and praise his name' needs a traverso, which seems to have caused practical difficulties: Handel first marked it to be transposed down a tone then deleted it. Would it be sacriligious to omit the trumpets in a low-profile performance?

I will magnify thee (HWV 250b; £18.00 score, £10.50 VSc), from the 1720s, derives from the Chandos Anthem with the same title, but with many differences and movements derived and reworked from other anthems. It has alto and bass soli (Hughes and Weely) and a strange chorus scored for SATB soli and ATB ripieni – presumably all the boys sang the solo part. The tenor part is simple and doesn't require booking a soloist. Only one oboe is called for.

As pants the hart (HWV 251e; £16.50 score, £10.50 VSc) is here given in the version Handel prepared for a composite programme called *An Oratorio* in 1738. It requires the standard orchestra but six vocal soloists (SAATBB) with the chorus similarly divided (but rarely); only ATB have separate solos. This is the second of the two versions combined in Donald Burrows' 1988 Novello vocal score (07 0488).

Let God Arise (HWV 256b; £14.50 score, £9.50 VSc), Chrysander's Anthem XIb, is again from the mid-1720s and needs only AB soli (Hughes and Weely) and one oboe. The bassoon does have a few independent notes, but only to double voices. It is short, with only four movements – perhaps to ease the strain on the aging George I, who habitually stood through the services.

Detailed discussion of the music will be found in Burrows' book. Hendrie's introductions give the origins of each movement, though this might have been easier to see if they had been set out as lists rather than continuous prose.

Klavierwerke II (BA 4221; £15.50) is a revised edition of the *Second Set* of 1733. Not that there is anything authentic about Walsh's anthology, but it was published as an entity as HHA IV:5 in 1970, so has been retained as the basis for a new edition by Terence Best. This as available in hardbound form as BA 4085 (£87.00). A critical commentary available separately for all four volumes of the keyboard works is mentioned, but I can't find it in Bärenreiter's catalogue. The introduction to the volume is extremely thorough, so most of the information one might want apart from specific variant readings is present anyway. The new volume retains the old layout (though with page numbers displaced by two) till Suite 6, where the missing Sarabande is inserted. The casual player of Handel may not need to replace what he has already, but Handel enthusiasts and experts will need to buy this.

The new Novello Samson *vocal score awaits our next issue.*

BÄRENREITER BACH

Bach ***Orgelwerke... Freely Composed Organ Works. Chorale Partitas from Miscellaneous Sources...*** Edited by Ulrich Bartels, Peter Wollny. Bärenreiter (BA 5243), 2005. ix + 84pp, £17.00

The advert on the back page lists nine volumes of the Urtext of the New Bach Edition followed by this without a volume number. It derives from NBA IV: 11, gathering together stones which the builders of the NBA rejected. They may not be cornerstones of Bach's organistic art, but should never have been rejected. Any compiler of a thematic catalogue or editorial board of a composer's works must be aware of the mistakes of attribution earlier generations have made: the policy should always be one of inclusion if there is any doubt, though the doubt itself must be clearly stated. I won't list all the titles now found plausible for inclusion: experts will recognise the BWV numbers (131a, 545b, 561, 571, 577, 591, 598, 1121/Anh 205 and Anh 42, 90, 97 & Partititas 758, Anh 77 & Anh 78). You can, of course, play the game of guessing the degree of likelihood of Bach's hand before reading the preface. The pieces with BWV numbers are all in BG and the Peters edition except for 545b, which was published separately by Novello in 1959. So there are few great surprises here. It is good that the Bärenreiter edition is expanded to include them. Several of the pieces are for manuals only and suitable for harpsichord (or even piano).

ABEL SONATAS

Abel ***Sonatas for the Viola da Gamba from the Musicbook of the Countess of Pembroke.*** **Edited by George Houle. Vol. 1.** PRB (CL011), 1997. 33p + 2nd score, $28.00.

Like the Wilbye reviewed above (p. 4), this is a reissue of an edition published by Santa Ynez Press. The book most associated with a Countess of Pembroke is Sidney's *Arcadia*; this Countess, two centuries later, was Elizabeth Spencer Herbert (1738-1831), remembered because the mad George III thought she was his wife. There is no evidence that she played the viol. This is the first of three volumes of sonatas, arranged by the editor roughly in order of difficulty. It is perhaps confusing to identify the sonatas by a K (Knape) number when the MS, though not the edition, includes a piece by Mozart (from K. 620). The MS has the upper part in treble clef: here, one of the scores prints it in octave-treble (so there is no problem if a treble player wants to have a go, though in that case some keyboard fill-in would be preferable), the other in alto clef. The accompanying instrument, in bass clef, is probably for a second gamba (the bottom Cs can be managed by tuning down – the instructions in the MS give C as the usual tuning of the bottom string); one sonata has the bass figured. The sonatas are quite short, in two or three movements; they look a bit thin on the page, but the resonance of the bass instruments will fill out the sound. Probably play for fun rather than to an audience.

BREITKOPF

Vols 3 & 4 of **Bach** ***Complete Arias from the Cantatas, Masses, Oratorios for solo voice, 2 flutes & piano*** are continuations of a series started by Musica Rara and with the original publisher's name preserved along with their present owner, Breitkopf (MR 2243 & 2244; €14.75 & €16.75). Vol. 3 has arias for alto from BWV 197a, 201 & 243. It seems a bit odd to include a fragment (probably about a quarter of the total aria) from BWV 197a in a practical series like this. The most substantial aria is 'Aufgeblasne Hitze' from *Phoebus and Pan*: is it good design or accident that enables the keyboard player using the rather large-print score to slide his finger through the middle to negotiate the otherwise-awkward da capo? I think I'd prefer the nastiest of electronic organs to a piano for 'Esurientes' from the Magnificat. Vol. 4 for tenor has arias from BWV 107, 110 and 173. Two of the three arias are for two flutes in unison, which makes sense in the full orchestration, but I

would have thought one flute was enough for separate performance with keyboard. So we are left with 'Ihr Gedanken und ihr Sinnen' from Cantata 110 as the main two-flute piece, and that's worth having if you are a tenor who expects to meet two flutes and a keyboard player. The singer is expected either to use a single-line part or look over the pianist.

The smart new cover to **Mozart's *Six Three-part Preludes and Fugues* K 404a** (1-3: PB 5293, €14.00; 4-6 PB 5294; €16.00) has a disappointing content: a score based on the 1938 edition by Johann Nepomuk David intended to be used for orchestral performance: parts are OB 5293 €5,00 each; OB 5294 €6.00 each. I have doubts about the plausibility of performing contrapuntal three-part music for violin, viola and cello orchestrally. It's not a normal texture of the period, and the four-part Adagio and Fugue K, 546 is hardly a justification. But these pieces should be in the library of all who play string trios, if only for when a violinist arrives late. There is controversy on the extent to which the arrangements of Bach can be attributed to Mozart and whether he composed the unidentified Adagios to nos 1-4 and 6. I certainly enjoyed No. 1 in D minor in the dim and distant past when I played a viola (prefacing the E flat minor fugue from Book I down a semitone). The works do, however, need a proper critical edition, comparing the sources (none of which are authoritative) and discussing and showing when corrections have been made to make the string versions nearer to what Bach wrote.

Werner Breig's edition of **Mozart's *Clarinet Quintet*** (KM 2289; €14.00 for score & parts) includes suggestions for an earlier basset-clarinet versions: these are printed as ossias in the score, and given in a separate part for the player – probably sensible for layout, but the serious clarinettist will need the score at hand if he wishes to rethink the standard version himself or question the editor's basset version. The editor is, in fact, modest about his changes to the standard version: 'they are only to be understood as suggestions'. Players may also be concerned with the accuracy of other features of the posthumous editions that may seem un-Mozartian: the presence of a detailed critical commentary may give this the edge over the Bärenreiter set. There is also a reduction for clarinet and piano (EB 8784; €11.00), which will obviously be useful to students.

An offprint from the new **Beethoven** Collected Works of ***Meeres Stille und Glückliche Fahrt*** is (PB 14670; €26.00) is an indication that the accompanying performance material is now available: the Breitkopf web site lists strings at €2.20, but no wind, vocal or chorus scores yet.

Breitkopf's new Beethoven 9 will be reviewed in the next issue.

BÄRENREITER MOZART & MENDELSSOHN

The rediscovery and putting together of the various fragments of **Mozart's *Concert Rondo in A***, K 386 (BA 5768; £9.50) has relied on the publication of a piano solo version by Cipriano Potter of 1837 to give continuity. This is edited by Michael Töpel. I'm slightly puzzled by the need to print it separately. It is included in small print in the NMA edition of the work, where it is easy to see the minor changes from the autograph when it survives. Here, however, there is nothing to show correctable divergences, which are interesting in themselves but should not be played without consideration. For example, to take a section for which a facsimile of the autograph is included in the edition, in bar 166 Potter replaces two quaver C sharps with semiquaver B sharp and three C sharps: a legitimate embellishment, but Potter's, not Mozart's. I would have thought that the obvious way of publication was a facsimile of Potter's edition, which presents no problems of legibility: if the xerox copy I made in 1964 was a bit better, I'd do it myself. Potter, incidentally, did not declare when Mozart stopped and his completion began.

Bärenreiter has also issued the **Mozart *Symphonies*** in study-score format in four volumes (TP 600; £63.50). I didn't ask for a set, since I've got the complete works in study score issued for the 1991 Mozart celebrations; but it looks as if this new set is easier to handle and on more substantial paper, since two volumes of the 1991 set are presented as four in the current package.

Mozart's *Grande Sonate for Clarinet (or Violin) and Piano (1809)* (BA 9162; £8.00) is an anonymous arrangement of the Clarinet Quintet K. 581. It is obviously useful for clarinettists (and even violinists) to be able to play it without summoning a string quartet, and our readers at least will prefer an arrangement from more-or-less the period rather than take a modern one, which is likely to be more reverential but less idiomatic (especially on a forte-piano). The score shows both violin and clarinet versions, while the parts are separate. This may appeal to a slightly different type of performer from those who will be happy with the Breitkopf piano reduction mentioned above. The editor, Christopher Hogwood, has not attempted to co-ordinate markings with those of the quintet version, though has tidied up the source's inconsistencies. While I'm not sure I would want to hear the work with piano at a concert, I'd be very happy to play the accompaniment for a soloist.

Mendelssohn's *Violin Concerto op. 64* has arrived in three entities, and that's just the violin/piano version. The one aimed at the uncritical fiddler is BA9050a (£12.00). The version isn't mentioned in the title: the press information calls it 'later popular version', the note on the back of the title page more specifically calls it the 'piano reduction of the 1845 version'. There are two violin parts: urtext and with bowings and fingerings by Martin Wulfhorst. The more scholarly among players will prefer the version that contains both the 1844 version and the 1845 revision (BA 9050b: one volume of score and a separate folder with two violin parts; £24.50). However, the introduction by the editor, R. Larry Todd, isn't at all clear what stage of the history of the work in 1845 the two versions printed here represent: I've puzzled over it several times, and suspect that it will only become clear from the introduction to the full score and its critical commentary. Comparison of the

versions is awkward, since they are bound together so one cannot lay them side by side – the two violin parts each have both versions, one with and the other without the benefit of Wulfhorst's additions. It is, however, clear that both these versions have significant differences from the current editions, which are based on the revision in the 1860s for Mendelssohn's Collected Works.

MOZART MASSES & VESPERS

Carus Verlag's most obvious contribution to the Mozart anniversary is a boxed set of all the Masses and Vespers, at the bargain price of €99.00 (about £70) until the end of March, when it increases to €149.00. Each item comes separately, not amalgamated into volumes, but the 20 scores are in a slip case. Most of the volumes are quite recent, and in some cases have information updating the earlier NMA editions. The introductions are in German, with English and French translations that are sometimes shortened; critical commentaries are just in German. The Mass in C Minor and Requiem are in completions by Robert Levin; these have long introductions but no critical commentaries. For all of them, performance material is available, and the Carus catalogue also has most of Mozart's other church music. The separate Mozart Sacred Vocal Music leaflet that lists them is adorned with a variety of facsimile pages and is worth getting. Possession of the set might encourage more performances of this undervalued area of Mozart's output.

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NOVOSIBIRSK 55° 02' N – 82° 55' E

Christopher Stembridge

When Christopher told me he would be in Siberia for Christmas, I suggested that he sent an informal report: further such accounts from peripatetic musicians would be welcome. CB

Happy Christmas and New Year form Novosibirsk. Christmas Eve here was merely an ordinary Saturday, though I did see school children carrying skis as I walked from my flat to the Philharmonic today. Sunny and only -11 today. Pleasant enough. (It has been -23, which was a bit chilly). Feel very good. It is dry – too dry till I bought a humidifier, since when both the clavichord and I are feeling happier.

I have never appreciated the comforts of central heating so much! Life is simple. Food is fine, even for vegetarians (except when eating out – in Moscow that is easier at this time of year as many people strictly observe the orthodox advent fast – which means no cheese either, of course!) There is a lot of traffic on main streets, but there are many paths between blocks of flats and plenty of trees so walking across town can be quite pleasant if you know where you are going. And, of course, plenty of people – including many healthy looking old people – out walking.

The first evening here a front tooth broke and I feared having to have a crown. But a very efficient modern clinic built up the tooth. It matches well and is functioning well.

The main concert was on Dec. 22nd which coincided with the solstice. By chance – but I liked that, as everybody seems now to celebrate something different: Xmas now or (orthodox) on 6-7 January, or New Year. Students have exams this next week so it is busy for them, though they hope to meet me sometime. Until now I had no time. We rehearsed for our concerts everyday since I arrived on Dec 5th (except for the day they had too much to do in the theatre).

The first concert was last Sunday for children. They were amazingly attentive. The Insula Magica consort (four singers and three instruments) was augmented by two extra singers and two baroque violins. The acoustic in the small hall –really a theatre – is not good. But we did a Buxtehude cantata, Carissimi (b.1605) *Jephte*, some movements from JSB *Wachet auf*, 'Rejoice' and Xmas music from *Messiah*, Sweelinck, Eccard and Walther motets.

The Sunday concert ran into difficulties as the 2nd violinist was prevented from coming. Both play (modern) in the chamber orchestra in the opera house and there was a ballet evening. (It had been worked out that there would be no problem as the orchestra was not needed for the first 2 ballets: Scarlatti (sonatas played on a grand piano) and Kurt Weill (some historic recording). Unfortunately the Weill recording didn't work and the 3rd piece started earlier. This meant that our 2nd violinist (who leads the chamber orchestra) couldn't play for us. She has only one instrument and could not retune from 415 to 440 in 30 minutes! Julia has two violins and just made it across from the Phil. to the opera house.

I was invited to the ballet the previous evening and saw only the Scarlatti, which I found pretty strange – obviously first rate dancers, but I couldn't see the point of them dancing to sonatas played on a badly amplified Steinway. I was depressed by the enormous theatre space – built in the Stalin era from big commie demos – and by the news I just heard about our violin problem, so left to discuss how to solve it and never saw the modern Russian ballet that I would have liked to see.

I have spent two afternoons in the conservatory listening to the organ class (including both teachers, one of whom composes quite interesting music). Some of those I heard were on my course in Devon last summer. There was some fine Bach playing including the 'Wedge', the D major and the C major (9/8).

I am going to spend the rest of the time here working with the two violins, Jana the soprano who sang Jephta's daughter so well, and Katya (viol) at Frescobaldi and Purcell that they would like to record.

On Jan 7th (Xmas day) I will fly to Moscow and teach a course at the Gnesin Academy for 3 days. I will also inaugurate their new clavichord with a recital. (For those of you in Europe except the very west of Ireland, you are now nearer Moscow than I am!) I have been offered the possibility of teaching there for a semester as guest professor and may do that from February. We will discuss everything when I am there. (My only commitments this spring are courses to teach in St Petersburg, Helsinki and Tallinn).

THE CLAVICHORD AND A FEW OTHER NEGLECTED KEYBOARD INSTRUMENTS

Neal Coleman

A celebrated Italian composer came to Germany biased against the clavichord, which he regarded as an imperfect instrument, which is still the generally held view. One of his compatriots who had lived long in this country took him to the house of a great Master, (Sebastian Bach, father of all the Bachs, as far as I can recall). Already astonished by the preludes of this skilful teacher on the Clavichord, he was moved to tears by an adagio *which followed, and hardly waiting for the end of the piece, threw himself around the Artist's neck and cried:* it is the King of instruments ...'

La Borde *Essai sur la musique ancienne et moderne*, 1780 (quoted in the *Bach-Jahrbuch*, 1988)

This passage, previously unavailable in translation, is further evidence, if any were needed, of the high esteem in which J. S. Bach held the clavichord. It also bares witness to a bias against the instrument, which persists to this day. Incapable of holding its own against an orchestra, the instrument falls by that ultimate failing, to our minds, of being quiet and reserved for a few 'specialists'. Yet this lack of decibels has its advantages too, and many neighbours and housemates are grateful that this small instrument's use is inaudible. Perhaps the problem is compounded by a relative scarcity of good instruments, for although the mechanism is the simplest of all keyboard instruments, building one well takes a great deal of skill and years of experience. Bach's pupil, Jakob Adlung wrote 'It is certainly true that many are much too soft; but there are also those that can be heard above quite a few violins... A number of clavichords sound loud, others soft. These former deserve praise, the others do not'. Adlung also mentions that pedal clavichords were very common; some organists only practised on such instruments and, according to his first biographer, J. S. Bach liked to extemporise on either a double-manual harpsichord or clavichord fitted with pedals. Contrary to popular opinion, the piano became a sophisticated musical instrument during the baroque era and was championed by Bach, Handel and Scarlatti. Still, even copies of the types known to them are not to be found in this country.

Perhaps we have still something of a puritanical view of our early keyboard instruments, a 'make-do and mend' approach which has left us, at times, far removed from historical ideals. Certain players clearly had a far greater variety of good instruments at their disposal than we currently can muster. This is especially acute for the later 18th century repertoire when many builders experimented, at times quite spectacularly, with a variety of instruments and combinations.

For the Germans, the clavichord remained 'the true *clavier*', even into the 19th century. It has been shown that there, the terms for clavichord included the generic title *Clavier* as well as the fashionable foreign titles *'Clavecin', 'Cembalo'* and *'Clavicembalo'*. Much of the keyboard music of Haydn, Mozart and early Beethoven is in fact clavichord music *incognito*. Beethoven is on record as saying that the clavichord was unique amongst keyboard instruments with the amount of control the player is allowed over the sound. So did the clavichord ever die out, as our history books like to tell us? It seems to have been known to the Arabs several centuries before the dates generally accepted. How much was it used outside Germany?

This is a foretaste of a booklet on the subject by Neal Coleman to be published shortly by King's Music. For remarks on the clavichord as an organist's practice instrument, see review on p 33.

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Martin Lubenow has drawn attention to the musikland-tirol website. This contains scorings of a vast amount of 17th-century Tyrolean music by composers such as Finger Pandolfi Mealli (all 12 Sonatas) and Stadlmayr .

RETHINKING GUT STRINGS
A GUIDE FOR PLAYERS OF BAROQUE INSTRUMENTS

Oliver Webber

In recent years, the subject of gut strings in 17th and 18th century performance practice has received a lot of attention. The range of available strings has expanded, and accepted practices have increasingly been questioned. Moreover, many ensembles are now experimenting with, and even insisting on, proper historical stringing. The results have been fascinating, and the differences amount to far more than an academic subtlety: they are now being noticed by conductors, audiences and critics. Players coming into the profession now will find they need to be informed about the subject, and established players will find they need to adapt. However there remains a lack of easily available, clear and accurate information on the subject, and consequently players wishing to be authentic can find themselves at a loss for the right answers.

Rethinking Gut Strings is an attempt to fill that gap and make it easier for performers to put into practice what scholars have agreed on for some time. It is an explanation of historical stringing practices up to about 1750, as far as we are able to reconstruct them. In short, the system of stringing hitherto common on baroque instruments is far removed from the 'equal tension' of historical practice, which requires much thicker strings in the lower registers. Although evidence of the fine details is often lacking, the general principles are quite clear, and, now that high quality thick gut strings are easier to come by, we can use these to come up with historically consistent solutions which really work. In this essay you will find clear and detailed instructions on how to do this: I will explain how to choose gauges, which strings should be wound, how to get used to playing on equal tension strings, and who can supply them. I will also explain the implications of good stringing not only for sound, but also interpretation, ensemble playing and even the future of the early music movement. I hope in the process to debunk a number of persistent myths about baroque stringing, and to make the often daunting physics of strings a little clearer.

*Rethinking gut strings** is aimed at anyone who has an interest in string performance practice: amateur & professional performers, conductors and directors, teachers, string makers and instrument makers. No technical knowledge or scholarly experience is needed; however anyone who wishes can find detailed technical and bibliographical information in the notes and appendices.

It might seem odd that such a basic element of instrument design should be in need of reassessment at this mature stage in the early music movement. However, manufacturing difficulties have until recently meant that stringing has lagged behind other areas, and remained a rather unsatisfactory compromise. This is changing, and it is now possible to find good quality strings which work well at the heavier gauges generally required by historical practices. Naturally, players who have worked tirelessly to achieve convincing performances with the old system may be reluctant to make changes. However I hope in this essay to convince readers that such fears are, if not groundless, then at least easily overcome, and that the results possible with historical stringing are truly exciting, and will inject new life into the music we all hold dear.

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The following was sent as a letter, but it fits here.

I was very interested to read Mike Diprose's account of recent experiments with the 'holeless nat' and the philosophy and approach to early music that goes with them. I am wholeheartedly in favour of such an honest and open-minded approach: nothing but good can come of it.

Of course I was also delighted at Mike's acknowledgement of the spread of historical stringing, a field close to my heart. I would however like to pre-empt one possible misunderstanding. Although it is true that Catherine Martin, myself and a number of colleagues play largely on all-gut, this is actually not the essential point: the main issue is that of *equal tension*. Until the second half of the 18th century, equal tension (in which each string had the same tension, and the lower strings are very thick) was the standard stringing. The modern violin uses a graded system – heavy on the E, light on the G – which was adopted during the classical period, along with so many other changes to the instrument and bow. Since there were certainly some violinists using wound Gs in the early part of the 18th century – although how many is debatable – it is more authentic to play with a wound G string in equal tension, than with all-gut but unequal tension!

I take the trouble to mention this because 'all-gut' could so easily become a straw man that well-informed cynics would have no trouble knocking down. But equal tension, is widely accepted by scholars and the evidence (from Dowland to Leopold Mozart) is quite clear. Moreover the difference in sound is palpable and a genuine ear-opener.

On a more general note, I hope that conductors and recording engineers are amongst those who read Mike's article. For experiments in the nitty-gritty of the baroque sound world to succeed, we need the support – moral, practical, even financial! – of those in positions of influence.

Oliver Webber

* *Oliver Webber's* ***Rethinking Gut Strings*** *will be published by King's Music shortly.*

FOR THE BRAVE AND CURIOUS?

Pauline Nobes

Any attempt to bridge the divide between academia and performance is a positive step towards a more holistic approach to music, and also has, of course, historic precedence. In Baroque times, it was the norm for gifted performers to put their pen to paper in the form of composing, not only music, but also substantial treatises.

Libby Wallfisch's *The Art of Playing 'Chin-Off' for the Brave and Curious: A Treatise on one Technical Aspect of Baroque Violin Playing in the Year 2003* brings this concept into the 21st century. As in some of the smaller Baroque treatises, neither musical examples nor diagrams are included; neither are the more detailed, even computer-aided, types of analysis more recently adopted into the realms of teaching. The title of the present-day treatise emulates that of an 18th century one, thus suggesting musicological insight albeit within perhaps a humorous guise. 'One original source' written by the 'pedagogic genius' Francesco Geminiani, is said to be the 'greatest inspiration' for this 21st century treatise and the first part of its title makes a clear reference to Geminiani's violin method *The Art of Playing on the Violin* (1751). [This was emphasised in the initial marketing, which offered Geminiani & Wallfisch cheap as a pair. *CB*]

The end result of Libby's treatise is, however, a violin study book which diverges from its single 18th century violin role model. Surely, it would have been perfectly viable if this had been the author's aim? After all, a 21st century violin teacher is able to draw on, not only a wealth of personal pedagogic experience but also that passed down through the various written and unwritten violin schools of the last 250 years.

The targeted readers of Libby's essay are the 'Brave and Curious', defined in the Introduction as 'players who are already violinists, **not beginners** in the sense of never having played the instrument. Whether accomplished in the areas of "modern" playing or Baroque playing or any level/period in between.' Perhaps the tongue-in-cheek title indicates a favouring towards the amateur reader, in keeping with the aims and parameters of an 18th century treatise, if not providing a clear *caveat* for the professional side of the market. Certainly, comments such as 'Hug yourself! Yes do it! Nicely!' 'That really hurts me!' and 'I find it is very important never to hurry from step to step' are not conducive to promoting the subject of Baroque performance practice from the perspective of the modern high flyers and the musicological content not in depth enough for the baroque specialists. In contrast to the aims and traditions of an 18th century treatise, there seems to be little import given to the academic content and presentation of Libby's *Treatise*. Perhaps this is a conscious failing explaining the author's own references to the treatise as 'essay', 'tiny treatise' and 'little Book'. Indeed, the infiltration of the academic domain by performers nowadays has as many obstacles as the reverse scenario. Even whilst remembering the humorous tilt of the title, the compositional intent is unclear and the content looses focus on its 'one technical aspect'. Through criticism, even in the form of parody, it is hoped that different points of view and questions raised may encourage correspondence comparable to the often anonymous discussions by letters of the 17th and 18th centuries. This response is indeed provoked by the author's statement

> 'This little book is not the answer, but perhaps the beginning of the questions...' *

By describing Geminiani's violin method as 'essential primary source material', as well as including a bibliography (albeit rather short), a certain air of seriousness is introduced. Even taking aside the spoken/broken style of prose with its strange mixture of **bold**, CAPITALS and underlining, and trying with every incomplete sentence to forget that knowledge of grammar and syntax were so highly praised in the Baroque Treatises, surely the aspects of this 21st century treatise which draw on Geminiani should be faithfully represented.

> If Libby's greatest inspiration really is Geminiani's **'pedagogic genius'** then why does her "little book" CONTRADICT his violin method 'The Art of Playing on the Violin'?

Although the 'Brave and Curious' violinist is advised to read Geminiani's commentary 'many times' in the opening of 'Part the Second, The System', fundamental questions emerge.

> **Whose** system IS IT?

In the light of a wealth of iconographical evidence showing the 'folk-fiddle' violin hold and numerous 17th and 18th century French School descriptions of exactly such a violin hold it is surprising that Libby is 'not sure at all about "below the collar-bone", where exactly he [Geminiani] means'. It would seem likely that his method is simply, as stated, intended for a below-the-collarbone technique. Of course, Leopold Mozart's depiction of 'the first way of holding the violin' described as 'difficult and somewhat inconvenient.... unless the advantage of being able to hold it between the thumb and index-finger has been acquired' seems to be one where the violin is held

* *Quotations from Libby's book are indented but right justified, and enclosed in quotes. Imitations of her style lack quotes and are right-indented.* CB

higher than the breast, on or certainly above the collar-bone, as is the case with portraits such as that of Veracini. The confusion seems to be caused by the assumption (not only by Libby) that the violinist on the cover of the Paris 1752? edition of 'The Art of Playing on the Violin' is Geminiani himself: this violinist also has his instrument on or above the collarbone and even possibly his chin touching the violin. Not long after Boyden's suggestion that this stylised portrait was of Geminiani (?) (in his pioneering work and Editor's Introduction of the OUP edition), research has shown it to bear remarkable similarity to the Frontispiece of Herrando's treatise '*Arte y puntual Explicación del modo de Tocar el Violin con perfección* (Paris, 1756). Although 'below the collar bone' is 'chin-off', it is certainly very different from the chin-off technique being promoted in the 2003 Treatise.

> So, doesn't this **question** the ENTIRE structuring of the present-day Treatise?

Another substantial problem manifests after the first section. Although neither Geminiani nor his treatise is mentioned, the 'Brave and Curious' are insistently advised to move the thumb before shifting downwards. Libby summarises:

> 'D: **NOTE** (Essential for All *ESSEMPII*) **(And for life)**
> FOR EACH DOWNWARD SHIFT; PREPARE THE THUMB AT THE NOTE BEFORE THE SHIFT!
> i.e. Move the thumb back and partly under the neck of the violin.
> Then, gently squeezing the violin between the base of the first finger, if you are shifting on an open string, OR **the finger stopping the note**...and the thumb creating the counter-pressure/anchor-
> *Shift Down.*'

Geminiani, on the other hand, states: 'It must be observed that in drawing back the hand from the 5th, 4th and 3rd Order [position] to go to the first, the thumb cannot, for want of time, be replaced in its natural position; but it is necessary it should be replaced at the second note.' Perhaps neither is written in the most straightforward English, but...

> ISN'T Geminiani advocating moving the thumb **after** shifting, **not before**?

Again baffling is why immediately after quoting Geminiani's comment 'it would be most prudent to undertake [these exercises] without the use of the Bow' Libby's advice to practise the same exercises with the bow, to change bow whenever changing string, indeed with one two or three *fwells* per bow stroke. However, it may be said that Libby's assimilation and development of Geminiani's ideas does perhaps bring the somewhat dry original *Treatise* to life, especially since Geminiani himself confesses 'it cannot be supposed but that this Practice without the Bow is disagreeable, since it gives no Satisfaction to the Ear; but the Benefit which, in Time, will arise from it, will be a Recompence more than adequate to the Disgust it may give.'

Geminiani opens with rhetorical musings, 'The Intention of Musick is not only to please the ear...' and later demands the expression of 'Passions', including among many others fury, anger, horror, fear, grief and lamentation. The 'Chin-Off' treatise offers a different principle.

> 'THE JOY OF PLAYING THE VIOLIN?
> I believe in the pleasure principle:
> i.e. That everything about playing the violin is a pleasure.
> The feel, how it looks, comfort, quiet strength and balance, beautiful sound...all that'

In 'Part the Third' the 'Brave and Curious' are catapulted forwards into the world of 20th century scales whilst the Baroque concept of major and minor semitones (*ma* and *mi*) is completely ignored even though strikingly evident in Geminiani's scales of *Efsempio i, ii* and *iii* [II, IV and VI] already discussed and recommended in 'Part the Second' of the present-day treatise.

> DOESN'T a small mention of MAJOR AND MINOR SEMITONES **take priority** over **D flat major, Sevcik, and Flesch** in a Treatise concerned with Baroque Violin Playing?

The acknowledgement of major and minor semitones (resulting in lower thirds or raised roots) is essential not only to historic performance practice but also to the practice of scales! And if scales are to be used in examining and in studying chin-off playing, then Geminiani's scales with basso continuo might offer a new and challenging (not to mention more appropriate) insight for the 'modern' baroque violinist, in search of historically correct performance practice. Although probably a little over-ambitious for the scale of the 'tiny treatise', 'a greater understanding of the concepts of style inherent in the expression of emotion and *affekt* of the music of the 18th century and earlier' is promised in the Introduction of the 2003 Treatise.

'Part the Third' (again straying from its 'one technical aspect') contains a relatively long Trouble Shooting section. But the reference to vibrato is especially and tantalisingly welcome to both Baroque and chin-off beginners; it's probably fair to say that vibrato (next to downward shifting) represents one of the foremost challenges of chin-off playing.

> So why is there NO INCLUSION of Geminiani's advice on **vibrato**, or any description or definition of **vibrato**?

Geminiani description of the 'close shake', included under his 'Ornaments of Expression', seems to refer to various types of vibrato: 'To perform it, you must press the Finger strongly upon the String of the Instrument, and move the Wrist in and out slowly and equally, when it is long continued swelling the Sound by Degrees, drawing the bow nearer to the Bridge, and ending it very strong it may express Majesty, Dignity etc. But making it shorter, lower and softer, it may denote affliction, Fear, etc. and when it

is made on short Notes, it only contributes to make their Sound more agreeable and for this reason it should be made use of as often as possible.' Of course, other contemporary descriptions and criticisms of vibrato which help to clarify what Geminiani means by 'more agreeable' reveal a preference for a not too wide, not continuous and non-automated approach to vibrato thus qualifying Libby's advice 'the key to mastery' really is to achieve one's 'usual vibrato technique'. Presumably this was never meant to apply to those from the Russian romantic school of violin playing, so heavily criticised in the author's article 'Style in the Art of International Competitions' (*EMR* Aug 2005).

'Part the Fourth, Further Reading-Practising' contains 19th and 20th century material already well-known and widely taught in 'modern' violin schools whilst failing to mention other treatises, contemporary to Geminiani's *Art of Playing on the Violin*. Is this because much of the other 18th century pedagogic advice regarding violin hold, fingering and shifting often criticises rather than condones Leopold Mozart's 'somewhat difficult and inconvenient' way of chin-off playing. Corrette, for example, is one of many Geminiani contemporaries who encourage finding freedom in the left arm by recommending putting the chin on the violin. The reality and perhaps prevalence, of Leopold Mozart's 'comfortable method' of holding the violin also seems to be supported by Monteclair, Crome, Tartini, Prelleur, Herrando, Nogueira and L'Abbé le fils. Nogueira's *240 Lessons* provide a substantial systematic method for building left hand technique, concentrating on finger patterns, mostly within the octave hand frame, and all manner of shifting so that if Libby's 'primary concern is shifting' a reference to such literature is essential. 25% of Nogueira's finger exercises (Lessons 14—92) have original fingerings, as do many of the remaining étude-like Lessons. Or at least the variety of shifts provided by Geminiani might be analysed, perhaps represented in a nutshell, in a 21st century treatise devoted not only to Baroque violin playing but also to Geminiani himself? Or is it maybe, that Libby's booklet is simply promoting the very good cause of selling more of Geminiani's original *Treatise*.

The declaration in 'Part the Fifth' (the last page), that 'a world of expression and Affekt...BEGINS with chin-off playing' is in danger of sounding extremely critical of all those dedicated and serious Baroque violinists, then and now, who choose a different, just as historically correct method of playing. In addition, is it not perhaps a little out of touch with the current increase in stylistic awareness in many factions of modern violin teaching? Or perhaps a clearer definition of 'chin-off' is required. Doesn't the use of a Wallfisch roll under the violin approach Leopold's second, 'comfortable method' of holding the violin 'at the neck', advocated so that it 'comes under the chin' and 'remains unmoved in its place even during the strongest movement of the ascending and descending hand'? And isn't this more akin to the chin-assisted technique used by a great many Baroque violinists today, than to the chin-free, resting-on-the-collar-bone technique which is generally understood to be chin-off? Integration of the author's own advice and technical help would perhaps have a stronger impact within a different context, and not intertwined with that of a previous era, especially since divergence from Geminiani's teaching method might be even further justified. When considering any early treatises and literary sources it is essential to bare in mind that each source may have its own agenda (or agendum): who is it intended for, who might it be attacking? Geminiani's comment about the 'wretched rule of down-bow' certainly suggests he might be exaggerating his point of view. Or it may well be that some of the advice in historic documents is aimed at the less proficient, or less talented performer; or perhaps it's intent is corrective.

With all this in mind, wouldn't it be interesting to have 'A 21st Century Teacher's Approach to Chin-Off Playing' and perhaps also 'A Survey of Chin-Off Playing through the Ages', especially since another tautological question remains

> Is a <u>different</u> **chin-off** technique being used NOW it's 2005?

Or are we simply treading dangerous territories in our efforts to pass on another era's traditions? After all, just as it was in the beginnings of the early music movement, primary sources have to take priority, and particularly over any ensuing secondary sources. As the first, or indeed second (and possibly third) wave of Baroque violinists turn to teaching, is it not vital that there is a continual checking back to the original sources, the discoveries and first hand information that created our modern-day Baroque. The very fact that a lot of younger players have been taught how to play Baroque music, rather than discovering first-hand presents an interesting dilemma.

> Is it <u>inevitable</u> that the modern baroque orchestra and solo performers will develop all the **faults** of ossification that they originally intended to CORRECT?

Perhaps we need another Age of Enlightenment? Would it then be known as the Third Age of Enlightenment or perhaps Enlightenment of the Third Age?

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HAYDN'S *THE CREATION*
ON PREPARING A NEW ENGLISH TEXT

Neil Jenkins

The success of Haydn's *The Creation* has always depended to a large extent upon the language in which it was being performed, and what the audience thought of the quality of the text. Within a few years of its first performances in Vienna and London this was being attacked as far inferior to the quality of Haydn's music:

It is little wonder that the words translated from the German almost literally into English, should be neither sense nor grammar, nor that they should make wicked work with Milton.[1]

Would he [Haydn] *had been directed by you about the words to The Creation! It is lamentable to see such divine music joined with such miserable broken English.*[2]

The Creation is a remarkable work in that it is the first oratorio to have been composed and published in a bilingual format. The libretto that Haydn took back with him from England to Vienna was in English. He subsequently obtained a German translation from his friend and colleague Baron van Swieten; and when the work was eventually published, it contained both sets of text. Haydn wanted it to be performed both in Austria and in London, where Johann Peter Salomon had provided the initial enthusiasm for the work.

One might suppose that the English text contained in this first publication of 1800 would represent the libretto in its original state. Salomon handed it to Haydn in 1795 as he was leaving London for the last time. It is quite conceivable that he was expecting Haydn to compose the work in English. Haydn had demonstrated a certain ability with the English language (which he did not speak well) in his recent settings of *12 English Canzonettas*. The libretto *of The Creation* was said to have been written for Handel. Salomon could have been forgiven for thinking that Haydn would appreciate its quality and set the material as received.

In fact, the English version contained in the first edition of *The Creation* can hardly represent the text that had been handed to Haydn. It displays many signs of having been put together hurriedly by inexpert English speakers, with awkward lines such as

Their flaming looks express, what feels the grateful heart

and

With thee is life incessant bliss, thine it whole shall be.

The original text was said to be derived from the Book of Genesis and the Book of Psalms in the King James Bible, and from Milton's *Paradise Lost*. The biblical passages are often quoted word for word, but Milton's original voice is harder to detect. There are passages in Part 2 where some phrases are quoted virtually word for word. But in many other places the true Miltonic voice has been overwhelmed by a two-way process of translation into, and out of, German.

In England the oratorio has suffered as a result of this less-than-ideal text. Many hands have had a go at turning the awkward passages into a text that can be sung more convincingly in the English speaking world. Editors with a better understanding of Milton's style were not slow to begin their improvements. Muzio Clementi's 1801 vocal score already addressed some of the problems of the 1800 score, and was further improved in 1827. Vincent Novello incorporated many improvements from the 1832 English edition by Haydn's pupil Sigismond Neukomm into his own famous 1847 edition. It was this edition which did most to set in stone a version of the text that was thought to be as good as it could get. But Novello couldn't eliminate the pervasive Germanic word-order; the underlay of the text in the choruses was far from ideal; and the solos were couched in a language that, while appearing both naive and unsatisfactory to some, was considered to be acceptably quaint by others. This is the version in which the work came to be known and loved throughout the English-speaking world.

My investigations into the origins of the *Creation* libretto were born out of a desire to improve this version for the 21st century. Although it was well-known and comfortably familiar to choirs, it was also seen as far from satisfactory by many choral directors. As I had previously done similar refurbishment to Bach's major choral works,[3] I was approached by various eminent conductors who felt that Haydn's masterpiece needed the same reappraisal. I had already produced a new English edition of Haydn's other great choral piece *The Seasons*.[4] During my work on this I had discovered, to my surprise, that *The Creation* employed lines of text taken from the James Thomson poem of that name (first published in 1730, and revised yearly until 1746.) For example: the Bass Aria "Rolling in foaming billows" (Aria no. 6) uses some lines of text from Milton's *Paradise Lost*:

> *.... The mountains huge appear*
> *Emergent, and their broad backs upheave*
> *Into the clouds, their tops ascend the sky.*
> [*Paradise Lost* Book VII, lines 285-7]

but is completed by others from Thomson's *The Seasons*:

> *Lashed into foam, the fierce-conflicting brine*
> *Seems o'er a thousand raging waves to burn.*

Meantime the mountain billows, to the clouds
In dreadful tumult swelled, surge above surge,
Burst into chaos with tremendous roar.
[*Winter*, lines 159-163]

The soprano aria, no. 15, seems to have been derived from these lines of Thomson:

..... the steep-ascending eagle soars
With upward pinions through the flood of day,
And, giving full his bosom to the blaze,
Gains on the sun...
[*Summer*, lines 608-11]

rather than this image by Milton, which has sometimes been cited as the original inspiration:

They summ'd their pens, and soaring th'air sublime,
With clang despised the ground...
[*Paradise Lost* Book VII, lines 421-3]

Thomson has a distinctive vocabulary. He uses words that are not found in Milton or the King James Bible. Many of these also occur in the *Creation* libretto. For example: *cheerful* is a particularly favourite word of Thomson's, being found no less than 14 times in his poem with a meaning akin to 'balanced' or 'normal'. Whoever the unknown librettist was, he was certainly an avid admirer of Thomson, as well as of Milton. 'Cheerful' makes two appearances in the Creation libretto:

cheerful, roaring, stands the tawny lion (no. 20);
the cheerful host of birds (no. 18a).

Further examples of Thomsonian vocabulary abound. The expression *dew-dropping* (in Adam and Eve's Duet, no. 29) is Thomson's, appearing as 'dew-dropping coolness' in *Summer*, at line 206. Other words found in Thomson and *The Creation*, but not in Milton, are: *tribes, ethereal, dreary, ravished, unperceivéd, limpid, purls, outrageous*, and *sated.*

With this as my starting point I began to search out all the possible sources for the Creation text. As this has only come down to us in the version inserted by Swieten into the 1800 score, it was clear that I needed to do a lot of detective work. So I decided to learn all that I could about the libretto and its origins before beginning work on a new 'singable' text. I hoped to retain the original 18th-century feel in my new version by using as much as possible of the original sources. These were sometimes clearly identifiable in the Swieten re-translation, even though the Germanic word-order, together with his limited knowledge of English grammar, periodically masked them.

In the process of investigation I became convinced that some of the remarks about the work related by Haydn and Swieten probably contained a good kernel of truth. I was most intrigued by Swieten's statement that the libretto was an old one, originally intended for Handel. From the use of Thomson's poem, as well as other textual indications, it seemed likely that the date of composition could well have been c.1745 when Handel's librettists were Newburgh Hamilton and Charles Jennens. So I searched Hamilton's libretti, of which *Samson* (being based on Milton's poem *Samson Agonistes)* was the most relevant, for any similarities with the *Creation* libretto. I thought that there might be some moments in the text when the vocabulary or style would betray a common author. Although Hamilton clearly wrote certain arias himself, without deriving them from lines in Milton's drama, I did not find any key words in them that recurred in a similar way in the Creation libretto. But an exhaustive research into Charles Jennens' libretti for Handel revealed remarkable similarities of language, style and content with the *Creation* text.

Jennens' libretto for *Il Moderato* (1740) was closely scrutinised to see if it could yield any similarities of vocabulary or expression. Within its modest length of just eight musical numbers occurred the significant use of several words common to both libretti, yet unusual enough to raise the question of a common authorship:

With her let **rosy** health appear (cf. In **rosy** mantle appears... *Creation* no. 26)

The **fumes** that did the mind involve (cf. Here vent their **fumes** the fragrant herbs... *Creation* no. 8)

There were similar echoes in *Belshazzar* (1745), but just one will have to suffice:

God, only wise and just, **ordains**. (cf. So **God** our Lord **ordains**... *Creation* no. 28)

In Jennens' libretto for *Saul* (1739) there is a *Recitativo* that reads like a sketch for the Creation libretto. As it is often cut in performance, its relevance has not received the attention it merits. However, as will be shown, it is couched in language that harks back to many of Milton's lines in *Paradise Lost.*

SAUL : Accompagnato

By thee this universal frame
From its Almighty Maker's hand
In primitive perfection came,
By thee produced, in thee contained:
No sooner did th'eternal word dispense
Thy vast mysterious influence,
Than chaos his old discord ceased.
Nature began, of labour eased,
Her latent beauties to disclose.
A fair harmonious world arose;
And though, by diabolic guile,
Disorder lord it for a while,
The time will come, when Nature shall
Her pristine form regain
And harmony for ever reign.

By comparing this verse firstly with Milton, and then with the *Creation* libretto, it will be possible to see how closely the language and ideas are related to each other. The opening lines are related to the Duet and Chorus in part 3 of *The Creation*, beginning as it does:

By thee, with bliss, O bounteous Lord,
The Heaven and Earth are filled.
This world, so great, so wonderful,
Thy mighty hand has framed.

Milton had written:

These are thy glorious works, Parent of good,
Almighty! Thine this universal frame,
Thus wondrous fair: thyself how wondrous then!

The use of the phrase *this universal frame* proves that Jennens was quoting Milton's *Paradise Lost* in his libretti as early as 1739.

Later lines introduce the concept of *the word*, which is so integral to the idea of God's creation in both Testaments. Later lines remind us of Aria no. 2:

Disorder yields to order fair the place

whilst

A fair harmonious world arose

is very similar to

A new created world springs up at God's command.

In the final lines the one particular Miltonic conceit – apart from the veiled reference to Satan's presence at 'by diabolic guile' – is the idea that harmony reigned on earth before the Fall of Man. This is reiterated many times in *'Paradise Lost'* and other minor poems. Just one example will suffice for the present purpose:

Such music (as 'tis said)
Before was never made,
But when of old the Sons of Morning sung,
While the Creator great
His constellations set,
And the well balanced World on hinges hung,
And cast the dark foundations deep
And bid the weltering waves their oozy channels.[5]

Another small point that may lead to Jennens being identifiable as the original librettist is the spelling of the first word in the chorus 'Achievéd is the glorious work' (nos. 25a & 25c). It appears in Haydn's 1800 edition with an extra 't' as *'atchievéd'*. That this spelling can be traced back to Jennens himself is proved by the existence of the following line in his pamphlet *The* Vindication *of 'King Lear'*:[6] '... and to the atchievement of his publication it is allowed, that patience and industry were required'. It appears that this was Jennens' favoured spelling for the whole of his life, even though it had fallen out of normal usage and is not given in Dr Johnson's 1755 Dictionary.

A final and extremely important clue that Jennens had been interested in preparing a libretto for Handel on the theme of *Paradise Lost* came to light in some recently published correspondence between Charles Jennens, James Harris, and their circle of friends. Between them they had provided Handel with the libretto for *L'Allegro, il Penseroso, ed il Moderato* some few years earlier, and seem to have been planning a further work based, once again, on Milton in 1744. The following lines occur in a letter of 14th September 1744 from the 4th Earl of Shaftesbury to James Harris:

Pray did you settle the oratorio of 'Paradise Lost' &c whilst at Packington? Has Mr Jennens finished his, and sent it to Handel yet?[7]

Whilst it is clear from the date of the letter that Jennens would also have been working on the *Belshazzar* libretto for Handel at the time, it is still intriguing to see the reference to *Paradise Lost*. Donald Burrows interprets the Earl of Shaftesbury's comments as implying that he already knew of a plan to base a new oratorio text on *Paradise Lost*, much in the manner that the *L'Allegro ed il Penseroso* libretto had been prepared from Milton's minor poems. A letter also exists from Jennens to James Harris dated a couple of months later in which it appears that Harris may not have progressed very far with his part of the labour:

I am sorry to hear (for I have heard) that you are no further advanced in your Miltonics. For shame, don't be so lazy.[8]

It certainly looks as though the question of authorship and date of the original libretto can now been established with some certainty; although it will be impossible to tell how much input James Harris had in its composition, unless a manuscript were to re-emerge one day.

Once I began to concentrate on Jennens it seemed more and more likely that the libretto was his, rather than one of the others that have at various times been proposed as the original (by Mrs Delany,[9] John Upton,[10] and Benjamin Stillingfleet.[11]) Jennens' love of Shakespeare (which he went on to edit) could be the reason that some of the language appears so old-fashioned. His eclectic knowledge of the Scriptures and of Virgil's poetry makes sense of other passages. Thomson's poetry was enjoying enormous fame in the 1740s, and would have been well-known to Jennens' circle of dilettanti friends. The fact that Jennens' libretti were always too long for Handel makes sense of Haydn's remark that the text that he was given on leaving London in 1795 was too long and needed pruning. How much it was altered by Swieten is not clear; but I have made some conjectural suggestions elsewhere,[12] based on the literary structures that Jennens uses in *Messiah*, *Saul*, *Belshazzar* and his other libretti.

One thing on which it is impossible to make a secure pronouncement is: what happened to the libretto after its presumed rejection by Handel? Handel's music, scores and papers can be traced through to John Christopher Smith via his father who inherited them in 1759 and subsequently passed them on to his son. Haydn visited Bath in 1794, where the elderly Smith was living. Although there is no record of them meeting, it is likely that Haydn would have wanted to meet the one living person who had a first-hand knowledge of the composer whose oratorios he so revered. He mentions some of the musicians he met in Bath in his notebooks,[13] but there is no mention of Smith. However, his desire to write an oratorio in the style of Handel must have become known to his circle of musical friends. Smith would have been one of the very few

people alive who would have known of the old libretto; especially in view of the fact that it was he who in 1760 performed an oratorio of his own on the Miltonic theme of *Paradise Lost*. The libretto for this is the one by Benjamin Stillingfleet mentioned earlier – which implies that J.C. Smith would have been either unaware of the other libretto until he inherited it, or that he had deliberately rejected it in favour of a new one when he was composing his own oratorio in 1757-8. If Salomon – in an endeavour to get Haydn to return to England for a third visit – had been enquiring after an unused Handelian libretto in 1795, it is likely that J. C. Smith would have been the only man to know where to find one.

Salomon did get his oratorio from Haydn, and gave very nearly the first performance of it in English on 21st April 1800. But then the problems with the text began. It has been to address this that I finally committed myself to producing a new, singable, English translation.[14] This is based on all the available sources, taking careful note of the libretto contained in Haydn's meticulously prepared 1800 edition, but incorporating improvements from the 1800 *London Wordbooks*, and later editions by Clementi and Neukomm. I have consulted the poems of John Milton and James Thomson in order to try and incorporate more authentic versions of the lines that derive from their works. I have also consulted the Biblical texts in circulation in the 18th century, and metrical versions of the Psalms that were in usage at that time (by Sternhold & Hopkins, and Tate & Brady), as well as the translations of Virgil that Jennens was writing about in his correspondence with Edward Holdsworth.[15] In the choruses there are moments when Swieten's text has been rearranged into something more idiomatically English [particularly in nos. 4, 13 & 27]. In other places the addition of a syllable or two has allowed the underlay to match the German better [in nos. 2, 10 & 31].

Anyone who would like to read about my research in depth, and the reasons behind the changes to the familiar lines of the old Novello edition, can find it discussed at length in my recently published article (see note 12).

FORTHCOMING PERFORMANCES

The new edition of Haydn's *The Creation* with Neil Jenkins' new English text will be premiered this year at the Mayfield Festival, in Mayfield Parish Church on Sunday May 7th. The London premiere is on Thursday June 29th, when the Goldsmith's Choral Union will perform it at the Cadogan Hall. Brian Wright will be the conductor, and Neil Jenkins himself will be singing the tenor solos.

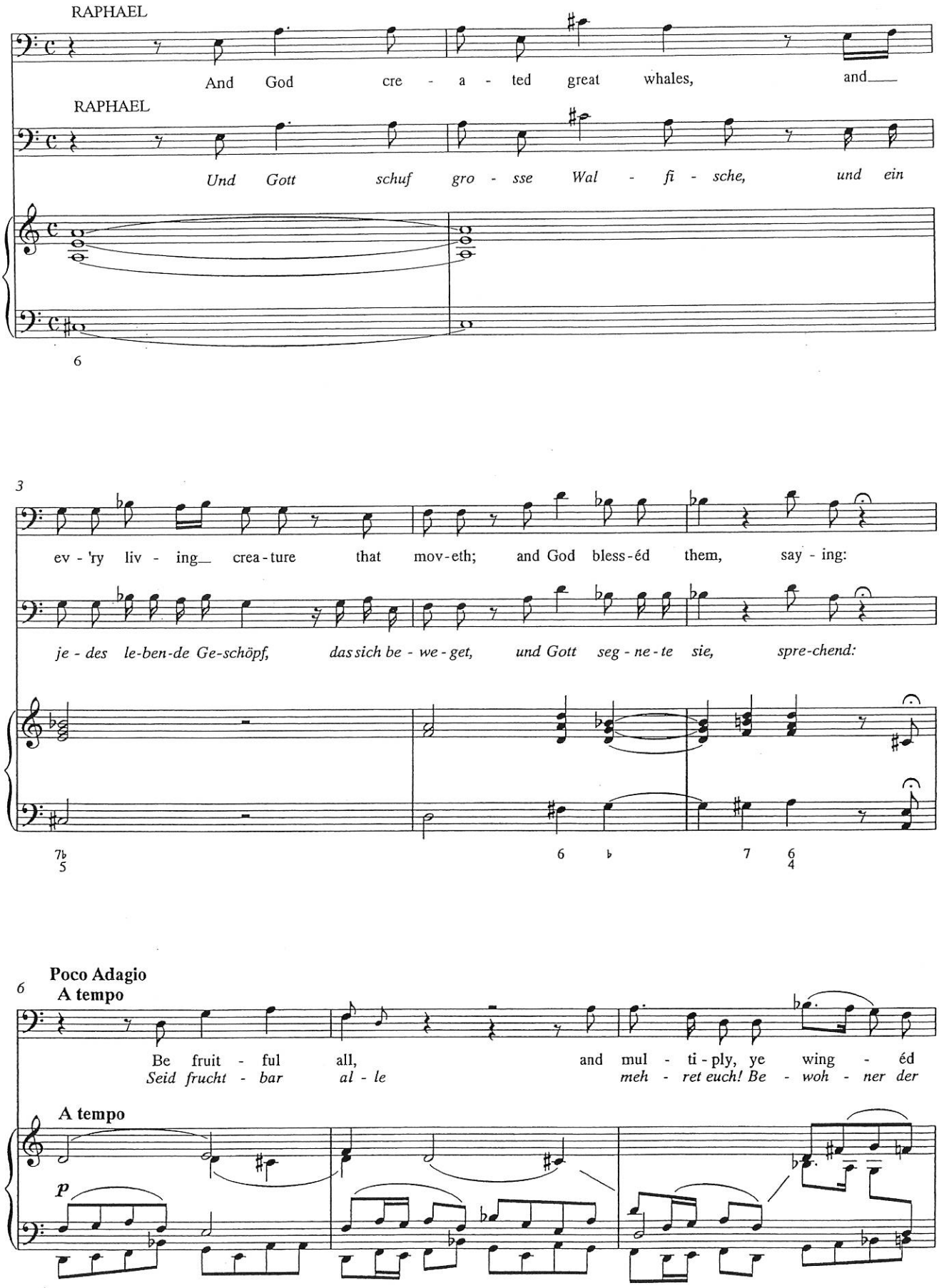
[1] Anna Seward, letter of September 27th 1802
[2] Scottish music publisher George Thomson to Anne Hunter, poet of Haydn's *12 English Canzonettas*, 1804
[3] For the 'New Novello Choral Edition'
[4] published by King's Music
[5] Milton *On the Morning of Christ's Nativity*
[6] published in 1772
[7] Burrows & Dunhill *Music and Theatre in Handel's World*, Oxford 2002
[8] Charles Jennens to James Harris, 30th November 1744
[9] In her letter letter of 10th March 1744 to her sister Mrs Dewes she mentions that she had been amusing herself writing 'a drama for an oratorio out of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, to give Mr Handel to compose to'.
[10] In his letter of 22nd March 1746 to James Harris he states: 'When last I came from Handel's oratorio I was so charmed, that to work I went, & from Milton's *Paradise Lost* drew out a plan of a new oratorio'.
[11] Libretto of 'Paradise Lost', 'Literary life and select works of Benjamin Stillingfleet', London 1811
[12] in my article 'The Text of Haydn's *Creation*; New sources and a possible librettist"', Haydn Society of Great Britain, Journal no.24 Part 2, 2005
[13] Landon, H.C Robbins *The Collected Correspondence and London Notebooks of Joseph Haydn*
[14] published by King's Music
[15] The image of the horse in Raphael's Recitative 'Straight opening her fertile womb' cannot derive from Milton, as he does not describe it as appearing at the moment of Creation in Book VII of *Paradise Lost*. However it is similar to a description in Joseph Trapp's 1731 translation of the *Aeneid*: [The Works of Virgil, 1731] Book the Eleventh.

****

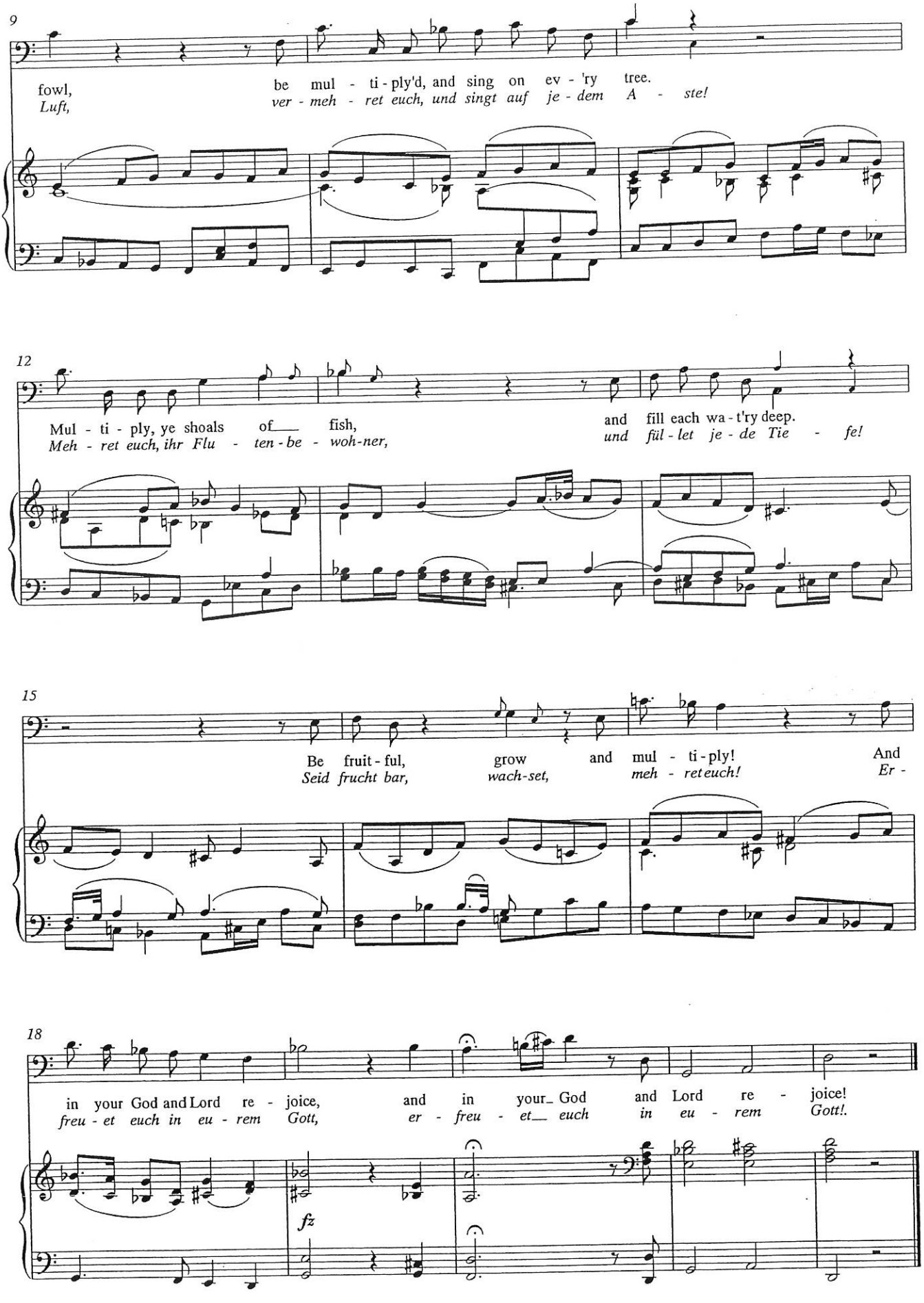
WHAT IS CREATION?

The day I fed this article into the page format I received an order from the library of the Guildhall School of Music on a standard form which included sections for 'Created by' and 'Creation Date'. Miranda Cramp may be a very intelligent orchestral librarian, but surely in an artistic institution, 'creation' must refer to some creative artistic act: filling in a form isn't, in the usual sense of the term, creative (unless it's part of some 'creative' accounting system – but that's another meaning.)

No. 16 Recitative [Raphael]



2 pages from the new edition of *The Creation* by Neal Jenkins: size slightly reduced


9
fowl,
Luft,
be mul - ti - ply'd, and sing on ev - 'ry tree.
ver - meh - ret euch, und singt auf je - dem A - ste!
12
Mul - ti - ply, ye shoals of fish,
Meh - ret euch, ihr Flu - ten - be - woh-ner,
and fill each wa - t'ry deep.
und fül - let je - de Tie - fe!
15
Be fruit - ful, grow and mul - ti - ply! And
Seid frucht bar, wach-set, meh - ret euch! Er -
18
in your God and Lord re - joice, and in your God and Lord re - joice!
freu - et euch in eu - rem Gott, er - freu - et euch in eu - rem Gott!.
fz

THE FIRST SHAWM BAND IN JAPAN

Minoru Takahashi

Few people are aware that Japanese Christians enjoyed European music from middle of 16th to early 17th century. But we can trace chiefly Iberian and Italian music during the Christian Century (1549-c.1650) in Japan.

Francisco de Xavier (1506-1552), who had come to Japan in 1549, presented a *manicordio* or a *monochordum* to Yoshitaka Ouchi (1507-1551), one of the most influential local lords in Japan in 1551. The first text books for *canto chao* (plain song) and *canto d'orgao* (polyphonic music) came to Japan in 1556. Lessons for the *violas darco* (consort of viols) began in 1562. The first two organs were played around 1580. Four boys, who had been sent to Rome, introduced *harpa* (harp), *rebeca* (violin), *vyhuera* (vihuela), *laude* (lute) and *clavicymbalum* (harpsichord) to Japan in 1590.

Four boys played *cravo* (harpsichord: *cravo* was used for keyboard instruments, both hammered and plucked), *harpa, laude, rabequinha* (violin), *violsa de crco* (viols in this case) and *realego* (positive organ) at Jyurakutei palace in Kyoto in the presence of Hideyoshi Toyotomi (1537-1598), who was the ruler of the time. Some Solemn Masses were said with the accompaniment of musical instruments from Europe. Around 1600, Japanese Christians began to make organs. The last and the most interesting for me now is that music composed for The Beatification of Ignatius de Loyola (1491-1556) in 1609 was performed in Nagasaki in 1611, only two years after the performance in Europe.

As a Renaissance woodwind instruments player I am proud to say that the second musical instruments that came to Japan from Europe were shawms and flutes. We can see three reports by priests from Japan which describe the presence of shawms and flutes in sixteenth century Japan. Each has different significance.

The First Report of Shawms from Japan.

On September 19 1551, Xavier was going to meet Yoshishige Otomo (1530-1587), a local lord in Bungo (the present Oita prefecture in Kyusyu). There was a Portuguese ship in the Hiji port, a little north of Bettpu in Oita, and they lowered three boats from their ship and played *charamela* and *flauta* on them to encourage Xavier or to celebrate this special day. This is recorded in *Historia dos Religiosos da Companhia de Jesus*, Liv. VI, cap.11 (Bibl. National de Lisboa, cod. B-17-34). Unfortunately I can see only Japanese translation in *The Introduction of Western Music to Japan* by Dr. Arimichi Ebisawa. As I have been unable to check whether terms *charamelas* and *flautas* are used in the source. So I cannot judge if shawm and flute were plural. But as sailors played them on three boats, I think several shawms and flutes must have been played. And it is certain that a kind of shawm was played in Japan as early as in the middle of 16th century. Was this the first shawm band in Japan? There must have been some Chinese sailors as well as other Asian sailors and African sailors; so we can't deny the possibility that Chinese shawms were played on these three boats.

The Second Report of Shawms from Japan

There was a kind of Mass in September 1557 in Hirato, Kyusyu, according to a letter from Hirato, October 29, 1557, by Gaspar Vilela, a Portuguese father. (Hirato was an earlier international port in eastern Kyusyu.) In the procession in the mass, *flautas* and *charamelas* were played. As two Portuguese ships had come to Hirato, there were many Portuguese traders and sailors in addition to fathers and monks.

Who played shawms?

In this letter about Hirato, Vilela used 'We' and 'Portuguese' as the subjects of the sentences, so it is safe to assume that Portuguese played shawms and flutes.

In what style did they play shawms?

The only descriptions are *'Em Firando fizemos hua procissam solenne com missa catatada'* and *'em canto d'orgao'*(in polyphony) for the mass in Hirato. But Vilela also wrote about a mass in Funai, present Oita City. He wrote that there were two *coros*; each had five singers and some were Portuguese, and they sang polyphonic music, *'em canto d'orgao'*. I guess that there were far more Portuguese in Hirato than in Funai. So in this procession for this mass, more Portuguese sang polyphonic sacred songs in Hirato than in Funai. But the source does not show us whether they played shawms and flutes in monophony or in polyphony. I suspect that they played as they did for a procession in sixteenth century Portugal. So study of Portuguese music may show us how they played shawms and flutes. As for the sizes of the shawms, I imagine that they brought only smaller sizes. Larger sizes would have been too expensive and too large to carry to Japan and to play in a procession.

The Third Report of Shawms from Japan

Goncalo Fernandes, a Portuguese monk who had been in Japan from 1557 to 1559, wrote a letter in 1570 from Goa, India. Fernandes described another shawm band in Hirato. He wrote that *Christaos* (Japanese Christians) played *charamelas* and *flautas* in a procession. This confirms that Japanese Christians played European shawms and flutes in Japan between 1557 and 1559.

This is the last report we have found for a renaissance shawm band. In Meiji era (1868-1912) some modern military shawm bands were introduced to Japan, but they used different kinds of instruments.

The first modern band of renaissance shawms appeared in the Early Music Festival in Tokyo about twenty years ago. There are now two sets of shawms in Japan. One is in Osaka and the other is in Tokyo. The museum of Osaka College of Music has shawms from soprano to great bass by Moeck; the shawms in Tokyo, which I possess, are from soprano to bass by Hanchet in addition to one soprano, one alto, one tenor by Moulder. Shawms did not play an important role as *violas darco* in the Christian century. And now, although there are so many recorder players in Japan, few show their interest on shawms. I am always searching for new members for my shawm band.

Lastly, I must make a short comment about *flauta*. I don't think that recorders were introduced to Japan in the 16th century. If recorders had, we could find some special remarks on their sizes or differences of their construction.

RAVENS VIEW

Simon Ravens

The disc may not be released for another six months, but in my mind I can already see the reviews for Anima Eterna's forthcoming CD of Ravel. My forebodings are based on the evidence of a concert performance I heard in Antwerp last October. Doubtless some will welcome the revelations of hearing the music of a great orchestrator on the instruments he was actually writing for, but just as many will throw up their hands in despair at Jos van Immerseel's approach. In particular, they will take him to task over the way he despatches the conclusion of Bolero.

Even without a score to hand, it's easy enough to describe. The penultimate bar of *Bolero* begins with a quaver rest in all the upper parts, followed by a crashing discord and, most significantly, nothing from the snare drum. In the context of a relentless rhythmic ostinato, that moment is the obvious, startling conclusion to the whole piece. Every half-decent conductor (or ice-dance partnership) recognises the significance of this moment, and most recognise it by pausing (or flinging themselves on the ice). Why? Well, although Ravel offers no such instruction, I suspect that most conductors would simply say that it was common sense to underline the drama by playing that moment for all it is worth. The more astute conductor might turn things around, pointing out that by not instructing them not to pause, Ravel effectively gives them free rein as interpreters.

At this point, in walks the conductor whose background is in early music. Jos van Immerseel is aware that Ravel's instructions don't end with the score itself. Just as we might need to read Couperin's *L' art de toucher le clavecin* if we want to know how we might or might not play a simple run of his quavers, so we need to do some further reading to find out what Ravel had in mind for the end of Bolero. For instance, the soprano Madeleine Grey wrote that when, in the year of his death, she sang *Chanson à boire* to the composer, 'he pointed with his index finger to a bar at the end where I had made a slight rallentando that was not in the score'. Ravel, needless to say, did not approve. Other performers, too, recall Ravel's dislike of unsanctioned rallentandos.

This fits well with Ravel's famous loathing for the self-indulgence of performers. When the dedicatee of the Concerto for the left hand, Paul Wittgenstein (who had taken liberties with the score in a performance attended by the composer) loftily responded to Ravel's criticisms with the statement 'Performers must not be slaves!' Ravel bit back: 'Performers are slaves.' This would seem conclusive, were we not able to read numerous reports that Ravel as performer was notoriously liberal with his own scores. In this, as in so many things, one suspects that Ravel flew flags of convenience.

Van Immerseel is aware of the recorded legacy of Ravel and his contemporaries, but when I spoke to him before the Antwerp concert, he emphasised the primacy of the score. 'When Ravel asks that one instrumental solo is to be played expressively, but not when the same theme is taken up by another instrument, this is exactly what we do.' Again, I can see critics bridling at the result. This is simply not something we are used to hearing, and in Anima Eterna's performance, that saxophone solo really does sound bizarre.

Even in the sterile environment of Antwerp's De Singel concert hall, Anima Eterna's Ravel was sensational. Van Immerseel, in each project, takes the search for an authentic instrumentarium to almost fetishistic levels. 'Which instrument caused them most problems in this programme?' I asked. 'The oboe d'amore, without question', van Immeseel says (mirroring Ravel's own dire experience), but he points out to me, with something close to pride, that the particular Parisian oboe d'amore they have procured may even be an instrument Ravel knew. Where van Immerseel's experience with this instrument differs to Ravel's, I suspect, is in the player. Anima Eterna's oboe d'amorist plays ravishingly.

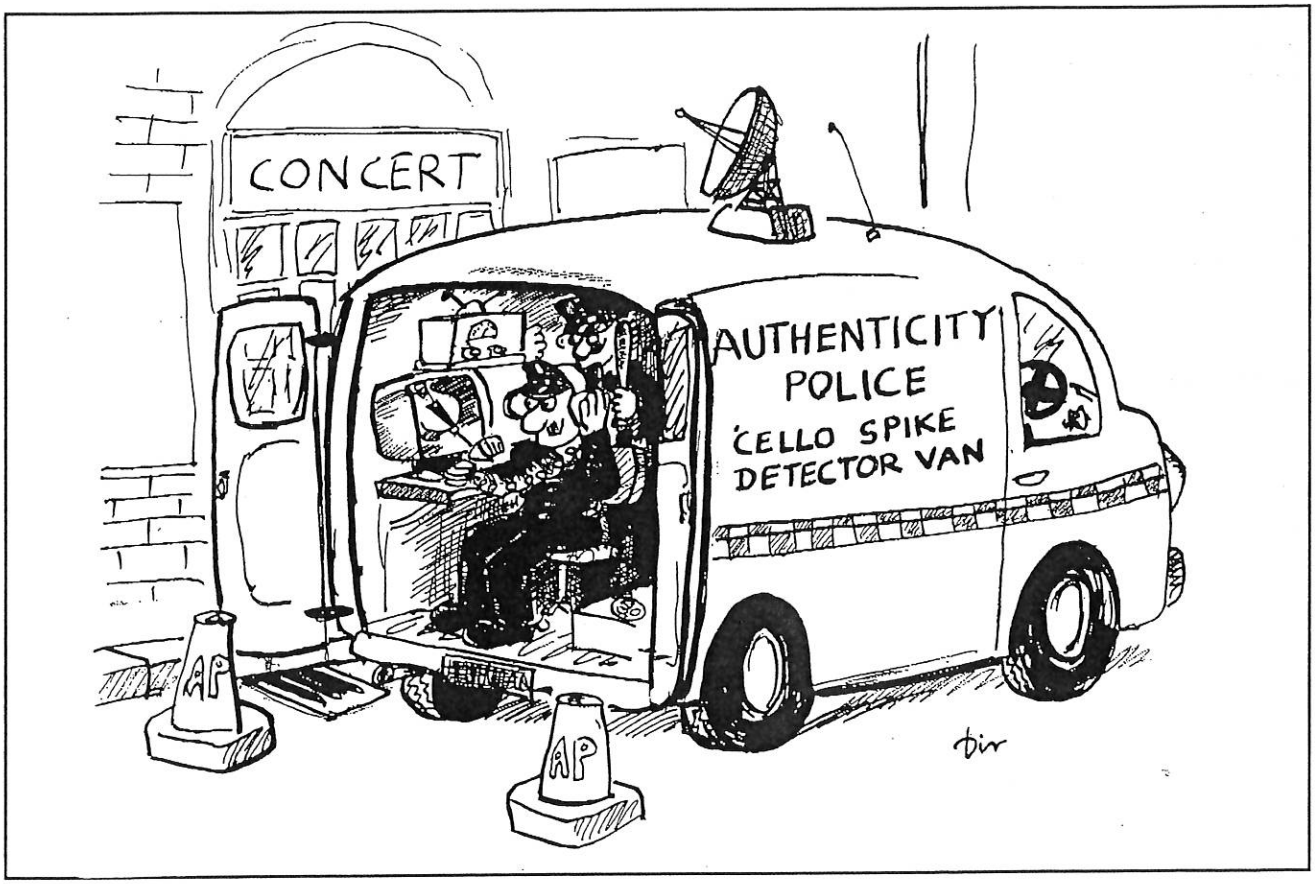
For a group rooted in chamber music, a concert with an orchestra of 78 players presents certain challenges. Revealingly, the afternoon technical rehearsal in the hall began with van Immerseel walking around in the auditorium to listen, leaving this massive group to pick their way through the 17-minute minefield of *La Valse*. This Anima Eterna did, with an abundance of smiles, but with precious little semaphore from leader Midori Seiler, which strikes me as a remarkable testament to their chamber ethos.

The contrast between this run-through, though, and the concert performance, is also revealing. Van Immerseel, with his meticulous fidelity to the score and complete lack of self-indulgence, may strike some as being an unremarkable conductor. I imagine he would be pleased to be considered the medium rather than message. But with his added presence, Anima Eterna's *La Valse* becomes wonderfully focussed, technically and musically. The prospect of hearing this performance on disc (the sessions were taking place in the week I heard the orchestra) is mouth-watering, and one I would recommend to anyone with ears open to new possibilities.

It strikes me that more than any other musician, Jos van Immerseel is living proof of the maxim that 'early music' finished yesterday. He is simply not capable of withdrawing that probing attitude to the sound-world and intentions of the composer. (When he performs Messiaen, he tells me, he does so on an Erard of the type the composer knew.) If the evidence van Immerseel unearths points him away from his own intuition, so be it: his first response is to trust the composer and to ask questions of his own presumptions. And so Jos van Immerseel chooses not to indulge himself with a pause at this dramatic conclusion of *Bolero*. Ravel, one has to assume, would approve: the critics, I am sorry to presume, will not.

Those without a score of Bolero *might like to know that the drum plays two quavers at the beginning of the penultimate bar rather than the quaver and a triplet of semiquavers that it (or rather they, since there are two players) have played in the preceding 338 bars of the piece. The second quaver has an accent (looking like a short diminuendo – the sort that gives such trouble to Schubert editors) above most parts with semiquavers, though nothing for the saxophones and trumpets, and an inverted bold V above parts that have longer notes, but nothing above the percussion. At least, that's what the 1994 Eulenburg edition prints, though the autograph is less precise. There is no dynamic mark: indeed, dynamic marks are amazingly sparse throughout the score: but is Ravel relying on the players to need only a few dynamic clues (like baroque composers)? The only mark since a fortissimo for everyone at bar 291 is for the entry of the percussion at 335: **f** for the cymbals and bass drum, **ff** for the tam-tam – Ravel typically gives a dynamic the first time an instrument plays. The cymbals break the rhythmic pattern they have set up in the four bars they have played so-far by playing the second quaver of the bar rather than the second crotchet. Do the players treat the piece as real music or mechanically play just what is written, as some of Ravel's remarks on* Bolero *imply?*

There is a precedent for writing on Bolero *in EMR since I devoted my editorial in Issue 5 to the edition.* CB



MUSIC IN LONDON

Andrew Benson-Wilson

For some completely inexplicable reason, I called Peter Harvey 'Richard' in my review of the St John Passion in the last EMR. The relevant sentence should have read 'Mark Padmore and Peter Harvey were outstanding as the Evangelist and Christus'.

Just a few yards away from where the 5/11 event nearly happened 400 years ago, The King's Singers, Concordia and actor Bill Wallis brought a performance of their CD 'Treason & Dischord – William Byrd and the Gunpowder Plot' to St Margaret's Church, Westminster (4 Nov). Without the detailed programme notes of the CD, we were left to concentrate on the music and the scene-setting text. Although none of the composers were directly involved with the plot, and none of the music explicitly referred to it (apart from Francis Pott's imaginative 21st century interpretation in his *Master Tresham: His Ducke*), the music and text explored how the political and religious implications of those distracted times affected musicians. Basing their programme around Byrd's Mass for four voices, the six male singers, five viol players and one lutenist evoked the period with works by Dowland, Philips, Gibbons and Weelkes alongside Byrd and Pott. What interested me in terms of musical interpretation was the contrast between the almost too perfect consistency of tone, texture and intonation of the singers (who provided shading by adding or subtracting voices, rather like an organist adding or subtracting stops) and the vibrant ebb and flow and delicacy of detail of the viol players and lutenist.

HANDEL & MOZART OPERAS

Guildhall School of Music and Drama nipped in just before the start of Mozart year to give us *La finta semplice* (7 November), written when he was 12. I have written before that 'the very early works of great composers are difficult to review – they inevitably do not show the mastery that the composer later became capable of, so are open to undue criticism – but are usually staggering achievements for a youth, so are open to undue praise' (*EMR* 61, June 2000). Although there are tempting insights into the genius to come (for example, the finales to the three acts show the young lad's early ability to string together longer musical arguments), Mozart never quite manages to bring the characters into sharp musical focus and tries to cram far too much of what is already a daft plot into the helter-skelter recitatives. Incidentally, I loved Richard Morrison's description of the plot in his Times review – 'a tissue of unlikely intrigues in which a Hungarian woman pretends to be a naive ingénue so as to seduce an elderly misogynist, so that he will understand the power of love sufficiently to allow his sister to marry the pretend-simpleton's brother.' There were some impressive singers on the evening that I attended (most of the cast changed on alternate evenings), notably Rosina, Don Cassandro and Don Polidoro, and all the cast seemed to be accomplished actors, notwithstanding roles that spanned a wide range of ages. The orchestra, directed by Nicholas Kok, occasionally lacked the crispness and articulation that Mozart's music deserves.

Nicholas Hytner's award winning 1985 production of Handel's *Xerxes* is, deservedly, an English National Opera staple – it was one of the productions that started the Handel operatic revival which continues apace. Its sixth revival (I saw the 26 Nov performance) featured a complete recasting since the 2002 revival – and it has an equally fine cast, with particularly strong performances from Katarine Karnéus (Xerxes), Lawrence Zazzo (Arsamenes), Lucy Schaufer (Amastris), Neal Davies (Ariodates), Sarah Tynan (Atalanta) and Graeme Danby (Elviro). Conductor Noel Davies never managed to give the music the impetus it needs, and the modern instruments of the ENO orchestra seemed even less sympathetic than usual, although the continuo group was better. For those that haven't seen it or the DVD, the setting veers towards the surrealist, with several references to Handel himself, including the famous Roubiliac sculpture relabelled as Timotheus (court musician to Alexander, a future ruler of Persia) and several appearances of the Handelian fob cap. Huge green reproductions of the British Museum's Lions of Ninevah added a suitably Persian air to the sets, and the separation of the uniformly grey-clad chorus, the black-coated and talcum-powdered flunkies and the colourful lead roles provided visual depth, as well as a social comment. Musically, of course, Xerxes is in a world of its own as a one-off experiment in a more coherent fusion of aria and ensemble numbers, albeit relying to a large extent on borrowed music. As one of Handel's last operas, this style was not developed further by him, although his departure from his roots in opera seria seem to be apparent in the gentle mockery of much of the action. There are certainly some impressive showcase arias, notably in Act 2, where there seem to pile one on top of the other.

The Royal Academy of Music's Opera Course (Royal Academy Opera) performed Mozart's youthful *La finta giardiniera* in the Sir Jack Lyons Theatre (I saw the 21 Nov production – all but one of the cast changed for alternate performances). I usually avoid naming individuals in student productions where there are cast changes, as it is pot luck which cast I see; but the cast on the 21 Nov were, without exception, impressive singers – indeed, one of the strongest casts I have seen from the RAO. Although there is the usual problems of many of the singers being allowed (or encouraged?) to develop over-powerful vibrato, this rarely got in the way of pitch or intonation, although, sadly, it probably will do as the singers age. As usual, the costume

was sumptuous and the staging neat (if noisy when moved) – a simple set of interlocking staircase in varying configurations. The players were the Royal Academy Sinfonia (why not their period ensemble?) under Iain Ledingham, who also provided some rather-too-powerful harpsichord continuo playing (was it the harpsichord that produced the loud wooden taps that were heard frequent throughout?)

BARBICAN 'GREAT PERFORMERS'

The Barbican's 'Great Performers' series is increasingly taken up by record company favourites blatantly promoting their latest disk. Although this can produce some great concerts by some great performers, I would hope for a bit of a re-think in future series. This month it was Cecilia Bartoli (whose concert I missed) and, on 8 Nov, Andreas Scholl with 'Senesino', a programme of extracts from operas written by Handel, Albinoni, Porpora and Lotti for the famous castrato singer. I have always been impressed by Scholl's singing, so it was good to see him develop a far more expressive stage presence, although he still roots his feet slightly too dogmatically on the ground, rather like the famously statuesque Senesino engraving. It was clear that he was not trying to emulate the vocal style of Senesino, particularly in his nicely restrained use of ornamentation and embellishment – his cadenzas were frequently minimal, sometimes just a held note or a simple scale, and they were the more effective for their simplicity. The same cannot be said of the lead violinist of the accompanying band, Accademia Bizantina. He took every opportunity to show off, not least in his extravagent cadenzas, applying portamento and vibrato with evident gusto. He was at its most irritating in the Geminiani/Corelli Concerto Grosso, where he attempted to outshine an extremely good cellist (in one of his most virtuosic moments) even though he was only playing a single held note. It was a shame, because the rest of the band were very good, playing vigorously but without being aggressive. Particular credit must go to the second violinist, Fiorenza De Donatis, for exquisite playing throughout, notably in Vivaldi's Concerto for 2 violins (op. 3/8), and to the cellist Marco Frezzato. Despite letting the leader get away with musical murder, Ottavia Dantone was an accomplished director, taking care to look at the larger scene rather than getting bogged down in detail. A number of continental orchestras have made their name in the UK by backing singers like Andreas Scholl, so it is a shame that this otherwise impressive group should be let down by their leader. I was particularly impressed by the way that Scholl shared the honours with the director and orchestra. Each of his entrances was done with the director and, if anything, he took fewer bows than the instrumental soloists – this is not usually the case in showcase concerts like this.

David Daniels and Magdalena Kozena drew a capacity crowd for their concert of works by Telemann, Handel (continuing Andreas Scholl's Senesino theme), Corelli and Purcell, supported by the Basel Chamber Orchestra under Paul Goodwin (25 Nov), both pairing proving particularly effective. Paul Goodwin allowed the music to breath and speak for itself, reflecting a fine sensitivity of mood and drawing a sophisticated sound from the Basel players and eschewing the antics of some of the more flamboyant contemporary continental bands. Although David Daniels started with a fairly lack-lustre reading of 'Fammi combattere' from *Orlando* (which only occasionally reflected the mood of the piece), he certainly worked himself in to the emotional core of the later works, notably in 'Pompe vane di morte – Dove sei' from *Rodelinda* and 'Se in fiorio' from *Giulio Cesare*. I was particularly impressed by his resistance to the temptation to add a flourish to the bitter-sweet da capo link in 'Dove sei' – the pause was most telling. Although he retains quite a powerful vibrato, he avoids the havoc to intonation and tone that can result and seems to growing in stature as a musical interpreter. I suppose it is in the nature of such things that it was Magdalena Kozena who got the 'brava' yell from London's opera mafia – in this case for 'Scherza infida' from *Ariodante*. She had earlier impressed me with her singing Dido's Lament. She has the ability to tease the maximum emotion out of such works without going all operatic – the audible cracking in her voice towards the end could have sounded so kitsch from a lesser performer, but I found it hugely compelling. In comparison with David Daniels, I feel that she has a greater control on the articulation of runs and, for me, a better sense of control of vibrato and vocal timbre. In this concert, she was also more constantly able to get behind the music and text – including the revelation of a delightful glimpse of feminine coquettishness in the trouser role aria 'Dopo notte' from *Ariodante*.

The Sixteen were welcome additions to the Barbican's series with their performance of *Messiah* (2 Dec). The opening Sinfony was rather slow by today's standards, but set the scene for a performance that was lifted well above the everyday reading. Harry Christophers showed a careful attention to details of phrasing and articulation, including the occasional pairing of notes. The choir was on brilliant form, excelling in all voices. The audience, however, was dreadful, with frequent unrestrained coughing and even the heavy rhythmic breathing of sleep. They were also more than usually ragged in their response to the Hallelujah chorus – for quite a while there was only one person standing and a sizeable proportion remained seated throughout. I can understand the mixed feelings that this curious custom can engender; but if for no other reason than to avoid disturbance and confusion, it is something that needs to be managed by the conductor – either by making it clear that we should all remain seated, or by directing us to our feet (as Stephen Layton does in his St John's, Smith Square performances).

There is something intensely involving about a solo cellist sitting alone on a stage playing Bach. Yo-Yo Ma showed that he deserves all the hype that the marketing men can come up with by an absolutely inspired performance of the Suites 3, 5 and 6 (4 Dec). He has an extraordinarily relaxed playing style, whether leaning into his instrument or reclining back into the simple frame chair. His delicate

bowing and deft finger touch avoided any sense of aggressive attack, whether from finger or bow. The control of the ebb and flow of the separate movements towards the greater whole was masterly, as was his mastery of cello tone – producing a singing tone, but without obvious vibrato.

The indisposition of Magdalena Kozena bought a radical change of programme to the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment's 9 December Mozart concert. I felt for mezzo Malena Ernman having to stand in for such a distinguished singer in a major hall under Sir Simon Rattle. In the event, her programme of character pieces never really gave her the chance to show her undoubted mettle. It was only 'Non sò più' from *Figaro* that came close to the dramatic exit aria that she needed to enthuse the audience, although if there was anybody less physically suited to portray the 'hormonally unsettled love of a young adolescent male', it was this tall and very striking Swedish blonde! She showed remarkable control over the timbre and range of her voice in 'Non più di fiori' from *La clemenza di Tito*, her voice blending beautifully with the lower registers of the basset horn. Simon Rattle bought his usual interpretive insights and emotionally powerful directing to the ballet music from *Idomeneo* and Haydn's 'Oxford' Symphony 92, giving an air of mystery to the latter's expansive opening that many conductors fail to explore, and seeking out the emotional depth to be found in the Adagio and the jaunty little 5-finger exercise theme of the concluding Presto. Rattle really does unpeel the layers of orchestras – this is not the first time I have seen him spending much of his time directing the second violins and violas.

Similar problems befell Le Concert d'Astrée under Emmanuel Haïm (10 Dec). The heavily pregnant Haïm had recently fallen, damaging her right arm and shoulder, which meant she had to conduct a shortened concert with her left hand. Alice Coote's true mezzo voice was impressive in the *Agnus Dei* from Bach's B minor Mass, although both she and Barbara Bonney suffered from excessive vibrato, notably in Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater*. Haïm explored the operatic rather than the spiritual side of this work, exposing Pergolesi's glimpses of the forthcoming galant style, although the Duet 'Fac, ut ardeat cor meum,' whilst clearly in the stilo antico, was delivered with a vigour that was entirely Baroque. Stéphanie-Marie Degand and Stéphanie Paulet were outstanding soloists in Bach's concerto for two violins, demonstrating much more of an air of cooperation than, dare I say, many a mixed gender reading. Patrick Beaugiraud was equally effective in Bach's concerto for oboe d'amore.

SINGING GABRIELIS

The Gabrieli Consort continues to expand its musical horizons, this time both backwards and forwards, with a programme of entirely vocal works by Parsons, Tallis, Sheppard and Byrd at one extreme and Britten, Harris and Howells at the other, sandwiched between plainchant processionals, and all combined under the title of 'The Pilgrim's Progress: the road to Paradise' (16 Nov, Christ Church, Spitalfields). Inspired by a recent series of concerts on the pilgrim route to Santiago, their programme was 'intended to celebrate the passage of the soul from earthly tribulation to heavenly joys'. I am not sure if I have heard the Gabrieli Consort in their entirely vocal incarnation before, but they put in a pretty impressive performance, with a very cohesive sound and an excellent balance of voices. John Sheppard's extraordinary *Media Vita* was one of the highlights, as was Holst's *Nunc Dimittis*, the huge crescendo towards the climactic *Amen* bringing a 'Wow!' from the seat behind me. The rather noisy movement of the singers around the stage was a bit of a distraction, as was Paul McCreesh's increasingly regular habit of peering over his shoulder towards the audience. I would imagine this must be rather disconcerting for the singers, and it certainly is to this member of the audience.

WIGMORE YOUNG ARTISTS

The King's Consort (or TKC, as they increasingly seem to call themselves) presented a Young Artists concert (Wigmore Hall, 18 Nov). Countertenor Iestyn Davies was unable to appear (but see my review of a later appearance below), and was replaced by baritone Ben Davies and Matthew Halls, harpsichord, performing Bach's fascinating mini-opera *Amore traditore*. Ben Davies has a clear and agile voice, with a consistent and pleasantly unaffected tone over his range. He was well supported by Matthew Halls with a characteristically rich and full harpsichord accompaniment.

The Calino Quartet were the stars of the evening for me, with their stunning performance of Schumann's immensely powerful Quartet in A, op. 41/3. They explored the widely varying moods, ranging from the gaunt to the lush, and showed themselves fully capable of accessing the anguished power of this disturbing work.

The Saraband Consort seems to be a cover-all name encompassing forces ranging from solo voices to a full orchestra and choir. This evening's incarnation was of voices and organ, the later causing a conflict in the directors mind as he struggled to decide whether to conduct or play the necessary chords on the organ – the resulting combination of both was not really satisfactory, with the organ continuo often seen as something to do when not conducting. Indeed, I wondered whether any of the works needed conducting at all. I was also less than comfortable with the singing – all the voices had strong vibrato which, although not necessarily unpleasant in itself, collectively gave a feeling of unsteady intonation.

The final group, Xacona, sprang from the 2000 European Union Baroque Orchestra, with Muffat's Sonata 1 from *Armonico tributo* and the Concerto for 3 oboes and 3 violins by Telemann. Although they produced a good consort sound, they missed some of the elements of light and shade and subtle detailing that makes music more than the notes.

DRAMATIC *WINTERREISE*

Baritone Thomas Guthrie, whose singing often reflects his interest in acting, has devised a fascinating staged performance of Schubert's *Winterreise*, complete with puppetry, animation and lighting. I saw one of the Hampstead New End Theatre performances in November, with Gary Cooper, fortepiano, and David Miller, guitar. Thomas Guthrie sang at the same time as animating the puppet, whose rather perplexed looking and slightly Mondrianesque face reflected the alienation of the increasingly anguished winter wanderer. The love that grew in the spring has dissolved by the winter, leaving the distraught stranger with nothing but his thoughts. The use of a puppet, particular one manipulated by the singer whose face we also saw just behind and above it, gave a layering effect to the emotions. It was difficult at first to work out how this would impinge on my own interpretation, in comparison to having the singer's face and voice to bring expression. As the puppet was only capable of limited physical movement and no variety of facial expression, and the singer was denied most of the physical movements that he could otherwise employ, we were left with the singer's face (and voice) and the puppet's movements. In practice, this worked well, adding a layering effect to the gradual emotional collapse of the protagonist. Perhaps it reinforced a male response to emotion, with the face remaining unmoved, while the partly hidden emotions creep out from around the edges. I am not sure if this performance answered all my own questions about this agonising work – for example, is the wanderer still alive at the end, or, after his brief burst of courage after passing the graveyard (during which he realises that he has the power of God, and therefore, presumably, self determination, within himself), has his 'third sun' finally set, leaving him better off in the dark as the organ-grinder leads him into eternity. There were quite a few children in the audience, and they managed to remain remarkably quite throughout – which says a lot, either for Thomas Guthrie or for the innate good manners of Hampstead kids. It also says something for this performance that it has generated such a reflective and philosophical response from this reviewer.

ST CECILIA'S DAY

The London Handel Festival's St Cecilia's Day concert at St George's Hanover Square (22 Nov) turned out to be a short, one hour affair before the better dressed members of the audience sloped off to dinner at Claridge's. It was a shame that Robin Blaze, the star name that must have drawn many of the audience to this concert, was indisposed (but useful that he gave sufficient notice for the programmes to reflect the change), although it gave me the chance to hear the slightly less eminent singers Claire Ormshaw and Timothy Travers-Brown, who stood in alongside the winner of the 2005 Handel Singing Competition, Fflur Wyn. The Israelite woman's song ('So shall the lute') from *Judas Maccabaeus*, gave Fflur Wyn a chance to demonstrate her stage presentation skills – she works an audience extremely well, although I was less convinced about her ability to articulate her runs and her control of tone and vibrato. I also felt that she confused the underlying suffering in her solo in the trio from *Orlando* – although the words suggested that she could not be comforted, her face, deportment and voice suggested entirely different emotions. However, she gave us one of her dramatic high cadenzas at the end, which the audience loved. Claire Ormshaw impressed me with her lovely soprano tone, her ability to control her voice and her natural stage presence. Timothy Travers-Brown also made a very effective contribution with his high countertenor voice, notably *in 'Inumano fratel'* from *Tolomeo* and in duet with Claire Ormshaw in 'Consolati, a bella' from *Orlando*.

EROICA & *LA MARSEILLAISE*

The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment's 'Listening in Paris' concluded with a Study Day (29 Oct) on 'What made people sit up and listen?' and a Queen Elizabeth Hall concert (24 Nov). The study day exploring the changing style of concert going between 1750 and 1850, reflecting a move from music as background entertainment for the aristocracy and church dignitaries to music that people wanted to actually listen to. One of the joys of OAE programmes is their frequent inclusion of lesser-known works, in this case balancing Beethoven's *Eroica* with Paisiello's *March funèbre à l'occasion de la Mort du Général Hoche* and Davaux's *Symphonie Concertante of Patriotic Airs* for 2 violins. A pre-concert sing-along had introduced some of the audience to the said patriotic songs – an occasion that included the lusty singing of *La Marseillaise* within a few hundred metres of Waterloo Station. Although using the same musical devices, Paisiello's work served to show just how good Beethoven's funeral march is, although Napoleon was clearly impressed by the Italian opera-composer as he lured him to a lucrative post in Paris. There was some exqusite playing from oboe, clarinet and bassoon principals. Davaux's contribution was of a similar musical standard, with some rather formulaic writing for the two violins (played by father-and-son team Boris and Daniel Garlitsky). It did give the chance for what I think might have been a group of OAE staff to start applause after the first movement – a topic that had been raised in discussion during the study day. The *Eroica* was given a masterly reading by the impressive young Russian conductor Vladimir Jurowski. Although his evident energy pulled the OAE to new heights, his reading of the opening movement was marked by lightness and delicacy. Some noisy page turns from the violin desks marred a key moment of silence, and a banging door somewhere in the bowels of the building was a further irritant – or was it intended to reflect the distant sound of the guillotine's chop.

APOCALYPSE

Sequentia (in this instance, just Benjamin Bagby and Nobert Rodenkirchen) bought their programme 'Apocalypse: fragments for the End of Time' (a compilation of works from the 8th to the 11th century and from Iceland to Anglo-Saxon England) to the Purcell Room (7 Dec). I have

written before (*EMR* 74, Oct 2001) that 'the first time I saw Benjamin Bagby give one of his sung/spoken performances was very late at night in a Cambridge college many years ago. His opening yelp and furious strumming of his little harp sent me into a fit of giggles that took me the rest of the evening to recover from'. I have grown up a bit since then, but I must say that these performances do still take a little getting used to. In his interpretations of these early medieval texts, Bagby combines bardic declamatory spoken text, albeit with a very wide tessitura, with chant and snatches of melody, few of which develop into what we might call music. Accompanying instruments include a reconstruction of the early 7th century 6-string lyre found in the 'singing-knight's grave' in Oberflacht in Southern Germany (similar in appearance to the Sutton Hoo lyre), tuned to give a sequence of 4ths, a couple of 5ths and minor 3rds and the octave, an early medieval triangular harp and a succession of flutes, including one made from a swan's bone based on an 11th-century example from Speyer, and a symphony. I suppose one could comment on whether these instruments were appropriate for music from such a wide geographical and historical span, but they were effective in performance, particularly Nobert Rodenkirchen's various flute solos (which frequently featured breathy acoustic sub-harmonics). The audience was rather small, for a Purcell Room early music concert – I wonder if more people would have been attracted if it had been billed a poetry event.

BACH IN THE COFFEE HOUSE

'Lovelier than a Thousand Kisses' was the enticing title of a short 'invited audience' concert promoted by BBC Radio 3 as part of their 'Bach Christmas' project. 'Bach in the Coffee House' was the theme and the venue was The Troubadour on the Brompton Road, an authentic 1950s coffee house that has played host to Bob Dylan, Paul Simon, Jimi Hendrix and Led Zeppelin and, now, a mini version of the Royal Academy of Music Baroque Orchestra. Although I was disappointed with the eventual broadcast (too fragmented, too many vox-pops etc), the concert version was good. Kati Debretzeni gave a thrilling performance of Bach's Violin Concerto, having first given a neat description of the work. That was followed by the Coffee Cantata *Schweigt stille, plaudert nicht*, a declamation that was earlier used to good effect to bring the bustling basement bar to order. The singers were Pippa Goss, Matthew Beale and Alex Ashworth, and they were supported by some impressive young players from the Royal Academy, notably Soile Pylkkonen, flute, (with some beautifully expressive and excellently articulated playing), Elly Harrison, violin, and Lucy Schotchmer, cello. The whole was directed by Laurence Cummings with his characteristic verve and energy. (See also p. 29)

Congratulations to Jill Mitchell on her 'Trust me, I'm the Conductor!' Cardinal Carwood seems to bear an uncanny resemblance to Curmudgeonly Carrington! I read this out to my Schola [at Yale] and they recognised almost every line! *Simon Carrington*

HAZARD CHASE CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL

ST JOHN'S, SMITH SQUARE

Hazard Chase continue with their annual block booking of St John's, Smith Square in the run up to Christmas, with far more concerts that most people, and reviewers, can get to. I managed three, including 'The Journey of the Magi' from Cardinall's Musick – a programme of Padilla, Handl, Victoria, Palestrina and Byrd (16 Dec) based around Padilla's *Missa Ego flos campi*. The pairing of Padilla (maestro at Puebla Cathedral, Mexico) and Victoria in the first half only served to show the mastery of the latter in double choir writing. Poor Padilla's attempts, although they included some fascinating moments, never really convinced. The Credo, for example, sounded as though he had started off writing for double choir, and then couldn't quite work out how to do it. It was all rather formulaic. What was interesting, though, was his use of text repetition as a device. The word Credo is repeated 20 times throughout the movement: in the *Gloria*, 'bonae voluntatis' is repeated nine times, and in the *Sanctus* and *Benedictus*, 'Domine Deus Sabaoth'. The eight singers sang in their customary forthright style. In the double choir works, there was a marked contrast in style and quality between the two choirs, notably in the two very differently voiced countertenors – one shawm-like, one with more of a recorder tone, the shawm dominating too often for my taste.

Chapelle du Roi's programme (21 Dec) was, appropriately, based around Christmas at the Chapel Royal, albeit the English one, with works by Sheppard, Tallis and anon. It started with an interloper – Jacob Praetorius's harmonisation of Nicolai's *Wachet auf*, sung initially from the back of the hall and then in procession, and continued to combine the Tudor works with carols like *Gaudete* and *The Coventry Carol*. It was an attractive programme and was very well performed by the 11 singers under director Alistair Dixon – it was refreshing to have a conductor who is willing to just let the singers get on with it, notably by not conducting at all during some 2-part sections and even some complete works. As with the Cardinall's Musick, there was some contrast between voices, but this worked well. The highlights for me were the exquisite harmonies of Tallis's Christmas psalm sequence, and the *Agnus Dei* from his Mass *Puer natus est nobis*.

The highlight of these pre-Christmas and pre-Easter concerts is the inevitable appearance of Polyphony under Stephen Layton, on this occasion with an outstanding performance of *Messiah* with soloists Carolyn Sampson, Iestyn Davies, James Gilchrist and James Rutherford. Countertenor Iestyn Davies (who was originally billed to appear at the King's Concert Young Artists concert) was very impressive. He has a plangent quality to his voice which he combines with a clear, distinct and pleasantly unaffected tone – and he also knows how to elaborate *da capo* arias. James Gilchrist was also particularly effective in the jagged and angular lines of 'Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron'. But yet again, Carolyn Sampson stole the show. I have often mentioned her ability to draw an

audience into her world by her engaging stage presence – but she also comes up with the goods vocally. In 'I know that my Redeemer liveth', her voice gently assumed the tone of the naïve innocent expressing her pure belief and confidence, and she finished with a beautifully simple and musically integrated cadenza. The choir was excellent, singing with absolute clarity and cohesion. The Orchestra of Polyphony were also generally on very good form, although I was very curious as to why the leader applied so much vibrato during his solos. Stephen Layton, as ever, demonstrated his ability to explore the drama of the text. It was nice to have a continuo organ that was actually audible although, as usual on such occasions, my heart sank at the sight of the organist quietly leaving the stage and making his way around the galleries to the huge west-end organ, which quietly entered the final Amen before building up to a huge mass of sound that completely dominated the choir and orchestra and had the audience turning there heads towards the new burst of sound. But given the quality of the rest of the performance, I am happy to let Stephen Layton get away with this annual aural blast – once an organist...!

INTERNATIONAL WILLIAM BYRD CONFERENCE

Richard Turbet

Until 2004 there had, shamefully, never been a conference devoted to Byrd, and then two came along in consecutive years. In September 2004, Richard Rastall organized one at Leeds University's Centre for English Music, with three speakers followed by a round table discussion. It was cogently written up by Kerry McCarthy in *Early Music* of November that year. The death of Philip Brett in 2002 meant that, beside the loss of him as a person, there would not be a book on Byrd's English-texted music to complete the intended trilogy *The music of William Byrd* alongside the two existing books by Oliver Neighbour (instrumental music) and Joseph Kerman (Latin-texted music). The Leeds conference was convened in order to establish a project that would create some sort of replacement for the monograph, and this was achieved in the setting up of what is now named Byrdsang. Kerry McCarthy already had in mind plans for a large international conference on Byrd, and these came to fruition on 17-19 November 2005 at Duke University, North Carolina.

The event was a triumph. There were 23 papers, all of the highest quality. Contributors ranged from graduate students to the doyens of Byrd scholarship. Practical arrangements were superb: delegates were well fed and watered, graciously received, comfortably and conveniently accommodated. The East Campus is spacious and beautiful, even the weather smiled. Everyone remarked on what a friendly and stimulating atmosphere prevailed.

Philip Taylor and Samuel Schmitt got us off to an ideal start with a pair of papers offering fresh insights into the relationship with Byrd with the discreetly recusant Paston family. Basing his hypothesis on an account by a member of the family, Mary Berney (pronounced Barney) and on a site-visit, for which he provided a map, Philip proposed a location for the Pastons' mass-centre in a different part of Norfolk from that given in another apparently more explicit contemporary source. Samuel looked at the compositions of Byrd in the Paston manuscripts, what their presence tells us, and what conclusions can be drawn from the presence of works from continental Europe. Rebecca Redman continued the recusant thread by looking at the texts of some of Byrd's consort songs. In the same way that Craig Monson has illuminated Byrd scholarship with his insights into how Byrd and his fellow Catholics 'heard' contemporary Latin texts, she applied this thinking to the songs, with enlightening results. The first morning's session closed with our host Kerry McCarthy's paper which revealed the unique nature of the partnership between Tallis and Byrd in compiling their *Cantiones* of 1575, and in the course of her paper she announced her discovery of the source of the text for Tallis's *Suscipe quaeso* from that collection.

I opened the batting after lunch with a paper which noted the instability of Byrd's keyboard canon from the 1840s, when the first listing was made, and I advised against dogmatism in excluding doubtful works which do not fit our view of what we think Byrd ought to have composed. Timothy Day was prevented from attending, so Kerry read his fascinating paper on the history of Byrd performance as revealed by the recorded materials in the British Library National Sound Archive. One of the unsung heroes of Byrd scholarship is William Mahrt. Every year Bill gives penetrating papers about Byrd's Latin music at the William Byrd Festival in Portland, Oregon. Over here in the Carolinas he spoke on varieties of *commixtio* – commixture, or change of mode – in Byrd's music. Superficially this had the makings of an intensely academic study, but while both intense and academic, it was also lucid and revelatory. Finally for the day, Jessie Ann Owens exploited her research on the writings of the 17th-century musical theorist (and much else) Charles Butler to enquire whether Byrd chose certain keys for laments. And this was only the first day of three.

Kerry grouped every session judiciously, perhaps most felicitously in the third session, which took up the second morning. James MacKay took us through the stages, based on the writings of Morley, whereby Byrd created complex

polyphony from basic counterpoint. John Milsom then introduced us to the concept of morphing (at its simplest, enlarging or elongating a particular point for subsequent contrapuntal exploitation) and fingered the faultline where the still young and developing Byrd diverged from his previous models such as Ferrabosco and began to create his own melodies and *fuga* differently. Julian Grimshaw's paper 'Byrd and the development of *fuga* in England' brought these two approaches together in a paper illustrating Byrd effectively shrugging off the compositional shackles of his predecessors, and Davitt Moroney led this riveting session to a close by looking at non-imitative imitation in Byrd: this apparently gimmicky title is in fact a key to revealing a significant aspect of Byrd's creative process. Davitt's revised title was 'What's the point?' and he explained how Byrd varied his points and used them in different contexts within the same piece, whether for keyboard or voices, to bring the listener by such repetitions into a deeper comprehension of the composition. Not only were all these four papers fascinating in themselves, but they complemented one another, as it were, contrapuntally.

The session on the second afternoon offered varied fare. Walter Kreyszig focused on the tension between elements of *stile antico* and *stile moderno* in My Lady Nevell's Book [soon to be bought or not by the British Library: donations needed!] The tantalizing title of Oliver Neighbour's paper was 'From a sixteenth-century waste-paper basket', and he delivered in spades: a unique surviving part from a hitherto unknown anthem attributed to 'Birde'. This led to a consideration of its authenticity, and whether Byrd was born Catholic or converted, stimulating animated discussion at the end of the paper. (It should be said that every single paper throughout the conference provoked discussion afterwards, once the initial pause for thought, reticence or shyness had been overcome.) David Crook then propounded an idea put forward recently and quite independently in the journal *Chelys* by Ian Payne, asking whether Byrd's keyboard works were more often derived from consort works than we now imagine.

After a short break, delegates had the privilege of hearing Joseph Kerman's keynote address, which looked at Byrd as both a Catholic but also a careerist, showing the tensions between his holding to his faith while seeking to advance himself as a musician of royal choice within the Establishment. A light reception then led to the evening's event, a recital of Byrd's keyboard music by Davitt Moroney. Bulked out by the generous reception by Davitt of requests from delegates, this was the usual sensitive combination of the familiar and the neglected. To select for comment items from a programme that received unanimous acclaim is invidious, but the most vivid memories of this listener remain the B flat pavan and galliard BK 23, with its extraordinary growls in the pavan; the manic and at moments almost surrealistic world of the Quadran pavan and galliard; and a revelatory interpretation of the sometimes intractable Hornpipe. (With personal thanks for the incomparable pavan and galliard in a, BK 16!)

And to borrow from American TV advertisements a tag that became a catch-phrase for the conference, there's more. On Saturday the final day's papers continued at the same pitch of excellence and stimulation. One of the youngest contributors, Jason Gersh, picked up several threads from earlier papers in his original contribution to the study of Byrd's strategies for setting texts in his 1589 *Cantiones*, after whom one of the doyens of Byrd scholarship, John Harley, gave a complementary paper on 'Byrd and the word', focusing on *Tui sunt caeli* and asking us to ponder whether we can really comprehend Byrd's mindset as he approached the task of setting his texts. John prefaced his paper with an update of his promising researches on William's brother John Byrd, which resulted in his being able to announce his discovery of a hitherto unknown document bearing William's signature, and to revise the date for Byrd's removal from Harlington to Stondon Massey. David Trendell then pursued further the matter of Byrd's choice and setting of texts, concentrating on how Byrd exploited the rhetorical use of homophony as a means of expressing his own recusancy, and of consoling fellow recusants. Roger Bowers brought the penultimate session to a characteristically iconoclastic close by disputing the newly accepted date of 1540 for Byrd's birth, arguing for a return to the integrity of 1543, and he then looked at Byrd's compositions from his Lincoln organistship, 1563-72, in the light of his Catholic upbringing (or perhaps conversion), seeing some apparently routine Anglican compositions as possessing covertly subversive structural ingredients.

The final session showed no signs of flagging. Richard Rastall gave a detailed progress report on Byrdsang, the project mentioned above. (There have been encouraging developments even since he spoke.) Jeremy Smith enquired whether there is such a thing as a best text for the consort song *My mistress had a little dog* and for the *Psalmes, sonets & songs*, which he edited for *The Byrd Edition*; even the successive contemporary printed editions of the latter, over which Byrd had influence, show signs of not being his final thoughts, while *My mistress* presents the problem of an editor having to choose between two surviving textual sources, both credible. [But if both are equally valid, an editor surely publishes both. *CB*] Jeremy provided fascinating insights into a range of solutions offered by contemporary textual criticism. Finally Peter Bassano brought the proceedings to a suitably exciting conclusion with a paper arguing that some of the texts that Byrd set in his *Songs of sundrie natures*, 1589, are translations by Emilia Bassano, last mistress of the dedicatee of the 1589 *Songs* and the leading candidate for Shakespeare's 'dark lady'.

And ... there's no more. But Kerry McCarthy and Duke University are committed to publishing a substantial selection of the papers, and others are already bound for publication in other forms. The research on show either consisted of new discoveries or of new insights, and made for compulsive, stimulating and above all enjoyable listening in a companionable and welcoming environment. With its Leeds predecessor, the International William Byrd Conference reminds the musical community of the limitless scope for research and sheer pleasure which abides in Byrd's music.

REVIEWS OF BOOKS

Clifford Bartlett

MEGSCHRIFT

Citation and Authority in Medieval and Renaissance Musical Culture: Learning from the Learned **Edited by Suzannah Clark and Elizabeth Eva Leach** The Boydell Press, 2005. xxxii + 250pp, £60.00. ISBN 1 84383 X

The headline isn't journalistic wit but the working title of this collection, published in honour of Margaret Bent's 65th birthday. I've admired her for many years, mostly from afar, though our paths have occasionally crossed. We were contemporaries at Cambridge, though reading different subjects, and I only became aware of her from her work on the Old Hall Manuscript. (I've probably mentioned before that I had that MS in my office for a few weeks sometime in the mid-1960s). A strong feature running through her work is a desire to find out how people of the past thought about their music: take their beliefs seriously and you might understand it better. Musical procedures and practices that seem odd to us may turn out to be reasonable. I'm sure she was delighted by the quotation on p. 5 that 'scientists of the Institute of Astronomy in the University of Cambridge had measured the pitch of a black hole as B flat, 57 octaves below middle C' – an extension of music of the spheres. Like most festschrifts (is it f...s or F...en?) this is unsummarisable. Much of it is hard work for readers not already involved in the topics, and it is easy to get the impression that medieval music requires so much specialised contextual knowledge that the mere CD-buyer is aware of only a small part of what even a monophonic Machaut virelai is offering. But the extension of experience does not invalidate what already exists: at least, that's a comforting belief, if true? Does the rich getting richer make the poor poorer? But all is not serious: the book ends with a discussion of the playful use of quotations by scribes of the Alamire scriptorium to indicate rests: *Benedictus requiescit* ('The blessed man rests' or 'The *Benedictus* is tacet'). [There's a fine interview with Meg in the current *Early Music Today*, stressing the inseparability of musicology and music.]

PLAINE AND EASIE

Morley ***A Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practicall Musicke... London, 1597.*** **[Facsimile]** Cheap, Choice, Brave and New Music Editions (CCBN Morley 1), 2005.

This is an essential source for the study of Elizabethan music, and a way into understanding how renaissance musicians thought (and were, to a certain extent, getting exasperated by some of the rules). For most of my lifetime, the most accessible version has been the modernisation by Alec Harman (Dent, 1952). But the reader really needs to see the exact terminology, so requires either a facsimile or a proper edition. The latter is forthcoming from Ashgate, while CCBN has provided a reprint of the facsimile published in 1937 by Oxford UP for the Shakespeare Association. Since the Ashgate edition seems to be fairly imminent, I'll leave any detailed comment till that appears. But assuming that it follows the pattern of their other reprints of early sources, buying the facsimile won't be a waste of money. It is, however, not very tough, with its comb binding: personally, I'd rather have it on loose sheets without the perforations and put it through our own adhesive binding machine, and libraries would probably also prefer to bind it themselves.

I noticed while looking unsuccessfully for CCBN's price a reference to a reset version with the musical material in facsimile from Ben Byram Wigfield's Ancient Groove Music costing £40.00. (www. cappella.demon.co.uk)

WATER & FIRE

Christopher Hogwood ***Handel:*** **Water Music** ***and*** **Music for the Royal Fireworks** (*Cambridge Music Handbooks*) Cambridge UP, 2005. xii + 155pp. £ 37.50 ISBN 0 521 83636 0 (hb); £12.99 ISBN 0 521 54486 6 (hb)

This is the best of the volumes in this series that I have read – if I've written that about previous volume, it means that this is even better. It balances the needs of scholars, performers and listeners in an elegant narrative which throws new light on music that is so familiar. Not that these pieces have had the performing history that we might imagine. Hamilton Harty's was the first popular concert suite and the full three-suite *Water Music* seems to have been an invention of Thurston Dart and appeared in print in Brian Priestman's Eulenburg edition of 1959; it was followed in Redlich's Bärenreiter score of 1962. Recently, rumours have been circulating that this was merely a theory, based on little evidence, and at it is now firmly demolished. For a new edition, we must await the replacement to Redlich's which Hogwood is editing. Not that the order needs much changing: the HWV numbering follows the three-suite order, and to get the proposed new one (from the newly-identified main source), nos. 1-12 are unchanged, then the order is 16-18, 14, 15, 19-22, 13. Editing the *Water Music* is handicapped by the lack of an autograph score – so unusual that one wonders whether it was a piecemeal compilation. For the *Fireworks Music*, there is an autograph, recently issued in facsimile with a fascinating introduction (see *EMR* 106 p. 4: my guess that Byrom's letter was held back for this volume was indeed correct.) For each of these major pieces, there is a chapter on the political background as well as a detailed study of the

music. There is also a chapter on the *Concerti a due cori*, works that have been regrettably under-rated, perhaps because Handel based them on existing movements. But Hogwood uses Handel's treatment of all sorts of pre-existing material – by him or others, whole movements or mere snatches of melody – as a way of showing the subtlety of his treatment of his material, allied to the changes made during composition in the music for which autographs survive. We are given an insight on the composer at work. The whole moral question of 'borrowing' is taken back to his (and many other composers') musical education. 'This training had been that of a normal Lutheran organist – improvising on a known theme or chorale, and preluding on a figured bass outline. As an improviser, you don't *wait* for inspiration to strike, you begin with what you have and a *routine* ensures that you continue, and expect inspiration to arrive as you proceed' (p. 52). The book sets the music in its time with a wide range of quotations, and every paragraph offers some sort of insight or curiosity (like the accidental thematic relationship between Rameau's music for the French celebration of the same Peace as Handel's). The final chapter is given a more cautious title than the 'Performance practice' that it might have had a decade or so ago, though the book as a whole is imbued with matters that make one continually aware that this is music to perform and hear, not to study. There is compositorial skill if you look for it, but this is not the sort of music that demands that we ferret it out – and that's not to denigrate it in comparison with Bach!

Just to show that my proof-reading faculties are more alert on other people's publications than my own, I'll mention the duplicated sentence on p. 29. For a review of a DVD of the Water Music on a barge on the Thames, see p 46.

BACH'S SUITES

David W. Beach ***Aspects of Unity in J. S. Bach's Partitas and Suites: An Analytical Study*** University of Rochester Press, 2005. xv + 92pp, £50.00. ISBN 1 58046 202 2

I happened to glance at the epilogue before reading this, and was struck by its first sentence: 'It has been my experience over the years that I have been drawn to certain musical works, to listen to them over and over again, and eventually to study them in detail...' There is an activity missing there: playing. Most of Bach's suites are for keyboard – 30 (including the three for lute) out of the 44 listed are for or can be played thus, and it is hardly possible to progress far as a musicologist without a modicum of keyboard technique. Failing to approach the music as a player has led to the underplaying of features of the surface, of thinking of the music as the result of a physical as well as a mental process. His analysis of the *Menuet* of the second French Suite, for instance, doesn't mention that the difference between his motive *a* (bar 1) and *b* (bar 5) is not just melodic but one of phrasing. *a* has an isolated quaver and five under a slur, *b* has six quavers under a slur every time except at its first appearance. I don't have the NBA commentary at hand, but BG has a 6-note group in bar 5 as well.

Much of the book is perceptive, and it is relief that no attempt is made to find a universal model for unity. In fact, the light touch by which connections can be found is refreshing. I was puzzled by its odd shape: more-or-less A4 landscape. It would be a very good format were the text and examples designed (preferably at the writing stage) to fit it, but the format owes more to the demands of Schenkerian abstractions than to placing examples and prose in relationship with each other. The Allemande and Courante of Figure 2.1, which should be side-by-side for comparison, are a recto and its verso. If you want to convince people of patterns in music, learn how to set them out on the page in a way that will make your point with minimum verbiage. Despite criticisms, though, this is a sensible study, easier to read than much analytical writing and providing genuine insight into how the music works.

PEDAL CLAVICHORD

Joel Speerstra ***Bach and the Pedal Clavichord: An Organist's Guide*** University of Rochester Press, 2004. xii + 205pp, £50.00. ISBN 1 158046 1352

I've never quite known what dialectic meant, except as an adjective referring to regional varieties of language. I associate it particularly with left-wing writing (whose intellectual pretensions turn me off even more than right-wing), especially communism, so assume that any writing that uses it is not for me. However, on p. 91 the word is used to describe exactly how I think early music performance (and the evaluation of it) should be 'a dialectical process between theory and practice', which regenerates it for me. Speerstra is adapting insight from the theatre director Peter Brook, which accords with my own belief that the performing-practice treatises are only fully meaningful if you are interpreting them with the instruments to which they refer, and that checking theory and practice against each other is the only way to gain insight. So Speerstra's book includes the documentary information on Bach and the pedal clavichord, an account of how he made one, and suggestions as to how pieces that must have been played on the clavichord (whether or not specifically written for them) can be interpreted.

Speerstra's argument that Bach used a pedal clavichord and that scholars have discounted the information out of prejudice is a strong one. Less strong is any attempt to reconstruct instruments he might have used. The only surviving models are from the 1760s, whereas the only piece that has an explicit (late but of good pedigree) link with the two-manual-and-pedal clavichord, the Passacaglia in C minor BWV 582, was probably written half-a-century earlier. Under the influence of Thurston Dart and Michael Thomas, I've long been a believer in the suitability of much of Bach's music for the clavichord, and Speerstra makes a strong case for the pedal clavichord not being merely a device to practice the organ without paying for an organ-blower or freezing in church in winter. He doesn't claim that Bach was explicitly writing for the clavichord, but that there is a lot more in common between organ playing

and the clavichord than with the harpsichord. He also uses the rhetorically identified short patterns of notes to show the advantage of clavichord technique, though the trouble with that part of baroque theory is that it is much less helpful in describing how whole phrases work and how to treat cadences. This is a stimulating book, quoting all the familiar early documents, often with corrected translations, and it is essential reading for those interested in Bach's keyboard music (not just clavichordists).

HAYDN COMPANION

The Cambridge Companion to Haydn **edited by Caryl Clark** Cambridge UP, 2005. xx + 318pp. hb £45.00 ISBN 0 521 83347 7 £45.00; pb £17.99 ISBN 0 521 54107 7

This fine book on Haydn is a useful antidote to the flood of Mozart books, recordings and performances – I hope (I'm sure in vain) that Haydn will receive similar coverage (or do I mean cover) in 2009, despite competition with Handel. I suspect that if this had been published a couple of decades ago, the third of the book's four sections would have filled it, perhaps topped by a short biography and tailed by reflections on the decline and partial revival of Haydn's reputation. Here, the approach through chapters on the orchestral music, quartets, sacred music, etc, are surrounded by a variety of other topics in accordance with current musicological fashions – most are interesting, but the proportions seem to relate more to the cultural world of academic writers than to 'provide an accessible and up-to-date introduction to the musical work and cultural world of Joseph Haydn' (to quote the blurb). Also, it is these chapters that supply most of the less-accessible prose. A regular topic, the misleading image of Papa Haydn, crops up so much that the reader may eventually conclude that, since so many writers are obsessed by it, there must be something in it. Can't it just be left to fade away? Virtually everything written about Haydn demonstrates the sophistication of his music: is it really necessary to analyse his dedicatory letters (which could have been written for him) to show that he was also fully trained in verbal rhetoric?

I'm torn between recommending the chapter 'Haydn and Humour' as the core of the book and complaining that only people without a sense of humour would need to read it. It is sad that people smile so little at concerts, and never laugh aloud. (To take a non-Haydn example, why don't people laugh at the tongue-in-cheek correct Soviet peroration of Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony?) There are a couple of chapters on performance; that by the pianist Tom Beghin is delightfully imaginative, and links with the opening chapter on Haydn's music and its audience. But Melanie Lowe on recorded performances of the symphonies doesn't bring together her two lines of thought – on how the music has been played over the last century (tempi, for instance, not varying as obviously as might be expected) and on how recordings are different from performances. Not a word on the need for editing – that if you are hearing a performance twice, you don't want to hear the same mistake twice, or that the current tendency is to diminish rather than maximise the amount of 'cutting room' tinkering. She doesn't point out that 'authentic' has fallen out of use among practitioners of early instruments, except perhaps as a shorthand way of expressing a cluster of meanings that are far less dogmatic than used by CD publicists. As someone who hasn't travelled south-east of Vienna, I found the chapter on Esterházy fascinating. Surprisingly, I had never checked its location on a map and hadn't realised how near in one sense, how remote in another it was from Vienna. One of the best chapters is by Lawrence Kramer (a writer I have often found impenetrable, but not here) on Tovey and Haydn.

MOZART ENCYCLOPAEDIA

The Cambridge Mozart Encyclopaedia **Edited by Cliff Eisen and Simon P. Keefe.** Cambridge UP, 2006. xii + 662pp, £95.00 ISBN 0 521 85659 0

Apart from Köchel, the Mozart book which I use most often now is probably H. C. Robbins Landon's *The Mozart Compendium*, published by Thames and Hudson in 1990 in preparation for the last Mozart anniversary year. (I might use Zaslaw & Cowdery's *The Compleat Mozart*, Norton 1990, rather more if the glue had been strong enough to hold the pages.) The book I've used longest is the 1956 *The Mozart Companion* edited by Landon and Donald Mitchell, Rockliff, 1956. These are completely different sorts of books, and the new CUP one complements rather than supplants them. I must confess that I haven't read it from beginning to end, but rather had it on the arm of the chair on which I flopped over the Christmas season and let it fall open at random. If there was any bias in my choice of reading, it was towards the shorter entries. I suspect that I will consult the book for specific points, not to read general articles on the sonatas or symphonies.

In fact, only the operas have individual entries. These are given plot-summaries, descriptions and critical evaluations of some length. The entry ***Die Zauberflöte*** covers 13 pages, whereas there are only eight for **symphonies** and ten for **concertos**. In view of the fact that many of the articles are devoted to Mozart's contemporaries, it is a pity that these articles on forms do not relate more to what they were writing. I found **compositional method** one of the most interesting entries. The article devoted to Mozart himself contains, not just a biography, but sections on his education, religious beliefs, medical history and death, and (signed by a name familiar to our readers, Peter Branscombe) Mozart as author, Mozart as letter writer, and Mozart: literature and the theatre. He also contributes a measured article on **Freemasonry** and various others. Most contributions, however, are from younger scholars, and all are clear and well-balanced. The musicologese that erupts in the Haydn volume reviewed above is notably absent.

The editors encourage readers to consult the index. That is, however, hard work, since entries are not subdivided.

J.S. Bach is mentioned on 24 pages: it shouldn't be necessary to look them all up if all one wants to find is whether the story of Mozart surrounding himself by parts of motets in St Thomas Leipzig is a myth. There are 17 lines of unsorted page-numbers for Leopold (or rather Johann Leopold Georg) Mozart. It's a pity that more effort (and space) was not taken in maximising the uses to which this excellent encyclopaedia can be put.

EXTRAORDINARY MOZART

Julian Rushton ***Mozart: an extrordinary Life*** Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music, 2005. 118pp, £7.95. ISBN 1 86096 419 2

'Mozart's life is not worth presenting, since he neglected life for art'. Rushton begins by rejecting this remark put into Da Ponte's mouth by Anthony Burgess. I'm not so sure. Mozart the composer obviously benefited enormously from his travels; but Haydn did just as well without travelling until he was nearly 60 – though the effect of his visits to London makes one wonder what would have happened had he gone to Italy, Paris and London in the 1760s. But it is very difficult to trace significant relationship between Mozart's personal life and his music. One might psychologise about the link between the death of Leopold and the composition of the Musical Joke. Mozart's operas reveal a deep understanding of human emotion, but it is quite possible to believe that his musical life went on without any conscious (and perhaps little unconscious) linking with his social interactions. Do the letters really shed much light on the composer (except for specifically musical matters)? Are we not reading back a romantic life-works correlation that begins with Beethoven? That said, this is a useful biography, which mentions music but is not concerned with describing it. Biographical chapters are interspersed with sections on specific themes: 'Mozart as icon', 'Mozart and money', 'Who killed Mozart?' A lot is crammed into a short space without feeling compressed. The writing is fluent, though I suspect aimed at a slightly higher reading age than many of the Associated Board's clients. For a detailed life-and-works of Mozart's first quarter-century, Stanley Sadie's new study will be the first port of call (I'll review that in our next issue). As a way of reviving and updating ones knowledge of Mozart's life (and there have been a lot of changes of emphasis, if not many new facts, over the last few decades), this will be difficult to surpass.

Our next issue will include reviews of the following. I was going to decide by weight which heavy tome to take with me to read in Venice next week, but both are 1.140 kg. One is a quarter the price of the other, so I'd better select that in case I lose it.

The Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Music **edited by Tim Carter and John Butt** Cambridge UP, 2005. xxvii + 591pp, £100.00. ISBN 0 521 79273 8

Stanley Sadie ***Mozart: the Early Years, 1756-1781*** Oxford UP, 2006. xxv + 644pp, £25.00. ISBN 0 19 816529 3

MORE HISTORICAL DHM

Continued from p. 45

There is rather more to enjoy in a programme of six Josquin Motets from Pro Cantione Antiqua (**69993** 46' 33" 1972). Here, the music does flow, and it is worth buying for *Miserere mei Deus*, a substantial piece that takes up nearly half the disc, sung without the instruments that are present on the other tracks. It is much slower than I would prefer, and expresses the music's emotion in a different way from that which I would favour now. It took me a couple of minutes to get into it, but it is a convincing performance of an amazing piece, directed by Bruno Turner with understanding and passion.

Of the two Christmas reissues, I preferred *Renaissance Christmas Music*, a package of two discs (**69996** 77' 44", 1961 & 1965). The first, *Altdeutsche Weihnacht*, has music by Eccard, Praetorius, Gesius etc sung by Elly Ameling and Bernard Michaelis with flute, two strings and lute, and, though a bit stiff, is very pleasant. Disc 2, less interesting, has the Tölzer boys singing Bodenschatz, Eccard, Handl, Lassus and Scheidt rather too carefully and Alpine carols. I'm less enamoured of *Christmas Concertos* from Collegium Aureum: Corelli, Tartini, Pez & Manfredini (**70041** 57' 46" 1966) sounding a bit heavy. If you don't know it, try the Passacaglia in Pez's *Concerto pastorale*.

Flirt in Rococo seems a very odd title for an excellent programme of 17th-century German songs from Edith Matthis and Benno Kusche *SB* with Fritz Neumeyer *hpscd* and Reinhold Johannes Buhl *vlc* (**70033** 38' 46" 1961). I was surprised to enjoy the *Missa Salisburgensis* (here not attributed to Biber) with a variety of performers including the Escolania de Montserrat under its director by Ireneu Segarra (**70810** 48' 50" 1974). It's a piece I know better than most, having edited it and played it several times, and I found myself less worried than usual by the hybrid style of Collegium Aureum.

Three discs involve Gustav Leonhardt. On *Music in Versailles* he plays Marais (the *Sonnerie...* and *Tombeau de Saint-Colombe*) and Forqueray Suite V with Sigiswald and Wieland Kuijken and a d'Anglebert prelude alone (**70040** 46' 33" 1970), a very fine disc, the best of the set. I'm less enthusiastic by the Bach gamba sonatas with Johannes Koch (**70045** 40' 31" 1961): the two instruments in theory have very different ways of being expressive, but here the viol, by superficially matching the harpsichord, fails to be itself. On a disc of three concertos, he plays the D minor concerto BWV 1052; BWV 1060R has Franzjosef Maier and Helmut Hucke in the violin and oboe version of BWV 1060 and Bob van Asperen joins Maier and Barthold Kuijken in BWV 1044 (**70044** 60' 54" 1976 , except 1965 for BWV 1052). Fine if you fancy the programme. The last of the batch, however, is too heavy for comfort, even if you want an ensemble version of *The Art of Fugue* (**70047**, 2 CDs 88' 52" 1962): the main point of interest is the string combination of violin, alto viola, tenor viola and cello with a superfluous violone. *CB*

CD REVIEWS

Rather more reviews are held over to the next issue than we would like (particularly Bach and Handel) – a few of them missed the last issue as well. I set an earlier deadline than usual, but the reminder I thought I had circulated mistakenly wasn't sent, and by the time it was, it read as if the final deadline was Jan 29th, a week later than I intended. My apologies to readers and the record companies. *CB*

ANCIENT GREEK

Melpomen: Ancient Greek Music Melpomen Ensemble (Conrad Steinmann *comp, dir, aulos* Arianna Savall *S, barbitos,* Luiz Alves da Silva *A, kymbala,* Massimo Cialfi *tympanon, krotala, salpinx* 55' 58"
Harmonia Mundi **HMC 905263**

In these days when a click can freely download hypothetical antique Greek music from fragments of papyrus, the CD addict might wonder what ancient riches to expect on hearing Melpomen. As an imaginary guest at a 450 BC symposium we can hardly fail to enjoy the entertaining sounds this versatile ensemble create on reconstructed instruments. We are treated to theatrical effects, a range of expressive timbres and the virtuoso techniques of accomplished Greek players at such a gathering. Shining amidst all this feast of music the sweet clear soprano voice of Arianna Savall (daughter of Montserrat Figueras) with amazing ease negotiates dramatic leaps, melismas and complex rhythms, sometimes in dialogue with the alto voice of Luiz Alves da Silva. Everything is performed with delicacy and refinement as for a sophisticated audience appreciative of poetry and the amphitheatre, wine, philosophy and in the end peaceful somnolence.

Both craftsmanship and erudition lie behind this recording, for all its apparently light touch. Paul J. Reichlin is credited with the reconstruction of instruments from archaeological remains or pictorial sources, and graduates of Schola Cantorum Basiliensis explored their properties to deduce idiomatic playing techniques, sometimes by comparison with surviving instruments of the Mediterranean. It is hard to know how to pitch the level of booklet notes, but certainly the appetite is whetted. In the rush of publication deadlines trilingual pages can be problematic, and the sometimes bewildered English reader may like to check musical terminology against the interpretive French translation.

see also p. 45 *Diana Maynard*

CHANT

Chant wars Sequentia, Benjamin Bagby; Dialogos, Katarina Livljanic 74' 53"
DHM **82876 66650 2**

Irrespective of the historical intent behind this disc, buy it: it's the most exciting chant recording I know. So often, plainsong feels remote and formal: words, a general feel of holiness, but not human emotion. And usually we wish it thus: it speaks more powerfully if there is no overt emotion in the performance; when there is, it can sound as false as an actor hamming up the Authorised Version. But try the last track here: *Christus vincit*, a Carolingian Imperial acclamation. Christ and the Emperor matter! Three tracks earlier, Psalm 148 is exultant with Alleluias. In contrast, *A solis ortu*, a lament on the death of Charlemagne, has an amazingly beautiful refrain. All these examples are in the Frankish section of the disc. The 'Chant Wars' of the title are the attempts to get a unified chant through the Empire. So much of the performance style is hypothetical that I'm not convinced that the difference in sound is significant. But the music here is so well sung, so convincing, that I can recommend this even to those who are not generally attracted by chant. *CB*

MEDIEVAL

Delectatio angeli: music of love, longing & lament Catherine Bott and Friends 62' 26"
Hyperion **CDA67549**
Music by Bedyngham, Ciconia, Dufay, Etienne de Meaux, Landini, Matheus de Perusia Vaillant, Ventadorn & anon

Few can sing medieval music so convincingly and attractively as Catherine Bott. She can sound almost unaffectedly simple, but there is immense subtlety as well as the sheer virtuosity of the bird-song in Vaillant's *Par maintes foys*. The unaccompanied songs are stunning, but for once the emotional level doesn't drop several notches in the tracks with instruments. 'Catherine Bott and Friends' made me expect a wider range of accompaniment than we have here: just two friends, Pavlo Beznosiuk and Mark Levy on fiddles, which is much more tempting than the group of miscellaneous instruments that we so often get with recordings of this sort. The playing concentrates on the music, not on trying to make the sound original or striking for its own sake. There's a nicely individual booklet note by the singer, though in a world where costs didn't matter, I'd have welcomed a more-scholarly companion to it with information on individual songs – the four laments, for instance. For me, the outstanding CD of the month. *CB*

La doce acordance: chansons de trouvères Diabolus in musica (Aïno Lund-Lavoipierre, Raphaël Boulay, Jean-Paul Rigaud *STB*, Evelyne Moser *vièle*, Antoine Guerber *harp, dir*) 67' 10"
Alpha 085

This is one of two Alpha discs that I heard consecutively, in each case before reading the booklet note (the other was *Marions les roses*: see p. 44). I enjoyed this very much. The singing is excellent, and the songs all felt convincing. It didn't occur to me until halfway through that I should be wondering about how the problem of rhythm was being solved. That was the chief performance-practice issue when I first encountered this repertoire: here, an undogmatic approach sounded utterly convincing. A more recent issue is that of accompaniment. Here, I wasn't entirely happy: no complaint with individual choices and the sympathetic playing, but I could have done with more songs without instruments. The balance on the disc seems to go just a little further than Antoine Guerber's excellent booklet note implies. The note is worth reading as a general introduction to trouvère song, as, indeed, is the disc itself. *CB*

La Fête des Fous Obsidienne, Emmanuel Bommardot 63' 58"
Calliope **CAL 9344**
Mostly short anon pieces + Perotin *Viderunt*

There's a contradiction between what we hear and the booklet note, which asserts that 'parodies of the Mass and other acts of irreverence were relatively exceptional' in the observance of the Feast of Fools. We get some rather realistic asses noises in *Orientis partibus* in the opening section, headed 'at the church door', but the service is mostly more refined, with some imaginative chant singing. The disc is well worth hearing, even though the performance of Perotin's *Viderunt* (which is the Gradual for Jan 1st as well as Dec 25th) is a bit earthier than usual and with some strange cadences. *CB*

The Rose, the Lily & the Whortleberry: medieval gardens Orlando Consort (Robert Harre-Jones, Mark Dobell, Angus Smith, Donald Greig *ATTB* + Robert Macdonald *B*)
Harmonia Mundi **HMU 907398** 76' 34"

Music by Agricola, Arcadelt, Brumel, Carpentras, Ceballos, Clemens non Papa, Crecquillon, Frye, Gombert, Guerrero, Lupi, Machaut, Mena, Phinot, Power, Rore, Sermisy, Trebor, Vasquez & anon

I must confess that the first time we listed this programme in our concert diary, I had to look up whortleberry to make sure that it was spelt right – I even suspected that it might not have survived the middle ages. But it's another name for bilberry. The list of composers suggests sweets rather than berries (Trebor, Fry), but the theme is not food – that was a previous disc. Here we have music for gardens arranged by country: France, England, Burgundy, Spain, Italy and the Low Countries, with a chronological progression from c.1290 through the following three centuries. It's a delightful programme, charmingly sung, though I would have welcomed a bit more variety in the performance styles. The 116-page bound booklet isn't quite as lavish as that for Hesperion's Don Quixote, but is a desirable object in itself. *CB*

15th CENTURY

Pierre de la Rue *Missa L'homme armé, Requiem* Ensemble Clément Janequin, Dominique Visse 48' 21" (rec 1988)
Harmonia Mundi *Musique d'abord* **HMA 1951296 £**

The bargain reissue of this classic 1988 recording of two masses by Pierre de la Rue to coincide with a Gaudeamus release of the Clerks' Group's account of the Requiem (see following review) may well be an attempt at a spoiler, but the CD buyer benefits from the fact that we now have available two very different and thoroughly excellent accounts of a superb and disgracefully neglected piece. La Rue composed most of his finest music while in the employ of the ubiquitous 'Dame de Deuil', Marguerite of Austria, and more than a little of the melancholy circumstances of this ill-fated daughter of Hapsburg and Burgundy are evident in his magisterial setting of the Propers and Ordinary pro defunctis. Set in an unusually low tessitura, the piece achieves an impressive sonority, enhanced here by the use of organ accompaniment. While the Ensemble Clément Janequin characteristically don't linger – the entire CD with filler only runs to just over 48 minutes - they capture very successfully the brooding profundity of la Rue's masterpiece. By contrast the other work on the disc is the first of the same composer's two Mass settings using the Burgundian theme *L'homme armé*. This is a splendidly militant piece, given a suitably aggressive performance here by an ensemble at the peak of their powers, and in this barn-storming interpretation the listener is (quite properly) largely unaware of the extraordinary contrapuntal virtuosity being displayed by the composer. In the most impressive of these intellectual puzzles, a series of canonic tours de force culminates in the final Agnus Dei, where the four voices simultaneously sing the same melody subjected to different mensurations.

D. James Ross

Pierre de la Rue *Requiem*; Brumel *Requiem* The Clerks' Group, Edward Wickham
Gaudeamus **CDGAU 352** 56' 15"

It really comes as no surprise that the rest of Antoine Brumel's setting of the Requiem is as stylish as the Sequence *Dies irae* recorded in isolation in 1990 by the Huelgas Ensemble as a filler for their account of the extraordinary 12-part Mass *Et ecce terrae motus*. Less showy than la Rue's setting and often consisting of the simplest harmonisations of the underlying chants, Brumel achieves an austere magnificence which is highly appropriate to the liturgical context of the Requiem service. In both settings, one is inexorably reminded of the dignity, simplicity and sheer power of the setting by Ockeghem, whom both composers clearly admired and emulated. The Clerks' Group's tempi in the la Rue setting generally add about a minute to each movement to those of the Ensemble Clément Janequin's reading, and while this sometimes enhances the sobriety, just occasionally the simpler passages seem to plod. However, this is overall a highly expressive and thoroughly convincing interpretation of these two fine Requiem settings, in which Edward Wickham brings to bear all his considerable practical experience of the music of this period. It is invidious to choose between the two recordings, both of which have their considerable if very different merits, and on the grounds of their fillers alone I would recommend investing in both. *D. James Ross*

16th CENTURY

Guerrero *Missa Surge propera* The Tallis Scholars, Peter Phillips 66' 57"
Gimell CDGIM 040
motets *Ave Maria, Ave Virgo sanctissima, Beata Dei genetrix, Hei mihi Domine, Regina caeli laetare, Surge propera, Usquequo Domine*

The Tallis Scholars steam through this rather gorgeous music in their usual fashion: technically perfect, but doing little more than reproducing the notes on the page. Although one cannot fault the tuning, the blend, or the general beauty of the sound, I find myself wishing for a little more heart, even at the expense of some accuracy. The rather acerbic sound of the top soprano line makes the Tallis Scholars instantly recognisable, but is too relentless for my taste. The tempi are pretty unrelenting too, although the *ritardandi* are beautifully handled.

The most luscious music in the Mass, scored for SSAATB, is the *Sanctus*, rich with suspensions, false relations and English cadences, and here the performance does show more sensitivity. The triple-time *Osanna* is the first occasion on which the cross-rhythms are actively pointed out, but the result is lumpy, with stress on the wrong syllables emphasizing the initial glottal stops rather than enhancing the words. The first solo note of the *Benedictus* is pure cornetto sound! Among the motets is a setting of *Surge propera*, but not that on which the Mass is based: apparently this has not been identified. *Usquequo Domine* is full of yearning, with beautiful waves of overlapping sound and some lovely effects. The CD ends with an exultant performance of *Regina caeli laetare* – the first time the singers really sound as if they are enjoying the music. Anyone who knows Guerrero only for his *Duo Seraphim* should be inspired by this marvelous repertoire. *Selene Mills*

I thought when reading this: why should anyone know Guerrero from one 12-voice piece, then realised that it was the first Guerrero that Mapa Mundi published nearly 30 years ago and circulated very widely. *CB*

Jacobus de Kerle *Missa Da pacem Domine etc* Huelgas-Ensemble Paul Van Nevel *dir* 66' 43"
Harmonia Mundi **HMC 901866**
+Missa pro defunctis, Cantio de sacro foedera contra Turcas, Come nel mare, Media vita, Super omnia ligna & Agnus Dei on hexachord a5 & a7

Why do I know so little music by Kerle? I've never sung any, I can't find any music by him on my shelves, and I had no image of him in my head. But hearing this disc, I'm sure that if he had been English, there would be many recordings of his music, chamber choirs would include him in their repertoire, and Early Music Fora would have weekend courses devoted to him. Paul Van Nevel is clearly an enthusiast, and I cannot recommend this disc too strongly. If you want a sampler, try the final Agnus of the *Missa Da pacem* – though it's not separately tracked, so you will have to listen to the other two Agnuses (agni?), which is no hardship. As an introduction to the composer, it is sensible to present movements rather than the complete mass,

and similarly with the *Missa pro defunctis*, though both works require complete performances with singing of this calibre. Most of the music is cantus-firmus based with imaginative polyphony, clearly sung and recorded. If I have a slight criticism, it is my usual one of imposed dynamics – occasionally, I felt more that the choir or engineer was trying to give the impression of a procession rather than a purely musical effect and at other times the conductor seemed to lack confidence to keep the rich sound going to the cadence. I hope Harmonia Mundi have checked that the *Song on the Holy League against the Turks* does not make the disc offensive under the proposed religious and racial hatred laws. Buy it while you can! *CB*

Palestrina ***Messes et Motets*** Ensemble Vocal Sagitarius, Emmanuel Mandrin *org* (discs 1 & 3), Arnaud Pumir *org* (4), Ensemble La Fenice (1 & 3), Maîtrise de Paris (4), Michel Laplénie *dir* 229; 38"
Accord **476 8504** (rec 1994) ££

Originally issued separately during the 1994 quatercentenary year, each CD is dedicated to a saint and based around a Mass (*Missa Salve Regina, Missa Beatus Laurentius, Missa secunda* (St. Michael) and Missa *Ecce ego Johannes*), an offertory motet, an office hymn and a four-voice Magnificat. There are plainchant propers, some extra motets, and a couple of ricercares on the organ. At the time it represented a new French interest in authentic Palestrina performances, influenced by Alain de Chambure who has written the booklet notes. There is mainly one singer per part, with wind instruments accompanying two, and organ three, of the masses. Five boys take the soprano part of the fourth mass. Pitch is low, with pieces in chiavette transposed down. All this is in keeping with 16th-century Roman practice and gives an authentic feel to the polyphony (I'm not so sure about the chant) which I welcomed at the time. On the whole they have worn well. Tuning is not always as good as the best English recordings and there is some unevenness in the performances, but there is a real commitment to the music and recording quality is good. As with other reissued sets, the booklet does not provide much information and some of the labelling of movements has got mixed up; there are no texts or translations. This provides an excellent overview of Palestrina's liturgical music and includes much that is seldom or not otherwise recorded. *Noel O'Regan*

£ = bargain price (up to £6.00)
££ = mid price
other discs full price (as far as we know)

Tallis ***Spem in alium*** The Kings's Singers (+ interview) 14' 36"
Signum **SIGCD071** CD/SACD Hybrid
see DVD reviews, p. 46

17th CENTURY

Bruhns & Leyding ***Complete Organ Works*** Friedhelm Flamme (1724 Christian-Vater organ, St.-Petri-Kirche, Melle) 66' 28"
cpo **777 123-3**

Christian Vater was possibly an apprentice of Arp Schnitger (his father had been one of Schnitger's journeymen). He set up as an organ builder in Hanover in 1702 and built around 32 organs in the southern part of Lower Saxony, of which the Melle instrument, reconstructed in 2000, is one of the most important. Although in a very slightly later style than Bruhns (1664-1697) and Leyding (1664-1710) would have been familiar with, it follows in the Schnitger tradition and does their music proud. Most of the organ works of Bruhns will be known to organists, apart from a recently published *Adagio* from the Husam Organ Book, which could be part of a lost large-scale work. This snapshot only underlines the tragedy of Bruhns' early death – and the musicological tragedy that all the known organ works of these two important composers can be fitted onto one CD. Leyding was a contemporary of Bruhns who worked in Brunswick, and was similarly a pupil of Buxtehude in Lübeck. Although not quite the claimed 'first recording' of Leyding's organ works, his five extant compositions are impressive additions to the CD catalogue, notably the variations on *Von Gott will ich nicht lassen*, with the imposing double pedal final movement. The playing is sensitive and musical, and the registrations are effective. Because of the temperament of the organ, three of the Bruhns pieces are transposed down a tone, including the two well-known e minor Praeludia – the organ is also at Chorton, with G# at 441Hz. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

Buxtehude ***Seven Trio Sonatas, Op. 2*** John Holloway *vln*, Jaap ter Linden *gamba*, Lars Ulrik Mortensen *hpscd* 63' 13"
Naxos **8.557249** £

When I first reviewed this recording (as a Dacapo issue), I was thrilled by the fabulous sound the instrumentalists make (much as I was exhilarated by the Veracini set: see p. 42), and I must say that nothing has come along in the intervening 12 years to supplant Messrs. Holloway, ter Linden and Mortensen as *the* performers of this music. If you missed out first time around, this bargain price release is a must-have. *BC*

Miguel de Cervantes ***Don Quijote de la Mancha: Romances y Músicas*** Montserrat Figueras, Hespèrion XXI, La Capella Reial de Catalunya, Jordi Savall 145' 27" (2 CDs)
Alia Vox **AVSA 9843A+B** (book format)

I'm not quite sure what to make of this. If I were a Cervantes enthusiast, I'd love it, with his musical allusions expanded into actual sound, linked by readings from the text. But I have never managed to get very far into *Don Quixote* (though I have had a translation for 45 years), and there are plenty of other Hyperion XX or XXI discs that give a better and more focussed flavour of Spanish popular music of the 16th century. Most of the pieces are either short or multi-verse romances. I hoped this production would fill me with enthusiasm to try Cervantes again (which is why I kept it myself), but I don't like discs with chunks of readings even in English, let alone a language I don't speak. So this is really for lovers of the Don, especially those with hitherto little awareness of his musical world. The presentation is lavish: the two discs are slipped into the endpapers of a 271-page, well-illustrated hard-backed book (in DVD booklet format). There are sections in seven languages – Castillian, French, English, Catalan, German, Italian and Japanese; so English readers get 38 pages, plus the original texts in the Catalan section. This is clearly a valuable project, and should be available in any institution teaching Spanish literature. I've learnt a lot from it. But judged as an evangelical excercise, it hasn't converted me – though it has convinced others to acclaim it as Midem's Record of the Year. *CB*

Charpentier ***Te Deum H.416 [recte 146], Messe pour plusieurs instruments au lieu des orgues H.513*** Claire Lefilliâtre, François-Nicolas Geslot, Bruno Boterf, Jean-Claude Sarragosse *SATB*, Choeur de Chambre de Namur, Les Agréments, La Fenice, Jean Tubéry *dir* 49' 35"
Ricercar **RIC 245**

This disc offers extremely short measure, information which I cannot find anywhere either on the packaging or in the booklet. The case also misprints the *Te Deum*, which is yet another recording of the 'usual' one (H 146), not the seasonal H416. This is a spirited reading, with a good sense of continuity from one section to another and alert contributions from the always reliable choir. Charpentier's orchestral mass is a unique piece written for very unusual circumstances of which the note gives a thorough account. It has had a number of recordings (see *EMR* 102 for another quite recent one reviewed by BC) including, ironically, a transcription

for organ. Here, the plainsong versets are all sung and the sections that are lost or that Charpentier simply did not complete are provided by drawing on the miscellaneous movements he composed for which we do not now have a context. The full and exotic ensembles specified, complete with cromhorne (not the reedcap variety), are used to give a pretty heady experience but the disc is still, by current standards, poor value. *David Hansell*

Charpentier ***Music for the Virgin Mary, celebrating 300 years of Charpentier*** Concerto delle Donne, Alastair Ross 69' 00"
Signum **SIGCD073**
H 15, 19, 21, 32, 59, 81, 309, 315,421 + organ pieces by Lebègue & Nivers

This disc has several items in common with a 1998 Virgin Veritas French release (see *EMR* 48, p19) and also shares several of its virtues and vices. The recording was made in Notre Dame, Rozay-en-Brie, and makes use of that church's fabulous 1690 organ, an instrument which has apparently had only one restoration and that recently enough to be sympathetic. Even the original keys are still in place, so one's fingers literally follow paths once traced by the Couperins, among others. The programme is devised in such a way that there is a narrative thread running through it and the vocal items are complemented by organ pieces. The music is all pretty much out of the top drawer and has been carefully prepared, even if the French pronunciation of the Latin does not always sound entirely natural. There is much to enjoy though I do have reservations about some aspects of performance practice. The use of organ only for the continuo means that the bass line itself sometimes lacks the definition an added theorbo and/or gamba would bring. The other issue that raises an eyebrow is the use of a small choir in some pieces. This is entirely appropriate and provided for in the *fauxbourdon* verses of the Port Royal *Magnificat* and *Stabat Mater* but elsewhere solo/ripieno alternations are imposed that are rather harder to justify – and the principals do cope very nicely on their own. *David Hansell*

Concerto delle Donne *are performing this programme at St John's, Smith Square on 16 February.*

Erlebach ***VI Sonate*** Rodolfo Richter *vln*, Alison McGillivray *gamba*, Silas Standage *kbd*, Eligio Quinteiro *theorbo*, Peter McCarthy *violone* 70' 56"
Linn **CKD 270**

This is an excellent recording of some truly delightful music. I have long been trying to interest people in Erlebach's output (chamber music, 'orchestral' suites and cantatas alike) and although individual pieces have made it into the catalogue before, this is only the third disc I know of that is dedicated solely to Erlebach, and the very first to feature a complete set of any substance. Rodolfo Richter is, without doubt, an excellent advocate of Erlebach's lyrical style, but I wonder why only he is named on the cover – couldn't he and his colleagues have come up with a name for their group? I wonder also why the sonatas aren't played in the printed order – can't we all re-programme our machines if we're offended by the composer's chosen key sequence? These small reservations aside, these are marvellously enjoyable performances and this is a recording which I hope finally will catch performers' attentions: next year will be the 250th anniversary of the composer's birth and it would be lovely if someone somewhere would mount a celebration. *BC*

Jacquet de la Guerre ***Les Pièces de Clavecin (1687); Pièces de Clavecin qui peuvent se jouer sur le viollon (1707)*** Elizabeth Farr *hpscd* 142' 50 (2 CDs)
Naxos **8.557654-55** £

Her spectacular name is not the only reason to take note of E-C J de la G. In her own time she was renowned as a player and performed at the court of Louis XIV from a very early age and by a quirk of chronology she seems to have been the only *claveçiniste* to publish music in both the 17th and the 18th centuries. Now Elizabeth Farr's dedication gives us the chance to evaluate her fully as a keyboard composer, though she is lucky to be able to do so as only one copy of each of her *Livres* (1687 and 1707) has survived. The harpsichord used is appropriately resonant and colourful, and its resources are sensibly and tastefully deployed. Miss Farr finds a convincing path through the minefields of the unmeasured preludes and strikes elegant musical poses in the stylised dances. These are above all exquisite examples of the then all-pervading *style brisé*, with richly ornamented melodic lines, to which even more decoration is added on the repeats, though this is convincingly done and never gets out of hand. The rubrics of the 1707 publication offer the possibility that a violin could either double or replace the right hand melody and it would have made this already enjoyable recital even more rewarding had we heard this option occasionally – but that is not to say that what we do have lacks interest in any way. Should you see this in a shop and be shocked by the price, do note that there are two discs, despite being in a standard size case. This music is well worth exploring. *David Hansell*

Lully ***Isis*** Françoise Masset, Isabelle Desrochers, Valérie Gabail, Guillemette Laurens, Robert Getchell, Howard Crook, Bertrand Chuberre, Bernard Deletré, Renaud Delaigue *SSSmSATBarBB*, La Symphonie du Marais, Hugo Reyne 153' 31"
Accord **3CD 3476 8048** ££

Exactly a year after Vol 6, along comes Vol 7 of this increasingly amazing series. The stage directions of *Isis* are almost an opera in themselves (Juno's descent on a chariot drawn by peacocks is really quite dull compared with other splendours described in the libretto) but sadly this is not a DVD. However, with typical dedication and enthusiasm, Hugo Reyne has brought together massive forces (70 musicians, including the singers, musette and four trumpets) and the music springs vividly to life from the majestic overture to the inevitable apotheosis, via the story of Syrinx – a passage of real charm – a frost scene, Furies and the mouth of the Nile. All human life may not be here, but most of the gods are. Like Vol 6, this is a live recording, with slightly irritating opening and closing applause just to prove it, and there are one or two (but only one or two) moments where tuttis are not quite together; but the general surge of the production makes these irrelevant. The experienced and starry cast rise to the occasion and surely give Lully at least as fine a performance as he would have demanded himself. I'm not always an opera person when I can't see it, but I did enjoy this. *David Hansell*

Monteverdi ***Combattimento di Tancredi & Clorinda etc*** Jan Van Elsacker *Testo*, Guillemette Laurens *Clorinda*, Hervé Lamy *Tancredi*, Akadêmia, Françoise Lasserre *dir*
Zig-Zag Territoires **ZZT051003** 59' 00"
+ Altri canti d'amor, Altri canti di marte, Con che soavità, Hor ch'el ciel, Interrote speranza, Lamento della ninfa

As far as I can remember, I've only heard Akadêmia in church music: this selection mostly from Book VIII came as a surprise, since Françoise Lasserre has moved her already fine standard of performance up a notch, getting distinctive and dramatic performances without making one feel that she is imposing herself as a distorting figure the way some directors of Monteverdi do – I'm not thinking of anyone in particular, but several names fit. The concluding *Combattimento*, a problem piece to those whose Italian isn't fluent, conveys its emotional power even without the need to follow every word. The main disappointment is the *Lamento della ninfa*, particularly since the soprano is the most famous singer on the disc. And those marvellous parallel fourths as the sopranos descend in the last two notes of the antepenultimate bar of *Hor*

ch'el ciel (one of those evocative fragments I mention in my editorial) didn't work: S II doesn't balance S I. Otherwise, it rivals Catherine Bott's anthology (see p. 36) as my favourite this month. *CB*

Pasquini ***Oeuvre pour clavier: extraits du manuscrit autographe de Berlin,*** *1702*
Emer Buckley, *hpscd* 58' 19"
Fuzeau **5904**
Issued with the facsimile of the MS: see p. 4

Purcell ***Dido & Aeneas*** Catherine Bott *Dido*, Emma Kirkby *Belinda*, John Mark Ainsley *Aeneas*, David Thomas *Sorceress*, Michael Chance *Spirit*, Chorus & Orch of The Academy of Ancient Music, Christopher Hogwood 52' 35"
Decca **475 7195** (rec 1992) ££

Whoever designed the booklet evidently has few CDs of his own, since he isn't aware that a title is needed on the spine so that one can identify it when shelved. That apart, it is good to hear this recording again. Bott and Kirkby make a fine pair for the Queen and her companion (for those who might think that the early-music world is full of backbiting and jealousy, I know that Emma was genuinely delighted that Kate was given the leading role), and the rest of the cast is excellent too. The first Parrott recording is still my favourite, but that may be pure nostalgia. I'm not sure that the freedom from thinking of the work as written for a girls' school really justifies enlarging the scale as if it were for the commercial stage: the chamber ambience of *Venus and Adonis* might be a more appropriate model, and how often did the whole 24 court string players come together? But it sounds well, and one doesn't have to attempt to imitate the first performance (about which nothing is known) every time! This is a worth inclusion in Decca's Classic Opera series, and full marks for including the full original booklet notes, though it is assumed that any foreigners who buy it can understand the libretto. *CB*

Purcell ***The English Orpheus*** Colin Booth *hpscd, spinet* 75' 11"
Soundboard Records **SBCD 205**
Z 630/1, 645-6, 649-50, 653, 655, 660-3, 666-9, T676, T678, T684, T693/2, T694 D222

This very generous disc is built around the eight keyboard suites, each one expanded by the addition of some of the composer's individual pieces in the same key. It is a satisfying way of organising the music and, indeed, some of these little pieces are the best things here, beautifully played without fuss. The preludes are also very successful. I find some of the dance movements in the suites a bit heavy-footed, especially the Almands. Booth is keen not to Frenchify them too much which is understandable, but perhaps he errs on the other side here. Both instruments were made by the performer; there's a bit too much background resonance for my taste, especially on the harpsichord tracks which sound like they are in the next room, and the spinet can sound a bit tinny on top. That said, this is a very well-crafted account of the music with excellent technique and sensitive ornamentation. *Noel O'Regan*

Amour cruel Suzie LeBlanc S, Les Voix Humaines, Stephen Stubbs 62' 56"
Atma **ACD2 2216** (rec 2000)
Music by Lambert, Le Camus, Sainte Colombe

This disc, like Folies (see p. 43), dates from 2000 and features the same viol duo with two of their regular collaborators. This is a delicious programme in which airs and concerts alternate, exquisitely evoking their epoch with all artists on top form and heard in a well balanced recording – Susie LeBlanc, using period pronunciation, is as good as I've ever heard her. As on Folies, there is an element of arranging here, though only the modest one of the viols taking the violin *ritournelles*. The *concerts* span a wider emotional palette than the *airs*, enhancing their role within the programme as a whole, which is warmly recommended for the mellower stages of any evening. The only disappointment is the lack of a translation of the songs. *David Hansell*

Musica Secreta 3 CDs
Linn **CKD 261**
Package of three independent CDs with their original packaging and booklets ££
CKD 074 Lucrezia Vizzana *Componimenti Musicali (1623)* Deborah Roberts, Tessa Bonner, Catherine King, Mary Nichols *SmSmSA*, John Toll *org*, David Miller *chit* 63' 40" (1997)
CKD 113 Cozzolani *Dialogues with Heaven* 61' 33 (rec 1999)
CKD 169 Rore etc: *Dangerous Graces* 70' 54" (rec 2001)

Musica Secreta is the name of the group, but it applies as well to the repertoire, music of Italian nunneries. I wrote at some length about the first of these discs in *EMR* 40, pp. 14-15, though see that most of my comments are more on singing in nunneries than praise of the actual performances – but I will repeat that the performances are completely convincing. In the Cozzolani disc, there is one more singer, the alto Caroline Trevor. This is a selection from two publications, *Concerti sacri* (1642) and *Salmi a otto concertati* (1650) – but there is no multi-tracking: the pieces from the 1650 set are smaller-scale. For a fine sample, of Cozzolani's composition as well as the performers, try the Easter dialogue of Mary Magdalane and the angels (track 5).

The Rore disc (featuring Wert and Luzzaschi as well) is rather different. We move to the previous century and from sacred to secular, with a repertoire devised for female singers at court. Those listed for the Vizzana disc are supplemented by Emily van Evera and Richard Wistreich (*SB*) with Frances Kelly *harp*, David Miller *lute* and Matthew Halls *hpscd*. It received an typically-thoughtful review from Eric Van Tassel in *EMR* 83, p. 17, who found the distortion of the music disconcerting, objecting to 16th-century, not 21st century performance practice. I was more sympathetic and commented: 'the subtlety of the original is replaced by a surface glitter that may seem to some trivial but which, when well done, offers an alternative experience.' And well done it is! The recording demonstrates (though that is far too clinical term for these beautiful performances) how what are apparently five-voice madrigals might have been performed by the famous trio of ladies at Ferrara and imitators elsewhere.

All these discs are thoroughly documented, and that of the Rore commendably and helpfully lists who sings or plays which part and how the instruments cover the missing lower parts. If you haven't bought them already, don't resist the tempting price of not much more than a single disc. *CB*

LATE BAROQUE

Bach ***Sacred Cantatas for Alto: 54, 169, 170, 200*** Marianne Beate Kielland, Cologne Chamber Orchestra, Helmut Müller-Brühl
Naxos **8.557621** £ 62' 40"

Since the rise of the countertenor soloist, Bach's cantatas for solo alto have become some of his most frequently performed vocal works, and recordings have been made by Andreas Scholl, James Bowman and Gérard Lesne among others. This disc breaks with the current trend by featuring a young Norwegian contralto, accompanied by the Cologne Chamber Orchestra on modern instruments. But their performances do not match the standard set by the countertenor recordings. In *Widerstehe doch der Sünde* the strings cannot articulate the tortuous lines or the devilish final fugue with the incision of period instruments; and Marianne Beate Kielland's singing, though always competent, does not convey the emotional fervour of the texts. *Stephen Rose*

The Bach Organ of the Thomaskirche, Leipzig (Volume 4 of Priory's Organ Master Series). Dame Gillian Weir (2000 Gerald Woehl organ).
Priory **PRCD 800 AB** (2CDs). 94' 52"
The '18' (Leipzig) Chorale Preludes, Fantasia in G BWV 572, Trio Sonata IV BWV 528, Prelude and Fugue in b BWV 544, Toccata and Fugue in F BWV 540

Bach is known to have preferred the organ in Leipzig's Paulinerkirche to his own instrument in the Thomaskirche, and he was also impressed by the organ designed by his uncle for the Georgenkirche in Eisenach (where he was baptized). So it is appropriate that the new Bach organ in the Thomaskirche should be based on the specification of the latter and placed in a case based on the design of the former. Most of us have been weaned on Bach recordings made on North German or Dutch organs, rather than on the organs of Bach's Central German homeland. The sound world of the Saxon and Thuringian organs is different, and should generate an alternative style of registration to the 'one stop only at each pitch' mantra that is more suited to the Buxtehude generation of Northern composers than to Bach. The sound is richer and fuller, with a much stronger fundamental, aided on this organ by two impressive 32' pedal stops. Several of the works on these two CDs demonstrate this sound world, although Gillian Weir also provides a few 'baroque' tinkles for those that like that sort of thing (did Bach?) However, on this organ these registrations can produce a slightly hard-edged and brittle sound, without the clarity and brilliance that similar registration might produce on a North German organ – to hear this, it is worth comparing the opening movement of the Fantasia in G (*Pièce d'Orgue*) with the majestic central movement. There were also occasions when the pulse seemed to be running a little ahead of itself, and the playing can sound rather fast for the acoustic. But, as I have not heard this organ 'live', I accept that these points might be quirks of the acoustics or recording – the organ is in a side gallery facing across the church, so the player will probably get early reflections and might not appreciate quite how big the acoustic is (in Bach's day, it would probably have been shorter). The playing is well up to Gillian Weir's usual performing style and standard, with some expertly engineered registrational crescendos in some of the pieces. It is a shame, particularly for a CD where the organ is likely to be of as much interest as the music or the player, that no registration details are given, despite space being found for the texts and translations (in English rhyming verse) of all the chorales.
Andrew Benson-Wilson

Bach ***Das Wohltemperierte Clavier – I***
Andrei Vieru *pf* 138' 49" (2 CDs)
Alpha **087**

We don't normally review Bach on the piano unless there is any particular reason. But I was struck by the beginning of an essay in the booklet by the player: 'The past is dead – and for good.' So why is he playing a dying instrument, the piano. Around 1800, there were still harpsichords around, but there were far more pianos. Around 2000, old-fashioned people played the piano, but the current keyboard instruments are digital in a sense other than being activated by fingers. Vieru's playing is a good example of Bach on the piano: but it is a style of the past, of the 19th & 20th centuries. That tradition can show us something about Bach, but it is even more historical than trying to work out how his music can be played on harpsichord or clavichord, since by that one can at least escape some of the dead weight of tradition and might possibly get a better idea of what the composer expected to hear – Bach was creating sounds, not just patterns. We hear so often 'If Bach were alive now, he'd write for the piano'. Possibly, except that he would have written his music very differently. Judging by the way he used the latest instruments of his time, he would be playing with computers and keyboards to achieve something we cannot imagine. I'm not saying anything about the performance, just as the player's essay says nothing about the music. *CB*

Bach The Landowska Recordings 7CDs
RCA Red Seal **82876678932**

We didn't ask for a review set, but readers might like to know of its existence.

Bach/Handel Núria Rial *S*, Giovanna Pessi *harp*, Patrick Beaugiraud *ob d'am*, Ricercar Consort, Philippe Pierlot *dir*
Mirare **MIR 009-2** 63' 25"
Bach *Oboe d'Amore concerto* BWV 1055A [not 1005A as on cover], *Weichet nur* BWV 2002; **Handel** *Harp concerto* op. 4/6, *Tra la fiamme* HWV 170

This quality period-attuned recording opens with a rare, flexibly-articulated and refined performance of the orthodox reconstruction of Bach's harpsichord concerto in A for oboe d'amore, for which it was very probably conceived; despite several strong CD competitors, I think that this is the best account that I have heard. The soprano Núria Rial has a clear, uncluttered tone, suitable both for Bach's wedding cantata and Handel's semi-operatic scena. In these, both the oboist and the baroque harpist Giovanna Pessi considerably enhance the accompanying ensembles, resulting in a treasurable recital. The Handel Harp Concerto is another 'best recording'. A cultural grant from the town of Nantes is acknowledged. This, together with a common educational debt shared by most of the performers to the excellent Schola Cantorum in Basel, encourages the hope that we might hear further recordings of this repertoire derived from the same cultural and financial sources.
Stephen Daw

Francoeur ***Amans, voulez-vous être heureux?***
Ausonia (Isabelle Desrochers **S**, Mira Glodeanu *vln*, Niols Wieboldt *vlc*, James Munro *violone/db*, Julian Behr *theorbo*, Fréderick Haas *hpscd*), *dir* 72'01"
Alpha **076**

This release, lavishly presented as always by Alpha (save for some poorly reproduced photographs in the booklet and a disagreement between the box and the text pages over the spelling/grammar of the title), features violin sonatas and operatic extracts, the latter sometimes being interpolated into the latter to the detriment of neither. The sonatas are really quite virtuosic in a subtly understated way and I greatly enjoyed the approach of Mira Glodeanu, who allows the double-stoppings to be a perfectly natural element of the music and not something requiring a special effort from her. Francoeur, despite his fame and proficiency as a player, left only two books of sonatas, preferring to put his compositional energies into dramatic works, on which he collaborated with Rebel. These make considerable demands, both technically and dramatically, on the singer and it is tribute to Isabelle Desrochers' ability and experience in this repertoire that she does so much more than simply stay afloat. The whole recital feels and sounds more of a concert than a studio production and is very enjoyable.
David Hansell

Handel ***Concerti Grossi op. 3 & op. 6***
Handel and Haydn Society (Boston), Christopher Hogwood 203' 29" (3 CDs)
Avie **AV 2065** ££

We enjoyed this. It is difficult to mention Hogwood's restraint without it seeming to be damning with faint praise. But it is refreshing to hear playing which isn't led by an urge to make a stronger impact than rival recordings: we don't feel that the director is looking over his shoulder at the opposition all the time. Heard in succession, the opus 3 concertos lack (as one might expect from their origins) the cohesion that Handel brought to the form

when he concentrated on it for several weeks to produce op. 6 (even if many ideas in that are borrowed). There may be other recordings that one would like to hear once: this is a touch less exciting but will wear well. It is a pity that Donald Burrows' booklet notes are cut down: the listener should be told, for instance, where the latter two movements of op. 3/6 come from. *CB/EB*

Manfredini ***12 Concerti op. 3*** Les Amis de Philippe, Ludger Rémy 78' 42"
cpo **999 638-2** rec 1998-99
Packaged with 282pp cpo 2006 catalogue

Francesco Manfredini was a pupil of Torelli in Bologna, but appears to have spent some years as *maestro di cappella* to Prince Antonio I of Monaco, to whom he dedicated his Op. 3 concertos in 1718. They follow the distinctively Bolognese model of Torelli's Op. 8, with two 'obligato' as well as two 'rinforzo' violins but without a separate concertino cello. Four of the concertos feature a solo violin, four are for two violins, and the remaining four have no solo passages at all. On the whole the music is rather lightweight and lacks something of the unpredictability of Torelli or the grandeur of Corelli, but it is unfailingly well written, tuneful and enjoyable. Rémy directs spirited and energetic performances, although the battery of continuo instruments (harpsichord and 'virginal' – whatever that is – in addition to the theorbo and organ specified by Manfredini) is sometimes over-aggressive, and the habit of playing all 'walking basses' staccato eventually becomes a slightly irritating mannerism. Despite my advocacy of one-to-a-part performance of many baroque concertos, however, I'm glad to report that the band of a dozen strings used here is about right (though perhaps the 'violone' should have been an 8' instrument): Manfredini's own preface to Op. 3 explicitly allows doubling of all but the solo parts. *Richard Maunder*

Rameau ***Platée, Pigmalion, Dardanus: Ballet Suites*** European Baroque Orchestra, Roy Goodman 75' 46"
Naxos **8.557490**

The composer's name slipped out of the heading in the last issue. Luckily, there was little chance of confusion with any other composer between Leclair and Rathgeber.

Scarlatti 3 Pierre Hantaï *hpscd* 65' 16"
Mirare **MIR 007**
K. 8, 27, 56, 146, 151, 213-4, 227, 276, 366, 466, 468, 511, 517, 525-6

This is one of the best Scarlatti recordings I have heard. Hantaï is an exciting player with a virtuoso technique which is always at the service of the music. He has chosen a programme of his own favourites which doesn't necessarily take account of pairings and largely avoids the better-known sonatas, but does move through related keys to make a satisfactory whole at a single hearing. His Italian harpsichord, a copy by Philippe Humeau, sounds just right for these sonatas, light and crisp but with good depth to the sound. It is particularly effective in guitar-like textures, and in the cuckoo calls in K366. An excellent introduction to Scarlatti, covering a wide range of styles and textures and also showing the emotional range possible in hissmall-scale forms. *Noel O'Regan*

Telemann ***Paris Quartets vol. 3*** Florilegium Channel Classics CCS SA 21005 73' 48"
Quatuor 4-6 (1738) Suite II (1730)

This is the third volume of a series, but only the first I've heard. Since I last reviewed Florilegium, the line-up has changed considerably, but I'm happy to report that the qualities I associate with the group (a liveliness of performance, with elegance and virtuosity in equal measure) are very much part of the present sound, and anyone who enjoys Telemann's chamber music will be enthralled. Quatuors 4-6 are played with gamba solo and cello continuo, while the Deuxième Suite reverses the two instruments. The recorded sound is (typically of Channel) very fresh and rich in harmonic overtones. A total pleasure for the ears and the soul. *BC*

Veracini ***Sonatas*** John Holloway *vln*, Jaap ter Linden *vlc*, Lars Ulrik Mortensen *hpscd* 61' 46"
ECM New Series 1889
op 1/1, op. 2/6, Sonatas for vln or fl no. 5, sonata after Corelli op. 5/1

If Veracini has had to await revival longer than Vivaldi and Tartini, perhaps his time has now come. Coming somewhere after Leclair and Locatelli in the list of famous virtuoso violinists of the baroque, these exceptionally fine readings of four works will surely force performers and listeners alike to recognise a master at work. The same must be said of the three players – more than a decade after the ground-breaking Buxtehude recordings, they continue to delight us with more and more rare gems. Each of the four works comes from a different printed set from various stages of Veracini's life, including his *Dissertazioni... sopra l'opera quinta del Corelli*. There are too many wonderful moments to list, but I recommend anyone who has *any* doubts about whether they should buy this or not to listen to track 15: you'll instantly be drawn into Veracini's world and impressed more than you've ever been by Holloway's consummate skill on the violin (and that's saying something!) *BC*

Vivaldi ***Recorder Concertos*** László Kecskeméti *rec* & a Hungarian chamber ensemble 66' 41"
Naxos **8.557215** £
RV 87, 92, 94, 101, 103, 105, 108

What struck me most about this enjoyable Vivaldi recital is how more successful modern wind instruments are at conveying a sense of period style than strings: don't get me wrong – the violinist and cellist are very good musicians. But their instruments don't allow them the lightness of touch that lets phrases to be shaped without being over-shaped and that lends melodic lines the all-important air required to lift sequences of repeated notes or random successive arpeggios from the dull and workaday. There are seven chamber concertos in the recital, each one featuring the recorder (the track listings only detail the *other* players – having a solitary number 4 (=bassoon) beside Track 8 thoroughly confused me until I'd heard the disc!) and it's a balanced and enjoyable set. *BC*

Barocke Kammermusik Musica Antiqua – Köln 64' 55"
Aulos **AUL 66100** (rec 1974/5)
Becker *Sonata in D (1667)*; **Dornel** *Sonate pour trois dessus*; **Kerll** *Sonata in g*; **Leclair** *Première recréation de musique*; **Naudot** *Concerto op. 17/3*; **Schmelzer** *Lamento...di Ferdinand III*

This is a 2002 re-issue of a 1974/75 recording which needs a less dull title. The programme lacks the focus we might now expect but the subsequent history of the ensemble suggests that it fulfilled its task of showcasing their talents – it was their first recording. The sound is full and the playing excellent – if anything less mannered than many of their later performances. The booklet gives notes on the music but fails to identify the players beyond their collective name. *David Hansell*

Bolivian Baroque: Baroque music from the missions of Chiquitos and Moxos Indians Katia Escalera, Alejandra Wayar, Gian-Carla Tisera, Henry Villca *SSST*, Florilegium 72' 28" (SACD & DVD)
Channel Classics **CCS SA 22105**
Music by Zipoli & anon

The most exciting piece here is the opening one, Zipoli's *Beatus vir*. He has a way of being vigorous and repetitive that is quite different from Vivaldi. The anon items are not quite so forceful and lack the deliberate exoticism of the villancicos

that make much Latin American music so intriguing. This is attractive music, maybe not from the top draw, but sung convincingly by mostly local soloists with leading British-based players (I hesitate to say English, since of the seven players, three of the surnames suggest Scotland and four are more exotic). Much more interesting than the Peruvian music reviewed in our last issue (p. 32). *CB*

An email from Ashley Solomon drew attention to our failure to review his discs and made me aware that we were no longer on the circulation list of Channel Classics. That will be remedied. *CB*

Folies Les Voix Humaines (Margaret Little, Susie Napper *gambas*) 60'07"
Atma **ACD 2 2203** (rec 2000)
F. Couperin, Lebegue, Marais, Rameau

Margaret Little and Susie Napper had been playing together for 15 years at the time of this recording (2000) and it shows – excellent rapport, near flawless ensemble and consistency of style are their hallmarks. This is a disc of the virtuoso arrangements that are as much their stock in trade as the original viol repertoire. These pieces range from near-exact transcriptions (Couperin) to more comprehensive re-thinking of the music in terms of the new medium, which might involve as much simplification of textures (Rameau) as adaptation. Whether one approves of these processes or not, at least they stay within the composers' sound world and are extremely well done, showing insight into the original as well as an obvious appreciation of the potential of the new instrumentation. For my taste the performances need a greater sense of line to make the fullest impact – the natural decay of the bow is allowed too much dominance – but viol players especially will enjoy this. *David Hansell*

Hamburg 1734 Andreas Staier, Christine Schornsheim *hpscd* 66' 23"
Harmonia Mundi HMC **901898**
Music by Buxtehude, Handel, Mattheson, Staier & Telemann

I'm not much of a keyboard player, but I can easily appreciate the skills of others, and this is clearly a recording that demands appreciation. In a diverse programme, Staier (who needs no commendation from me!) uses all the colour available from a copy of a Hass instrument (dated 1734, hence the title) to lend variety to the repertoire he chooses. I have reservations (which not everyone will agree with, I realise) about Staier's own four-hands transcriptions of Telemann orchestral music (featuring some, for me, **very** unpleasant sounds) and I truly disliked the especially composed piece with which the recital ends, but that's just my taste. It just seems such a strange idea. *BC*

CLASSICAL

Schobert ***Quatuors, Trios, Sonates*** Luciano Sgrizzi *fp* (Fritz c.1820), Ensemble 415 (Chiara Banchini, Véronique Méjean *vlns*, Philipp Bosbach *vlc*) 76' 40" (rec 1988)
Harmonia Mundi *Musique d'abord* **HMA 1951294** £
Quartet in F, op. 7/2; in Eb op. 14/1; sonatas in d & A op. 14/ 4 & 5; trio in Bb & F op. 16/1 & 4

I welcome this reissue of music by someone who rarely emerges from the pages of history books. Schobert comes across as a gifted composer of chamber music for the novel combination of obbligato keyboard and strings, and his tragically early death in 1767 is greatly to be regretted. The string playing on this CD is excellent, but the keyboard reveals the age of the recording. It would be considered rather odd nowadays to use a fortepiano of c.1820 for harpsichord music written more than half a century earlier; and occasionally the rhythm seems a little uncontrolled, either because the instrument was imperfectly regulated or because the player was unfamiliar with its touch. Worth buying for some fascinating music, all the same. *Richard Maunder*

Hail Windsor, Crowned with lofty Towers Sophie Bevan, Rogers Covey-Crump *ST*, Café Mozart, The Windsor Box & Fir Company 70' 03"
CM003
Music by The Earl of Abingdon, Arne, Arnold Carey, Carolan, Dibdin, Frederick Lewis (Prince of Wales), Haydn, Herschel, Horn, Schroeder, Shield, Weiss

We enjoyed this. It's not high-powered music, and the performers don't try to make more of it than it deserves. One can imagine the music performed in the middle-class homes of Windsor as well as up the hill in the royal castle – though you won't find this disk there: it was deemed too high-brow to be sold in any royal souvenir shop. Highbrow, of course, is just what it isn't; but an awareness of what minor ephemeral music works and the local connection makes this an entertaining disc. *CB/EB*

19th CENTURY

Hummel ***Cello Sonata, Op. 104, Piano Quartet, Piano Trios Opp. 22 & 35*** The Music Collection (Micaela Comberti, Simon Standage *vlns*, Jane Rogers *vla*, Pal Banda *vlc*, Susan Alexander-Max *fp*) 69' 22"
Naxos **8.557698** £

Hummel is enjoying something of a well-deserved revival at present, and this CD presents four gems of his chamber music with piano, ranging in date from the entertaining Op. 22 piano trio, written when he was employed by the Esterházy family as Haydn's deputy, to the beautiful late cello sonata, for Grand Duchess Maria Pavlovna of Russia to play with the composer on a concert tour of St Petersburg and Moscow in 1822. The performances are first-rate, and it's fascinating to be able to compare the two fortepiano copies from Derek Adlam's workshop, the earlier Rosenberger having a distinctly thinner and brighter tone than the more modern-sounding Streicher. It's also good to have one last recording by the much missed Micaela Comberti. Strongly recommended. *Richard Maunder*

Schubert ***Poets of Sensibility, vol. 3*** Wolfgang Holzmair *bar*, Ulrich Eisenlohr *fp*
Naxos **8.557568** £ 60' 59"
Settings of Claudius, Hölty & Stolberg

This fine recital contains twenty-four mainly short settings in a well-chosen mixture of familiar and less familiar lieder, to texts by anon. and, mainly, Hölty, Claudius and Stolberg from the group of poets associated with Göttingen. Wolfgang Holzmair is in commanding voice, though also master of the delicate, lightly ironic touch demanded by some of the songs. Throughout he is partnered with sensitivity and grace by Ulrich Eisenlohr on a (sadly unidentified) fortepiano with just the right combination of gentle strength and poetic discretion. The pianist supplies a helpful and long introductory note, but the absence of the words of the songs from the booklet is keenly felt, despite the singer's keen characterization and clarity of enunciation. The CD is well recorded and may be highly recommended. *Peter Branscombe*

VARIOUS

All the Ends of the Earth: Contemporary and Medieval Vocal Music Choir of Gonville & Caius College, Cambridge, William Towers *cT*, Geoffrey Webber *dir* 71' 12"
Signum **SIGCD 070**
Medieval anon *Campanis cum cymbalis, Gemma nitens, Kyrie (Winchester Troper), Mater ora filium, Stella maris* Dunstaple *Quam pulchra es* + music by Michael Finissy, Jonathan Harvey, Robin Holloway, Gabriel Jackson, Bayan Northcott. James Weeks & Judith Weir

This is an intriguing disc, with a more successful mix of ancient and modern than most I have heard. The modern pieces all have old Latin texts, and are in a style that, while in no way pastiche, relates to the middle ages. Much of it is very beauti-

ful, and it is easier to hear what the composer is doing than in most recent music. It is nice to have one item reproduced from a 14th-century score in the College library. Full marks for the idea as well as the performances. *CB*

L'art de Teresa Stich-Randall *310' 12"*
Accord **476 8633** (4 CDs in box) rec 1954-67

Several times in the last few months I've been involved in conversations in which enthusiasm for Teresa Stich-Randall's performance of Handel's *Ode for St Cecilia's Day* was shared. I no longer have the World Record Club Disc I bought round about 1960 – I wonder what colour it was? (WRC offered alternatives to the standard vinyl black.) I was worried that putting recollection to the test of the reality might prove disappointing; but no, the opening of the last movement was just as good as I remembered (is the unusual pattern of each line being sung by an unaccompanied voice and repeated tutti inspired by parish church lining out?) and the holding of the top A in the last line over the fanfare till the trumpet takes the note over (carefully, as notated, without overlap) is, indeed unforgettable. The minor section is beautifully, and unusually, in tune. I'm not going to say buy the piece just for these few bars. The whole performance, conductted by Anthony Barnard, greatly admired (at least by me) in his day, is worth hearing, even if some of the tempi are a bit slow. It is good, too, to hear again a fine Handelian tenor of the time, Alexander Young; the instrumental soloists, sadly, are not named. Disc one also has Bach's soprano and trumpet concerto, BWV 51, with Maurice André and a couple of movements from the B-minor Mass: good, but not so outstanding. One feels eventually that, despite her fine intonation, agility (including trills) and purity, there is just something missing: personality. (Just, some critics may say, what is needed to fit a baroque orchestra!) Disc 2 is devoted to Mozart: *Exsultate Jubilate*, of course, the 'Laudamus' from the C minor Mass but also complete performances of the Coronation Masss (K 317) and the Vespers *de Confessore* (K. 339). These were all recorded in Spring 1963 by Karl Ristenpart and are fine performances if you can put your mind back to that period. A third disc has Handel, Mozart and Schubert, a fourth has Bach, Mozart and later music, ending with Strauss's *Four Last Songs* – one of the few Strauss pieces that I like, but here it left me cold. *CB*

£ = bargain price (up to £6.00)
££ = mid price
other discs full price (as far as we know)

Concertos of Four Horns American Horn Quartet, Sinfonia Varsovia, Dariusz Wiśniewski *cond* 75' 40"
Naxos **8.557747** £
Handel *Concerto in F*; **Haydn** *Symphony 31*; **Schumann** *Konzertstück*; **Telemann** *Alster Overture*

This disc sits at the very periphery of our remit, being played on modern instruments and although the booklet notes refer to 'sparkling ornamentation' in the one piece for which it might be worth buying the recording at all (Handel's Concerto in F of around 1746), it's not anything that would ever have been heard in Handel's day (the valveless instrument being incapable of playing half the notes for a start!) The Schumann is very impressive, if that's more your cup of tea. *BC*

Marions les roses: chansons & psaumes de la France à l'Empire Ottoman Les Fin' Amoureuses (Emmanuelle Drout, Nannette van Zanten, Nathalie Walker) 61' 10"
Alpha 517

This is the other Alpha disc which I listened to 'blind' after the trouvère programme reviewed on p. 36 – apart from a vague recollection that it featured links between Geneva Psalms and the Turks. The Psalms were obvious, and other tunes seemed to be French folksongs, but the exotic pieces were less exotic than I expected (they were mostly Sephardic). What made the disc an entity was the distinctive style of the arrangements, which struck me as brilliant in idea and execution but nothing to do with early music. Sadly, the booklet note is mostly elementary ('The Psalter is a book of the Bible composed of 150 sacred songs...') or too vague to be very helpful. But one paragraph gives specific information: that a Turkish musician of the Ottoman court, Wijciech Bobowsky alias Ali Ufki (1610-1675) translated the first 14 of Marot & Bèze's Psalms and classified the melodies into the *makam* system. 'Wijciech Bobowsky' doesn't sound very Turkish – it's much more like Polish. The careful reader of *EMR* 109 might recall the name: the very same character lies behind *Sacred Bridges*, the disc by The King's Singers and Sarband reviewed on p. 42 of that issue. That struck me as an imaginative attempt at musical resconstruction. The present disc is, I stress, extremely enjoyable; but it is in the style of a folksong group taking a variety of musics from the past and performing it in their own way. Fine if that's what you want and if there is no attempt to pretend that you are doing more than that, but (like the Melpomen disc on p. 36), a bit deceitful if you are not entirely open. *CB*

Songs for Ariel James Bowman *cT*, Kenneth Weiss *hpscd, pf* 58' 38"
Satirino Records **SR 052**
Britten *Down by the sally gardens, I know a bank (MSND)*; **Dowland** *If my complaints*; **Gant** *Epitaph for Salomon Pavey*; **Handel** *Ho figgito amore, Tacero pur che fedele*; **Howells** *King David*; **Purcell** *Fairest isle, Here the deities approve, I attempt from love's sickness, Sweeter than roses*; **Rubbra** *A Hymn to the Virgin*; **Tippett** *Songs for Ariel*; **Vaughan Williams** *The Woodcutters Song (He that is down)*; **Warlock** *The Night* + chant *Salve regina*

Described in the invitation to the launch party as 'possibly James Bowman's last recording', this disc, sponsored by friends, is his own collection of songs that connect with people, events and places that have influenced him during his career. While not a swan-song, he is now more selective in the jobs he accepts, and evidently is enjoying life. The pieces are arranged more or less chronologically, starting somewhat surprisingly with a chanted *Salve regina*, a reminder of his choirboy education at Ely; he has returned to the collegiate tradition, and is now a member of the Chapel Royal choir, whose director Andrew Gant contributes the closing item, Ben Jonson's tribute to a treble of the chapel who died in 1602, aged 13. It's good to hear James sing again Oberon's aria from *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, though it doesn't work with piano. That is hardly Kenneth Weiss's fault, though I wonder who thought of an ottavino spinet as a lute substitute in Dowland: it doesn't work. The song that really affected me was, unexpectedly, Howells' *King David*. But there are too many songs for detailed comment. This is a welcome reminder of a characterful singer (both on and off the stage) whose voice has been part of our experience of early music for 40 years. There is no need to praise it: it just is. But I should compliment his booklet essay and mention the photos. *CB*

MORE HISTORICAL DHM

I was on the whole disheartened and disappointed by the batch I wrote about in the last issue. But I'm a bit more positive about these. All numbers begin with **82867** and end with **2**; all discs are at bargain price.

Most chant enthusiasts will know what to expect from Godehard Joppich and the Choralschola of the Benedictine Abbey of Münsterschwarzach. *Vir Dei Benedictus* (**69998** 52' 46" 1980) has music for the mass and office of St Benedict and has not

dated over the last 25 years. I can't quite say that of the Deller Consort's *Music in Reims Cathedral and at Notre-Dame in Paris* (**70035** 66' 40" 1960-61). The vocal line-up is fine (Alfred Deller, Wilfred – printed Wilfried – Brown, Gerald English and Maurice Bevan). But they can do little against the recorder, fiddle, pommer and trombone in Machaut's Mass, and the Notre-Dame stuff is worse – though there are signs that *Sederunt* could be sung in a more full-blooded way than is now normal. How fashions change! Dufay's *Missa Se la face ay pale* (**69992** 43' 39" 1964) has a sound that is too oppressive to enjoy, and even if there were no instruments, it wouldn't flow.

continued on p. 35.

LA MUSIQUE DES SIÈCLES

We've received 14 of the 20 discs in this series from Harmonia Mundi: '20 CDs to tell the thrilling story of Western music', to quote the advertising pamphlet, which implies that the series is called *Explorer 25 siècles de musique* or *Explore 25 centuries of music*, though that title isn't apparent on the individual issues, which use the title Century + volume number, with *La Musique des siècles* as subtitle. There are no order numbers, apart from the bar code. How confusing! The booklets don't give texts and translations, which is a pity, and the interested listener should surely be pointed to the various discs from which the tracks are taken: apart from being helpful, it might increase sales of Harmonia Mundi recordings An educational series like this really needs back-up on the www anyway.

Vol. 1, ***La musique de l'Antiquité***, has sections on Ancient Greece, Byzantine, Melchite and the Gallic rite. The Ancient Greek section comes from the Melpomen disc reviewed on p. 36. In her review, Diana Maynard treated it as modern music, and on that basis enjoyed it (as I did). But it is far too speculative to present it as original music of the period as here: enjoy it for what it is, but not as giving much idea of ancient Greek music. The instruments may be meticulous copies, but what could an archaeologist two and a half millennia hence do to imagine music on a violin without a wide sample of scores or recordings? The notes are too vague to tell us that Archilochus's *Ekleipsis* refers to an eclipse on 6 April 648 BC. *CB*

Reviews of the other discs are deferred until our next issue.

Congratulations to Harmonia Mundi Midem's Label of the Year

DVDs

Bach *Weihnachts Oratorium* Claron McFadden, Bernardina Fink, Christoph Genz, Dietrich Henschel *SATB*, Monteverdi Choir, English Baroque Soloists, John Eliot Gardiner 198' (rec 2000)
Arthaus 101 237
+ features on JEG's Bach Cantata pilgrimage

Bach *Mass in B minor* Ruth Ziesak, Anna Larsson, Christoph Genz, Dietrich Henschel *SATB*, Gewandhaus Kammerchor & Orchester, Herbert Blomstedt 117' + 21' introduction by Blomstedt
Euroarts **2054518**
St Thomas, Leipzig, May 2005

The Herderkirche, Weimar, is a fitting location for Gardiner's performance of the Christmas Oratorio. In Bach's day it was called St Peter and Paul's Church and the ducal family sometimes attended services on feast-days, making it likely that Bach performed some of his festal Weimar cantatas here; in addition, four of his children were baptised at the church. The church's décor, in particular the Cranach altar-piece, make an atmospheric backdrop for the performance, and the Evangelist sings his recitatives from the pulpit – a nice touch enhancing the rhetoric of his delivery. The other soloists sing from between the choir and orchestra, with slightly less projection. The 16-strong choir produces a disciplined yet lively sound, while Gardiner gives energy and drive to the many different dance rhythms of the choruses and arias. The DVD ends with a brief documentary, where Gardiner visits sites associated with Bach in Saxony and Thuringia.

Blomstedt's performance of the B minor Mass is in the Thomaskirche, Leipzig, undoubtedly the place most associated with Bach, although the composer would never have performed the entire Mass here. Blomstedt's ensemble is placed in the west gallery, which as Gardiner notes in his documentary has been substantially altered since Bach's day. (In the 1720s the instrumentalists had separate galleries raised up to the left and right of the main gallery, offering potential for antiphonal interplay.) Blomstedt also uses larger forces than Bach might have expected, with a chorus of about 36 singers. Yet the concert shows the influence of historically informed performance in several ways. The Gewandhaus orchestra produces a supple and transparent sound, although without the visceral force of period instruments. By contrast with Gardiner, Blomstedt's direction appears relaxed, even laid back; yet he ensures that the dance rhythms of the arias have an upward spring. Combining aspects of mainstream and period performance, this recording documents the continuing tradition of committed Bach performances in Leipzig.

Stephen Rose

Charpentier *Te Deum et Psaumes des Ténèbres* Le Parlement de Musique, La Maîtrise de Bretagne, Martin Gester 85'
Armide **ARM004**
H 126, 146, 128-9, 206, 228, 230,
Charpentier *Le Tombeau de Marc-Antoine Charpentier* Il seminario musicale, Gérard Lesne 75'
Armida **ARM005**
H. 183, 237, 252, 266, 270, 332, 403, 423,474

These two DVDs are films of concerts from the 2004 Versailles Charpentier festival, both of which took place in the palace chapel. Each has a similar format. We see shots of the audience arriving, the concert, and an interview with the director about aspects of the music. In neither case are there subtitles of either texts or translations (these are in the booklets – but it isn't possible to watch screen and booklet simultaneously), and the filming is pretty pedestrian – not even any 'atmosphere' shots of the building, for example. Both booklets list the performers though give no information about them and there are also slips of detail. The *Te Deum* note is that of the concert programme and still contains a reference to 'this evening' and the *Tombeau* texts do not include the short encore.

But perhaps more importantly than all this, neither concert is presented a way that suggests that anyone had thought about how it would look when filmed (or, come to that, when seen live). Gester's performers look quite disinterested much of the time, especially the youthful choir, standing and sitting is fairly chaotic, there is no agreement as to whether music is in folders or not and the singers make minimal eye contact with the camera/audience. I found this all so off-putting I almost forgot to take note of the performances, which are serviceable, though not particularly exciting. (The *Te Deum* includes a serpent on the bass line, uncredited in the booklet.)

Visually and musically *Le Tombeau* fares rather better (other than a distractingly mobile organist), though there is still little eye contact with the camera. However, the singers here do engage with each other and the music rather more and there is a visually sumptuous moment when, in Charpentier's ironic epitaph, the Angelic Trio appears high up in the organ gallery. Gérard Lesne works himself hard in this programme but emerges with great credit and he is well supported by all his vocal and instrumental colleagues.

However, my overall feeling is that both releases represent missed opportunities in terms of both the medium and the music and in the case of the *Te Deum* especially, the visual aspect adds nothing to the pleasure available from a CD.

David Hansell

Handel *Water Music: Recreating a Royal Spectacular* English Concert, Andrew Manze 78'
BBC Opus Arte **OA 0930 D**
July/August 2003

This makes an entertaining and instructive companion to the book reviewed on p. 32. A performance of the Water Music on a barge (modern but quite antique in appearance) is accompanied by a TV programme that provides much historical information together with conjectures on practicalities. I'd like to have heard more about the acoustics: how near to the royal barge would the musician's boat have had to be for the King's party to have heard very much – the Thames doesn't have the backdrop of buildings that provides a semi-enclosed space on Venice's Grand Canal. If no-one has done so already, it would be interesting to have some detailed feed-back from the players on how it felt, and also from the recording team on how it actually sounded and what had to be done to make it acceptable for home listening. There a certain inconsistency in having the parts copied in an 18th-century hand then holding them in place with bluetack, as in watching a trip down the 21st-century Thames with musicians in 18th-century dress. But this was a worthwhile project and is certainly enjoyable to watch, even though for pure listening I'd go for a concert-hall or studio recording. *CB*

Monteverdi *L'Orfeo* John Mark Ainsley *Orfeo*, Juanita Lascarro *Euridice*, Brigitte Balleys *La Messagiera*, Russell Smythe *Apollo*, David Cordier *La Musica*, Michael Chance *La Speranza*, Mario Luperi *Caronte*, Dean Robinson *Plutone* Tragicomedia Concerto Palatino, Stephen Stubbs *dir*, Pierre Audi *Stage dir.* 140' (2 DVDs)
Opus Arte **OA 0928 D**
Het Muziektheater Amsterdam, July 1997

Both this and *Poppea* are productions from the Nederlandse Opera by Pierre Audi and have simple, timeless sets. This came three years after *Poppea*, and there are distinct improvements, particularly in having the musical direction in the hands of someone whose experience is primarily 17th- rather than 18th-century. The infernal sinfonias and choruses are down a fourth. I'm puzzled why Musica is a countertenor – there used to be people who thought of the voice as the archtypical sound of early music, but most of us have grown out of that. John Mark Ainsley makes a fine Orfeo, despite his shapeless black robe. The singers are generally more stylish and accurate (one goes with the other) than those in Poppea – though I do prefer a messenger who restrains herself until her message is delivered. The ancillary material shows bits of rehearsal and comments by Audi, Stubbs and Ainsley – incidentally revealing that they are using my edition (for which I don't think I received a recording fee). DVD comes into its own here: Stephen Stubbs' remarks on Monteverdi, the instruments, rehearsing etc are absolutely spot-on (some are also included in the booklet). But (as we are told) the modern auditorium is completely out-of-scale from whichever room the opera was written for, so the voices are mostly unsuitable. An extensive film like this with rehearsal and commentary mixed would be fascinating. The small screen is better at 'how to do it' programmes than representing a big stage. But I've enjoyed this more than most operatic DVDs I've seen. *CB*

Monteverdi *L'incoronazione di Poppea* Cynthia Haymon *Poppea*, Brigitte Balleys *Nerone*, Ning Liang *Ottavia*, Michael Chance *Ottone*, Harry van der Kamp *Seneca*, Heide Grant Murphy *Drusilla*, Jean-Paul Fouchécourt *Arnalta*, Dominique Visse *Nutrice*, Claron McFadden *Valletto*, Les Talens Lyriques, Christophe Rousset *dir*, Pierre Audi *Stage dir* 219' (2 DVDs)
Opus Arte **OA 0924 D**
Het Muziektheater Amsterdam, July 1994

The better I get to know *Poppea*, the more important it seems to get the rhythm absolutely right. The notation is so precise that it gives minimum scope for freedom – and attempts to do so generally sound wrong rather than expressive. Virtuosic passages need to be in time as well as one-note-per-syllable recitative. You can stretch the tension of discords a bit, but not rush or distort the pattern. And accuracy is also needed in intonation: faults are particularly noticeable if a sustaining bass is added – far too often here. This *Poppea* might pass muster in a theatre, but it just isn't good enough for more clinical listening. I want to see a performance with clear-voiced singers (these sound so forced) who can place their notes accurately in each chord and use the rhythms to express the text as the composer so marvellously provides, with the balance between words and music slightly nearer the words than usual. (Neither of these Amsterdam productions sound very Italian.) Then we need visual images that show what matters: in a love duet, the singers have to be close enough together for both to be on camera together to get the interaction between them. In the Nerone-Lucano scene, there was a fine shot of them relating from opposite sides of the stage, but that was rare (the scene was, as usual, turned into a love duet rather than a build-up to Poppea's entry). I've been rather negative: there is much to praise, and it is worth mentioning that Seneca is, for once, not portrayed as an old man – refreshing, though historically he was 69. But the main problem is none of the things I've mentioned or even the added instrumentation or the mixing of Venice and Naples scores or the cuts , but the fact that the sexiest opera in the repertoire left me cold. *CB*

The King's Singers *From Byrd to The Beatles* 93'
Arthaus 101 248
Tallis *Spem in alium* The Kings's Singers 8' 22" + 6' 14" interview
Signum **SIGCD071** CD/SACD Hybrid

The DVD is based on a typical King's Singers concert – a mixture of renaissance and modern pieces, sung with incredible panache, all from memory, all with amazing ensemble, accuracy and skill, but with the earlier pieces tending towards the superficial and seeming just a little slick. The music is informally introduced by the singers, and as the programme progresses, it is interspersed by discussion of how the recording of *Spem in alium* by six singers might be effected. The disc closes with the performance. The discussions are interesting, and the task is undertaken with enormous care and imagination. But the performance doesn't quite catch fire. First, the visuals were no help at all: I preferred the CD single, and recommend listening to that. The singing is, of course, incredibly accurate. They had to record to a click-track – the modern equivalent of following the tactus, it might be thought. But it isn't. The strict time of the tactus works because it is generated by all the performers, not imposed (like Lully banging the tempo of an opera with his stick on the floor). It doesn't sound or feel inexorable but invigorates. It gives life, not rigidity. But the regularity here has no bite to it, and was not helped by being a fraction too fast. I didn't feel the coming together on each new chord that makes the main chord changes so exciting. I wondered whether inclusion of an organ, recorded first, might have helped. The singers have done brilliantly and are rightly very proud of their efforts: in many ways they succeed, but the effect is less than the sum of its parts. A pity. *CB*

BACH-A-THON

A WEEK OF BACH

I sent an email circular round to our reviewers asking for any comments on Radio 3's 00-00 to 24.00 days of broadcasting Bach's complete works – a somewhat lengthier enterprise than the complete Webern a few months earlier. The response was small, perhaps because they were too busy, but perhaps because the messages didn't reach them. Maybe the circular was misinterpreted as Spam and automatically rejected by their computers. So only two comments, plus a couple of my own, though I'm not a very regular listener to Radio 3 so I move on to Radio 4.

The Bach-a-thon is the best idea R3 has ever had and I shall e-mail them to the effect that it should be an annual feature, along with A Bach Easter and Midsummer Bach. Less emotionally, I've particularly enjoyed the Weimar cantatas and the generally mixed scheduling. I haven't enjoyed many of the modern instrument performances, not so much because of the soupy vibrato-laden upper string sound but because of the amazingly dull way in which the bass lines are played. And as a family, we thought that standard of performance in the Toccata and Fugue in D minor recital was poor. But as for your comment [in the invitation to our reviewers to send responses] that no-one's listening all day, we must be quite close in that if we're here we have radios playing on all three floors of the house.

In the end, I suppose I listened intently for about an hour a day and was in the presence of the broadcasts for very much longer. Leaving aside issues of musical quality, I think JSB was a good choice for this kind of exposure as on the whole movements and even complete works (apart from the obvious) are quite short: seldom did we go five minutes without a change of style. My one disappointment was the amount of piano we heard. For me it doesn't matter how it's played, it's just wrong. In discussions of this issue I always ask disagreeing parties how they feel about Beethoven or Chopin on the harpsichord.

David Hansell

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I'm afraid you will have to excuse me from the Bach exercise for two reasons: a) we are about to go away for Christmas; but b) I virtually (hardly virtuously!) never listen to the radio. I can't stand the chatter on Radio Three – or at least, I imagine it's the same as when I gave up radio listening perhaps fifteen years ago – or worse (?). I'm sure I miss much that is good and worthwhile, but we don't even take the Radio Times, so I don't know what I'm missing. I *have* noticed from *The Times* that there is a Bach Week, and I did find myself listening to the final twenty minutes or so of the St John Passion yesterday, and found it a thoroughly second-rate performance. Sorry, that's very pompous. *Peter Branscombe*

I caught on my way to the local market on the Monday morning (Dec. 19th) an intriguing recording of the organ at the Marienkirche, Dresden, from 1944, made a few months before its destruction. As the announcer stressed both before and after, the much-vaunted reconstruction does not include an attempt at an authentic replacement of the Silbermann organ (which Bach played). I heard what used to be called the Fantasy in G, now the *Pièce d'orgue* (BWV 572). I did not know how much the organ had been restored (considerably, over its 200 years, AB-W tells me), but it sounded a good performance, with no fussy registration changes or tempo adjustments. The balance emphasised the overall sound rather than the contrapuntal detail, but that is an option which needs to be considered for any organ recording: *in situ*, one can enjoy both, but for home listening there is a tendency now to prefer detail. What struck me while listening was that in Bach's day organ music functioned at a completely different volume from all other sorts of music: it isn't a point I remember seeing discussed, but it must have made organ music a different sort of genre even more than it is now. I suspect that if you analysed Bach broadcasts through the year, the amount of organ music would be low compared with its quantity in Bach's output: a feature of the 'complete works' approach is that it was brought more to the fore (unlike the sound of the harpsichord). The lost tapes of the Dresden recording were apparently found being used by kids as streamers on the streets of Berlin. It is available on Berlin Classics 0094102BC.

On the same day I caught bits of a programme such as might have been heard at Zimmermann's Coffee House, played in the basement of a coffee bar in Earls Court (for a review of the concert, see p. 29). The presentation was imaginative, though I wondered why the music faded in and out: we had the first movement of the A-minor violin concerto, but then switched to talk which was rounded off by the last few bars of the last movement. They set the scene for the Coffee Cantata with a few bars of recitative in English, but given the surroundings, why not sing the whole piece in the vernacular? I was very impressed by the comments on the concerto by the violin soloist, Kati Debretzeni; Radio 3 should sign her up for more – she talked sense in a completely natural manner, sounding just like she does on the phone. The band was from the RAM with Laurence Cummings. This wasn't actually live, but recorded a couple of weeks previously.

Irrespective of Radio 3, there were some interesting Radio 4 programmes relating to music: Radio 4, in fact, is where to look for words about music. On Sunday Dec. 18th, there was a short programme by Simon Halsey about Howells' *Suite for Strings* and the Gloucestershire hill which inspired it – obscure, unexpected and introducing the listener to a fine but almost unknown piece of music. An hour and a

half later, though, a poetry programme was misleading because of a failure to consider Eleanor Farjeon's 'Morning has broken' as a poem written to fit a tune: you could tell from the unrhythmical way that the poem was read that the approach would be one-sided. As the poem progresses, one realises that the last two syllables of the line are not strong-weak (though at first that pronunciation works – broken, morning, etc) but more or less of equal strength (new fall, dewfall... sunlight, one light): what might at first seem to be mis-accentuation in the two equal notes of the music turns out to be a perfect match. The wider implications of the tune (as well as the subject of the poem) being supplied by the editors of *Songs of Praise* were not explored; musicologists would call it a contrafactum. The programme offered some standard lit-crit. musings, but missed the opportunity of learning from the topsy-turvey relationship of word and tune. How can you discuss the form of a poem in isolation if that form is determined by the music?

A couple of days later I caught a programme on *My Ladye Nevells Booke* – Radio 4 again, which all our radios are tuned to, so we can wander round the house without aural interruption (apart from the infuriating time-lag of our one digital set). How often are musicians allowed to talk on Radio 3 about the manuscripts of the music they play? Yet here was a half-hour programme, lightly presented (with Trevor Pinnock on hand to play as well as to marvel), discussing the beauty of its appearance and praising the scribe (John Baldwin) as well as the composer (William Byrd). What came across was the sheer excitement of being face-to-face with a document so close to the creation of the music – something we hardened editors can often forget. Let's hope that the British Library finds the half-million it needs to keep it in Britain.

Christmas Eve began for us just after 6.00 am with the regular Saturday 'Open Country' offering, appropriately on the preservation of Forster Country, a piece of undeveloped Hertfordshire countryside adjacent to The Rookery, E. M. Forster's childhood home, better known under its fictional name *Howards End*. 'Appropriate', however, not because of Forster. It fitted the series because it focussed on the attempts to preserve the area from encroachment by the ever-expanding town of Stevenage and celebrated the planting of an apple tree in honour of the centenary of the birth of a later inhabitant of The Rookery, Elizabeth Poston. I had met her occasionally when I worked at the BBC, since I was the recipient of the box of chocolates that she presented each Christmas to the music library staff. We made a family visit to see her a couple of years before her death in 1987, on the excuse of delivering some Lawes that she had ordered from us. The house and garden looked a bit run-down and it was bitterly cold: but Clare and John, who can tell a friendly house instantly, were completely relaxed. It had obvious character, as did she: a delightful but slightly eccentric old lady. We were glad we saw her, though sorry that she couldn't show us her two donkeys. Her *Penguin Book of Christmas Carols* (1965) was an interesting and sadly neglected anthology. A pity that King's (Forster's college) didn't celebrate the centenary that afternoon with her *Jesus Christ the Apple Tree.*

Later on Christmas Eve I heard the Radio 3 record-review run-down of complete recordings of Bach's organ works. It was amazingly patriotic: the three players selected were Christopher Herrick, Peter Hurford and Simon Preston. Without casting aspersions on any of them, are they really better than any players across the channel or the Atlantic?

Talking of patriotism, we cannot resist adding our voices to those who regret the demise of Fritz Spiegel's ingenious celebration of the traditional music of the four nations that for many years has announced the beginning of the Radio 4 day. I've already had an enquiry of where to get the orchestral material from, and I have sent an email to Nick Kenyon suggesting that, with simultaneous open-air concerts in each country, it would fit very well into the Last Night of the Proms.

One TV event over Christmas caused considerable annoyance to our regular Christmas guest, Hugh Keyte, and myself, both of us having been absorbed in carol scholarship for a lengthy period a decade ago for *The New Oxford Book of Carols*. Hardy's *Under the Greenwood Tree*, though not one of his most substantial novels, is of unusual interest to musicians because it expresses a common theme (cultural misunderstandings between generations, the educated and the uneducated, the middle and the working class, town and country, etc) in terms of performance practice. Incidentally, it also gives a vast amount of information on that performance practice, which can be backed up from a wide variety of sources, including the MSS of Hardy's father. Much research has been done on the topic, so we assumed that, along with accuracy in costumes (though not of set – which was Jersey, not the surviving original locations) there would be an attempt to get the music right. But no: the musical director obviously had no interest in the sound or style. Hugh gave up at the first carol, I stayed a few more minutes until 'It came upon the midnight clear'*, whose American words reached England in 1870 with a Sullivan adaptation of a folksong from 1874. The novel was published in 1872, but is set some decades earlier earlier; and even had that carol been known, despite its folk melody it is from the world of the vicar, not the rural choir. The production seemed to be happy for the olde-world atmosphere to survive visually: why not aurally, especially since the whole plot was about a specific body of performers with their own way of playing and singing.

**I should cover myself by saying that, like Hugh, I had already made up my mind about the musical failure before that second carol, and didn't pay much attention to it. So it might have been a different one; but I registered strongly that it was inappropriate.*

I few weeks later, we were amused by an instalment of *Rosemary and Thyme* in which a cathedral organist had his alibi for a murder committed during his pre-service voluntary blown because the chorister who played it instead lacked the pedal technique of the man himself. *CB (and EB)*

Since EB has a round-figure birthday in March, we may celebrate with a trip abroad, with a possible consequence of the April issue being a little late. So here is advance warning.