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I was wondering how we could find some more creative ways of writing about early music when the Summer issue of *Early Music America* appeared with a story by Ronald Broude, publisher of the excellent Performers Facsimiles among other things, that touched wittily and subtly on the dangers of perfect reproduction. I think that the overlap of readership with ours is small enough for it to be worth reprinting the story here.

The danger of confusing re-creation with music-making was raised by a lecture Philip Thorby gave at the Irish Recorder and Viol course in August. This was chiefly concerned with a set of viols made for performing early 16th-century music. There is some evidence of what the instruments at the court of Isabella d'Este were like, though nowhere near enough for a reconstruction. But players and a maker pooled their knowledge and instincts, and the result was not only satisfactory but, in once respect, was confirmed by a picture ignored during the original research. Research has to go hand in hand with experience and imagination – which is no excuse for not learning the knowledge.

And thinking of taxi-drivers leads me on to Ted Perry, though as a minicab rather than black-cab driver he did not need to drive round London on a moped for several years to pass the exam on 'the knowledge'. Behind the oft-repeated story that his early success with Gothic Voices and Hildegard of Bingen came from hearing a performance on Radio 3 as he was driving around one night earning money to support the fledgling Hyperion, there is an unasked question: how did Radio 3 happen to be broadcasting it? Hugh Keyte gives the answer, and is also inspired to contribute a song in honour of Christopher Page.

There must be lots of other memorable events in the revival of early music to document before the memory vanishes – first concerts of ensembles, major discoveries, disasters narrowly avoided, etc. *CB*

REVIEWS OF MUSIC

Clifford Bartlett

BOTTEGARI'S SONG BOOK

Cosimo Bottegari *Il Libro di Canto e Liuto*... A cura di Dinko Fabris e John Griffiths... Forni, 2006. 61 pp + 54ff, €57.00.

The MS is widely known under the title *The Bottegari Lutebook* in an edition by Carol McClintock published in the distinctive black floppy covers of the Wellesley Edition in 1965, nine years after the editor's article on the subject (JAMS 19/3). Players will prefer the facsimile, but singers may find the version with transcribed accompaniment easier to use. The edition, however, works on the assumption that the lutenist has instruments at hand tuned to a variety of pitches, whereas we now realise that it was normal for the vocal line in such anthologies, whether printed or MS, to retain the pitch notation of the original source but to be sung to whatever tuning the lute was using. So there is no need for songs to be notated in F minor or E flat major. Curiously, McClintock gave the original clef of the voice part but not the first note, which would have shown that note-values had been halved. Singers may find it easier to read the calligraphic handwriting of her scribe's underlay to Bottegari's. The facsimile has substantial introductions in Italian and English, and a slightly fuller table listing the contents, concordances, etc. The alphabetic index to songs would be better at the end of the book, and could have been supplemented by indexes of composers and authors. The double foliation is confusing for quick reference; the repetition of the foliation at the bottom left of the recto isn't visible when flicking through the book to find a page, so perhaps a printed foliation could have been added.

The MS is fascinating as an example of the sort of book a musical courtier might have carried around with him. It seems to have been copied chiefly between 1578 and 1587. The lighter forms of Italian song make up the majority of the contents, but there is sacred music too, even a sophisticated piece like Lassus's *Timor et tremor* (here, if the lute is tuned in G, sung a minor third higher than the original notation). Any singer with a tame lutenist (or vice-versa) should buy this. It is also a reminder that voice and lute was a regular way of performing what looks like music for several voices, and we should not feel constrained to stick to the pieces that survive in such arrangements as Bottegari's: follow the spirit, not just the letter.

AMOROSA ERO

***L'amoroso ero: eighteen Italian madrigals for four viols, voices or recorders* Edited by Richard Charteris.** PRB Productions (VC064), 2006. xii + 81 pp $35.00 (4 parts + two extra with alternative clefs; various price options)

This is not an entirely unfamiliar title, a previous edition having been published, one might wonder whether the collection is so important that another, albeit improved, is more important than publishing collections that are as yet unedited. The explanation is probably the particular function of PRB as a publisher: the 'for voices and/or viols' of some English madrigal publications is reversed, since their interest is primarily viol consort music, and this is edited with that as a major consideration. The bar length is one clue. The editor justifies it, but surely the main reason is the fondness of viol consorts for four-minim bars. As a viol player reading a part, I would prefer the long bars. But they look wrong in the score. In fact, I felt the same recently when playing some Gibbons and Jenkins organ parts: I felt that the organ parts needed barlines more frequently, as in most early MS scores – but having an edition with parts barred differently from score wouldn't work.

Not every reader will have seen the previous edition or know what the collection is about. Count Marc'Antonio Martinengo of Villachiara (c.1545-1595) wrote words and music of a madrigal, and got a local composer to make a setting as well. Antonio Morsolino (about whom nothing much must be known or the editor would have told us) also wrote a setting and claims to have asked composers from all over Italy to do the same. This information from the dedication may conceal that Morsolino was really responsible, but be that as it may, the collection was published in 1588 with contributions by composers as famous as Gastoldi, Ingegneri (Monteverdi's teacher), Marenzio, Luzzaschi, Striggio (father of Monteverdi's librettist), Merulo, Porta and Alfonso Ferrabosco I – the last being perhaps what drew Charteris to it, since he edited that composer's complete works. The overall quality of the book is very good, though singing it straight through might make one rather fed up with Hero lamenting Lysander's death. All are for four parts except Ferrabosco's madrigal – the separate part for which is on a loose sheet which might easily get lost. High-clef pieces are given both untransposed and down a fourth. A welcome addition to the repertoire of both singers and violists (and any combination of them – or recorders, for which a table suggests the appropriate instruments and 4' and 8' pitch). The end of Luzzaschi's setting must have been written to fox singers, since the final couplet, in triple time, is repeated one minim out, playing havoc with any sense of tactus when reading from an unbarred part; the absence of a few rests in the original print would have thrown the singers even more!

Is it a difference between English and American English that both this and the previous edition is described as a 'vocal score'. For me, that term implies that the music is

for more than just singers, with a piano reduction of what is omitted: this is just a score. But both the editor (in his reference to the 1968 edition) and publisher (in the note added to list the various prices) use the term 'vocal score', which might make one expect a score that is in some way less than a full edition.

NICOLAS PAYEN

Nicolas Payen *Motets and Chansons Edited by Laura Pollie McDowell* (*Recent Researches in the Music of the Renaissance*, 144). A-R Editions, 2006. xxvi + 160pp, $98.00. ISBN 978 0 89579 593 9

Payen must have been an leading figure among musicians of his time (c.1612-59). A pupil of Gombert, he remained a member of Charles V's *capilla*, becoming *maestro* in 1556. Apart from the presence of his name in court documents, little seems to be known about him. The first piece here, *Virgo prudentissima*, is attributed to Gombert in the earliest sources: Payen's authorship is plausible in the context of the source that names him, but no musical justification is given apart from the comment that 'of all Payen's motets, this early work comes closest to Gombert's modern style'. This edition contains 13 motets and 6 chansons, all except two motets in four parts, though only two parts survive of one chanson. It does seem a pity to have omitted his one remaining work, a chorale, on the grounds that it is already published (DDT 34, 149): there are a couple of blank pages at the end of the volume, so there would have been space. It presence would have made the point that, although he worked at a Catholic chapel, his music circulated among Protestant circles as well, and that if the ascription of the chorale is true, Payen must have had protestant contacts.

There are several laments that Payen probably wrote as part of his official duties. *Carole cur defles, Isabellam* commemorates Isabella, the Emperor's wife, who died on 1 May 1539. The year is concealed within its text. The incipit is set to a simple, memorable phrase, whose opening feature A ♭B A is taken up in later points. *Quis dabit capiti*, with text adapted from Poliziano's lament on the death of Lorenzo de' Medici and set by Isaac, has no known function. The editor points to its expansive length as being in contrast to *Carole cur defles*, but that takes 82 bars over two brief sentences, whereas *Quis dabit capiti* sets 22 lines of verse in 205 bars. It too begins by exploiting the fifth and the semitone above (here BCB).

The term 'isorhythmic' seems archaic in the description of the fine five-voice *Resurrectio Christi/Surrexit*. But the cantus firmus, one line from the Easter sequence *Victimae paschali laudes*, has a repeat pattern that a composer could have used a century or two earlier: two statements in dotted breves (to use the notation of the edition), two in breves and two in semibreves; this is then repeated in Pars II. In each pair of statements, the first is a fourth higher than the second, which is at the normal pitch of the chant notation. The editor speculates on numerical proportions, but his conclusion that it uses Marian symbolic numbers to refer to Mary Magdalene, the first person to see the risen Christ, needs justification from contemporary sources. I'm pleased that the editor knows David Hiley's excellent *Western Plainchant*, but it is odd footnoting his book as a source of the sequence rather than a 16th-century Spanish Gradual or sequentiary or even the *Liber usualis*, as she does elsewhere. I'm puzzled why the setting of *Nunc dimittis* is described in the introduction as a combination of two liturgical texts, Pars II 'Lumen ad revelationem gentium' being the antiphon to the canticle 'Nunc dimittis'. But in that form, Pars I is not a canticle, whereas what we have here is more likely to be a through-set version of the whole canticle complete with 'Gloria Patri', which is how it is described with the text and translation. The editor notes 'homophonic passages, syllabic text setting and repeated pitches' and there is also the hint of a psalm tone in the music, which perhaps derive from it being intended for use in Compline. *Benedictus Dominus Deus Israel*, however, is set alternatim – though the chant verses are not given. It is in high clefs, so is going to need recopying for performance.

This is an interesting volume: Payen's music is worth extracting from the anthologies for the full musicological treatment. I'm not sure that I want a whole CD of his music, but RISM 1548², an anthology of music by Payen and other Imperial composers, might offer an interesting selection for a renaissance ensemble.

STRIGGIO *LIBRO I a5*

Alessandro Striggio *Il primo libro de madrigali a cinque voci* Edited by David Butchart. (*Recent Researches in the Music of the Renaissance*, 143). A-R Editions, 2006. xxxi + 181pp, $93.00. ISBN 978 0 89579 589 2

In his first sentence, the editor places Striggio with Lasso, Monte and Wert as one of the most highly-regarded musicians in the second half of the 16th century. While most readers will be a little more knowledgeable than to wonder 'Who's he', they are unlikely to know more of his output than the 40-part motet (though very madrigalian in style) *Ecce beatam lucem* and perhaps one of the many embellished versions of *Nasce la penne mia*. His father, librettist of *Orfeo*, is now better known. Striggio's output was small – just four madrigal books and not much else – though the newly-discovered Mass a40 related to the motet will receive its premiere next spring. The volume reviewed here, however, was extremely popular, with eight editions between 1560 and 1585. It originally had 27 madrigals – larger than usual, and was published quite sumptuously; later editions added three more pieces, but in a more compact format. The opening piece is an implied dedication or acknowledgment of his employer, Duke Cosimo I of Florence. Other pieces honour individual members of the Gonzaga family of his native Mantua, though there is some doubt which particular Isabella or Hippolita or who were the characters for whom Striggio produced a magnificent *Epithalamio*. This has five

stanzas and is 342 bars long. Written in high clefs, transposed it would fit an alto solo and four tenor and bass viols or trombones perfectly, with perhaps four other voices joining in the refrains. The editor is aware of the two normal clef combinations, but unlike most volumes in the series, there isn't a section on performance practice that might have discussed the implications of *chiavette* or whether such public pieces might have been intended for voices and instruments.

The standard vocal distribution is SATTB. The alto is printed at sounding pitch, though octave-treble would have fitted the compas better, whether representing C2 or C3 originals. The appearance on the page (with three five-stave systems) looks much better to me than the excessive white space on some of the other A-R volumes reviewed here. I thoroughly approve of the retention of the original mensuration signatures: users of A-R series shouldn't need cut C to be translated as 4/2. Butchart also represents the difference between *alla breve* and *note nere* notations (with cut or uncut C) by barring the former in 4 minims and the latter in four crotchets: a sensible practice that should be followed more often, whether or not the implied tempo is actually proportionate. The music has a flexibility and fluency that looks as if it would be enjoyable to sing.

G. F. ANERIO

Giovanni Francesco Anerio *Selva armonica (Rome, 1617)* Edited by Daniele V. Filippi (*Recent Researches in the Music of the Baroque Era*, 141). A-R Editions, 2006. xxv + 159pp, $98.00

This is a collection of 27 devotional pieces connected with the Oratorio tradition and Filippo Neri. 13 are for solo voice – soprano or tenor. Then come four duets; the second voice of the first differs little from the organ part, and is ad lib and the second is a dialogue between the Soul and Christ. Four trios and five quartets follow. The volume ends with a Litany of the Virgin for SST. As the editor says, Anerio's 'refined style expresses intense *affetti* without indulging in sensual delight, following the guidelines included in many Oratorian writings of the period'; if one wasn't trying to praise the music, one might paraphrase this as saying that it is a little bland without the sensuousness of the more exciting music of the period.

A few points puzzled me in the Notes on Performance. Since the index heads the section *a una voce* 'Tutti queste si possono cantare in Soprano, & in Tenore', what is the point of his remark 'performers may take this possibility into consideration'. The C1 clef doesn't necessarily assume that the former is preferred or that it is a female voice: Castaldi, for instance (see p. x in the edition reviewed below), scoffs at falsettists and states that monodies should be notated in the tenor clef. It is annoying that the exact rubrics are not printed in the score but buried in the commentary. The Bc partbook (does it just print the bass, or is it a *partitura*? I can't find any indication of this) is entitled *Basso dell' organo*. Later, it is often assumed that such titles are conventional, but 1617 is a bit soon for a convention that organ means any sort of continuo instrument to have grown up, so the sentence 'Continuo players may realise the basso continuo [a term not used in the original] on the organ, harpsichord, or any suitable combination of instruments that is informed by historical performance practice' needs some justification.

Considerable attention is paid to the texts. As well as being set out with parallel translations, the metrical forms are described and rhyming schemes shown – though the latter are obvious enough. If technical metrical terms are used in a publication that is aimed at musicians, perhaps they should be defined. Since the editor is Italian, the orthography is modernised. Were it of English music of the period, that would be deplored. In some cases, the effect is merely a modernisation in appearance (which is unnecessary in an edition likely to by used chiefly by specialists), but I assume that *fabro* and *fabbro* indicate different pronunciations.

I would also question the belief that 'a critical edition should translate, saving not necessarily the formal outline, but the "spirit" of the text. In this perspective, the correct solution of mensural problems – even if discussed in the critical notes – should in any case loom in the musical text itself ' (Note 4 on the Critical Report). On the contrary, the less the editor modernises matters of mensuration, the more shelf-life the edition is likely to have. Theories change, and the best solution is to keep the original mensural signs and note values.

CASTALDI'S CAPRICES

Bellerofonte Castaldi *Capricci (1622) Part 1: Duos for Theorbo and Tiorbino, Sonatas for Theorbo* Edited by David Dolata. (*Recent Research in the Music of the Baroque Era*, 142) A-R Editions, 2006. xv + 180pp, $118.00. ISBN 0 89579 591 4

Bellerofonte Castaldi *Capricci (1622) Part 2: Dances and Other Works for Theorbo, Songs with Tablature Accompaniment* Edited by David Dolata. (*Recent Research in the Music of the Baroque Era*, 142) A-R Editions, 2006. xx + 163pp, $110.00. ISBN 0 89579 592 2

I suspect that only theorbists among our readership will be aware of the significance of the Castaldi (1580-1649), a dilettante who fell into hard times later in life, including literally shooting himself in the foot. One wonders why his father gave him such an ill-fated name. His skills as composer for his instrument, the theorbo, were considerable, and his music certainly deserves publication. There have been two facsimiles. It seems ill-mannered of the editor to slate the 'lamentable' introduction of the one of the copy on which the edition is based (from SPES) in a footnote cued to the very first word of the introduction: we are not told till much later that it is a better facsimile than the earlier Minkoff one, which reproduces the copy of the three that are extant which is in the worst condition. The best copy, used by SPES and the basis of

the edition, belongs to Count Giulio Forni and includes MS corrections, probably by the composer. Interestingly for those who think that barlines don't matter, some of these regularise the barring. The edition includes tablature and transcription, so players will probably prefer the facsimile (costing only €20.00) because of the frequent page-turns the double notation imposes – Castaldi himself was particularly concerned to get the page turns right. But they will want to read Dolata's introduction. The transcription (on two staves separated by a gap just large enough for middle C to be printed between them) is obviously useful for non-lutenists, but there is a problem. Some lute music (e.g. the more systematic part-writing of Francesco da Milano and Dowland) makes sense when played at a keyboard; but the less formal style of theorbo music looks unimpressive on two staves, and although it can be read, it would sound so much richer and better on the theorbo. There are indeed substantial pieces here which do work, but if you don't play the theorbo, don't write off the less dense pieces: they sound better than they look. The editions really need to be accompanied by CDs with performances. The two volumes are more-or-less self-sufficient, so if your interest is primarily in the songs, you don't have to buy vol. 1. As in earlier MSS for lute (like Bottegari's, reviewed above), the accompaniments are written out in the tablature, while this occurs much less frequently for when the theorbo is the expected instrument, so are instructive. The six songs, however, are in a fairly simple dance style.

DRESDEN SONATAS

***Dresden Sonatas 1 [2 & 3].* Edited by Reinhard Goebel.** A-R Editions, 2006. 3 vols, score & parts. £35.00 [$40.00 &$35.00]

The three-page introduction starts with the bombing of Dresden in 1945, but explains that the loss of most of the music played in the city in the 17th century was the result of the bombardment by Frederick II (in Dresden not called 'The Great') in 1756. It continues with a history of German violin music of that period, based round the pieces in these three selections. The first (for 2 vlns & bc) contains the *Sonata detta la Polaca* and *Sonata detta la Capriola* from Farina's *Libro delle pavane...* published in Dresden in 1626 and Furchheim's Sonata in e from an Uppsala MS. Vol. 2 has Sonatas a5 by Ziani in g (op. 7/11; TrTrAAB), in d (op. 11/12; TrTrAAB bc), Thieme in e & d (SSATB bc) and Furchheim (TrTrTrAB bc). Vol. 2 has Sonatas a 6 by Furchheim in A and D for TrTrTrAAB and Fux's Rondeau in C for vln piccolo and bassoon + TrAAB bc.

There is a problem in describing the instrumentation since there is no indication in the score whether the names *violin*, *viola* and *violoncello* are justified by the sources, but they are probably sound. I've used original clefs in the summary above as a neutral way of indicating by function rather than instrument. The only one that needs further explanation is the Thieme Sonata in D minor which is headed (and described in the introduction) as being for four viola da bracchios. Any lover of German string music (and Musica Antiqua Köln, from which Reinhard Goebel recently announced his retirement) will hasten to buy these volumes. It does puzzle me, though, that just a little more information isn't given: apart from the instrumentation, one expects more than the name of the library the source is in, and signs to reassure the user that they are accurate enough for an editorial commentary not to be necessary. The violin piccolo part is at player's pitch in the score and part: if it was at sounding pitch in the score, apart from making it easier for the non-expert to read, a player on a standard violin could try the piece through reading it over the harpsichordists' shoulder: it doesn't go particularly high. But I don't want to sound critical. The series is most welcome, with an excellent selection that those of us who love 17th-century instrumental music will welcome, and I hope buy.

KERLL'S SACRED SELECTION

Johann Kaspar Kerll *Delectus Sacratum Cantionum (München 1669)* herausgegeben von Bettina Eichmanns (*Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Bayern*, Neue Folge, 19.) Breitkopf & Härtel (SON 249), 2006. lxiii + 131pp, €117.00.

Kerll (1627-1693) studied in Rome with Carissimi, worked at the courts in Brussels, Munich and Vienna and was among the leading German organists and composers. His *Delectus sacrarum cantionum* was dedicated to the Bavarian Elector Ferdinand Maria. Nine pieces were published in DTB 3 in 1901, the piece for four basses in Commer's *Musica Sacra* 2 (surely the editor could be more precise about the publication date than 1839-87?) It contains 26 concertante pieces for 2, 3, 4 and 5 voices with continuo. The variety of ensembles is striking – and would be more obviously so if the volume had shown the voices in the contents list (and set it out so that all the pieces were listed on a single page); the information appears in two tables in the introductory material, neither revealing it in a glance; it would be easier to use the facsimile of the original index, except that it doesn't number the items. It is worth setting out the scorings of nos. 16 to 21.

16. Ama cor meum	AT	2 vln
17. Ave Regina	SSBB	
18. Dominus regnavit	BBBB	
19. Laetabundus	SSB	2 vln
20. O panis mellifluus	AAB	2 vln
21. Estote fortes	BBB	2 vln

The other scorings are more normal, and without violins: nos 1-6 are duets, 7-12 trios, 13-15 quartets and 22-26 quintets. The music itself is imaginative, and I'd love to perform the set and hear a recording (there is one from a decade ago from Ars Musici). The writing is soloistic throughout. There are a surprising number of unidentified devotional texts, perhaps penned for whatever occasions the music was written for. The edition is thorough, one might even say pedantic, especially the table which lists the participants and range of each section of each piece: one is hardly likely to change singers between sections, so overall range is surely enough. The ranges are quite wide.

In the four-bass piece, two parts have two octaves (from C-c'), two others go up to d'. One might suspect a high pitch level, but in other pieces the cantus parts in C1 clef go up to top G or A. The extensive introduction covers the composer's life, analysis of the music, discussion of the notation and commentary; facsimiles give a flavour of the notation. I find this volume tantalising. Sadly, the market for separate editions is small, since there is no choir involved, and the use of C clefs inhibits performers. But any small vocal ensemble should find a library that subscribes and have a look at it.

HH TORELLI

Torelli *Concertino (Sonata) in A minor (TV 51); original version for two violins and basso continuo* edited by Michael Talbot Edition HH (30.118), 2006. xi + 12pp, £12.95
Torelli *Sinfonia (Sonata) in A major (TV 50)...* edited by Michael Talbot Edition HH (30.117), 2006. xiii + 18pp, £13.95

Both these works survive in BL Add. 64,975, bought by Thurston Dart in Paignton in around 1943 and eventually, 16 years after his death, bought by the British Library in 1987. The link between a wide range of contents was Pepusch, though it is not in his hand. In the MS they appear as trio sonatas, but both survive at San Petronio, Bologna, where Torelli worked from 1684-96 and from 1701 till his death in 1709, with parts for orchestra. TV 51 has the two solo parts split between 4 violins, 5 each for violin I & II ripieno, 9 viola parts, 5 for cello and 10 for violone. The San Petronio version of TV 50 is less elaborate, and also involved no change substantial enough to prevent this edition allowing performance both as trio sonata and as a concerto grosso with two solo violins and cello. The editor argues convincingly that the trio versions of both pieces are the original ones, with subsequent enlargements made by the composer. The moral of the version of TV51 is that, if you want to play a trio sonata orchestrally, add a viola part, copy out ripieno parts (not forgetting the possible need for minor adjustments at their entries and exits) and a 16' bass – assuming Talbot is right in assuming that the occasional viola note below the bass demands 16'. (I've expressed my doubts before whether a viola playing briefly below a cello is actually heard as affecting the harmony.) TV51 is rewritten more drastically, chiefly by dividing each the solo part between two players, so cannot be combined in one edition, so that can only be used for the trio version.

The edition is of the habitual high quality one has so quickly come to expect from HH. The substantial introduction (English and German) is mostly identical in the two scores; each has a critical commentary, and the printing of the notes is neat and clearly legible, offering no impediment to playing these fine pieces.

I'll raise one point, not as specific criticism of these publications but as a general issue. When should an editor add bass figuring? I find that the way I think as a player varies according to whether a bass is minimally or fully figured. If the latter (whether in the source or by rapidly scrawling figures in gaps in the rehearsal), I assume that the absence of a figure is significant; but if the bass isn't figured, I react far more to the signs in the music. Take the 2nd movement of TV51 as an example. The first bass entry has quavers

|E♯F♯GE FEFG | A↓ACA DBEE |A

[the arrow = an octave leap]. The sharp before the third note makes it unnecessary to show that the first four quavers are under an E major chord, and the pattern of the rest is predictable: if one plays that chord with an E at the top, the hands fall into place without thought. The one note where assistance might be needed is the final A. The editor, however, figures nine of the notes (four with double figures) but doesn't figure the A because by the key-signature it is minor. But that A really does need help. Torelli seems, on the evidence of this piece, reluctant to include a third in minor cadences at all, so should the keyboard also have unisons? I suspect that I would play a major chord first time through, and might decide that the C natural on the violin's third semiquaver was an intended piquancy, but I'd probably settle on unisons rather than the editor's minor. There are mistakes in the editorial figuring in TV50, with sharps printed under the fifth note in bar 2 and fourth note in bar 3 instead of '6'.

TELEMANN CANTATAS

Telemann *Fortsetzung des Harmonischen Gottesdienstes...* Edited by Jeanne Swack. Vol. VII: Cantatas 40, 45, 55, 60, 62-65, 68, 71. PRB Productions (HGII-7), 2006. Score, vocal score and 3 parts, $85.00.

This completes PRB's publication of the second of Telemann's published cycles of 72 cantata for chamber forces. His *Harmonischer Gottes-dienst* (1725-26) was published fifty years ago as early volumes in Telemann's *Musikalische Werke*; Bärenreiter has recently issued a new selection in 6 volumes, which we hope to review in due course, and Fuzeau has issued vol. I of a facsimile. That set was scored for a solo instrument, voice and continuo; the new series had parts for two instruments. The edition is a tremendous achievement: I hope musicians take advantage of it in churches, concert halls and at homes. We have drawn attention to the volumes as they have appeared over the last decade, and it is particularly commendable that PRB has followed it through to the end, especially since it a little peripheral to their other publications.

A consequence of PRB's grouping by scoring rather than liturgical year is that this set has a unified instrumentation of violin, viola and continuo. Seven cantatas are for soprano, two for alto and three for bass. None for tenor? Telemann's preface states that the parts are of limited range and even bass parts can be sung by any other voice. In this volume more than others, it would be useful to know the scoring of the larger-scale cantatas from which these are adapted, especially whether second violin parts are omitted or double violin I or whether string writing is changed – e.g. the viola part takes some material from the second violin. If the latter, then there would be some

point in using a small string orchestra if one were available. The editor mentions the need to remove the bass figures to their place where the harmony changes. I wonder whether editors might now revert to leaving pairs of figures under the bass note rather than trying to align them: 18th-century players seem to have managed, or perhaps clashes were accepted.

Telemann *Gelobet seist du Jesu Christ: Kantate zum 2. Weihnachtstag... TVWV I:612.* Herausgegeben von... Ute Poetzsch-Seban. Partitur. Bärenreiter (BA 7676), 2004. vi + 18pp, £9.50. **Vocal score** BA 7676a, £5.00. Parts on sale.
Telemann *Nun komm der Heiden Heiland: Kantate zum 1. Advent... TVWV I:1174.* Herausgegeben von... Ute Poetzsch-Seban. Partitur. Bärenreiter (BA 7677), 2004. viii + 28pp, £10.50. **Vocal score** BA 7677a, £6.50. Parts for sale

These both come from vol. 39 of the *Musikalische Werke* (BA 5858). The Advent cantata has the more generous instrumentation: two trumpets and timps as well as two oboes, strings and harpsichord or organ with SAB soli and SATB choir – presumably small. The edition is based on the autograph score: it would be nice to have a list of the parts that survive with it: in fact, the introduction might have less biography and more source information. There are eight movements, of which the first and fifth are an identical alla-breve imitative setting of the chorale. Movements 2 and 4 are an impressive proclamation of praise for the coming of the Saviour by the bass and the alto with the full band. Nos 3 & 6 are recits, 7 is a treble solo with unison oboes and violins, and the cantata closes with tutti instruments and chorus.

Gelobet seist du is more restrained, with no trumpets and drums and a homophonic opening chorale. An unusual feature is the presence of four short harmonised recits for the three soloists (ATB). Two of the arias have a scoring for unison violins and violas which could have been carried over unchanged to the *Fortsetzung*, the other has a pair of oboes. The cantata ends with a tutti Gloria.

The introduction is a bit confusing, chiefly because too much of the material is in common. Quite a lot of space is devoted to Neumeister and Telemann's *Geistliche Singen und Spielen*, whose texts were published in 1711. The reader could easily miss that *Gelobet* was written in 1710, *Nun komm* in 1717. The editor suggests that, being written in Frankfurt, the bass line may have been played by a calcedon. Both these look attractive pieces that deserve performance.

Telemann *Wende dich zu mir TVWV 1: 1550*... herausgegeben von Klaus Hofmann... Vocal score Carus (39.116/03), 2006. 20pp, €6.60

Wende dich zu mir (TVWV 1: 1550) for Trinity 3, score for soprano I, soprano II/alto and ad lib bass solo and tutti; one aria is for soprano I or tenor – a flexible piece that could probably be performed just by two solo voices or female choir. Teachers at girls' schools may find it useful. Scoring is for strings with the viola *ad lib.* (39.116/03).

CARUS BACH CANTATAS

Bach Der *Himmel lacht! Die Erde jubilieret BWV 31/BC A 55b*... herausgegeben von Michael Märker... Vocal score Carus (31.031/03), 2006. 31pp. €7.90
Bach *Her Gott, dich loben wir BWV 16/BC A 23*... herausgegeben von Michael Märker ...Vocal score Carus (3.016/03), 2006. 23p, €5,25

There's a limit to what one can say about vocal scores in isolation from the full score, though at least the scoring of each movement is stated and scores and orchestral material are available for sale. **Cantata 16** (*Herr Gott, dich loben wir*) is for new Year's Day. It has two choruses as well as a closing chorale and needs ATB soli, strings and two oboes [+ bassoon ?] and strings. A corno da caccia doubles the sopranos in the cantus firmus of the first movement – the first four phrases of the Te Deum, and a tricky tenor aria has an obbligato for oboe da cacia or violetta. There is an alto recit, and the bass has a recit and a solo role in the second chorus, in which the corno da caccia has a lively independent role, including a two-bar trill. (31/016/03).

Cantata 31 (*Der Himmel lacht!*) for Easter Day has an impressive opening chorus for large orchestra – 3 trumpets and timps, 3 oboes, taille, bassoon and five-part strings. Like the better-known Easter cantata *Christ lag in Todesbanden*, it is a pre-Leipzig work, so Bach had to make some adjustments to the notation for his Leipzig revivals (hence the 'A' in the Bach-Compendium number – as a catalogue, it is a significant improvement on Schmieder, but the latter's numbers are too fixed to be abandoned). Of the woodwind parts, only oboe I works at Leipzig pitch. The string parts were not changed, but the pitch of the performance was a tone lower. These matters are only of concern if you expect to use the full scoring. The Sonata and opening chorus (SSATB) are impressive, the bass then has a dramatic recitative, followed by an aria with an energetic continuo. The tenor has a recit & aria pair, the latter with strings and not da capo. The next pair is specifically for Soprano I (the vocal score omits the 'I'), with a solo oboe d'amore and the strings playing 'When my last hour is close at hand'. The full forces return for the same chorale. (31.031/03)

ROSEINGRAVE

Thomas Roseingrave *Complete Keyboard Music* edited by H. Diack Johnstone and Richard Platt (*Musica Brittanica* 84). Stainer & Bell, 2006. xliii + 130pp, £76.50.

Roseingrave father and son impinge on a variety of contexts. It is father Daniel who has featured in studies of music in the two Dublin cathedrals. His son Thomas is known chiefly for his keyboard music and for his 1739 edition of *XLII Suites de Pieces* by Domenico Scarlatti, whom he had met in Italy 30 years previously; this was the source of Avison's transformations into concerti grossi. The majority of this edition is occupied by his three publications: 15 *Voluntarys and Fugues* (1728), *Six Double Fugues*

(1750), which also included a version of Scarlatti's K.37 included here as an appendix; and *EIGHT Suits of Lessons for the Harpsichord or Spinnet in most of the keys* (1728). The editor is most impressed by the Voluntarys and Fugues, perhaps over-reacting to Hawkins's condemnation (quoted on p. xxv). The 'most keys' are ♭E c d, F f e G & g. Roseingrave's mental state declined during the last thirty years of his life (he died in 1766, aged about 75). I imagine that the 1750 double fugues must have been earlier works, and a few years after his death a Concerto in C was published as a harpsichord solo; another version is called a Solo (Fitzwilliam Museum MU MS 106F). It is printed in its original form and in a version based on Peter Holman's orchestration. Roseingrave was an in interesting and skilful composer, maybe not of the top rank, but deserving attention.

HH @ MOZART

Anton Eberl *Toccata in C minor op. 46* edited by Christopher Hogwood Edition HH (10.174). 2006. viii + 8 pp, £7.95
François Devienne *Sonata in C minor* edited by Nicholas Cox Edition HH (21 222), 2006. viii + & part, £9.95.

These are from HH's subseries '@MOZART' of Mozart contemporaries. The Eberl is a nice piece that has been recently discovered. As the editor points out, 3/8 is an unusual mensuration for a toccata. Two early editions are mentioned. Since the commentary is devoted almost entirely to listing mistakes in Source A, wouldn't it be simpler just to say that it is more carelessly printed than Source B so the latter has been taken as source text, especially since it has been followed in respect of printing dots for A's dashes. Why is A called A anyway; on the approximate datings quoted, it is later – while B is even earlier if the c.1803 of the caption to the title-page facsimile is followed rather than the c.1807 of the commentary. Which date corresponds to Hofmeister's plate number of 87? Judging by the page of facsimile, I would have thought that an edition was superfluous anyway: a facsimile would be perfectly legible and the one error noted in the commentary is hardly a problem for the player.

There is a nomenclature problem with the Devienne; were I still the library cataloguer I once was, I would feel obliged to call it a Sonata in D minor transposed into C minor so that its substance could be clearly identified. No facsimile is given, and it is not clear whether the source is a score or parts. The clarinet part retains its original notation but is labelled editorially as for an instrument in B flat and the bass is transposed down a tone. The editorial statement is a bit confusing: 'I have transposed the work retrieving the original solo line in D minor with a clarinet in B flat'. I presume 'retrieving' means 'retaining'. The introduction begins by suggesting that the set of three sonatas (two more are to follow) was likely to have been accompanied just by a cello (or since the publisher Porthaut was a wind instrument maker, perhaps a bassoon): the bass isn't figured, so this seems very likely. (It would be even more likely if the source were in parts, not score.) But what we are given here is a piano accompaniment, nicely idiomatic, but with no excuse except that sometimes the bass has chords that couldn't be managed by double stopping. I can't see any in this sonata apart from a series of semiquaver B flat octaves, which could be optional. (It's not that the bottom B flat is off the cello: untransposed it would have been the open C string.) The edition doesn't offer a cello part. The whole enterprise puzzles me. More useful would have been a two-stave score at the original pitch with separate bass parts to allow clarinets in C, B flat and A to play the upper part. For once, I'm less than enthusiastic about HH editions.

HENLE CLASSICAL

A recent batch was mostly of separate items already available in a different context. A selection of Mozart's miscellaneous keyboard works (HN 103 €16.00) has 13 pieces including all that the non-specialist will want – roughly those from K.395 onwards. The D-minor fantasy K.397 also comes separately (HN 52; €5.00) as do the Eight Minuets K. 315a (HN 41; €5.00), which are only in the complete Klavierstücke volume. Clementi's Sonata in G WO14 (HN 817; €5.00) is an early piece, slightly Scarlattian, in two quick movements. The absence of a contrasting middle movement may well be an obstacle to educational use.

Haydn's string trios (for two violins and bass) are early works, dating from c.1755-65. The two volumes of *Joseph Haydn Werke* that contain them (Series XI, vols. 1 & 2) are reissued as three study scores, of which vol. 2 has just appeared (HN 9425; €11.00). It contains Trios 14-21, though 14 is just an incipit from Haydn's thematic catalogue. Players expecting the quality of the mature quartets will be disappointed, but apart from being useful when the viola player doesn't turn up would be useful for trio-sonata groups lacking a harpsichord. It is, in principle, good that the collected work volumes are made more easily and cheaply available.

THE ETTRICK SHEPHERD

James Hogg *The Forest Minstrel* Edited by P. D. Garside and Richard Jackson with musical notation prepared from pre-1811 sources by Peter Horsfall. (The Collected Works of James Hogg, 19). Edinburgh University Press, 2006. lxx + 404pp + CD, £40.00. ISBN 0 7486 2288 8

I expect that for most of us south of the border, James Hogg (1770-1835) is little more than a name, though his PR sobriquet 'The Ettrick shepherd' may lurk in the back of the mind. Here he appears as a Robbie Burns epigone, and this substantial volume presents a thorough edition of the collection of poems, mostly his own, in the Burns folk tradition that he published in 1810 under the title *The Forest Minstrel; a selection of songs, adapted to the most favourite Scottish airs.* That had no music; the virtue of this edition is that the editors print the tune specified or, when the 1810 edition doesn't name a tune, one that is appro-

priate. These are taken from sources recorded at or before the time and are printed with each song. Convenience of the singer and accompanist has not been a consideration in the book's layout: it is amazing how often songs taking two pages have page turns. Otherwise, presentation is good. The songs mostly have an unfigured bass – the harmonies are not usually unfathomable! A few ensemble arrangements are included: these should certainly have a credit to the composer above the score, and since the source is often buried among paragraphs of annotation, perhaps all versions should have a brief note of source. The notes on text and music are extremely detailed, following the tradition of thoroughly annotated editions of Scottish songs collections, and is a fine piece of work – such information on English songs is much less accessible. An annoying feature is that the songs are numbered in the notes but not in the main text. For those who cannot read music, an electronic version is supplied on an accompanying CD – an idea for more sophisticated music, perhaps.

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RAVENS VIEW

Simon Ravens

Whatever problems we might face when we try to present Renaissance church music in a historically-informed way, it strikes me that these pale into insignificance beside the headache of performing domestic music. More often than not, a mass was composed for a specific ensemble in a particular building, and if there is a detective inside us, this offers us an obvious line of enquiry. But how about a madrigal or a devotional song? For sound commercial reasons, no self-respecting composer dared to be too prescriptive about the ensemble he was writing for, and doubtless in performance, acoustic, pitch and pronunciation would have proved to be similarly diverse.

The approach of Renaissance performers to domestic music is even more difficult to gauge. Faced with a profound work such as a Wilbye madrigal, did they acknowledge this profundity by analysing the literary and musical texts, in an attempt to communicate (even if only to themselves) the qualities of the piece? Or were they content with a quick run-through? In every respect, the performance-practice questions raised by domestic Renaissance music are vast. By implication, so too are the possible answers. They are not limitless, though, as two recent releases have reminded me.

First the good. Theatre of Voices and Fretwork have tackled one of the more quirky byways of the English Renaissance – the 'Cries' of Gibbons and Dering (HMU907214). The Gibbons I have never thought that much of, but the Dering Cries are, I think, superb, and here they are performed with infectious wit and enjoyment. I can't help but smile at the whole disc. But what on earth is going on with the pronunciation? Although Paul Hillier was one of the first to attempt 'Elizabethan' pronunciation in this repertory, he avoids it here. Instead, everything is sung in Modern Yokel. There may be good reasons for this – the most obvious being that it should render the texts more comprehensible to the modern listener. Maybe, but the singers then tread a very fine line between respect and pastiche. Take the very final words of the Country Cries, which show that the delusion of a Merrie England even existed for the Elizabethans themselves:

> *And thus they sing, as I have heard*
> *With hey, jolly buckets, to milking-ward.*

The singers pronounce that final word 'waaarrrrrd', in the jokiest, hammiest 'Elizabethan' possible. But who are they laughing at? The Elizabethans themselves, or the Oldspeak advocates such as me? I really don't know, but for a performance which in other respects is so fastidious about recreating the Elizabethan soundworld, it strikes me as bizarre that they should either ignore the way they spoke, or ridicule it. But for all that I am baffled by this one aspect, overall the music and performance are magnificent.

I wish I could say the same of Tonus Pergrinus's take on Gibbons' Hymns and Songs of the Church (Naxos 8557681; see review on p. 35). If only it *did* what it says it is on the tin I certainly could say magnificent, because Gibbons' music is simply sublime and I have a high respect for Anthony Pitt's vocal group, who always sing with accomplishment and ardour. I would also like to give the artists the benefit of the doubt about the way the CD is presented, because it is only on the back cover where we read that Gibbons' music has been 'specially realised' for this recording. Perhaps the label is responsible to this misrepresentation, because in truth, the music on the CD is more the work of Anthony Pitts and Alexander L'Estrange. Both are enviably talented musicans, but I think they have missed the boat here. What they have done is taken Gibbons' soprano and bass parts (he wrote no inner parts) and added their own harmonies – showing an undergraduate relish for the flattened 7th cadence which, with its copious repetitions, had my toes scrunching in embarrassment after five minutes. Surely Gibbons' intentions have been misconceived. Give these strophic hymns to a solo singer and one accompanying instrument (virginal, lute or lyra viol) and the player will hint at harmonies, varying them by the verse. Even in a church performance (and I know of no evidence that they actually *were* performed in church) the inner harmonies would have been improvised and, by implication, varied.

I say this with some feeling, because I myself have been performing these hymns for years, initially yoked with anachronistic notions of what a 'hymn' had to be. In New Zealand, earlier this year, I had the pleasure of hearing them performed by solo singers, accompanied by Robert Oliver on lyra viol. In retrospect, this was the simplest, most obvious, and for my money the most beautiful solution to the 'problems' left us by Gibbons and Wither.

Returning to the CD, the composers have gone further with a number of Wither's texts, by freely composing their own hymns. Even worse is a saccharine setting by Antony Pitts of *There is a green hill far away* (words not even by Wither, but by the same invidious Victorian dogmatist, Mrs C.F. Alexander, who assured the rich man in his castle and the poor man at his gate that God had ordered their estates.) Well, if people want to listen to this stuff, fine; but let me just say that if I had paid money to hear Elizabethan domestic music and ended up listening to barbershop arrangements of Victorian doggerel, I might be asking questions of the integrity of those responsible.

AN EARLY MUSIC FAUST

Whoever makes a bargain with the devil should not expect a fair deal
(old Italian proverb)*

Ronald Broude

[Note: The following narrative was found among the papers of a well-known early music personality, recently deceased. During his last years, he had lived as a recluse, the result, it was generally believed, of the bizarre failure of his last major project. The editor assumes that what is printed here was a sketch for a short story never submitted for publication rather than a narrative of events that actually – or were imagined to have – occurred. Notwithstanding the pompous style, the editor has resisted the temptation to rewrite, and he gives the text here exactly as its author left it.]

Call me Faustus.

My real name matters not. Those of you who keep *au courant* with early music will have little difficulty identifying me. I am a conductor, an editor, and the author of numerous articles and reviews on the subject of early music. Throughout my career, I have been a staunch advocate of historically informed performance, and remain firm in my belief that the principal task of all historically oriented musicians is to create performances that enable their listeners to experience as nearly as possible what was heard by each work's first audience. True, as time passes, the meaning of that first performance is degraded, its subtleties are lost, and today, people brought up on Wagner, Schoenberg, and worse are tragically debarred from a truly satisfying experience of any piece by the Baroque or Classical masters. Nevertheless, romantic as this may seem, I believe that for any work a historically committed musician renders, it is his obligation to offer a performance that replicates as closely as he can that work's first night.

Three years ago, I was preparing to conduct Handel's *Messiah*, a masterpiece that I regard as the greatest achievement of Western music. Long hours of tedious work in New York's public and academic libraries, peopled by boisterous students and sullen researchers, had taken their toll, and I was perhaps somewhat light-headed. I was standing on line outside Carnegie Hall to buy a ticket for the season's 'hot' new ensemble – an ostentatiously earnest group with a pretentious Latin name, fresh from successes in Europe, playing trio-sonatas by Boyce and Arne – when I felt a hand on my left shoulder. I turned to face a professorial gentleman in a brown tweed sport jacket, his face adorned by a well-cut goatee; he was carrying a fine reptile-skin portfolio. 'Correct me if I'm wrong', he addressed me politely, 'but are you not the celebrated conductor preparing a performance of Handel's *Messiah*?' I confessed that I was. 'I believe', he proceeded, 'that I may be of some assistance to you. An associate of mine is the proprietor of a record shop, and there has recently come into his possession a recording of the first-night performance of *Messiah*.' I do not bear fools gladly, but I am not by nature unmannerly, and so I responded civilly. 'You mean, I suppose, the first – or more probably a very early – recording of *Messiah*, doubtless one from the early 20th century.' (Early 20th-century recordings are, unless you are perversely interested in performance practice before the First World War, of no value that I can see, and I simply cannot understand early-record enthusiasts' fascination with them.) 'No', he replied, rather as if he were explaining a simple proposition to a rather slow child. 'I mean a recording of the performance that Handel himself directed in the Musick Hall in Fishamble Street, Dublin, on April 13th, 1742. I do not believe that you would be satisfied with the completeness of your researches if you had not heard it.' The idea was, of course, preposterous, but one encounters all sorts of strange people on lines outside Carnegie Hall, and in my experience, it is usually best to humor them. Therefore, I did not resist when he pressed into my hand a business card with the name and address of a shop that called itself, in typically New York fashion, Off the Record, a shop that I had thought had been closed for some years. 'You have', he said pleasantly, 'merely to ask for "the true *Messiah*".' I was next at the ticket window; I purchased my ticket and walked off briskly.

[Note: Off the Record, as New Yorkers will remember, enjoyed a certain notoriety for its ability to supply copies of virtually any recording that had ever been released – and, under the counter, a good many that had not. At the time of these events, Off the Record had been closed for several years, the result of its having unwittingly sold to a publisher's attorney an unlicensed recording of Messaien's Hymne pour Grand Orchestre, *thereby opening itself to prosecution for copyright infringement.]*

I put the incident from my mind, but a few days later, I happened to find myself on West 44th Street, and there, next to the entrance of a narrow, disreputable looking walk-up, I noticed a plaque with the words 'Off the Record, Fourth Floor'. I climbed the three dingy flights, opened the heavy wooden door, and found myself in an ill-lit shop filled with dusty bins crammed with CDs, cassettes, and, yes, 33s and 78s inadequately protected by jackets and in various states of mildew and decay. A clerk with a smug know-it-all look materialized, and I told him that I was interested in recordings of *Messiah*. 'I wonder',

* *A thorough search of Italian sayings has failed to identify such a proverb.*

he said, 'if you might not be the gentleman who my colleague said might call. Are you not looking for (excuse our impious little joke) "the true *Messiah*"?' Without waiting for an answer, he dove into a particularly grimy bin, and presently surfaced with what seemed a perfectly ordinary CD. 'Behold', he announced, 'a recording of the performance of April 13th, 1742. Conducted by the composer himself. Very rare. Very rare indeed.'

I inquired about the price. It was, he explained, one that he, as a gentleman and scholar, was reluctant to enunciate, and that I, as the same, must certainly know. 'And payment?' I inquired. 'That can be managed with your credit card', he responded, depositing the purportedly remarkable CD in a plain black plastic bag.

Like any other New Yorker with experience of dubious transactions, I knew enough to ask: 'But what if the article is not as represented, if the performance is not as you say, or if the disc proves insufficiently durable?'

'We stand behind our product', he assured me. 'The disc is guaranteed both as to authenticity and durability; it is compatible with all CD players at present in production and will be compatible with any device now or hereafter available for purchase. If the article is not exactly what we say it is, then you may return it for a full refund. If, on the other hand, you find it to be just as represented, the sale is final, and the transaction cannot be reversed.'

In the 'total' box of the transaction slip, the clerk had entered the price that neither of us was prepared to pronounce, but as that price consisted of letters and words rather than a dollars-and-cents figure, I assumed it was simply another part of an elaborate charade: I was certain that my credit card company would not pursue so quantitatively indeterminate an obligation, nor, should matters go that far, did I think that any New York County court would consider itself competent to decide such a case. I therefore signed the slip, took back my credit card, picked up the black plastic bag, and walked downstairs into the reality that is West 44th Street between Sixth Avenue and Broadway. The activity around me restored my equilibrium. Not for a moment had I believed the clerk, but I had been impressed by his performance.

I reached home wondering what sort of inanity I might hear when I put the CD in my player. No doubt it would be a recording of just one more horrid performance. But when the first notes came through the speakers, I realized, to my amazement, that the article was genuine. This was how the first performance of *Messiah* must have sounded. The lightness of the instrumentation. The quality of the voices. The density and distribution of the embellishments. The subtlety of the phrasing. The pacing of the entire work. No modern conductor could have conceived such a performance. And the CD resolved incontrovertibly some of the cruxes about which musicologists have been arguing for decades. I was even able to make out the famous remark of the Irish clergyman concerning Mrs. Cibber's singing and the forgiveness of her sins; the exclamation was perfectly audible and distinctly less polite than traditionally reported. A dozen dazzling projects chased each other through my consciousness. Articles, editions, concerts, recordings. So enthralled was I that it was not until after several hours listening that I recalled the unpronounceable price to which I had committed myself. 'In any event', I thought, 'if I'll have the devil to pay, before the bill comes due I'll be so busy that I'll have no time to worry about it.'

I listened to the CD virtually all my waking hours for three weeks, by which time I knew each of its details by heart. As it happened, a new recording of *Messiah*, widely praised for its historical authenticity, had just been released, and a trendy magazine, *In Your Ear*, had asked me to review it. With the true *Messiah* in hand, it was a relatively easy task to identify the various – no, make that the many – failings of this highly touted rendering and to show how completely it missed the original. My review provoked a storm of protest – from average 'music lovers', from Handel scholars, and, of course, from the conductor whom I had taken to task. How, he demanded sarcastically, could I be so certain of what the earliest performance of *Messiah* sounded like? Had I heard it myself?

[Note: In Your Ear *was one of those publications that briefly benefited from the short-lived enthusiasm for aggressive reviews by high-powered reviewers – and from the controversy thereby engendered. Some readers may recall the author's piece – and the vitriolic exchange it provoked. Declining advertising revenues forced* In Your Ear *into a merger with the equally infamous* Woofer; *the result was the more sedate* Post-Vinyl Review, *which until quite recently could be found in newsstands and record shops.]*

It was then that I realized how awkward my position might be. It seemed quite likely that if I told the truth – that I was by means of a Faustian bargain in possession of a recording of the first-night *Messiah* – I would probably be dismissed as a madman.

I concluded, however, that I might be able to make my case – at least to intelligent members of the musical community – by producing an edition based upon my remarkable and unique source. Such an edition would, in any event, be a necessary prerequisite to the performance I intended. The task would not be difficult: the recording was so true that I could hear literally every note. Nevertheless, it took me three full months to transcribe the recording and another six months to check my transcription back against the CD to be certain that I had written down not only all the notes but also all the dynamics and tempi – in short, all the nuances – correctly. When my manuscript was completed, I took it to Broude Brothers, where they like to think of themselves as the only American music publisher committed to serious scholarly editions. The editorial people there – pedants every one – required a historical introduction, a critical apparatus, a description of the sources on which my edition was based, a list of emendations, and a report of variants in other authoritative sources. Naturally, I asked

to have my manuscript returned so that I could submit it to a publisher with less mindlessly rigid requirements. However, it did occur to me that an introduction and critical apparatus might make my edition more attractive, and when I approached my next prospective publisher, I had the same in hand. That publisher was a university press, a venerable house with a charming, erudite, but not overly selective editor and an aggressive acquisitions policy; my edition was accepted sight unseen, on the conditions that I provide camera-ready copy and a substantial subvention. I accepted the conditions, signed the necessary papers, and impatiently endured the inevitable delays attendant upon the publication process. Eventually, my edition appeared in print and was sent out for review. The reviewers must have been waiting to pounce, for the reviews appeared with unusual alacrity. The notice in *Notes* was particularly disappointing. Reference was made to my eccentric phrasing, my ahistorical handling of certain passages, my failure to take into account the accepted views of certain respected musicologists, and my predilection for using the critical apparatus not to defend editorial decisions but to point up the failings of other editors and conductors at specific points in the work.

This response was, admittedly, somewhat discouraging. Nevertheless, it seemed likely that the reviewer – like many of his colleagues – probably could not read music and that to prove my case I must conduct a performance from my edition. My agent quickly made arrangements for singers and instrumentalists and, fortunately, was able to secure on short notice a date at the 92nd Street Y. Even the thought of having to deal with nine soloists – the number Handel used – instead of the four employed in most modern performances did not daunt me.

Rehearsals went slowly, as the affects I wanted to produce were quite different from those to which most of the performers were accustomed, and I was frequently obliged to remind them to play the notes on the pages before them and not the ones from performances in which they had previously participated. The organist, a veteran of countless HIP projects, was particularly resistant to instruction. 'I am not an ignoramus', he informed me haughtily. 'I have a doctorate from Indiana. I am thoroughly conversant with all of the relevant literature, not only on realization in general but on Handelian practice in particular. I can assure you that yours is not a historically authentic realization and that Handel would never have played the keyboard part the way you have written it out.'

Handel played the keyboard part exactly the way I have written it', I told him. 'Please play what is on the page.'

'Well', he said indulgently, 'I suppose historically informed performance is a matter of opinion.'

The mezzo who sang Mrs. Cibber's part was predictably temperamental. 'Maaaaestro', she intoned (she had an annoying habit of lengthening the first syllable when she was irritated; the longer the syllable, the greater her irritation). 'Handel and I understand each other perfectly. I may not have read all those dull little articles in those obscure and dusty journals, but I know how this passage should be sung. I feel it.'

'How you sing it is not how Handel wanted it sung', I informed her.

'Perhaps yes, perhaps no', she replied, with the air of someone who knows that hers will be the last word. 'But remember, dear boy, people do not come to hear Handel. They come to hear *me*.' It was only by means of a judicious mix of bullying and cajoling that I was able to arrive at a performance that was, if not exactly, at least much as I wished.

But if the performance was much as I wished, the response was not. The audience after the first few notes sat stunned and silent. One could sense an ugly undercurrent, a stubborn resistance to all that I was doing. When the echoes of the last amen had subsided, the applause was restrained.

The critics, however, were anything but restrained. One and all, they decried what they were pleased to call my 'highly personal interpretation' of Handel's greatest work. They all agreed that it was unlike any *Messiah* they had ever heard. They called me arrogant, misguided, absurd. 'Does he expect us to believe', the *Times* reviewer asked ironically, 'that this eccentric interpretation was dictated to him by the bird that sang chant to Saint Gregory?' 'The early music community', warned another reviewer, 'must protect itself against such cranks and lunatics if it wishes to be taken seriously.'

I wrote a few scathing replies to the editors, some of which were printed. Journalism, after all, needs controversy to survive. But after this, the recording I had anticipated was out of the question. Not even Nonesuch would have committed to what had become so unpromising a project.

[Note: The author's memory is faulty, for the reviews were not uniformly hostile. The Post*'s critic found the production 'a truly modern interpretation, innovative and forward looking, an example of what a courageous conductor can do when he is not constrained by ideology.']*

It was shortly after these events that I began to notice certain changes in my CD. It was scarcely 36 months since it had come into my possession, and already it seemed to be deteriorating. First one passage and then another lost vitality and freshness. Finally, after several weeks, almost the entire performance seemed to have reached a uniform level of depressing mediocrity. I was, as you may imagine, puzzled and perturbed. How could this timeless performance go stale?

Then, a strange thing happened. One morning as, almost automatically, I loaded my CD player, I inadvertently inserted the disc containing the early-music-robots-

perform-Handel rendition that I had reviewed so harshly just three years before. I was astonished. To hear it was almost refreshing. I listened to the entire performance, and I was surprised at how easily I could tolerate it. Not that I regretted for a moment the derogatory things I had said about it in my review, but I was forced to concede, if only to myself, that it was somewhat better than I remembered. But I could not escape the fact that my own special CD had become a dud.

I began to conclude that defective goods had been palmed off on me. But what could one expect when one deals with the devil? I knew that mine was not a case that the Consumer Complaints Department would be likely to take on – assuming that I could make the civil servants there understand my predicament. I considered consulting my attorney. He would be sympathetic, having been a moderately gifted violist at Juilliard who had turned to the law for sordid pecuniary motives, and whose feelings of guilt therefrom encouraged him to take on clients among musicians, whom he charged at less than his usual rate. I approached him with a story about 'a friend' who had paid a substantial price for goods that had proved to be substandard. My attorney is not one of those lawyers who believe in litigation: he suggested that my 'friend' approach the store where the goods had been bought to see if they would not accept a return of the defective merchandise.

Accordingly, I made my way back to West 44th Street with the CD in its black plastic bag. As before, the shop was empty except for the clerk, who seemed almost to be expecting me. I explained to him that the CD had deteriorated, that the goods were not as represented, and that our transaction was therefore null and void. With elaborate courtesy, he expressed his doubt that anything was wrong with the CD (they are manufactured to the highest standards), but he agreed to have a comparison scan made with the master. 'The case', he said when the experiment had been completed, 'is just as I expected. The CD is unchanged.'

I summoned my renowned temper. 'That is impossible', I exclaimed. 'That performance, which was once so vibrant and exciting, is now dull, stale, flat, and unprofitable! The CD has deteriorated, and I demand a refund.'

'The CD has not changed', the clerk responded evenly. 'What would be the point? If we had sold you a CD that deteriorated, we would be obliged to cancel our transaction, and that, you will agree, is not the object of the exercise. No: I assure you, there has been no change in the CD. However, have you considered the possibility that its *not* having changed might in fact be the cause of your difficulty?'

No, I had not considered that possibility, although now I must do so.

Since that interview, I have listened to the recording again and again. I know by heart every note, every nuance, every slip by every musician (for the first performance was by no means a perfect one). Although it seems different now, I must admit that there is not a note, a nuance, a single detail that is not as it was three years ago. I concede that the CD has not deteriorated, and I accept my fate.

I do not regret the bargain I have made. No more do I regret having devoted much of my life (and, it would now appear, my afterlife) to the cause of historically informed performance. And I understand what form my damnation will take. When the next Dante descends to whatever circle shall be my eternal abode, he will find me in a room much like the one in which I now sit, seated before a CD player, damned for all eternity to listen to a recording of the first performance of the greatest work in the history of Western music.

[Note: The executor's inventory of the author's record and CD collection lists 23 recordings of Messiah, *all of which are to be found in the standard Handel discographies.]*

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WHAT THE TAXI-DRIVER HEARD

Hugh Keyte

Is there such a thing as the natural-born broadcaster? If there is, Christopher Page is one. Stylish in his script-writing, confident at the microphone, acute of ear, easy in communicating with his singers. Chris brought an enviable clutch of talents to the 1981 broadcast of music by the sainted polymath Hildegard of Bingen that constituted his radio – indeed, his professional musical debut.

The programme had been his own suggestion, but the process of getting him into the studio was protracted and far from easy. At times, I felt like a jockey cajoling an eager but nervous two-year-old into the starting-gate for its first race.

Chris was wise to hesitate, of course. His primary field was French medieval literature; he had (I believe) received little or no formal musical training; and he was a stranger to the microphone and the conductor's podium alike. On the other hand, I had been struck by the musical insights of his contributions to *Early Music*. Meeting him, I had been impressed, too, by the air of general competence that underlay a certain surface diffidence, and I discounted any likelihood of failure. This horse would stay the course, I was convinced, and I laid on the whip a little more firmly until he was safely corralled and straining for the off.

This was the sole occasion on which I sidestepped the BBC's adamantine regulations on the admission of new artists, probably with the collaboration of a sympathetic boss, Ernest Warburton. In theory, both conductor and choir should have been 'heard' in a professional engagement, with a formal report submitted and assessed. But how was a university student without private resources to finance a professional choral concert? I was impatient of delay, in any case, since I was still in the process of building up Radio 3's depleted stable of medieval groups. I had inherited a few highly unsatisfactory though supposedly specialist ensembles from which I had gently – and inevitably slowly – disengaged. (I inherited a number of excellent groups too, of course.) No one below a certain age could now conceive the abysmal standard of some of their broadcast performances. The singers, prominent in later repertoire, were so unfamiliar with medieval idioms that their unstylish and vibrato-laden assaults on, say, a 13th-century motet would not infrequently end in shipwreck, with the item abandoned. 'All at sea' began my programme report on one nightmare session, when only about half of the pieces made it into port. The director, an internationally respected but physically inept scholar, functioned as an inadvertent male Siren, unerringly coaxing his gamely bellowing singers onto the hocketer's equivalent of the North Goodwin Sands. One or two decrees nisi later, I was in the position of a half-starved vampire athirst for fresh medieval blood, and if an untried group could supply it, I was none too concerned with the rule book.

Recordings cost money, and it was no doubt naïve of me to risk using an untried conductor and an *ad hoc* choir. But there is something to be said for a degree of producerial naïvity. It can, for instance, nudge artists towards repertoire of which they have previously fought shy. 'But do you really think my voice is *right* for Bach?' was Emma Kirkby's hesitant response when I asked her to sing *Weichet nur, betrübte Schatten* for a Radio 3 May-Day sequence. As with Chris Page, a certain amount of persuasion was required to get her to tackle it. But her eventual performance of that most enchanting of the solo cantatas, like the Gothic Voices renditions of Hildegard, was followed by an acclaimed commercial recording – and who now doubts the suitability of Emma's voice for Bach? [1]

To return to the young Christopher Page's diffidence, I always suspected that it was something of a front, a kindly prophylactic device that was calculated to put the less keen-brained (music producers and suchlike) at their ease. I was, nevertheless, in harmony with what I saw of his life-style as a D.Phil student at Jesus College, Oxford, when we finally got together to discuss projects. In his choice of venue for our expense-account meal, scorning the Michelin-rated Elizabeth and the gothic splendours of the Randolph, he proposed that we meet at an obscure eatery (now defunct) tucked away above one of the High Street shops, a haunt of my own cash-strapped student days. The menu still brazenly offered such treats as 'Tinned Fruit Salad with Evap. Milk'. Who could resist? While Chris effortlessly chatted up the waitresses (he had, curiously, already dined) I relived my guilty gastronomic past. Eventually we got down to the nitty-gritty.

HK *formally*: Chris, have you ever considered devising a music programme for Radio 3?
CP *brightly*: Why yes: I've written dozens of scripts, actually.
HK *taken aback*: Have you? Where are they?
CP *matter of fact*: In the chest of drawers in my college bedroom.
HK *heated*: Why, for God's sake? Did you never think of submitting them?
CP *defensively*: Well, no-one was ever going to *want* them, were they? So I just tucked them in the drawer and forgot about them. *He leaned forward confidentially.* You see, Hugh, I'm really just an ordinary north London Boy.

I blinked.

I later learned that it was as 'an ordinary north London boy' that he had introduced himself when, as a teenager

intrigued by early music and with a school chum in tow, he had knocked on Michael Morrow's front door to seek enlightenment. Warmly welcomed, the pair spent many a subsequent Saturday afternoon at the feet of that most forthcoming and genial of early-music oracles until Chris felt that he had absorbed what he needed.

Was that first Hildegard programme one of the treasures liberated from the chest-of-drawers? I cannot now remember. Whatever its origin, the plump script that landed on my Yalding House desk a few days later was fully-fledged and studio-ready, patently from the hand of a regular radio listener with an acute grasp of what would work on air. Any amendments must have been minimal.

Bowing to Chris's concern about his inexperience as a conductor, I agreed that his choir should include friends who could discreetly intervene if things threatened to fall apart: hence the dream vocal line-up which included Emma Kirkby and Andrew Parrott among its eight singers.

We were booked into Wren's modestly-scaled bombed-but-rebuilt church of St. Anne and St. Agnes, which boasts a near-ideal acoustic for small choral forces. As well as Chris Page's radio debut, this would be the first time that our SM (Studio Manager, BBC-speak for sound engineer) had been in charge at a recording. I had recently discovered that producers had a rarely-exercised right to 'require' a particular SM and had rattled the scales of the anti-female dinosaurs responsible for allocations by 'requiring' Helen Robinson, a gifted amateur oboist and experienced SM who had long been passed over in favour of junior male colleagues. As with Chris, I had every confidence in her ability to come up with the goods, but it was doubly important that things should go smoothly.

All the greater was the shock that cold November Saturday morning as we turned into Gresham Street. In place of its usual weekend calm, all was noise and bustle. Marching bands rehearsed, scarlet-robed marshals barked orders. Steaming carriage-horses stamped, snorted and jangled their gilded harness. There, drawn up directly before our well-windowed conventicle, was the entire Lord Mayor's Show, due to move off long after our starting time. I fought off premonitions of doom.

But for that triple debut – Chris, Helen, Hildegard – the gods smiled on us. The Lord Mayor's cohorts either quietened down or moved off early. The *ad hoc* choir (as yet nameless) gelled instantly. Helen quickly disposed her microphones to magic up the kind of sound that choral producers hanker after but by no means always receive: crystal-clear and with an indefinable aural bloom. (Curiously, I can still hear the sound in my mind's ear, rather as I imagine a wine expert might recall the bouquet or some long-ago-savoured vintage.)

Best of all, Chris proved quietly efficient as conductor, and had no occasion to call on the service of his planted cronies. In the studio a little later, his script fairly bounced off the page, with his poetic-yet-accurate prose translations of Hildegard's often dauntingly allusive Latin texts making a profound impression.

Hildegard herself provided the programme's evocative title, *A Feather on the Breath of God*.[2] Finding a name for the choir was another matter. With the transmission date fast approaching, Chris and I cudgelled our brains, to no avail. I threw down a vast list of possibilities on the automatic-writing principle: none hit the spot. The *Radio Times* deadline was only minutes away as we had a final telephony colloquy. 'You decide!' yelped Chris at last, with the guillotine poised to descend, and somehow I managed to pluck (from the air? from the list?) 'Gothic Voices'. Not quite right, we agreed, but it would have to serve. From that instant, the name was engraved in stone.[3]

A Feather was broadcast on 30 November 1980 in the weekly programme Early Music Forum, introduced by Nicholas Kenyon, where it was paired with Andrew von Ramm singing Martin Codax.[4] It attracted unusual interest for a medieval offering, and was selected as the BBC's entry for the first Innsbruck Radio Prize.[5] We cheated a little, though hardly on the scale of certain continental stations that notoriously create their never-broadcast entries specifically for competitions, in defiance of the rules. Chris re-recorded the script, conservatively adapted (i.e. simplified) to become more juror-friendly, and his translations were now hauntingly delivered by an actress.[6] A printed booklet was added, and the entry despatched. But our hopes were not high. 'Don't look for the first prize', warned Chris Sayers, who was lending his extensive experience for the rejig. (Later he became Peter Wadland's successor at Decca's early-music label Florilegium.) The top awards in such events, it seemed, always went to an experimental entry, with the music subjected to the kind of wearisome radiophonic-workshop treatment that always puts me in mind of underwater transmission.

Sure enough, the palm went to such a programme, from Westdeutscher Rundfunk.[6] The winning ensemble was Sequentia, then embarking upon what would be a stellar career; they fielded real virtuosi in 'Italian Music between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance' , a highly professional construct and a genuine, already-broadcast radio programme. We did not begrudge them their triumph. Third was Paul van Nevel and Las Huelgas Ensemble with 'Ciconia, Pioneer of the Renaissance'.

A Feather gained an honourable second place, which gave great pleasure all round. The rejigged programme was given a second, celebratory airing. Listening in his minicab to that second transmission was Ted Perry, who forthwith signed Gothic Voices for Hyperion. They continued to supply a steady succession of attractively-packaged discs that gave (and continue to give) musical delight while making significant contributions to musical scholarship.

So here we are, a quarter of a century on, with Gothic Voices a long-established ornament of the international

early-music scene and now independent of their founder-director. It was I who christened the ensemble all those years ago, a source of inordinate pride, so perhaps I may conclude this memoir by reassuming for a moment my quasi-sacerdotal role to bestow renewed baptismal blessings on the heads of the worthy successors of those dedicated and prodigiously talented singers who were the original Gothic Voices, and on Christopher Page, that quite *extra*ordinary London boy who was their mould-breaking and endlessly creative founder. May they all continue to flourish *ad multos annos*.

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[1] I was on firmer ground in Emma's case, having known her extraordinary voice since that Day of Shame in 1965 when I was a member of the audition panel that rejected her for a place in what was then Oxford University's leading student choir. Decidedly *non mea culpa*, but that's another story.

[2] The feather would have been blown aside by bureauocratic decree during the merciful short period in the early '70s when music producers were ordered to eschew fanciful titles and stick to the bald surnames of the featured composers. Fiercely libertarian, my predecessor Basil Lam responded by recording a just-credible combination of instrumental works by John Blow and the obscure 18th-century oboist/composer Charles Suck. Fearing (rightly) that Basil had much more mischievous titles up his sleeve than the *Suck and Blow* (or was it *Blow and Suck*?) that *Radio Times* and the continuity announcers had been delighted to accept, the anonymous panjandrums of Broadcasting House quickly rescinded their diktat. [Another of his ambitions was to present a programme of Mouton edited by Lam. *CB*]

[3] It now seems inevitable, yet virtually any name will take on a patina of rightness, given consistent use. Remember how pretentious *The Fires of London* seemed at first. And what of the flourishing English vocal group that has taken its name from the demotic Italian for – politely – 'the passers of wind'? (Perhaps they employ some arcane method of breath control?) Familiarity has robbed even that name of its giggle-factor.

[4] Our cartoonist has kindly lent me an off-air tape of the programme. The cutting of the Radio Times billing included in the cassette box gives no title for the programme (though Hildegard's phrase appears in the first sentence of the script) or ensemble; the account of the previous paragraph must refer to the competition version. I was surprised how formal the spoken voices of Nicholas Kenyon and Jack Sage (introducing Codax) sound compared with current speech. Christopher Page sounds as he did on the phone last week: why don't we hear him on the radio now? *CB*

[5] Its full title was 'First Innsbruck Prize for the Interpretation of Early Music'. The judges were Othmar Costa, Stanislaw Galonski, Siegfried Goslich, Christopher Hogwood, Alfred Krings and Lionel Salter. [Chris Sayers kindly provided a copy of the press release. He reported the event in *Early Music* April 1982, p. 292. *CB*]

[6] She was a singer as well as actress. I think that her name was Penelope, but neither Christopher Page nor Chris Sayers remembers her.

The title-page of the programme book was as follows. The top two lines of my copy are in my handwriting and perhaps replace a more elaborate title page which I didn't photocopy. CB

[A Feather on the Breath of God]
[Hildegard of Bingen]

Written and Narrated by

CHRISTOPHER PAGE

who also conducts performances by

GOTHIC VOICES

Emily van Evera Kevin Breen
Poppy Holden John Dudley
Emma Kirkby Andrew King
Judith Stell Andrew Parrott

with

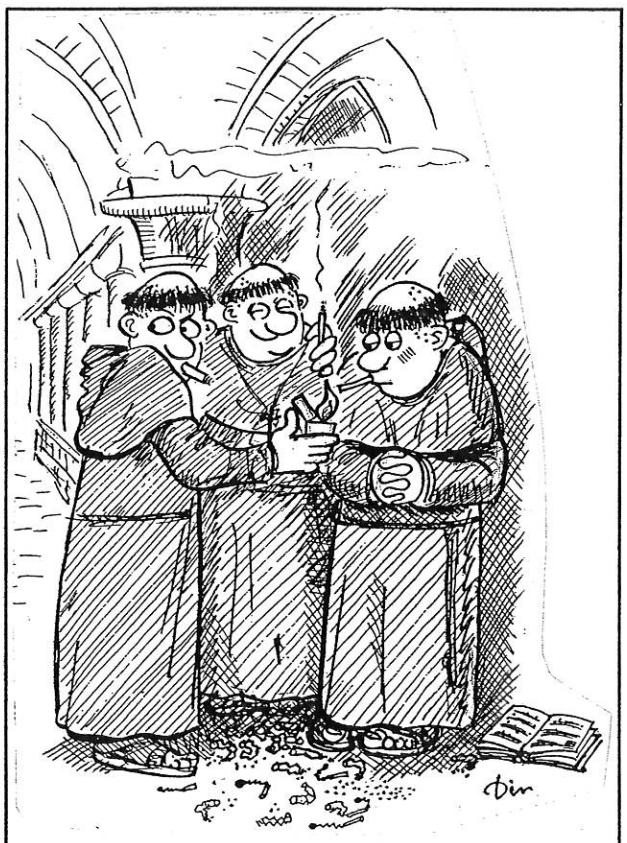
Doreen Muskett
(symphony)

Music recorded at the Church of St. Anne and St. Agnes In the City of London, 11th November 1980

Production
Hugh Keyte
Christopher Sayers

Music balance
Helen Robinson

Speech balance
James Hamilton



Gothic vices (A favourite Radio Time misprint, 1994)

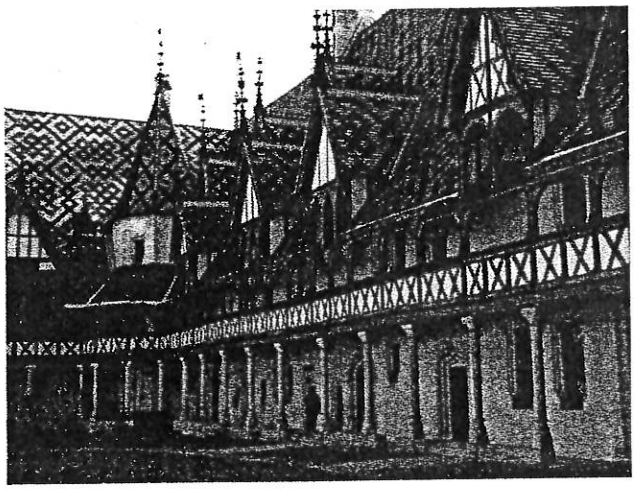
FRENCH FESTIVALS

Brian Robins

The Beaune International Festival of Baroque Opera

The 2006 Beaune Festival coincided with the excessive heat wave enjoyed (endured?) by much of Europe during June and July, conditions favourable for programmes scheduled to take place in the enchanting out-doors surroundings of the *cour* of the 15th-century Hospices. Notwithstanding, the perhaps understandable twitchiness of the organisers regarding weather conditions led to two performances we attended being needlessly (as it happened) transferred to the less favourable acoustics of the basilica of Notre-Dame. It is in fact one of the paradoxes of Beaune that while it deservedly claims status as an international festival, it manages to convey a certain provincialism, sometimes appealingly so, at other times less ingratiatingly. The press ticketing arrangements certainly made for an interesting comparison with those at this year's Göttingen Handel Festival.

As befits its name, the concentration of the Beaune Festival remains on opera given in concert performances. In common with what seems to have been a majority of European early music festivals this year, the 2006 festival paid handsome tribute to the Mozart anniversary, in this case in the shape of performances of his *Idomeneo*, *Don Giovanni*, and the early oratorio *La Betulia liberata*. The festival's strong commitment to the operas of Handel was advanced with performances of *Rodelinda* and *Orlando*, while Gluck was represented by the Paris Garnier *Iphigénie en Tauride* under Marc Minkowski. Although one might almost have missed it among the Mozart celebrations, 2006 has also witnessed the 350th anniversary of the birth of Marais, an occasion marked by the first performance since its 1709 premiere of his *tragédie lyrique Sémélé*, and an orchestral concert of music from *Alcyone*, given by Le Concert des Nations under Jordi Savall. Other non-operatic events included Ton Koopman directing Bach cantatas, Rinaldo Alessandrini and his Concerto Italiano in a programme of Monteverdi madrigals, and three celebrity recitals.



The six performances we attended highlighted my growing belief that given the present crass production standards of early opera (and I include those of Mozart in that context), concert performance is invariably the best way of hearing them live. That feeling was put into sharp relief by the quite dreadful, clueless production of Handel's *Poro* in Göttingen only two or three weeks earlier. To have the singers react to each other in recitatives, then simply stand and deliver their arias seems to me eminently preferable to enduring ugly settings, cod acting, and irrelevant stage business. The music takes centre stage, untrammelled by visual horrors.

Interesting light on present-day Mozart style was cast by the very different approach adopted by the respective conductors. Jérémie Rhorer, the conductor of *Idomeneo*, is a young protégée of William Christie and obviously highly talented. Whether or not he is a true Mozartian remains to be seen, but at this stage of his career his direction of *Idomeneo* missed the essential nobility, grandeur and pathos of the work, all largely lost in an almost frenetic desire to create highly charged dramatic tension. It is a long time since I've seen a conductor in music of this period whip himself into such a frenzy; but while Rhorer drew dynamic, sometimes thrilling playing from Le Cercle de L'Harmonie, the overall effect frequently bordered on the superficial. Pre-festival publicity had promised a tenor Idamante, but in fact we ended up with Renata Pokupic and a version that accorded closely with Mozart's original performing edition for Munich; given Beaune's 9pm starting time, it was probably a wise decision to omit the final ballet. Pokupic proved to be the most satisfying member of a variable cast, deploying her rich, beautifully produced mezzo throughout with a sensitivity and security that enhanced the excellent impression she made in last year's *Partenope*. Idomeneo was sung by Stefano Ferrari, commanding in figure, but not always totally secure in pitch, although 'Fuor del mar' was confidently and authoritatively projected. A principal attraction of this *Idomeneo* was to have been the opportunity of hearing the Ilia of Sophie Karthäuser, to my mind one of the most exciting young sopranos to have emerged in recent years. In the event such hopes were in vain, since Karthäuser was replaced by Magali Léger, who sung the role prettily but with poor diction and, at least at this early point in her career, failure to bring much character to one of Mozart's most affecting heroines. Dramatic commitment was not a

problem with the Elettra of Raffaella Milanesi, whose decent performance was marred by mannered gestures and some downright ugly facial expressions.

No greater contrast in Mozart interpretation could be envisaged than that of the previous night's *La Betulia liberata*. Employing a minimum of gesture, Antonio Florio conjured from his excellent Capella de' Turchini playing that glowed with an appropriate Italianate warmth and affection – the oratorio owes much to the Neapolitan tradition – yet remained pointed and flowing. While the 15-year old Mozart's version of a frequently set Metastasio libretto recounting the gory political murder of Holofernes by the virtuous Judith is no masterpiece, it represents a considerable advance on *Mitridate*, his previous dramatic work. In particular, the chorus that concludes each of the two parts is remarkable, the first a foreshadowing of the great choruses in *Idomeneo*. On this occasion they were outstandingly done by the excellent Chamber Choir of Namur (who also provided the chorus for *Idomeneo*).

One of the overall strengths of the performance was the pacing and delivery of the plain recitative by the Italian-dominated cast, no small matter when there is so much of it. There are also some highly effectiv *accompagnatos*, most tellingly at the point where Juditha gives an account of her deeds to the astonished Bethulians, a long passage superbly delivered and dramatized by mezzo Marina de Liso, who but for an occasional weakness in the lower register also gave fine accounts of Juditha's arias. The role of the Bethulian prince Ozia was neatly and stylishly sung by tenor Makoto Sakurada, more comfortable in lyrical utterances than with tackling virtuoso arias, while Maria Grazia Schiavo's glitteringly sung Amital provided a master class in combining coloratura technique with dramatic projection.

The final event of the festival, *Don Giovanni* under the direction of Sigiswald Kuijken, was given twice. It was unusual for Beaune in that it was what might be termed 'semi-semi-staged', which is to say although the cast sang in front of La Petite Bande they made exits and entrances onto the platform of the Hospices *cour*, engaged in a certain amount of acting, and were dressed in a manner befitting the character (Isolde Siebert's Elvira wore a striking black and green creation *a la* Spanish *mode*). It worked well, allowing for effective moments such as the voice of the Commendatore (the excellent Harry van der Kamp) coming from the blackness of the night in the graveyard scene (he was situated high in the gallery surrounding the courtyard). Notwithstanding such attempts at dramatization, the thoroughly enjoyable performance never quite hit the heights, although it is not easy to pinpoint exactly why. Kuijken adopted sensible tempos, the notes – including appoggiaturas – were mostly in the right place (give or take the odd moment of uncertainty in the all-important wind and brass department), but the first act remained stubbornly lacking in frisson. The voltage increased in act 2, which certainly culminated in an electrifying penultimate scene, though how much this had to do with Mozart's overwhelmingly powerful denouement rather than the performance is debatable. Perhaps part of the problem was a cast most of whom I suspect feel more at home on the concert platform than in the opera house. That is surely true of the Don Giovanni of Stephan Genz, the intrinsically lovely quality of whose baritone gave great pleasure throughout without convincingly suggesting the dark, threatening side of the Don. As his victims (or intended victims), Siebert brought considerable fire to Elivra's music, contributing an impressive 'Mi tradi'. but although well sung Siri Thornhill's Anna remained a rather inflexible character. Best of all was the Zerlina of Nuria Real, utterly enchanting as to both voice and manner. This highly personable Spanish singer is surely destined for great things; one would have to go far to hear a more musically and sensually shaped 'Vedrai, carino'. Her Masetto (Marco Scavazza) was a rather dull stick, but the young baritone Fulvio Bettini promises to be a fine Leporello once he has grown more into the role. Christoph Genz's Don Ottavio did not find the tenor at his best, his singing being marred by some wayward intonation.

From *Don Giovanni* (30 July) to the opening night's *Rodelinda* on 30 June represents not only a considerable step back in the Beaune calendar, but also musically and aesthetically, Handel's celebration of the steadfast conjugal love standing in stark opposition to the libertine cynicism of Mozart's opera. It was entrusted to Paul McCreesh and his Gabrieli forces, long-standing Beaune favourites, and given in the *cour* on a stiflingly hot night. By chance, I encountered Paul before the performance and he was distinctly apprehensive about the prospect of conducting such a long opera in the heat. He need not have worried, because the ensuing performance was excellent, dominated, as it should be, by the outstanding Rodelinda of Karina Gauvin and Bertarido of Daniel Taylor. Gauvin's sympathetic and lustrously toned Rodelinda opened with an account of 'Ho perduto' that immediately announced her credentials and thereafter captured the varying moods of faithful wife superbly: 'L'empio' was projected with impressive fire, the *passaggi* thrown off with almost disdainful accuracy, 'Ritorno' was imbued with gracious nobility, while 'Se'l mio duol' was simply heartbreaking in its pathetic intensity. Taylor's Bertarido was a match for this wonderful performance, touching in 'Dove sei' (very stylishly ornamented), dramatically impassioned in the furiously jealous outburst 'Confusa si mira', and moving in the despair of 'Chi do voi'. Grimoaldo is one of Handel's more interesting villains, a baddie whose redemptive quality is his own insecurity. This ambivalence was well conveyed by Paul Agnew, who also caught effectively the instability of a character whose final *volte face* is more convincing than that of many an *opera seria* 'villain'. Garibaldo, the true villain of the piece, was well if not outstandingly sung by Alan Ewing. McCreesh provided excellent support, even if I remain to be convinced that he is yet as outstanding an interpreter of Handel's operas as he is of the oratorios.

Orlando is one of Handel's most radical masterpieces, an opera whose remarkable flexibility of form defies the conventions of *opera seria* to a remarkable degree. It is

especially notable for an unusual number of accompanied recitatives that culminate in the great 'mad' scene for Orlando, driven to distraction by the love of Angelica and Medoro. I approached the performance by Ottavio Dantone and his Accademia Bizantina on 22 July with a certain caution, having found their work on record to be at the more acceptable end of the current Italian mania for extremes of tempo and dislocation of line. Such fears proved largely groundless. With the exception of the odd piece of mannered phrasing and a few tempos approaching the outer limits, this was an exceptional performance noteworthy for outstanding orchestral playing and singing that was rarely less than of the highest quality. Orlando, the last role Senesino sang for Handel, was here allotted to the mezzo Ann Hallenberg, whose statuesque figure and low neckline gave little visual veracity to her portrayal of the insanely jealous hero. None the less she sang and characterized the part exceedingly well, any criticism having to be limited to chest notes that were not as strong as they might ideally have been and the failure to extract the ultimate dramatic nuance from the great mad scene. Raffaella Milanesi proved a far better Angelica than Elettra, displaying less aggravating affectation and real tonal beauty in tender arias such as 'Così giusto', while Renata Pokupic's sympathetic Medoro again demonstrated that the Croatian mezzo is not only the possessor of richly endowed voice, but is also a highly intelligent singer who phrases with a rare appreciation for line. Bass Carlo Lepore brought the right degree of noble gravitas to the marvellous music Handel wrote for the magician Zoroastro, while Gaële le Roi completed a fine cast with a charming Dorinda.

The performance of Marais's *Sémélé* on 1 July coincided with France's World Cup victory over Brazil, but nonetheless still drew its full audience. It was in any event kept up to date with events in Germany by conductor Herve Niquet, whose announcement of the score after the interval was rapturously greeted the players of his Concert Spirituel. This good-humoured atmosphere had already transmitted itself to the idiomatic and hugely enjoyable performance of Marais's *tragédie lyrique*, a work whose total neglect for three centuries is difficult to account for. While not approaching the level of Handel's setting of Congreve's racy libretto on the same subject or *Alcyone*, Marais' masterpiece in this genre, *Sémélé* includes much colourfully orchestrated music set to a variety of spectacular scenes including Jupiter's palace, the gardens of Cadmus, the underworld (the jealous Juno stirring up a terrific chorus of Furies and Demons), and so forth. There are also some fine airs, especially for Sémélé, whose *ariette* 'Amour, régnez' is especially delightful, and dances, those in the rustic act 4 particularly taking the ear. Vocally the performance was dominated by Blandine Staskiewicz, whose captivating Séméle was as easy on the eye as on the ear, and the splendidly authoritative Jupiter of bass Thomas Dolié. As with some of his recordings, I thought Niquet's tempos at times a little hurried, but there was no doubting the overall spirit and verve of a performance that left one regretting the cuts made to the score.

Rencontres Musicales de Vézelay 2006

In former days the beautiful Burgundian hilltop town of Vézelay was itself both a destination for pilgrims and the start of one of the four pilgrimage routes to Santiago de Compostella. Today Vézelay plays host to a more modern breed of pilgrim, the kind that each year descends in the shape of tens of thousands of tourists. Their ultimate objective, attained only by a steep ascent up picturesque, narrow streets with many a diverting charm, is the former abbey church of Sainte-Marie-Madeleine, now a basilica that dominates the surrounding countryside. Over the centuries this magnificent juxtaposition of Gothic and Romanesque architecture has undergone a variety of vicissitudes, but was restored to its full glory in the middle of the 19th century.

At the start of the present century Vézelay gained a new attraction, the Rencontres Musicales, an annual festival of sacred music centred on the basilica, but also taking in performances held in smaller churches in the surrounding area. The inspiration behind the festival's creation is Arsys Bourgogne, the professional choir formed by Pierre Cao in 1999 and which has established itself as not only one of the finest in France, but worthy of comparison with the best of similar bodies in Europe.

This year's Rencontres, held over four days at the end of August, was not surprisingly primarily devoted to Mozart, but it also featured rarely heard works by his contemporaries and the live premiere of a new setting of the Vespers psalms and Magnificat commissioned by Arsys Bourgogne. In addition, a full programme included pre-concert talks before every event. We were able to take in five concerts in the two days we attended, having regretfully missed an opening day's programme that included performances of the Mozart Requiem, and Masses by Michael Haydn (*Missa Sancti Hieronymi*) and the little-known Bohemian composer Georg Druschetzky (1745-1819).

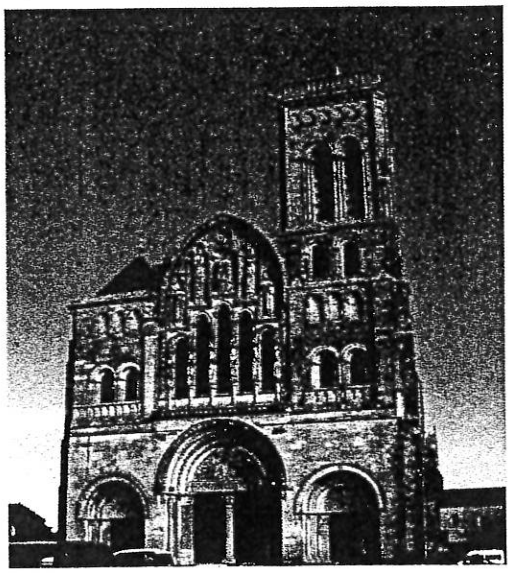
The late afternoon concert on our first day took place in the largely Romanesque church at Asquins, a village situated on the north flank of Vézelay's hill. Devoted to solo motets by Hasse, Galuppi and Traetta, and a Jommelli sinfonia, it was given by soprano Isabelle Poulenard and Les Paladins under the direction of Jérôme Correas. The experienced Poulenard has long been one of the ornaments of the French early music scene, her pure voice and excellent technique on this occasion allowing her to sail through the coloratura demands of these demanding Neapolitan motets with assurance and fluency. Only an occasional weakness in the lower register prevented these from being performances of the highest distinction, ably if not impeccably supported (the strings had the odd intonation problem) by Les Paladins. Musically, the highlight was Hasse's splendid *Alta nubes illustrata*, which includes a remarkable, dramatic accompanied recitative and a mellifluous final aria that leaves no doubt as to why the composer was so esteemed for his gracious, grateful writing for the voice.

The new Vespers settings, each by a different composer, but all scored for six *a capella* voices obviously fall outside *EMR*'s remit and I hear too little contemporary music (from time constraints rather than inclination) to pass expert comment. The performance in the basilica was given in tandem with the launch of a new Accord CD and set within the context of the plainsong antiphons for the basilica's dedicatee, Mary Magdalene. The antiphons were superbly sung by the eight singers of Les Ambrosiniens of Dijon, whose slow walk into the basilica in their white cowls amusingly caused a large audience to wonder if it was appropriate to applaud these monkish figures or not. To my mind, the juxtaposition of the old chant with the modern psalm settings worked extraordinarily well, casting both into the sharpest of relief. The performances of the psalms and Magnificat under Cao was simply staggering, providing the best possible testimony as to the quality of singers Arsys Bourgogne can draw upon.

For the evening concert in the basilica, Arsys took a well-earned break to turn the platform over to the Stuttgart Chamber Choir and Baroque Orchestra under Frieder Bernius for performances of Michael Haydn's Requiem in C minor and Mozart's *Vesperae solennes de confessore*, K 339. Like Cao, Bernius is a fine choral conductor with considerable experience (one remembers some excellent Sony Vivarte recordings) and he here drew highly rewarding singing from the responsive, well-disciplined choir, unusually disposed in a single semi-circle around the back of the orchestra. As Robert King indisputably demonstrated on his outstanding Hyperion recording, the Haydn Requiem is a powerful, intensely moving work that clearly shows why he was so highly regarded as a composer of church music in his day. It also provided more opportunities for an excellent solo line-up to shine than the soprano-oriented Mozart Vespers, with tenor Marcus Ullman highly effective in 'Domine Jesu', and mezzo Ruth Sandhoff providing a particularly sensitive account of 'Hostias'. In the Mozart, soprano Joanne Lunn seized her biggest moment with the greatest of assurance, producing a 'Laudate Dominum' so exquisitely shaped and tonally ravishing as to suspend time itself.

First port of call the following day was the church of Notre-Dame in Saint-Père, a village also situated at the foot of the Vézelay hill, yet another architectural treasure dating from the 13th to the 15th centuries. Here the late afternoon concert was devoted to Mozart and Boccherini's *Stabat mater* in its original form for solo soprano and string quintet. France is blessed with a profusion of outstanding small period instrument ensembles these days, among which Patrick Cohën-Akenine's Les Folies Françoises is definitely premier league material. Throughout this concert the playing was virtually flawless, with Cohën-Akenine himself producing exquisite silkily veiled tone in the sections of the Boccherini calling for muted strings. Les Folies recently made a treasurable CD of this work with Sophie Karthaüser, but here they introduced an immensely talented young French soprano, Hanna Bayodi, who made no small impression on Andrew Benson-Wilson when she stood-in as Iole in William Christie's Barbican *Hercules* back in March (June *EMR*). The voice is not only fresh and youthful, but has power and a distinctive lightly velvet quality that is especially appealing, in addition to which her diction and enunciation are excellent. Bayodi is one of the most exciting new talents I've heard in some while; she is unquestionably a singer to watch. The only flaw in this enchanting concert was the nasty little chamber organ employed in three of Mozart's so-called Epistle Sonatas.

The final concert of the Rencontres naturally featured the home choral team, who with Daniel Cuiller's Stradivaria (which usually functions as a chamber group, but was here expanded to orchestral size) performed Salieri's Mass in D and Mozart's 'Coronation Mass', with *bonnes bouches* in the form of Mozart's *Misericordias Domine*, K 222 and *Ave verum corpus*, K 618. The Salieri, a purely choral work, is believed to date from 1788, having been composed to celebrate the return of the emperor from battle against the Turks. It turned out to be of variable quality, at its best in more lyrical, overtly Italianate passages such as the surprisingly gentle Kyrie or the 'Qui tollis' of the Gloria, which has an effective part for solo cello. But fugal passages, such as the Amen of the Gloria, are weak, as is the unison opening of the Agnus Dei. Cao's strong direction presented the Mass in a favourable light, but I'm not sure it's a work I would feel a strong urge to hear frequently. A distinguished solo team consisting of Johannette Zomer, Britta Schwarz, Hans-Jörg Mammel and Cornelius Hauptmann (SATB) contributed greatly to the success of a resplendent performance of the 'Coronation' Mass, in which Cao's sensible tempos made a refreshing change in a work that can seem almost a non-stop gallop as far as the famous soprano solo Agnus Dei, here beautifully done by Zomer. But there was nothing solid about the performance, as was proved by a Benedictus that was both elegant and light of touch. The Mass was immediately followed by K 618, the conclusion of which was greeted by some 15 seconds of total silence, perhaps the most telling moment of all in two days during which the spirit had been uplifted and the heart touched on many occasions.



MUSIC IN LONDON

Andrew Benson-Wilson

BARBICAN'S MOSTLY MOZART FESTIVAL

This has in past years concentrated on 'safe' works (it is supported by ClassicFM) and modern instrument performances; but, at last, it is showing an increased interested in period instruments and more adventurous programming. This was very evident in the opening concert of the 2006 Festival (6 June), a concert performance of the little known opera (or, more accurately, *festa teatrale*), *Ascanio in Alba*, written when Mozart was 15 for the marriage of a Hapsburg Archduke to one of the d'Este Princesses (a typically Hapsburg way of expanding their Empire). By all accounts the newlyweds loved it, and so they should, as this rather slight work does little more than reflecting the glory of the couple and other assorted Hapsburgs, including the Archduke's mother, the Empress Maria Theresa, as a barely disguised and totally dominating, Venus. Even by operatic standards, the plot is hardly gripping, and Mozart rarely manages to lift the lifeless libretto above the commonplace. The evening was rescued by some vivid playing from Europa Galante under Fabio Biondi and some impressive singing from Carlo Mena (a pleasantly lyrical counter-tenor, with none of the tonal oddities that some of this ilk can produce) and the bright-eyed and bonny soprano Sunhoe Im, bringing a delightful lilt to the extended melismas in her opening aria as the shepherd. My only quibbles with the performance were a far-too-busy harpsichord continuo, some curious pauses in the choruses, and some rather self-indulgent cadenzas from the soloists.

The 'Mozart in London' concert (14 June) featured just one Mozart work written in London, the charming little 1st Symphony, written when he was 8. A pared-down Gabrieli Consort and Ronald Brautigam *fortepiano* then accompanied the young Welsh soprano, Elin Manahan Thomas, in three chamber works by J. C. 'the London' Bach and Mozart's pupils, Thomas Linley Jr and Stephen Storace. Nancy Storace, Stephen's sister and Susanna in the first performance *Le nozze di Figaro*, was the focus for Mozart's sex-on-a-piano concert aria, *'Ch'io me scordi di te?'*, composed for her 1787 farewell concert as she left Vienna to return to London. She and Mozart were never to meet again, but Mozart's feelings for the young singer seem pretty evident in the music ('Fear not, dearest one, my heart is yours forever'), and in the fact that he played the prominent piano part himself. Rosemary Joshua sang this work with conviction and proved to be a rather unfair bit of competition for Elin Manahan Thomas. Both featured rather too much vibrato for my liking. Brautigam's fluent performance of the Piano Concerto 12, K414, in A (the use of a J. C. Bach theme was the London link) was followed Symphony 40, the London link being the theory that his last three symphonies were intended for a proposed visit. Paul McCreesh was in an more than usually bouncy mood, and helped to inspire some fine performances from the players, notably Katy Bircher *flute*, Jane Booth *clarinet* and Alastair Mitchell *bassoon*.

The first of two programmes featuring Concerto Köln was a concert performance of *Don Giovanni* (27 June) which, along with the German orchestra, featured a French choir (Chorus of Théâtre des Champs Élysées) and an Italian conductor and soloists. Apart from being a concert performance with only tiny touches of semi-staging from the soloists, this was a production with a difference, not least in the portrayal of the Don by Ildebrando D'Arcangelo, a replacement for Dietrich Henschel. Although he was an impressive singer, he just didn't seem the Don Giovanni type – he came over as rather too nice and, to put it bluntly, I wonder if his character would have been up to the required sexual shenanigans. An additional problem was that he was vocally and physically dominated by his sidekick Leporello, sung by Lorenzo Regazzo, adding several of the attractive comedy touches that caused giggles in the orchestra – I imagine this was the first time that they have been out of the orchestra pit and able to see the action. Giovan Battista Parodi was a suitably statuesque Commendatore, Patrizia Ciofi a beautifully sung Donna Anna and Alexandrina Pendatchanska a formidable Donna Elvira, although her voice is probably better suited to a later repertoire. But they were all outshone, in my view, by Anna Bonitatibus as a bewitching Zerlina. Evelino Pido's direction was brisk, alarmingly so in some cases, and the band and chorus were on good form. As this had been a Théâtre des Champs Élysées fully staged production, it was a shame that more of that staging didn't show through.

The second Concerto Köln contribution was *Zaide*, conducted by Louis Langrée and directed by Peter Sellars (6 July). Directed is not really the right word for what Sellars did to *Zaide*. As is his wont, he completely reconstructed it, secure in his knowledge that Mozart was apparently a leading light in the movement to abolish slavery, a fact that his biographers appear to have missed. Billed as 'an anti-slavery opera for the 21st century', the spiky and excitable Sellars started by giving a hour-hour platform to speakers from two important organisations working in the anti slavery field (Anti-Slavery International and The Poppy Project), with some horrifying stories, such as the trafficking of young girls from eastern Europe to be sold into sex slavery in the UK. Worthy as all this was, it did strain the sympathy of many in the audience and left me pondering how appropriate it was for us to continue to listen to the music while many of these tragic girls were being raped. It also led me to question the honesty of

Sellars' radical reinterpretation of Mozart's work. He omitted the words of Gomatz's early *Melologo*, for example, leaving awkward gaps in the music. He suggests in his programme note that Gomatz did not know the backgrounds of his fellow prisoners – whereas, in fact, the missing words make it clear that, far from being victims of slavery, his companions are a bunch of criminals! So if Mozart inconveniently includes something that doesn't fit his own political views, Sellars seems to think he is justified in just leaving it out. Whilst labouring the inaccurate point about the slavery issues, Sellars also sidestepped the issue of the whole thing being set in a Muslim jail, with one of the key issues being the conflict between Muslim and Christian values. Re-setting the staging of the work in an Afro-Caribbean sweatshop (with an American Korean in the title role) rather misses one of the points that Mozart was making, but perhaps makes it a safer option for an American director to push in the current climate. Sadly, all this gets in the way of what was otherwise a pretty impressive performance by the singers and the band, despite the singers having to struggle with some of Sellars' awkward staging and posturing. The orchestra excelled in the excerpts from *König Thamos* that Sellars included to further extend the evening and his political stance.

In rather more straightforward vein was The Sixteen's exploration of Mozart in Vienna with the The Symphony of Harmony and Invention conducted by Harry Christophers (27 July). The Sixteen started with an exquisite performance of Caldara's *Crucifixus*, although what that work has to do with Mozart in Vienna escapes me. Extracts from Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice* were a little closer to home, although it was written when Mozart was six and Gluck had long-since retired by the time Mozart arrived in Vienna. The evening finished with works by Mozart himself – the little *Venite, populi,* managing to creep into the programme despite having been written in Salzburg, and the only work that came close to fitting the programme title was the Mass in C minor (although I cannot resist pointing out that this, also, was first performed in Salzburg, although it was at least composed in Vienna). The key soloists were the bright soprano Sally Matthews, contrasting with the darker tones of Sarah Connolly, mezzo, with supporting roles for tenor Matthew Beale and baritone Jonathan Arnold.

Paul Daniel led us on a jovial scamper through 'The arias that time forgot' with the Academy of Ancient Music and singers Geraldine McGreevy, Amanda Roocroft, Sarah Tynan, Andrew Kennedy, Mark Stone and Christopher Purves (28 July). Paul Daniel's spoken introductions helped to ease the path through a programme of 21 works. There were a number of often amusingly presented ensembles from the unfinished opera projects *Lo sposo deluso* and *L'oca del Cairo* (*The Cairo Goose*, described by Paul Daniel as 'a bit of a turkey') to contrast with the key focus for the evening, the so-called 'insertion' arias that Mozart wrote for his favourite singers, including Aloysia Lange (Mozart's first love and later sister-in-law), Louise Villeneuve, Dorothea Wendling and the bass singers Ludgwig Fischer and Franz Gerl. The latter's work, *Per questa bella mano* featured a lively obligato double bass, played to great acclaim by Judith Evans – and leading to the first time I have seen a bunch of flowers presented to a double bass player. This programme worked far better than I thought it would, almost taking on the format of an opera itself, with all the usual characters (cuckolded husbands, seductive and derided aristocrats, innocent wenches etc) getting involved at some stage or other. All the singers can be proud of their performances, the highlights for me being Sarah Tynan, usually taking the role of Aloysia Lange, Mark Stone for his *'Rivolgete a lui Io sguardo'*, and Andrew Kennedy for several *buffo* roles.

THE BBC PROMS

Not surprisingly, Mozart was one of the key themes for this years BBC Proms. All the concerts reviewed were held, as usual, in the Royal Albert Hall, though the series also used Cadogan Hall. As an introduction, the second Prom explored 'Mozart the Dramatist' (15 July), with Sir Roger Norrington, the BBC Singers, the Scottish Chamber Orchestra and a line up of eight solo singers. As with Paul Daniel's Barbican concert, Norrington enjoyed introducing the individual pieces, which included extracts from *Mitridate, Zaide, Lucio Silla, La clemenza di Tito, Figaro, The Magic Flute*, the Act 2 Finales from the *Abduction from the Seraglio* and *Don Giovanni* and the opening ballet music from *Idomeneo*. The singers that impressed me were Anna Leese, for her *Fra I pensier* (Lucio Silla), Ian Bostridge for his *Dalla sua pace* (Don Giovanni), Benjamin Hulett for some stupendous stuttering in the cameo role of Curzio (Figaro) and Simon Keenlyside for *Nur mutig, mein Herze* (Zaide) – and all for the various roles in Mozart's large-scale Finales. It says much for the work of conductors like Sir Roger Norrington that it is becoming increasingly difficult to tell a modern instrument orchestra apart from a period band, and this evening was no exception, although I still miss the distinctive tone of period woodwind. Valveless horns were used, however – indeed it is often the brass instrumentalists that lead the way in using period instruments.

Glyndebourne Festival Opera bought their most recent staging of *Così fan tutte* (reducing it to an impressive semi-staging in the process) for a day trip from the Sussex countryside to the Albert Hall (18 July), using their resident period instrument orchestra, the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, conducted by Iván Fischer. Miah Persson and Anke Vondung were impressive as Fiordiligi and Dorabella, the former notably in *Per pieta, ben mio, perdona* and both for their duet *Prenderò quell brunettino.* Luca Pisaroni also impressed in Guglielmo's aria *Donne mie, la fate a tanti a tanti,* as did Ainhoe Garmendia as Despina. Topi Lehtipuu seemed to be straining his voice rather too much – his persistent vibrato certainly got in the way of his vocal line on many occasions. Samantha Potter created the Albert Hall staging from Nicholas Hytner's Glyndebourne direction, and made good use of

the awkward stage in the process. Iván Fischer kept the music buzzing along, although he was not afraid to relish the lusher moments of Mozart's score. However, there were times when a bit more emotional depth might have been delved into. As ever, the OAE were on good form throughout, coping well with the differing demands of this huge space.

I wasn't able to get to the (very) late night Prom on 26 July, but managed to catch it on the radio, which is probably just as well as it went on well past midnight. Sir John Eliot Gardiner conducted the Monteverdi Choir, the English Baroque Soloists and His Majestys Sagbutts & Cornetts in a programme of 'The Great Venetians', centred around Monteverdi's Mass in four voices and concluding with Rigatti's rarely heard *Magnificat a 7* and Giovanni Gabrieli's monumental 20-part *Dulcis Jesu*. Highlights along the way were Cavalli's *Salve Regina a 4* and Giovanni Gabrieli's Sonata XVIII a 14, although the opening Gabrieli Sonata sounded as though it took a while for the widely spaced instrumentalists to get used to the acoustic. My spy in reports that they were positioned on stage on the east and west sides of the enormous hall, with Gardiner conducting from the middle – an almost impossible position for the players to be in, requiring them to totally shut out the sound of their, literally, opposite numbers. Throughout the concert, the musical forces were spread around the hall, with three separate stages within the auditorium as well as the main stage and the organ gallery. Gardiner himself also changed his conducting position, including directing one choir work from the rear of the hall. BBC Radio 3 picked all this up pretty well, but I can imagine the aural confusion this could have caused in the hall itself. However, having performers close to their audience, if only for parts of the concert, is likely to have been closer to the reality of St Mark's Venice, where most of these works were first performed, where the acoustics of the performing spaces are less expansive than is often believed.

A respite from Mozart came in the form of a Haydn and Schubert concert, given by the BBC Philharmonic and the BBC Singers conducted by Gianandrea Noseda (30 July) – a programme that in recent years might have been seen as the preserve of period instrument orchestras. Unlike the Scottish Chamber Orchestra concert, there seemed to be few, if any, concessions made to the historically informed movement, with the possible exception of the timpani sticks and a pleasantly clean flute solo in the scherzo of Schubert's 'Great' C major Symphony. There was strong vibrato from both choir and orchestra, and the lengthy phrasing, particularly in the Haydn *Missa Sancti Bernardi von Offida ('Heiligmesse')*, was inappropriate. The string forces increased from 10/8/6/4/3 to 14/12/10/8/6 for the Schubert, and the brass produced an almost Brucknerian fervour in their playing.

Alexander's Feast could also have been a respite from Mozart had it not been given in Mozart's orchestration of Handel's oratorio, performed by The English Concert in classical mode and Choir under conductor Andrew Manze (1 Aug). This is one of several Handel orchestrations he prepared for his friend, Baron Gottfried van Swieten, a Viennese champion of Baroque music including the Bach family and Handel. In stark contrast to our own times, it was assumed that performances of this 'ancient music' would be updated from what the composer intended, and this Mozart re-orchestration is one of the most notable examples of this trend. Andrew Manze's programme note describes Mozart's work as making smooth a texture which Handel left spiky, and the longer and smoother phrasing was indeed apparent form the start. Another innovation was the increased range of woodwind instruments and textures, with pairs of flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoon, horns and trumpets and timps. For this performance there were also two harpsichords (might Mozart have used a fortepiano?) String strength was 10/8/6/6/4.

The other big difference, of course, is that the whole thing is in German, using Ramler's translation. This sometimes misses the subtlety of Dryden's English original (for example, the vanquished victor sunk upon her arm rather than her breast), and there are some typically awkward consonant-riddled Germanic words, for example, 'kindle soft desire' becomes the far from soft 'und sanfter Zärtlichkeit'. Sally Matthews was the soprano soloist, her *Töne sanft du lydisch Brautlied* ('Softly sweet, in Lydian measures') was sublime although there were other occasions when her strong vibrato got in the way, particularly as it beats at trill speed. Paul Agnew's normally lyrical tenor voice managed to become elegantly bombastic in *Krief, o Held, ist Song' und Arbeit* ('War, he sang, is toil and trouble'), although there were occasional intonation wanderings, and baritone Roderick Williams also excelled in *Ha! Welche bleiche Schar* ('Behold a ghastly band'). I think this is the first time that I have seen Andrew Manze conduct an entire concert shorn of his usual director's violin, and he made a pretty good job of it, exploring the wider range of emotional timbres that Mozart's writing envisaged.

My last four Proms were another sequence of Mozart concerts, starting with Collegium Vocale Gent, and the Orchestra des Champs-Elysées conducted by Phillippe Herreweghe with *Meistermusick* Philippe Autexier's reconstruction of the Masonic Funeral Music, Symphony 39, and the Requiem, in the usual Sussmayr version (27 Aug). The questionable theory behind *Meistermusick* is that what we know as the *Masonic Funeral Music* was based on an earlier cantata written for the raising of a Mason to the rank of Master, with the original plainchant chorus of tenors and basses replaced by the first oboe and clarinet parts in the later instrumental version. The inclusion of texts from Lamentations, argues Autexier, would fit the essentially tragic mood of the occasion, the ceremony reflecting death and resurrection. In the event, the short piece was pleasant, but not gripping, an argument that can also be applied to a rather lacklustre performance of the Requiem. Despite some fine singing, particularly by Carolyn Sampson and Mark Padmore and the exceptionally well-drilled choir, Herreweghe never really found its emotional depths. The choir was one of the best I have heard for a while, with an

excellent sense of consort singing, a unity of purpose, clear articulation and a soprano line that can soar to the heavens with no sense of stridency or dominance. Indeed, they paid far more attention to details of articulation and phrasing than did the orchestra, although there was some fine playing by Nicola Bond, basset-horn, in the *Benedictus,* and Gunter Carlier, producing a far more eloquent sound with his trombone in *Tuba mirum spargens sonum* than did the bass soloist. English audiences always love choirs, giving them far more applause than the conductor or orchestra, and in this case it was well deserved. Although Herreweghe's Symphony 39 was again slightly workmanlike, he coaxed a performance of considerable depth and vigour out of the instrumentalists. With his 8/8/5/5/3 string forces, he made no concessions to the cavernous space of the Albert Hall, adopting brisk tempos and a fine sense of detail that might have been lost on those sitting, or standing, further away from the stage than I was. One irritation, in this and other Proms, was the intrusion of BBC 4 television presenters – at least Radio 3 announcers generally manage to work their introductions in unobtrusively and without delaying the start of works.

If Herreweghe's Mozart lacked emotional depth, Ivor Bolton laid it on in spades in his concert with the Salzburg Mozarteum Orchestre (apart from the trumpets, using modern instruments with 8/8/6/5/4 strings) with soprano Veronique Gens and Lars Vogt *piano* (28 Aug). He imparted a far more overt shaping of texture and volume than Herreweghe, notably in the concluding *Prague* Symphony 38, in which Bolton explored the operatic drama of this work. The operatic element was also evident in his reading of the opening Symphony 34, Mozart's last Salzburg symphony, notably in the busy exchanges of the final movement. Veronique Gens was unfortunately hidden from many in the orchestra by the conductor, but nonetheless projected an emotional intensity during her singing of *Vorrei punirty, indego* from *La finta giardiniera* as, torn between love and pity, she alternated between pouring out her scorn and her love on the 'worthless man'. For the concert aria *Ch'io mi scordi di te'* , she was joined by Lars Vogt for the prominent piano part – again a performance with depth and insight. Lars Vogt also joined the general operatic mood in his reading of the Piano Concerto 24, K491, in C minor. An impressive Proms debut by this orchestra, and another example of how modern instrument bands, given the right direction, can produced impressively HIP performances.

Sir Simon Rattle may have been taking some stick in Berlin recently, but the huge welcome given to him by the Proms audience and the excellent performance he drew out of the Berliner Philarmoniker (1 Sept) suggest that he remains on top form. From the very start of the opening of Mozart's Symphony 25, it was clear that he was not only in total control, but was also willing to push this venerable orchestra to emotional extremes – the almost violent opening passage was immediately followed by an absolutely exquisite moments of pure repose, with the sensuously lilting, and only just audible, oboe melody. Who but Rattle could have engineered such a contrast? The world-renown strings retained their characteristic sense of depth and warmth, managing to sing without any really noticeable vibrato. The strings expanded from 8/8/6/4/3 to 10/10/6/5/3 for the concluding Symphony 40 in another powerful performance, exploring the tragic nature of this complex work. Rattle looks deep within the musical texture – for example, at times when the violins have the principal theme, he will pointedly direct the cellos and basses. In a typical piece of Rattle programming, the orchestra expanded to the full massed ranks (the programme listed a rather scary string line-up of 23/19/14/13/11, although I couldn't manage to check whether they all managed to get onto the stage) for *Noesis,* an extraordinary 2001 piece by Hanspeter Kyburz, and Colin Matthews' orchestrations of four of Debussy's piano Préludes.

Beethoven's 9th has been usurped from its traditional penultimate night slot to be replaced, on this occasion, by the Orchestra and Choir of the Age of Enlightenment, conducted by Sir Charles Mackerras in another Mozart programme (8 Sept). The opening *Haffner* symphony made an immediate impact with the glittering sound of the OAE under a conductor they clearly adore. As ever, Mackerras bought a delightful sense of perception and fun into this sprightly interpretation, relishing, as few conductors in their 80s could ever do, the mind-set of the 25 year-old Mozart. He well deserved the respect that the OAE showed him by remaining seated during his returns for applause, allowing him to take the plaudits.

A lesser conductor would have made Robert Levin's completion of the Mass in C minor sound rather trite, but Mackerras imbued it with a seriousness and depth that I am not convinced it deserved. Of course, I admire anybody who can even contemplate such a task, and acknowledge Levin's innate insight into Mozart's musical world, but his working up of Mozart's sketches for the final movements (and the addition of two sections using music from *Davidde penitente*) somehow lacked the depth that I think Mozart would have imparted to his skeletal framework. But perhaps repeated listening will change my view. Ever the populist, Levin's *Dona nobis pacem* (which, incidentally, seemed to turn *Dona* into a three-syllable word [though in the score it is underlaid normally *CB*]) was given a catchy little melody built on a three-note phrase which everybody seemed to be singing as they left the hall.

ENGLISH NATIONAL OPERA

Building on his earlier English National Opera productions of Handel's *L'Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato* and Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas,* director Mark Morris came to the rescue of Purcell's *King Arthur,* a work in which every production involves a conceit of some sort (Coliseum, 4 July). As it stands in a modern edition, I struggle to think of any production that would hold its own today, so 'doing something' with it is almost essential. But what? Morris's answer was to strip away Dryden's text entirely – and practically all else of what purports to be the plot (the weakest element at the best of times) cutting the whole

thing down to a very manageable two hours. The strongest link is, of course, Purcell's music. That survived, and was given a nicely turned reading by Jane Glover and the ENO house band (who are getting better at playing 'early music') and the singers Andrew Foster-Williams, William Berger, Iestyn Davies, James Gilchrist, Gillian Keith, Elizabeth Watts and Mhairi Lawson. The ENO chorus were in the pit, leaving the stage to the 16 dancers of the Mark Morris Dance Group, who formed a backdrop to the singers. Morris's action-packed production spanned the whole gamut of (American?) preconceptions about what it is to be British, to the extent of including a Morris dance and kitting out what I think might have been the King Arthur figure (James Gilchrist) in a Biggles helmet. Indeed, all the singers and dancers had clearly had fun with the dressing up box, as did the ENO props and scenery departments with their hidden stock of old doors and suchlike. But did it work? As one (female) reviewer commented, it would certainly appeal to those who like men's bottoms in tights but my overall impression was of a production that was fighting rather than working alongside the music. Only on rare occasions (James Gilchrist's lovely 'Dance of Hearts', and Mhairi Lawson's 'Fairest Isle', for example) did the music speak above the background antics with any real sense of conviction.

GLYNDEBOURNE FESTIVAL OPERA

The revival of Deborah Warner's 2001 production of Beethoven's *Fidelio* (I saw the 13 Aug performance) throws into sharp focus changes in world politics. The stark wire cages that dominate the first Act set were then seen as reflections of the brutality of the collapse of the former Yugoslavia. Today, few (with the exception of one American reviewer whom I read) would not think of Guantánamo Bay. In directing this revival, Deborah Warner has resisted any temptation to labour this point, retaining the original sets – I dread to think what Peter Sellars might have done. Sadly, the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment (who were playing for *Così fan tutte* and *Guilio Cesare* during the current Festival) had been replaced by the London Philharmonic Orchestra, but with occasional nods from Mark Elder toward period style, including limited string vibrato. Elder whipped up an enormous frenzy of drama from Beethoven's complex writing, aided by excellent singing of the appallingly challenging score. The darkness-into-light theme was dramatically portrayed before the overture started, with a very gradually dimming of the brilliant white stage cloth, and the house lights, to complete darkness. The opening sequence is often treated as a bit of frivolity, but Stephanie Corley (plucked from the chorus as an outstanding cover for Lisa Milne as Marzelline) and Andrew Kennedy (managing to shake off the amiable buffoon side of his operatic character as Jaquino) produced an emotional depth that I have not seen in any other production – this was not a bit of a lover's tiff but a real humdinger of a confrontation. Stephanie Corley managed to maintain this immensely powerful portrayal throughout, earning herself by far the biggest audience cheer at the end, including well-deserved plaudits from her companions in the chorus – a young singer to watch out for. Anja Kampe's outstanding performance as Leonore was key to the success of this production, aided by an stirring contribution from Torsten Kerl as Florestan – his lengthy second-act scene was extraordinarily powerful, aided by a quite terrifying set. As well as these major roles, Warner also explored the minor characters in depth. This is not an easy opera to stage, sing or, indeed, to listen to, but this performance was the most powerful I have ever seen.

BRITISH CLAVICHORD SOCIETY
HANDEL'S KEYBOARD MUSIC

There can be few more appropriate settings for an afternoon of Handel than the architecturally stunning church of St Lawrence Whitchurch, the venue for the first performances of Handel's 'Chandos' Anthems. The recently restored church is the only surviving part of the Duke of Chandos's Cannons estate, and has one of the finest baroque church interiors in the country. It now contains a new organ built to some extent in the style of the one that Handel would have known during his time at Canons. For the first of the three afternoon recitals, Paul Simmonds gave a programme based around the music known to Handel in his youth, played on a fretted clavichord after the c.1700 instrument in the Leipzig collection. Krieger's exploratory *Praeludium* was followed by a *Ricercare* that quickly developed an intense chromatic texture before dying away to almost nothing at the end. Ebner's extended *Aria variata* of 1648 built to a virtuosic climax while Kerll's *Toccata ottava* demonstrated Simmonds' fine sense of rhetorical playing, with some nimble fingerwork in the lengthy trills. Zachow's *Suite in B minor,* transcribed into A, concluded with the 'Zig-zag' fugue that Handel later 'borrowed' for one of his Concerto Grosso. Terence Charlston played a copy of a 1784 Hoffman clavichord – an interesting choice that led me to wonder just how close this might be to the sound world that Handel would have known. His all-Handel programme included two works based on angular themes, the *Capriccio in G minor* (HWV270) and the extraordinary *Fugue in* A minor (HWV17). He opened with the *Fantasie in C,* (HWV60), a popular piece in the 18th century, and full of violinistic figuration and sequences. Terence's sensitive and eloquent played was shown at its best in Babell's highly ornamented arrangement of *Lascia chio pianga* from *Rinaldo.* The day finished with Julian Perkins playing the St Lawrence organ in works loosely connected with Handel, He made curious choices of registrations in several works, notably using 16' pedal stops and the swell box when neither would have been available to Handel in England. He included a forthright performance of Buxtehude's *Toccata in F,* demonstrating just how far the English organ of Handel's time was from the German instruments that he (and Buxtehude) would have known.

* *Andrew Benson-Wilson will be giving a recital of Handel on the St Lawrence organ on Sunday 18 February 2007 at 2.30. Details in Concert Diary*

REVIEWS OF BOOKS

Clifford Bartlett

EUROPEAN MUSIC

***European Music 1520-1640* edited by James Haar.** The Boydell Press, 2006. x + 576pp, £75.00.

I liked the informality of the preface. The reader is, for instance, invited to read the book in any order (though encouraged to keep a check so that nothing is missed). A great feature is the intermixing of historical chapters (country, period, etc) with more conceptual ones. This works very well, and is an encouragement for anyone with time on their hands to read straight through. The authors are the best available, they understand their subjects, write with insight and clarity and only occasionally does one feel that an area is rushed through without due care and attention.

It is not, however, the sort of reference book in which you can expect to find anything useful about a single piece or even a lesser composer. I had the book with me at the Beauchamp Summer School, and occasionally consulted it. We worked on a couple of pieces by Jacobus Vaet and sought illumination: only two page references in the index, one of which was insignificant but the other of which had a short paragraph which didn't relate very closely to the music we were singing. It is also frustrating that the index entries are not subdivided: there are 37 pages (treating entries for consecutive pages a one), with no clues to avoid having to look up every one. Also, topics are frequently discussed in more than one place, and cross-references in the text (or perhaps margin) would be useful.

I made lots of notes of minor quibbles, but I don't think it is worth selecting a few: it would give the wrong impression. This is a fine book; if you've got a relative who is enthusiastic about the music of the period, it would make an excellent present (though I expect it's too learned for the average music student now). My favourite chapter was Robin Leaver's on the Reformation – apart from a couple of McCreesh liturgical reconstructions, liturgical interest has focussed more on the catholic than the protestant liturgy; and it's refreshing to read quotes from a religious leader who is a music enthusiast – 'next to the Word of God, music deserves the highest praise'.

Only one chapter disappoints: 'The Motet' by Anthony M. Cummings. Since it was the only reference around, at Beauchamp, I checked it to see if it had more to say than the instant answer offered when someone in the choir asked the question: what is the difference between a madrigal and a motet? It was apposite in that we had been singing a marvellously intense sacred madrigal *Dimmi, lume del mondo*, which reflected every nuance of a striking and varied text and *Rex Babylonis ad lacum*, a much less expressive and more protracted piece (which managed to avoid any significant cadence except between Pars I & II for 199 bars), both by Jakob Vaet (c. 1529-67). Cummings suggests that word 'motet' might be restricted to pieces called that at the time (like Newman's history of pieces called 'sonatas'). But he then quotes various title pages that give synonyms – *ecclesiastici cantiones, cantiones sacri, sacrae modulationes vulgo motecta* – which undermine such verbal simplicity, so it is left hanging whether that idea is rejected or not. He convincingly makes the point (that he first made 25 years ago, so it has probably been absorbed quite widely by now) that motets, even if they used liturgical texts and were sung in services, had no specific liturgical position – though they might, like instrumental pieces, be used for the Elevation or to fill silences elsewhere; but they could also be used for private music-making or public ceremony. He then drifts back to before 1520 (the book is intended to cover 1520-1640) and studies the motets of Josquin, apparently accepting the format of Smijers' edition, which divides Josquin's output into three parts: Masses, Motets and Secular Works. This is irrelevant to the volume and undermines the point he was making earlier. The chapter concludes with an analysis of settings of *Gaude Barbara beata* by Mouton and Palestrina showing the extent (which does not go so far as respecting the sequence's paired-verset structure) of the influence of the poem. It seems odd to choose an example for which no chant has been found, so that there is no way of telling whether musical similarities are because Palestrina knew Mouton's motet or because both were reacting to the chant. Cummings seems to think that, since the unpaired final couplet isn't in early sources of the text, it is somehow suspicious; but the same situation applies to the most famous sequence, *Dies irae*, and was probably established by the 16th century There is clearly something wrong with the text of the poem: the last word of the first and second line should surely rhyme. (The book kept on falling open at this page, 149, and every time my eye fell on it and I was irritated.) In the translation, 'in doctrina angeli mysterio' cannot mean 'in the mysterious doctrine of the angel': *mysterio* isn't an adjective, and if it were, it would have to bey *mysteria*.

A consequence of this solitary unsatisfactory chapter is that there isn't one about the motet in the prescribed period, nor is there one about specifically liturgical polyphony other than setting of the ordinary of the mass. This is particularly regrettable when, for the last 40 years of the period, the service which attracted most musical interest was Vespers. Not only do we need to be told about psalmody, hymns and the magnificat, but also there is nothing about the 17th-century use of the word motet, which was a different sort of piece altogether – a *secunda*

prattica soloistic setting such as those described as 'nonnullis sacris concentibus' on the title page of Monteverdi's 1610 Vespers.

Despite one chapter, this civilised volume is highly recommended: excellent in content and a demonstration that musicologists (the contributors are a distinguished bunch) *can* write readably.

RESTORATION ORGAN PARTS

Rebecca Herissone 'To fill, forbear, or adorne': The Organ Accompaniment of Restoration Sacred Music *(RMA Monographs, 14)* Ashgate 2006. xvi + 141pp, £37.50.ISBN 0 7546 4150 3

There is a fallacy still widespread that the function of keyboard instruments in baroque music is to fill in gaps and not to double what the composer has already written. So when I encountered written-out parts in, for instance, the English viol-consort repertoire, or Schütz's instruction that organists should copy choral parts out in tablature so that they could double the voices, I was puzzled. I can relate my change of attitude to what I played in the violin duo section of Monteverdi's *Sonata sopra Santa Maria*: I used to play nothing, now I double them. Empirically, I found that doubling felt comfortable and sounded right when playing organ, but less so on the harpsichord – the only time I have played fortepiano continuo, I quickly found myself doubling the strings. The most convincing musicological argument came in Peter Holman's contribution to the 1992 Jenkins Conference (published in *John Jenkins and his Time*, Oxford 1996).

Peter argued that one function of the big score collections of Purcell's music was for him to play from. But there are also organ parts. The difficulty is that they are not generally associated with particular sets of vocal parts: the copying process was different, and they were kept in a different location from the choir music. Editors have not always taken them seriously, and often either supply their own continuo realisation or take an organ part and add extensively to it. So it was time that the subject received a thorough study.

This reveals no easy answers. It is worth following the detailed analyses, which should make one much more aware that what is written needs to be taken seriously, even if it is not always the complete answer. A potential telltale sign is the *custos*, which most players would interpret as meaning that the part continues but isn't notated – but it could mean that it continues but need not or shouldn't be played. I've no experience of playing anthem organ parts, and there is no hint that the author has either – a pity, since theory needs to be tested against use – by playing in performance organ parts that don't have the vocal parts notated above them. I spent a couple of days at the Irish Recorder and Viol Course playing (not from the score) organ parts to viol fantasies – Gibbons and Jenkins pieces that I knew from my viol-playing days but which neither I nor the players at hand had played with organ. Here, the organ parts are more closely linked with a specific set of string parts, so divergences are less likely to be the result of different textual traditions. Yet there are numerous minor discrepancies, such as pairs of quavers which are dotted for the organ but not for viols – I doubt if the obvious solution 'treat them as inégale and they will sound the same' is the invariable answer. There are places where the organ part follows low-lying six-part counterpoint in detail and seems far too solid to be effective, and also rather tricky to play. Harrisone doesn't discuss such issues, nor does she pay much attention to the dynamic implications of the density of accompaniment – in this, she is in the company of most baroque writers on continuo playing.

It would have been easier for the reader if the organ parts were always aligned with the voices. The retention of original clefs in the voice parts will be an additional hurdle for some, though it is by far the neatest way of identifying the voice of each part.

The conclusion is a bit vague, but true: 'just as a keyboard player chooses his or her instrument according to the genre of the piece being played, so he or she needs to consider the style of accompaniment appropriate to that genre.'

PLAYING BOCCHERINI

Elisabeth Le Guin *Boccherini's Body: An Essay on Carnal Musicology* University of California Press, 2006. xxiv + 350pp, £26.95. ISBN 0 520 24017 0

I don't think a mere musician should try to change our language. Despite the selection of definitions from the OED, 'carnal' cannot escape from the connotation of 'carnal desire' or 'carnal knowledge'. Most if not all of the times it occurs in the book, 'physical' or 'bodily' would be better, but it continually makes one wonder whether the author has some sort of cross-centuries sexual involvement with Boccherini. But don't be put off (or salaciously enticed) from reading this. It is an attempt to bring together the perceptions of music by a performer with the approach of a musicologist. The author is a member of the Artaria String Quartet, an 'early' ensemble led by Elizabeth Blumenstock, but is also on the faculty of UCLA. The musicology and the performance credentials are high, and the book is stimulating. There is also an element of the 'outsider' view that feminist musicology has contributed, though without the specific feminist agenda that generally annoys me. As a listener, I have difficulty with Boccherini's chamber music – we may have 93 of his quintets in our catalogue and six quartets, but one can issue facsimiles without knowing the music. I am impressed with his symphonies, but find little to sustain my interest in the quintets. Le Guin shows why by her analysis of how the music is written on terms of how it is played, how its argument can expressed in terms of hand positions. Even though the sensation is actually in the brain, as a keyboard player, I tend to feel music in my fingers, and I expect

string players (especially cellists) feel music differently from me. The CD accompanying the book helps to see Boccherini's quartets from the position of a cellist (though perhaps a DVD would have been better). How the listener responds is also considered here.

The book covers a variety of other approaches, drawing on a wide reading of ideas of the period and discussing them in relation to the music. She uses a variety of ways of addressing issues, such as a dialogue between the members of the quartet and the CD producer (a technique that was rejected on principle when I wanted to use it for an academic publication). And there is far more music reproduced than is normal in such studies. There are, according to the non-PC phrase, many ways of skinning a cat: irrespective of any interest in Boccherini, this offers a few new ways, in conjunction with some of the old ones skilfully executed – though please, don't let it become too close a model for a newer musicology: it works because of the enormous gifts and personality of the author, and any imitation should be of the spirit. It is controversial, deserves to be reviewed and discussed by musicologically aware performers, and should make Boccherini's quartets more fundamental to our awareness of how classical chamber music functions.

CD REVIEWS

MEDIEVAL

Gothic Voices Gramophone Award Winners Collection Gothic Voices, Emma Kirkby, Andrew Lawrence-King, Christopher Page
Hyperion **CDS44251/3** ℄℄ 144' 22"
Contains three independent discs:
Hildegard of Bingen: A feather on the breath of God (rec 1981)
The Service of Venus and Mars: Music for the Knights of the Garter (rec 1986)
A Song for Francesca: Music in Italy 1330-1430 (rec 1987)

While not Hyperion's first recording, *A feather on the breath of God* was the one that was most responsible for Ted Perry's success with Hyperion. While working as a mini-cab driver, he heard a programme of Hildegard's music on Radio 3, was captivated by it, and decided he had to record it. It was timed just right, catching a new audience for medieval music that wanted something more sophisticated than drones and drums (though drones are not entirely absent here), and as a bonus catching the feminist market as well. (For an account of the background to the programme Ted heard, see p. 15.) This is accompanied by two other discs that were also Gramophone award winners. These have not reached out to so wide an audience – though Margaret Philpot's *Lullay, lullay* in 'Venus & Mars' should win over anyone (it is abbreviated here: I've heard it twice with the 16 'original' verses – once sung by Margaret herself and once by Robert Oliver, and it mesmerised the audience). That disc relates music to various individual knights and at times the sound is a bit forbidding to those not accustomed to it. The Italian music of 'A Song for Francesca' is more ingratiating. If you've managed to avoid buying these so far, don't miss the bargain offer. Full notes, texts and translations are retained. *CB*

Joie Fine: Chansons pieuses/Pious trouvère songs of the 13th century Oliphant 66' 25"
Alba **ABCD 222**
Adam de la Halle, Aubertin d'Araines, Guillaume de Béthune, Jacques de Cambrai, Thibaut de Champagne & anon

The Oliphants comprise two singers who play dulcimer and fiddle and two players of mostly soft instruments. I am puzzled why, for our secular age, the amended texts of sacred contrafacta of trouvère songs are preferred to the originals, particularly since the performing style involves creating an atmosphere that encourages listening to the songs without worrying about the words. But they quartet does what they do very well and interest is sustained, if by external devices rather than by the poetic narrative. *CB*

Melodious Melancholye: The sweet sounds of medieval England Ensemble Belladonna (Miriam Andersén, Rebecca Bain, Susanne Ansorg) 54' 31"
Raum Klang **RK 2003**

'Deadly nightshade' is an odd name for an ensemble. Their style is a bit subdued – though that corresponds more with the texts than many other performances – and they treat the music a bit more freely than I would have anticipated when I first investigated it in 1961. This is far from Merrie England! The three singers double on harp, fiddle and rebec, soberly (and without any irritating percussion). They tend to sing slower than other performers, but without the arch laidbackness of lazy tempos; with this, though, comes a lack of delight in the words. A fine CD, showing that dolour was characteristic of English song long before *Semper Dowland semper dolens*. *CB*

14th CENTURY

The Unknown Lovers: Songs by Machaut and Solage Gothic Voices 71'19"
Avie **AV 2089**

This is the first disc to include all the songs of Solage, a leading representative of what is usually called the *ars subtilior*. Nothing is known about his life except what can be deduced from references in the texts he set. The music (and its notation) is extremely complicated, with individual lines going their own rhythmic ways: one is tempted to get the score to understand what is happening, then wonder if it really helps. It makes Machaut sounds quite simple, and Catherine King sings three delightful monophonic pieces by him to lighten the texture. The singers almost have the mastery of Solage's complexity, though occasionally intonation (a hallmark of the Gothic Voices sound) isn't immaculate – but only by the group's high standards. None of the singers here are on the original Hildegard recording, though Leigh Nixon sings on both of the other discs in the anniversary box. *CB*

15th CENTURY

Agricola ***Chansons*** Michael Chance, Fretwork 75' 12"
Harmonia Mundi HMU 903421

I was first drawn to Agricola (d. 1506) by the patterns on the page of the instrumental volume of his Complete Works, made more obvious by the beaming necessitated by the over-reduced note-values. (Apologies if I've written this sentence before: it feels very familiar). His music, despite any broad-minded view of what might seem to be naturally vocal, looks very instrumental. One can imagine a band of loud instruments overplaying the rhythm, but viols are more subtle and Michael Chance only has a few opportunities and simple easy lines in which to shine. The music is as good as it looks. The disc also includes part of a series that Fabrice Fitch is composing called *Agricologies*. Unlike other contemporary music I've heard mixed with and derived from early music, these seemed to belong, partly because they use the early materiel in audible ways but with what was evidently a careful structure, perhaps not dissimilar to some used by composers of the 15th century – Fitch is, of course, an expert on the subject. *Agricola I* reminded me of change ringing; *Agricola III* sounds odd but pleasing, though passes far too quickly to make any surmise about what was happening. Explanation came with the August *Early Music* (arriving on 20 Sept), which among several articles commemorating Agricola's quincentenary included one by Fitch explaining his processes (and the ideas behind them) and printing *Agricola III*. *CB*

La Rue ***Missa Ave Maria; Vesperae*** Capilla Flamenca, Psallentes 67' 56"
Musique en Wallonie MEW 0633
with motets *Ave Regina caelorum, Magnificat toni V, Regina caeli, Salve mater salvatoris, Salve Regina II* & chant

On this disc Pierre de la Rue's polyphony appears in the context of two liturgical reconstructions, one of the Mass and one of Vespers. The former features a four-part setting of the Mass based on the plainchant Ave Maria in the course of which we hear two further Marian works by the composer, *Ave Regina caelorum* and *Regina coeli*. Although neither service is sung in its entirety, and the booklet note

freely admits that such an enterprise is seriously hampered by the lack of specifically Burgundian chant sources, both the mass and the Vespers, which features *Salve Regina II* and *Salve Mater salvatoris* as well as the Magnificat V[i] toni, all in four parts, are pleasing sequences of chant and polyphony. The solo voices of Capilla Flamenca perform with great clarity and precision and not a little passion, while Psallentes present splendidly unified and convincing readings of the chant items. Much quoted in his lifetime as a source of definitive polyphony, as more of his thirty or so mass settings are recorded, the figure of Pierre de la Rue seems to regain once considerable musical stature. *D. James Ross*

Le Rue *Incessament* Amarcord 66' 38"
Raum Klang **RK ap 10105**
Missa *Incessament* + chant from Moosburg Gradual

This disc opens with a Latin Protestant contrafactum to Pierre de la Rue's famous five-part chanson *Incessament mon povre cueur lamente* and concludes with the chanson itself, between which it provides a liturgical setting of his masterly Mass based on the chanson. Composed for the thrice-widowed Marguerite of Austria, the powerfully sonorous setting is given a spectacular performance here by Amarcord, an ensemble I had not hitherto come across, but whose experience in a wide range of musical spheres has brought great richness to their singing of the repertoire of the early 16th century. The acoustic of the Stiftskirche Wechselburg enhances the low sonorities of la Rue's chosen ensemble, as well as helping greatly with some lovely plainchant singing. His years in the service of the melancholy Marguerite were his most musically productive, and the present Mass exudes the confidence of a composer at the height of his powers. *D. James Ross*

Peñalosa *Un libro de horas de Isabel la Católica* Odhecaton, Paolo da Col *dir*
Bongiovanni **GB 5623-2** 64' 30"
+ music by Alva, Anchieta, Brumel, Compère, Josquin (*Ave Maria, Domine ne in furore*)

I've placed this under Peñalosa, but only six of the 15 pieces are by him; the cover features his name on the front, but not the back or spine. Each item is headed with its liturgical function, and much of the music is chant-related. The singing is good, though a line-up of four falsettists, four tenors, one baritone and three basses gives undue prominence to the top part. Much of the music is functional, not intended to draw attention to itself, and is slightly self-consciously phrased. In liturgical writing, 'dico' and 'canto' ('say' and 'sing') can be interchangeable, but it helps for the singers to know whether a setting exists primarily for the clear presentation of a text or to sanctify and adorn it. A big problem is how to treat the one really well-known work, Josquin's *Ave Maria*. I was tempted to use it as the basis of an an article on the what you can and cannot do from single-line parts. It is just too old-fashionedly 'musical', and I don't believe in the quiet end. Nevertheless, my criticisms are not serious enough to discourage the reader from buying this; fine music, with a wide contrast of polyphonic styles of composition. *CB*

Flour de Beaulté: Late Medieval Songs from Cyprus La Morra, Michael Gondko, Corina Marti *dir* 68' 39"
13 pieces from Torino J.II.9

The Western rule of Cyprus lasted for nearly three centuries from 1192, when Richard I, then fighting the third Crusade, sold it to Guy de Lusignan. The Turin MS contains a large quantity of French courtly songs, probably assembled during the reign of Janus I (1397-1432). It is all anonymous, which explains why it is performed so rarely. As this disc shows, however, it is extremely beautiful, though doesn't have to be quite so langourous. It puts a lot of strain on singer and listener having only one voice among the five performers (and very odd that two of the five are named artistic directors, neither of whom are the protagonist – Els Janssens is the singer). Michael Gondko, in his note, misunderstands the point of Christopher Page's 'a cappella heresy'. It was not that instruments shouldn't be used, but that there were problems in mixing instruments with voices. All-instrumental performances are fine, as several tracks here show; what we don't have, though, are voice-only performances. Otherwise, this is a rare recording of music of the utmost refinement from an outpost of European culture. *CB*

16th CENTURY

Bacheler *The Bachelar's Delight* Paul O'Dette *lute* 78' 50"
Harmonia Mundi **HMU 907389**

Daniel Bacheler is one of England's outstanding composers yet, unlike his contemporary John Dowland, his music is little known today. A useful anthology of his music was published in facsimile and transcription by Oxford University Press back in 1972 (which includes all but three of the 26 items on the CD), and we know much about his life through the research of his descendant, Anne Batchelor. I fear that the main reason for Bacheler to be so neglected, is that most of his music is extremely hard to play.

Typical of English lutenists from the Dowland generation, Bacheler composed pavans, galliards and almains, and later on courantes and voltas. What makes him so special is the extraordinary variety in his division-making. His variations on *Mounsieur's Almain* are a tour de force, built on contrasting rhythmic points, exciting sequences of fast arpeggiated figures, and constantly changing textures. His divisions are not confined to one voice-part, and they certainly offer far more variety and interest than the almost formulaic scalic roulades of his contemporaries. His later compositions explore deep sonorities with the aid of the extra diapason strings which were added to the lute in the early part of the 17th century.

Paul O'Dette's interpretation is stunning. Unflustered by the virtuosic demands of the music, he succeeds in capturing the essence of each piece, whether it be a sombre pavan, a brisk (or not-so-brisk) galliard, or a less serious, foot-tapping jig. There is a slight inégalité in *En me revenant* reflecting the influence French lutenists would have had on Bacheler in the latter part of his life. The courantes and voltas go with a real swing, but the dancing stops with a reflective prelude, to be followed by a melancholic pavan and well-poised galliard in *cordes avalées* tuning. Subtly expressive, this is lute-playing at its best. *Stewart McCoy*

Byrd *Playing Elizabeth's Tune: The Tallis Scholars sing William Byrd* Peter Phillips *dir* 65' 54
Gimell **CDGIM 992**
(multi-channel hybrid **SACD GIMSA 592**)
Mass a4, Ave verum corpus, Magnificat (Great Service), Ne irascaris Domine, O Lord make thy servant Elizabeth, Prevent us O Lord, Tristitia et anxietas, Vigilate

It is good to have a whole disc of Byrd, and the sacred pieces represented are some of his greatest, but this magnificent music deserves a more sympathetic and careful treatment. As ever, The Tallis Scholars revel in the beauty of their voices, but this seems to be at the expense of the music and its unfurling. Not all the individual voices are as fine as we might expect from such a well-known group, and they are not particularly well-matched or balanced. The recording seems to have been made with less than Gimell's usual care, perhaps normal procedures being changed by being BBC co-production. The singers are unevenly miked, so that some voices are bright and clear, while others merge into a haze of sound: not necessarily a bad thing, but giving a strange effect particularly in multi-voice pieces such as the 'Great

Service' Magnificat. Consonants and note endings are not always unanimous. Word stresses are frequently ungainly, even in English, the worst case being the repeated 'quia' in *Tristitia et anxietas* – in other ways rather a lovely performance. Speeds are inexorable, mowing through Byrd's cross-rhythms, such as the 'miserere nobis' in the Gloria of the Mass for Four Voices which, incidentally, is sung by eight voices. *Selene Mills*

Crequillon *Mort m'a privé* The Brabant Ensemble, Stephen Rice 66'11"
Hyperion **CDA67596**
Caesaris auspiciis, Congratulamini mihi, Cur fernande pater, Le monde est tel, Missa Mort m'a privé, Mort m'a privé a 5 and a 4, Oeil esgaré, Praemia pro validis

Those for whom Thomas Crequillon is a name associated only with a handful of light-weight chansons are in for a very pleasant surprise with this disc. It is surprising that so little of his magnificent church music has been recorded, particularly as large amounts of it found its way into print in his own lifetime and was widely admired throughout Europe. Between 1540 and 1550 he was the favoured composer of Emperor Charles V, and the Mass *Mort m'a privé*, written to mark the death of the Emperor's wife Isabella of Portugal belongs to the beginning of his period at the Imperial court. It is easy to see how this brilliantly allusive masterpiece would have assured his reputation with Charles, and a superbly balanced and expressive performance by the Brabant Ensemble shows the work to great advantage. Through the setting's imaginative and original polyphony Crequillon skilfully weaves references to a number of chansons associated with the dead Empress, demonstrating at the same time his enormous talent as a composer and his intimate association with the Imperial family. Stephen Rice's uncomplicated approach to the music allows its many virtues to shine in this splendid performance, and the choir's use of authentic pronunciation also helps to evoke the mid-16th-century Imperial court. We look forward further recordings of Crequillon's important and accomplished contribution to ecclesiastical composition. *D. James Ross*

Drop, Drop, Slow Tears Robert Stephen *boy sop*, Stewart McCoy *lute* 40' 25"
Tadpole Music TAD 0505
Music by Bartlet, Campion, Dowland, Ferrabosco I, Gibbons, Hume, Jones

The innocence attributed to a boy's voice in the last century or so may not have survived into this (and was unlikely to have existed around 1600), but there is an attraction in hearing lute-songs sung with a vocal clarity that balances the lute and an interpretation that is uncluttered by adult expression. There is more in the words and music than is expressed here, but the listener can impose his own subtleties. The contrast with adult singers can be heard particularly in *Have you seen but a white lily grow*, which includes the embellishments but is sung at a speed that isn't adjusted to allow for them. I don't think that the swooped scale on 'grow' works, but the attempt is refreshing. This is one of very few places where one has to make allowances for the singer. I assume that Stewart put the programme together, and it works very well: the title does not lead to a disc of slow melancholy. The length felt right to me, but had I paid for the disc I might have complained of short measure. He plays securely and with a simplicity that matches the voice. Those who ever thought that Emma Kirkby sang like a choirboy should compare this with the next review; apart from anything emotional, her vowel sounds are always better controlled. If I had to make a choice, I'd definitely prefer her *His golden locks* and *Sorrow stay*, but this is an enjoyable recital with its own virtues. *CB*

An Elizabethan Songbook Emma Kirkby, Anthony Rooley 53' 19" £
Decca Eloquence **476 7466** (rec 1978)
Music by Bartlett, Campion, Daniel, Dowland, Edwards, Jones, Morley, Pilkington

And here we have the lady herself, with still-youthful voice, without the bloom it developed later. Hugh Keyte tells of his embarrassment at rejecting her at an audition (p. 17). I did rather better. I first heard her while sitting with David Munrow auditioning applicants for his course at Dartington in the early 1970s. We were both astounded at what we heard. I don't think David used her much, but I reported back to Peter Holman that I had at last found the ideal voice. This is perhaps a lighter collection than Emma and Tony later favoured, but it is still enjoyable. How can critics have complained that she had no vibrato or her defenders agreed with them? Virtually all the long notes are coloured with it, but it does not interfere with good intonation. *CB*

The Harp of Luduvico: Fantasias, Arias and Toccatas by Frescobaldi and his Predecessors Andrew Lawrence-King 70' 06"
Hyperion *Helios* **CDH55264** (rec 1991) ££
Music by Frescobaldi, de Macque, Michi dell' Arpa, Milán, Monteverdi, Mudarra, Ortiz

Luduvico (the second 'u' isn't a misprint), an early 16th-century Spanish harpist, only gets a single sentence in the booklet, but is the dedicatee of the best-known renaissance harp piece (you'll recognise it even if you've never heard of Mudarra). The virtue of Andrew as a harpist is that, as well as being a brilliant player, his continuo experience gives him an improvisational fluency combined with a flexibility that doesn't lose the underlying steadiness of rhythm. The surprise item here is Monteverdi's *Pulchra es* as a harp solo, which works surprisingly well. *CB*

Mil suspiros dió Maria: Sacred and secular music from the Brazilian Renaissance Continens Paradisi, Thais & Marcel Ohara *dirs* 65' 35"
Ricercar RIC 246
Music by Cabezon, Carreir, Escobar, Mudarra, Trosylhoa & (mostly) anon

Most of the South American anthologies we have been hearing lately have been based on rather later (if old-fashioned) music and linked with Spain rather than Portugal. Here we are in the mid-16th-century (though some of the music sounds earlier) following a young Jesuit, José de Anchieta, who is trying to understand the culture of the Tupi natives in Brazil and translate Christianity into terms they can understand. The Bishop thinks that the Jesuits are being converted to paganism and tries to sail back to Portugal to consult his seniors but is shipwrecked and eaten. The music here is more or less what any Portuguese anthology of the period might contain, but some secular songs have Anchieta's sacred contrafacta and there's a chanted *Ave Maria* with a native text. It would be nice to have more information on the individual pieces. The performances (SATB with five instruments) are appealing. *CB*

17th CENTURY

Antonia Bembo *Produzioni Armoniche* Maria Jonas *S*, Bernhard Hentrich *vlc*, Stephan Rath *lutes*, Markus Märkl *hpscd*
Alpha **099** 71' 06"
+ lute music by Robert de Visée & *Chaconne* by Jacquet de la Guerre & cello sonata by Jacchini

Antonia Bembo (née Padoani) was born into an aristocratic Venetian family around 1640 and married a nobleman from whom she subsequently fled to France in 1676, abandoning her children and alleging infidelity and brutality. She had been a pupil of Cavalli and also knew the famous guitarist, Francesco Corbetta who may have assisted her escape. Once in Paris, Antonia's musical abilities impressed Louis XIV sufficiently for him to grant her a pension which enabled her to live in a women's community, where she devoted herself to composition. None of her music was published and these are all first recordings. Given the composer's difficult background it is not so surprising

that these songs are predominantly sombre in tone, the main work being an extended *Lamento della Vergine.* Maria Jonas works really hard at this demanding music, receiving excellent support from the continuo team, and maintains emotional intensity throughout, though wisely the programme includes some short instrumental pieces by way of a contrast. This is not easy listening, but I found it rewarding. *David Hansell*

Blow *Venus and Adonis* Margaret Ritchie, Gordon Clinton 56' 33" (rec 1953)
Handel *Apollo and Dafne + soprano excerpts from Sosarme* Margaret Ritchie, Bruce Boyce 61' 31" (rec 1954)
L'Ensemble Orchestral de L'Oiseau-Lyre, Anthony Lewis ££ (2 CDs in box)
Urania **URN 22.295**

Delving into the archaeology of attempts at historically informed performance is a disappointing experience. I hoped that my recollections of Margaret Ritchie's singing were more reliable than what I could hear in the *Sosarme* reissue reviewed in our last issue (p. 40); it is odd that her role appears as a fill-up here as well. But in both these discs she still has a little-girl voice that doesn't convince: perhaps I found it a refreshing contrast to her over-singing contemporaries, or was there a quality that the microphone didn't pick up? Both basses bluster but are fair examples of a style that still persists. There is some good playing by the orchestra, but it lacks spark; when I started listening to chamber orchestras, I thought that Lewis never had the flair of Thurston Dart, despite the highly-praised Birmingham opera revivals. The Handel is the more successful performance; the all-purpose late-baroque style doesn't work with Blow, though sometimes it does convey the emotions despite this. *CB*

G. M. Bononcini *Sonate à tre;* Purcell *Sonnata's of III parts* Jaap Schroeder *vln*, Arcadia Players Trio (Dana Maiben *vln*, Alice Robbins *vlc/viol*, Margaret Irwin-Benson *hpscd, org*) 75' 19" (rec 1994)
FUG514
Bononcini: op. 1/4-6,8; op. 2/11, op. 9/1, 3, 5, 9
Purcell: 1683/1,2,6, 9, 11, 12

Everyone knows that Purcell's trio sonatas were written after Italian models, but this is the first disc I have come across that juxtaposes works by him and a leading Italian composer of the day. Jaap Schröder and the Arcadia Players Trio have selected Giovanni Maria Bononcini (1642-1678) as their representative choice, and a fine partner he makes to Purcell – very rarely is there quite enough chromaticism to trick the ears into hearing that 'English vein', but there are numerous occasions when his contrapuntal ingenuity has a definite 'essence of Purcell' about it. The playing is wonderful – the gutsy, pointed bow work harks back to performances of baroque music 20 years ago, but that's an aspect of early HIP which seems to have been smoothed out, much to my regret. Of course, it's one approach of many and one must keep an open mind. I hope there are more such recordings in the pipeline – much of the early trio sonata repertoire remains undiscovered, despite Christopher Hogwood's revelatory radio series. *BC*

Brunelli *Arie, Scherzi, Canzonette & Madrigali per suonare & cantare (1613-1616)* Auser Musici, Carlo Ipata *dir* 56' 25"
Symphonia **SY 04209**

Brunelli (1577-c.1630) published three volumes of secular vocal music between 1613 and 1616, from which 16 items are selected for this delightful disc. The ensemble of five singers (with Elena Cecchi Fedi noteworthy as soprano) are accompanied by a large continuo group and a few other instruments. As far as I can tell without a score, the music is presented faithfully without the wilful changes of e.g. Marco Beasley's anthology reviewed below. One can relax and enjoy a programme performed by people who know what they are doing and can do it well. The series is new to me: the packing is simple: a cardboard folder with a disc and booklet loosely slipped inside. The booklet is very elegantly printed, but slim and the texts have no translations. The price, however, is still full. *CB*

Charpentier *Vêpres aux Jésuites* Magali Dami, Natacha Ducret, Charles Daniels, Mark Tucker, Hans-Jürg Rickenbacher, Peter Harvey, Stephen Imboden *SSTTTBB*, Ensemble Vocal de Lausanne, Ensemble baroque L'Arpa Festante, Michel Corboz 100' 37" (2 CDs; rec 1993)
Cascavelle **VEL 3088** ££
H. 35, 67, 78, 160, 160a, 203, 203a, 204, 208, 225, 361, 536

This is the second in a series of Michel Corboz re-issues. It is a shame that the booklet biography has not been brought up to date and the idiosyncrasies of the English translations ironed out, but at least the core information is present including full texts and translations. The programme itself is not a sequence of music that could ever have been heard at any one service in the Jesuit Church of St Louis, Charpentier's domain in the 1690s. The psalms are those for a Sunday but the plainchant antiphons and the extra-liturgical items are from a variety of feasts and several of them are in liturgically unsuitable places but at least there is a sense of context which is to the music's benefit. Charpentier's range and inventiveness as a composer is well-represented as well, from the grand psalm settings for voices and orchestra to a motet for solo bass (literally). The performances are all carefully prepared and flow well, though the soprano soloists are sometimes a little tentative. But this is a welcome re-issue. *David Hansell*

Formé *Le Voeu de Louis XIII* Les Pages & les Chantres, Centre de Musique Baroque de Versailles, Olivier Schneebeli 55' 18
Alpha 097
Music by Boesset, Bouzignac, Formé, Louis XIII, Moulinié

Having overcome and survived a variety of political threats and upheavals, in 1638 Louis XIII dedicated France to the Virgin Mary and decreed that this vow should be commemorated every year on the Feast of the Assumption. This disc does not attempt to re-create one of these services in all its detail but is a representative selection of music by four major composers of the Louis XIII period that might have been performed on those occasions. As a spine it uses the *Missa duobus choris* by Nicolas Formé, scattering amongst its movements motets by him, Bouzignac, Moulinié and Boesset. This is music comparable in style with that of, say, Schütz, and is full of interest with effective contrasts between florid solo writing and grand choral entries. It is all performed with a secure sense of style and the young choristers sound more at ease that they have often done in more elaborate music. As always with this company, presentation is very good save that the translations are in a rather eccentric format which makes cross-referral between languages difficult. This is nonetheless a very recommendable disc that opens a window on to early 17th century French music, still a little-known area. *David Hansell*

Frescobaldi *Fantasie (1608) and Canzoni (1615)* Liuwe Tamminga on organs of San Petronio, Bologna 75' 21"
Accent **ACC 24169**

This gets off to a exciting start with the short toccata for full organ over pedal notes from the Turin tablatures. It ends somewhat curiously with a track featuring the four bells of San Petronio in Bologna, on whose two organs the music has been recorded, and where Tamminga is organist. In between, pairs of fantasies are alternated with the livelier canzonas from 1615. We no longer have the organs

in St. Peter's on which Frescobaldi would have played but the two San Petronio organs (1470s/1531 and 1596) are roughly equivalent in date to those which would have been at his disposal and provide the right sort of sound in an equally resonant acoustic. The 1608 fantasies show Frescobaldi's early mastery of counterpoint and Tamminga's playing lets the music speak for itself, with good contrasting registration and fine articulation. The playing is more consistent than on the Naxos recording (8.553547-48) by Tamminga's predecessor, Sergio Vartolo, which mainly uses harpsichord. Both Bologna organs have a pronounced chiff, most noticeable on the *principale* alone, which gets a bit irritating here; otherwise this is a very welcome recording of some very fine music. *Noel O'Regan*

Gibbons *Hymns and Songs of the Church*
Tonus Peregrinus 71' 42"
Naxos **8.557681** £
+ tunes by L'Estrange & Pitts

This is the third CD from Tonus Peregrinus which I have approached with interest but left in disappointment. It is excellent that Gibbons' hymns are taken seriously, but their approach is incompatible with my concern at the historical basis of early-music performance – there are, after all, enough 21st century assumptions in any performance without adding more than necessary. This sounds more modern Anglican than 17th-century, and does not have enough respect for the tunes' function as conveyors of multi-stanza texts. Following the practice of David Wulstan, middle parts are added like that of the Dowland hymns, which are too rich for repetition. Beautification passes to prettification. If Wither's texts are thought too poor for the music, the melodies can be put (as has historically happened) to later words. But there are some affected midline breaks when that is done in Song 13: a seven-syllable line rarely needs a caesura – putting one in every line is ludicrous. I'm not on the right wavelength. If I had not really been looking forward to a disc devoted to this music, I'd have passed it to someone else. I reckon that American groups used to Billings and shape-note tunes are likely to make a more plausible shot at this music. *CB*

For more on this recording, see p. 10. We are told that scores are available at www.tonusperegrinus.co.uk. I couldn't find a way of seeing more than a few chords of each on screen, and to buy them costs £124.50. The booklet, however, is more substantial than most from Naxos, with full texts.

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

G. L. Gregori/Stradella *Concerti grossi*
Capriccio Basel 64' 20"
Capriccio **71 091** SACD
Gregori: Op. 2 Nos. 1-10; **Stradella** Sonata in due cori, Sonata di viole, two Sinfonias from Christmas Cantata, Sinfonia to *Qual prodigio*

Giovanni Lorenzo Gregori of Lucca (1663-1745) was one of the first Italian composers to publish pieces called concertos, and a recording of his whole set is greatly to be welcomed. The music is dismissed by *The New Grove* as 'neither accomplished nor original', but it is much better than that. Bach's cousin Johann Gottfried Walther thought highly enough of Gregori to include Op. 2 No. 3 in his collection of organ transcriptions of Italian concertos.

I'm afraid, though, that I have serious reservations about the performances on this CD which, although good of their kind, are in the rather aggressive, 'in your face' style currently fashionable among some period groups. Gregori himself specifies just a string quartet, archlute and organ, with (probably only two) ripieno violins as an optional extra, but here the concertos are played by a band of 16 strings plus bassoon and an array of assorted continuo instruments including harpsichord, theorbo and guitar as well as the two asked for by the composer. Some of the time this inflation is tolerable, if anachronistic, but elsewhere the effects verge on the grotesque, especially in the second movement of No. 3 where what is surely meant as a virtuoso cello solo is played by the whole bass section of two cellos, double bass and bassoon. And it is daft to start No. 2 with an extended harpsichord cadenza. For one thing this is not one of the instruments Gregori specifies; for another, if you think the music needs this much 'tarting up' to make it acceptable to a modern audience, why are you playing it at all? As for Stradella, his sinfonias and oratorios of the 1660s and '70s were almost certainly played by single strings, and – unlike later composers such as Corelli – he normally used the 'concertino' and 'concerto grosso' groups alternately, for antiphonal effects. If, as here, you increase the latter group to a dozen or more players the effects are reduced merely to loud/soft contrasts.

To end on a more positive note: the solo string playing in the remarkable slow movement of Stradella's first Christmas Cantata sinfonia is *beautiful*. I wonder if Biber knew this music? *Richard Maunder*

Lübeck *Complete Organ Works*
Friedhelm Flamme (Treutmann-Organ, 1734-37, at Stiftskirche St. Georg zu Grauhof bei Goslar) 67' 03"
cpo **777 198-2** (SACD)

Vincent Lübeck (1654-1740), along with Bruhns, is an interesting example of the development of the North German organ school after Buxtehude, when most of the attention switched to Bach. He was organist first at the (still surviving) Schnitger instrument in St Cosmas & Damian, Stade (marrying his predecessor's daughter in the process) and then, from 1702, at the prestigious Schnitger organ of St Nicholas in Hamburg – considered the finest organ in the world at the time. Two of the seven Praeludia on this CD (in F and G) are possibly by his son, also called Vincent, as was our Lübeck's father, but the others attest to his enormous reputation as a performer. Using less of the *stylus phantasticus* style of Buxtehude, he extended the virtuoso element of organ playing with, for example, frequent use of double pedalling. Of course, organists usually improvised in those days, so the written examples may be mere snapshots of what listeners of the time might have experienced.

The choice of organ is not the most obvious one, particularly when Lübeck's own instrument survives in Stade. The Grauhof organ was built in the final years of Lübeck's life, and reflects a later and more Central German idiom. But that said, it make an extremely impressive sound – the passages with the 32' pedal Gross Posaunen Bass are great for annoying the neighbours. Flamme's choice of registrations is generally stylistically appropriate, but the inclusion of all three manual divisions within a single (typical of its period and location) loses the spatial effects that the North German organists would have been familiar. One key letdown because of this is in a couple of the echo effects, where only a change of tonality is apparent, rather than a true echo. The playing is excellent, with a fine sense of the architecture of these sometimes complex works and with no irritating mannerisms to annoy on repeat listening, *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

S. Rossi The Songs of Solomon: sacred vocal works in Hebrew Corvina Consort, Zoltán Kalmanovits 65' 10"
Hungaroton Classic **HCD 32350**

I've acquired quite a collection of recordings of Rossi's Hebrew psalms (the 'Solomon' of the title is not David's successor but the composer). The music itself is in the conservative style of its time (1623), but none of those performances make the music sound of the period. Most have assumed that the vibrato that we associate with much later Jewish music is appropriate, and other aspects of later choral styles have been adopted. But this nine-voice Hungarian

ensemble gives the sort of singing I would expect for music of the period. I can't tell if it is really sensitive to the text, but it sounds like it; the rhythms are clear and the phrases nicely shaped. The need to transpose high-clef pieces is ignored. This contains 20 of the 33 pieces, and presents the music convincingly. *CB*

A. Scarlatti *Inferno: Cantate drammatiche*
Elizabeth Scholl, Modo Antiquo
cpo **777 141-2**

I neglected to quote the label and number of this disc about which I was so enthusiastic in our last issue.

Amori & Sospiri Anthonello, Midori Suzuki *S* Yoshimichi Hamada *dir*
Symphonia **SY 04211** 64'08" (rec 2002)
Music by Caccini, Cazzati, Falconieri, Fontana, Kapsberger, Picchi, Piccinini, Riccio, Rore/Dalla Casa, Sances, B. Strozzi, Uccellini

This is rather more forceful in music and performance style than the similarly packaged Brunelli CD reviewed above, and vocal items are slightly later; this has a more substantial booklet including English translations of texts. The opening, Barbara Strozzi's *Usurpator tiranno,* is a powerful and passionate piece, hardly a lament, on the descending fourth. The most extended piece is also by Strozzi, *Lagrime mie,* a model example of the expressive power that almost breaks the bounds of musical language; Midori Suzuki sings these with virtuosity and passion. The instrumental pieces are also impressively played, though recorders are hardly substitutes for violins. *CB*

Recitar cantando Marco Beasley *voice,* Accordone, Guido Morini *kbd, dir* 62' 16"
Cypres **CYP1645**
Music by Busatti, Caccini, Fontana, Monteverdi

I was a little disappointed with this. While in full sympathy with his comments, it seems a bit arrogant (or mean) to perform the *Combattimento* with only one voice – better to experiment with pieces for which the composer isn't so explicit. Similarly, when the voice part is carefully written with a wide range of note values, I would have thought it common sense to assume that, whatever other freedoms a singer may have, in such pieces anything other than subtle variation is precluded. It is, however, a disc well worth hearing. Beasley has studied the evidence on 17th-century singing and moulded his voice to suit what it suggests as well as anyone. *CB*

***The Sound of Cultures: a musical journey through baroque Europe – vol. 4.* Poland**
Ars Antiqua, Austria 55' 37"
Symphonia **SY 04210**
Music by Döbel, Mieleczewski, Nauwach, Speer, Weiss, Zielenski & anon

Marcin Mielczewski flourished in Warsaw in the first half of the 17th century. His Canzona for two violins and continuo is made up of short contrasting dance-like sections, now soft and gentle, now rumbustious, one with bagpipe-like drones, and ending with an after-thought of a reverence chord. The playing is tight, well-disciplined and flamboyant. Mikolaj Zielenski was organist and Kapellmeister of Wojciech Baranowski, Archbishop of Gniezno at Lowicz. His *Video caelos apertos* is sung with vibrato by soprano Katarzyna Wiwer, and accompanied on a sweet-sounding chamber organ by Norbort Zeilberger. Heinrich Döbel's Sonate in A for solo violin and continuo begins with flourishes supported by slow-moving chords on the organ and lute; there follows a more lyrical set of divisions on a ground bass; the third sonata is static as the violin noodles above extremely long notes in the bass.

Johann Nauwach studied composition in Italy, and was influenced by the songs of Caccini and others. Accompanied by the deep sounds of Hubert Hoffmann's lute, Katarzyna Wiwer sings the *Tempesta di dolcezza,* which describes, in somewhat florid terms, the effect of a kiss. It is followed by four movements from the Sonata *L'infidèle* of Silvius Leopold Weiss. They are well played, although the overall sound lacks clarity, as if played in a swimming pool, with the microphone a long way off. The Sarabande is particularly restful.

The CD ends with some anonymous Polish dances. According to the CD notes, Gunar Letzbor plays the slobtschok as well as the violin, but it isn't clear quite what a slobtschok is – an instrument sounding like a violin, or the one thumping out a bass line? I suspect it is the former, played with lots of double stops.

All the music was recorded live in concert, not in a studio, so there are extraneous noises like coughing, clapping, and a deafening crash as a member of the audience falls off a chair. *Stewart McCoy*

LATE BAROQUE

Bach *Flute Sonatas* [BWV 1030-2/4-5]
Philippa Davies *fl,* Maggie Cole *hpscd,* Alison McGillivray *vlc* 64' 11"
Avie **AV 2101**

This is a difficult CD to review. The harpsichord and cello are played by leading HIP performers while the flautist plays on a modern wooden flute. The point of such an enterprise baffles me – there is no way a modern flute can ever sound like an old one. For one thing, the evenness of tone across the register and the perfection of tuning are entirely alien – semiquaver runs are beautifully articulated, but are they done as a period player would have done? One might ask, 'Does that matter?' and the answer you give will decide whether or not this disc is for you or not – if you enjoy perfectly executed articulation and mini crescendos within runs, then make your way to the checkout. I shall be returning mine to the shelf. *BC*

The promotional material for this stated that Philippa Davies was playing baroque flute, which seemed plausible, not merely because of the other two players on the disc but because, when I first met her, she was always with two other students, one of whom was a baroque cellist (who went on to found a period orchestra) and the other was a baroque flautist who married a lutenist and has a baroque violinist son CB

Boismortier *La Veloutée: Sonatas for flute and harpsichord* Les Buffardins (Frank Theuns *fl,* Martin Bauer *gamba,* Ewald Demeyere *hpscd*) 90' 52" (2 CDs)
Accent **ACC 24168**
op. 91 + *Préludes* from op. 35 & op. 59/4 *hpscd*

Boismortier's Op 91 sonatas of 1741 are the only set of sonatas for flute and obbligato harpsichord from the Baroque period. As these performances amply demonstrate, they are really top notch music, a typically idiomatic flute part being offered in tandem with keyboard writing which varies between continuo-type support, accompanimental figuration and fully developed contrapuntal dialogue. Blavet, the dedicatee, must have enjoyed them and so do both players here. Tempos are well chosen and phrasing is full of character. Each sonata is preceded by a prelude from Op. 35 in the appropriate key played by the flute with chordal gamba support, a good idea and a potentially lovely sound, but the closer recording that seems to have been used for these has also picked up quite a lot of extraneous sound that can be disconcerting, especially when heard through headphones. However, I must emphasise that the sonatas are splendid. If you sample before purchase don't be put off by track 1, try CD1.17. *David Hansell*

Handel *Apollo e Dafne* *see under Blow*

Handel *Il Gelsomino: Italian Cantatas*
Anna Korondi *S,* Rezso *vlc,* Judit Péteri *hpscd* 65' 33"
Hungaroton **HCD 32383**
Care selve, aure grate HWV 68; *Dolce mio ben HWV* 108; *Allor ch'io dissi addio* HWV 80; *Son gelsomino (Il gelsomino)* HWV 164a; *Parti, l'idolo mio* HWV 147; *Chi rapi la pace al core?* HWV 90; *Stelle, perfide stelle* HWV 168

About half of Handel's 100-odd cantatas with continuo accompaniment remain unrecorded (the exact number depends on how variant versions are counted), so it is good that the seven chosen by Korondi for this disc keep off the beaten track. HWV 68, 80 and 108 are first recordings. HWV 164a, which gives the disc its title, appears for the first time on CD, and the other three have been recorded only once before, the account of *Stelle, perfide stelle* by Maria Cristina Kiehr (on Accord 204212, no longer available) being marred by an annoying harpsichord prelude added before the opening recitative. *Dolce mio ben* (HWV 108) is clearly not by Handel, and gains its spurious attribution only because a copy lacking a composer's name is fortuitously inserted among the genuine Handel cantatas in RCM MS 257, where Chrysander found it. Nevertheless it is a respectable piece, worth having on disc. The Hungarian team have a pleasantly old-fashioned approach to historical performance. Cadences are delayed (more acceptable in chamber cantatas than in opera) and Korondi applies embellishments very sparingly, but it is good to hear a continuo line of just cello and harpsichord, with the cello acting as a real partner to the voice, and the keyboard giving definition to the harmonies without drawing attention to itself. The only brief instrumental indulgence is the pizzicato cello for the last aria of *Allor ch'io dissi addio*, a delightful effect in the context. Tempos throughout seem to me very well judged. Korondi uses her exemplary diction in combination with a beautifully controlled vocal line to express the appropriate emotional quality of each aria, as well as being passionate in recitative. The cantatas can take a little more caprice than Korondi allows, but her approach is very satisfying.

Anthony Hicks

Handel *Solomon* Ewa Wolak *Solomon*, Elisabeth Scholl *Queen/Second Harlot*, Nicola Wemyss *Queen of Sheba/First Harlot*, Knut Schoch *Zadok/Attendant*, Matthias Vieweg *Levite*, Junge Kantorei, Frankfurt Baroque Orchestra, Joachim Carlos Martini 160' 07" (2 CDs)
Naxos **8.557574-75** £

Martini continues his series of Handel oratorios recorded from live performances with this *Solomon*, complete on two very full CDs in the version of the first performance in 1749. (Actually the repeat of the first section of the overture is missing, presumably because the extra minute on a CD of 81' 06" couldn't be accommodated.) In the absence of any unexpected extras of the kind that Martini has added to his previous performances, the recording simply offers a cheap alternative to the only other complete *Solomon* from Paul McCreesh on Archiv, but it is really no bargain. Ewa Wolak (Sisera on Martini's *Deborah*) is a fine Polish contralto, but in the title role her heavily accented English, which tends to deteriorate as she gets into an aria, militates against repeated listening. The balance is peculiar, with the Junge Cantorei chorus in their usual sonic fog and the orchestral basses too heavy, and the continuo line has the all-too-common solecism of being dominated by the organ. Good points can be found: Martini's tempos are mostly well-judged, the soprano soloists acquit themselves well, Knut Schoch delivers Zadok's florid lines with confidence, and the scene of the judgement between the two harlots has dramatic tension. But it is basically an average one-off performance that does not deserve commercial issue, at whatever price. As is now customary with Naxos, the libretto has to be obtained from their website. For a 2-CD *Solomon*, John Eliot Gardiner's abridged version still has much to commend it, especially now that it is available in Decca's mid-price 'Originals' series; for completeness, it has to be McCreesh. *Anthony Hicks*

Locatelli *Concerti grossi op. 1, nos 2, 4, 7-10* Freiburger Barockorchester, Gottfried von der Goltz 61' 03"
Harmonia Mundi **HMC 901889**

The only criticism of this recording is that it only contains half the set. Locatelli hasn't been as well served as he deserves, especially since all his published works are available in facsimile from King's Music and modern scores from Schott. Listen to this, and you will wonder why. The excellence of the music is fully matched by the playing. Buy it. *CB*

Telemann *Komm Geist des Herrn: Late Cantatas* Dorothee Mields, Elisabeth Graf, Knut Schoch, Ekkehard Abele *SATB*, Kammerchor Michaelstein, Telemannisches Collegium Michaelstein, Ludger Rémy
cpo **777 064-2**
Er kam, lobsingt ihm TWV 1: 4632 *Kaum wag ich es* TWV 1:992, *Komm, Geist des Herrn* TWV 1:999

If for the last issue my house was dominated by Vivaldi, Telemann has had much more air time in September! The three cantatas on this recording are late works, setting texts by young Hamburg poets (Telemann always seems to have been keen on stimulating his mind with youthful company). They could scarcely be more different, or more lively – and richly varied. They reveal his keen imagination even as an old man, not only in response to the texts, as the notes suggest, but also in simple terms of melodic invention. The performances are stylish and typical of Ludger Rémy: there is some excellent singing and playing, and the whole enterprise is beautifully recorded. *BC*

Telemann *Overtures, Sonatas, Concertos vol. 4* Musica Alta Ripa 60' 34"
Dabringhaus & Grimm **MDG 309 1384-2**
TWV 41:G5, 43:a3 & G5; 52:B1, 55:E2

Regular readers will know that I am a great fan of Musica Alta Ripa and this, the latest instalment of their Telemann series, does not disappoint. The works include a solo violin sonata, the well-known 'concerto' for recorder, oboe, violin and continuo (A minor), a not-so-well-known concerto in B flat for two recorders and strings, an overture in which an oboe d'amore mostly doubles the first violin, and a fine concerto in G (though not the one discussed in the booklet notes) for four-part strings – Telemann's works in this genre really are much better than Vivaldi's! This is one of the most enjoyable discs I've heard this month. *BC*

Telemann *The Virtuoso Godfather* Charivari Agréable (Rachel Moss *fl*, Susanne Heinrich, Reiko Ichise, Kah-Ming Ng)
Signum **SIGCD086** 73' 31"
TWV 40:1, 43:C2, G10, G12; **CEP Bach** *Arioso* H135, *Fantasia on* Jesu meines Lebens Leben H639; **G. P. Kress** Trios in G & g

This enterprising recording includes works by Telemann (of course) and two of his god-children, C. P. E. Bach and the rather less well-known Georg Philipp Kress (named for the eponymous virtuoso). The main pieces in the programme are quartets for flute, two gambas and continuo – at least, that's how they are played on the disc. There are also trios (at least one of which may in fact be by Telemann, rather than Kress), a solo for gamba, and Bach's fantasy on *Jesu meines Lebens Leben*. I enjoyed much of the disc, but find some of the alternative scorings used a little misjudged (at least for my taste) – and I really wish there had been some stronger bass instrument used in the quartets, as the harpsichord simply isn't strong enough a foundation for the ensemble. *BC*

Vivaldi *Concerti e Sinfonie per archi* Venice Baroque Orchestra, Andrea Marcon 67' 36"
Archiv **00289 5092**
RV 111a, 119, 121, 127, 146, 152, 156-7, 163, 167-8

This is the latest in an increasingly long series of recordings of this repertoire. Even so, with playing of this high standard and electrifying interpretations (not always to my taste, I must add), Venice Baroque Orchestra simply demand to be heard. When one hears the same music so often, it is difficult even to keep track of

what one has actually heard before – some of these sounded like new pieces to my ears, but surely that can't be true! Whether or not these are 'today's foremost Vivaldi interpreters' (according to the back cover), their performances are not perfect, and they will not suit everyone. Try before you buy. *BC*

Vivaldi *Griselda* Marie-Nicole *Griselda*, Verónica Cangemi *Costanza*, Simone Kermes *Ottone*, Philippe Jaroussky *Roberto*, Stefano Ferrari *Gualiero*, Iestyn Davies *Corrado*, Ensemble Matheus, Jean-Christophe Spinosa *dir* 154' 34 (3 CDs in box)
Naive **OP 30419**

I've known this opera for a long time – I first spotted the Garland facsimile in my university library many years ago and even copied out a few of the arias for local singers. We never managed a performance – and we certainly never achieved anything like the excellence of this recording. The soloists are, without exception, absolutely wonderful singers. The orchestral playing is carefully shaped and the overall pacing makes the whole experience enjoyable. One could argue that Vivaldi lacks the dramatic insight and ability for psychological development of, say, Handel; but that would be to expect something that was almost certainly not expected of the composer, and the music is among the best of his output – don't miss it! *BC*

A Noble Entertainment: Music from Queen Anne's London The Parnassian Ensemble (Sophie Middleditch, Helen Hooker *recs*, Joseph Crouch *vlc*, David Pollock *hpscd*)
Avie **AV 2094** 66' 19"
Music by Corbett (op. 2/4), Handel (HWV 405), Haym (in e *vlc*), Keller (4 in Bb), Paisible (op. 1/3 2 *recs*; 4 in c), Pepusch (in F), D. Purcell (2 in g), H. Purcell (kbd Suite 2), Williams (*In immitation of Birds*

This is an interesting collection of pieces written by the most important composers of Queen Anne's day. One might quibble that Henry Purcell had died by the time Queen Anne came to the throne in 1702, but in fact his music continued to be performed for many years after his death. The rest of the music belongs to the tradition of music which composers wrote, often for their own performance, for the concerts and theatre intervals of early 18th century London. Concerts in those days tended to be quite varied, and if you are not a recorder player you may feel that eight trio sonatas for two recorders and continuo is rather a lot in one sitting; but the players have done their best to provide variety. The William Williams Sonata 'in immitation of Birds' could perhaps have been more bird-like, but I particularly enjoyed the lively Pepusch sonata with its fugal second movement, the Keller with its interesting bass line, and the Purcell harpsichord suite. *Victoria Helby*

Affetuoso Oboe Sonatas 1700-1750 Paul Dombrecht, Wieland Kuijken *vlc*, Robert Kohnen *hpscd* 101' 54" (2 CDs)
Accent **CC 30004** (rec 1978, 1980) ££
Disc 1: Sonatas by Babell (1), CPE Bach (H549), Forster in c, Geminiani (1), Handel (in F, op. 1/5), Vincent (2). Disc II **Telemann**

These two re-released discs feature some of the best solo oboe music of the period, with four works by Telemann (of course) and sonatas by Thomas Vincent, William Babell (really rather nice, actually), one of the many Försters, and the usual suspects – Geminiani, Handel and C. P. E. Bach. Paul Dombrecht is accompanied by Wieland Kuijken (on cello for once) and Robert Kohnen harpsichord. The recitals are very enjoyable, and it's remarkable what a virtuoso Dombrecht really has been for many, many years – the title may be *Affetuoso*, perhaps reflecting the oboe's cantabile nature, but there is some devilish music for it out there, and none of it clearly held any fear for him. Recommended for all baroque oboe students and aficionados. *BC*

The Rise of the North Italian Violin Concerto: 1690-1740 La Serenissima, Adrian Chandler *dir/vln*, Mhairi Lawson *S* 77' 51"
Avie **AV2106**
Albinoni op. 2/8; **Legrenzi** from op. 16; **Navara** a5 in C, **Valentini** Concerto XI a6; **Vivaldi** op. 3/3 & 10; **anon (Composer X)** *Laudate Pueri* RV Anh. 30

This fine disc is the first of several that will appear as Adrian Chandler's research on the subject progresses – what an absolutely gift of a project he's landed himself! Many of the works here explore the gradual shift from ensemble works to concertos with multiple violin soloists and on to a Vivaldi violin concerto. La Serenissima play as beautifully as usual, with each of the solo violinists taking the limelight as required, and the recorded sound is first rate. I was slightly disappointed by the only vocal work on the disc, not because of the singing (Mhairi Lawson never lets one down), but as the piece didn't really seem to fit into the overall plan of things – it's scarcely a north Italian concerto (and it's amazing that it could ever have been considered even an early work by the Red Priest). I recommend anyone interested in this repertoire to start a little collection – there will be a wealth of previously unheard material, and overall, it will surely bring a greater understanding of music far away from northern Italy. *BC*

CLASSICAL

C. P. E. Bach *Symphonies 1-4 (Wq 183); Cello Concerto in A (Wq 172)* Alison McGillivray *vlc*, The English Concert, Andrew Manze 64' 30"
Harmonia Mundi **HMU 907403**

This is a fabulous disc – four wonderfully eccentric symphonies frame a lovely cello concerto, played by the lady of the moment for such repertoire, Alison McGillivray. I'm surprised C.P.E. Bach's music (apart from that for keyboard) remains relatively little known, with very few outstanding recordings. This goes some way to addressing that, with performances that will, I imagine, remain unsurpassed for many years. I can but hope that it reflects an on-going interest on Andrew Manze's part, so that I can look forward to hearing more of the symphonies – and can we have a new version of the three quartets with harpsichord that appeared on L'oiseau-lyre many years ago? *BC*

C. P. E. Bach *Concerti per il Cembalo* L'arpa festante, Rien Voskuilen *hpscd/dir*
Carus **83.184** 70' 10"
in a Wq 26/H430, c Wq 5/H405, G Wq 34/H 444

L'arpa festante has a fairly substantial baroque ensemble of strings (5.4.3.2.1) besides the continuo-cum-solo harpsichord. Founded in 1983, it is among the earliest-established in German, and recorded 19 years later, sounds consistently expressive in playing three comparatively familiar Emanuel Bach concertos. The overall effect gives at least an adequate impression of the composer's skill and versatility with concerto composition; we tend to forget that C.P.E.B. composed over twice as many as Mozart. The disc is surely intended to draw attention to Carus Verlag's growing authority as a publisher of much of the music of the Bach family. *Stephen Daw*

J. C. F. Bach *Sonate per Flauto Traverso e Fortepiano* Marcello Gatti *fl*, Giovanni Togni *fp*, Giovanna Barbati *vlc* 63' 07"
Symphonia **SY 04212**
1777 nos 1, 3, 5; c.1785 no. 1

I really enjoyed this recording. The music is played with charm and sensitivity, a great variety of moods, and obvious sympathy between the players. The first three sonatas are from *Sechs Sonaten für das Clavier mit Begleitung einer Flöte oder Violine* published in Riga in 1777, while the last is from *Sonate per Flauto traverso o Violino, Violoncello e Cembalo concertato (o Piano-Forte)* c. 1785. The first sonata starts with a delicate and slightly melancholy allegretto, but the second movement

comes straight from the world of opera, with dialogue between the flute and piano interspersed with extraordinary piano recitative sections. The much more solid texture of the first movement of the fourth sonata with its unison introduction and added cello comes as a bit of a surprise after the delicate balance of the first three sonatas, but the second movement is based on a particularly attractive melody, and the third brings everything to a cheerful conclusion. It is a pity that there is no mention of the instruments on the otherwise informative but admirably compact cardboard sleeve and its insert. *Victoria Helby*

Boccherini ***Quintets for strings*** Natsumi Wakamatsu, Azumi Takada *vlns*, Yoshiko Morita *vla*, Hidemi Suzuki, Takeshi Kaketa *vlc* 66' 16"
TDK Arte dell' Arco **TDK-ADO17**
G 304, 314, 36, 318

I always feel that I am missing something when I listen to Boccherini quintets, though I have no problem with the symphonies. The answer may be in Elizabeth Le Guin's book on his quartets (see p. 28): you need to play them to realise the fullness of what the music is about. As far as I can tell from outside, this Japanese group have the measure of the man; indeed, the booklet note by Hidemi Suzuki echoes in a less academic and necrophiliac way some of Le Guin's points. The disc is growing on me, and if I listen long enough to this sensitive performance I might eventually understand what Boccherini is playing at. *CB*

Byström ***Three Sonatas for Keyboard and violin, op. 1*** Tuiji Hakkila *fp*, Sirkka-Liisa Kaakinen-Pilchj *vln* 55' 28"
Alba **ABCD 221**

Thomas Byström (1772-1839) was born and grew up in Helsinki but spent much of his life in Stockholm, as an army officer, civil servant and amateur composer. His Op. 1 duet sonatas for violin and keyboard (Breitkopf & Härtel, 1801) are accomplished, well crafted and tuneful pieces. To be sure, they are rather in the standard turn-of-the-century manner of Dussek's and Hummel's imitators, but there are occasional touches of individuality and the sonatas are definitely worth an occasional airing. On this CD they are persuasively played, with excellent ensemble and balance. It is refreshing to hear such stylish violin playing in music of this period, with almost no vibrato but plenty of attention to details of articulation and the like. The fortepiano sounds a bit 'modern' for an instrument of the 1790s, but is played with both sensitivity and virtuosity. Recommended. *Richard Maunder*

Goldberg ***Complete Concertos for Harpsichord and Orchestra*** Waldemar Döling *hpscd*, Sofia Soloists, Emil Tabakov *cond* 70' 22"
Dabringhaus & Grimm **MDG 601 9259-2**
Concertos in d & Eb

Goldberg's short life (1727-1756) was distinguished more for his playing than for his compositions: his complete keyboard Concertos number only two. However, any shortage in quantity is certainly compensated by strength in quality, so that I have taken unusual delight in this recording. The first Concerto featured is in E flat major is slightly the more contrapuntal of the two, affording the small accompanying ensemble good opportunities to shine. The second, in D minor, is spaced at a much less urgent pace, giving clear evidence of the composer's almost Mendelssohnian energy and true virtuosity – remarkable indeed for a composer whose life only just reached the birth of Mozart. This unusual disc is a real a discovery. *Stephen Daw*

M. Haydn ***Requiem in B flat MH 838*** Lydia Teuscher, Manami Kusano, Julien Prégardien, Jens Hamann *SATB*, Kammer-Chor Saarbrücken, Kammerphilharmonie Mannheim, Georg Grün *cond* 62' 46"
Carus **83.353**
+ **Mozart** *Ave verum corpus, God is our refuge, Misericordias Domini, Venite populi*

I just go on getting fonder and fonder of Michael Haydn's choral music. This premiere recording of a newly completed Requiem (by P. Kronecker for Carus-Verlag) is a delight – and, frankly, puts even more doubt in my mind that the Requiem I had to review earlier in the year (supposedly written for Mozart's funeral) could have been composed by Haydn. As well as the excellent performance by soloists, choir and orchestra alike, the disc contains four short pieces by Mozart, including a beautiful reading of *Ave verum corpus*. *BC*

Kraus ***The Solo Piano Music*** Ronald Brautigam *fp* 72' 06"
BIS CD-1319
Larghetto, Rondo in F, Scherzo con variazioni, Sonatas in E and Eb, Swedish Dance, Zwey neue kuriose Menuetten

Joseph Martin Kraus (1756-92) was Mozart's almost exact contemporary. His music is enjoying something of a revival at present, and he has – inevitably – been labelled 'The Swedish Mozart'. This is surely an exaggeration, but he is certainly among the more interesting composers of the late 18th century. The two sonatas on this recording are, at their best, highly original, though Kraus is occasionally apt to let pure virtuosity take over, especially in the Sonata in Eb. This was written in Paris in 1785, but its style is very much that of the early 'London Piano School', which Kraus no doubt met on his visit to London in that year. The later Sonata in E, said to have been written in Stockholm in 1787 or 1788, has a first movement very reminiscent of that of Mozart's K. 533, dated 3 January 1788 in the composer's own catalogue. If the resemblances are not just coincidence it would be fascinating to know which of the two came first.

Brautigam is a persuasive advocate for the music. His assured technique is fully equal to the virtuoso passages, and he can turn an eloquent and expressive phrase. But, as with his Mozart recordings, I have reservations about his choice of instrument. We don't know for certain what Kraus had in mind, but it would surely have been an English (or just possibly French) grand in Paris, and I can't help wondering whether he might have played the Stockholm sonata on a big Swedish clavichord. So why use a copy of an early nineteenth-century Viennese fortepiano by Walther (*sic*) & Sohn? It's a nice instrument and a credit to its maker (Paul McNulty), but it certainly doesn't sound or behave like anything available in the 1780s. *Richard Maunder*

Linley ***Music for The Tempest, Overture to The Duenna, Three Cantatas*** Julia Gooding *S*, Paul Goodwin *ob*, The Parley of Instruments Baroque Orchestra and Choir, Paul Nicholson 72' 38" (rec 1994)
Hyperion Helios **CDH55256** ££

I was slightly apprehensive when asked to play in a concert of Thomas Linley Jr at Peter Holman's Suffolk Village Festival a few years ago: a whole evening of music by someone who died when he was 22 was likely to outstay his welcome. But the concert was utterly convincing, as is this recording. Kah-Ming Ng praised the elan and polish of the performance as well as the music when he reviewed it for us when it first appeared (*EMR* 11) , and I would add that, as always, Julia Gooding is a delight, even if the coloratura does occasionally stretch her. *CB*

Mozart ***Zaide*** Diana Damrau, Michael Schade, Rudolf Schasching, Florian Boesch, Anton Scharinger *STTBarB* Concentus Musicus Wien, Nikolaus Harnoncourt 107' 3" (2 CDs in box)
deutsche harmonia mundi **82876 84996 2**

Zaide, the abandoned melodrama of 1779/80, contains music of great beauty and

historical importance, but it presents a major challenge to would-be performers. The decision taken here by Harnoncourt and his colleagues (just as happened, though less justifiably, with his recording of *Die Zauberflöte* in 1987) was to use a narrator to link the sung numbers, the dialogue not having survived. How many listeners will welcome Tobias Moretti's long, involved and illusion-breaking narrations is questionable. Musically there is much to enjoy and admire: fine singing from most of the cast, especially from Michael Schade (Diana Damrau is neat but thin-voiced, and Rudolf Schasching blusters in the villain's music). There is attentive and eloquent playing from the Concentus, and perceptive direction from Harnoncourt (though for me he takes the heroine's beautiful first aria too slowly). The live recording (Musikverein) is sonorous and precise, the insert booklet informative and with full text in the usual three languages. Less than a complete success, then. *Peter Branscombe*

Mozart ***Horn Concertos*** Johannes Interholzer, Mozarteum Orchestra, Ivor Bolton
Oehms Classics **OC 567** 65' 39"
K 417, 447, 494a, 495 on modern horn
K. 371, 412, 514 on natural horn

On this attractive disc we have virtually all Mozart's music for solo horn and orchestra (the one work missing is K370b, an opening *Allegro* in Eb). Included is the D-major Rondo for what used to be called the 'first' concerto, K412, actually by Süssmayr, which here conveniently follows Mozart's original Rondo in John Humphries' completion. Johannes Hinterholzer favours a natural horn for K412, 371 and 514, otherwise giving his fluent, assured performances on a modern valve instrument – though he is tempted in his own over-elaborate cadenzas to plumb unseemly depths. The Mozarteum Orchestra under Ivor Bolton's perceptive and stylish guidance gives fine support to the soloist. Clear recorded quality and helpful notes. *Peter Branscombe*

Mozart *Symphonies in G minor, K550 & C, K551 ('Jupiter'), ballet music from 'Idomeneo', K367* Les musiciens du Louvre, Marc Minkowski 78' 09"
Archiv **00289 477 5798**

These works were recorded live during a concert at Grenoble in October 2005, with the advantages of a real sense of occasion, and a closely attentive audience from whom we hear hardly a sound, the occasional tiny flaw in the playing being a small price to pay. The period-instrument Musiciens du Louvre, with strings 12.10.6.6.4, play with warmth and assurance, wind sonorities coming through strongly, though the timpani make a firm if muffled impact. 'Minkowski's debut Mozart recording' (as the blurb on the cover proclaims it to be) is constantly fascinating, though fluctuations in tempo, and hesitations in phrasing in the *Andantes*, are debatable features in 'authentic' readings. No doubt about the great finale to the *'Jupiter'*: under Minkowski it is undeniably exciting, but so fast that clear articulation is hardly possible. *Peter Branscombe*

Mozart ***Sonatas, Fantasies and Variations***
Jörg Demus *fp*, Thomas Albertus Irnberger *vln* 67' 43"
Gramola **98789**
pf/vln sonatas, K 301, 304, 360, 378; variations K360; *pf* Fantasy in c K 396, in d K 397,

This disc has some serious competition in the shape of Rachel Podger and Gary Cooper, who have already released three wonderful CDs. The tone of the keyboard used here is darker and there is an air of learned gravitas about proceedings that was scarcely a remote concern of the disc I reviewed last time. I was also slightly concerned (as I always am in this repertoire) that the violin seemed too loud for its role in the music. That is not actually to fault the performers, who are (of course) excellent. Perhaps I am more in tune with the *Amadeus* persona than with some idealized demi-god who must be treated with great reverence. *BC*

Mozart ***Complete Sonatas and Variations***
Ronald Brautigam *fp*, 627' 36" (10 CDs)
BIS CD-1633/36 ££ (rec 1996, 1997)

Actually you get more than just the sonatas and variations, if not quite 'The Complete Solo Piano Music' advertised on the back of the box. These are reissues; I reviewed the six CDs of sonatas in the January 2001 *EMR*. My reaction now is much the same as it was then: Brautigam is an excellent performer, and there is much to enjoy on these recordings even though his style is occasionally a little too modern for my taste. But it was a great pity to play everything on a copy of a Walter made some ten years after Mozart's death (not 'ca. 1795' as the programme booklet claims), and over thirty years after some of the music, written by the boy Mozart long before he knew any kind of fortepiano or, for that matter, before Stein had invented his revolutionary 'Prellmechanik'. *Richard Maunder*

Mozart ***Sonate per clavicembalo a quattro mani.*** Andreina Di Girolamo and Silvia Rambaldi *hpscd*, 51' 45" [no recording company named, no CD number]
Sonatas K.19d, K.381, K.358

The booklet note attempts to justify the use of a harpsichord on the grounds that that's what Mozart means by 'cembalo' on his scores. This is nonsense, of course (despite the 'cembalo' terminology, concertos such as K.491 are certainly not intended for harpsichord!) Nevertheless, a fortepiano is highly unlikely to have been available in Salzburg c. 1772-4 when K.381 and K.358 were written, or for that matter in London in 1765 (if Mozart was indeed the composer of K.19d). The performances are not bad, though I found some of the mannerisms (rallentandi at the end of most phrases, slow trills, and appoggiaturas played *before* the beat) rather irritating after a while. *Richard Maunder*

Mozart ***Piano Sonatas K. 279, 280, 281***
Robert Levin *fp* 54' 56"
deutsche harmonia mundi **82876 84237-2**

I enjoyed this CD very much. The fortepiano is an absolutely first-rate Stein copy, with a beautiful singing treble and a sonorous bass. Its tone is distinctly brighter than most of the reproduction instruments to be heard nowadays, and it has an amazingly wide dynamic range. Levin's playing is very fine indeed: he has an unrivalled sense of period style, his articulation is scrupulously clear, and his varied repeats are imaginative and at the same time impeccably Mozartean. Rhythms are subtly flexible, and phrases lovingly shaped. All Mozart's subversive humour is there as well, such as the cheeky 'up yours, Colloredo' acciacaturas in the first movement of K.279 and the third of K.281, whose ending made me laugh out loud.

Mozart may have had the clavichord chiefly in mind when he wrote these sonatas, but is at least known to have played two others in the same set (K.283 and K.284) on a Stein fortepiano during his visit to Augsburg in 1777. That instrument would have been an earlier model than the one copied for this CD and probably didn't have the *Prellmechanik* action developed by Stein in the 1780s; it's possible, too, that it had bare wooden hammers with no leather covering, like the Stein 'vis-à-vis' demonstrated at the Lausanne *rencontres harmoniques* a few months ago. However, despite these minor quibbles this is the best performance of these sonatas that I've heard in recent years, and I eagerly look forward to more recordings by Levin in the same series. *Richard Maunder*

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

Mozart ***Fantasias & Rondos*** Richard Egarr *fp* 74' 22"
Harmonia Mundi **HMU 907387**
K. 354A, 355, 356/617A, 394-7, 408, 485, 511, 540, 573

This is an impressive recital of Mozart's fantasias, rondos, preludes and other separate pieces, intelligently, forthrightly and expressively played on a fortepiano of c.1805. I particularly liked Egarr's convincing use of that rarely heard effect, 'period rubato', where – as Mozart himself described it —the left hand stays in time while the right is free to deviate. It is especially effective in the D minor Fantasia, K.397, where Egarr also makes a brave attempt at a new ending after Mozart abruptly breaks off at the pause in bar 98 (could the Fantasia perhaps have been intended as a prelude to something?) Full marks, too, for the stylish and imaginative ornamentation on all the repeats, particularly in the outstanding performance of the Adagio in B minor, K.540. It's good to hear this music played on a genuine early fortepiano rather than a modern copy, although it's a pity that – presumably for practical reasons – an instrument made some 15 years after Mozart's death was chosen. The tone is rich and sonorous in the tenor and bass, but there are signs of old age in the extreme treble, which sounds rather 'wooden' by comparison. I also raised an eyebrow at Egarr's use of the 'moderator' knee-lever for the quiet endings of K.485, K.540 and the prelude of K.394: it's a nice effect, certainly, but it wouldn't have been possible for Mozart to do this on his own instrument, which had only a hand-stop for the purpose.

These few reservations aside, however, I'm delighted to give this record a strong recommendation – especially after my lukewarm reception of the Egarr/Manze CD of Mozart violin sonatas in the August 2005 *EMR*. *Richard Maunder*

Gustaviansk klavermusik Swedish 18th century keyboard music on instruments from The Stockholm Music Museum Stig Ribbing 72' 34"
Sterling **CDA 1654-2** (rec 1968)
Music by Agrell, Ahlstrom, Kraus, Naumann, Wikmanson

This is an interesting curiosity: a reissue of recordings made nearly 40 years ago by the late Stig Ribbing (1904-2002) on five different instruments from the Stockholm Music Museum. They tend, unfortunately, to sound a bit dull and 'wooden', though it's difficult to know to what extent this is due to the re-mastering of the old LPs, cleaned up to eliminate the surface noise. It might also, of course, say something about standards of restoration in the 1960s: certainly the vilely out-of-tune combination organ-clavichord, mercifully used for only one very short piece, would not be tolerated nowadays. The choice of music is quite enterprising, and leaves me wishing to hear more of Agrell and Wikmanson in particular. And the performances are fine, if a bit four-square and unyielding. *Richard Maunder*

The Glory of Grosvenor: the organ of Grosvenor Chapel Richard Hobson (1991 William Drake organ) 65'14".
Regent **REGCD234**
Music by Attwood, Bennett, Gladwin, Keeble, Russell, Walond

The William Drake organ of the Grosvenor Chapel is, in my view, one of the finest organs in the country and I give frequent recitals there. It is not easy to play, with the very sensitive action (and the unforgivingly dry acoustic) taking no prisoners. The original 1732 organ of the Chapel had gone through the usual transformations, although it retained its original case and a tiny number of pipes. In 1991 a new instrument, broadly reflecting the style of the 1732 organ (albeit influenced by later 18th and early 19th century pipework), was installed in the restored case. The programme reflects this later influence – indeed, a number of the composers were not even born at the time the original organ was built. But this music suits the organ very well, not least because it is one of the very few organs upon which some of this repertoire can be performed, due to the eminently sensible provision of pull-down pedals enabling the lowest notes of the long-compass Great to be played on the pedals.

Gladwin was an early organist of the Grosvenor Chapel. His Sonata no 6 in E minor demonstrates the interchangeability of harpsichord and organ music during this period, with marketing considerations probably encouraging the order of the instruments (and, it seems, in the title of the works) in the titling of the collection as 'Lessons for the Harpsichord or Organ'. William Russell is one of the most important organ composers in the transition from the 18th to the early 19th century. He pulled the English organ voluntary out of its rather predictable and mannered predicament by injecting new musical, harmonic and structural ideas, often under the influence of composers such as J C Bach and Haydn, and building on a similar stretching of musical ideas by John Keeble and John Bennett. The first Voluntary of Russell's 1804 set is a good example, extending the usual two-movement form to four movements and including passages in the second movement that the programme note rather nicely describes as sounding as though they had 'strayed from a fortepiano sonatina played by the heroine in a Jane Austen novel'. These three composers represent the English Gallant and Rococo style in organ composition and are all worthy of further exploration. Although Handel is still a strong influence in this period, Thomas Attwood provides a link to the Mendelssohn era. His *Dirge* is interesting in being a work composed for a specific occasion, the funeral of Lord Nelson in 1806.

Richard Hobson is organist of the Chapel, and his playing reflects his intimate knowledge of the organ, with well chosen and stylistically appropriate registrations, meticulous attention to the detail of touch and articulation, and carefully thought out interpretations. If I heard these works in a concert performance, I might expect a bit more personality to peep through, perhaps through slightly more use of musical rhetoric and rhythmic flexibility – but for a CD that warrants repeated listening it is sometimes better to play it safe. I would prefer longer breaks between the individual pieces – with 28 tracks, divided into nine pieces, they do tend to flow into each other with no aural punctuation to alert you to the start of a new piece. I recommend this CD for its fascinating repertoire, an excellent instrument and some fine playing. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

19th CENTURY

Beethoven ***Mödlinger Tänze*** L'Orfeo Barockorchester, Michi Gaigg 66' 30"
cpo **777 117-2**
WoO 8, 9, 14, 17

This enjoyable CD contains a programme of 41 dances by Beethoven, including two by his brother Kaspar Karl, and the possibly spurious (but attractive) Mödling dances. There are familiar moments, as with the appearance of the 'Eroica' tune, and witty ones (the appearance of a posthorn); for the most part this is charming but inconsequential music, nicely played by L'Orfeo under the spirited direction of Michi Gaigg from the leader's desk. Clean recording, fanciful notes – with yet further proof that cpo would do well to find a competent translator into English. *Peter Branscombe*

Méhul ***L'irato ou l'emporté*** Pauline Courtin, Svenja Hempel, Cyril Auvity, Georg Poplutz, Miljenko Turk, Alain Buet *SSTTBB*, Bonner Kammerchor, L'arte del mondo, Werner Ehrhardt Capriccio **60128** 64' 18"

What is claimed to be the first performance of this little *opéra comique* since 1804 was held at the Beethoven Festival,

Bonn, in September 2005. *L'irato* was a triumph in Paris in 1801, when Méhul naughtily passed it off as the work of a young, now dead Neapolitan. It is an agreeable piece, here decently sung, though even the French members of the cast sound less than totally happy in the dialogue. L'arte del mondo is a keen period-instrument ensemble, and Werner Ehrhardt keeps up our interest in what is no more than a frothy trifle. Fair recorded quality, and useful booklet with notes and three-language libretto. *Peter Branscombe*

Rossini *Petite Messe Solennelle* Carolyn Sampson, Hilary Summers, Andrew Tortise, William Unwin, Andrew Foster-Williams *SATTB*, Gary Cooper,Matthew Halls *fps*, Mark Williams *harmonium*, The King's Consort, Robert King *cond* 79' 39"
Hyperion **CDA67570**

I've had very little practical experience of the choral-society repertoire – indeed, nothing between *The Creation* (1798) and *Gerontius* (1900) except this Rossini piece, which I sung at Dartington (though for the performance I page-turned for Susan Bradshaw, a contemporary music specialist who played the harmonium part on a baroque-style chamber organ). Later, I sung in a couple of performances with the English Chamber Choir (with a proper French harmonium that the conductor owned), one being at Huntingdon, my first visit to what has been our nearest town for over a quarter of a century. The point of the reminisce is the nature of the tenor. One of the particularly memorable features of the 'little' mass is the tenor solo *Domine Deus*. On the CD it is sung very beautifully by Andrew Tortise, but with the early-music-style joining of registers rather than singing the top notes as a full-blooded tenor. We had a real operatic-style tenor, admittedly amateur (his day job was as vicar of East Coker), who despite technical weaknesses, provided the sort of effect that I assume the music calls for. Robert King questions this, pointing out that much of the movement is marked *pianissimo*. In fact, Rossini rarely puts dynamics in the voice part: my score has just seven in that whole movement: *pp*, *cresc*, *sf* and *f* in four bars at 'Domine fili', *rinforz* and *f* at 'unigenite' and *ff* for the voice's final four bars. There are a lot more in the piano part, including *ppp* a bar before the voice enters and *pp* quite often; but the piano part is by its nature an invitation to loud playing, so these may primarily be reminders to the pianist not to get carried away and at least start sections quietly.

Robert King commendably keeps to the autograph's specification of 12 singers – though he ignores the expectation of three sexes: castrati are no longer available and his sopranos and altos are female. I feel that the performance is restrained a bit by the singers' good taste. But it is a welcome change from the intonationally challenged versions from modern opera singers, and if it makes people listen to it afresh, so much the better. *CB*

I'm puzzled by a few editorial matters, though haven't facilities to check, so these are comments, not criticisms. Answers welcome! My score is an early-looking edition from Chappell & Co, with 'Second edition' printed at the top of the title page. I also have a photocopy of an introduction which gives alterations to make the score from which it came correspond with the orchestral version. These alterations are incorporated in my score (a seven-bar introduction to Qui tollis, *for instance, and the extended 'symphony', as the corrigenda calls it, at the end of the* Quoniam*) and are on the CD, though if my surmise is correct, they belong only to the orchestral version.*

My score has a note appended to the list of movements: 'In the absence of a Harmonium the Mass can be performed with the Piano Forte Accompaniment, the Harmonium part having been written more especially to support the voices.' If this derives from Rossini, it suggests that the eight tutti singers were rather less capable than those recorded here. So is the harmonium needed? – or even, should they be poor singers? But there are limits beyond which the pursuit of authenticity should not go.

Lux aeterna: Messe Solennelle des morts Les paraphonistes, Damien Poisblaud
Sisyphe **002** 67' 25"

This was recorded in 2000, so has take a while to reach us. It is a performance of Requiem mass to chant and faux-bourdon as it might have been heard at Cambrai in 1840. It is not entirely clear whether the source of that date and place was just chant or included examples of any instruction for improvising the four-part version. Whatever, this is an impressive and moving disc, though you have to be in the right mood for it. It gives a glimpse on a widely-practised style that was ousted by the success of the attempts to go back to a more 'authentic' style of chant. My only doubt is that the social realism is undermined by the beauty of the modern singers. Essential for those interested in the history of church music and the varied ways of performing plainchant. *CB*
sisyphe@abeille-musique.com
www.abeille-musique.com

VARIOUS

The Ely Tradition Vol. 1 The Choir of Ely Cathedral, Jonathan Lilly *org*, Paul Trepte *dir*
Priory **PRCD 724** 77' 10"
Blow *Salvator mundi*, Cornyshe *Woefully arrayd*, Dering *O bone Jesu*, Draghi *This is the day*, Heath *When Israel came out of Egypt + chant*, *Mendelssohn & Stanford*

The unexpected item here is the first recording (edited by a member of the choir) of a 12-minute verse anthem for male voices by G. B. Draghi, a welcome discovery which shows off the solo skills of the men. I'm less convinced by the only other piece whose duration runs to double figures, Cornyshe's *Woefully arrayd*, since the sound lacks that substance that Gothic Voices, for instance, produce. The Mendelssohn and Stanford suit them rather better, though the enterprising programme should be commended. I suspect, though, that our readers will be put off by the accompanied plainsong hymns. *CB*

The Feast of St Edward, King and Confessor, at Westminster Abbey Choir of Westminster Abbey, Robert Quinney *org*, James O'Donnell *cond* 75' 57"
Hyperion **CDA67586**
Music by Bruckner, Crotch, Demessieux (*Te Deum*), J. Harvey (*Missa brevis*), P. Moore (*The King and the Robin*), W. Morley, Purcell, W. Smith, Stanford, Stone(s)

This contains music that might be sung at the Abbey on feast of the translation of St Edward the Confessor on 13 October – the booklet does not explain why he needed to be translated. It starts with some rather subdued regal acclamations – Mary Berry may be twice James O'Donnell's age, but she made them vigorous and meaningful at a concert at the Temple church a few months ago (and on disc). Then we have an abbreviated Matins (canticles by Stanford in C) and Evensong (Purcell in g) with Jonathan Harvey's *Missa brevis* as the filling of the sandwich. An example of modern Anglican performance at its best. Is the medieval concert put on for the 100th anniversary of Edward also going to appear on disc? *CB*

Hommage à Hugues Cuenod 135' 24" (2 CDs; rec 1936, 1937, 1950-52)
Cascevelle **VEL 3080**
Couperin *Audite omnes, Leçons de Ténèbres, 3 songs* **Delannoy** *Complainte de l'homme-serpent* **Mozart** *Masonic music K 148, 429, 468, 471, 483, 619, 623, 623a;* **Stravinsky** *Cantata*

Hugues Cuenod had an amazing career. His operatic debut was in 1928 (when he was 26) and he was 85 when he made his debut at the Met in New York; he retired when he was 92. The performance of Stravinsky's *Cantata* was recorded under the composer's direction in New York, just over a month after the premiere in Los Angeles with Jennie Tourel as the soprano. Stravinsky wrote the work for his voice, having heard the Mozart and Couperin discs included here. The voice isn't quite as I remembered: at a time when most singers had such prominent vibratos, his tight oscillation was less

annoying. His minimal expression was just right for Stravinsky, but the earlier music is spoilt, not so much by the singing as the rather stolid accompaniment which bogs the performances down. This is a fascinating pair of discs, as no doubt is the companion set *Hommage à Nadia Boulanger* with some of the famous Madrigal recordings which include Cuenod. *CB*

Orient – Occident, 1200-1700 Hespèrion XXI, Jordi Savall 72' 28"
Alia Vox AVSA 9848 SACD

I was casting around in my mind for a key word to describe this CD when my eye fell on the word Hybrid, and while it appears on the CD as a technical term it seems to sum up my ambivalence to this recording. In his booklet notes, Savall makes the very useful generalisation that while western music was from an early date committed to notation which survived the rapid advance of instrument development, eastern music generally stuck to the use of ancient instruments but largely failed to record the music they played, for the simple reason that generations of players could rely on oral transmission due to unchanging nature of performance traditions. This seems to me a fair point, but the present recording seems to face the problem that it really stands outwith the traditions of western scholarship. Taking melodies which are frequently of indeterminate antiquity and weaving elaborate symphonies of sound out of them makes for perfectly pleasant and enjoyable entertainment, particularly if they spring from musicians of considerable skill and inspiration, but is this really early music? A programme note which resorted too frequently to the language of the soul and glossed over specifics didn't help to convince me, and while I found the disc musically satisfying and even intriguing, it seemed to inhabit a world of fantasy rather than of history.

D James Ross

CHARLES FARNCOMBE

29 July 29 1919 - 30 June 2006.

Charles Farncombe was known in England chiefly for the Handel Opera Society. Its first performance was in 1955: I encountered it in 1957 at the St Pancras Town Hall with *Alcina*, which I've mentioned recently in connection with my amazement at Joan Sutherland's singing. (I was still at school then – coincidental, the one Charles Farncombe had attended 20 years earlier, though I didn't know that until I read Anthony Hicks's obituary of him in *The Independent*.) I mistook the venue and went to St Marylebone Town Hall by mistake, got to St Pancras just in time to rush in without anyone checking my ticket, sat in an expensive seat near the front (until sent up into the gallery in the first interval), and devoted most of my attention to what the harpsichordist was doing – I haven't got the programme, but am pretty certain it was my first awareness of Thurston Dart. The production the following year was *Theodora*. In 1959 they moved to Sadlers Wells with two productions, *Rodelinda* and *Semele*. It was the latter that particularly impressed me, especially the variety of textures Handel got from a string orchestra. At that stage, I had no expectation of ever having a professional involvement in music, but it can hardly be accidental that all four works are now in the King's Music catalogue nor that, to the extent that I am a performer at all, I'm a keyboard continuo player.

I attended the Society's productions regularly for over 20 years: altogether I saw 36 productions of works between 1957 and 1983 (though some of the later ones may have been concert performances). As time progressed, I became more critical of the quality of the productions and failure to change to a baroque orchestra. At first, I thought that staging the oratorios worked, but became disenchanted. Apart from the amateur chorus's vocal quality, its manoeuvres on stage undermined the quality of the music. (Those who saw the ENO *Semele* will know the feeling.) I'm sure that I am not the only person who acquired an enthusiasm for Handel opera from Charles. (I only caught the other Handel opera series organised by Alan Kitching at Abingdon as it was ending: the one performance I saw was a step ahead, with a baroque band directed from the keyboard by Nicholas Kraemer.)

I have a clear image of Charles as a tall, kindly man, though I only remember meeting him twice. Once was to arrange to copy a cello part for him – I was never asked again, and anyone who has seen my handwriting will understand why. The other time was at the Karlsruhe Handel Festival at the first night party of, probably, *Scipione*. He had considerable responsibility for the development of the Handel Festival there, and he was the chief conductor of the 18th-century Royal Court Theatre at Drottningholm from 1968 to 1979. He also ran a festival from his home at Llantilio Crossenny, Monmouthshire.

One could say that Charles' fame came from being in the right place at the right time. But credit is due for his *making* it the right place and time, anticipating by several decades the present success of Handel opera. *CB*

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Following my remarks in the last issue on Lydia Smallwood, I was intrigued that her husband has put together a two-CD recording of her memorial service, an extended Evensong at St John's College, Cambridge. It was evidently planned by Lydia herself. I imagine it was put together without much rehearsal, but it was an impressive event, and it is a tribute to the skill of Cambridge singers that it sounds so good – I particularly enjoyed White's *Christe qui lux es et dies* and an impressive *Nunc dimittis* from Ian de Massini. (Some readers will remember a concert in the Lady Chapel of Ely Cathedral organised by Lydia, which included Gabrieli'a Magnificat a 33, in which Ian, under his former surname, directed Victoria's *Missa pro victoria* from the drum.) There was a lot of organ music – I hadn't realised that Lydia had been an organist: I particularly enjoyed the idea of following the service with Bach's funniest fugue (D major) – though its character comes over as such more easily on a baroque instrument.

I learnt from Alastair Chapmen's excellent address (even if his exordium was all at sea) that Lydia and Geoffrey had first met when she was singing at a friend's wedding and he was recording it. So making the service available as a remembrance was particularly appropriate – and the name of John Rutter as producer is a guarantee of quality. I'd better line up Geoffrey for the equipment and John as producer and start planning my memorial service now.

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LICENSING ACT

Those affected by the 2003 Licensing Act, which extended the control of local authorities over ploaces that previously had not needed licences for music activity, might be interested in a seminar on the subject in London on 1 December.
www.voluntaryarts.org

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DÜBEN CATALOGUE

Stephen Rose thought that some readers might be interested to know of the online database of Uppsala's Düben collection (with digitised versions of manuscripts). The catalogue is not completely finished yet (in particular, not all the scanned pages are present) but it is still an extremely useful resource.
http://www.musik.uu.se/duben/Duben.php

KATHERINE McGILLIVRAY

21 May 1970 – 1 August 2006

Katherine McGillivray was born in Paisley, near Glasgow, and started playing the violin at the age of 3. A gifted violinist, she nevertheless decided that her career was to be in child psychology, and on leaving school, embarked on teacher training at Glasgow University. Things took an unexpected turn when she discovered the viola and was encouraged to apply for the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama. She was granted a place and left teacher training, not intending at that time to make music her full time career.

It was at the RSAMD that Catherine Macintosh introduced Katherine to the world of the baroque viola. She soon found herself increasingly in demand in the early music scene, and after a year in the European Baroque Orchestra, moved to London to study as a post-graduate with Jan Schlapp at the Royal Academy of Music. Whilst rummaging in an instrument store cupboard at the RAM, Katherine discovered a viola d'amore. She was very taken with the instrument and its wealth of repertoire, and decided this was to be the instrument that she would base her dissertation on. She was determined to banish the idea of the viola as the poor relation with less solo repertoire than the rest of the string family, and her recitals consisted of music from Biber to Hindemith, with as many as five instruments taken along to encompass various tunings and pitches. Of course, as with all Katherine's best ideas, things didn't always go according to plan. Confused by playing in several different tunings, she once finished a particularly beautiful movement of a sonata a semitone out. At another concert, having walked confidently on stage, it was only when tuning up that she discovered she had the wrong instrument. Unflappable, Katherine made a joke and left, returning with the correct one to laughter and thunderous applause.

While everyone else only talked about what they wanted to do, Katherine went ahead and did it. Her passion for Scottish music took her on a fiddling course in Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, on the isle of Skye. She qualified as a scuba diver, diving off the coast of Scotland and the Gold Coast in Australia. Her latest project had taken her to Sweden for almost a year, and was the fruition of something that had caught her imagination eight years ago in Nordmaling. We were doing concerts with Sonnerie, and at the after-show party, there was a demonstration of Swedish folk music on a nyckelharpa, a traditional folk instrument. A fearsome sight to those of us who only play on 4 strings; it had strings to play, strings to drone, and sympathetic strings. It had tuning pegs sticking out of the top and more pegs sticking out at the sides. It was played horizontally, tucked under the arm, with a very short bow. Quite clearly, none of us were going to embarrass ourselves by attempting to play it, but before we knew it, Katherine was sitting down with the instrument, making a pretty decent and not at all embarrassing job of it. Her sabbatical last year to study the nyckelharpa at the Eric Sahlstrom Institute in Tobo was so typical of her zest for learning and embracing different cultures.

A committed teacher, Katherine considered teaching to be very much a part of her own development as a musician. On her return from Sweden, she was open-minded about where her playing career would take her, but she was certain that her own recent experiences as a student would transform her methods of teaching. She had an amazing aptitude for chamber music and was truly a team player, yet when required to stand up and play solo, she always rose to the occasion with an innate poise and confidence.

But Katherine was not all about music. From Hogmanay to birthdays, to any excuse for a get-together, Katherine was often the organiser, host and cook. She rustled up dinner parties with ease and aplomb (who could forget the vodka and mangetout soup, a starter so potent that no-one has any recollection of the rest of the meal?) She was a generous host, offering a spare bed to musicians passing through London, food to people like me who always seemed to turn up at her house hungry, and single malt to anyone who needed a wee dram. She encouraged us all to dance, standing on a chair, calling out the ceilidh steps and never getting fed up with those of us who had two left feet. Katherine had wise words for those who sought her advice, and always made time for her friends.

Katherine died unexpectedly but peacefully on 1st August, amongst friends and fine music. It is difficult to imagine the early music scene without her; she was the source of so much inspiration for her friends, colleagues and students, both personally and professionally. She will be missed and remembered as an intelligent and sensitive musician, talented teacher and loyal friend. She leaves behind her sister Alison and father Iain.

Catherine Martin

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A grove of trees is will be planted in the Caledonian forest in Katherine's memory. To make a donation, go online to www.treesforlife.org.uk/memorial/kmcg.html where there is a memorial page. Alternatively, you can call 0845 458 3505.

There are a large number of obituaries on the www. Check the Monteverdi Choir, Ton Koopman, and Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra websites, which have links to the condolance register www.finishdesign.nl/voorbeelden/guestbook/addguesteng.html
John Eliot Gardiner's moving appreciation (on the Monteverdi Choir site) includes a soundbite.

THE MUSICOLOGYST'S COMPLAYNTE

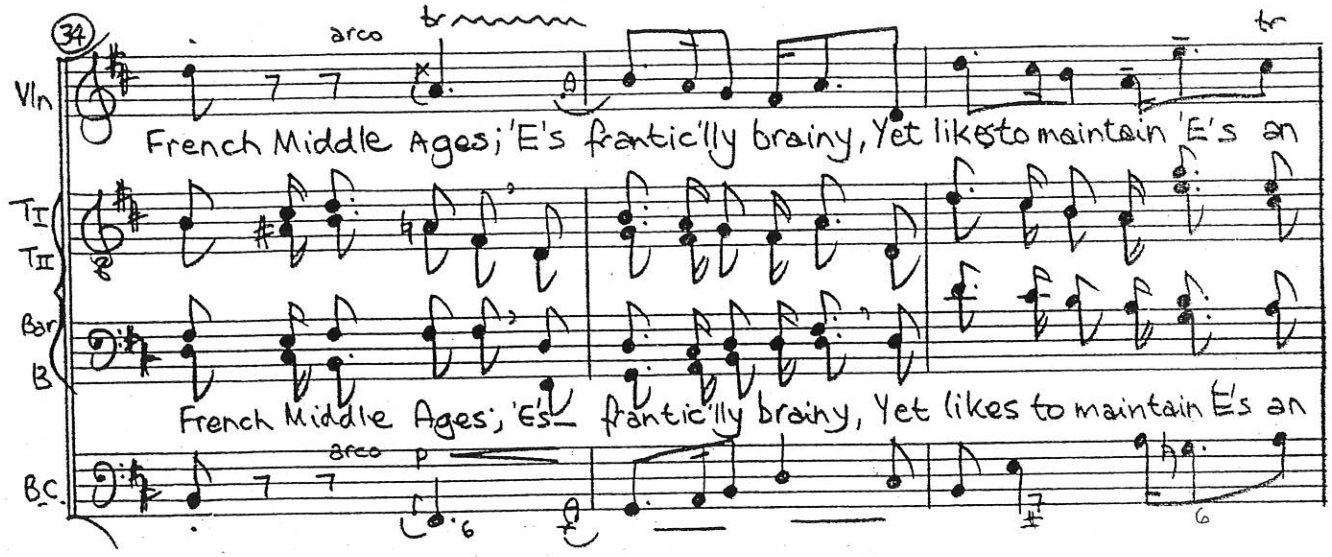
~ OR ~

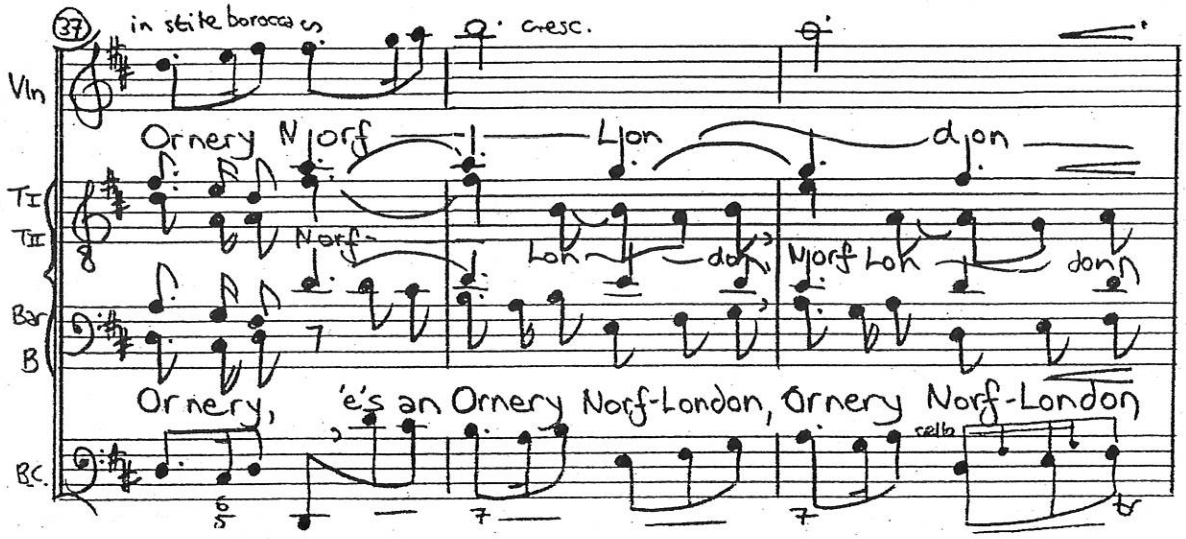
An Ornery Norf~London Boy

A New & Unpublish'd SONG

for Tenor Solo, Gothique Chorus, Violin/Viola, cello & pfte.

This song is found among a cache of what appear to be manuscript radio scripts recently discovered in an ancient chest-of-drawers in Jesus College, Oxford. It is thought to date from the early 1980s when groups of Oxford students, their State grants diminishing, took to the streets to sing ballads etc. in a vain attempt to support themselves. If so, this is a unique example of the kind of home-made songs that they sang. Nothing is known of 'Chris Page', which is probably a pseudnym.


34
arco
tr
Vln
French Middle Ages; 'E's frantic'lly brainy, Yet likes to maintain 'E's an
TI
TII
Bar
B
French Middle Ages; 'E's frantic'lly brainy, Yet likes to maintain E's an
B.C.
arco
p


37
in stile barocco es
cresc.
Vln
Ornery Norf Lon don
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Lon don
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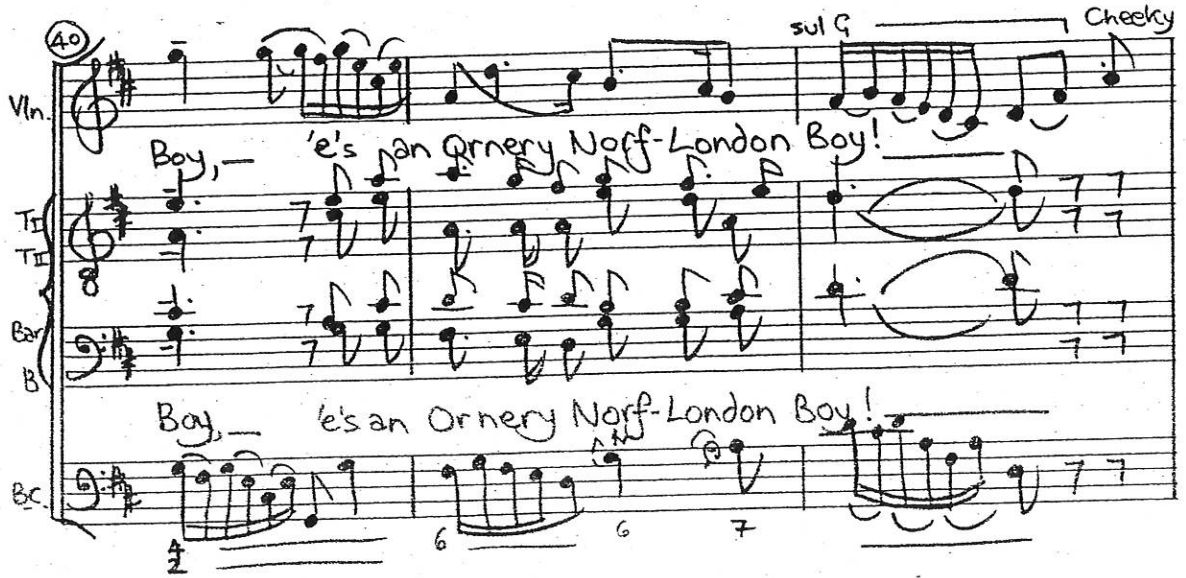
B.C.
cello


40
sul G
Cheeky
Vln.
Boy, 'e's an Ornery Norf-London Boy!
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Bar
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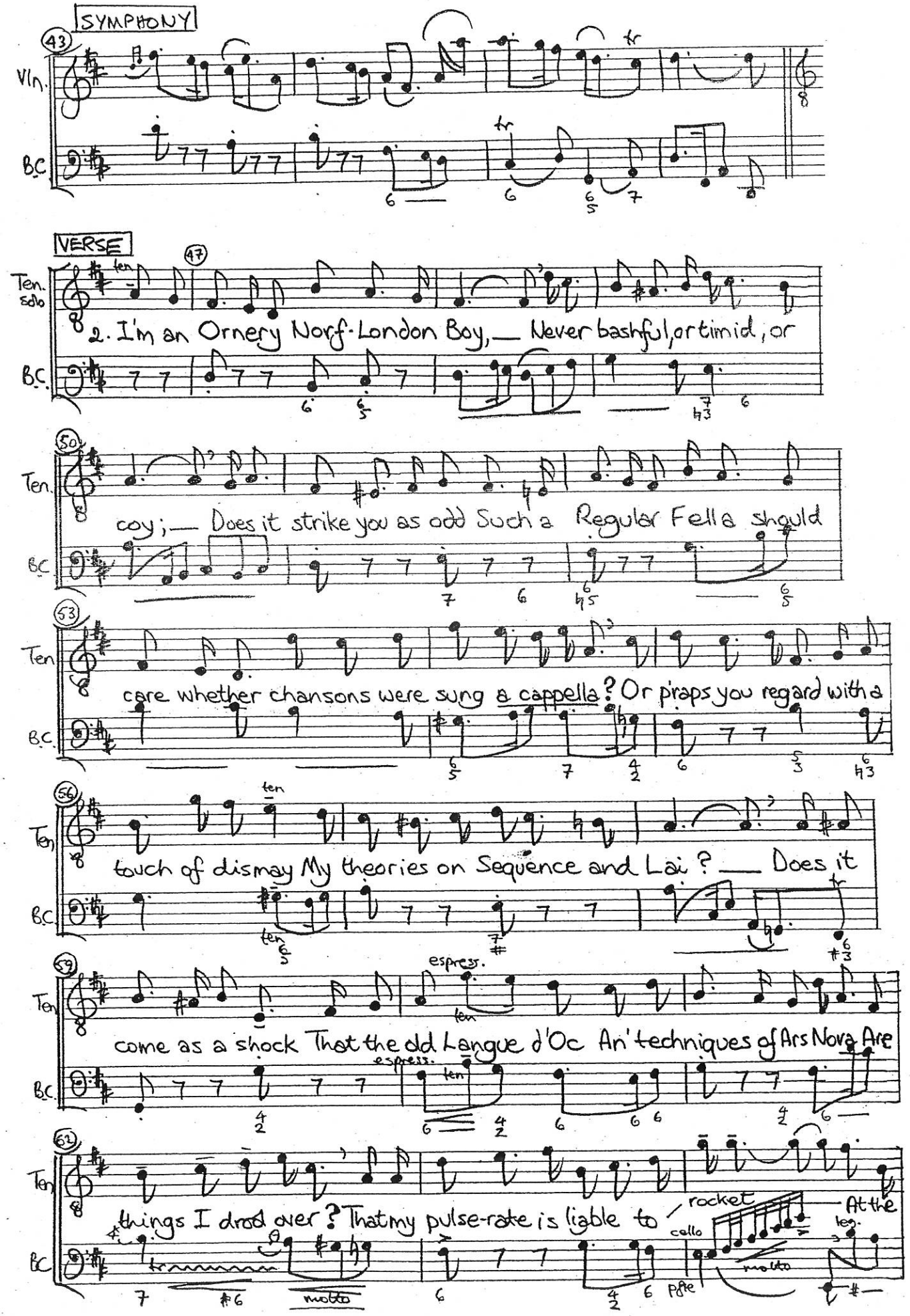
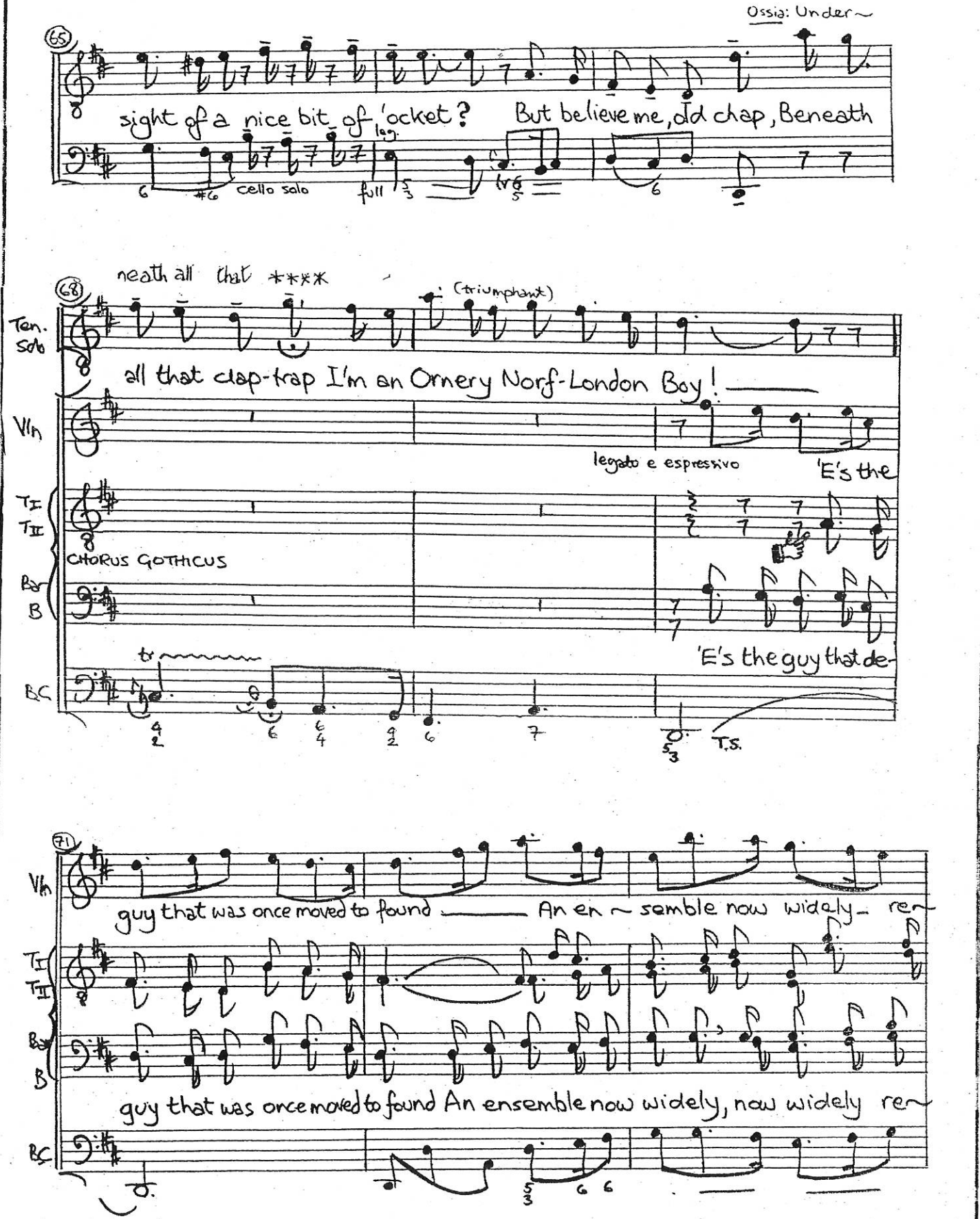
Boy, 'e's an Ornery Norf-London Boy!
B.C.


SYMPHONY
43
Vln.
B.C.
VERSE
47
Ten. solo
2. I'm an Ornery Norf-London Boy,— Never bashful, or timid, or
50
Ten.
coy;— Does it strike you as odd Such a Regular Fella should
53
Ten
care whether chansons were sung a cappella? Or p'raps you regard with a
56
Ten
touch of dismay My theories on Sequence and Lai?— Does it
59
Ten
espress.
come as a shock That the old Langue d'Oc An' techniques of Ars Nova Are
62
Ten
things I drod over? That my pulse-rate is liable to
rocket
cello
molto
At the
B.C.
molto


Ossia: Under~
65
sight of a nice bit of 'ocket? But believe me, old chap, Beneath
leg.
cello solo
full
trg
68
neath all that ***
(triumphant)
Ten. Solo
all that clap-trap I'm an Ornery Norf-London Boy!
Vln
legato e espressivo
'E's the
TI
TII
CHORUS GOTHICUS
Bar
B
'E's the guy that de-
tr
BC
T.S.
71
Vln
guy that was once moved to found An en~semble now widely- ren~
TI
TII
Bar
B
guy that was once moved to found An ensemble now widely, now widely ren~
BC

74

Grave

a tempo

Vln.

-nowned: Yes! the one that rejoices In the name Gothic Voices: So we

TI

TII

Bar

B

-nowned: Yes! the one, yes! the one that rejoices In the name Gothic Voices: So we

BC.

molto

cello solo

tutti

77

giocoso e vigoroso

Vln.

TI

offer sincerest congrat: ..... -u- lations etcetra to that .....

TII

offer sincerest congrat, congrat- lations etcetra to that, to

Bar

leg

offer sincerest congrat, congrat: .. -u- lations etcetra to that extra;

B

offer sincerest congrat, congrat — u — lations to

BC.

cello solo

fr

pizz.

arco leg.

full

OVER

(in stile barocca)

Vln.

TI

extra-ornery, that extra-ornery Norf- ——— Lon ~

TII

that extra-ornery, that extra-ornery Norf- ——— Lon ~ don,

Bar

that extra-ornery, that extra-ornery Norf- ——— Lon ~ don,

B

that extra-ornery, that extra-ornery, that extra ornery, that extra-

B.C.

84

~ don ——— Boy; — that extra-ornery Norf-London Boy!

Norf- Lon ~ don Boy; that extra-ornery Norf-London Boy!

Norf ~ Lon-don Boy; that extra-ornery Norf-London Boy!

Ornery Norf-London Boy; that extra-ornery Norf-London Boy!

cello

87½ CAUDA (still cheeky)

Vln.

(echo)

cello

B.C.

kbd.

fine