Early Music REVIEW

Number 116 December 2006

ISSN 1355-3437 Price £2.50

I was recently caught out at a Council Meeting of NEMA (National Early Music Association) by an objection that the participatory input at our AGM involved singers and was not one of those events to which players of any instrument are can participate. In fact, of the four such events I can remember, two have been primarily vocal with players arranged in advance, two have been for all comers. This seems reasonable.

There is a tension between the idea that early music is manageable with a modest level of technique and adaptable to all sorts of performance forces with the opposite concept that musicians of the past were as skilful as modern professionals, and wrote with a clear concept of the sound that singers and players produced. The success of historically informed performances in concert hall and on recordings depends on the latter, and the more research that is done on performing practice of the past, the less room there seems to be for large groups of amateurs. Authentic performances of Monteverdi's *Vespers* can no longer feature a choir of 100, which is about ten times the number of voices needed. I would not, however, want to discourage such performances. It is music that everyone should have a chance to sing, and if the conductor can balance the conflicting demands of the music and his forces, why not? Like many of our readers, I enjoy being a member of a crowd of fifty or so singing and playing Gabrieli and Schütz – if you live within reach of Beccles, come and join in the EEMF Epiphany Party (see the back page of the Diary for details). But we shouldn't forget that most fora events are geared to a modern ensemble, however authentic the pronunciation, phrasing and instruments may be. A choir of that size singing Restoration anthems is no more plausible than an accompaniment of viols and recorders. But singing is something we all can do (yes, even me!), and the easiest way to make an event suitable for everyone is to make it vocal but pick the right instruments.

The idea of the English Touring Opera was so good, but the execution showed how out-of-touch the operatic world still is about early opera, despite the use of early bands. I hope my review doesn't discourage repetition, and I urge the management to address the problems. *CB*

REVIEWS OF MUSIC

Clifford Bartlett

SWEELINCK VARIATIONS

Sweelinck *Sämtliche Werke für Tasteninstrumente*... edited by Harald Vogel, Pieter Dirksen... Vol. 3 *Variations on Chorales and Psalms*... edited by Harald Vogel Breitkopf & Härtel (EB 8743), 2006. 164pp, €34.00

This more-or-less corresponds with Bärenreiter vol. III,1 (which I reviewed briefly in issue 114), with a few extra pieces that will presumably appear in III,2. This gives Breitkopf an economic advantage over Bärenreiter, which will cost roughly twice as much. The general introduction to this volume is mostly the same as that to vol 1, and there are a further four pages on the attribution, sources and stylistic characteristics of the sacred variations. I thought it might be useful to make a detailed comparison of one piece, choosing *Christe qui lux es*, since both editors agree on the main source and differences will be a matter of editorial interpretation and not source-dependent. I'll distinguish the versions by the name of the editors: Rampe = Bärenreiter, Vogel = Breitkopf. In the tabulation of differences, I print the version I prefer in bold.

Before we get to the piece itself, there is the presentation of the chant. Rampe prints it before the music, but at a different pitch from Sweelinck's cantus firmus – at least, as notated, though Vogel's extensive discussion of Sweelinck's instruments has a diagram of the keyboards of the organ at Amsterdam's Oude Kerk showing one manual displaced by a fifth (or fourth, depending on the octave in question). His printing of the chant in G gives a more all-purpose vocal pitch if the work is performed *alternatim* – there are seven verses, so three organ verses are the right number. But it wouldn't have been performed liturgically in that church. Rampe quotes it with all verses, Vogel gives just one verse in a hybrid original/modern notation, from a 1588 source.

Vogel: source ascription at the head of the piece
Rampe relegates it to the commentary.

Vogel: preliminary stave with a few notes
Rampe: preliminary stave with no incipit.

Both editions have four-minim bars
Vogel numbers them normally
Rampe confusingly numbers semibreves to match the semibreve bars of the music edited from tablature.

Vogel: awkward page-turns within variation 1 and between 2 & 3, which run on.
Rampe: only turn is after variation 1, which doesn't run on. [Generally, Rampe's turns are better.]

Vogel removes redundant accidentals
Rampe preserves them.

Both editions apparently preserve the source's beaming of quavers, but Rampe's bar 10 isn't as the MS.

Vogel quotes 4 variant readings, Rampe about 40 variants listed under the sources and shows a considerable number in the score. Most of those that have any significance concern accidentals. Lynar A seems to be a good source with accidentals marked clearly, though that isn't evident from Vogel's removal of 'redundant' ones. **Rampe's way of indicating the alternatives is neat and shows variants unfussily – probably not important in this piece, but desirable when the assessment of rival sources is more equal.**

Both editions preserve coloured notation for the tripla in Variation 2. Since Vogel adds a 3 above every group (in square brackets only the first two times), there isn't much point in preserving the black blobs for minims.

From these remarks, it is clear that there is no obvious first choice. I suspect that some will choose merely on format and appearance.

Vogel is in portrait format
Rampe is landscape

But if I was seriously studying the music, Rampe's more detailed information on the sources would require me to use his volume.

FAIR ORIANA

Vecchi *Fantasia a4 Senza parole*
You will need to see the CD reviews (p. 38) for Morley's *Triumphs of Oriana*: this heading refers to Richard Carter's publishing venture, Oriana Music, which we regularly review (johanna.richrd@utanet.au). We have exchanged emails over the notation of Orazio Vecchi's *Selva di varia ricreatione*, 1590. He has the advantage of owning a facsimile, while I'm dependent on the 1892 edition of a selection by Chilesotti, which is in fact musicologically more satisfactory than most other publications of Ricordi until about a decade ago. It doesn't, however, contain the *Fantasia a4 Senza parole* (OM116; £4.50 for score and parts). This is a delightful play with rhythms, the opening eight crotchets appearing several times elongated to breves and also across the editorial barlines in triple time – if played with recorders (alternative clefs are supplied for the middle parts), breath ability for phrasing the breve versions must have some influence on tempo. I assume that the Schott edition (*Recorder Bibliothek* 31, 1966) is wrong in stating that it has reduced note values, since they are the same as Oriana's which are said to be unreduced. And I presume that the latter is right to have C signature rather than Schott's cut C (with half-length bars). The original is in

chiavette (G2C2C3F3 clefs); a version down a fourth or fifth would be nice for sackbuts or low renaissance viols.

William Lawes Lessons for Three Lyra Viols
The survival of Lawes' pieces for three lyra viols is erratic, and the six printed in OM114 (£10.50) are all that are complete; there are, however, a variety of single parts which would make interesting composition exercises. The score contains both tablature and transcription, the parts are just in tablature. They are, I'm told, fun to play, proved that you have the technique, and they are also quite entertaining to watch. I suspect that facsimiles have spread to players interested in the repertoire, but now there is a clearly printed edition, with the few mistakes of the source corrected, and a crib sheet (alias score) to enable teachers and recording engineers to see exactly what should be going on.

M^r^. Philidor L'Aïne *Four Suites for two Cellos*
These come from *Pieces a Deux Basse de Viole, Basse de Violon et Basson*, 1700 (OM112; £11.20). Despite the all-purpose title, their bottom B flats indicate that they seem to have been intended for the bass violin. Here they are transposed up a tone to suit the cello. Unlike the Lawes reviewed above, these have a clear upper and lower part, usually in different clefs (here standardised as tenor for the upper part, bass for the lower). The music doesn't look too difficult (a difficult chaconne has been omitted) and not really strong enough for concert use, but useful for teaching and entertaining to play. The Suite in F begins with a *Marche du Roy de la Chine*, from an Opéra-ballet, for which Philidor supplied a drum part. The other drum part presumably belongs to the next movement, since the alternation between **3/2** and **3** agrees, but there are not the right number of bars. Some advice on the relationship between the two time signatures might have been helpful: it looks as if minim = crotchet, but why the different notations? The editors (Johann Valencia & Richard Carter) have also prepared versions for two bass viols or tenor and bass viols.

FINE KNACKS FOR LADIES (& GENTS)

Vince Kelly made another trip from Edmonton, Alberta, to the Early Music Exhibition at Greenwich last month, and presented me with a selection of his Cheap, Choice, Brave and New publications for review. They come in a variety of series.

Victoria *O quam gloriosum* (CCBN 16001 FMS; £6.00) is in his series 'Facsimiles made Simple'. This is a useful way to get used to facsimile singing. Alternatives lead the singer or player from modern score to facsimile. It is possible to start from the score, though the print is a bit small for four people. Thereafter, the score can be put aside or used in case of trouble. The parts give the following versions:

modern clefs, halved note values, barlines
modern clefs, original note values, barlines
modern clefs, original note values, no bar lines
original clefs, original note values, bar lines
original clefs, original note values, no bar lines

Then finally comes the facsimile, for which the main surprise is the presence of ligatures. These are described in detail on a separate sheet, but if each stage has been traversed, these can probably be negotiated from memory, as can difficulties in reading the words. This could be an easy way into reading from facsimile, though it probably needs an inspiring director for it to remain a musical activity and not to become boring. Fortunately, the scheme is designed so that each person can progress at his own speed, so there is no compulsion on everyone operating from the same level. It seems a good idea. Byrd's *Ave verum corpus* is promised; it would be useful to have a simple piece in high clefs as well.

Byrd: *O God give ear* from his 1588 *Psalmes, Sonets and Songs* (CCBN 16003; £6.00) has the same colour cover but no facsimile; there is one score and a set of parts, with alternative clefs for recorders and viols. The vocal ranges are awkward, and although this isn't one of the pieces with a 'first singing part', with it's rhythmically distinct top part would suggest a solo voice (range of an octave from the D above middle C) with four viols (original clefs C3C3C4F4) Kelly modernises the notation less by keeping original spelling and notation of accidentals, but has short bars.

Handel: *Italian Trio I* (CV001; £9.00) is *Se tu non lasci amore*, dated 'il 12 du lugio 1708, Napoli' for SSB and continuo. I'm not sure whether many singers will use the option of the voice parts rather than use the score, but since both the continuo line and Brahms's continuo realisation are printed as separate parts, there's a score spare for one of the singers (though the words are a bit small for two to share). The parts are presumably intended chiefly for the option of playing the piece with recorders, an idea which I find odd, but if you inhabit a world where recorders are more common than singers, why not? It's good to have the edition available, and the Brahms contribution is a plausible harpsichord realisation, if sometimes a bit thick in the treble. ***Chandos Overtures X and XIa*** (EUT 003; £7.50) need little adaptation to become trios for recorders (XIa reappears in opus 5), though I would have thought that they would worked better with continuo than just a bass recorder. The edition gives an adapted and an original bass part, but no realisation.

Paisible(?): *Sonata pour 4 Fluti* (MPC 001; £7.50) has been published before. I'm put off by the way the score has the keyboard part in bigger notes than the recorders, but otherwise it is a serviceable edition, with, as usual from CCBN, extensive editorial remarks. The editor's intention to explore the source (BL Add. 39535-9) more fully is welcome.

La Barre *Suites XX and XXI (Douzieme Livre 1725)* has music for two equal parts are presented in three version in three different series: *Voice Flute Series* (VF-013; £12.00), *The Sprightly Hoboy* (SH 001 or VF 013; £9.00) and *The Proud Bassoon* (PB 002; £9.00). The Flute version is more expensive since it contains the music both at notated pitch (but in G2 clefs) for flutes and up a minor third for recorders, with

additional suggestions of voice flutes or violins. The oboe version is transposed down a tone; it also works on C recorders, though the only reason why violins would use it is that it is three pounds cheaper. The version for two bassoons (or cellos or bass viols) is two octaves below the treble recorder version. The designation of bass music for these three instruments is quite common, as is apparent in the Boismortier duets which we publish facsimiles – Vince bought a set of them, so expect editions of some of them in due course! The print is quite large, so I wonder it is necessary to include two copies in a set.

Gluck ***Trio Sonata IV (1746)*** (EUT 002; £7.50) is from a set that appeared while the composer was working in London. The decline of the popularity of the recorder very roughly coincides with the replacement of the late-baroque style, so there is something incongruous about playing and hearing these sonatas on two trebles and a bass recorder. But if players want to something to fill the vacuum, this should work well. The music is transposed up a fourth from B flat to E flat, and it that form, the editor is right that a keyboard part is unnecessary.

Even more incongruous on recorders is **Bruckner's** gradual/motet ***Locus iste*** (CCBN19001; £5.00); but that is the alternative scoring – singing comes first. We tend to think of singing from parts as a renaissance practice; but in most of Europe, it was normal through the 19th century. The first edition of Bruckner's *Vier Graduale* appeared in score (for the conductor) and parts (for the singers). Thanks chiefly to Novello, English singers expected scores from around 1850 onwards. I don't think that using parts has the musical merit that it does for earlier music, but this is an easy example to try.

Vince's bundle of editions also included a CD of *The Recorder and Music Magazine* vols 1-4 (May 1963 to Dec. 1974). This contains Acrobat files (readable on PC and Apple Mac) and costs £9.95. It is available exclusively in the UK from Recorder Music Mail/Jacks, Pipes and Hammers. The extraordinary title, analogous to the phrase 'musicians and singers' and implying that, like singers, recorder players are not musicians, fortunately absent from the current version of the magazine, Helen Shabetai. It is fascinating dipping around the files (which are searchable), solid articles mixed with quite parochial matters. One of the original editorial board, Anthony Rowland-Jones, is still active – he subscribes to *EMR* and was at the Greenwich exhibition. Other CCBN publications are available from Recorder Music Mail, cheapchoicebraveandnew@telus.net or via ebay: http://stores.ebay.ca/cheapchoicebraveandnew.

We have run out of time and space: blame our Egyptian cruise, the Early Music Exhibition and the crises affecting Elaine's unpaid activities. Our apologies in particular to Peter Berg, Edition Güntersberg, Edition Baroque, David Johnson, Henle & Breitkopf for postponing reviews of their publications until the next issue.

GREENWICH FESTIVAL OF EARLY MUSIC

Peter Grahame Woolf

Ibi Aziz (bass viol) Marais *D'un Goût Etranger*

John Henry Harpsichord/Clavichord Masterclass

Students of Trinity College of Music/Philip Thorby Motets by Michael Praetorius

James Bowman & Nicholas Clapton (countertenors) with John Turner and David Pugsley (recorders); Ian Thompson (harpsichord) & Jonathan Price (cello) *A Celebration for David Munrow*

Ensemble Telemania* and *La Flute Enchanteuse (Ella Kidney Competition)

Melopoetica Siv Thomassen (baroque violin), Iason Ioannou (baroque cello), Masumi Yamamoto (harpsichord/organ) and James Akers (lute and theorbo)

Colin Booth *Couperin, Dandrieu, Fischer and Muffat* on a new copy he had made of the Vaudry harpsichord at the V&A Museum

Edgar Hunt Memorial Concert Philip Thorby, Rebecca Miles, Ellen le Foll & Stephanie Pratley (recorders) Alison Crum, Ibi Aziz (viols) Susan Sheppard (cello) Tomasz Gniatkowski (baroque bassoon) Claire Williams (harpsichord, piano and chamber organ) Trinity College of Music Early Music Vocal Ensemble

Emma Murphy (recorders) *The Division Flute (1706)* with William Lyons (dulcian and recorder) James Akers (baroque guitar) David Hatcher (gamba) & Steven Devine (harpsichord)

Kasia Tomczak recital on a new clavichord by Edmund Handy

María Martínez Ayerza's Solo Recorder Competition winner's recital

This annual event has gradually altered over the years and has virtually become a showcase for Trinity College of Music's Early Music Department, with fewer outside visiting performers than we used to have (c.p. 2002). The 'international' aspect is now mainly signified by the range of nationalities of its students.

The recorder featured strongly, its players having also made an important bridge between old and new by presenting contemporary works at this festival (obligatory for the Moeck/SRP competition). Those have added welcome variety for non-specialist concert goers, and hopefully younger players of other early instruments will follow suit. The gratifying attendances for esoteric musical events (some of them oversubscribed) were swelled by visitors to the Early Music Shop's concurrent exhibition by instrument makers and publishers (which really is international).

Concerts in the Royal Old Naval College Chapel

Ibi Aziz, in 2005 the first ever winner on a period instrument of Trinity's gold medal, launched the proceedings with an engrossing recital of Marais, whose 32 *couplets* for bass viol on the familiar *Folies* theme seemed to rival Corelli's and Vivaldi's in variety and interest. There was a good turn-out for a morning concert, and at the end I thought 'it can't get any better'.

But it did! After lunch there was a full house for the **TCM Early Music Ensemble** of singers and instrumentalists for the biggest show of the weekend, a rare opportunity to hear five of Praetorius's unaccountably neglected and resplendent post-Monteverdian motets in up to 18 parts, one of them in two languages simultaneously. This great concert, under the inspiring direction of **Philip Thorby**, exploited the Chapel's ideal ambience and acoustics, with groups of musicians in the galleries as well as those on the floor. [I was particularly sorry to miss this – but a lone exhibitor has to stand by his stand. I would love in particular to have heard the *Vater unser*, whose merits I had been extolling to all who passed by. I've played it on several occasions with Philip, including the one at which we 'discovered' it, but haven't heard it from 'outside'. *CB*]

Amongst the smaller concerts in the Chapel, **Melopoetica** gave particular pleasure, with Siv Thomassen in a commanding account of a Biber sonata on her sweet-toned baroque violin.

Thorby also masterminded the last of the big events, a tribute to the late Edgar Hunt (1909-2006), recorder pioneer in the early music revival, associated with Trinity from 1926. His life and influence were celebrated in a perfectly designed concert which allowed us to hear a wide sampling of Hunt's favourite music. Directing proceedings mainly at the recorder, Thorby led a group of students and Trinity teachers, the high points being a Purcell Chaconne, a unique Vivaldi trio for treble recorder, baroque oboe and baroque bassoon, and as good an account as I've heard of Rubbra's exquisite *Meditation* which, in those old days when Hunt and Dolmetsch were active, I had enjoyed playing on recorder and piano (Hunt's preference for the accompaniment). To finish, a deeply moving presentation of J S Bach's funeral cantata BWV106, with one musician to a part and a chamber choir of eight singers from whom the soloists were drawn.

The previous night had been a celebration for David Munrow, a continuing influence thirty years after his tragically premature death by suicide left a yawning vacuum in the early music world. But the movement grew

and that concert allowed us to celebrate also another national treasure, counter tenor **James Bowman,** for whom no allowances at all need to be made at 65, his voice and infinitely subtle musicality in fine fettle. Partnered by Nicholas Clapton, a leading countertenor of the next generation, we had Purcell duets, Blow's Ode on Purcell's death and a strikingly successful novelty, **Judith Bingham**'s 'opera scene' on the death-bed conversion of the dissolute Earl of Rochester, a winning addition to a small repertoire. This concert was also notable for the participation of John Turner, who had been responsible for many 20th-century recorder compositions. Most substantial was Martin Butler's *Back to Ground*, an elaborate trio for recorder, cello and harpsichord, which cannot reveal all its secrets at a single hearing and urgently deserves to be recorded. [I was particularly impressed by Elis Pehkonen's *The Song of the Turtle Dove* countertenor (Nick), recorder (John) and cello, whose conclusion was radiant – not a word often used about contemporary music! *CB*] To finish, James Bowman held us spellbound with a group of solo Purcell favourites, ending with *Evening Hymn* to chamber organ accompaniment, before a varied reprise with Nicholas Clapton of *Sound the Trumpet.*

[I should have attended the previous hearing of the concert at Cambridge, and was sorry I missed it, since the manner of the singers was apparently very different, with the two altos really camping it up. At Greenwich, James was very mobile, though needed more dramatic direction for the moves to be really effective, while Nick was quite stiff, apart from an occasional facial expression. The voices sounded, from about halfway back, distinctive but complementary, though someone nearer the front thought 'distinctive' was enough. James was at his best in Blow's recitative 'So ceas'd the rival crew', which held the audience in almost complete stillness ('almost', since the row behind me seemed unaware of what was happening). *CB*]

Solo Recorder Prizewinner's Recital

The final concert of the Festival will have disappointed the reasonable expectations of those of us who were well pleased with María Martínez Ayerza's success in last year's prestigious Solo Recorder competition, at which she appeared unaccompanied, entirely on her own. For her Moeck/SRP Winner's recital she opted instead to present in Greenwich the ÆroDynamic ensemble led by singer/dancer Harma Everts. Their mainly contemporary trio presentation was an inappropriate way to conclude an Early Music festival, even given that we had some Dunstable and Binchois' *Adieu adieu* to send us home. Rolf Riehm's bizarre *Weeds in Ophelia's hair* (1991) might have passed muster in a British Music Information Centre 'cutting edge' experimental concert; Elizabeth Westerhof-Gaskill's *Gedichten voor Shiva* (no words or translations supplied) was dominated by Harma Everts' ritual song and dance. Donatoni's virtuosic *Nidi*, to which I looked forward, was dropped without announcement, and Maria's only solo to survive was an overlong piece from Isang Yun's *Chinese Pictures.*

Events in the Peacock Room, Admirals House and Blackheath Halls

Smaller events were held in these attractive intimate venues in Trinity College's buildings. They have limited space, so that listeners sometimes had to be turned away. Colin Booth played music in the French style on a new copy he had made of a Vaudry hapsichord in the Victoria & Albert Museum. There can be few instrument makers who command such stylish virtuosity as performers (See his website for recommendable CDs).

The clavichord featured more than previously, with a demonstration of a new, not quite finished, Edmund Handy instrument, and John Henry taught on both harpsichord and clavichord in his master class. His fascinating comments, often abstruse and esoteric, were hard for the audience to hear; a radio mike would help next year.

Jennifer Snapes and colleagues gave me more pleasure in flexible, expressive Rameau and Bach than did Ensemble Telemania, the efficient Ella Kidney winners, in their more formulaic music by Keller & Telemann.

At Blackheath a keen semi-improvising group supported former Moeck winner & PLG Young Musician **Emma Murphy**'s recorders in her *Divisions on a Ground* recital of late 17th-century English music. She is a versatile recorder player and singer who has maintained her interest in contemporary music for her instruments. The invigorating programme delighted those who made it to the other side of the Heath, with the items worked up from rudimentary scores and embellished spontaneously as they went. A CD is promised from Signum next year. Meanwhile, it was regrettable that her excellent *Celtic Celebration* CD, playing five different recorders with Steven Devine and Susanne Pell, could not be put on sale at Blackheath Halls after the performance – why not? It is beautifully programmed, perfectly recorded and most highly recommended. All young musicians have difficulties in making their ways and marketing recordings, so it is mutually beneficial for them, and for their audiences, to make CDs available for purchase at all concerts.

The International Exhibition with instrument makers and publishers from many countries (promoted by the Early Music Shop) is so separate from the Festival (one cannot go down to the bar for refreshments during intervals or after the concerts) that it would be better to have the Exhibition programme-book (not too easily navigated nor free of mistakes, e.g. time of the Blackheath concert) separated from the concert programmes. Those need to be better designed, with the information one expects such as dates of compositions, texts of vocal items and fuller programme notes – and maybe with less of the available space filled with photos and over-inclusive performer CVs.

We are grateful to Graham for letting us print this from his Musical Pointers website.

http://www.musicalpointers.co.uk/festivals/uk/GreenwichEMF2006.htm

THE EARLY MUSIC NETWORK SHOWCASE BRIGHTON, 2006

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Every other year, alternating with their International Young Artists Competition, the Early Music Network (the national early music development agency) organises a Showcase designed to present a representative example of performers to potential promoters. This year, the hosts and organisers of the weekend (29 September to 1 October) was the organisation behind The Old Market, the very attractive conversion of an old market and the impressive City of Brighton & Hove home of the Hanover Band. As usual, performers joined to offer composite concerts, each of the twelve groups or individuals invited to participate having about half an hour to present themselves. One concert was for an invited audience and Showcase delegates only, the rest were open to the public. There were around 80 delegates, representing Early Music Network's UK fund-holders as well as many foreign early music festivals. Thankfully, this year there was none of the outrageous and embarrassing self-promotion from one or two groups that dogged the 2002 Greenwich Showcase and the musical standard was well up to that of the 2004.

The first of the five concerts took place in The Old Market, Hove, and started with the very youthful group, La Follia, and their programme of Jewish Art Music. With a line up of recorder, violin, cello and theorbo, these former students of the Royal College of Music (and, I think, the Royal Academy) are in the process of making their way on the professional early music scene. Their programme ranged from Tarquinio Merula, Telemann and Handel to lesser-known composers such as Andrea Falconiero, Salamone Rossi Hebreo and Cristiano Guiseppe Lidarte. Their playing was elegant, musical and quite restrained by today's standards – and none the worse for that. The violin played a noble supporting role to the recorder, not always easy for violinists to do. It was a shame that the youngest group appeared first, as they could have learnt a lot from listening to, and watching, some of the more experienced performers. For example, they were the only group not to include a spoken introduction to the group or the pieces, which would have helped them to build a bridge between themselves and the audience – as would lifting their heads from the scores rather more often. Taking more time to acknowledge applause will also come with more experience (not least, of actually receiving applause) – as it was, they tended to immediately start fiddling with the music for the next piece.

La Follia were followed by a far more experienced group, Florilegium, who immediately showed the difference that years of experience and corresponding growth in confidence can bring – a confidence, of course, that can only be gained by regular performing opportunities for younger groups, one of the key focuses of the EMN Showcase and Competition and the more enlightened promoters. As if to demonstrate the performing opportunities for young players, Florilegium themselves include a young violinist in their line-up who is a fairly recent product of the London conservatories. They started with a successful arrangement of one of Bach's organ Trio Sonatas for flute, violin, cello and harpsichord, the latter's contribution sensibly limited to continuo bass and chords, with occasional harmonic figuration, rather than attempting complex countermelodies. Vivaldi's *La Follia* variations were given a very vigorous reading.

The second of the two Friday concerts was in the splendid, if slightly bizarre, surroundings of the Music Room of Brighton's Royal Pavilion – something of a shock to some of the continental guests. Although plucked from their natural habitat in The Old Market, this was a particularly exotic venue for a performance by the hosts of the weekend, The Hanover Band, directed by violinist Adrian Butterfield. Their programme was a four movement work constructed from two movements from Haydn's *'La Passione'* symphony, a slow movement from Mozart's Flute concerto (314), beautifully played by Rachel Brown (who gave a lovely spoken introduction) to and concluding with Andrew Arthur as soloist in the *Vivace* from Haydn's Harpsichord concerto in D. An impressive performance by one of our leading period bands.

They were followed by Mark Levy, viola da gamba, and Elizabeth Kenny, theorbo, with works by Marais, de Visée and Forqueray, the latter with *La Régente,* a very appropriate bit of regal pomp in the embodiment of our own Prince Regent's architectural excesses. Both players were fully engaged with the music and its projection, and produced sensitive and insightful performances. It was noticeable how alert they were to each others' playing.

The concert concluded with something of an innovation for the Early Music Network – a performance on classical Chinese instruments, the ancient 4-stringed *pipa* (a distant relative of, and apparently descended from the same Arabic ancestor as, the western lute), the *guqin* (a sort of dulcimer with one hand plucking the strings and the other sliding along them, produced an ethereal sound with complex harmonics) and the *di* and *xiao* bamboo flutes (played vertically and horizontally, respectively). Cheng Yu and Jan Hendrickse played music from Imperial China between 1425-1818 with such intriguing titles as *Wild Geese Descending on the Sandy Beach, Flowing Water* and the martial *Ambushed on Ten Sides*. Very appropriate for the rampant chinoiserie of the Royal Pavilion.

The first Saturday concert, in the old Parish Church of St Nicholas, started with Stile Antico, one of the highlights of last year's Early Music Network International Young Artists Competition, the well-deserved winner of the Audience Prize and the recipients of a rave review from me. And they will get another one this time. The 13 unaccompanied singers, standing in a shallow arc with vocal groups intermixed, produce a superb consort sound, with no single voice dominating and with each (including, notably, the sopranos) having voices that project without harshness. They have an excellent ability to control dynamics, producing exquisite cadences, and it is good to hear a choir that can sing quietly whilst retaining security of tone and intonation. And they manage all this without a conductor – indeed, in my view, the lack of a conductor is one of the reasons for their undoubted musical success. When not looking at each other, they engage with the audience, only occasionally glancing at their scores. Their programme was Ceballos, Sheppard, Palestrina, Peerson and Byrd, including his flamboyant and joyous *Vigilate.*

They were followed by Clara Sanabras and Retrospect and their programme 'Mythologising Pocahontas', with an eclectic mixture of pieces ranging from English folksongs to works from Portugal, Mexico and the Rowallan lute manuscript. One of the features was some imaginative and refreshingly unobtrusive percussion, featuring lots of shaky and rattly things – and, of course, Clara Sanabras's lovely unaffected voice (although she is not alone amongst singers in having a tendency to look above the head of the audience). As far as the programme was concerned, this could have done with a bit more oomph and better links between the pieces, perhaps by improvised interludes. Indeed, both this group and the following performer were perhaps better suited to a reflective late night concert.

Lutenist Matthew Wadsworth has received many complimentary reviews from me. His playing is delicate and musical with an extraordinary lilting quality – and he has a wonderful ability to draw the audience in to his world. He included his trademark Kapsberger *Arpeggiata*, a deceptively simple piece but one that shows his musical sensitivity. It has often crossed my mind whether this could be something to do with his having to learn all his music by touch, rather than by sight.

The Saturday afternoon concert in The Old Market started with London Baroque, surely one of the most professional UK groups around. They managed to make works that they must have played hundreds of times before sound fresh and invigorating and played with obvious enjoyment and a superb sense of togetherness, notably between the two excellent violinists, Ingrid Seifert and Richard Gwilt. They played a programme of Blow, Handel, Couperin (*L'Apothéose de Corelli*, with voiceovers in rather good French) and a movement from one of Bach's organ Trio Sonatas. Unusually for me, I struggle to find anything critical to write, apart, perhaps, from wondering about the brief omission of some of the harpsichord continuo to cover a page turn.

They were followed by The Gonzaga Band, one of the finalists in last year's Early Music Network International Young Artists Competition, and with the delightful voice of Faye Newton in the foreground. The cornett was considered the closest representation of the human voice – indeed I once described Faye Newton as a 'cornett on legs'. So it was appropriate that the other key contributor to the line-up was cornettist Jamie Savan. They produced a delightfully sensitive and musical blend, the cornett sensitively working with and supporting the singer. Their programme, *Il Vero Modo*, looked at the songs and duets of Monteverdi and his contemporaries, with the cornett often taking over the role of second soprano. There was some very attractive theorbo playing from Richard Sweeney, and Steven Devine's organ and harpsichord continuo was attractively restrained. One technical point is that I generally prefer the singer to get her note from the conclusion of theorbo tuning, rather than from an organ chord, which can sound rather too obvious.

The last group was Ensemble Fidicinium, finalists in the 2003 and the winners of the 2005 Early Music Network International Young Artists Competition, in a programme of Biber, Schmelzer and Weichlein. The line up of this group is two violins, two bass viols, cello, harpsichord and theorbo/guitar, the striking presence of the two viols being particularly relevant for the performance of the *stylus phantasticus* repertoire of the Germanic mid-17th century. Weichlein, in particular, made very effective use of this line up with five melodic instruments. And if you thought Biber's codas were extravagant, try listening to the extraordinary extended coda of Weichlein's Sonata III from his 1695 *Encaenia Musices I.* Finally, Colin Lawson, Caroline Brown, Trevor Herbert and Charles Medlam. discussed Historically Informed Performance.

The Sunday concert in The Old Market started with Mediva, stalwarts of the Brighton Early Music Festival, the latest incarnation of which overlapped with the end of the Showcase by means of a live BBC Radio 3 broadcast of the Early Music Show. Their programme, *Al Amor,* reflected love, longing and loss at the seashore through the moving Galician songs from the Martin Codex. They were the only group to make creative use of lighting, projected images and, most daring of all, of dance. They also read translations of the texts of some of the songs as part of the dance process, which I thought worked well. As with some of the other concerts, I wondered if this was a more appropriate late night affair – it was relaxed, dreamy and wistful, but lacked the virtuosity that can enliven performance. The projected sea-scene was rather more reminiscent of a calm day on Brighton beach than that Atlantic storms that batter the Galician coast (reflected in the words of the songs), though at that moment, Brighton beach was being battered by some pretty impressive waves.

They were followed by one of our finest keyboard players, Gary Cooper, fortepiano, with a programme of Mozart and J. C. Bach, starting with one of the flurry of works that Mozart wrote shortly after his mother's death, the

extraordinarily emotive set of variations on *Je suis Lindor*. Mozart's well-known Fantasia in D minor (K.397) was given an introspective and exploratory reading – Gary Cooper caught the improvisatory nature of the work beautifully. He concluded with a movement from J. C. Bach's Sonata Op. 7/6, reinforcing the notion that the 'London Bach' deserves to be better known. The intended fortepiano was not finished, so Gary played a 1790s Walther copy. Given the resonance of the instrument, I did wonder whether there was the need for quite so much use of the sustain pedal.

The concert, and the Showcase, finished with the six singers of Trinity Baroque and their programme 'A Taste ... of Sacred Passion'. They made effective use of the space, starting in a compact little circle in the centre of the auditorium and then moving from left to right of the stage area. Although they sang with more vibrato than I usually like, the pace and depth was generally slight, adding a shimmer to the overall sound and, particularly, to the gently undulating cadences, rather than producing the usually intonation, pitch and timbre problems. They made good eye contact with the audience, one of the keys to getting them on your side.

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LA GIUDETTA DI CAMBRIDGE

Neal Coleman

The dramatic and bloody tale of Judith (*di Cambridge* to distinguish this setting in a MS at King's College from an earlier one) was presented by Figur'd Shade at St Johns ARC, Old Harlow (19 November). The story, taken from the Apocrypha, or more exactly in this context, the deutero-canonical *Book of Judith*, has famously inspired several notable artists. Its mixed morality did not prevent Cardinal Ottoboni providing a text for this second setting of 1697 by Alessandro Scarlatti. It was a relief to hear the sustained notes of Graham Walker's cello underpinning the proceedings with excellent intonation. At this date, the chords of recitative were played 'as written', and Julian Perkins, who directed from the harpsichord, followed Gasparini's advice by holding the chords down while the soloists delivered Ottoboni's text. Having demonstrated a wide range in Paul Ayre's song settings, mezzo-soprano Lina Markeby sang the role of Judith's nurse as a contralto. This young singer has more sense than to dig for low notes, which will come into bloom with time. Her soporific but lethal lullaby *Dormi, o fulmine di guerra* revealed a technique with considerable control; the duets with Nicki Kennedy were invariably well done and no mean feat. In the exultant *Vincerò/ Vincerai*, their unalloyed joy lifted the music to new heights of inspiration. I have seldom seen singers and players enjoying themselves quite as much as in this performance and Julian Perkin's clear direction must have been a delight to follow.

His continuo realisation was also well played. It would have been interesting to hear what could have been made of hints from Scarlatti's exceptional written-out cantata realisations and his instructions for continuo realisation. These are held in the British Library, and were filleted and translated for F.T. Arnold's compendium. It includes instructions for the realisation of cadences which are confirmed by Gasparini, who taught accompaniment to the young Domenico Scarlatti. Discordant notes were to be added to certain chords of the new but potentially bland tonality, and perfect cadences realised by repeating the tonic against the dominant seventh chord. These 'mingled harmonies', also mentioned by North, still make perfect sense to composers today, and are surely not too spicy for the native palate.

Bernardo Pasquini, who was associated with Scarlatti in Rome, wrote that he liked making use of *piano* and *forte* dynamics in his accompaniments. Fortunately, there was a double manual harpsichord available for this performance and the coupled eight-foot registers were put to very good use for some of Holofernes' music, sung by the tenor, Paul Robinson. He is a singer on whom the Graces would smile as one if the stage lights had not caused him to blink. He negotiated the most sinewy of lines with such apparent ease that all seemed effortless. Nicki Kennedy as Judith had a charming stage presence and sang with limpid voice and a brilliant trill. Although occasionally a little sharp, particularly at the ends of phrases, her sense of drama was compelling and she despatched Holofernes and the oratorio's conclusion with great aplomb.

The singers should now be given the opportunity to take on their characters more and to sing without copies, which restricted their communication with the audience. They might also be allowed to keep the action moving along, as the dramatic thread was broken more than once. In general, consonants, particularly double consonants, needed more energy with 'v's and 'p's suffering in particular. More could have been done to shape long notes and the dynamic range could have been wider, but these quibbles did little to detract from some superb singing. The pitfalls of semi-staging were nicely avoided and the costumes did not appear at all 'low-budget'. In their ritornellos, the band did not always seem to know what the text was about, and in spite of a terrifically firm foundation, the violins' intonation did suffer, most noticeably at the beginnings of phrases. However, their unison playing was impressive, and, on the whole, tremendously spirited. It is an indictment of the debased patronage system of this wealthy country that, after seven years' searching, scarcely enough funding could be found for such a worthy yet minimal project. These performers deserve many more engagements to develop the efforts that already made for an immensely enjoyable evening, another tribute to creativity in spite of unduly limited time and funds.

My apologies to Sue Powell and Figur'd Shade for an incompetent advert which I concocted for them in the October issue and for neglecting to insert a substitute in the November Diary: I intended to make amends in the December issue, not remembering that the performance was in November.

LONDON MUSIC

Andrew Benson-Wilson

PHILIP VAN WILDER

How many readers could name Henry VIII's favourite composer as being the Dutch lutenist and composer, Philip van Wilder? His music directly influenced Tallis, Byrd and other Elizabethans, and the fascinating and enterprising concert (*The Kynges Mynstrell*) given by Cantores, directed by David Allinson in the impressive surroundings of the Great Chamber in The Charterhouse (2 Sept) demonstrated why. Much of this influence was through the continental style of Wilder's work, in its turn influenced by Josquin and Gombert and their ilk. Allinson set out to demonstrate that what we usually consider as aspects of the typical English 16th century anthem (including false relations) was in fact rooted in this Franco-Flemish tradition. He also included works showing how Wilder himself took up the style of the English composers he met, including Tallis's *Sancte Deus*, showing a similarity with Wilder's own version. A liturgical oddity was starting with Wilder's *Ite missa est*, a grandiose piece with voice piling upon voice like a peal of bells. Wilder's reinterpretation of Josquin's *Homo quidam fecit cenam magnam* was more florid than the original – typical of his treatment of the work of other composers (he normally added an extra two voices as well). Wilder's best-known work during his lifetime was *Je file quand Dieu me donne de quoy*, with its bouncy triple rhythms. Cantores started life as a student choir at Exeter University and, remarkably, they have managed to stay intact for a decade. They produce an impressive sound, particularly at fuller volumes. Although there were very occasional lapses of confidence, this was more than made up for by their attractive singing. I was particularly impressed with their cadences – neat and clean, and with pleasant warmth. For most of the first half, the voices were mixed, rather than in SATB groups – a common rehearsal technique that worked well in performance, not just for the concentration that it brings to the singers, but for the spread of sound that reaches the audience.

ESTERHAZY TO LONDON

The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment reinforced their reputation for innovative programme planning with 'Esterhazy to London: Haydn's Liberation' (19 Sept, Queen Elizabeth Hall) with the bewigged Simon Callow as the narrator, dressed in full 18th century garb as the personification of Johann Peter Salomon, the liberator of Haydn from Esterhazy to London. The writer of his script was not acknowledged in the programme (was it Callow himself?), but it was extremely clever and amusing with several up-to-date references – even to Polish plumbers. Naturally the music centred on Haydn's time in England, with his *Oxford* and the incorrectly nicknamed *Miracle* Symphonies. But the programme started, most unusually, with just a fortepiano and a singer (Alastair Ross and Martene Grimson) performing the poignant little farewell prayer, *Trachten will ich nicht auf Erden* that Haydn is believed to have composed the day before he set off for England with Salomon. The extremely impressive Martene Grimson also sang the aria 'Al tuo seno fortunate' from Haydn's 'London' opera *L'anima del filosofo (Orfeo ed Euridice)*, and Gabriel's 'Nun beut die Flur das frische Grün' from *Die Schöpfung*, the slightly mezzoish tinge to her voice bringing a very pleasant warmth to her tone. Clearly a young singer to watch out for. Frans Brüggen conducted in his characteristically laid-back way, exploring the many colours of Haydn's orchestrations, although the normally impeccable OAE experienced a few slightly awkward moments, either of general not-quite-togetherness or instrumental hiccups, in both symphonies. But how refreshing to hear a concert of Haydn in the midst of the Mozart frenzy.

BIG-BAND *CREATION*

Paul McCreesh gathered what was probably the largest collection of period instrumentalists for a monumental performance of Haydn's *Creation* (26 October, The Barbican). With a choir of 86 (half from an educational project with Chetham's School of Music) and an orchestra of 113 (strings 18/18/16/10/8 plus 6 of each of the woodwind), the Gabrieli Consort and Players completely filled the Barbican stage and produced the sort of volume of sound that Haydn must have heard when he attended the annual Handel commemoration events at Westminster Abbey – and a volume that is rarely heard today from period instrument bands. However it didn't quite match the 400 or so performers that Haydn apparently performed this work with in Vienna, despite the rather confusing programme note that suggested that this concert was 'a very rare opportunity to witness a re-creation of the gargantuan performances of *The Creation* which Haydn himself conducted in Vienna.' And those performances would have been in German, rather than English. The existing English translations were thoroughly rethought – work still in progress, apparently, as several of the sung words were not as written in the programme. Notwithstanding the vast forces, it was the *sotto voce* sections of the opening Representation of Chaos that initially impressed, alongside Neal Davies's remarkable singing of the opening recitative as Raphael, leading up to the climactic C major chord for full orchestra and chorus at '...and there was light'. McCreesh kept up this exploration of extremes of volume and orchestral texture, one feature being the placing of the trumpets and timpani

in groups left and right of the orchestra, heard to particularly stunning effect in the massive crescendo at the start of Uriel's recitative 'In brightest splendour'. The non-soloist woodwind players were also placed on the far left and right of the stage, giving a dramatic aural width and depth, albeit with an occasional lack of precision – I guess that period performers are just not used to sitting so far away from the conductor. Impressive as this was, it was not an error-free performance, but the forthcoming recording will presumably sort that out. It was interesting to ponder what effect the appearance of the contra-bassoon must have had on Haydn's audiences, both visually and aurally – it certainly made its presence felt in this performance, notably as one of Raphael's 'heavy beasts'. An innovation was having two additional singers (Miah Perssen and Peter Harvey) to sing the Part Three roles of Eve and Adam, with Mark Padmore continuing his role of Uriel throughout. Sandrine Piau sang Gabriel alongside Neal Davies's Raphael. All the soloists impressed me, although I am not sure why Sweden and France needed to provide the two sopranos for this performance sung in English. Paul McCreesh directed in his increasingly eccentric style, at several moments treating himself to a solitary little dance on the podium as well as his usual, and very slightly scary, habit leering over his shoulder at the front rows of the audience.

BRITISH HARPSICHORD SOCIETY

The British Harpsichord Society has organised a monthly series of concerts in Winchester's delightful little Milner Hall – a gothic gem and an ideal venue for intimate concerts. On Saturday 7 Oct, the group Emerald presented 'Ireland's Enchantment', reflecting Handel's time in Ireland set amongst traditional Irish music and a couple of modern compositions with an Irish lilt. The two impressive singers were Katherine Manley, soprano and Christopher Ainslie, countertenor. As well as solo pieces by Handel, they sang two love duets, although it was a shame that there was so little interaction between them, particularly in the farewell duet 'Se il cor ti perdi' from *Tolomeo* (which they also sang from scores, despite having recently performed the whole opera during the London Handel Festival). In the concluding 'Scherzando sul tuo volto' they did allow themselves some very brief glances but not enough to really pull the audience into their world. But their singing was otherwise attractive – these are two names to look out for. Instrumental works by Turlough O'Carolan, Cornelius Lyons, Roseingrave (a local lad) and several incarnations of Anon were played on various combinations of harpsichord (Bridget Cunningham), recorders (Laura Waghorn) and cello (Jennifer Bullock).

The British Harpsichord Society is also hosting a monthly series of harpsichord recitals at the Handel House Museum, alongside their normal events. One such was given by Katharine May (10 Oct) under the title of 'The Spirit of the Dance'. Starting with Byrd's *La Volta* and *Lady Montegle's Pavan*, Katharine then played one of Buxtehude's attractive Suites (BuxWV226), giving the Saraband an interesting hint of *notes inegales*. The French school was represented by d'Anglebert, Rameau and Couperin. The programme note for each of the pieces included a description of the dance in question and a quote from writers such as Mace, Morley, Talbot and Quantz reflecting on the quality of the respective dance. The concert was played on the Handel House's replica of Handel's own harpsichord, so it was inevitable that not all the pieces worked as successfully as Handel's grand concluding *Passacaille* in G minor, which was given a powerfully forthright performance.

MAGDALENA KOŽENÁ

The latest in the Barbican's showcase concerts (which do tend to follow a formula, but certainly bring in the audiences) featured the stunning (I mean this aurally) mezzo soprano Magdalena Kožená (27 Oct) singing arias by Mozart alongside symphonies by Boccherini, C. P. E. Bach as stocking fillers by her backing band, Il Giardino Armonico, directed by Giovanni Antonini – a concert no doubt linked to the marketing of her recent CD of similar arias, supported by her husband, Simon Rattle, and the OAE. To her credit, unlike some celebratory sopranos, Kožená did give the orchestra her full backing, taking the conductor on and off with her and acknowedging individual contributions from the players, particularly the basset clarinet and basset horn parts, played by an impressive Tindaro Capuano from a solo position next to Kožená front stage. There was also some good horn playing in the overture to *Mitridate, rè di Ponto* and Bach's Symphony in F (W183/3) gave most of the players solo opportunities. I did notice more string vibrato than is usual amongst period bands, particularly in the cellos in the opening of Boccherini's *La casa del diavolo* symphony. A number of continental orchestras have started their solo careers in the UK in such roles; although I think *Il Giardino Armonico* have still to achieve that. I reviewed Giovanni Antonini's conducting favourably when he directed the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment in May 2005, and his directing on this evening was a similar high standard. Kožená was most effective in the more subdued or seductive roles, notably in the opening of *Per pieta* from *Cosi fan tutte* and in *Deh vieni, non tardar* from *Figaro*. The more dramatic numbers were just that, and I wondered whether she was fully expressing the differing emotions portrayed, as opposed to giving a general all-purpose display of angst. That said, she has one of the finest voices around, her gentle vibrato having no effect on intonation and having a pulse that never interferes with ornaments or melismas.

EGARR & THE AAM

Richard Egarr's first London concert as the new director of the Academy of Ancient Music took place on 31 October in the Wigmore Hall. In his first round of concerts he is featuring his own keyboard playing, with a tour of all Handel's Opus 4 Organ Concertos, to be followed by a similar dip into the Opus 7 Concertos. In earlier out-of-London concerts he combined these with the 5th

Brandenburg Concerto, giving his fingers a further workout, although the London version of the short tour gave some of the other instrumentalists as chance to shine in Brandenburg 4, together with two of Telemann's 'Concertos a 7' (in F and A minor), scored for pairs of recorders, oboes and violins together with continuo. The Opus 4 Organ Concertos performed in London were nos. 1, 4 & 6, the last given in a version that referred back to its original incarnation as a harp concerto, with delicate orchestral textures (plucked bass and muted strings) and a curious combination of organ and theorbo as soloists, which I found unconvincing. The two solo instruments were competing for melodic interest, although the theorbo in continuo role (in the 3rd movement) was fine. And I have a feeling that Handel, once he had reworked a piece, viewed it in its new incarnation rather than feeling the need to refer back to the original. My other quibble with these performances was the choice of organ and temperament. The little box organ (itself very far from the sort of organ Handel would have performed these Concertos on originally) had a very fluty 8' stop, close to the sound of a Germanic Gedackt and most unlike the typical rather quinty English Stopped Diapason. There is at least one small hire organ in London with a proper Stopped Diapason and that would have been my choice, if a larger instrument was really beyond the AAM's financial means. In his introductory talk, Richard Egarr mentioned, correctly, that the English organ of Handel's period was almost certainly tuned in 1/6th comma meantone, but then went on to say that he had asked for the organ being used to be tuned in a modified ¼ comma meantone. Why? He further confused things by demonstrating the apparently meantone temperament, by playing an F major and an F♯ major chord – the later should have sounded dreadful in both temperaments, but the two sounded almost identical. All very odd! Apologies if I have lost any readers at this point – one of the penalties of having an organist writing the reviews! Anyway, Richard Egarr's playing was ebullient and pacy, occasionally slightly pacier that his fellow players. His elaborate application of ornaments usually worked very well, although they occasionally dominated, either getting in the way of the melodic line or interfering with the pulse. But despite my whinging, it was good to hear three of these concertos performed in one concert.

LA FINTA GIARDINIERA

The withdrawal of the planned director, Christof Loy (apparently, the result of an early tiff with the conductor) left his assistant, Annika Haller, having to draw on Loy's 1998 modern dress Düsseldorf staging to pull together the Royal Opera House's new production of the 18-year old Mozart's *La Finta Giardiniera* (21 Sept). I wonder what Loy himself would have done in regurgitating this production (if that was his intention), but I am inclined to think it is no fault of Annika Haller that the cobbled together staging struggled to retain credibility. Placing a large water feature between the singers and the audience is rarely a good idea (although a decking pier extending over the far right of the orchestra pit allowed some singers to get close to us), and the antics that the singers went through, around and in it were also not a particularly good idea either. It is always a problem for directors to work out what to do during lengthy *da capo* arias (I am generally of the stand-still-and-sing approach, not least because it more accurately reflects actual human speech behaviour), but providing toys like this is usually far too tempting. The plot, of course, is complete nonsense and doesn't bear much repeating here, other than to say that Nardo (who is really Roberto disguised as a gardener) loves Serpetta who loves Don Anchise who loves Sandrina (really the Marchioness Violante, also disguised as a gardener – the 'secret gardener' of the title) who loves Count Belfiore (who previously stabbed her and left her for dead) who loves Arminda who used to love Ramiro but jilted him and would be very surprised if he happened to turn up unexpectedly.

It cannot have escaped the mind of those that decide such things of the appropriateness of inviting Sir John Eliot Gardiner to conduct. Although he used the *Neue Mozart Ausgabe* edition as a basis, he also had access to more recent scholarship, including the Krakow autograph of Acts 2 and 3 and an even more recently discovered manuscript of the first (Italian) version which might have been linked to the lost score for the Munich premiere of the work – the first time that these changes in the score have been heard. Gardiner omitted some of the recitative sections, abbreviated some of the set piece arias and omitted the first two numbers of Act 3. One innovation which I don't think had any scholarly reasoning behind it is giving the aria *Da Scirocco a tramontana* (a listing of noble ancestry and a precursor to Leporello's 'Catalogue' Aria) that Mozart had originally given to Belfiore but later gave to Don Anchise, to both tenors to share between them – a rather neat device that worked well in practice as the two tried to outdo each other in aristocratic pedigree. Indeed, one of the keys to Gardiner's success as a conductor was to take it all seriously. He was given outstanding support by the English Baroque Soloists, a very sensible replacement for the ROH house band who never quite manage to do early opera justice. Playing from a raised pit platform, they demonstrated just how effective period instruments can be in spaces like Covent Garden – they, and their ilk, should become a regular feature there.

La *Finta Giardiniera* features Mozart's characterisation of the distant cousins of some of his later, and better, insights into the human condition and is usually held up as the first attempt to combine *opera seria* with *opera buffa*. The opening is pure *buffa*, all the characters appearing to be happy bunnies together until you hear the words of the individual solos and asides. The singing was particularly impressive, with Sophie Koch displaying some very accurate male mannerisms in the trouser role of Ramiro, Christopher Maltman getting rather wet in the pond as Nardo, Patrizia Biccirè (a lively Serpetta), Camilla Tilling (Arminda), Kurt Streit (Don Anchise), Genia Kühmeier (Sandrina) and Robert Murray with some slick comedy acting as Belfiore. This is unlikely to become my favourite Mozart opera, but with so fine a musical performance, it certainly surpassed my expectations.

INSPIRATIONS
the South Bank Early Music Weekend

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Tess Knighton continued in her tradition of giving a one word title, beginning with 'I', for her South Bank Early Music Weekend, which ran this year from Friday 15 to Sunday 17 September. It started with an introductory presentation and discussion in something called 'The Front Room' in the revamped foyer of the Queen Elizabeth Hall complex, which included such snippets as the fact that Mendelssohn's great aunt was a pupil of a pupil of Bach. This year's venture, as its title suggests, cast a rather wider musical net than in the past, catching *en route* Dowland with improvised jazz clarinet and a very impressive new composition by Fabrice Fitch performed by Fretwork.

The first concert featured the Freiburg Baroque Orchestra with fortepianist Andreas Staier (Queen Elizabeth Hall) and a programme of W. F. Bach, Mozart, Beethoven and Mendelssohn under the title of 'Inspiring the Romantic'. W. F. Bach's *Sinfonia in F* (F67) gave more than a nod to his father's baroque music in its structural form, although the music was *Sturm und Drang* in musical style. The orchestra produced a lush, warm sounds, notably in the long phrases of the first *Menuetto*, but their playing was often punchy and occasionally pushed too far, notably by the first cello, whose aggressive mechanical noise was a frequent irritation throughout the concert. Mozart's *Fantasie* in C minor (475) was given a dark and mysterious reading by Andreas Staier, who clearly recognised the improvisatory roots of such pieces. Unfortunately his fortepiano generated rather more resonance than Mozart's writing allowed for, a problem not apparent in the Mendelssohn – in those fledgling years, 38 years was a long time in piano development. Beethoven's monumental *Grosse Fuge* (a very obvious baroque inspiration) followed in a version for string orchestra with, for my taste, too much use of terraced dynamics rather than more subtle shading. It was given an intense and stark performance. In contrast to the last two works of the first half, the 14-year-old Mendelssohn's Concerto in D minor for piano and violin (written two years before the *Grosse Fuge*) was like being hung out to dry in a pleasant spring breeze after having spent a week in a washing machine. I am not sure that Gottfried von der Goltz had spotted the order of the instruments in the title, for he dominated proceedings throughout rather than reflecting Staier's more subtle approach. But the encore (a movement from a Beethoven's 4th piano concerto) gave Staier a chance as soloist.

The late Friday night Dowland Project concert (Purcell Room) pitched tenor John Potter, Susanna Pell (bass viol) and Stephen Stubbs (lute) against jazz clarinettist/saxophonist John Surman and Milos Valent, violin, in a supposed merging of styles that, for me, never really coalesced (although I have since heard part of one of their CDs in a shop that sounded very much better). Of course, this does fulfil one of the aims of the project, which is to allow non-period musicians a chance to play music like this 'as their instruments didn't exist at the time'. But only in *Go crystal tears* did I get the impression of the promised improvisation (or 'busking'): the rest sounded more-or-less scripted but, despite that, strangely disparate. Although he might not have the public profile of Sting, John Potter's gently lyrical voice is ideal for authentic Dowland, as was Susanna Pell's and Stephen Stubbs's support. But I didn't feel that the jazz contributors really added much other than what seemed to me rather too often like idle ramblings.

The Saturday afternoon opened with a free foyer performance by Charivari Agréable, wreaking havoc with the intended instrumentation of works by Telemann, C. P. E. Bach and Kress to fit their line up of baroque flute, two viols and harpsichord/organ, omitting the seemingly required bassoon, viola d'amore, oboe and, I suggest, an additional continuo bass instrument to add some weight to the harpsichord in the two Telemann Sonatas for flute, two viola da gambas and harpsichord. The premise was the influence of Telemann on two of his godsons, although he seems to have had no further contact with Kress and the C. P. E. Bach work chosen (the Fantasia on *Jesu meines Leben Leben*, H639) was about as far from the inspiration of Telemann as you could get. There was some impressive playing from Rachel Moss, baroque flute, and Susanne Heinrich and Reiko Ichise on bass viols; but from where I was sitting the little harpsichord was more or less inaudible above the general foyer hubbub.

'Music for the New Jerusalem' was the title of the concert by Ensemble Européen William Byrd (Purcell Room), directed by Graham O'Reilly, reflecting the brief glory that was Portugal in the early 18th century after the discovery of gold in Brazil. King João V spent most of this wealth on the extraordinary Convent/Palace at Mafra (which he saw as a New Jerusalem) and building up substantial musical forces. As well as setting up the first formal institution for the education of singers, organists and composers, he sent Portuguese composers to Italy to study and imported the likes of Scarlatti to his Royal chapel. The 12 singers were accompanied by contrabass, Spanish harp and, for once, a decent sized organ. Domenico Scarlatti's *Stabat mater* formed the centrepiece, performed in Iberian style with bass and harp added to the organ accompaniment – it is possible that this work, although composed in Rome, was also performed in

Mafra. But the highlight for me was the extraordinary 1737 *Miserere* for three choirs by João Rodrigues Esteves. According to the programme note, the reason for its composition is unknown, although I did develop a theory of my own, based on a visit to Mafra to play some of the 6 matching organs (2 on either side of each transept and 2 in the chancel). There are certainly records of multi-choir performances at Mafra, where all six organs would have been used, so I wondered if this work was intended to be sung by three widely separated choirs, based in the transepts and the chancel, with individual organ accompaniment. My reasoning includes the fact that I don't think there was ever a time when a solo singer from each choir sings (which would have been almost impossible in the acoustic) and that each choir develops its own polyphony before handing over to the other choir, rather than developing polyphony between choirs, again, easier done when the choirs are closer together. There is also a logic to movement of the music around the choirs, which would work well in the vast spaces of Mafra but was a little bit lost on the stage of the Purcell Room. The opening work, by Francisco Antonio de Almeida, could well have been the setting of *In dedicatione templi* that was performed at the beginning of the consecration of the Mafra basilica. An organ Toccata by Bernardo Pasquini and a *Sonata para cravo* by Jacinto do Sacramento, played on the harp, completed this fascinating programme.

The main evening concert featured La Serenissima, directed by Adrian Chandler, in a programme of Vivaldi concertos and operatic arias under the title of 'Vivaldi: violinist and impresario', focussing on the cross-fertilisation between Vivaldi's instrumental and operatic works (Queen Elizabeth Hall). This drew on the Berkeley Castle manuscript and the change in Vivaldi's operatic writing following the influence of Neapolitan composers, contrasting *La costanza trionfante* with the later *La fida ninfa*. Some rather direct introductions by Adrian Chandler set the scene – for example, he told us that the *Senza cantin* Concerto, which doesn't use the violin's E string, 'still goes bloody high', and referred to Vivaldi's early works as 'chundering on'. Mhairi Lawson was the very impressive soprano in works that often took on the form of a concerto for soprano, losing most of the vibrato that I find so distracting – it is amazing what a difference that makes to vocal timbre and intonation. Her enunciation was transparent and, perhaps helped by being Scottish, she made a very good job of rolling her 'Rs'. She engaged well with the audience, not least with the little shrug and a grin at the end of *Alma oppressa*. Adrian Chandler's solo violin playing and directing was energetic and often forceful, whether 'chundering on' or not, although I did wonder whether the isolated chordal movements like the *Grave* of the Concerto in B flat (RV729) are more effective when segued from the previous movement.

A neat collaboration with the National Film Theatre gave the chance for an afternoon viewing of the cult film *Tous les matins du monde*, featuring Jordi Savall and the music of Marais, Sainte-Colombe, Lully and François Couperin. This was complemented by the Saturday late night concert, 'Rhetoric of the Gods' with viola da gamba player Friederike Heumann (a pupil of Savall) making her first UK appearance alongside Dirk Börner, harpsichord, and Evangelina Mascardi, guitar/theorbo, in celebration of the 350th anniversary of the birth of Marin Marais (Purcell Room). Marais was represented by extracts from Books 2 to 5 of his *Pièces de viole*, most impressively the virtuosic *Le grand ballet*, the drama being the more intense for the occasional moments of repose when the gamba and theorbo died away almost to nothing, and the whirlwind *Le tourbillon*, demonstrating some nifty fingerwork. Very occasionally the gamba intonation lapsed in the no-man's land way beyond the frets, but otherwise this was a very impressive performance, with eloquent and musically sensitive playing from Friederike Heumann and her two colleagues, who had solo spots of their own in d'Anglebert's brilliantly ornamented harpsichord *Passacaille* and a guitar suite by Robert de Visée.

Sunday featured four events, starting with music by and inspired by Alexander Agricola (born 500 years ago) in 'Agricola Then and Now', with the viol consort Fretwork and counter-tenor Michael Chance (Purcell Room). Agricola's distinctive and occasionally bizarre music is in sharp contrast to that of most of his better-known Renaissance contemporaries, Obrecht, Josquin and Isaac, although his *Je nay dueil* came closest to their more lyrical style. Agricola re-worked many popular song tenors of composers such as Binchois and Frye, and these formed the basis for *Agricologies* by the French-born composer Fabrice Fitch, now an academic at Durham University and expert on the music of the period. The work was written for Fretwork and given its first complete performance in this concert [the Agricola CD that I commended in our last issue included only part of the work *CB*]. The four movements were performed alongside the individual pieces that inspired them, and were most impressive examples of how composers are rising to the challenge of writing for period instrument groups.

There followed a fascinating illustrated talk 'Time Stands Still' by Anthony Rooley, supported by Dowland songs from Emma Kirkby, looking at Queen Elizabeth I's spin doctor and champion, Sir Henry Lee, who provided the lyrics for several of Dowland's songs. The talk was based on an article in the current *Early Music*, based on the premise that a recently restored painting in Parham House, West Sussex, has revealed a portrayal of Henry Lee in his last appearance as the King's Champion, walking naked alongside the short lived heir to James I, Prince Henry.

The main Sunday evening concert was given by The Clerk's Group, directed by Edward Wickham (Queen Elizabeth Hall) and was a new interpretation of the early 14th-century satirical poem, the *Roman de Fauvel* enlivened by Anthony Shuster's reading of a comprehensive and frequently very entertaining and slick political satire by poet Ian Duhig (introduced, with some justification, as 'not for the faint-hearted, or for kids') and projected

images from the highly decorated Paris version of the original manuscript. Fauval is a horse (his name spells out the initials of six categories of vice) that manages to find himself on the throne of France, where he is surrounded by fawning courtiers, corrupt clergy and general decadence and degeneracy. Fauvel later attempts to woo Dame Fortune, but ends up with her maid, Vain-Glory. During the wedding (attended by the Antichrist, who was, it seems, also an anarchist, Death, Famine, Plague and War, amongst others) the Virtues try to improve the general moral climate, a task not helped by the buffoonery of the 'street-scum' musicians, the Charivari, who were apparently not very agreeable and rather bad at playing their instruments. Although the Virtues appear to win the day, the concluding cavorting of Fauvel's offspring in the Fountain of Youth, calling out for drink, suggests otherwise. Musically, the *Roman de Fauvel* includes examples of practically every type of notated music current at the time, during the transition from *ars antique* to the *ars nova*, and ranging from monophonic Latin songs and chant to 2, 3 and 4 voice motets, French rondeaux and ballads. The eight singers of the Clerk's Group (topped by three very impressive mezzos) were on particularly fine form, both in solo and consort. Rather like I Fagiolini's 'Full Monteverdi', performed at a similar weekend two years ago, this excellent show needs to tour and be filmed and issued on DVD, along with Ian Duhig's text – any promoters reading, take note. [There has been a vast amount of musicological energy expended on Fauvel since the facsimile appeared, but little has reached the wider musical world. *CB*]

The evening, and the weekend, finished in the foyer with The Orlando Consort 'letting down what little of their hair they have left' (their quote, not mine) in consort with the jazz quartet, Perfect Houseplants. In contrast to 'The Dowland Project', this worked for me. They drew on their two collaboration CDs, including movements from a *L'homme armé* Mass setting. This seemed to be a genuine interweaving of styles, well thought out and with some very neat contrasting of opposites. I particularly enjoyed hearing counter-tenor Robert Harre-Jones scatting with a soprano sax.

Having already had weekends dedicated to Inventions, Improvisation and now Inspirations, the book is open on the title of next year's weekend.

ENGLISH TOURING OPERA

BAROQUE FESTIVAL TOUR 2006

Clifford Bartlett

Cavalli *Erismena* (in English 17th-century translation)
Handel: *Tolomeo*
Carissimi *Jephte* & **Purcell *Dido & Aeneas***
Monteverdi *Orfeo* (in Anne Ridler's translation)

The idea of 35 performances spread through October and November of four baroque operas in 25 venues along with various workshops and promotional events should have been a marvellous way of introducing the public to the 'early'. There are also economic advantages to the company in being able to tour opera without resorting to cut-down orchestrations. But there was a basic flaw; my other main objections could have been tolerated if that flaw had not been so pervasive.

My text is a quote (not remembered verbatim, since I was driving the morning's work to the post at the time I heard it) from a Radio 3 CD Review interview with Catherine Bott at the beginning of October. 'I studied singing for three years at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, then joined the Swingle Singers and learnt how to sing in tune and in time.' What a damning indictment of singing teaching at music college. Judging by the singing from ETO, nothing has changed. I don't think that the Guildhall is unique in failing to teach the basics, though it was named more than other colleges in the biogs of the singers. But why are singers who can't sing in tune chosen? Acting ability may be important, but a badly-acted performance is less painful than a badly sung one. Who auditioned the singers? I doubt if it was the conductors –I know it wasn't for two of the operas. Were the auditions accompanied by an equal-tempered piano or a well-tuned harpsichord? Was attention paid to whether the candidates could sing different notes when filling the third in an E major and an F minor chord? Were they asked to sing passages in which exact intonation (without added vibrato) is essential to the musical effect? I'd have paired the singers and made them show their skill at the Messenger's dialogue with Orfeo, which would also have shown whether they realised that what is needed for interpretations is in the words and the notes. Vibrato is a related issue: every voice has a natural colour, but as soon as you notice it as vibrato, it's too much. (The same applies to tempo flexibility.)

If the singing had been good, I could put up with mysterious, perverse or fussy stagings. But it's better if they make sense. On the whole, the simple sets and actions of *Erismena* and *Tolomeo* worked, but for *Orfeo* and *Dido* the director had big ideas. Oh dear! I didn't read his note till

after seeing *Dido*. Apparently the work is about difficult choices. That's a change from the usual idea that it's about fate, and that the protagonists actually have no choice. It would make more sense to call it an opera about responsibility: Aeneas's is to go on and found Rome, Dido's is to rule her kingdom. The director is sometimes aware of the importance of costume, but presents *Orfeo* in drab, vaguely modern dress. A fundamental impulse of acting is 'dressing up': by adopting a different garb you can become a different person. If you dress people drably, you risk creating drab performances. One reason for going to the theatre is to see a world that is different from your own. The relationship between that world and any current one is a matter for the perception of the listener, and perhaps for chat in the bar – why don't theatres keep their bars open after the performance to allow that sort of conversation and for the audience to meet the musicians (if the latter want to) without hanging around the stage door? If James Conway wants to reinterpret the myths, he should create new works to do it, not foist an interpretation on Striggio/Monteverdi or Tate/Purcell that doesn't quite fit. I expect a director to express the ideas in the work he is engaged to perform, to be the servant of librettist and composer – and 'director's opera' tends to be far too libretto-based: I'm interested in his skill in staging, not in philosophising. Luckily, his *Dido* worked despite that.

Not that I'm completely against some modernisations. I can quote a couple of examples over the last 50 years that worked, because they helped rather than hindered the work. Back in the 1950s, there was a broadcast of Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida* in which all the Greeks were given American accents. Practically, it enabled the listener to know which side each speaker was on; but also Ulysses' character was enhanced by making him sound like an American politician. More recently, Handel's *Scipione* set in a Riyadh hotel foyer solved the practical problem of the convention exit aria – a hotel has lots of doors – and permitted close liaison between the singer and the harpsichordist in the recits by having the latter on stage as a bar pianist rather than more remote in the pit. Some, if not all, arias also had a new (but appropriate) visual resonance. Fine as single examples, but only if that sort of thing is rare. Out of the five works in this series, such a production could have been tried for one of them. Otherwise, Mr Conway, if you are let loose on opera again, read the libretto carefully, but understand it through the music (composers often deliberately distort it), and discuss everything with the conductor, the harpsichordist or, for 17th-century music, the theorbist (who will probably understand the music of the period more than anyone else involved).

I saw the series at the Cambridge Art Theatre on four consecutive nights (Oct 18-21). I hadn't seen an opera there since the rebuilding – indeed, even before that I can remember (with pleasure) only *Eugene Onegin* (with Roger Norrington and Kent Opera) at least 20 years ago and Euripides' *The Bacchae* in Greek with extensive incidental music in the late 1950s. Primarily a theatre, it doesn't have much resonance, and I gather isn't very helpful to the performers: I may have done better to have gone to the first set run at the Hackney Empire the previous week. Locals complained that the advertising wasn't very thorough (if they subscribed to *EMR* they would have found all the locations listed in the diary), and I was disappointed at the average age of the audience – probably at least 60! Undergraduates seems to have given it a miss: perhaps because of the cost, or perhaps because they were busy with their own activities. A practical feature was the lack of information on intervals. One expects three-act operas (*Erismena* and *Tolomeo* – and *Dido* is in theory a three-acter) to have two intervals, but they only had one. It is, however, a comfortable theatre, and I found the audience much friendlier than in a London opera house: strangers talked to each other.

My review incorporates discussions with people I chatted to at the theatre – this isn't just personal comment. In These included one of our CD reviewers, a young singer who has a PhD on Handel operas, an experienced amateur singer who gave up work to do a music degree and is now doing postgraduate work, a distinguished musicologist and reviewer (who doesn't write for us), one of our CD reviewers, and an opera conductor who works in leading European opera houses. I also overheard various comments from unknown members of the audience and chatted a few weeks later to a couple of the players.

Cavalli *Erismena* (18 October)

No-one that I spoke to or overheard at the interval had a clue about the story of *Erismena* or even the names of the characters. Some, like me, had started to read the synopsis, but had failed to get through the complex prehistory, even before they reached the account of Act I. It's a complicated story, and the audience needs help. The cast list was on page 12, with no indication of voice type, the synopsis on pp. 20-21. The pictures of the singers were on pp. 40-46. The audience needed clear clues to identify the characters: man, woman, cross-dressers – in one case, 'woman displaying her left thigh' would have helped. Having the house lights not fully dimmed would have assisted – one person I knew used her cycle lamp to follow the script. (It being Cambridge, I expect half the audience had come by bike.) Neither librettist nor composer had Monteverdi's (or Britten's) knack of making names a significant emotional feature of the opera: following *L'incoronatione di Poppea* is much easier. In the original context, the members of the audience would have had at least a list of the scenes on their knee if not a full libretto, so were not entirely dependent on the singers' diction. Interesting though it was to hear a 17th-century English translation, I would have preferred Italian with full and accurate surtitles (though preferably rather more precisely shown then in *Tolomeo*: so often we heard 'Ma... ' without seeing 'But...' till the singers were halfway through the sentence.)

Erismena is an erratic work. It has many moving scenes, but it is impossible to take the plot seriously, so I have no objections to the comic business; it was carefully kept in

the right place. The staging, for a touring show, was effectively simple. The small band played well, though unless more information has emerged since I last investigated Venetian opera instrumentation, the recorder and organ were superfluous. Brian Gordon (whom I used to accompany as a young alto but hadn't seen for about 25 years) secured excellent overall pacing: singers were not allowed to linger and it all ran very fluently (though I suspect, without sight of a score, that there was telescoping of final and opening bars). Apart from the tuning (the final chord reminded me of the end of Mozart's *Musical Joke*), I was irritated by the way long notes were usually were shaped by vibrato as well as volume. I didn't hear a single example of the Caccinian *esclamazione*, which starts strong and immediately weakens [there was just one example in *Orfeo*], and he makes no mention of vibrato being part of expressive dynamic effects. I found the women more irritating than the men, I think because the men made a more consistent sound while the women changed more often from slight to heavy vibration. I'm glad I saw the performance: Cavalli moved up a notch in my estimation, and it was nice to hear the music without the additional accompaniments René Jacobs inflicts on him. But it could have been so much better at no extra expense

Handel *Tolomeo* (19 October)

Strangely, although three of the five members of the cast had also been in *Erismena*, the singing was far more accurate. I feared the worst during the opening aria, in which Tolomeo was all at sea (I refer to his singing, not the plot) in the rapid semiquavers. Fortunately, he improved and the rest of the cast was fine. There's a gulf between the style demanded by early Venetian opera and that of the late baroque: non-specialist singers can cope with the latter fairly well, and anyway, although distorted and (we like to think) restored over the years, the Handel tradition is unbroken. The simple set worked well enough, though I was puzzled by the large vase of bright poison. I wasn't worried by modern dress in itself, but it demanded a naturalistic production, whereas the formality of a drama composed of da capo arias works better in the more formal attire worn by singers of the period. The plot is artificial and seems sillier presented in a more realistic manner, though the emotions come over whatever the staging. The band took a while to settle down – it must be difficult to turn up for a single night once a week in a different part of the country and play a lengthy opera – though not as long as it should have been: there were substantial cuts reducing acts II & III together to less than the length of Act I. But they soon pulled together under the ubiquitous and skilful Laurence Cummings. The music came across in its full glory. There are two marvellous duets and a fine dramatic recitative for Tolomeo, though the aria that follows (*Stille amare*) orchestrally missed any specific *affekt*: it looks on paper as if it is saying something different from the voice, but it just sounded odd. This may not have been an entirely ideal performance, but it certainly one that was worth putting on and attending.

Carissimi *Jephte*; Purcell *Dido and Aeneas* (20 October)

Dido and Aeneas and Carissimi's *Jephte* was an intriguing double-bill. The publicity listed them in that implausible order, but as expected, Carissimi came first. It is not, of course, a stage work, but it worked well enough on the bare set prepared for *Dido* and with simple movements for the six-voice chorus – though there was some inconsistency between casual and purposeful movement for which I saw no justification. It's the first piece between 1610 and Purcell that I got to know well, not from performance but from playing though the old Novello edition over and over again at the piano: every note is meaningful, but not every note had the resonance that it might have. The solos worked far better than the choruses: half a dozen opera singers are unlikely to sing the marvellous closing lament with the perfect accord of a specialist one-to-a-part ensemble. It didn't help that too much of it was soft: it needed to be far more full-bloodedly Italian. In the earlier choruses, where there is alternation between the three upper and three lower voices, the upper trio gave far more shape to the text than the lower three. Jane Harrington performed her lament movingly, and I would have preferred her to have been entrusted with 'When I am laid to earth'.

Dido is a difficult piece to begin: the fugue of the Overture bustles in a way that often sounds a bit ragged. Using it to accompany the cast putting on their costumes was a brilliant idea. Having the whole piece performed by a cast of nine worked well (though an additional singer would have left two-to-a-part in the choruses excluding the title roles). Before the performance, my companion pointed to the picture on the brochure (a much better-designed document than the programme) and wondered how anyone could have permitted such an awful promotional mug-shot. Unfortunately, on stage she did not appeal either, and I found it very difficult imagining Aeneas falling for her. That somewhat undermined the power of the drama. The production as a whole, however, was brilliant (and fortunately not conveying the director's message), though I have some doubts about playing the witches for laughs: the last execution for witchcraft in England was not until 1716, about thirty years after *Dido* was written. Musically, I was amazed to discover after the show that the rich continuo section comprised just the conductor, Matthew Halls, on keyboard and David Miller as a versatile plucker. I wasn't entirely happy with the end-of-movement rallentandos and the relationships between tempos. Some links are explicitly tempo-related (changing a time signature before the final chord of a movement isn't something that a mid-18th-century copyist would have invented) and following these would have enhanced rhythmic continuity. But it depends on how long through the 17th century one thinks that musicians felt rhythm through a regular tactus.

Monteverdi *Orfeo* (21 October)

The opening was weird. As with other productions in the series, there was no curtain and singers wandered onto the stage while the audience was assembling and chatting., Then,

I don't know why, there was a long and embarrassed silence while nothing happened. Was a crucial member of the band not there? ('I've lost my trumpet!' – not entirely implausible, since on my arrival one of the players asked me if I could find him a recorder anywhere). I was tempted to start 'Why are we waiting?' and my companion asked if I had a score so she could begin Musica's song. If the delay was significant, we needed a clue. That applied to other actions. The point of the prologue was lost by merging Musica into the rest of the cast and submerging the theme that is part of the work: the power of music. Is it ironic? Is it really the power of music (or whatever music symbolises) that gets Orfeo into the underworld? It is possible to argue that Orfeo bores Charon to sleep, or that what succeeds is not the artifice of 'Possente spirto' but the raw emotion of 'rendetemi il mio ben', or even the wordless Sinfonia that follows it.

Why was Orfeo given green gloves? Some thought it was to show that he was a lyre-player, I assumed to suggest that the scruffy singers were gardeners, recreating in miniature the artificial world of Arcadia. Or perhaps a sign of office as the group's leader or even its musician (hung on a tree with others when he passed on). Or were they a dated reference to the 2002 'green gloves' campaign against genetic modification? But they certainly were not a sign of a politically correct gang. The snatching and taunting with a lame man's stick reminded me of a sick production of *King Arthur* in Stuttgart conducted by the paraplegic Alan Hacker from his wheel-chair. The opera began gratuitously with a dance for people in wheel chairs knocking each other over: Alan was offended – the director must have known that Alan was conducting the production – his wife complained, and Alan was never asked back to a theatre where he had done excellent work. My companion that evening is wheel-chair dependent: she wasn't offended, but couldn't see the point. (Her comment on the performance was that the best bit was the trees.) Normally – and it's built into the libretto and music – there is a contrast between the two worlds of earth and Hades, usually indicated by lighting and/or costume – but this was ignored visually. One may want to argue that they are different sides of the same world, but that doesn't require the director to conceal the difference. There was a lot of stage business that wasn't understood – and an audience at Cambridge is not likely to be stupid. The idea of putting local singers in the pit for the Acts III & IV choruses worked well: why they were necessary was shown by the embarrassing 'Ahi caso acerbo' from the stage. The crucial element of the continuo playing, led by musical director Rob Howarth, was excellent: would that the singers had been as stylish.

I haven't mentioned singers by name. They will no doubt have successful careers. But if they intend to perform 17th-century music they should each find a good lutenist and work on Dowland or early monody until they can sing to the pitch of the accompaniment and can shape a note without falling back on increasing the vibrato. They (especially the ladies) also need to practise getting the words across. And the lady from Rio de Janeiro needs to work on her English vowels.

Sad that this marvellous opportunity to present so widely four great works and one good evening's entertainment was ruined by not making integral to the planning of the project someone who really understood 17th-century opera. I won't say that the effort was wasted, but it was disappointing. The programme gives a biog of a new member of ETO's board of directors who is a consultant on circus: surely she wouldn't encourage a tight-rope artist who wobbled? I don't like writing so critical a review of such an enterprising scheme, and I certainly don't want to discourage any repetition. Nor am I objecting from a doctrinaire early-music viewpoint: I'm aware of what others thought as well. Intonation is vital to most sorts of music (it was, for instance, taken seriously in the TV competition-auditions for Maria earlier this autumn). A conductor hasn't much chance to save the situation when the cast is chosen without his input. The only time I was involved in a high-level operatic production, the audition panel was the conductor, the impresario, and myself (as editor and expert on the style). No – I'm not looking for a job. But with music from a specific period that makes no sense unless performed with expert knowledge, and that knowledge shouldn't be shut away in the pit.

STRAVINSKY & MONTEVERDI

The Gabrieli Consort and Players celebrated their 25th anniversary in an unexpected but highly successful programme of Stravinsky and Monteverdi (Christ Church, Spitalfields, 22 Nov.) Stravinsky's *Mass* was interspersed with his less astringent *Ave Maria* and *Pater noster* and solo motets by Monteverdi for tenor and continuo. The hero of the evening was Charles Daniels, who threw off with ease Monteverdi's virtuosic writing; one needed to know the music extremely well to distinguish what was notated from what was added by the singer. The common link of Venice is a bit far-fetched, and the idea that early-music performance is following the Stravinsky non-interpretional line is passé. But it was an illuminating pairing – and nice that the modern brass could switch to cornett and sackbut for the 1610 encore. The specialising of instruments makes such mixed programmes much rarer than in the early days of early music. *CB*

Early Music Review is published on the first of February, April, June, August, October & December
International Diary published every month by
King's Music, Redcroft, Banks End, Wyton, Huntingdon, Cambs., PE28 2AA
Tel +44 (0) 1480 452076 fax +44 (0)1480 450821
e-mail clifford.bartlett@btopenworld.com
www.kings-music.co.uk
Annual subscription UK: £22.50 Europe: £27.50
Rest of World: £40.00 (air) £27.50 (surface)
(foreign rates £5 cheaper without Diary)
Sterling cheques made payable to King's Music
We accept cheques in Euros and US checks in sUS at the current exchange rate
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SIMON RAVENS

Ravens View

On radio and in the press of late there has been a queue of informed early-music luminaries lining up to pay court to Sting's recent disc of Dowland. Perhaps good manners tell them that they must, in the same way that 400 years ago people with functioning noses were probably persuaded, if put on the spot, to tell Queen Elizabeth I that her breath smelt just dandy (apparently it didn't). But on the grounds that Sting can't actually execute me, can I step out of line and say that I think his Dowland sounds toe-cringingly awful?

I like Sting as a musician and a singer (I'm calling to mind that one about the Russians and their babies) but I don't think this disc should ever have been made public. When Sting sings Dowland as Sting it's not good – a heart-on-sleeve emoting which is completely at odds with the hidden, interior passions of the texts. But what I find much worse is when he lapses into a quaint Merrie England singerese. He often does this on the second line of a rhyming couplet, making the poetry sound twee when it is anything but. What with Paul McCartney's latest oratorio, and Anne-Sophie von Otter Abba covers, I could almost create a special section in Grove Music for discs like Sting's. I really think that it is one thing having a musical identity crisis, but it is quite another to expect it to be funded by the cd-buying public.

So, I now sound like an old curmudgeon (hey-ho, it comes to us all) if I say that to anyone who wants a fix of Dowland this Christmas, why not go out and buy Poème Harmonique's new disc (Alpha 100) of Charles Tessier? True, it includes only one piece of Dowland, but how wonderful to hear *Burst forth my teares* sung with such acute psychological intensity. I would never have imagined that Dowland's music was not native to Poème Harmonique's singers.

By contrast, the music on Florilegium's second Bolivian Baroque CD (CCSSA24806) may have been unearthed from an archive virtually beneath the feet of their locally-sourced singers, but who could have guessed? Granted, most of the music is anonymous in every respect, but all-the-more opportunity for the choir to wow us with unfamiliar colours and idioms. Instead, they sound like a poor British university chamber choir, worthy and stolid from beginning to end – occasionally excitable, but never exciting. It is not that they are sometimes flat in pitch which bothers me, but that they are always flat in colour. Florilegium's playing is beautiful, as one would expect from one of Europe's leading period bands, but if the project affected their style, I failed to hear how.

Now, if I was a well-mannered person, I suspect I would not have just written any of that last paragraph. The point is that Ashley Solomon and Florilegium have invested huge amounts of time, skill and energy in working with their Bolivian singers and this is surely (ignoring the glaring conjunction of air travel and rain forest) a Good Thing. Well, I realise that on a human level it must have been a wonderful project for all involved – I've certainly never seen more smiles in a CD booklet – but is that enough to justify a commercial recording, let alone a full-price one? My ears tell me not.

It sounds like a terrible cliché to say that Ashley Solomon has approached the Bolivian Baroque project with a missionary zeal, but from the outside that is exactly how it appears. And whereas once the phrase 'missionary zeal' may have been offered with approval, at best it is now offered with equivocation. I am not sure how I could justify teaching skills to other cultures and then asking them to exhibit these to western listeners before they have mastered them. However provocative it may sound, arguably the right-on thing to say here is simply that the choir on Bolivian Baroque 2 are not yet good enough. Let's not patronise them by pretending otherwise.

An altogether-different cross-cultural project is L'Arpeggiata's 'Los Impossibles' disc (Naïve V5055; see p. 51). Here, amidst the South Americans, Spanish and continental musicians, the vocal ensemble is none other than the King's Singers. How times change! From being the epitome of Englishness, the King's Singers now frequently find themselves in the most cosmopolitan of musical environments. Not just that, they seem to be relishing the experience. It would be easy to be sniffy about Los Impossibles – it's nothing more than a sonic extravaganza based on a simple Mexican romanesca – but that would be to ignore the creative talents of Christine Pluhar and the performers she has gathered around her. Never mind her improvisational genius, Pluhar does seem to have a wonderful knack of listening to, and appreciating, the distinctive skills of musicians. Is she teaching or learning from them – or, like all the best minds, does she make no real distinction? It comes as no surprise that the final piece, on a disc which is nominally by a group of early music instrumentalists, features neither instrumentalists or early music. Instead, it is the Kings' Singers performing a Catalan folk-song arranged for them by Goff Richards. Christine Pluhar, for that kind of humility, I pay you due homage.

Readers into downloads might be interested in the following email message from Corvina Consort [corvina@chello.hu]
The last concert recording download in MP3 format Wedding of Matthias and Beatrice, 1476.
Binchois, Busnois, Ockeghem, Tinctoris, Frye and other works from the **Mellon Chansonnière**

NOT-SO-SWEET HONEY-SUCKING BEE

David Hill

Dowland ***Songs from the Labyrinth*** Sting, Edin Karamazov *lutes* 48' 37"
Deutsche Grammophon 06025 170 3139
Dowland + R. Johnson *Have you seen but the white lilies grow*

Even before its release, Sting's Dowland disc attracted a flurry of attention across the media, much of which has died down by now, so this is perhaps a good time to examine it more calmly! Most of the everyday musical press, who are, naturally, not specialists in English lute songs, have been generally gushing in their praise for this disc (and there is certainly much to praise); but in falling over themselves to establish 'early musical street-cred', most seem to have written to the effect: 'pop singer-songwriter sings songs by old songwriter', but seldom comment in any depth. Presumably this is because most reviewers lack any knowledge of the lute song repertoire, or are afraid to be seen to appear stuffy when criticising these performances. (A hip Guardian reviewer, somehow unaware that *Have you seen the bright lily grow* was written by Robert Johnson, despite clear labelling on the CD, goes on to gush that this song was 'written for the soundtrack of a play...').

The album has been dismissed by others as nothing more than an exercise in musical vanity publishing by a wealthy pop legend ('Sting's risible lute disc', sneered another Guardian pundit). So with such divided opinion, I think it is only fair to examine the release using the same criteria that we would apply to a recording by any of 'the usual suspects' in the lute song world.

This disc has to be, love it or loathe it, one of the most important early music releases of recent years, and no 2006 Christmas party involving early music folk can avoid some mention of it around the Norwegian Spruce; and although I intend to be very critical, even by EMR standards, ultimately, you will note that I come to praise Sting, not to bury him. But unlike every other review I've seen, 'I'm 'gonna tell it the way it is', as the bluesman said; so the musical kid gloves are removed here.

The gimmick here, of course, is one of the world's best-known and respected pop singers tackling songs that have somehow come to be seen as the property of specialist early music singers. But is it just a gimmick? I don't think so. But – this disc 'tears my heart'. In some ways it is undoubtedly the best Dowland lute song disc I've heard in years (there – I've said it), and I've long been waiting for someone to record this music using this kind of 'natural' voice production, rather than the more projected style that apparently developed after the mid-19th century. However, it also contains some very sloppy singing, by any standards, pop, jazz or classical, and undoubtedly some of the most bizarre lute playing I've ever heard anywhere. (Has no-one else noticed this?)

The programme features only ten Dowland songs (plus the one from Johnson's 'soundtrack'), as well as lute solos and duets, and is further interspersed by Sting's atmospheric readings of short extracts from Dowland's well-known 1595 letter to Robert Cecil, all of which has the effect of making the disc into a kind of 'Dowland Portrait', rather like Copland's tribute to Abraham Lincoln. This potted life-story (well, up to 1595, anyway) is where this disc works best. It's amazing that no-one has thought of this simple device for putting Dowland into some kind of context before, either on disc or in concert. Sting's readings really bring to life a tense, aggrieved Dowland mumbling to himself as he reads back the words he has so carefully composed in this letter, upon which, as he believed, his life depended.

Musically, there are horrid blotches that will cause the Dowland lover to wince – I only have room to list a few. Sting decides to stop singing in the middle of the fourth verse of *Come again* and leaves his lutenist to sweep up after him and finish the song. Some of the textual underlays in later verses of songs (such as *Clear or cloudy*) have just not been thought through properly, and the words sound mangled and rushed. Like most pop performers, Sting closes his mouth and hums those longer notes that have words ending in 'm' and 'n' (*In darkness let me dwell*) instead of putting the consonants towards the end of the note's value. He takes breaths in quite inappropriate places in several songs, often breaking the shape and sense of the particular line; there is the occasional wrong note (most notably the big fat C instead of C♯ in the third line of *Come heavy sleep*), and as well as the frequent sausage-machine swelling bulges on many longer value notes (*Wilt thou, unkind, thus reave me*), there are unintentionally hilarious vowel sounds on others, such as the virtually three-syllable Geordie 'o' in the words 'soul' and 'stole' in *Come heavy sleep*, and the amazing 'Whoa! let me living die', in *In Darkness* – all things a good lutenist or sound engineer should have picked up on in rehearsal and corrected*. For most students of early music, these mistakes (for that is what they are) are the all-important little details that would have been ironed out in 'Lute Song Class Day One' – I know I'd never have been allowed to get away with any one of them. Of course, these songs are far from easy to sing, as students soon discover. Any singer who thinks lute songs must be easy because they're neither Lieder nor opera quickly learns to think again, so full marks to Sting for even attempting them.

For some reviewers, Sting's Americanised pronunciation seems to be a problem, but this didn't trouble me at all.

Sting started out as a jazz singer, hence the 'transatlantic' drawl. (I can't understand why American singers of lute songs always go the other way, and try to outdo Meryl Streep or Gwyneth Paltrow with their slightly too-perfect, cut glass English accents).

This North American affectation does mean that Sting often misses the chance to employ to his advantage the open vowel sounds that Dowland so clearly intended when he set longer notes to some syllables. I found it annoying to read some 'right-on' comments in the media (from musicians who should know better) that 'this accent probably sounds closer to the way an Elizabethan would have pronounced it'. No it doesn't. Thanks to scholars like E.J. Dobson and, more recently, David Crystal, we have a very clear idea of how Early Modern English sounded (rather like the sung equivalent of the secretary hand!), and we can be sure it didn't sound much like Sting does here! He sings 'Flow my tears', not 'Floor mo-ay tares'. (No-one has been brave enough to use EME pronunciation 'full strength' on discs since the early 80s; nowadays most adopt selected modifications of modern RP).

The former circus performer Edin Karamazov's lute playing is quite unlike any other I've ever heard. Even allowing for the close pop-studio microphone placing, I don't recall ever hearing anyone pluck a lute as hard as he does here. Sometimes it reminded me of heavy, two-fingered thumping on an old Remington typewriter (complete with a few two-pressed-at-once jamming key moments), and, bizarrely, to emphasise the last fugal entry in the *Forlorn Hope Fancy,* he delivers several very loud, echoing slaps either on the soundboard of the lute or the floor (I can't work out which), percussion details which Dowland presumably forgot to indicate in the tablature. Listening on headphones, one could be forgiven for thinking that one of the microphones might have been poked through the rose and into the body of the lute itself. Perhaps lutenist readers can give us a better idea of precisely what is going on here.

I couldn't detect any actual *wrong* notes in his accompaniments, but I'm sure there are plenty of missing ones, and his sense of rhythm, even in individual bars, is sometimes so wayward that it reminded me of a motorway traffic jam – that lurching, 'concertina' movement when cars advance a little, then stop suddenly in short bursts. Nevertheless, all Karamazov's push-pull tempi, heavy breathing, slapping, grunting and string-squeaking aside, I have to say it is certainly intensely musical playing, but to end the same powerful performance of *Forlorn Hope Fancy* on a minor chord, as here, is not just perverse, it is, quite simply, a wrong note. I don't mean to be unkind about Karamazov's playing, because he's certainly expertly flexible when accompanying Sting's vocal line – it's just that by now, in the twenty-first century, we're all accustomed to hearing the lute played to such a high, dignified standard of clarity on almost every disc, that this extraordinary, often rapid 'scattergun' splat playing really stands out – for the wrong reasons. He adds short lute preambles to some of the songs that 'start with a bang', which work quite well, even though they reminded me of Fellowes' notorious 'free pianoforte transcriptions' that were originally published beside each song when his editions began to appear in the 1920s.

Singers will notice that Sting uses the old faithful Stainer and Bell *50 Songs* edition for most of these songs, which still perpetuates Fellowes' 1925 re-ordering of the text to the second verse of *Come heavy sleep* in order to crowbar the words to fit the number of notes. Sting innocently sings this as printed, but these lines fail to rhyme after Fellowes' tinkering.

Incidentally, although no portrait of Dowland is known to exist, enterprisingly, on the Dowland page of Stainer and Bell's website you will find an oval miniature labelled 'John Dowland', depicting a smiling, bearded Elizabethan gent in bible-black livery. Perhaps those *EMR* readers known to be virtuosi of the ouija board will relay Dr. Dowland's reaction to S&B's use of the portrait of none other than Dowland's correspondent, Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury to represent their flavour-of-the-month composer?

For all my moans, this disc contains good, honest singing by someone who knows how to put a song across, and, more importantly, whose genuine affection and respect for composer and music is clear from the outset.

Whilst repeatedly listening to this disc I could not help thinking to myself: 'What would Bob Spencer have made of it all?' Well, although he would probably have had reservations about the use of the jazz singing style (and plenty about the luting), and would have wished to tactfully, but firmly correct all of the obvious mistakes

Semper Dowland, semper download

already mentioned, I suspect he might have approved of Sting's direct approach to the songs. Bob so disliked what he once described as 'the prevalent innocent choir-boy style of singing lute ayres', and continued: 'I think something more robust, expressive of the words is indicated by the music itself.' Robust is definitely what you get with Sting. When Bob sang Dowland songs to his own lute, he employed his natural, only slightly projected voice, which, as he freely admitted, was not the most beautiful, but... the effect it had! Bob's commitment to this music, and his remarkable ability to convey layers of meaning and always find new depths in a lute song was humbling, even when he was merely demonstrating short phrases to students. It is the highest praise I can give this album when I say that, in some ways, of all recorded interpretations, Sting's performances often come close to the essence of Bob's passionate, committed delivery of these songs.

However, for all this praise for such a 'natural' approach to singing Dowland, we should remember that there are lots of pop, jazz and folk singers, many of whom would, it has to be said, make a very much better job of the same repertoire given the opportunity, but who are unlikely to be invited to record a lavishly produced and promoted DG debut disc. I'd pay good money to hear Robbie Williams or Martin Carthy sing lute songs.

Here is the bottom line: thanks to this disc and its promotion on TV, radio and online, more people worldwide will be aware of, and, more importantly, have actually *heard* John Dowland's music than ever before in history. In fact, at a stroke, probably more people than the entire number of the 'aware' over the last four hundred years added together; and ultimately, that has to be a good thing for this wonderful music. For all the modern pop studio approach, these few songs are, for the most part, performed straight, and it could so easily have been truly dreadful. (Can you imagine what Madonna or Rod Stewart might have done to them?) But it still has to be said that it could also have been even better.

So, as you will have gathered, I still like this disc a lot, because the songs are performed relatively straight by someone who loves them, and it is a pleasant contrast with some of today's re-examinations of Dowland *et al*, dribbled over with saxophones and what-not, in attempts to make the music relevant today, or 'buggered about with', as my Granddad would have expressed it.

Buy this disc, o ye singers, if you haven't already, and perhaps take on board something slightly more dangerous and 'edgy' from a real expert in selling songs (in both senses) - and in doing so, help keep multi-millionaire Sting in bubbly over Christmas.

**Lutenist Karamazov (and the Decca engineer) also failed to spot and correct the inexcusably horrid F♯ (sung instead of F) by Andreas Scholl on the word 'moisten'd' in* In Darkness let me Dwell *when accompanying on his 2001 disc of Robert Dowland's* A Musicall Banquet.

THE PROBLEMS OF CONSORT SINGING

Anne Roberts

Consort singing – one to a part, and unconducted – always strikes me as more difficult than it should be. Perfectly good soloists and chamber choir members – whilst having all the right theoretical credentials to make them potentially good consort singers – frequently struggle to create any kind of sonority with four, five or six colleagues, let alone replicate the sound of the groups who have made their name out of this kind of music (such as I Fagiolini or the Hilliard Ensemble).

There are many challenges for wannabee consort singers: the slightest technical problems (and let's face it – we all have those) in the areas of tuning (relative) and intonation (absolute) are exposed in all their (un)glory; personal interpretations of 'singing on the beat' are revealed to be just that – subjective, individual, and unlike anyone else's; group members' response to performance – either weaving around like a willow in the breeze or glassy-eyed and monumental – can also detract from audience enjoyment; and perhaps, most importantly, there are the issues of ego versus humility and responsibility versus abdication of power. As a consort singer you must perform soloistically whilst maintaining an acutely empathic response to what your colleagues are doing, and you must bare the responsibility of producing an accurate and present vocal line which responds also the changing group performance. In consort singing, there is nowhere to hide. I've frequently heard it said that it is the scariest kind of music to sing – after all, as a soloist you can only really let yourself down.

Having said this, in the three years that we have been running Renaissance Consort Workshops at La Maison Verte in Languedoc, interest in the art has grown tremendously. It seems singers all over the world are getting together in small groups and eschewing the skills of the conductor to explore Renaissance Polyphony for themselves. There is nothing quite like the thrill of being part of the living, breathing, thinking, feeling, multi-celled organism that is the consort. Your response to your fellow singers, and to the audience is direct and visceral without the mediation of a conductor.

And the most wonderful thing about consort singing is that because it is so difficult, when you do get it right, the sense of achievement takes you to a place which is very, very close to heaven – which was, after all the original intention of the music.

Anne Roberts and Francis Steele (of the Tallis Scholars and The Sixteen) run the Renaissance Consort Workshops at La Maison Verte in Languedoc, an old wine mansion in the South of France which they now own. In 2007 they will be running three workshops for Consort Singers of varying experience. Call 01223 525261 for details or email anne.roberts@easynet.co.uk.

This article has also appeared in the Thames Valley Early Music Forum newsletter.

REMEMBERING *MESSIAH* & *VESPERS*

Clifford Bartlett

There are some works that I have known for so long and so well that it is difficult for me to listen to them because the music is so internalised: I don't need to play a CD, since it's all in my head, and performances (especially recorded ones) don't equal the imagined ones, which come attached with some of the emotional response to performances I have experienced. The *Vespers* and *Messiah* are the chief works that fill into that category for me, though the ways they have entered my memory are very different.

I was brought up on *Messiah*, as people of my generation often were. My father took me to the Albert Hall one Christmas when I was about eight – my first professional concert. We had seats behind the choir, and my recollection was not so much musical as of the gestures of the conductor (Leslie Woodgate, who for many years conducted the BBC Singers). I was given a vocal score that Christmas, and for some years isolated bits on the radio and playing through that were my only acquaintance with the work. When my voice broke, I joined the choir at the family Methodist church. *Messiah* was the most substantial music we performed (apart from operas by the organist), and since the singers were not very fluent, I got to know every chorus line and most of the solos for memory as they were learnt, and also often accompanied the rehearsals. This was, of course, from the Prout vocal score, whose introduction first alerted me to the concepts of editing and performance practice. (My Oxford UP *Messiah* edition is dedicated to the memory of the enthusiastic organist who, with a sometimes reluctant patience, taught me and the rest of the choir members so much.)

I have no memory of what our performances sounded like. I sometimes wonder whether we are too concerned with the way we evaluate performances anyway. Doing is almost invariably better than listening, even if listening gives a fuller perspective over the work as a whole. And most of us will, consciously or unconsciously, evaluate a performance according to its nature. Something that one would find atrocious in the Festival Hall can be enjoyable if performed by local forces in the village hall. My inner awareness of *Messiah* is utterly unrelated to any HIP performances. I have only played in a couple, both with local orchestras, and once conducted a 'Messiah from scratch' to raise money for the local church. I'm not sure if the image in my mind is continually updated or if I recall it without needing to work out how to double-dot 'Behold the Lamb of God'. Tempos don't have to relate to real time – a bit like the speed of silent reading being different from reading aloud.

Monteverdi's 1610 *Vespers* reached my mind in a different way. (I'll refer to it as a single work, though that has been questioned). I first encountered it in a broadcast in, I think, 1959, with Walter Goehr conducting largish forces in York Minster. I have absolutely no memory of it, but can imagine it from the maroon-covered score Universal published, with big time-signatures that make it look as if it was by Schoenberg or Webern. I bought a L'oiseau-lyre two-LP set soon after, and played it incessantly; I passed it on a few years later to Heather & Bruce Ramell, one of our readers: he still had it when I asked him a few years ago. I attended the first performance of the truncated Denis Stevens edition at Westminster Abbey, and was immediately suspicious on practical grounds, though I knew nothing about Catholic liturgy then so couldn't question that aspect of his scholarship. I was not involved in any performance until the mid-1970s. I used then to have lunch most days with Louis Halsey in the BBC Music Department canteen; Louis (father of Simon) had a well-known chamber choir and also a choral society in Kingston, so I persuaded him to book an early band for his Vespers performance. Much to my surprise, I find I still have a programme: the ensemble included Francis and June Baines, Mark Caudle played recorder as well as cello, one of the cornetts was Michael Laird, and the organists were Peter Holman and myself.

The breakthrough in understanding how the Vespers worked liturgically came from an article by Stephen Bonta (JAMS 20, 1967, pp. 87-106) which brought forward the idea of antiphon substitutes: other music (whether instrumental or vocal) could be substituted for the antiphons which framed the psalms and Magnificat. So the 1610 as sequence *was* liturgically acceptable. This and several other ideas lay behind what was the most significant performance in my experience, the Prom by Andrew Parrott and the Taverner Choir and Players in 1977. Andrew subsequently recorded the work, but it's the performance, and perhaps even more the Early Music Centre weekend course he directed before that, which impinged on me. Andrew was, for many of the early-music groupies in the 1970s, the ideal choral director, with an interest in researching early vocal performance with the care that others were applying only to early instrumental practice. His sensibilities, knowledge, experience and enquiring mind were developed in association with his friend Hugh Keyte, who had become the BBC early-music producer. I don't know where the various ideas that led to that performance came from, but they effected a complete change in how the work was performed.

There are two glaring problems in the sequence of movements as printed in 1610: *Duo Seraphim* isn't a Marian text and the *Sonata sopra Santa Maria* (to keep the 1610 spelling of the title) isn't relevant; *Audi coelem* is also somewhat

incongruous., So Andrew initiated the practice of shuffling them around, bringing in instrumental music and finishing with the seasonal Marian antiphon as the end of a truncated Compline. But the order of the 1610 publication is so unusual that I find it difficult to believe that it was assembled by a printer – it isn't such an incompetent publication as the *Selva morale*. Putting *Duo Seraphim* somewhere else doesn't avoid its irrelevance. I am suspicious of our faith that liturgical books are a full guide to what happened in the independent Italian state and ducal chapels. They had local traditions of which they were proud, and Roman decrees and instructions may well have been treated with the laxity that France and Italy apply to European Union regulations now. Also, the concept of substitution can be extended further. What was happening in the clerical celebration need not have been directly matched in the musicians' gallery. Odd bits of information (like the rule that the end of the first section of a Papal Credo should coincide with the Pope's recitation of the complete creed) suggest that what the professionals were singing may not have mattered too much liturgically. If a Santa Barbara celebration in Mantua happened to fall on a Saturday, why not do a Marian Vespers with a Trinity substitute? Purists then and now would have been upset, but the Mantuan duke's desire might have prevailed. I would give the printer the benefit of the doubt: the printed sequence works perfectly well.

There is also the question of how the congregation/audience heard Monteverdi's music. I presume that the chant would have been sung by a different ensemble at the altar: would the chant be perceived as part of the 'music'? It is interesting occasionally to be made aware of the whole context, but that is distorted if the functional music associated with liturgical action is dissociated from the liturgy and attached to the concerted music.

I assume that the 'da concerto' in the 1610 title in the continuo part implies that the whole vespers is for the court singers (virtuoso soloists), not the chapel choir. There is some evidence of a fundamental difference in style, the former being mostly loud, the latter more subtle and flexible. In broader terms, the assumption of 'choirs' in the modern sense in early music was being revaluated. By 1977, some of us were sceptical; I had probably already formulated the general rule 'assume that vocal (as well as instrumental) ensembles were one-to-a-part unless there was any evidence otherwise'. As I have written in this month's editorial, every singer should have a chance to sing the Vespers, but that is not to say that Monteverdi could have imagined a modern choral-society. Andrew's 1977 performance wasn't entirely one-per-part (though it was orchestrally – and that was unusual enough), but it moved in that direction.

In any performance of the Vespers, there is a shock when the tessitura suddenly changes at *Lauda Jerusalem*. At first, it could be taken as expressing the sentiment of the text. But the tessitura is odd, as if the basses have all been called away to a rival gig. It took a long time for anyone to link that with the idea that clefs chosen for vocal music could be an indication of pitch. The leading UK proponent was David Wulstan. Andrew rejected his use of the theory to justify high-pitch English trebles, but it lead to a thorough article on *chiavette* (*Early Music* 12, 1984, pp. 490-516) which may have been ignored (like Rifkin and Parrott on Bach's 'chorus') but which has only seriously been questioned by Roger Bowers. I've been reviewing editions and books (*Early Music News* started in 1977) with that topic to the fore in my mind and have found no reason to disbelieve the idea that high-clefs normally imply transposition. The other movement in high clefs is the Magnificat. An embarrassment, once cornetts replaced trumpets or oboes, was the top D in 'Deposuit': even if they did manage to hit it without cracking, the effect was spoilt by the expectation that they might. That is solved by transposition, which give a top A, surely not coincidentally the top end of Gabrieli's tessitura. Those who object to the two bass parts having bottom Ds in 'Et misericordia' should look at bars 34-52 of the *Gloria a7*: I've never heard of anyone transposing that work up.

While I wouldn't say I edited the music for the 1977 event, I did have a bit more than a librarian's responsibility in preparing it for that performance, as well as participating at the course mentioned a page back – I don't know if I was also playing keyboard, but I was certainly singing some of the time since, as I mentioned in a recent issue, Michael Lowe and I were the two basses to try out the passage with the bottom D. I was also involved in editing Andrew's *Early Music* article, adding a few footnotes about transpositional practices in vocal music arranged for solo voice and lute.

Andrew's Prom and the later recording are probably as near as any performance that I have heard to my ideal at the time. But I have been reluctant to play it again. I refer to the information on the LP occasionally, but can't even remember if I've got the CD reissue. The next performance I remember was Paul McCreesh's in, I think, 1989. At this stage, my edition was based on a heavily-corrected copy of Malipiero's (with the keyboard realisation cut out – not just for copyright reasons), with a BBC copyist's MS of the transposed movements. I had nothing to do with the chant for the Parrott version, but (presumably at Paul's request, though I don't specifically remember), I did some work which led to the never-completed pamphlet that we sell as a *Guide to Liturgical Context*. This uncovered the difficulty of relating antiphons of any of the main Marian feasts to the tonality of Monteverdi's music: not a single set of antiphons matched. Monteverdi seems to have deliberately chosen the least useful modes for his psalms. So if chant is used, most antiphons won't be in the appropriate mode and will need to be at whatever pitch links best, even though it will usually have the wrong interval patterns. This increases my own hunch that Monteverdi's music wasn't heard as relating to what the plainsong choir sang, so removes the need to perform it. Furthermore, the antiphon before the psalm might just have been an incipit; so if its full statement after the psalm is replaced by a motet or sonata, the inclusion of the incipit in a concert performance would be pointless.

My next Vespers involvement was the revision and typesetting of my edition. This happened just too late for Andrew's second Prom performance in 1990: Andrew insisted in using the new score, but the rest of the performers had the earlier material with completely different barring, which must have been confusing! This was the first large-scale piece of typesetting and editing Brian Clark and I undertook, and it is certainly our best seller – partly, perhaps, because of the musicological and editorial skill involved, but also because we can provide it in whatever form the performer wants, whether or not I believe in it.

I'm not sure if it just because people think I might then offer a good deal on the music, but I have also been asked to play in a fair number of performances over the last 15 years. So my awareness of the work as listener and editor is now mixed with the mental and physical experience of playing it. When doing so, I'm not making judgments about the ideas of the conductor or other performers, just concentrating on the relationship between the work and my own contribution to it. What I hear is selective, and primarily rhythmical. Whether the singers are in tune or not, have massive vibratos or nice clean voices, is immaterial to what I do, but I need to be aware of the slightest rhythmic flexibility and also, since it influences the thickness and length of chords, the conductor's shaping of stresses in each phrase. And this brings me to what has, I think, been the chief development in performance over the last decade or so: the concentration on the Latin text – and by that I mean the shaping of the phrase rather than just getting the right pronunciation.

Readers may have noticed my suspicion of rhetoric. That's not because rhetorical ideas are irrelevant, but because it is not very helpful to get bogged down in the 'naming of parts' or to think specifically through the renaissance interpretation of the classical treatises. Concentration on them is, I suspect, the result of the decline of real oratory among modern politicians and preachers. Those of our readers who attend early-music courses and summer schools will probably have come across Peter Holman relating Purcell to the way the English text is stressed, and Philip Thorby doing the same with other languages (and no doubt English as well, though I don't think I've been involved with him on English texts). I imagine other teachers do the same. Every phrase must have a text-determined shape and every repetition a point. In the early days of HIP, there was a tendency to shape bar by bar, presumably because the late-baroque theorists said a lot about bowing by the bar, nothing about longer phrases. It's not just a question about the stress of a phrase, but varying it according to repetition. To take a simple example from *Nisi Dominus*, one phrase has stress pattern is 'Fru-stra, frustra vi-gi-lat, frustra vigilat qui custodit e-um' (the stress on 'eum' is primarily because it is on the dominant: the point is not so much the stress but that the phrase needs to have its tension maintained until then). In some parts of Europe, Latin may well have been pronounced without much stress, but in Italy at least it was surely spoken and sung like the vernacular.

Listening to Paul McCreesh & the Gabrielis' new Vespers CD (details on p. 39) I was puzzled: was Paul behind the times or setting a new trend? I don't hear the intimate connection between the pattern and meaning of the words and the music, though I do hear at times the bar-by-bar style. In Monteverdi's setting of Italian, the traditional opposition of the primacy of words or music is irrelevant: they feel like one. In obvious places like the opening of *Dixit Dominus*, the text-based lack of relationship between stress and tactus sounds clear enough; but elsewhere there is not enough engagement with the language. Sadly for his musical future, Paul's catholic youth came too late for him to have benefited from the intimate acquaintance with the Latin liturgy (hence the irony of a methodist giving him liturgical advice) and language. It is possible to wonder whether the Italianate stress of Latin really is an appropriate way of dealing with an inflected and quantitative language. Have Latin experts considered renaissance pronunciation and the implications on singing it? Perhaps Paul is ahead of us.

The new CD does, however, seem to reflect an earlier stage of his career. The liturgical setting gives it away: the first vespers of the Annunciation when it occurs after Easter. That is a fairly rare occurrence, though it happened to be appropriate for the date of the 1989 performance. We adapted our edition for the McCreesh version a little after we produced our 1990 version, changing the barring to correspond with that of the basso continuo *partitura*. (That was BC's second Vespers; more recently he typeset Robert King's edition as well.) It includes chant for both the Annunciation and the Assumption.

There is much to enjoy in the new recording. An advantage of the shuffled order is that the polyphony ends with one of the most magical pages in the work – 'Benedicta es, virgo Maria, in saeculorum saecula'. Every single note is necessary, perfect, and in the right place. (When playing organ, I feel that playing any note other than those in the score here violates the music.) In general, I was affected by the 'nonnullis sacris concentibus' more than by the psalms, which tend to be a little hard-pressed in tempo and volume. The slower triple tempi are interesting: I haven't decided whether I like them yet. There is some overlap in voices with the Parrott recording: Tessa Bonner (with the same solo), Joseph Cornwell, Charles Daniels, Simon Grant and Richard Savage, with Jeremy West in the band. I haven't done a 'building a library'-style comparison, but this is certainly a performance worth buying. It will contribute something to my mental image of the work, though I suspect what I will remember most are Paul's concluding words in the booklet:

> How could one ever grow weary of those breathtaking moments when Monteverdi takes us into another world; the mesmerizing ending of 'Audi coelum' which seems to sum up the essence of Marian worship; or that sublime moment when those gloriously eloquent cornetts displace the mighty from the seats and the whole world seems to turn on its axis. To tire of this wonderful, timeless masterpiece would be to tire of life!

Roll on my next performance: 6 May in Norwich with Philip Thorby.

THREE *MESSIAHS*

Anthony Hicks

Handel *Messiah Dublin Version, 1742* Susan Hamilton, Annie Gill, Clare Wilkinson, Nicholas Mulroy, Matthew Brook SAATB, Dunedin Consort, John Butt 140' 01" (2 CDs) ££
Linn **CKD 285**

Handel *Messiah* Kerstin Averno, Patricia Bardon, Lawrence Zazzo, Kobie van Rensburg, Neal Davies *SAcTTB*, Choir of Clare College, Freiburger Barockorchester, René Jacobs 137' 22" (2 CD/SACDs in box)
Harmonia Mundi **HMC 901928.29**

Handel *Messiah* (1751 version) Henry Jenkinson, Otta Jones, Robert Brooks, Iestyn Davie†, Toby Spence, Eamonn Dougan *TrTrTrcTTB* Choir of New College Oxford, The Academy of Ancient Music, Edward Higginbottom 2 CDs 142' 19"
Naxos **8570131-32** £

As is well known, *Messiah* was subjected to much revision during the first decade of its existence. It was revised before its first performance in 1742, and Handel wrote new music for every subsequent revival until 1750, when it reached a form close to the version represented in the old Novello vocal score edited by Ebenezer Prout. That has come to be accepted as the 'standard' form of the work -- rightly, in my view: it surely presents the best version of each number in a coherent whole. Some of the numerous variants left in the wake of Handel's revisions were represented in the old Peters edition, but were largely ignored in performance until they became more widely circulated in Watkins Shaw's new edition for Novello (1959, revised 1966, 1981 and 1991). They now have gained further prominence in the variorum editions of CB (for Oxford) and Donald Burrows (for Peters). On record, Mackerras's 1967 recording of Basil Lam's 'performing edition' (actually the old Peters edition questionably embellished by Lam) seems to have been the first to feature some of the variants, and since then several other recordings incorporating variant numbers have appeared. In 1991 Harmonia Mundi issued a variorum recording conducted by Nicholas McGegan, with most of the alternative settings added in appendices to each CD disc, but the choice of variants was not quite right and the performance was lack-lustre. (The opportunity for a definitive variorum recording remains.)

These three new sets follow a more recent fashion of claiming to present one of the composer's own versions of a particular date, an interesting policy but with some inherent difficulties. One is that some details of some versions are uncertain, and another is that historical accuracy may conflict with musical instinct. It seems clear, for instance, that Handel never performed the full version of 'Why do the nations', but always used the short version with recitative ending he had devised for the first performance. But the first section of the aria is a magnificent musical paragraph, and the second hardly inferior, so that (certainly for me) the short version, despite its 'dramatic' effect, always comes as a disappointment. Similarly one feels short-changed by the reduction of the *Pifa* to its first section, though again this appears to have been Handel's practice in his later revivals. Interestingly, both René Jacobs and Edward Higginbottom seem to share this view, since each uses the longer versions of these movements, at variance with their claimed versions.

The historicity problem is especially acute in the case of the Dublin premiere, since an historically accurate text deprives the listener of any setting of 'Their sound is gone out' and (according to the 1742 wordbook) three texts first composed as arias ('But who may abide', 'Thou art gone up on high' and 'Thou shalt break them') should be sung as recitatives, though no recitative setting of 'Thou art gone up' is known. John Butt boldly takes on the task of presenting this version on record for the first time, but compromises by using the original bass aria versions of 'But who' and 'Thou art gone up' (the recitative 'But who' is put in an appendix on the first CD), while allowing the recitative version of 'Thou shalt break' in the main text and adding the aria in another appendix, presumably not wishing to lose it altogether. All of which is reasonable enough, and is explained (though with a touch of special pleading) in Butt's notes. Less convincing is Butt's decision to use the full 12/8 *da capo* version of 'Rejoice greatly', which Handel reduced to the shorter 12/8 in his autograph. He probably needed only a preliminary run-through to realise that the modulation to C minor was a dreadful mistake. (The long version has its place in Jeffrey Thomas's recording of the unrevised autograph text, issued on Delos in 2004, though his performance is marred by the unrelieved use of organ on the continuo.)

Handel's 1750 version, as (nearly) adopted by Jacobs, was the first to introduce the best known settings of 'But who may abide' and 'Thou art gone up', composed for the alto castrato Gaetano Guadagni, and now often sung by countertenor (here the excellent Lawrence Zazzo). There was also a female alto, so the main differences from the 'standard' *Messiah* are 'He shall feed his flock' sung throughout in F, though divided between alto and countertenor, and the C minor versions of 'How beautiful' and 'If God be for us'. The C minor 'How beautiful' is something of a rarity on disc, otherwise available only in one of McGegan's appendices, where it gets a more poised performance from Drew Minter. A tiny but perverse point is Jacobs' omission of the first two beats of the da capo of 'He was despised'; another is his adoption of the cut of one bar after bar 70, beat 2, in 'Ev'ry valley', an idea that Handel considered only in 1743 but perhaps never imple-

mented (it was marked in the autograph but never reached the conducting score). So if you want the only available recording of that 'version' of 'Ev'ry valley', you have to have Jacobs. There is little other reason to do so, despite the high accomplishment of all the performers. Jacobs expresses his customary dissatisfaction with Handel's scoring by employing a lute and a harp, the latter arpeggiating through an impossibly languorous Pifa and supplying a preliminary bar of barcarolle rhythm for 'He shall feed his flock' before the orchestra enters. It also doubles the violins in their unaccompanied passages in the Amen chorus. The organ is used inappropriately and plays regrettable solo flourishes before 'Their sound is gone out' and 'Worthy is the Lamb'. In most numbers, and especially the choruses, Jacobs continually makes dynamic changes that seem to have no expressive purpose and often become ridiculous (as in 'The Lord gave the word', begun softly). Final cadences are apparently a particular bugbear, and Jacobs enlivens them with a variety of effects, a *subito piano* here, an orchestral embellishment there. The virtuosity of Clare College Choir in coping with Jacobs' demands is quite remarkable (notably in sustaining a very slow pianissimo ending to 'Behold the Lamb of God', again with unclear expressive intention), but I cannot think the results will bear repeated listening.

John Butt's presentation of the 1742 Dublin version with a small group of singers and players, perhaps similar in number to the original forces and with the soloists participating in the choruses, makes a refreshing contrast, free of eccentricities. A slight touch of rawness in the strings of the Dunedin Players also contributes to a sense of creative evocation of the original event. The soprano, Susan Hamilton, makes a very 'white' sound that I found disconcerting at first, but came to appreciate as fitting the ethos of the performance. Obviously the nature of the version prevents this set from being a first-choice *Messiah*, but it makes an ideal supplement to any recording of the standard version. The duet-and-chorus setting of 'How beautiful' needs to be heard occasionally, and Butt's energetic but not rushed account, typical of the performance in general, makes a fine case for it. His controlled exposition of the final Amen is another highlight.

The choice of Handel's 1751 performances of *Messiah* as a model for the Naxos recording with New College Choir derives from Edward Higginbottom's desire for a 'collegiate' (vocally all male) version to celebrate his thirty years as director, using boy trebles for the soprano solos and two graduates of the College for the tenor and bass roles. (The impressive young countertenor Iestyn Davies, a happy intruder with Cambridge training, takes on the alto numbers.) It seems that 1751 was the only year in which Handel did not use women soloists, but instead allocated the soprano numbers to an anonymous treble ('The Boy') and presumably had Guadagni singing all the alto solos. Higginbottom does however twist his historical 're-creation' a little by dividing the soprano solos between three trebles and giving 'Rejoice greatly' to the tenor. (Handel did allocate the aria to John Beard on some occasion, but not in 1751, as it too is marked for 'The Boy' in the conducting score.) I feel that this also has to be regarded as a recording to turn to for occasional refreshment, rather than a prime choice, but anyone who happens to pick it up fortuitously for its bargain price will be well rewarded. The clean instrumental lines of the Academy of Ancient Music and the well-projected choral sound, with trebles incisive at high pitch and throaty lower down, give a somewhat Spartan feel overall, though Higginbottom's direction has plenty of spirit. (His Pifa is a rustic dance, utterly in contrast to Jacobs.) I am more ambivalent about the solo trebles. The boys concerned display extraordinary musicianship, but to my mind do not project the sense of the words, especially in recitative, with the nuance that a mature voice can supply. The Nativity sequence, for example, is matter-of-fact (not helped by organ continuo.) Nevertheless, the set most worthily honours the distinguished and unparalleled contribution that Higginbottom and his choir, ever-changing yet consistent in quality, have made to music, both live and on record.

I'd forgotten that I'd sent the Linn recording to Anthony Hicks, so wrote a short review myself. Since editing the Oxford UP edition, I've had very little to do with Messiah, whether performing or listening. But I was intrigued to hear what John Butt made of it. And very interesting it was. It isn't the glossiest of versions, and the chorus doesn't sound unnaturally over-polished. But it is neat and effective, and is roughly the right size (at least on the later evidence of the Foundling Hospital records and parts). It is a performance that has character but lacks mannerisms. So provided that you can bear to be without those later changes which turned the first version into the Messiah *we think as normal, do try it: I think it will wear well. One detailed point: John attempts to find significance in Handel's erratic slurs in the voice parts. I hadn't thought of doing that, and I haven't had time to check the autograph – it's been a busy month. Comment would be welcome. I have, however, often wondered about whether Handel's beaming of short notes into twos or fours meant anything. It isn't usually consistent – one wouldn't expect consistency from the MS of a composer writing at such speed. But just as the occasional bowing slurs give an idea how Handel is hearing a phrase, so sometimes underlay slurs, like beaming, might do the same. I am, however, pretty certain that the presence of a slur doesn't imply that the absence of one in a parallel passage is intentional.*

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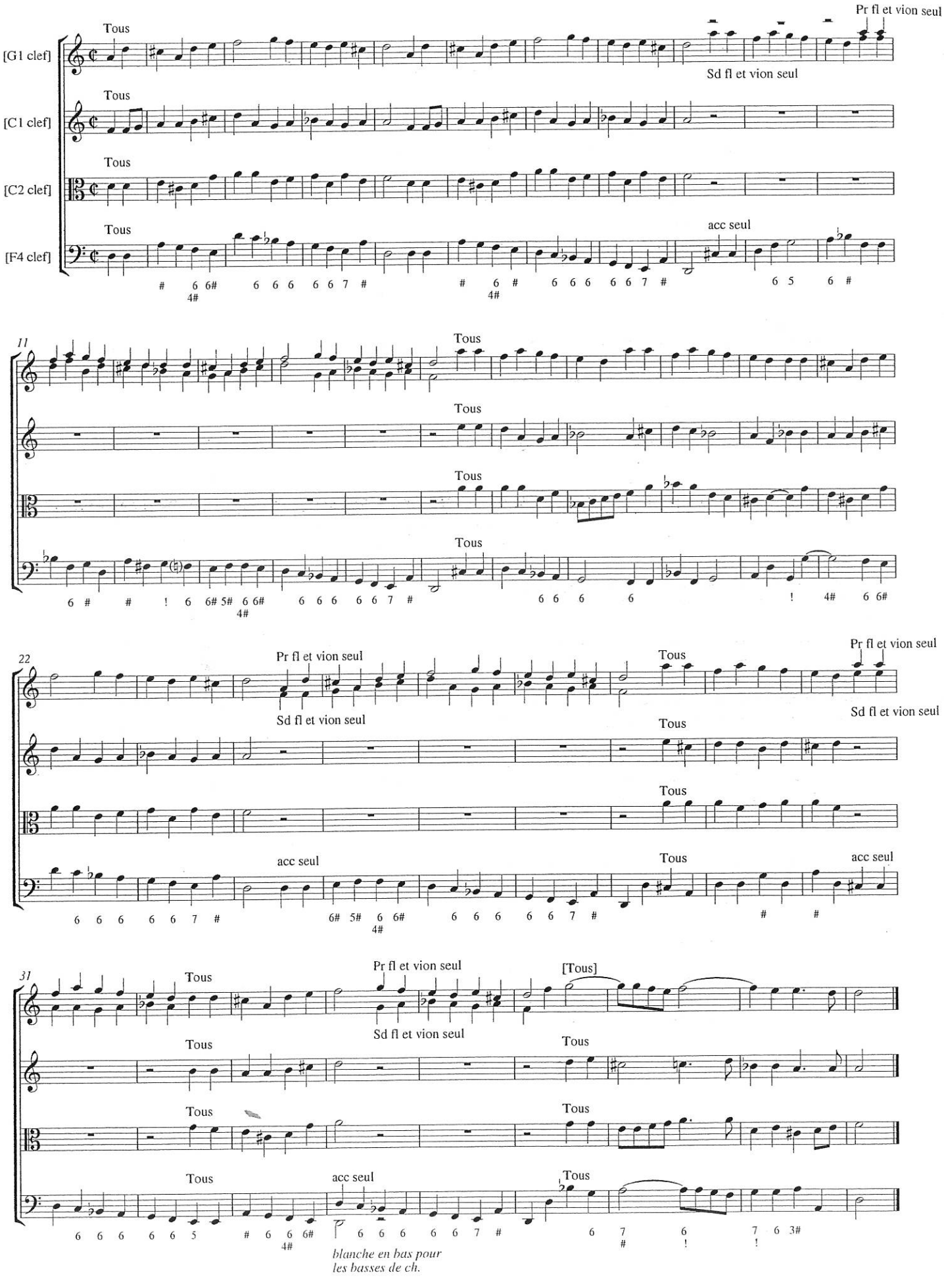
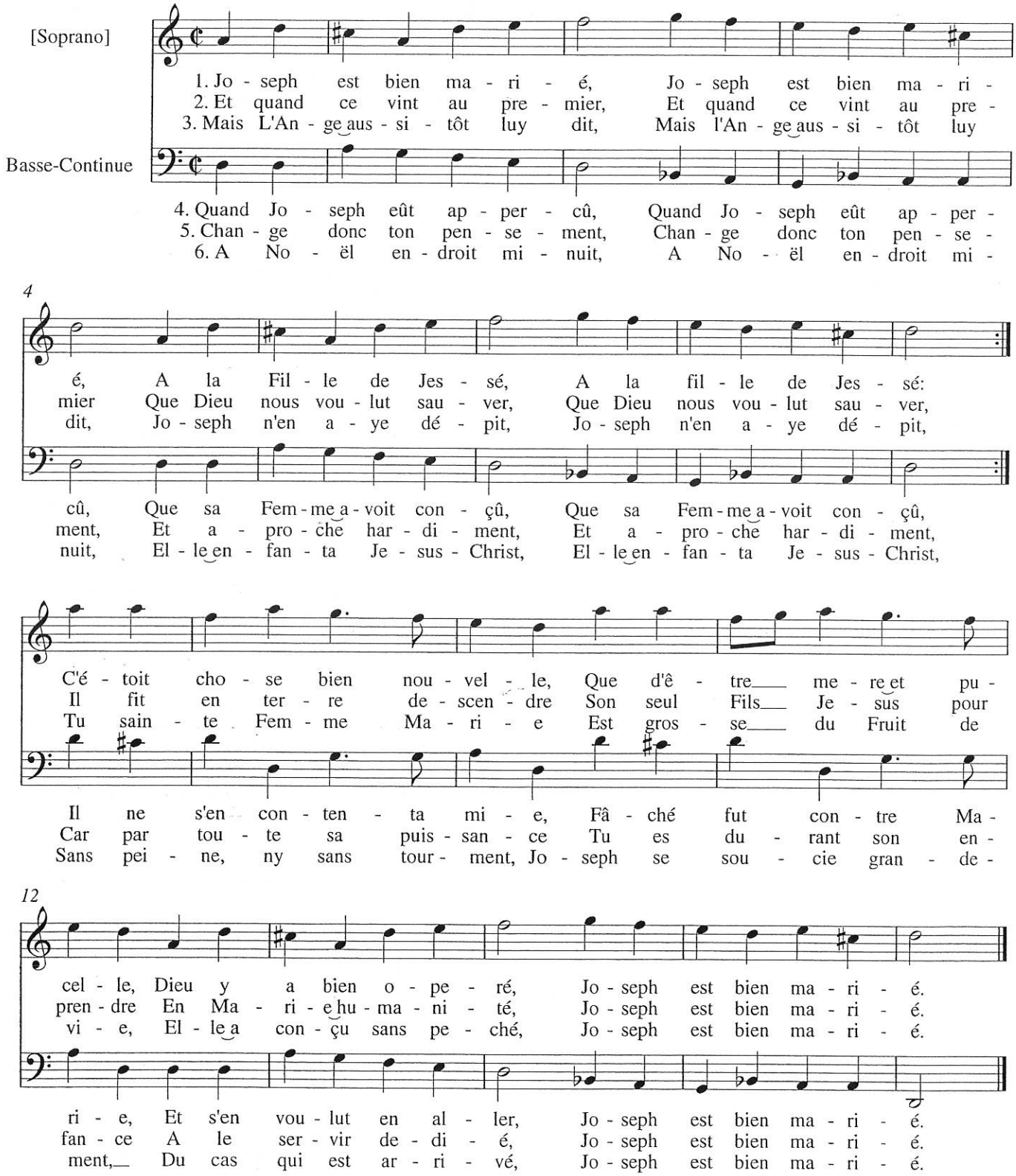
Joseph est bien marié

We have placed together on pp. 28-29 an instrumental setting of the tune by Charpentier (H. 534/3: *Méslanges autographes* V, f. 23v) and a slightly later version for voice and continuo (*Chants des noels anciens et nouveau...* Paris 1703). The user can devise ways in which these can be alternated or intertwined. The pitch is rather high for a soprano, but there is no need to take the treble clef as excluding high tenor or alto. The original clefs of the Charpentier are G1 C1 C2 F4. *CB*

Joseph est bien marié



Joseph est bien marié



REVIEWS OF BOOKS

Clifford Bartlett

GAFURIUS IN ENGLAND

Theodor Dumitrescu *John Dygon's* Proportiones practibales secundum Gaffurium (Practical Proportions according to Gaffurius) *New critical text, translation, annotations, and indices.* University of Illinois Press, 2006. xi + 194pp, $35.00

In my library-cataloguing days, we might have argued whether the main entry for this would follow the title page, and treat the editor as author, or Dygon, since the core of the book is an edition and translation of his text, or Gafurius, on part of whose *Practica musice* this is an gloss and adaptation. I'd give the editor the main credit. Without his extensive introduction and translation, publication of this early-16th-century pair of discussions on musical proportion would hardly make a publishable entity.

For the modern child working through the hurdles of the grade examinations, 'theory' is in fact a very practical matter – learning how musical notation works to be able to read what a composer has written and write what you might wish to write yourself. Medieval theory is in part that, but often only tangentially, since it got caught up with mathematics: this gave it respectability as an academic discipline but made it more complicated than need be as a guide to how music could be notated. A written notation for pitch emerged that wasn't dependent on the complex nature of intervals and the naming of them, or even the naming of the notes themselves. But such simplicity was a long time coming for the length of notes. A modern composer or editor wishing to make one group of notes take the same length of time as another can either change the timesignature and add above ♩.=♩ or for a short phrase, just bracket the notes and write 3 for three in the time of 2 or even 11=9 for eleven notes in the time of nine. That freedom didn't fully arrive until the 19th century (though earlier composers were happy to write irregular groupings without any distinguishing sign). But Dygon was a pedant, and had to spell every possibility out, not just state a principle, and had to name it as well. So we have, for instance, the *triplasupertripartiensquartas* proportion 'when a greater number contains a lesser number three times, and three fourths of the lesser: for example, 15 to 4, 30 to 8 and 45 to 12'. [The translation splits the long word into its constituent parts, but follows what is a sensible convention in such translations of leaving technical terms in the original.] He does actually notate it with a 15:4 sign, though reading is made more complex by the use of ligatures. I suspect a singer, if he encountered it in a motet, could deduce the meaning. But there is also oocasionally practical advice, and it is interesting that at one point a usage is rejected because it is too quick for the fingers or lips – he is thinking of players as well as singers. Music theory had a life of its own, running often only partially in parallel with notation and performance. Few of us can, or if they can would want to read the polysyllabic Latin, but at least some scholars need to be able to understand such works and digest their relevance to music, apart from their interest in the independent discipline of music theory – but reading this won't help with Grade 5.

All this is a bit vague. I should add that Dygon studied in Oxford (B.Mus 28-3-1512), travelled to the universities of Leuven and Paris in the 1520s and spent his working life at St Augustine's monastery in Canterbury, being prior from 1528 to the dissolution in 1538, when he changed his name to Wylbore. There is nothing to date the treatises, of which the first is explicitly by him the second, which follows in the MS, is a plausible ascription. A couple of fragments of music by him are preserved by Baldwin and transcribed (with minimal modernisation) here, and the musical examples are presumably his. The introduction is thorough and there are indexes of words, as well as names and subjects.

JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS

Richard Hudson *Jumping to Conclusions: The Falling-Third Cadences in Chant, Polyphony and Recitative* Ashgate, 2006. xiii + 205pp, £xx.xx ISBN 0 7546 5407 9

The title is a neat pun, describing cadences where the tonic is approached, not from the note above, but from the third (generally preceded by the fourth), and the topic that will interest most readers is whether the almost universal contemporary practice of filling that third in recitatives is valid wherever and whenever over a chronological range of several centuries. Hudson is a literalist: he needs a lot of evidence to convince him that composers don't write what they mean. One can admire the industry of someone who can count the number of figured and unfigured cadences in a Handel autograph. But Handel's figuring is so sporadic that I'd be very suspicious of drawing conclusions from them alone. The figuring of the contemporary editions might be more significant (of the common practice of the time, if not of Handel's expectations), but sadly they mostly omit the recits. Hudson argues that filling the third isn't necessarily automatic, happens more in mid-phrase than at main cadences, and wasn't obligatory even in the alter 18th century. This should provoke considerable further research. Our ears have got used to it: perhaps in Bach it should sound as obtrusive as when added by singers with a little knowledge in Monteverdi. There is, I think, less reason to question Hudson's belief that cadences should only be delayed when written thus – beware of the

notational practice in Chrysander's Handel. Bach writes what he wants: BG and NBA preserve that. He finds little justification for the keyboard to play suspensions to soften the vocal clash.

The earlier sections of the book discuss how the falling third is used from chant to Palestrina, which is in a way logical, but doesn't really illuminate later practise. The wide range of cadences quoted form the 17th century start the story of the cadence off again, though more attention is paid to the theory than the beauty of what is quoted. I happened to hear two of my favourite descending-third cadences a day or two before I opened the book. On p. 48 he quotes the daughter's lament from Carissimi's Jephte 'Plorate colles', but he doesn't quote final cadence (not approached from above) of Scheidt's Paduana V, where the third is just a throw-away little note that gives an individual close to an astonishing piece (see review p. xx). This is a really stimulating book that I hope will receive the attention it deserves. Perhaps the word-play of the titles implies that conclusion are drawn beyond the evidence. But meanwhile, until the dust settles, editors would be advised to refrain from adjusting basses and suggesting appoggiaturas at cadences in recitatives.

TYNE AND WEAR

Roz Southey ***Music-Making in North-East England during the Eighteenth Century*** Ashgate, 2006. xi + 259pp, £xx.xx. ISBN 0 7546 5097 9

This is one of those thorough local studies that full of information, set out sensibly, if a bit repetitously, by topic and essential reading for anyone interested in the music or history of the area, but quite hard work to read through. It concentrates on music in and around Newcastle and Durham, occasionally mentioning York and even places across the Pennines, but not attempting any systematic cover of such areas. Were it not for Durham Cathedral and Charles Avison, there would not be much activity to report. Local pride is being invested in promoting the music of the latter, though for historians of Durham music, the 18th-century is not of major importance. The author finds a lot about what was going on, at various levels of society – though a folk-music historian might write a very different sort of book. The musical activity revealed here is very closely linked to class and fashion, with the status of musicians being questionable. Little in the book surprised me, but the documentation is valuable, and it will be interesting to compare various parts of the countries if similar books were produced – perhaps to the same excellent model. There is a biographical index of musicians, though no sources are quoted for the information it contains. There is also a good general index, with longer entries well subdivided. One possible misprint intrigued me. On p. 4, paragraph 3, line 4, I think that 'so fated in the 1770s' should read 'so fêted' (as a synonym for 'lauded' two lines above), though it just makes sense as printed. I'm amused by the defence for a Swiss musician's inability to sight read that it was 'a Task unreasonable to be put upon the greatest Performer that ever the World produced' (p. 25). Those who think that organ voluntaries preceded and followed the service should note that they actually occurred within the service and there were two lasting up to ten minutes each, though the paragraph (p. 113-4) is a bit vague on precisely where they were played and no source is quoted.

TURIN TABLATURES

Candida Felici ***Musica italiana nella Germania del Seicento. I ricercari dell'intavolatura d'organo tedesco di Torino.*** (*Historiae musicae cultores*, 107) Leo Olschki Editore, 2005. xii + 260 pp, €27.00 ISBN 88 222 5480 5

Keyboard players who have never encountered 'New German Organ Tablature' (NGOT), let alone considered how much evidence about keyboard style such an unmusical form of notation actually has to offer, might be inspired by this thorough study – on one type of piece found in one source – to learn how to decipher it themselves, or at least to appreciate some aspects of transcribed versions. In fact, English and German musicians already name notes by letters, so reading keyboard music in horizontal lines of letters does not present too much trouble, and all the examples in this book are, of course, transcribed. Evolved from earlier forms which mixed notes with letters, NGOT was written without staves, and was still used by Bach for his private sketches and marginal annotations. Unfortunately reading this hefty book will present a great difficulty to those who do not read Italian, but they might read elsewhere about NGOT, and peruse this volume for the numerous comparative musical examples provided, at least before playing from modern transcriptions of this repertory. The Appendices, too, will be useful in their own right, containing two ricercars by Annibale Padovano followed by intabulated versions by S. Bertoldo and by the copyist of the Turin MS, 1 'fugues' extracted from toccatas from Vol. 9 (Foà 2), 4 preambula and 4 short toccatas from Vol 1 (Giordano 1).

Candida Felici focuses on one preponderant type of contrapuntal composition, the ricercare (whether so named or not), as found throughout the massive manuscript collection of mainly Italian (and some southern German) keyboard music known as the Turin Tablature. It was copied between 1637 and 1640 in Southern Germany, bound in the 18th century, and is now in the national library of Turin. It is available in facsimile (Forni), discussed in important studies by Oscar Mischiati, Carol Dell Newman, Robert Judd, Isabella Fragalà Data and Annarita Colturato, and transcribed in various volumes of the CEKM and other series. Players have perhaps already found these transcriptions to differ from the original printed versions in cases where we have the latter. This book discusses the differences and the characteristic ways the manuscript transmits ricercars.

Here are some examples of the useful findings, to some degree applicable to all 1,770 of the pieces (by the

Gabrielis, Merulo, Marenzio, Sweelinck, Philips, Erbach, Staden, Dretzel, Widman, Aichinger, with most of the keyboard music of Hassler and Frescobaldi). The copyist often corrected errors in his sources, modifying pieces to fit within a 4-octave range, dismembering pieces to redistribute their sections by type, producing 'good' counterpoint by eliminating dissonances and differences in thematic motifs, modernising cadences by introducing leaps in the bass, covering up his errors by rewriting the music that follows! He was more respectful toward some composers, while freely adding diminutions to the music of others. Passages and ornamental figures are generally more fully written out than in the printed sources, and when they don't display his preferred embellishment figures one can assume he was faithfully copying them from his source. The use of simultaneous ornaments – not found in Venetian compositions – confirms that the copyist was a German. As in other tablatures, the intabulated versions blithely ignore the intended part writing (they eliminate unisons, put higher notes in higher 'parts' and give passages to the highest part in the right hand). But in favour of NGOT: all accidentals are explicit, so the manuscript is extremely precious for this characteristic, even if it merely represents the copyist's interpretation of the composer's intentions.

After acquiring all this information on the ricercar and ricercar-like pieces, the reader is inevitably left in suspense. Will there be analogous studies on the Turin tablature's toccatas and toccata-like pieces? On the madrigals or dance variations or pieces on a cantus firmus? At least, thanks to Dr. Felici, we now know something about the taste and musicianship of the anonymous copyist himself, more about this copious source of keyboard music, and know what to be wary about or grateful for (e.g. the accidentals!) when playing from intabulated compositions. *Barbara Sachs*

ITALIAN TEMPO MARKINGS

Karsten Lüdke ***Con la sudetta sprezzatura: Tempomodifikation in der italienischen Musick der ersten Hälfte des 17. jahrhunderts.*** (*Kölner Beiträge zur Musikwissenschaft*, 5) Regensburg: Gustav Bosse Verlag, 2006. 476 pp. ISBN 3-7649-2705-4 (£25.00 from Bärenreiter)

Anyone involved in the performance of 17th-century music (or any other music for that matter) needs to understand the notation of the originals and their implications. Lüdke's study sets out to establish the importance of tempo markings in the chosen repertoire, firstly by closely studying the prefaces to early 17th-century Italian keyboard and madrigal collections and then looking at individual works (both vocal and instrumental) in an attempt to establish possible patterns that might give some insight into contemporary performances. The book is full of interesting information from the primary sources and Lüdke's discussion of it is thought-provoking. At the end of the day, however, is all this discussion nothing more than a wild goose chase? When the author accepts that tempo markings appear at different points in individual part-books – sometimes even *different* tempo marks – how can one be sure that the music was ever performed the way the composer intended? I found it a nuisance constantly having to flick from the text to the musical examples (which are printed as an appendix) to following his argument – and the appearance of the music is awful. Each staff of each system has the time signature (including a most unlikely 4/4 in one Uccelini sonata), and there are inconsistencies of beaming that do not appear to be original; I would have much preferred the old idea of the music being printed separately and tucked into the back sleeve. One of the main problems in the repertoire is the correlation between tempo marks and a simultaneous switch to different note values (for example, moving from music in running quavers to phrases in minims, the latter marked Adagio); in other words, where the notation would change the flow of the music even if there were no express indication. Being obsessed by the quest for enlightenment of tempo marks, Lüdke seems not to have noticed that the sonata before Sabbatini's *Amar com' io solea* is based fairly closely on the following vocal music, with the first 39 bars disguised by being in doubled note values. When the next section reprises it double speed, of course it will allude to the vocal version, which uses the same basic note value. Everyone knows that music of this repertoire must be flexible and fluid. This book is a useful resource for performers, but Lüdke is no more able to make definitive statements about the subject than anyone else ever will be. *BC*

RUSSIAN 18th CENTURY MUSIC

Marina Ritzarev ***Eighteenth-Century Russian Music*** Ashgate, 2006 xxvii + 388pp, £55.00. ISBN 0 7546 3466 3

When this book arrived, I was very excited. Ever since I was involved with Robert Glenton's proposals to involve his *The Orchestra of the Golden Age* with Manchester-St Petersburg twinning projects, I have been intrigued by the subject of the book. Another direct interest for me is the fact that the iconic figure of the period, Catherine the Great, started life as a fairly minor German princess who was entertained by Johann Friedrich Fasch (my main musicological focus). In fact there are many Russian documents in Zerbst, where he was *Kapellmeister*, where great celebrations were held in the 1740s, and I am currently involved in a project to perform a serenata written by him for Catherine's birthday in 1758 (by which time she was well established in Russia), whose manuscript was among those returned to the Berlin Sing-Akademie from archives in the Ukraine. Against this background, I must say I found the book a bitter disappointment.

That is not to say that this is not a valuable and very interesting book: Quite the reverse, in fact. But it is both tantalizing and frustrating, more for what it does not say; and I found the overly lengthy introduction just too much. It is, indeed, essential to anyone studying Russian musical history to have a certain knowledge of the preceding

periods, but when did you last read a book about Bach that started with a discussion of Hildegard? Russia is a vast and complex country – it has always been so – but where I felt this book was weakest was in its overall organization. There was too much supposition and interpretation of documents and not very much in the way of discussion of the music. European contributions (and Ritzarev is very interesting and informative in her slightly stilted descriptions of the varying roles of the West) are largely dismissed on account of this being a book about Russian music, and extracts from Berezovsky and Bortniansky (who are, of course, the main focus of the volume) are taken from piano arrangements or 19th-century editions. I am not saying that there are not difficulties in identifying original sources, and attribution in the first place is a minefield; but ought some effort not have been made to return to earlier material (even given the enormous problems accessing library material in Eastern Europe can present)? I had other problems, too: I found the different usage in personal names confusing – in English, I would say Brian Clark and Brian Edward Clark to distinguish between two different people; Ritzarev omits or includes middle names seemingly to prevent repetition, or simply for a change. When this is combined with a noble tag (several Count Orlovs appear with an array of Christian names, for example), it's a nightmare. As an exercise, I checked the index and found four entries for Telemann, the last three of which (listed on separate lines) refer to the following phrase: 'paralleled Telemann's Polish partite, concertos and trio sonatas'.

There is a wealth of information in this book, but it will not be easy to assimilate it. The narrative, I feel, jumps about in a most disturbing way. Ritzarev has clearly read widely – and takes pleasure in dispelling earlier myths – but sometimes there just is not quite enough evidence to give new definitive statements about her subject. The problem, of course, is that after 80 years of Communist neglect of Russia's cultural heritage on account of its class associations and, before that, about 300 years of absolute autocratic rule, myth and propaganda have destroyed much of the evidence, and the incredibly restricted access researchers have to material means that piecing together this devilish jigsaw may be an impossible task. I hope Ritzarev's book stimulates others to start their own explorations. *BC*

PENGUIN SUPPLEMENT

Ivan March, Edward Greenfield and Robert Layton. *The Penguin Guide to Compact Discs and DVDs Yearbook 2006/7, Completely Revised and Updated.* Penguin Books, 2006.xxxi + 695pp, £20.00. ISBN 0 141 02723 1

The merits and use of this supplement are manifest and need no description. But there are a few ways in which it might be improved, so I'll offer a suggestion or two.

With the balance between new recordings and reissues changing, a higher proportion than ever of the items included here are the latter. Generally, the text of the entry makes the status of the item in hand clear. But it would be useful if the heading could provide an obvious indication. We do it by giving the date of recording or (if that is not stated) of first issue, which works without the need to devise any additional symbol. I suspect that our readers who use the book might also welcome an indication of whether a disc uses 'authentic' instruments, and those suspicious of them might also be pleased to be warned off. I think that, other things being equal, most of our readers would prefer an early-instrument CD to one with a modern band, and such an indication in each heading would avoid the text having to state baldly (or the authors having to rack their brains to do so more subtly) what sort of ensemble is involved. For vocal discs, no simple system would work (unless someone invents a vibrato-measurer – though it would need to be quite subtle to distinguish between vibrato as a disguise for bad intonation, vibrato as ornament, and a pleasing natural vibrato). It would be amusing to devise a HIPometric scale – but it would have to be sensitive enough to detect performances that claim to be HIP but aren't.

A more general problem is knowing what period of releases the volume covers. One might guess from the title 2006/7 that it is gives a foretaste of issues to be released during next year. I don't think it does, so to that extent the title is dishonest. And what was closing date of the volume to which it is a supplement? It isn't even clear what its cover dates are. Not everyone has a complete run of recent volumes.

But the idea of issue, reissue, deletion, and only a specific quantity of a century of recording being available at any one time is being undermined by the rapidly growing parallel universe of downloads. I've avoided it so-far – I get far too many CDs passing through my hands to have time to hunt down even more music, and I like the serendipity of switching on the radio and not knowing what I might find. (There's an idea here for sites offering serendipitous downloads.) Perhaps we need, not a guide to what is available, but a guide to the best ever, irrespective of whether it is currently available on disc.

The Penguin Guide is an amazing achievement, a monument to an age when there was a common musical repertoire, in any part of which an enthusiastic musician could find himself at home. Sadly, that has gone, and there are vast areas of Western music which are as foreign to many lovers of 'classical' music (though that too is an outdated idea, whatever term is used) as the North African contents of some of the disc from Pneuma are to me (see p. 50). March, Greenfield and Layton are all to some extent middle-of-the-road men. Their praiseworthy achievement depends on that, but their judgments inevitably gloss over the defects in some recordings that skim the surface of the music and don't grapple with the problems and clues that deep study of score and performance practice can offer. I suspect that to continue, there will need to be a wider team. Good luck to them.

CD REVIEWS

CHRISTMAS

Celebramos el Niño: Christmas Delights from the Mexican Baroque The Rose Ensemble 54' 37"
Rose **00006**
Music by Durón, Gonzales, Guerrero, Padilla, Perez, Salazar, Vidales, Zéspedes

Were there not so many other recordings of Latin-American church music, I'd recommend this. But it doesn't have enough panache. My recollection of the opening *Convidando* by Zéspedes is so much more vivid than what we have here, which doesn't quite back the claim on the booklet that 'the Rose Ensemble is a daring and inventive vocal ensemble'. (Based at St Paul, Minnesota, it is unrelated to the Rose Viol Consort.) But it's interesting repertoire, and worth hearing; the performances are good in their way, but rather European – I would have written Anglo-Saxon, but the performers' names are too varied for that. *CB*

Christmas Vespers at Westminster Cathedral Choir of Westminster Cathedral, Matthew Martin *org*, Martin Baker *Master of Music* 68' 12"
Hyperion **CDA67522**
Chant + **Langlais** *Fête*; **Schütz** *Hodie Christus natus est*; **Sweelinck** *Gaude et laetare*; **Tallis** *Magnificat* a5; **Victoria** *Alma redemptoris mater* a5

This is primarily chant, with the Christmas Eve vesper psalms framed by antiphons and separated by short organ improvisations. The music listed above tops and tails the service, except that Tallis's setting of the Magnificat is used. Purists will be puzzled by the need for an organ accompaniment to the chant, so I expect that this is not an appropriate place to review it. In fact, the polyphonic pieces seem a bit out of place, though the Langlais makes a fine end. *CB*

Gabrieli's Message: Festive Music from Medieval England Mediva, Ann Allen *dir* 55'40"

Unnumbered: available from mediva.co.uk, where there are supposed to be texts and translations.

I nearly didn't get a copy of this. I was chatting to the director at the Early Music Exhibition and making disparaging noises about medieval music with percussion in everything, and the offer was withdrawn. But she offered a copy next day (after all, we're indirectly family old friends: I used to work and was part of a lively social group with her mother in the mid-1960s), and I'm glad she did. There is, indeed, percussion, but it isn't of the distracting Moorish variety, and fits with the imaginative arrangements of what are mostly familiar pieces (though what's familiar to me from editing English songs as an undergraduate and work on the *New Oxford Book of Carols* in the 1990s may not be quite so well-known by all readers). The arrangements all seem to derive from the surviving music rather than, as so often, impose a group's standard ideas on them. I'm not myself convinced that the literate style of the *Musica Britannica* vol. 4 carols would have been taken up by minstrels (except perhaps in independent oral versions), but I may be too influenced by the opinions of the MB editor. Vocally, this benefits enormously from the presence of Clare Norburn. In *Lullay... As I lay...* she's accompanied (it works thus, dspite my praise of performances with olo voice in our last issue) by someone I will always remember from a particularly embarrassing broken violin string just before the *Deposuit* in Monteverdi's Vespers, Rebecca Austen-Brown: at least it showed she had the nerve to become a professional player! I liked the opening 'pun': you think you are hearing an introduction to a Basque folk carol and instead it leads to a very similar medieval one. I really enjoyed this, not just nostalgically; I hope readers will take my word and get hold of it. *CB*

Magnificat: Noël au Concert spirituel Agnieszka Kowalczyk, Jean-Francois Lombard, Bertrand Bochud, Olivier Bettens *SATB*, La Camerata Baroque, Arabesque, Daniel Meylan *dir/org* 53' 25"
Hortus **043**

This delightful CD contains a Magnificat based on noëls, in the manner of Charpentier's *Messe de Minuit*, written sixty or more years earlier. The MS is entitled *Magnificat, motet à grands choeurs par M ...* and needs a bit of creative editing. Many of the tunes will be familiar. Some organ settings by Balbastre, Corrette, Daquin and Dandrieu are added, played on a 1768 organ by Bénigne Boilot. The booklet is informative, but a bit confusing, with no proper track listing. An easy-going disc, delightfully played, and ideal to cheer any francophile's (and, indeed, anyone else's) Christmas! *CB*

Medieval Christmas: 10th- to 16th-century secular and liturgical music for feast days The Orlando Consort 68' 09"
Harmonia Mundi **HMU 907418**
Music by anon, Brumel, Busnois, Clemens non Papa, Compère, Dufay, Lantins

Apologies: either the disc or the review has gone astray. Since it is a seasonal title, we must at least list it, and on the Consort's previous form I'm sure it's worth hearing. CB

Medieval Carols Oxford Camerata, Jeremy Summerly *dir* 69' 50"
Naxos **8.550751** £ (rec. 1992)

This doesn't fully warrant being placed under the Christmas heading, since the *planctus* on the death of William the Conquerer and on Abelard's on King David are hardly seasonable items. But most of the rest of the disc comes from the English repertoire assembled in *Musica Britannica* IV and is mostly Marian, and protestant programme-builders tend to assimilate all the Marian feasts to Christmas. The four singers (Rebecca Outram, Deborah Mackay, Philip Cave and Jeremy Summerly) are excellent – particular congratulations to Philip Cave for his quarter-hour solo stint in the Abelard, though I suspect most listeners will have wandered off to do something else by the time the track, the last on the CD, is over, since there are not texts or translations. I felt that *Riu riu chiu* and *Gaudete* were out of place: nothing else has a 'modern' harmonic bass. I realised after a few tracks that the touch-over-beautiful sound was because the English was pronounced as modern. In my Eng-Lit days, pre-16th-century English was always given the sort of pronunciation one used for Chaucer, and I don't remember hearing or singing it modernised. If that doesn't worry you, this is an excellent buy. *CB*

The Musical Advent Calendar 77' 33"
Hänssler **CD 98.276**

I list this, not so much for the specific content, but to draw attention to what lies behind it. It is an anthology from choirs and instrumental ensembles in SW Germany put together by a local radio station to be broadcast daily in the late afternoon within a programme called *Kaffee oder Tee*. The booklet says something about each ensemble. The programme is

varied, starting with Hammerschmidt but encompassing *White Christmas* on an accordion orchestra and Bizet on multi-guitars. A euro of the sale prices goes towards a local children's charity. How about something like it here?

Navidad renacentista Capella de Ministrers, Carles Magraner 43' 35"
CDM 0513

Four of the tracks here come from *Iudicii Signum* (CDM 0203/2002), four from the Canconer del Duc de Calàbria (EGT536 CD/1990) with two from a 2004 concert. The familiar piece is *Riu riu chiu*, sung and played more or less as written. Some of the other pieces are more or over-imaginatively treated, depending on your taste. The most substantial pieces are Flecha's *La Negrina* (a bit tamely sung) and a Sybilline song (more impressive). Not very good value (unless it is a free PR handout), with short running-time, minimal information in the booklet and no texts. *CB*

A New Joy: Orthodox Christmas Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir, Paul Hillier Harmonia Mundi **HMU 907410** 55' 25"

This is not really part of *EMR*'s remit, but I have to say that I thoroughly enjoyed the wholesome, warm sound produced by the choir in some delightful settings of parts of the Christmas liturgy of the various Eastern churches. The EPCC is a highly renowned choir and Paul Hillier has a wealth of directing experience, so this is a happy marriage in every way. *BC*

CHANT

Old Roman Liturgical Chants: 1st Sunday of Lent with Organ Fantasies by Iván Edod Schola Hungarica, László Dobszay, Janka Szendrei: *soloists* Bálint Kiss, István Csuthy Hungaroton Classic **HCD 32358** 76'18"

Schola Hungarica regularly performs from medieval sources to create sound archives arising from their research over recent decades and this CD is the latest addition to an impressive discography. The Roman Chant enthusiast who anticipates the Byzantine bass sonority of Ensemble Organum with Marcel Pérès and Lycourgos Angelopoulos will be surprised by the sweetness and tranquil delicacy of the Schola Hungarica ensemble. The interchanging light tenor and crystalline soprano voices in perfect unanimity would sustain the interest with their varying textures, even without the piping clean treble voices of the soloists floating out of the background. Notes succeeding stepwise are embellished with an air of apparent ease and deep concentration, the melismata giving the effect of cool droplets falling. The diction is clear and assured. Just one passage, *Kyrie eleison*, consciously reflects a Byzantine style, with a tenor drone and a spirited rendering by the trebles. For a strong contrast one could compare the Tractus *Qui habitat in adiutorio altissimi* as sung by Ensemble Organum alternating higher and deeper bass drone and as sung by Schola Hungarica with sweet high voices and light ornamentation. The organist has responded to the challenge of composing music which matches the medieval melodic structures and yet adds the tones of modernity. Only gradually does he take more licence, with an astringent and dynamic piece verging on the concerto and a postludium rich with trills and drama. *Diana Maynard*

MEDIEVAL

Hildegard of Bingen ***Celestial Light*** Tapestry, Laurie Monahan *dir* 63' 17"
Telarc **CD-80456**
+ 3 Notre-Dame pieces & *From the Circling Wheel* by Robert Kyr

With such a wide variety of recordings of Hildegard, the main reason for this is the inclusion of three pieces by Robert Kyer, lasting a quarter of an hour, setting his translations of Hildegard. My guess is that these need more of an atmosphere, both architectural and spiritual, than they get on CD – which is not to blame the four ladies of Tapestry. The more ethereal Notre-Dame pieces contrast with the earthier men of the Diabolus in Musica disc reviewed below. *CB*

Carmina Burana: Officium lusorum Millenarium, Choeur de Chambre de Namur, Psallentes 76' 57"
Ricercar **RIC 247**

There's a problem with modern attempts to reconstruct the various parodies that occurred within the liturgy of the Octave of Christmas (or the Twelve Days of Christmas, which, we are told, relates to the period between the solar and lunar calendars). Performers focus on them because the secular and parodistic nature of the Beauvais or Benediktbeuern sources are likely to attract modern audiences. But their point is that they are parodies whose function relates to deep-rooted beliefs and practices that are foreign to nearly all the performers and listeners, so the blasphemy and the reasons for their controlled tolerance in North France for perhaps a century or so cannot be felt as part of the performance. This disc at least sets the distortions within a straight performance of the ordinary of the mass – that might have been more effective if it hadn't been preceded by nearly eight minutes of instrumental jollification, creating at once a secular context. I like the idea of linking a network of Goliards with more recent Catholic dissidents, including Joseph Ratzinger. This is an ingenious attempt to present the gamblers' mass to a modern audience; how freely it is done can be seen by checking Clemencic's edition (*Carmina Burana*, Heimeran Verlag, München, 1979). CB

Paris expers Paris: Ecole de Notre-Dame, 1170-1240 Diabolus in Musica, Antoine Guerber 69' 41"
Alpha 102

This offers excellent 'straight' performances, with no frills or eccentricities, of a varied selection from the most substantial of the 'Notre Dame' MSS, Florence MS Pluteo 29.1. For once, the picture which is discussed alongside the music in Alpha discs is specifically related, coming from the same MS. Here the explication avoids the naïve interpretation that the group of instruments on one sextile of it might suggest and concentrates far more sensibly on Boethius. The singers take the vocal medium as seriously as Gothic Voices, but are a little more ingratiating, and the use of a lower texture from most Notre-Dame performances gives solidity and gravity. It is good to hear the complete complex that forms the organum a3 *Descendit de celis* (lasting over 18 minutes), and the monophonic *Olim sudor Herculis* (familiar from Carmina Burana recordings and the one secular item here, though it doesn't sound as sexy as the text) runs to twelve and a half minutes of monophony. I'm quoting the length as praise: as I have mentioned several times recently, early pieces are not always short. Unless you want pipes and bells, this is an excellent recording; the booklet has good notes, texts and translations (though not always opposite the Latin). Highly recommended. *CB*

14th CENTURY

Jacopo da Bologna Madrigali e Cacce
La Reverdie 59' 15"
Arcana **A 327**

The opening track raised my suspicions. The first singer to make sense of this repertoire was Esther Lamandier, with her virtuoso vocal performances. So despite being delighted by Doron David Sherwin's brilliant cornetting, it was disappointing that the singer took the slow-moving lower voice. However, the disc shows greater variety of performing options in the remaining pieces (about half Jacopo's output) and makes a good case for it. The

main source for his music is the late Squiarcialupi Codex – one of the two pieces in facsimile on the cover of the excellent booklet is recorded here. This is a delightful recording, very enjoyable to listen to, despite the manic look of the ginger character on the group photo. *CB*

15th CENTURY

The Essential Ockeghem The Clerks' Group, Edward Wickham 66' 41"
Gaudeamus **CD GAU 357** (rec 1994-99)

To the non-specialist, the idea that any Ockeghem could be essential would seem ludicrous. But even though his music may not be to all our readers' taste, I strongly recommend those who do not know his music to try this as a sampler. It is framed by the motets *Alma redemptoris mater* and *Intemerata Dei mater*, has three chansons (*Petite camusette, Ma maistresse* & *Fors seulement*), the *Offertorium* from the Requiem, and a mass assembled from five separate masses, all beautifully sung. As Edward Wickham's note states, 'here... is an attempt to present the essence of a composer whose work is so eccentric that its eccentricity is arguably its more unifying characteristic'. *CB*

Marguerite d'Autriche: Carnetz secretz Les Jardins de Courtoise, Anne Delafosse-Quentin *S, dir* 60' 15"
Ambronay **AMY007**
Music by Agricola, Brumel, Compère, Josquin, LaRue, Pipelare, & anon

To the 'Carnetz secretz' add, of course, 'Regretz', because this is music associated with Marguerite of Austria, the privileged but tragic daughter of Habsburg and Burgundy, whose collection of illuminated manuscripts, including her own stunning Grand Chansonnier, seems to have brought her little consolation in life. The melancholy note struck by much of the material recorded here is representative of the Chansonnier as a whole, and the generous programme booklet allows for some lovely reproductions from one of the most beautiful music books to survive from the 16th century. The impressive list of composers also makes it clear that this is an important and musically impressive manuscript, and these performances by the voices and instruments of Les Jardins de Courtoisie are thoughtful and technically very competent. If there is something lacking, it is the passion mentioned in the notes, but underplayed throughout most of the CD. These are chansons which tell stories and express feelings chosen to reflect the inner life of Marguerite, but too often the technically assured singing just seems to gloss over the text. This is a pity, as there are some intriguing timbres achieved, most notably the dark bass tones of Philippe Roche and the rather oriental percussion contributions by Patrick Bernatene. Enjoy the notz, but don't expect to feel the full regretz. *D. James Ross*

Speculum amoris: lyrique d el'amour medéval du mysticisme à l'erotisieme La Reverdie 51' 30"
Arcana **A 336** (rec 1992)
Music by Forest, Hasprois, Landini, Molins, Neville, Magister Piero, Wolkenstein

This enjoyable CD embraces sacred and secular depictions of love from a range of medieval musical sources. The singing is delightfully lively, set against drones on symphonia, vielle, and rebec, while melodic lines and counterpoints also appear on portative organ, cornett and recorder. A generous acoustic and the versatility of the performers conceal the fact that they are only five in number, with some quite elaborate textures built up as the musicians switch from voice to instrument at short notice. The recording dates from a time when the islamic influence on medieval western music was being explored, and this comes through strongly here. These are strong idiomatic performances of generally unfamiliar material, and the ingenious theme allows for the juxtaposition of a wide range of compositional and performance styles. *D. James Ross*

16th CENTURY

Byrd ***Laudibus in sanctis*** ***(Byrd Edition vol 10)*** The Cardinall's Musick, Andrew Carwood 69' 45"
Hyperion **CDA67568**
Cantiones Sacrae 1591 *Apparebit in finem, Domine exaudi orationem, Fac cum servo tuo, Laudibus in sanctis, Quis est homo, Salve Regina, Tribulatio proxima est* **Gradualia** *Propers for Lady Mass in Eastertide, Ecce quam bonum, In manus tuas, Regina caeli, Unam petii, Visita quaesumus*

The Byrd Edition has passed from Gaudeamus to Hyperion – it is far too valuable to have been abandoned.. The opening two tracks disappointed me. Even without checking the actual pitch or noting that the notation was in chiavette, *Quis est homo?* seemed to lack foundation (it's sung down a semitone – other high-clef pieces are down a tone), and diction was particularly poor in the next piece, *Tribulatio proxima est*, with missing letters in tribula(t)io, sed (t)u, defen(s)sor, vindi (c)a. But the music was well phrased, and the problem diminished. The more specifically liturical settings are sung with some despatch, while the motets are more spacious – this distinction makes sense and gives a variety of movement. The title-piece, which begins the 1591 set, provides a resounding end – though perhaps, up a third, more a reflection of modern than 16th performance style. But buy it anyway. *CB*

Merulo, ***Opera omnia per organo vol. 2***
Stefano Molardi (1533 Colombi and 1588 Antegnati organs) 146' 11" (2 CDs)
Divox Antiqua **CDX 70311/12**

As I wrote when I reviewed the first of this series, Claudio Merulo is one of the most important Italian keyboard composers, lifting the fledging toccata, ricercare and canzona forms to new heights of maturity as the Italian Renaissance gave way to the Baroque. He was active in Brescia, Venice (including San Marco) and Parma (whose Conservatory of Music houses a positive organ built by him). His works cover the whole gamut of forms of the period. As well as toccatas from his 1598 and 1604 collections, these two CDs include examples from all his other published works. The sound of the Italian organ is beautifully vocal, and the 1533 Colombi organ in Valvasone (used in Vol 1 and of the first of these two CDs) is a fine example of the Venetian school, as well as being one of the oldest surviving organs in the world. Given the wealth of tone colours, it is remarkable that the organ, typically for large Italian organs of the period, has only 8 stops. The *tenore* stop is notionally 10' (from low F), and its use at this pitch (in works played an octave lower than written) in some of the toccatas adds an impressive grandeur. Registrations are based on instructions found in the church of Valvasone, presumed to be by the organ builder Colombi, together with other contemporary references. The other organ is the equally impressive 1588 nine-stop Antegnati instrument in San Salvatore, Almenno, and is registered in accordance with Antegnati's own 1608 *Arte organica*. The two organs reflect different influence of Merulo's music, from the early Renaissance Venetian style to the early Baroque timbre of the Almenno organ. The liner notes are comprehensive and include registrations. The playing is impressively sensitive and musical. The Italian organ and its music are one of the most important in organ history, and this composer, and these two organs, are well worth exploring. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

Pallavicino ***Madrigali su Testi del Guarini***
Daltrocanto, Dario Tabbia *dir*
Symphonia **SY 05214**

One has to question why a group of five or six singers should need a director, but Tabbia has done a great job, and the

singers mould each phrase beautifully and effectively. They are responsive to the unexpected corners which Pallavicino delights in turning. I loved their quivering *Una farfalla* with the transition from the fluttering heart's butterfly to the immortal phoenix. The ensemble is good, and the feeling for the music and its communication is excellent without being exaggerated. So *Cruda Amarilli* achieves its power more through dissonance and understated irony than through bluster or excessive attack on 'cruda'. *Io mi sento morir*, with its play on 'morir'/'miro', is a polished gem: a tiny but complete drama contained in a few epigrammatic lines, and perfectly presented. The madrigals are taken from various collections, the unifying theme being Guarini's authorship of the poems. It is well worth following the texts, masterpieces in themselves (though sadly not translated in the booklet).

The quality of sensitivity is equally demonstrated by the lutenist Ugo Nastrucci, who accompanies a few of the madrigals, occasionally leading in with a short introduction which I found very welcome. The tenderness with which Nastrucci changes a phrase from major to minor is highly refined and emotive. He also plays some delightful solos by della Gostena and Terzi to break up the programme of madrigals. *Selene Mills*

Tallis ***Complete Keyboard Works*** Rachelle Taylor 60' 48"
ATMA **ACD2 2349**

We've had a Tallis Complete Works from Signum: do we need a separate disc of the keyboard works from a single player? Without disparaging the keyboard contributions to that set, I think that the answer is yes, partly because the instruments and the occasion that gave rise to this disc was an important one, partly because the playing is so impressive. The instruments are the Goetze and Gwynn reconstructions of the Wingfield and Wetheringsett organs, the keyboad part of the Theewes claviorgan and the 'AH' virginal, crucial instruments for giving us some idea of how 16th-century English keyboard music might have sounded. The occasion was a symposium celebrating the possible 500th anniversary of Tallis's birth last April at the King's Chapel, Aberdeen. The large number of short pieces makes it difficult to provide a satisfactory programme, but the variety of instruments helps, and I would suggest having an interval after the first *Felix namque* – the other setting balances it by closing the disc. Whatever one thinks about the other items, these are amazing pieces, more shapely than much of the European keyboard music of the time (except for Cabezon). Any excuse for hearing them again is worth having. Rachelle Taylor is, on the strength of this, a fine keyboard player, shaping the music just enough without overdoing the slight delays to phrases and with a flexibility that never interrupts the flow. I hope we get a Byrd disc from her soon. *CB*

Tessier ***Carnets de voyages*** Le Poème Harmonique, Vincent Dumestre 59' 05"
Alpha **100**

This is the 100th issue in Alpha's *ut pictura musica* series. Like all the others it is elegantly packaged with a relevant picture on the front, the explication of which is given almost as much booklet space as the music, and like issue 1, Le Poème Harmonique are the artists. This group has done for French secular music around 1600 very much the same kind of intense exploration of repertoire that the Consort of Musicke did for the English equivalent. Here they draw on the music of the much-travelled Charles Tessier (*b*1550?), whose *Premier livre de chansons & airs de court* (1597) was dedicated to Lady Penelope Rich, the Earl of Essex's sister. The performance style is more Munrow than Rooley, with a liberal view taken of the options present in the source – essentially solo voice and lute or vocal ensemble – and as usual I prefer the simpler realisations which allow the grave beauty of the music to speak for itself. However, there is no denying the fun of the opening 'Turkish' song or the general finesse with which all the interpretations are both prepared and delivered.
See also p. 19 *David Hansell*

Batailles La Bande Montréal Baroque, Concerto Palatino 69' 00"
ATMA **ACD2 2312**

It is no surprise, given the performers on this disc of battle-inspired music, that the playing is fist rate. From the fairly literal following of Janequin's model found in the opening Gervaise pavane to the humorously descriptive Biber *Battalia*, the programming idea is plainly on show. However, if you feel this needs more dressing up, read the booklet notes, which trace the pedigree of imitation from Aristotle, no less, and it is unsurprisingly a good while before we reach the 16th century, somehow passing Beethoven on the way. The playing is always vivacious and attention-grabbing and each piece is given its own distinct character. The opening Gervaise is significantly the earliest piece and could have been used to set the stage and pattern for the following baroque elaborations. But it is over orchestrated with instrumentation changes every half phrase, which is a rather dated approach (and heaven forbid that any early music should sound *dated*). Get past this, and you're in for some formidable playing. *Stephen Cassidy*

Renaissance Giants The Tallis Scholars 150' 31" (rec 1984-1993)
Gimell **CDGIM 207** ££
Byrd *Mass for four voices*; **Josquin** *Missa Pange lingua*; **Palestrina** *Missa brevis*; **Tallis** *Spem in alium*; **Taverner** *Western Wind Mass*; **Victoria** *Requiem*

Not another *Spem in alium*! Like the Allegri *Miserere*, it gets everywhere, but at least it's a genuine early work! It goes well, but the transposition gives too much emphasis to the sopranos; irrespective of musicological arguments, I prefer the bass emphasis of Venetian polyphoral music. But this makes a fine introduction to renaissance sacred polyphony, and I'd happily tuck it into the Christmas stocking of any relative who was studying music or sings in a choir. *CB*

The Songbook of Hieronymus Lauweryn van Watervliet (c. 1505) Egidius Kwartet & Consort 89' 00" (2 CDs)
Et'cetera **KTC 1314**
Music by Appenzeller, Compère, Ghizegem, Laurentius, Vyzeto; mostly anon

I was very surprised by the quality of composition in this collection, and then read in the notes that this Hieronymus was a successful business man who had made a collection (as he had also done of fine art) of songs; by Josquin, Busnois, Mouton and others – indeed including many anonymous pieces. It may be some of this latter group (or not) where the undoubtedly skilled composition seemed to serve no particular dramatic or wider musical purpose. The danger is that this makes a pitfall for the performers who may be tempted to introduce phoney renaissance vigour to create interest. Maybe it is that poetry at the time was valued much more highly than (or separately from) music – which was simply an elegant tray upon which it was offered, or, as the notes put it, 'keeping their expensive paper for more weighty matters'. Considerable effort by Peter de Groot has been put into creating conscientious performing editions, which makes a thorough compendium, and results in a valuable library recording. Amongst the performances, pride of place for me goes to the beautiful dialogue between man and wife in *J'ayme bien mon amy* by Ghiselin, perfectly and tenderly delivered. *Stephen Cassidy*

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

The Triumphs of Oriana The King's Singers
Signum **SIGCD082** 67' 13"

This complete recording of Morley's 1601 publication in honour of Elizabeth I is highly recommended. These are for the most part wonderful pieces, inexplicably ignored by anthologists – and few singers now find their way beyond the contents of the Oxford Book and other anthologies. Transposed down by a tone or so (occasionally making the links disturbing to the ear) to fit the all-male voices, the performances are close-miked in a dry acoustic favourable to the crisp words for which the King's Singers are renowned. The sound is very clean, to the extent of being rather shrill in the top lines, unsoftened by vibrato, so both notes and words are perfectly clear in every part, and vivid contrasts of dynamic and mood are easily conveyed. Although I miss the sound of female voices, to my surprise I prefer this recording to that by I Fagiolini.

The booklet contains a brief introduction by David Starkey, followed by much more comprehensive and enlightening notes by Thomas Elias. The texts are printed in full, with one unfortunate error occurring twice: the substitution of 'Orion' for 'Orian' – a surprising mistake in a publication referring to Oriana in every single piece! This word is also at the root of one of my few complaints: its pronunciation is inconsistent, undecided between 'Orianna' and 'Oriaana'. The final syllable is invariably long and strong: don't look here for the tasteful feminine endings of Daltrocanto (*see* Pallavicino review above). But do listen to these neat, energetic performances which display the madrigals to great effect. *Selene Mills*

Voglio il core: Music from the Salon of the Renaissance Courtesan Veronica Franco, Venice, Circa 1574 Susanne Pumhösl *hpscd*
Klangrede **LC 9288** 44' 33"
(from www.susannepumhoesl.com)
Music by Barges, Donato, Facoli, A. Gabrieli, Luzzaschi, Merulo, Motaro, Valente

Thanks to a strange definition of the word, there were 11,543 prostitutes in Venice in the 16th century, more than 10% of the population. But even if that is an exaggerated percentage, it was a significant trade in a city that had already began to slide into its present function as a tourist centre. Some of the ladies were cultured escorts rather than in the sex business – how can we tell? Anyway, the title is an excuse for a pleasing disc of mid-century Venetian keyboard music, the sort that Veronica Franco (1546-1591) might have played to visitors like Tintoretto, Veronese and the future Henry III of France. The pieces are mostly short, and include a fair number of 'standards' (*Susanne un jour, Ancor che col partire*, romanesca, passamezzo antico, etc), with Merula's *Cappriccio chromatico* being the most substantial and 'serious' item. I won't complain about the short duration: it makes a manageable programme which I have enjoyed. The bibliography appended to the booklet note might have been supplemented by a list of editions of the pieces – there is plenty of space for it. *CB*

17th CENTURY

Biber ***Sonaten über die Mysterien des Rosenkranzes*** Gunar Letzbor *vln*, Lorenz Duftschmid, Michael Oman *viol*, Ulli Fussenegger *db*, Wolfgang Zeber *org*, Wolfgang Glüxam *hpscd*, Axel Wolf *lute*
Arcana **A401** 119' 40" (2 CDs) (rec 1996)

This is a re-packaging of a fine set. Letzbor's approach will not be to everyone's taste – the pizzicato gambas in the first sonata will make or break it for you – but the fiddling is astonishing, and there is absolutely no doubting the performers' conviction in their quest to recreate Biber's sound-world. *BC*

Buxtehude ***Opera Omnia I: Harpsichord Works 1*** Ton Koopman 136' 52" (2 CDs)
Antoine Marchand **CC72240**

Having finished his complete recording of Bach's cantatas, Ton Koopman has now launched a complete recording of Buxtehude's music. He starts with what is probably the least known aspect of his output – the suites and variation sets for *manualiter* keyboard. Throughout this double-CD set, Koopman animates the dance rhythms with unceasing energy. He even maintains effervescence across the 32 variations on *La capricciosa* (BuxWV 250). As might be expected, he adds plentiful ornamentation on the first statement of a dance movement and even more on the repeats. Some listeners will find this irksome, although I find his approach attractive and enlivening for a composer such as Buxtehude who does not commit every detail to the page. I await the future instalments of this series with interest.
Stephen Rose

Correa de Arauxo ***Facultad Orgánica (1626) I*** Andrés Cea (1616 Diego Quijano organ, San Pedro de Lerma, Burgos) 61' 14"
Lindoro **MPC-0716**

The cover of this CD is a little confusing – the word LERMA (the town where the organ is) is in bold capital letters and in tiny lettering underneath is the name of Francisco Correa de Arauxo. When I first glanced at it I thought it was a recording of works by Lerma – a composer unknown to me. In fact, it is the first of what I hope will become a complete recording (these things are never sure) of the 1626 *Facultad Orgánica* by the astonishing Seville organist/composer Francisco Correa de Arauxo – including, I hope, a new edition with English translations of his detailed instructions. Organists usually fit shy of approaching Correa's music – and I admit that, at first glance, it can appear daunting. But it is certainly worth the struggle, even if it must involve playing them on an early Spanish organ. Although they had long gone by the time he was composing, there is something of the Moor in Correa – his sinuous melodic lines have the sensual and exotic air of present day Moroccan music, made the more dramatic by the way that his melody (actually, most of them are just the elaborated upper voice of polyphony, rather than true 'melodies') often burst through in prominent registrations over an otherwise conventional bit of late-Renaissance polyphony. The organ produces a staggering sound. With just 9 stops, including an *Orlos* reed and a divided *Cimbala* (the only divided stop on the organ), it pulls you into the magical sound world of the Iberian organ. The playing is equally staggering. Andrés Cea Galán gets into the soul of Correa, from the measured unfolding of the polyphonic structure of some of the *Tientos* to the flamboyant virtuosity of *La muy célebre Canción Susana*. Highly recommended. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

Pietro Della Valle ***Pellegrino: Il viaggio di Pietro della Valle (1586-1652)*** XVIII-21 Musique des Lumières, Twais, Jean-Christoph Frisch *dir* 76' 06"
Arion **ARN 68716**

Almost worth buying just for the booklet! Musically important for his *Della musica dell' etá nostra* (1640), in his younger days he had spent twelve years touring the East – Constantinople, Cairo, Baghdad (where he married Maani), Isfahanh, the Persian gulf (where Maani died), Goa, Basra and eventually back to Italy with him Maani's partially-embalmed corpse since her last wish had been to be taken to Rome. This disc mixes Quagliati's *Il carro di Fedeltà d'Amore* (1606), for which he wrote the text, and his own *Per la Festa della Santissima Purificazione* (1640) with the sort of music he might have heard on his travels. I've no way of evaluating that, but it seems to fit more with the ethos of his Italian music than any of the Arabic pieces on the Pneuma discs reviewed above. Fragments of Catholic church music from Goa are included, but otherwise the 'western' music is readily accessible: the

Quagliati was published in 1957 in *Smith College Archives* 13 – and here sounds far more exciting than it seemed when I tried some of it around 1970, and *Per la Festa* is repoduced in Garland's *Italian Oratorio* vol. 1. I'm not sure what a *violone panarmonio* is, and the harpsichord should have with three manuals in different temperaments and pitches. The performances are impressive, stylish and convincing: my surprise favourite from this month's recordings on the strength of the greater substance of the music – like the Pluhar disc (se p. 50) notable for the lavish and brilliant continuo playing. *CB*

Dowland ***Songs from the Labyrinth*** Sting, Edin Karamazov lutes 48' 37"
Deutsche Grammophon **06025 170 3139**
See review by David Hill on p. 20

Jacob van Eyck ***a wonder for all the ages in his flute and bell-playing*** Saskia Coolen *rec*, Arie Abbenes *carillon* 75'59"
Globe **GLO 5218**

This recording of pieces from van Eyck's *Der Fluyten Lust-hof* is a bit of a novelty and would not have been possible, as the booklet explains, without modern technology. Most of the pieces are for either recorder or carillon, but in the two pieces where they appear together, Saskia Coolen played the recorder on top of the tower of the Domchurch in Utrecht, while Arie Abbenes, playing the carillon below, followed her performance through an earpiece. No doubt the carillon was extremely audible on top of the tower, but the wind up there and the lack of a natural acoustic necessitated the provision of an artificial acoustic for the recorder. All the other recorder pieces were recorded separately in another church. It's rather fun to hear the well-known van Eyck music performed on the carillon, though some pieces work better than others. The *Fantasia en echo* is an obvious candidate for a two-instrument version and works well, but I also enjoyed the *Batali* duet. I remain to be convinced that *Engels nachtegaeltje* is carillon music, but it's worth buying this CD just for Saskia Coolen's chirpy recorder version of it.

Victoria Helby

Fux ***Concentus musico-instrumentalis*** Armonico Tributo Austria, Lorenz Duftschmid *dir* 61' 50"
Arcana **A 338** (rec 1997)
Overtures in d & g, Serenade in C, *Turcaria*

This seems to be a re-packaging of an excellent recording from 1998. Apart from a lovely disc by Paul Dombrecht and Il Fondamento, this is the finest performance of Fux's instrumental music I have heard. Fux's reputation may be based on his landmark treatise *Gradus ad Parnassum*, but he was obviously a composer of not inconsiderable talent, and these four pieces give a representative sampling of his instrumental output. *BC*

Fux ***La Grandezza della Musica Imperiale: Composizione per orchestra*** Freiburger Barockorchester, Gottfried von der Goltz *vln/dir* 63' 58"
Carus **83.308**
Concerto *La dolcezze...* E 112, Intrada in C E62; Ouverture in d N 4, Rondeau E 111, Suite in C N 83

How extraordinary! Not one but two discs of orchestral music by Fux in the same issue? Even if one of them *is* a reissue, there's plenty to celebrate with both recordings as there are no overlaps, and all of the music is thoroughly enjoyable and should once and for all confirm the composer's abilities in the world of the concerto and the orchestral suite. Occasionally there is something slightly Purcellian about Fux's harmonies and his frequent use of rondeau betrays a slight French bent, but there's nothing particularly Gallic about the virtuoso violino piccolo writing in the Intrada in C. If you can afford both discs, I'd recommend adding them to your collection. *BC*

Marais ***L'ange Marais: pieces a trios violes*** Wieland Kuijken, Les Voix humaines (Susie Napper, Margaret Little *viols*, Nigel North *theorbo*, Eric Milnes *hpscd*) 61' 18"
ATMA **ACD2 2374**
Suites I & II (livre IV), *Tombeau de Lully*

This recording of the two suites for three bass viols, from Marais' Book IV is outstanding. The duo Les Voix Humaines joins with a truly great player to produce the richest sounds imaginable. In addition, Wieland Kuijken gives the *Tombeau pour Monsieur de Lully* from Book II a performance that will be as definitive as his performances of the *Tombeau pour Monsieur de Sainte Colombe* – so expressive that it seems that no-one else dare play it. Those fortunate to have heard it live, or still have the old recording of Music in Versailles, made in 1970, in which he also played the Forqueray 5th Suite, will know what I mean. He brings not only his absolute technical assurance, but also that fantastic control over articulation and those touches of pure magic which only he seems able to achieve. The result has all the drama, poignancy, and at times, almost unbearable intensity, that one would expect. When this is allied to the amazing unanimity of ensemble of Susie Napper and Margaret Little, the result is a great musical experience. They fall in beautifully with his approach, tempering their own sometimes wayward phrasing, but fitting perfectly with his capacity to bend the time without losing rhythm. And of course they also bring formidable technical assurance. The continuo team of lute and harpsichord is superb, the music is marvellous – highly recommended. *Robert Oliver*

Monteverdi ***Vespers*** Gabrieli Consort & Players, Paul McCreesh 97' 53" (2 CDs)
Archiv **00289 477 6147** ££ *see p. 23*

Monteverdi ***Madrigali guerrieri et amorosi: libro VIII*** Concerto Italiano, Rinaldo Alessandrini (3 CDs in box)
Naïve **OP 30435** (rec 1998, 1997, 2005)

Disc 1 contains *Il Combattimento* and *Il ballo delle ingrate*, recorded in 1998 and reviewed in *EMR* 45 by Robert Oliver, who 'looked forward to hearing this with great anticipation, and the some extent the performances fulfilled my hopes... Well worth having for the two masterpieces in an individual performance of passion, commitment and style'. Disc 2 appeared slightly earlier, but we did not review it. The third disc is new. It seems odd to me that no attempt is made to preserve the careful order of Monteverdi's publication. I'm not sure if every detail is significant, but the division into madrigals of war and madrigals of peace, an essential component of the aesthetic of Book VIII, is completely lost here: I would expect one disc to begin with *Altri canti d'amor*, another with *Altri canti di marte*, and each to end with the relevant ballo, even if *Il combattimento* has to have a separate disc to be followed by the items for which there isn't room in the other two. But presumably the intent is also to sell disc 3 separately to those who have the others two. The performances are stylish and expressive, and I recommend it; but I find just too many details with which I'm not entirely happy to want it as my only recording. *CB*

Monteverdi ***Combattimento*** [+ arias and duets] Patrizia Ciofi, Rolando Villazón, Topi Lehtipuu *STT*, Le Concert d'Astrée, Emmanuelle Haïm 67' 28"
Virgin Classics 0946 **3 63350 2**

I took half a minute or so to warm to *Il combattimento*, but I wouldn't want to hear Clorinda's final words again. The rest of the disc is taken up with a variety of songs and duets. The lighter ones suffer from being treated too seriously. *Si dolce è 'l tormento* has the sort of simple tune that doesn't call for arty embellishment, and *Ohimè ch'io cado* needs a lighter touch. The first word needs a parodied *esclamazione*, not a swoop. *Interrotte speranze* is a

passionate enough piece, but I felt it was too hefty. An excellent programme with some little-known items, but a lot of it needed to be a bit more more relaxed. *Tempro la cetra* (which could have sent the listeners dancing away had it been placed last – yes, I know it *begins* Book VII) comes over well. *CB*

Muffat ***Armonico Tributo, 1682*** Ars Antiqua Austria, Gunnar Letzbor *dir* 66' 35"
Symphonia **SYCAT 00183**

This is a re-packaging of Ars Antiqua Austria's 2001 recording of Muffat's 1682 set of five wonderful sonatas (played one to a part, with continuo of lute and clavicembalo/organ – the lute sometimes just a little too obtrusive for my liking) . The CD comes with Symphonia's 2005 catalogue, which is full of all sorts of goodies – the website is at least two years out of date, so this is the best way to view their total output: we wish them well with whatever plans they have for the future! *BC*

Scheidt Ludi musici Les Sacqueboutiers 56'00"
Naïve Ambroisie **AM9996**

A marvellous recording. Most of the music strikes me as primarily for strings, but even the complex and sophisticated *Roland*, which starts this anthology of 17 pieces from the 1620 publication (now called *Ludi musici* because later volumes of the series have that title), convinces – though what Scheidt calls elsewhere *imitatio violinistica* is unlike anything explicitly for wind for several centuries. It's a bit quicker here than I've tried it with viols (it's presumably intended for violins), but it works with wind – just! The ensemble is quite varied, so the listener who is not besotted with the sound of cornetts and sackbuts gets a break, and the playing is magnificent. The *Cantio Gallica* has entered the modern brass repertoire, but here the humour is more subtle. *Paduan V* is another piece I associate with viols (it must have been 40 years ago when I spent an evening on it coached by John Beckett at the Chiswick viol evening class) and certainly seems to demand strings. It feels a bit rushed here, especially the tripla in the last section – but it's the Pavan with everything, even a descending third final cadence (cf p. 30). Unless you have strong feelings against one of the chief constituents of the sound world of the period, buy this CD, but I found that I needed a break in the middle. In case you ask, the group is the same as the one that used to acknowledge Toulouse as its home. It's not too far to Catalunya, for which, perhaps, we can blame the intrusion of percussion, but at least Pedro Estevan keeps in the background. *CB*

Schenck ***Bacchus, Ceres en Venus*** Camerata Trajectina, Louis Peter Grijp 70' 03"
Globe **GLO 6060**

This is a very interesting disc. Aside from the pleasure it gives, there are several notable points. It's one of the first Dutch operas, and is sung in Dutch. It survives incomplete, so the director of the ensemble has had to fill some gaps. He has written one or two brief recits himself, but mostly found suitable substitutes from other works, arranging a number of Schenck's solo bass viol pieces from *Scherzi Muzccali* for the small ensemble of two violins, two oboes, two recorders, plus a continuo team of harpsichord, theorbo (which he plays), bassoon and bass viol. The booklet explains all, specifies which movements are arranged, and gives parallel Dutch and English texts. Sung Dutch has clear, open vowels and all the singers have a lovely clear sound, but fluency in Dutch perhaps limited the choice. For example, Jasper Schweppe, who sings Bacchus, is too light for the role, though he sings well. The singing is uneven in quality, at its best very enjoyable and expressive. It is particularly well characterised, portraying moods ranging from poignant grief to ribald drunkenness, the latter hilariously portrayed by Bernard Loonen as Sylenus, accompanied by a bassoon no less intoxicated. Venus is sung very expressively by Renate Arends. Schenck has a marvellous melodic gift, and this is constantly displayed. The instrumental dances are brilliantly arranged, picking up all sorts of hints; they sound as though Schenck himself had written them for these forces, and are beautifully played. It's easy to follow what has been done if you possess *Scherzi Musicali*, and it's worth it to admire the skill of the arranger. But there's no need for that; it's very enjoyable indeed, and deserves a wide audience. *Robert Oliver*

Weckmann ***Die lieblichen Blicke*** Jan Katschke *hpscd* 81' 03"
cpo **777 185-2**

Weckmann was one of the first of the north German organists to assimilate the keyboard styles of other countries. His keyboard works draw on the Lutheran traditions of counterpoint and sacred songs, while also incorporating the expressive freedom of Froberger's toccatas and the subtlety of the French suite. Jan Katzschke's recording follows Weckmann's works in the order presented in the Lüneburg manuscript KN147; it would have been nice to have separate tracks for individual movements of the suites. Katzschke captures the freedom of Weckmann's toccatas with well-judged rhythmic flexibility and tapered transitions between different tempi. In the dance movements this sometimes risks obscuring the pulse. The disc features a robust-sounding harpsichord modelled on German instruments *c.*1700 and also a lute-harpsichord (whose delicate yet resonant sound is apt for the suites). Unfortunately the release is marred by poor booklet notes, with several errors in the German original and a dreadful translation into English. *Stephen Rose*

Weichlein ***Parnassus Ecclesiastico-Musicus, Ulm 1702*** Ars Antiqua Austria, St Florian Sängerknaben, Kepler Konsort, Gunar Letzbor *dir* 74' 31"
Symphonia **SY 04213**

I really enjoyed this CD. Two masses (of seven) from Weichlein's 1702 set are performed by three boy sopranos and altos with two grown-up tenors and basses, single strings and continuo of lute and organ. I've had enough experience of performing this repertoire to know that some people find it rather dull, but I find it incredibly satisfying (I guess my actively analytical mind loves the contrapuntal ingenuity – it's like 17th-century Palestrinian perfection) and I'm sure that in its originally liturgical context it would have been deeply moving. For anyone with a performer's interest, one thing caught my attention: where 'German Latin' pronunciation has emphasised the ü-like sound of *Kyrie*, my ears were struck by the sound at the centre of *eleison*. This may be the only disc of the year to celebrate the 300th anniversary of the composer's death! *BC*

L'anima ritrovata: music for the Amati violins Ensemble L'Aura Soave cremona 48' 17"
MV 005/018 [contact www.mvcremona.it]
Music by Carubelli, Cazzati, Corelli, Ingegneri, Marin Marino, Merula, Monteverdi

The premise of this excellent CD is to play music written in the area where the Amati workshops were located. The programme is very varied, ranging from harp and keyboard solos to Corelli. The playing throughout is stylish and exciting, (though just now and then, I wondered if the cellist was *too* excited), nowhere more than in the Corelli concerto grosso – one that I've heard and played dozens of times, yet it seemed fresh and innovative. Carlo Antonio Marino's sonata for three violins, viola, cello and basso made me want to hear more, and I hope L'Aura Soave will produce a follow-up disc soon. *BC*

J. S. Bachs früheste Notenhandschriften Jean Claude Zehnder (1689/93 Schnitger organ St Jacobi, Hamburg) 51' 30"
Bach BWV 731, 764; **Buxtehude** *Nun freut euch* BuxWV 210; **Pachelbel** *An Wasserflüssen Babylon*, Kyrie, Fugue in b; **Reincken** *An Wasserflüssen Babylon*

The CD is an aural recognition of an important bit of research from the Bach-Archive Leipzig, the discovery in Weimar of the oldest surviving MSS in Bach's hand, copied when he was between 13 to 15. The works are two massive North German chorale fantasias by Buxtehude and Reincken (*Nun freut euch, lieben Christen gmein* and *An Wasserflüssen Babylon*). Also found, but not in Bach's hand, were three hitherto unknown Pachelbel works – a fugue in the unusual key of B minor and chorale fantasias on *An Wasserflüssen Babylon* and *Kyrie Gott Vater in Ewigkeit.* Further information on http://www.bach-leipzig.de/main_englisch/aktuelles/menu/aktuelles/start_text.html. This CD includes all these works, together with two of Bach's early organ works (chorale fantasias on *Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern*) based on what can now be recognised more certainly as the early influence of the North German organ school on the young Bach. Appropriately, the chosen organ is the magnificent Schnitger in Hamburg's Jacobikirche – arguably the finest surviving instrument from the North German organ world that Bach so clearly admired with a remarkable wide range of solo colours. Jean-Claude Zehnder is an inspiring teacher and performer, and his insightful interpretations demonstrate his thoughtful approach. The two principal Choral Fantasias are difficult works to interpret – at nearly 15 and 20 minutes respectively, their very length makes for some difficult interpretative decisions. Zehnder's choice of registrations is exemplary, as is his ability to provide an over-riding structure to these wonderful pieces. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

In an ideal world, the disc would also include a facsimile of the 'new' MS; but copyright issues are becoming more and more an impediment rather than an aid to scholarship and performance. CB

Music from the Chapel Royal The Sixteen, The Symphony of Harmony and Invention, Harry Christophers 68' 00"
Coro **COR16041**
Anthems by Blow, Cooke & Humfrey

This CD is an interesting attempt to explore the music of the English Chapel Royal in the 1660s and 1670s, before Purcell started contributing to the repertory. It contains two symphony anthems by Henry Cooke, *Put not to rebuke, O Lord* and *O Lord, thou hast searched us out,* together with symphony anthems by several of the choirboys he trained as Master of the Children: Pelham Humfrey's *O Lord my God* and *By the waters of Babylon*, Blow's *I will hearken what the Lord will say*, and the 'Club' anthem *I will always give thanks unto the Lord,* a joint effort by Humfrey, Blow and William Turner. There are also devotional songs by Humfrey: *Lord I have sinned', O the sad day, Sleep downy sleep* and his famous setting of Donne's *Hymn to God the Father* 'Wilt thou forgive that sin'.

It is good to see unfamiliar repertory explored, though the choice of programme is disappointing. The Humfrey songs have nothing to do with the Chapel Royal (they are devotional rather than liturgical), and the performances, by soloists drawn from the choir, are mostly no more than adequate. Bruce Wood is kind to Cooke in the notes, and the performers do their best with his anthems, but they cannot disguise the fact that they are poverty-stricken in invention, with short-winded phrases, unconvincing harmonies and rudimentary counterpoint. I would have gladly traded them and the Humfrey songs for some anthems by Matthew Locke, by the far the greatest early Restoration Chapel Royal composer. He wrote several symphony anthems in the Restoration style, and some of his fine verse anthems with organ remain unrecorded. They would have given the choir more to do; it is odd that The Sixteen only contributes a few minutes to the recording since it gets the top billing and is generally more accomplished than the soloists drawn from it.

The performances of the symphony anthems are mostly accomplished and stylish. Christophers uses the right instrumental forces – a string quartet, two theorbos and organ – and deploys them correctly: the bass violin only plays when the upper strings are used while the continuo plays throughout. They play well, though the balance within the string group is not good: the first violin is much more prominent than the lower parts. For my taste, Christophers takes most of the duple-time sections too slowly (so that, for instance, the setting of the words 'thou art my succour, haste thee to help me' in Humfrey's *O Lord my God* sounds inappropriately tardy), and is too inclined to slow down and hang about at section endings, so that it is difficult to get the sense of the 'patchwork' anthems as organic single structures. If you are interested in Humfrey, then Nicholas McGegan's fine Harmonia Mundi CD of Humfrey anthems with Clare College, Cambridge is a better bet, though this recording is worth considering for the Club Anthem and Blow's beautiful *I will hearken*, both of which seem to be first recordings. Obsessives will also want the Cook anthems which are – no surprise – first recordings as well. *Peter Holman*

Editions of the Humfrey anthems on the HM disc are available from King's Music: I had a weird Christmas editing the music for that and a CD of Josquin for Andrew Parrott. CB

LATE BAROQUE

Ariosti *The Stockholm Sonatas I: Lessons and Sonatas for Viola d'amore* Thomas Georgi *Viola d'amore* Lucas Harris *plucker* Joëlle Morton *gamba*
BIS: CD1535

Attilio Ariosti is remembered mainly for his compositions for viola d'amore. His *Cantates and a Collection of Lessons for the Viol d'Amour* are thought to have enjoyed the largest sale of music by subscription in the eighteenth century. This collection was intended for performers to practice scordatura techniques on the violin in preparation for playing a viola d'amore, undoubtedly as difficult an instrument to procure in England in the 18th century as today. Ariosti's solos for the viola d'amore survive in two sources, the *Collection* and the *Recueil de Pièces pour la Viol d'Amour.* The appellation 'Stockholm Sonatas' derives from one of the available sources, that in the hand of Johan Helmich Roman, a young Swedish student who copied them in the late 1710s during visits to London. There are 21 solos altogether and this CD includes seven of these, the first five of the *Lessons* and two further 'sonatas'. These are reconstructions by Georgi of *Lesson VI* as they might have been before the four-string versions were assembled. The additional movements are drawn from the *Recueil.* All the *Lessons* are, in fact, sonatas in all but name.

In this recording, Georgi has used three different instruments, a twelve string (6/6), a fourteen string (7/7) and a six stringed instrument without sympathetic strings. This last instrument is strung with wire rather than gut, a practice now widely considered a defining feature of the viola d'amore of the early 18th century. For the first four *Lessons* Georgi uses a lower alto tuning to facilitate the high position fingerings indicated by Ariosti in his scordatura notation, whilst the reconstructed sixth and seventh *Sonatas* use more conventional tunings. The scordatura notation by its nature tells us precisely what fingerings Ariosti would have used. By following these, Georgi is able to recreate the range of timbres Ariosti would have expected, including the more covered sounds produced in high positions.

This is a recording which I have thoroughly enjoyed. Georgi plays with a delicacy and sensitivity which does not get in the way of the music and Ariosti's voice comes through clearly. I am very impressed by the variety of different types of sound Georgi is able to get from the three instruments and how beautifully in tune his playing is, something sadly lacking in some viola d'amore recordings. His use of the three different instruments illustrates subtly different viola d'amore sounds whilst at the same time maintaining a sense of the musical world of Ariosti. The result gives a fascinating insight into the possibilities of the viola d'amore. The continuo instruments are cleverly used in a number of different combinations which help to maintain the interest. *Leon King*

Bach *Cantatas vol. 32: Mit Fried und Freud* Yukari Nonoshita, Robin Blaze, Andreas Weller, Peter Kooij *SATB*, Bach Collegium Japan, Masaaki Suzuki *dir* 74' 28"
BIS-SACD-1501

This latest disc contains four chorale cantatas from the Epiphany season of 1725. The members of the Bach Collegium Japan are at their best in the opening choruses of each piece. Here they show a subtle yet pervasive awareness of the chorale, whether as the rhythmic underpinning of the vigorous figuration in Cantata 111, or as the melodic motif behind the luminous wind writing of Cantata 123. The instrumental playing is excellent, with crisp rhythms and articulate figuration. As for the arias, there is a vivid evocation of tolling funeral bells in the tenor aria of Cantata 124, and the continuo section propels the vigorous passepied in the soprano-alto duet of the same cantata. Other arias present taxing or even enigmatic textures, as with the relentless dotted rhythms of the duet of Cantata 111; here the performers do their best to project the complexities of Bach's writing. Throughout this disc, the consistency, care and musicianship of Suzuki's series remain evident. Recommended.
Stephen Rose

Bach *Sacred Cantatas for Bass Nos 56, 82 & 158* Hanno Müller-Brachmann, Cologne Chamber Orchestra, Helmut Müller-Brühl
Naxos **8.557616** £ 50' 33"

Although from 1976 to 1987 today's Cologne Chamber Orchestra, then named Capella Clementina, worked under its present conductor on period instruments, since then the Ensemble has used modern instruments 'according to the principles of historic performance-practice' which has given it some merit to be considered here, even though in such matters as pitch, details of text, pronunciation and stylistic continuo-realization a little has been left as 'too detailed to warrant special attention'. But Hanno Müller-Brachmanns is a highly suitable voice to be accorded specialist status as a Bach soloist; he copes expertly with the wide range of tessitura required by his demanding programme, without resorting to any tasteless vibrato or portamento, and most appropriately combining with modern oboe (in BWV 56) and flute (in 158) obbligati. The detail of text mentioned above concerns the exact opening of Cantata 82, which strictly speaking is not *Es ist genug* but *Es ist genung* in the original. For this recording, a flute has been used as the unspecified obligato melody-instrument of the Aria 'Welt, ade', the second movement of Cantata 158. I still prefer a violin soloist here; fond memories from way back of Jaap Schroeder and more recently of Margaret Faultless make me feel some lack of expression with the flute, however strongly those advocating a flute argue from the part's lack of any demand of a violin's lowest fifth.
Stephen Daw

Bach *Altarien* various singers, Gächinger Kantorei, Bach-Collegium Stuttgart, Helmuth Rilling 78' 03" (rec 1971-96)
Hänssler **CD 98.243** ££
Alto arias from BWV 35, 81, 115, 108, 144, 175, 244, 169, 83, 245, 77 & 187

Helmuth Rilling, in his heyday an authoritative director of Bach's sacred music, may have been the first ever to record the entire corpus of his Cantatas (including the secular ones); but since then our interpretative views on how this should be done are much changed in many respects. All of the distinguished late-20th-century soloists featured here are clear to hear despite rather distant and unstylish accompaniments, and all sing clearly in modern German; for listeners still requiring this kind of selection, the most memorable tracks are those sung by Helen Watts (tracks 3, 6 & 10) and Carolyn Watkinson (4, 7 & 9). In a sense, these two soloists, who are happily remembered over here, fulfil distinct aspects of alto associations for Bach and his age: Watts, with her commanding majesty and technical assurance is chosen for arias which effectively speak with the authority of God himself, whereas Watkinson equally effectively reflects the responses of good discipleship. So, unacceptable though these recordings are in many respects, they do remind us of two positive aspects of Bach's associations with (almost certainly for him) the masculine and maturing aspect of this voice. *Stephen Daw*

Bach *Motets* Le Petite Bande 54' 46"
Challenge **SACC72160**
BWV 225-9

In the debate about the size of Bach's choir, few references have been made to his motets. In Leipzig during the 1720s, the repertory of motets mainly comprised 16th-century pieces that were suitable for less experienced singers and could be sung with more than one voice per part. Bach's own motets, however, make similar vocal demands to his cantatas, and seem to belong to the solo-voice repertory in spirit if not in name. Kuijken's recording is not the first with solo voices for the motets (such a scoring having already been recorded by Cantus Cölln and The Sarum Consort) but it is the first to use solo voices with instrumental doubling. Such instrumental reinforcement is in keeping with Bach's own practice, as documented by surviving parts from Leipzig. Here the use of instruments gives a pronounced sense of strong and weak beats to each phrase; the articulation is influenced primarily by tonguing and bowing, with less emphasis on the diction or projection of individual words. Consequently there is a subtle dance pulse in many of the motets (such as *Komm, Jesu, komm*), although in the intimate inner movements of *Jesu meine Freude* the focus shifts to the voices rather than instruments. Kuijken omits the four-voice motet *Lobet den Herren*, saying he has 'serious doubts' about its authorship; but at less than 57 minutes, the resulting disc seems less than generous. Perhaps he should instead have included the eight-voice *Ich lasse dich nicht* (BWV Anh. 159), which Daniel Melamed has recently ascribed to J. S. Bach. *Stephen Rose*

Bach Magnificat** see **Vivaldi Gloria

Bach Mass in B minor Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, Marga Höffgen, Nicolai Gedda, Heinz Rehfuss *SmSTB*, Wiener Singverein, Vienna Phil. & Philharmonia orchestras, Herbert von Karajan 153' 41" (2 Cds)(rec 1952 & 1953)
Naxos **8.111053-54** £
+ excerpts from other recordings of the Mass

Sadly, the opening movement is in a ponderous 8-in-a-bar that is likely to make one turn off long before it ends. But other movements have their interest. Take the *Laudamus*, for instance: it's a bit slow, but the violin playing by Manoug Parikian is lovely and Marga Höffgen even attempts the notated trills. It's nice to hear Denis Brain in the *Quoniam*. But on the whole, the quick movements fare better. The line-up of organists is interesting: Thurston Dart, Geraint Jones

and George Malcolm, playing a chamber instrument lent by the actor Bernard Miles.* These named players seem to have been from the London sessions: the unnamed Viennese organist is less stylish. The recording has a strange history, with the choruses recorded in Vienna and the solos in London – which presumably explains the gap between the *Quoniam* and the non-attacca *Cum Sancto Spiritu*. Disc 2 is completed by 5 excerpts: Dorothy Maynor singing *Laudamus te* in New York in 1945, Elizabeth Schumann and Margaret Balfour with the LSO conducted by Albert Coates in *Et in unum* and Frederic Shorr in *Et in Spiritum Sanctum*, both from 1929, Georges Thill singing the *Benedictus* in Paris in 1936 and the famous 1952 Kathleen Ferrier *Agnus Dei* with the LPO and Boult – this is the original version, not the later dubbed one. An interesting set, even if only sporadically enjoyable. *CB*

**There's a link here with the 1953 Dido performance & recording instigated by Bernard Miles in which Schwarzkopf sang, Geraint Jones conducted, and (I believe) Dart played harpsichord.*

Bach Orgel Werke Franz Raml (1750 Silbermann organ, Hofkirche, Dresden)
Oehms **OC 573** ££ 76' 21"
BWV 525, 542, 594, 604, 768

The organ in the Dresden's Hofkirche was Silbermann's last work, completed after his death by his apprentices. It survived the war, and was most recently restored in 2002. It makes a very grand sound in an impressive acoustic. The CD notes contain some errors (for example, the solo register for track 21 is played on the Brustwerk, not the Oberwerk); most critically, it omits half of the organ specification – it can be found in full on http://www.jehmlich-orgelbau.de/englisch/restorations/organ_hofki.htm, together with information about the restoration. The recording seems to have had the microphones quite close – unlike North German organs, the three manual divisions are in the same case, but the recording produces a very distant sound for the Oberwerk, high in the case, whilst the Brustwerk, just above the players head, is prominent – and the pedal is rather indistinct. This is not the way it would sound in the body of the church. The playing is musical and uses rhetoric and articulation well (listening to the rather distinctive articulation of the opening of track 1 – the G minor Fantasia). But there is some unsteadiness in occasional notes, with the opening transient not quite in the expected place. I am not sure if this is a deliberate application of articulation or rhetoric gesture, or just the way it turned out. The winding on the organ is quite sensitive, and there is a noticeable bounce in the wind at the conclusion of the relentlessly energetic G minor Fugue (track 2) – usually the result of taking the hands of the keys too quickly. The choice of registration is good, notably using the Hauptwerk *Viola da Gamba* and the Oberwerk *Quintadena* for the E♭ Trio Sonata and the interesting registration of 16' *Quintaton* and 4' *RohSei gegrüsset, Jesu Gütig* variations. The lengthy *rflöt* in one of the Concerto in C (594) gets a rare hearing – in my view this is one of the least successful of Bach's Vivaldi transcriptions. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

With* Bach *throughout the Liturgical Year
Elisabeth Roloff *org* 154' (2 CDs in box)
Dabringhaus & Grimm **MDG 320 1337-2**
BWV 538, 547, 552 + chorale preludes

The collection of chorale preludes, generally drawn from the *Orgelbüchlein* and the '18' Chorales, is arranged by broad liturgical groupings reflecting Advent, Christmas, Passion and Easter on the first CD and Pentecost and Trinity on the second. The 1971 Schuke organ at the Redeemer Church, Jerusalem, extended in 1984, is probably not the most obvious choice of instrument that *EMR* readers would choose to hear their Bach on – the pedal 16' is a particularly booming specimen. The playing is methodical and generally accurate but, in my view, lacks that mysterious 'something' that makes it a fulfilling musical experience. The pulse occasionally begins to drag and there could be rather more articulation to give life to the notes. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

Bach *The Great Fantasias, Preludes and Fugues* Christopher Herrick *org* 150' 03"
Hyperion dyad **CDD22062** ££ (rec 1993)

This is a reissue by Hyperion of their 1993 CDA66791/2, and does what it says on the tin – collects together some of Bach greatest free works. The use of a modern organ, albeit with a nod towards the North German school, will put this beyond the pale for some readers, but otherwise this is worth exploring. I have previously queried Christopher Herrick's rather neo-baroque interpretation and slightly mannered articulation; but if you are happy with tracks 1 and 3 (with its elaborations) of CD2, then you should be comfortable with the whole show. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

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

Happy Christmas.

Bach *Clavierübung, Parts 1 & 2, Chromatic Fantasy & Fugue* Elizabeth de la Porte *hpscd* 193' 01" (3 CDs in box) (rec 1975 & 1983)
London Independent Records **LIR012**

Elizabeth de la Porte was born in Johannesburg, but long ago moved to England, where she still lives in Kent, from where she still teaches harpsichord to the Junior Exhibitioners at the Royal College of Music. These closish analogue recordings date from 1975 [BWV 971, 831 & 903] for Saga and 1983 for Hyperion, but they sound well and still communicate very effectively. The substantial repertoire presented here is a strong challenge for any player, and this has indeed brought out many distinctive qualities. It would be unreasonable to pretend that she solves all of the interpretational problems with equal success or with consistent brilliance. In the earlier (Saga) tapes, her left hand often sounds rather pianistically rigid (it worried me particularly in her playing of the Fantasia BWV 903 and the Concerto BWV 971), but there are wonderful compensations elsewhere. Her delivery of all of the Partitas is unusually magisterial from either hand, with the last recorded, 6 in E minor and 4 in D, particularly effective. I also find that the tuning of her instrument is rather uniformly equally-tempered for my idea of Bach's preferences. But generally, this is an outstanding recording from one of our least appreciated performers. A wonderful surprise. *Stephen Daw*

Bach *The Well-Tempered Clavier, Book I*
Wanda Landowska *hpscd* 133' 07" (2 CDs) (rec 1949-51)
Naxos **8.110314-15** £

These records of the whole of *Das Wohltemperirte Clavier, Teil I.* or Book One of 'The 48', were originally recorded in New York [846-852] and Lakeville, Connecticut [853-869] between 26 March 1949 and 14 January 1951 by the then only international recording artist to specialise in the harpsichord. These interpretations thus gained a kind of authority which still today carries distinctive stature, so that we are in debt to Naxos's Historical Recordings Division for digging them out and for making them readily accesible on two inexpensive CDs. When these recordings were made (this reviewer was aged 4 when they began), the idea of any journal internationally restricted to recordings made on original instruments or copies of them had not even been contemplated. Any notion of there being serious concern for playing music as its creators had expected it to sound in detailed tonal

respects would have been considered ridiculous or impossible, and carefully though many world-class performers were considering some details, a review of this kind would have had no real significance.

That Wanda Landowska had special insight into J S Bach's music is very positively testified in these recordings, however. The characteristic sound of the instrument(s) upon which she was recorded may have adversely effected her accounts of certain of the daintier Preludes (BWV 866, 847. 848, 850, 851, 854, 856, 859, 860, 863, 864 865, 868 and in a different way 853 and 867 – 15 out of 24). The real strength of her considered scholarship is revealed chiefly in the more majestic Fugues; the chromatically rich ones in F minor (857) and B minor (869) well deserve our concentrated attention even today. As these happen to occupy the last tracks (24) on each disc they are now readily accessible on most CD players; riches indeed from the Bach recording heritage. *Stephen Daw*

Bach *Violin Concertos* Monica Huggett, Sonnerie 61' 30"
Gaudeamus **CD GAU 356**
BWV 1041, 1042, 1052, 1056

I was very excited when I spotted this CD among those that CB sent last month, but I regret to say that my expectations were not fully realised. While I have no problem with reconstructions of lost concertos, and I'm sure that the harpsichord concertos are transcriptions of earlier works, it seemed slightly odd to showcase them by programming them first and second in the playing order. More surprisingly, Monica Huggett, whom I have worshipped as a goddess of my instrument for a long time, does not seem as completely at ease in these works – as sure a sign as I need to tell me that the reconstructions might not be quite as Bach's originals! And doubly interesting that the Naxos recording uses flute as the obbligato instrument to great effect. *BC*

Bach *Concertos for oboe* Four Centuries of Bach (Adrian Butterfield, Christopher Verrette *vlns*, Patrick Jordan *vla*, Sarah McMahon *vlc*, Alison Mackay *db*, Borys Medicky *hpscd*), John Abberger *ob, dir* 53'11"
Analekta **AN 2 9910**
after BWV 1053, 1055, 1056, 1060

There's a well-established tradition of performing Bach's harpsichord concertos in putative earlier versions for oboe, and Abberger (principal oboist of Tafelmusik and the American Bach Soloists) is certainly a persuasive advocate for this approach. With his sprightly articulation, warm sound and elegant phrasing he gets quickly to the heart of each movement and leads his ensemble Four Centuries of Bach in some delightfully conversational chamber playing. With single strings and harpsichord (rather too far back in the balance for my taste) there's plenty of subtle dynamic interplay and soloistic virtuosity from each member of the team. Adrian Butterfield is the sometimes too self-effacing violin soloist in the C minor double concerto BWV 1060: his sound seems considerably less present than that of Abberger's incisive oboe. The roles are reversed in the joyous A major concerto BWV 1055, where the tonality brings out the violin's brighter open strings while Abberger's oboe d'amore, deliciously chocolaty* in timbre, takes more of a back seat. A couple of the slower movements feel a little hurried, missing opportunities to savour Bach's sometimes quirky melodic lines and harmonic intensity. Elsewhere tempi appear to be very well chosen, with some buoyant rhythmic momentum, lithe bass lines and a degree of flexibility that is encouraged and enlivened by the chamber music nature of these performances. *John Bryan*

** The spelling of this word hasn't yet settled down; according to* Classical Music *25-11-06, the house style of* The Times *is chocolatey; OED prefers that but gives both.* CB

Bach *Brandenburg Concertos* Swiss Baroque Soloists, Andrés Gabetta 114' 32" (2 CDs)
Naxos **8.557755-56** £

This two-CD set includes not only the Brandenburg Concertos but also the Trio Sonata from *The Musical Offering* and a version of the keyboard concerto BWV1066 for flute and strings. It is (at least) the second set available from Naxos and, at bargain price, is an excellent contender if you only want to have one version of the concertos on your shelves – the playing is bright and well recorded, and the performances are really very good. The middle movement of the third concerto is a harpsichord improvisation (I was a little surprised that the link into the orchestral cadence bore a distinct resemblance to the similar link in Concerto 4). *BC*

Joseph-Marie-Clement Dall'Abaco *Il Capricen für Violoncello* Kristin von der Goltz 55' 34"
Raum Klang **RK 2503**

It appears that Kristin von der Goltz is on a single-handed quest to bring solo cello music back into vogue – following on from her excellent CD of sonatas by Jacob Klein, we have one of 11 Caprices by Joseph-Marie-Clément dall' Abaco (non-cello specialists will perhaps be more familiar with his father's music). I'm not as convinced by their aesthetic qualities as I was by the earlier recording, but von der Goltz makes a mostly eloquent case for their re-discovery. I imagine all early cellists will want to own this, though even they may find just under an hour of solo works quite hard going – despite von der Goltz's beautiful playing! *BC*

C. H. Graun *Te Deum* Monika Mauch, Elisabeth von Magnus, Bernhard Gärtner, Klaus Mertens *SmSTB*, L'arpa festante, Basler Madrigalisten, Fritz Näf 59' 17"
cpo **777 158-2**
+ motets *Herr ich habe lieb, Lasset uns freuen, Machet die Tore weit*

This is another welcome addition to the cpo catalogue. Both the Graun brothers were very able composers as well as performers, and here we get a feeling for the impact of Carl Heinrich's professional singing career on his musical style. The three motets that fill out the disc most possibly date from his time as a choirboy in Dresden – even in what strikes me as too reverberant an acoustic (the pieces presumably were not written to be performed in an empty church), they are striking works, very stylishly performed by the Basler Madrigalisten. The main work on the programme, the 1757 Te Deum, written to mark a Prussian victory over the Austrians, eschews the trumpets and drums of many other settings of the text, and yet manages to capture the majesty of the text. Again, Graun's expertise in writing for the voice comes to the fore – relished, it must be said, by the four fine soloists on this recording. I hope these forces continue to explore this repertoire – and I would love to hear them in C. P. E. Bach. *BC*

J. G. & C. H. Graun *Concerti* Il Gardellino
Accent **ACC 24166** 67' 56"
By JG: in A *gamba*, in D *ob d'amore*, in e *fl*; by CH: in G *fl, vln, gamba, vlc*

What a great month for Graun fans! A disc of church music by Carl Heinrich *and* one of concertos by him and his elder brother, Johann Gottlieb. The solo instruments in works by the latter are viola da gamba (soloist Vittorio Ghielmi is editing the composer's complete output for his instrument), oboe d'amore (Marcel Ponseele needs no introduction from me – he's simply brilliant), and flute (the work is in E *minor* despite what the cover says). Johann Gottlieb seems to have a formula that goes something like this: extended opening ritornello, solo episode with violin accompaniment, ritornello, solo episode with tutti, ritornello, solo

episode again with violins, final ritornello – although it may seem limited, in fact, there is more than enough variety in the writing to alleviate any potential boredom – and with wonderful playing like this, it's never less than enjoyable. Carl Heinrich's contribution to the recital is more of a *symphonie concertante* with four soloists (flute and violin as one pair, gamba and cello as the other). His clever choice of instruments and the lyrical quality of his music I praised above ensure that this piece is bound to become a favourite. Let's hope we hear more Graun from il Gardellino! *BC*

Handel *Messiah Dublin Version, 1742* Susan Hamilton, Annie Gill, Clare Wilkinson, Nicholas Mulroy, Matthew Brook SAATB, Dunedin Consort, John Butt 140' 01" (2 CDs) ££
Linn **CKD 285**

Handel *Messiah* Kerstin Averno, Patricia Bardon, Lawrence Zazzo, Kobie van Rensburg, Neal Davies *SAcTTB*, Choir of Clare College, Freiburger Barockorchester, René Jacobs 137' 22" (2 CD/SACDs in box)
Harmonia Mundi **HMC 901928.29**

Handel *Messiah* (1751 version) Henry Jenkinson, Otta Jones, Robert Brooks, Iestyn Davie*t*, Toby Spence, Eamonn Dougan *TrTrTrcTTB* Choir of New College Oxford, The Academy of Ancient Music, Edward Higginbottom 2 CDs 142' 19"
Naxos **8570131-32** £
see review by Anthony Hicks on p. 26

Handel *Italian Duets* Gillian Fisher, James Bowman *SA*, The King's Consort 63' 33"
Hyperion Helios **CDH 55262** (rec 1990)££
A mirarvi, Conservate raddoppiate, Fronda leggiera, Langue geme, Nò di voi, Se tu non lasci, Sono liete, Tanti strali, Troppo cruda

Originally recorded in 1990, this is well-deserving of re-release. The singers have quite different voices, but share an understanding of the music which makes their partnership delightful. Their long runs of parallel semiquavers are a lesson to anyone who attempts to sing Handel duets or similar music. Handel is impeccably served by these performers, including the fine continuo group: Jane Coe's beautiful cello-playing is particularly worthy of mention. The twenty-one Italian duets are well known as the source of some of the great tunes in oratorios and operas; in the booklet Robert King notes some of Handel's future uses of material which made its first appearance in the nine duets recorded here. True Handel buffs might like to listen blind before referring to the notes, and test themselves! Those with less encyclopaedic expertise will be constantly reminded of Handel's powers of invention within a fairly restricted medium, continually mixing the familiar with the fresh and new. *Selene Mills*

Handel & Hasse *Arias* Vivica Genaux *mS*, Les Violons du Roy, Bernard Labardie
Virgin Classics **7243 5 45737 2 9** 72' 01"

I'm sure this recording will be very successful, and it certainly has great entertainment value. At least for me, it loses its HIP credentials not so much in that fact that the band uses modern instruments, but rather in the singer's inability *not* to over-ornament Handel's Da Capos. Enjoy the composer's lines during the first time through, as they will be all but unrecognizable second time around! Vivica Genaux's is, of course, a prodigious talent and her range and dexterity are often astonishing, but I'm not convinced that Handel would have been as delighted as some of her own fans might be – one could argue that the castrati of the day often distorted the melodies, and even had the audacity to substitute their stock arias when it suited them, but thankfully I don't have to listen to recordings of them, and when I *do* choose to listen to Handel arias, Handel is what I want to hear. *BC*

Hasse *Serpentes ignei in deserto* Valérie Gabail Angelus, Isabelle Poulenard Josue, Stéphanie d'Oustrac Eliab & Nathanael, Annette Markert Moyses, Robert Expert Eleazar, Les Paladins, Jérôme Correas
Ambronay **AMY005** 78' 30"

This is a tricky disc to review – not on account of the quality of the music or the excellence of the performance, but because I have reservations that I do not want to express to the detriment of the project as a whole. So let's get my doubts out of the way first. The booklet notes go to great lengths to tell us the history of the *ospedali* of Venice and the importance of their all-female performances in that city's musical history – so why is one (just one!) of the characters in this performance sung by a man? More importantly, though, if this is nothing more than a (beautiful) glorified introduction to a setting of the *Miserere*, would it not make sense that it should be packaged with a recording of that work? Whether this be the C minor setting the booklet mentions, or the D minor setting (scored for SSAA, strings and continuo – therefore very similar to the Oratorio), I don't really mind; but ending with a recitative announcing a performance of the *Miserere* just seems odd. The piece consists of an introduction, eight recitative-aria pairs (two each for Moses and the Angel, while the other four singers – or, in this case, three! – get one), a recitative-duet pair, and an epilogue, and reveals a most inspired composer turning his hand to a display of all sorts of emotions. The five singers and the fine 4-3-2-2-1 band (with bassoon, theorbo, harpsichord and organ continuo) give persuasive performances, revealing beautiful voices and an impressive range of virtuoso techniques. I am a little concerned that their decoration of Da Capo repeats follows a recent trend that involves more or less disregarding the written line in favour of improvisations on the underlying harmony (more of a blues break than anything to which I'm accustomed in this repertoire), and I for one don't actually enjoy it that much – there is one example here of a staccato, 'Queen of the Night' variation which seemed particularly inappropriate. Still, as I said at the outset, this is a (mostly) enjoyable recording and the pros very much outweigh the cons. *BC*

B. Marcello *Sonatas op. 2* Accademia Claudio Monteverdi Venezia, Hans Ludwig Hirsch *cond* (!) 110' 10" (2CDs)
Arts **47412-2** (rec 1985)

These re-released recordings would frankly have been better left in the archives. Marcello is not to blame – these are lovely sonatas, but they deserve far better performances, especially from the violinist and continuo team. The cellist is perhaps most to blame, and it seems unlikely that there was much eye-contact during the recording sessions – at least, that's what comes over when listening time and time again to three performers managing to get from one cadence to the next out of synch with one another. The recorder player seems more interested in decorating linking passages than the actual lines themselves. The transverse flute is too closely miked for my liking – too much breath and not enough beauty of tone is the result. *BC*

G. B. Sammartini *Sacred Cantatas: Della Passione di Gesu Cristo, L'addolorata Divina Madre* Silvia Mapelli, Miroslava Yordanova, Giorgio Toboni *SST*, Symphonica Ensemble, Daniele Ferrari
Naxos **8.570254** £ 72' 47"

This is the second set of Sammartini cantatas that I have reviewed for *EMR*. Each consisting of a sinfonia, three recitative-arias pairs (one each for the three soloists) followed by a recitative-trio, the two cantatas on this recording date from the year of Handel's death, but could not be further from his style – just how far music in Italy had 'progressed' is clearly demonstrated by the longer,

melody dominated arias. The singing is very good and the playing, though not HIP, avoids the stodginess that sometimes plagues this repertoire in modern instrument performances. *BC*

Vivaldi *The Four Seasons* Dan Laurin *rec*, Arte dei Suonatori 65' 40"
BIS-SACD-1605
+ RV 124, 437, 441

I'm getting used to Dan Laurin's CDs having rather unattractive covers. Don't let the greenish sleeping baby put you off this very attractive performance. Other recorder players have made recordings of *The Four Seasons*, but this one works particularly well. Laurin has managed to make the music sound so idiomatic to the recorder that when I played it to a friend she said that, if she hadn't known, she wouldn't have guessed that it was really for the violin. I particularly like the third movement of Spring, with its 'Balkan ornaments' inspired by the word *zampogna* (bagpipes) in the accompanying sonnet. Dan Laurin plays with charm and apparently effortless technical facility, admirably assisted by Arte dei Suonatori, a small period-instrument orchestra formed in Poland. I was glad to see the sonnets, in both Italian and English, printed at the back of the booklet, and there is also an interesting essay by Laurin explaining not just the 'plot' but also the philosophy behind the music and its performance. The three other concerti are not just fillers, and Laurin gives a particularly sparkling performance of the concerto in C minor. *Victoria Helby*

Vivaldi *The Four Seasons, La tempesta di mare, Il piacere* (op. 8/1-6) Cho-Liang *vln*, Lin *vln*, Sejong, Anthony Newman *kbd*
Naxos **8.557920** 55' 11"

I'm not going to go on at length about this disc, simply because there are too many good recordings on period instruments. Of their kind, Cho-Liang and Sejong's vesions are very good, capturing the fire of the Red Priest in fast movements and not without the odd nod and wink at HIP ideas with improvised ornamentation. There will almost certainly be another CD with the remaining six concertos from op. 8, but I don't think they'll stay on my shelves for long. *BC*

Vivaldi *L'Amore per Elvira* Mhairi Lawson *S*, La Serenissima, Adrian Chandler *vln, dir*
Linn **CKD 281** 76' 11"
Sonatas RV 11, 37, 83; Cantatas *Elvira anima mia, Lungi dal voi, Tremori al Braccio*

This CD consists of three cantatas for solo soprano and two sonatas for violin (the latter reconstructed by Adrian Chandler from the incomplete sources at Graz), as well as the composer's only (known) sonata for violin, cello and continuo. As always with La Serenissima, the performances are full-blooded and passionate – this is a Red Priest full of Mediterranean passion, not wheezing his way from one service to another. Elvira is the subject of the three cantatas and the final track of the disc sees her triumphantly joined with her admirer Fileno – a fittingly exuberant end to a thoroughly enjoyable recital. *BC*

Vivaldi *Gloria* Bach *Magnificat* Lynda Russell, Gillian Fisher, Alison Browner, Ian Partridge, Michael George *SSATB*, The Sixteen, The Symphony of Harmony and Invention, Harry Christophers Coro
COR16042 (rec 1991) 55' 09"

This recording may be 15 years old, but it certainly doesn't show any signs of aging – quite the reverse. Like a good red wine, the passing of time has been kind to these performances, in which soloists, well-drilled choir and stylish band bring poise and rigour in equal measure to two of the best-known works of the late baroque. There are also one or two little surprises, most notable of which is the decorated cello line in Vivaldi's 'Domine Deus' (including double stopping, if you don't mind!), an innovation in 1991 that has not really caught on. Despite not being the Christmas version of Bach's Magnificat, this would make a joyous present this yuletide. *BC*

Vivaldi Suzie Leblanc, Teatro Lirico, Stephen Stubbs 56' 48"
Challenge **CC 72027** (rec 1998)
Laudate pueri RV 601, *O qui coeli* RV 631, *Salve Regina* RV 617, *Vos aurae per montes* RV634

This is a fabulous addition to the Vivaldi discography. Suzie LeBlanc sings with an energy and sparkle that is often lacking nowadays – from the opening track to the last, this is stylish, bright and lively. It seems that the disc has waited eight years to be issued (the recordings were made in 1998), and I cannot imagine why – these performances are as good as one will ever hear! *BC*

The Baroque Lute Andrew Maginley
Inkling Records, Avie **AV2115** 55' 09"

Andrew Maginley is an American lutenist now living and working in Germany. His CD begins with his own transcription of Bach's Cello Suite no. 1 (BWV 1007). The piece sounds well on the lute, which is better able to sustain the treble and bass lines than the cello. The overall effect is fairly soporific, with soft, gentle playing, swathed in a considerable amount of echo. The Sarabande is particularly restful, but the other movements – even the gigue – maintain the same morphean mood.

Weiss' Sonata no. 36 in D minor, on the other hand, has plenty of contrasts, with a flamboyant Fantasia, a scurrying Courante, and a somewhat grandiose Gavotte. The Sarabande is nicely played, although there is an excess (for my taste) of split and rolled chords, which, together with the blurring of notes echoing on, loses clarity. The suite ends with a virtuosic Giga, reminding us what a fine composer Weiss was.

Falkenhagen's Largo has a pastoral flavour and proceeds with a series of extravagant, unpredictable gestures, and a surprising variety of timbres. The excitement continues through a lively Allegro and Vivace. Falkenhagen was a pupil of Weiss, and his music epitomises the pre-classical gallant style. Andrew Maginley succeeds in giving us a glimpse of the refined elegance of lute music in 18th-century Germany. It seems a strange quirk of history that such fine music should have been followed so soon by the lute's rapid fading into obscurity. *Stewart McCoy*

Baroque Sonatas Richard Galler *bsn*, Johannes Maria Bogner *kbd*, Ernst Weissensteiner *db*, Clemens Horak *ob* 52' 27"
VMS Musica Treasures **VMS 172**
Bach BWV 1027; **Böddecker** *sopra La Monica*; **Fasch** in C; **Telemann** in f (from *Der getreue Music-Meister*); **Vivaldi** in g

It is easy to understand why a record company would be interested in these performers and this programme – the bassoonist is first rate, and these are the stock-in-trade of any performer on that instrument, so there is a ready market. Unfortunately, I would imagine that most HIP bassoonists won't be queueing to buy it – despite interesting ornamentation and well-judged tempi, the style just isn't right. (The transcription of the Bach G major gamba sonata certainly should not have been included!) Personally I found the 16' stringed bass just too much, especially pizzicato with the harpsichordist using that other bug-bear of mine, the lute stop! I am grateful for one thing, though – it's the first performance of the Fasch sonata that has convinced me that it might be authentic! *BC*

Carl Dolmetsch *recorders*, ***Joseph Saxby*** *harpsichord* 69' 26" (rec 1950-53)
Pearl **GEM 0234**
Handel Sonata in a & C; **Pepusch** Sonata 4 in F; **Senaillié** Sonata 5 in g; **Telemann** Partita 2 in G, etc

These are historic Decca recordings from 1950 and 1953, but the sound of the Dolmetsch recorders is extremely clear.

It is interesting to hear how much recorder playing has changed in the fifty or so years since they were made, but many of the performances are enjoyable in their own right. The descant recorder pieces show Dolmetsch at his best, particularly in the short Matteis prelude, the *Variations on Greensleeves to a ground*, and the charming arrangement of Lawes pieces. His performances on treble and tenor recorders are less successful for me. His rather emphatic style of playing tends to make the slow movements somewhat plodding in spite of the numerous ornaments and imaginative cadential flourishes, and I was too aware of the continuous vibrato. I remember attempting as a child to interpret Dolmetsch's ornaments in his recorder editions, and would have found these recordings most helpful. Although I feel that a few of the performances have not really stood the test of time, it is most interesting to hear recordings from the relatively early days of the recorder revival, made by a player who had so much influence upon it. It is rather a pity that although there is a lot of information in the booklet about the Dolmetsch family's immense contribution to the history of the recorder, there is nothing about the music except a list of the tracks.

Victoria Helby

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CLASSICAL

C. P. E. Bach *Concertos Vol. 15* Miklós Spányi *tangent pf*, Opus X Ensemble
BIS-CD-1422A ££ 141' (2 CDs in box)
Concertos Wq 23, 39, 105

C P E Bach *Complete Works for Solo Keyboard, Vol. 15* Miklós Spányi *clavichord*.
BIS-CD 1422B
Includes **Sonatas** in a H143A & d H105, **Petites Pieces:** *L'Auguste* H122, *La Xenophone et La Sybille* H123, *La Philippine* H96 *La Gabriel* H97, *La Louise* H114, *L'Ernestine* H124 & 685.5, *La Caroline* H98, *La Sophie* H125, Andantino in d H108, Allegretto in F H301, Allegro in D H302
These two discs are sold as a pair at mid price

Miklos Spányi here takes forward his ambition to record the barely-known complete repertoire of Emanuel Bach's complete keyboard concertos (and, as we find here, those 1760s Sonatinas with extra winds), an oeuvre that certainly surpasses the comparable one of Mozart numerically, whilst rivalling it in stylistic range. This time, Spányi issues together a familiar old friend in the Concerto in D minor (published a century ago in *Denkmäler deutscher Tonkunst*, and one of the very first concertos to have been played by Spanyi at the Franz Liszt Conservatoire in Budapest as a youth) along with two pieces that I myself had never heard with the keyboard soloist. All goes well, as it has usually done in this series, with the comparatively new enrichment of really stylish accompaniments from Opus X, a small, but highly accomplished Finnish ensemble strikingly led and at times directed by the violinist Petri Tapio Mattson. For me, like the previous volumes, a real treasure-chest.

Volumes 8 and 12 of Spányi's series of the keyboard solos have also been dedicated to discs of Sonatas and *Petites Pièces*. Neither have come to me for review, but I presume that they show similar qualities of variety, technical dependability and sensitivity such as we find here. With other composers, to package together both Sonatas and socially-derived character-studies might work out to the disadvantage of one or the other; but the mixture is fine in the case of Emanuel Bach, partly because neither are his Sonatas too pretentious, nor his miniatures too trivial; he seems utterly at home with either genre. So, indeed, does Spányi, whose very pleasing clavichord sounds more and more like an extension of his own interpretative imagination with every sample of this pleasing series that I am privileged to hear or to report upon.

Stephen Daw

C. P. E. Bach *Sonaten 'für Kenner und Liebhaber'* Jeab Goverts *fp* 68' 39"
Divox Antiqua CDX 70303
H.161, 209, 244, 269, 280, 282, 286, 287, 298?

Jean Goverts was born in The Hague and derives his international distinction – and probably much of his really fluent and expressive technique – from his long experience as a teacher of early keyboard instruments and continuo realization at the Schola Cantorum in Basle. He has chosen here to play a rich selection from Emanuel Bach's Sonatas, carefully chosen to illustrate their diversity, but also the dexterity they require from their adequate interpreter. I have never specially liked the harpsichords from the German Neupert factory, but was very pleasantly surprised by the immediacy and the efficiency of the example used here. The immediate response of the instrument's escapement is particularly well used, as are what sound like a number of quieter stops or knee-leavers; the tuning may sound a little too evenly tempered for a member of the Bach family, but has been very well recorded in a really suitable church; just very occasionally we can just hear Goverts' deeper intakes of breath. This is a really attractive product, with one serious shortcoming: specialist readers should hold on to this review for its Helm's numberings which are far more up-to-date than the Wotquenne ones supplied with the recording. *Stephen Daw*

As I wrote a few issues ago, the Wotquenne numbers are often more convenient, since Helm splits up groups of pieces that were and still are considered as a coherent group, so reference to them can be made by a single Wq number, not six unrelated ones. The sonatas on this disc, however, are not from a single set. CB

Galuppi *Forgotten arias of a Venetian Master* Catherine King *mS*, Il Canto di Orfeo, Guanluca Capuano *dir* 71' 31"
Avie **AV 2116**

It would seem from the copyright line of this CD that it was produced and paid for by the excellent singer, Catherine King. Time and time again, I thought to myself that it was as if Galuppi had known her voice, so perfectly suited was the music to the range and colours she produces – of course, it is entirely possible that the music was originally all written for one singer, who matched these qualities. Galuppi was, after all, a vocal teacher as well as composer, and he would have written for his singers accordingly – even if the arias were originally written for castrati! Where the CD does not quite make the mark is in the instrumental pieces: the tuning was slightly wayward at various points, and I felt there was just a little too much 'interpretation'. This is such pity, as the vocal numbers are excellent and Catherine King's radiant in a way that should lead the way for others in this sadly neglected repertoire. *BC*

Haydn Piano Concertinos, String Trios Sabine Vatin (1893 Erard *fp*), Ensemble d'arco 73' 30"
Naxos **8.557660** £
Hob. V:16, XI: 11, XIV:11-13, XVIII:F2

This generously-filled CD gives us six mainly quite early works of Haydn from categories that are at present thinly represented in the CD catalogue. They may not all be authentic as they stand (the D-major Trio was in fact written for baryton), but they are undeniably attractive, and contain a measure of surprises too. They favour simple structures, with both halves of movements repeated (Haydn's instructions are duly, though not always imaginatively, followed in these lively readings). Sabine Vatin's fortepiano is an Erard of 1893; it is set off and balanced very nicely by the strings, and these are pleasingly direct, unpretentious readings, cleanly (if over-closely) recorded, and sensibly introduced in the accompanying leaflet note. *Peter Branscombe*

£ = bargain price (up to £6.00)
£ = mid price

Mozart ***Lieder*** Suzie LeBlanc *sop*, Yannick Nézet-Séguin *fp* 63' 12"
ATMA Classique **ACD2 2327**

The Lieder volume is one of the smallest in the Neue Mozart-Ausgabe but, as this CD reminds us, Mozart's song-output demands a prominent place in the development of the art song in German. Suzie LeBlanc has a lovely voice, which she puts sensitively at the service of Mozart's ever-changing requirements, in French and Italian (Myslivecek's 'Ridente la calma', K152/210a) as well as German. Her phrasing is a shade over-deliberate here and there, but she creates the moods of the personae without exaggeration (interestingly, she does not include 'Die Alte'). The twenty-two tracks include the pantheistic *Kleine deutsche Kantate*, which was the last work Mozart completed. LeBlanc's sympathetic partner is Yannick Nézet-Séguin, on a fortepiano modelled on an Anton Walter of 1790, an ideal instrument for these songs. *Peter Branscombe*

Mozart ***Piano Sonatas complete*** Malcolm Bilson 364'30" (6 CDs in box; rec 1988-90)
Hungaroton Classic **HCD 31009-14** ££

A welcome to this reissue of one of the pioneering achievement in the recording of Mozart's piano sonatas on appropriate instruments, in this case copies of a c.1780 Walter [but see the review of Tilney's Mozart below] by Philip Belt, a Dulcken of a decade or so later by Thomas & Barbara Wolf, and a Walter from the mid-1790s by Paul McNulty. The 18 sonatas are not arranged chronologically, though some thought has been given to the compatibility of the groups of three sonatas that make up each disc. The booklet notes by the distinguished Hungarian scholar Laszlo Somfai comprise a chronological table of the sonatas and two pages of text, mostly about editions and instruments. He also writes on behalf of the performer; whether one agrees that abstemiousness in ornamentation is always a good principle, there is a case for it on sets that are likely to be used as reference points. However, when he made these recordings, Bilson presumably wasn't expecting them to be packaged 15 years later as a bargain and that there were to be plenty of alternatives around. *CB*

The Secret Mozart Christopher Hogwood *clavichord* (with Richard Adlam in duets)
DHM **82876 83288 2** 73' 46"
K 33b, 236, 312, 355, 356, 381, 397, 453a, 460, 494, 501, 623

This is a fascinating recording, and a valuable corrective to the prevalent notion that all Mozart's keyboard music was written for the standard Viennese fortepiano, as made around 1800 by Walter and others. On the contrary, like other composers of the period Mozart revelled in the rich variety of keyboard instruments available at that time, not least the clavichord. Hogwood plays three excellent examples on this CD, a Hass of 1761, a Schiedmayer of 1791 and – most interesting of all – Mozart's own clavichord, used by him in 1791 while working on *La Clemenza di Tito*, *The Magic Flute* and the Requiem. The Hass has a beautiful fluty treble but tends to run out of steam in the extreme bass (despite the extra 4' rank), while the Schiedmayer is reedy and sonorous throughout its compass. Mozart's clavichord does not sustain quite so well but has a very good balance between treble and bass; surprisingly (or is it?) it sounds rather like a very quiet fortepiano. The choice of music is equally enterprising. I agree that the 'unfinished' D minor Fantasia K.397 was most likely intended as a prelude to another work: here the Duet Sonata K.381, which Mozart and his sister may well have played on the clavichord at home. And it's good to have a chance of hearing the autograph version of the K.460 Variations, and the earlier stand-alone Rondo K.494, later incorporated into the K.533 Sonata. The introverted, almost 12-tone Minuet K.355 is particularly suited to the clavichord, though Stadler's trio is quite different in style and seems rather incongruous (it's on a separate track so you can omit it if you wish). One or two other choices are a little eccentric: K.236 is not by Mozart at all, but is simply his transcription of part of a Gluck aria, possibly intended as the subject for variations. K.356, although it works well on the clavichord, was written for Benjamin Franklin's glass armonica. And the hymn often printed after the Little Masonic Cantata K.623 is of doubtful authenticity and anyway isn't a keyboard piece (listeners may recognize it as the current Austrian national anthem, adopted after Germany had appropriated Haydn's 'Gott erhalte Franz den Kaiser'). Hogwood's (Adlam's) playing is suitably thoughtful and introspective – except for the cheerfully exuberant K.381, of course. Full marks, too, for the judicious choice of tempi and the tasteful ornamentation in some of the repeats. *Richard Maunder*

Colin Tilney plays Mozart vol. 1 *fp* 63' 56"
Doremi **DDR-71137**
K 180, 265, 455, 540, 573

I enjoyed this CD very much. Tilney has an impeccable sense of period style, and convincingly gives the impression that he has approached the fortepiano via the clavichord and harpsichord, not backwards from the modern piano. All Mozart's detailed articulation markings are meticulously observed, and the 'moderator' stop is – very properly – reserved for just one variation in the K.265 set (which, incidentally, dates from 1781-2, not 1778 as stated here). There is a little ornamentation on some of the repeats, always tasteful and never overdone. The fortepiano is a very nice instrument and sounds well throughout its compass but – to my no doubt pedantic ear – it's a little too 'modern' for the music on this record, especially K.180 of 1773 which was surely not written for any kind of fortepiano (if the dynamic markings are original it was presumably meant for clavichord). It's highly unlikely to be 'a copy . . . of a 1778 Walter' as the programme note claims, for Michael Latcham's articles on Walter list nothing by that maker from before about 1782; moreover his earliest surviving instrument that still has its original action is dated 1789. But this is a minor quibble, and doesn't stop me recommending these satisfying performances by a sensitive and intelligent player. *Richard Maunder*

Mozart ***The Flute quartets*** (K285, 285a, 285b, 298), **Beethoven** ***Serenade op. 25*** Lisa Beznosiuk *fl*, Pavlo Beznosiuk *vln*, Tom Dunn *viola*, Richard Tunnicliffe *cello*
Avie **AV 2108** 74'08"

I received and sent out two copies of this, so we have two reviews. CB

This is a clear and bright recording of Mozart's well-known flute quartets and Beethoven's D major Serenade for flute, violin and viola. The balance between the instruments is excellent and the players are in sparkling form. Lisa Beznosiuk plays a 4-keyed ebony flute by Grenser, said to be almost exactly contemporaneous with the Beethoven Serenade, mostly composed in 1801. The Beethoven is a big work, six movements lasting almost twenty-five minutes, sandwiched between the four Mozart quartets, and should certainly be better known. The quartets are varied in mood, reflecting the different circumstances of their composition. There is some doubt whether K285b is by Mozart at all, while K298 is based on a song by Hoffmeister, a French *rondeau* and an opera aria by Paisiello. Its third movement has the longest performance instruction I have ever seen: *Allegretto grazioso, ma non troppo presto, pero non troppo adagio. Cosi-cosi con molto garbo* (grace) *ed espressione.* *Victoria Helby*

Easily the least-familiar and longest of these works is the six-movement Serenade that Beethoven composed in 1801 and published next year as opus 25, a piece that begins almost flippantly and includes in its slow movements passages of

ruminative profundity. The performances of all these works are first class, the recording and presentation likewise. The four Mozart flute quartets, often recorded, emerge here as delightful as ever, thanks to performances that are alert and sparkling without any lack of poise and poetry. *Peter Branscombe*

Mozart & Beethoven ***Harmoniemusik***
The Australian Classical Wind Band
ABC **476 5256** 70' 31"

Beethoven Octet op.; 103; Mozart Quintet in Eb K 452, Serenade in Eb K 375

There's an awful lot of E flat here, but no complaints about that, especially when the three works are played with such engagement and freshness as by these Australians with their instruments all modelled on originals from around 1800. The Beethoven Octet is, despite its opus number, an early piece, alternately solid and lively. The Mozart works are both absolute stunners, especially of course the great Quintet K452. Geoffrey Lancaster plays a copy of an Anton Walter fortepiano of 1805; its tone-colour and Lancaster's phrasing are neatly offset by the forward, at times engagingly raucous wind instruments. Here and, especially, in K375, the players convey an air of spontaneity as well as total commitment. A valuable booklet note and fine recorded quality enhance the attraction of this issue. *Peter Branscombe*

Sacchini *Oedipe à Colone* Sviatoslav Smirnov *Oedipe*, Manon Feubel *Antigone*, Fabrice Mantegna *Polynice*, Daniel Galvez-Vallejo *Thésée*, Raphaëlle Farman *Eriphile*, Ch and CO of La Camerata de Bourgogne, Jean-Paul Penin 92' 22"
Dynamic **CDS 494/1-2**

'First recording', it claims, and true enough, it predates the Naxos (whose sessions took place in May 2005 as opposed to Dynamic's June to September of 2004) by eight months. The performance is fine, with a real sense of dramatic build-up to the drama in each act. Manon Feubel is rather edgy in tone as Antigone but exciting in the ensembles; appropriately, Raphaëlle Farman as Eriphile is gentler, more lyrical. The men are all well characterized, with Jacques Gay particularly impressive as the High Priest. Jean-Paul Penin favours generally faster tempos than Brown, and certainly carries his excellent chorus and orchestra with him. An absurdly short break between Acts I and II is regrettable, but in other ways this set is finely produced, with close but well-focused sound quality, an illustrated insert booklet with brief four-language introduction, and French and English libretto clearly laid out. It's hard to know which set to recommend – having both is a luxury that I shall relish. There's more poise, dignity and poetry in Ryan Brown's approach, whereas for dramatic excitement Penin is your man. *Peter Branscombe*

After Peter sent the above review, I thought it would be worth having a comparison with the version I reviewed in EMR 113 on the assumption that there was no alternative recording: hence the second review below. CB

Sacchini ***Oedipe à Colone*** François Loupe *Oedipe*, Nathalie Paulin *Antigone*, Robert Getchell *Polinice*, Tony Boutté *Thésée*, Kirsten Blaise *Eriphile*, Opera Lafayette Orchestra & Chorus, Ryan Brown
Naxos **8.660196-7** £ 112' 47" (2 CDs)

The only other Sacchini opera recording currently available, apart from the rival *Oedipe*, is of the *buffo* intermezzo *La contadina in corte*. *Oedipe à Colone*, first performed in 1786, a few months before the composer's death, could hardly be more different: it is a fine, austere *tragédie lyrique* that unites the finest features of Italian style with the noble qualities of Gluck's maturity. Ryan Brown, who with Opera Lafayette has already given us a memorable recording of the Paris revision of *Orfeo ed Euridice*, makes a strong case for Sacchini's pre-eminence in his lifetime, that makes his neglect nowadays the more surprising as well as regrettable. This performance is highly impressive, with François Loup dignified as the tragic old Oedipus, Robert Gretchell moving, even heroic as his son Polynices, Nathalie Paulin an affecting Antigone, Tony Boutté a dignified King Theseus, and Kirsten Blaise fresh-voiced and youthful-sounding as Polynices' bride. The writing for orchestra and chorus is adventurous and skilfully realized under Ryan Brown. This fine issue is enhanced by the booklet notes, English, French and German synopsis, and French-language libretto.
Peter Branscombe

Soler ***Sonatas for Harpsichord vol. 12***
Gilbert Rowland **77' 55"**
Naxos **8.557937** £

We had a problem with this. I listened to some of it, but than sent it (I thought) to Noel O'Regan, but omitted to include the disc in the case. (I was puzzled why the packet weighed less than 100g but didn't draw the obvious conclusion.) I assumed it was in the disc magazine in the car, but it wasn't. If it turns up (or if I pass a shop that has a copy), I'll send it to Noel. But on the strength of what I heard, I can recommend it: I'm not sure if I've a strong image of the composer, but he definitely isn't a second-rate Scarlatti clone, and the playing is very appealing. *CB*

Vanhal *3 Violin Concertos* Takako Nishizaki, Cologne Chamber Orchestra, Helmüt Nüller-Brühl 70' 33"
Naxos **8.557815** £
In Bb no 1, In G nos 1 & 3

Regular readers of these pages will know that I am a fan of Vanhal's music. His tuneful melodic style and easy command of harmonic progression combine with a fertile imagination and often colourful orchestrations to make for very easy listening. This new CD of three violin concertos is to be welcomed – the playing from soloist and orchestra alike are enjoyable. While listening to it, however, I began to reflect on the oft-recounted anecdote of Mozart performing one of Vanhal's violin concertos, which has hitherto been seen as a measure of the latter's standing in sophisticated Austrian circles. Is it not more likely, I wonder, that Mozart was in fact trying to demonstrate how much *better* his own violin concertos are? My opinion might have been different had the performers been a little more flexible, a little more HIP than they are – there's something very four-square about the soloist's approach to ornamentation in particular that did nothing to enhance the music's quality. *BC*

VARIOUS

Canta Napoli: 400 ans de chansons napolitaines Mathieu Abelli **T**, Fuoco e cenere, Jay Bernfeld 60' 41"
Arion **ARN 68730**
Music by d'Annibale, Ansalone, Cardillo, Cimellol, Donato, Donizetti, Falconieri, Gesualdo, Lambardi, Marra, Montesardo, Nola, Ortiz, Peccia, Pergolesi, Sabina, A. Scarlatti, Tosti, Trabaci, Willaert

Here is a delightful and very mixed 'tribute to four hundred years of Neapolitan song', arranged and presented by Jay Bernfeld and his group Fuoco e Cenere. The 'fire and ashes' are a tribute to the re-born Phoenix rather than the destructive force emanating from Vesuvius. Composers range from Willaert and anon. to Donizetti and Tosti. Of the 27 numbers presented, 12 are instrumental, including fetching dances, and 15 are songs, sensitively or uproariously recreated by the fine young tenor Mathieu Abelli, haunting in Pergolesi's (?) 'Tre giorni', infectiously lively in Donizetti's 'Me voglio fa 'na casa'. Notes are in French and the Italian words are printed, with French and English translations. It's a shame that the players and their instruments are not listed, for they add much to the delights of this unusual issue.
Peter Branscombe

Convivencia Catherine Bott *S*, Stephen Henderson *perc*, David Miller *plucker*, Abdul Salam Kheir *Oud* 60' 00"
FRED CD1

Convivencia is the term for the peaceful coexistence of Muslim, Christian and Jew in medieval Spain. This disc is a mixture of Spanish music of the early 16th century with items from the other cultures from a wider period. I reacted most favourably to Narváez's *Passeavase el re moro*. There are two settings of *Tres moricos*, though it's the tune that matters, not the setting, beautifully sung, but perhaps a fraction too artily. I'm not too convinced by the recitation against music of prose translations of verse; they are fine for booklet notes, but can the verse forms not be replicated for oral delivery? Catherine Bott is always worth hearing, so try her in a new repertoire. *CB*

Grand Chorus Royal Academy of Music students play historic and important organs South of the Thames 154'35"
RAM032 (CTRS1024) (2 CDs)

This double CD is an enterprising venture by the Royal Academy of Music and the Southwark and South London Society of Organists, following a report by the organ advisors to the Diocese of Southwark. A mixture of past and present students: some of the tutors play 22 different organs in a very mixed programme from 19 English composers (including, bizarrely, Elgar's Sonata in G on three different organs by three different players). As well as a detailed CD booklet provided, further information on the instruments, churches and works is on the Internet at http://www.ram.ac.uk/SSLSO/. Naturally, this will be of more interest to general organ enthusiasts rather than the early music brigade, but the important historic organs at Rotherhithe (1763), Bermondsey (1829) and Camberwell (1844) are included, alongside the Royal Festival Hall and two organs built in the past 10 years. The organs are not always in tip-top condition (including, sadly, on this hearing, the 1829 and 1844 instruments) and there is some background noise (the logistics of this enterprise is a story in itself). The link between the organs and the pieces played is not always the most obvious (for example, it is a shame that the Rotherhithe organ is treated as an early 19th century organ for a performance of Mendelssohn, rather than a mid-18th instrument). In fact, the two pieces from before around 1815 are played on the most recent organ. But the performances are all fine. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

£ = bargain price (up to £6.00)
£ = mid price

Los Impossibles L'Arpeggiata, The King's Singers, Béatrice Mayo Felip & Patricio Hidalgo *voices*, Pepe Habichuela *flamenco gtr*, Christina Pluhar *dir* 51' 56"
Naïve **V5055** + DVD 32'

Like several other discs recently, this undermines one of the assumptions that I, probably most of our reviewers, and many of our readers share: that a performance has as one of its aims a desire to recreate a piece of music in accordance with the likely practice and expectations of the musicians of its time. (We can fill *EMR* with discussions of what that means and the extent to which it is possible!) This CD includes versions of 17th-century standards, but played with a Latin-American slant, which blends well with more recent Hispanic pieces. The improvisational style of the largish band (a dozen players) draws the centuries together, and the only irrelevant touch is the closing King's Singers' arch 'post-Victorian' harmonisation of a Catalan song. I'm a bit worried at the implication of the credits that some of the pieces have specific arrangers: I'd much rather believe that they are they evolved during rehearsals – but perhaps that is as naïve as the belief that 'the folk' as a collective entity could compose songs. On the bonus DVD, Pluhar (who comes across as a delightful lady whom I'd love to meet, without the slightly sinister touch of the CD cover picture) stresses improvisation, yet the shot of the harpsichordist's music undermines this. The way she apparently gets results by encouragement is impressive. If you don't like grounds, you may think some of the tracks are introductions to a piece that never appears, but I find the subtle contradiction of expectations gripping. This is a stimulating recording, one of the best crossover discs I've heard. *CB*

See also Simon Ravens on p. 19

Romances Séfardes dans l'empire de la Sublime Porte Accentus Austria, Thomas Wimmer *dir* 66' 30"
Arcana **A 341**

I find this less convincing than the recording reviewed above. That may be because I am more aware of the styles that Pluhar is bringing together, whereas the North-African/Levantish backing has only a hypothetical early pedigree. I find the texts more convincing than the music. When we got an expert to review a Sephardic disc, the early-music pretensions of the repertoire were utterly demolished. But setting aside 'authenticity', some of the songs are beautiful, well worth hearing whatever historical and musicological mixture has produced the versions recorded, and the texts (printed in four languages) are interesting. *CB*

PNEUMA

Aire de Al-Aldalus: Andalusian music for wind instruments Eduardo Paniagua
Pneuma **PN-550** 72' 29"

Alfonso X El Sabio ***Cantgigas de Francia***
Eduardo Paniagua 62' 30"
Pneuma **PN -520** (rec 1997-98)

Cantos de La Noche Ensemble Ibn Báya, Omar Metioui, Eduardo Paniagua 60' 54'
Pneuma **PN-640**

El Cantar de la conquista de Almería Música Antigua, Eduardo Paniagua 75' 03
Pneuma **PN-450**

Hilal: Arab Chamber Music Naseer Shamma & Oyoun 58' 39"
Pneuma **PN-760**

Ibn Zamrak (1333-1393) ***Poemas de la Alhambra*** Eduardo Paniagua, El Arabí Serghim etc 65'55"
Pneuma **PN-230** (rec 2000)

Minnesang in Südtirol Ensemble Unicorn, Mischael Posch 56' 11"
Pneuma **PN-790**

Musica cortesana en la Europa de Juana I de Castilla Música Antigua, Eduardo Paniagua 56' 57"
Pneuma **PN-710**

Prada de Gacelas, Núba Sika (Meadow of Gazelles) Salim Fergani etc 64' 55"

Puentes sobre el Mediterráneo (Bridges over the Mediterranean) Eduardo Paniagua
Pneuma **PN-800** 57'33"

Terribilis est: Liturgia de la Dedicacion de la Iglesia; Rito Visigótico de Consegracion del Altar Schola Antiqaua, Joan Carlos Asensio Palacios *dir* 74' 33"
Pneuma **PN-670**

Wallada (Córdoba 994-1077)–Ibn Zayadún (Cordóba 1003-1071) ***Una historia de amar y poesía*** Eduardo Paniagua, El Arabi Ensemble 67' 47"
Pneuma **PN-500**

I hadn't come across the Pneuma label before I received this batch from Metronome. I'm not going to comment in detail on them, particularly since I've no experience of the Arabic strand, both in genuine Arabic music and in Hispanic music allegedly influenced by it. I hoped I might hear a bit of Arabic music during the excursions on our Red Sea cruise at the beginning of November, but we just had a wired-up lute and drum at Wadi Rum and a couple of singers on a floating restaurant in Cairo – the woman rather

good – accompanied by an accordion and an electronic keyboard which at least had an exotic temperament and a very plausible shawm sound – and I nearly forgot the bagpipe ensemble (I imagine from the Jordanian army) at Petra, playing a medley of British tunes.

The common element, apart from the 'mediterranean' sound, is the presence of Eduardo Panigua playing some sort of flute, even in apparently authentic North African ensembles. Irrespective of the music, the booklet notes are squashed with a vast amount of historical information which extended my knowledge enormously. They do their best with translations of texts, but the English isn't always within sight of the original language. They are less helpful on the authority of the performance practices the discs embody. One of them covers a repertoire that is more familiar, *Music of the Court in the Europe of Juana I of Castille* (1479-1555, but shut away as mad from 1509), so offers a better chance to evaluate Panigua's work. It begins with *My Lady Carey's dump*: why distort a rare and distinctive keyboard piece in a concoction for gamba, vihuela, alto and tenor flutes, viola, dulcimer, regal and percussion, and in doing so lose its impetus? Josquin(?)'s *Mille regretz* comes in the Susato version (published right at the end of Joan's life) rather than the original: the Pavan is played both before and after being sung, and even that (with lute) uses the dance version. And why ever add yet another version with Susato's middle parts given prominence? None of the four renderings of the piece has any of the poignancy that the original (even with just one voice and instruments) does in virtually any performance. Innsbruck is no better: it starts with the top and bottom of the canonic version, and when we eventually get to the normal version with the tune in the treble, we hear some statements of it minus-one – perhaps to test whether we have remembered it. There are also a variety of instrumental pieces expanded in a rather simple way: it all sounds like an amateur early music concert of around 1970, though with better intonation.

This makes me suspicious of much of the rest, though the ill-omened *Terribilis est* is in fact an impresive presentation of the chant for the dedication of a church, with an appendix of Visogothic chant. This doesn't involve Panigua, nor does *Minnesang in Südtirol*, from Ensemble Unicorn, familiar from a variety of Naxos discs – the style is rather more direct than Panigua's, though it raises some questions, such as the imitation of an offbeat accordion on the first track. As for the other discs listed, there is a collection of Alfonsine cantigas with French stories: the facsimile shows the opening of no. 11, giving the listener a chance to compare realisation with notation. *El Cantar de la Conquista d'Almeria* is, after the opening tracks, a lengthy poetic account in Latin of Alfonso VIIs's defeat of the Muslims in 1147. The music is contrafacted from other Iberian sources. You can test your Latin by not keeping one finger in the text and the other with the translation!

The other discs are essentially Arab. The annotations and translations of the poetry are interesting, the music is fascinating, but I am uneasy at claims of the antiquity of some of the material. How do we know? If any reader does, I'd be grateful for information. *CB*

ACCORD BAROQUE

Bach ***Six Sonates pour violon et orgue (BWV 1014-18, 1019A)*** Alice Pierot *vln*, Martin Gester *org* 100' 45" (rec 1993)
Accord **476 9486**

G. B. Bassani/Legrenzi ***Vêpres de la Vigile de Noël*** Le Parlement de Musique, Martin Gester 121' 04" (rec 1997)
Accord **476 9653**

Bononcini ***La Maddalena à piedi di Cristo (1690)*** Ensemble Concerto, Roberto Gini
109' 52" (rec 1998)
Accord **476 9665**

Caldara ***La Conversione de Clovis*** Le Parlement de Musique, Martin Gester 84' 55" (rec 1996)
Accord **476 9696**

Marais ***Pièces de violes*** Jonathan Dunford etc 127' 33" (rec 2000 & 2001)
Accord 476 9483

Each is a two-disc set in a card case with two flaps opening out over a central booklet, which is not skimped, as so often on cheap reissues. Notes are in French and English, but the vocal discs have only the original text and French translation. Price: ££. Apologies for the delay in printing these reviews, which should have appeared in the August issue.

Three of them involve Martin Gester, who consistently produces fine recordings but seems to be little known in Britain. I was uneasy with the Bach: no problem with the playing, but the six sonatas for violin and keyboard sounded odd with organ – and I write that as someone who, other things being equal, would always prefer playing organ to harpsichord continuo. I may just be prejudiced: I was convinced by the extensive booklet note (a substantial essay on the different sorts of duets with keyboard and some comments on modern attitudes, which deserves to be published separately)*, but somehow the relationship between violin and organ felt wrong. But try it.

No doubts on the Bassani. The fuller title given inside the package gives place and date: Ferrara c. 1700. Bassani was maestro di cappella at Ferrara Cathedral from 1686 and the music is his complete opus 21: *Salmi concertati a 3. 4. e 5. voci von violini e ripieni* of 1699. The collection has a single Vespers cycle suitable for, but not exclusive to, Christmas Eve. The recording includes chant antiphons and three motets by Legrenzi (who worked in Ferrara from 1656-75). These stand out as particularly fine, but whole programme makes attractive listening. If it hasn't been already, the edition by Jean-Luc Gester (Martin's brother) should be published.

With regard to the Bononcini, it's nice to find that I had a facsimile of so obscure a work (the result of one of Garland's sales). So I can see that the choice of bassoon for the non-continuo bass notes that appears in the first aria is editorial. The libretto would be easier to use if it included the cue numbers. It is a work that was worth reviving (and now reissuing). The Caldara is tighter instrumentally than the Bononcini, and also deserves attention. Both have fine casts. The Marais begins with the Spanish Follies, but in an early version, and the rest of the programme is based on newly identified pieces in a MS taken back to Scotland in the 1680s by a Scottish pupil of Marais, Harie Maule. Dunsford's playing matches the brilliance of his scholarship, ably assisted by Sylvia Abramowicz *viol*, Benjamin Perrot theorbo/guitar, Stéphane Fuget & Laurent Stewart *hpscds*. A worthwhile series of reissues. *CB*

** Martin: if there is a copy of the English version on a computer file and Accord and the translator is willing, we'd love to reprint it here.*

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As always, there are a few discs which should have reviews but are missing, One reason for this is the loss of emails, and at the crucial period when I just had time to remind reviewers that their offerings might have gone astray, my email failed. So for omissions, I apologise to their suppliers and potential customers.

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Message received from Concerto Caledonia
Now available at www.concal.org is a free download of our **new recording** of a set of tunes by Katherine McGillivray. On the download page you can also find details of and donate to, **Katherine's Get A Life Fund.**

LETTERS

Dear Clifford

Being somewhat slow of study, I have only recently got round to a thorough reading of *EMR* 107 (June 2005). I noticed in your review of Wilbye's Five-Part Madrigals your question 'Has anyone studied the English madrigal repertoire in relationship to voice types and Morley's rejection of transposition by cleff?' It was something that I had in mind to do many years ago, but never quite got round to it. However, I did air my thoughts in an article in *Leading Notes*, July 1992.

Briefly, in my experience, the majority of the English Madrigal repertoire (and indeed, that of the 4-part lute air as well) has an overall range of some 3 octaves, implying the use of treble voices (as opposed to the 2 octaves and a sixth of music for means only (cf. Charles Butler, 1636). Thus, anything in the G2 clef is likely to be for trebles; the C1 or C2 clef for means; the C3 clef for countertenors. Secular works involving the C4 (tenor) clef are remarkably thin on the ground – less than half of the contents of the *Oxford Book of English Madrigals* uses a C4 clef, and I suspect that even this is an unrepresentative proportion. Bass parts, however, are often written in the F3 clef (or even C4), but I think this is purely due to the range being higher than the corresponding parts in sacred music. In fact, the overall ranges of secular music are approximately a tone higher than their sacred equivalents, suggesting a lower pitch standard.

A combination involving only G2, C2, C3 and F3 clefs might have suggested to a church musician that the work in question was in chiavette – hence Morley's stricture. The music is meant to sound at this pitch, and not to be transposed. The issue is clouded by the appearance in English sources of Italian madrigals for SSATTB written in chiavette, since these might be taken to be for TrTrMCtCtB, a frequent combination in English secular music (cf. Weelkes' *Thule, the period of cosmography*, for example). I wonder how often this was a source of confusion?

On another note, your obituary of Charles Farncombe reminds me that I also came across him in the mid-1950s, when I was a chorister at St Margaret's, Westminster. He occasionally used to deputise for the organist (Herbert Dawson), and had a habit, when accompanying a boys' rehearsal on the piano, of suddenly veering off into something totally unrelated, expecting us to hold our own!

Simon Hill

Thanks for picking up my question, and in particular for drawing attention to the rarity of the F4 clef in the bass parts: a glance through facsimiles of the Gibbons and the two Wilbye books confirms this

A few more questions, which I hope will encourage further discussion. The terminology of trebles and means has so far been used mostly in connection with church music and boys. Are there reasons to assume that madrigals were written for boys rather than women and that women's voices were classified in that way? And was the usual church pitch (apparently three quarters of a tone rather than a minor third above A=440) prevalent for domestic music-making? CB

Dear Clifford

Trebles and means. Yes, as far as I know, most references are in connection with church music (apart from the Alison reference which I mentioned in my LN article); but then, domestic music is not much written about (from a practical point of view) anyhow. The concept appears to have been still there, of splitting high voices into two distinct ranges. As for the boys/women dilemma – domestic music seems to be neither prescriptive nor proscriptive – whatever is available. However, Denis Stevens' quote (in the preface to his Second Book of English Madrigals for Penguin) from Claude Hollybande's *The French Schoolemaister* implies that the involvement of boys' voices was not uncommon. After all, any self-respecting household would have a page or two in its service.

Pitch. Without getting too involved in this thorny subject, as I said, the ranges of the secular repertoire do seem to imply a lower pitch (a tone) than church music. The upper voices may have been different, but the mens' parts were still sung by the same kinds of voices, and so presumably had comparable ranges. What I find striking is the comparative lack of parts corresponding to the 'tenor' – it really was a much-disparaged voice! *Simon Hill*

Dear Clifford,

In your review of our *Amorosa Ero* you refer, twice, to a 'previous edition', without describing, or even naming it. The unfortunate implication is that we have produced an unnecessary duplication; a suggestion that was raised recently, and I think mitigated, in another publication [VdGS(GB) Newsletter]. As far as we know, the only previous modern publication was one edited by Harry B. Lincoln, musicologist at the State University of New York, in 1968. It was published in a small format hardcover book, now out of print; many of the madrigals were transposed, imperfectly, from the original Dorian or transposed Dorian, to unusual keys; the Italian underlay, not always correctly placed, was replete with misspellings; and accidentals were often omitted or ill-judged. Lincoln added numerous slurs that would not be acceptable in a modern scholarly edition, and predominant use of two-minim measures caused longer notes to be extended across barlines with ties that did not always reach their destined note.

We believe that our edition's four-minim measure is a good compromise, as it enables easy communication of location during rehearsal, while reducing the number of

cross-barline ties. A facsimile edition would be almost impossible to prepare without extensive clean-up of print-through, ink bleeding, and most importantly, restoration of the original text which was, in the only surviving complete set of partbooks, bowdlerized by an overzealous guardian of public morality: this was not mentioned in your review.

Ferrabosco the Elder's five-part piece was not what 'drew Charteris to [the edition]'. We approached him about editing the entire collection and he readily accepted the chance to do so; he had already published the Ferrabosco madrigal. The separate part for the five-part madrigal will be found when the player or singer of the fourth part turns the page to the 18th madrigal, and I suggest that it be returned there for safe-keeping after performance. As it is the only five-part madrigal in the collection, I didn't feel it necessary to print an entire partbook with a single page of music.

As for 'singing [the book] straight through': this would take at least two hours, including the five madrigals that are printed in both transpositions. Repetition of the text might induce boredom: I haven't heard this criticism of Latin Masses of the period, whose movements have identical text. It would seem, however, that you scarcely read the story anyway, as you remained in a Midsummer Night's Dream through September: Hero's lover was Leander, not Lysander! Groups that have played many of the pieces on viols in the course of an evening, have been enthusiastic about their stylistic variety and the chance to encounter music by composers such as Zoilo, Barera and Fiorini, who, like Morsolino, might otherwise have remained unknown.

I hope readers of your review will not be put off by its air of damning with faint praise; we consider it an important, interesting edition, of value to singers as well as instrumentalists. *Peter Ballinger*

I'm sorry that my normal enthusiasm for your productions was modified here. There is a simple reason: I couldn't find the photocopies I had of a few examples from the Lincoln edition when I wrote it, and intended to look again later and return to the review. Unfortunately, I failed to find them, so couldn't make the intended comparison, which would, I am sure, have revealed the superiority of your edition. Another consequence of not finishing the review was that the tone sounded much more critical than I intended, even if the incidental points (like comment on the length of bars) were plausible in themselves. My surmise about the reason for your edition was reasonable, but wrong. As for mixing Lysander and Leander – curiously I came across the same mistake elsewhere recently, so it can't be too unusual a slip, though the Marlowe poem should have sprung instantly to mind – I must have read it once in my youth, sicne I found some notes on it slipped inside his Complete Works. I would, however, still maintain that, with one edition of the work in academic libraries, another edition, however superior, was of lower priority than one of the many unpublished madrigal anthologies – especially one with more varied words. But my apologies for the review as a whole. CB

Dear Clifford,
Your most enjoyable issue for October gave me quite a pang: Eric would so much have enjoyed it. He would have got some fun from the Broude piece and would have just loved Hugh Keyte on one of Eric's great heroes, Christopher Page. Many thanks! (Thanks, too, for your review of Emma Kirkby. This household always likes to hear her celebrated.)

It's eerie receiving messages from Jane, since she still uses Eric's email address so they seem to come from beyond the grave.

It came up in conversation last year, when Richard Wood was asking around for information for his biography of David Munrow, that David Fletcher (amateur cornettist, staunch supporter of TVEMF and NEMA, and a regular at the Beauchamp Summer School) had been at school with him. I asked him to write down what he could remember. In fact, it was so little that Gill Munrow, who withdrew permission for the book fairly soon after she gave it, could hardly object. We thought that giving it the status of article was excessive, hence the letter.

Dear Clifford,

I'm happy to write what little I can recall about David Munrow but it's not much – we are going back about fifty years and he wasn't famous then!

He and I were contemporaries at King Edward's School, Birmingham, but our paths rarely crossed as I was studying the sciences and he was doing modern languages, and of course, music. My most memorable encounter with David was when we were both in the Junior School play, *The Shoemaker's Holiday* by Thomas Dekker. I was in the crowd scene, he played the lead. We must have been about fourteen at the time, and David was noted for his wonderful treble voice, which was starting to break. The music master, Dr Willis Grant (later professor of music at Bristol University), wanted David to retain his treble voice as long as possible, but in the play David insisted on singing a drinking song in an excellent baritone. He was very popular and charismatic, so the play was a great success.

It must have been somewhere about this time that David was loaned a bassoon and came back a fortnight later able to play it competently. I remember him playing it very well at some school event a bit later, but that I'm afraid is all I can recall of him at school. My own interest in music really began only when I heard Beethoven's fifth symphony at the age of about sixteen, by which time it was much to late to do music at school. Indeed, music was not ever on offer to me at the King Edward's, though I had done recorder for a year at my previous school. It wasn't until my second year at Bristol that I started to play the recorder again, though I never had any contact with the music department – my memories of the formidable Professor Willis Grant were too daunting! Sadly I never met David Munrow again after leaving school; once I had become involved in early music I certainly had hopes of doing so, but it was never to be. *David Fletcher*

Of Possets and Syllabubs

Jennie Cassidy

'I dined with Mr Sheply upon his turkey pie. Later, my wife and I went to Mrs Jem's in expectation to eat a **sack-posset**, but Mr Edward not coming it was put off, and so I left and went to Mr Fage to consult concerning my nose, who told me it was nothing but a cold.' [Some things never change!] **Epiphany eve 1660 - Diary of Samuel Pepys**

The word 'recipe' is from the Latin 'recipere', to receive and so here are a few thoughts on posset and syllabub recipes I have received from across the centuries.

There are many pastoral allusions to the tradition of milkmaids or nymphs making syllabub:
'Nymphs making sillebubes for their lovers.' (Nashe 1591)
'White nymphs, come and with you bring some sillabub.' (Marston 1598)
'Jone strokes a sillibub or twain.' (Wotton 1605)
'Strain ewe's milk into your cyder syllabub and be drunk to him.' (Jonson 1640)
'Thy white wine, sugar, milk together club
To make that gently viand syllabub.' (King 1704)

Originally a medieval recipe, sack posset or posset curd was a lovely winter drink served warm and made with milk, ale or sack, sugar, spices and eggs. A very similar recipe appears in Mrs Beeton's book known as 'hot egg nog' and is still enjoyed today. The Italians have their own version in zabaglione, and the Germans biersuppe.

Sack was in plenteous supply and was a sweet, light-coloured wine of the sherry family. For the recipe below you could use marsala, sherry, mead, pineau or any other favourite sweet fortified wine. In the 15th century spices would have been the preserve of the social elite, but by the 1600s they were much more readily available. Nutmeg was the most popular spice, the importation of which was at first controlled by the Dutch. The fashionable gentry would carry a dainty silver nutmeg holder/grater ready to spice up an ordinary wine or dish.

A later development of posset was the syllabub, the first recipes of which were reputed to have been made by squirting milk straight from the cow into a jug of ale, sack or cider. Horace Walpole in the 18th century took some French visitors down to his garden in Strawberry Hill (my former college) where he had a syllabub milked for them as an English treat. Having read the testimonies of many enthusiasts, it seems that the results one gets from this authentic practice tend to disappoint the modern pallet a little. The task of milking a dairy cow into a fine bowl of liquor without other bovine additions and without upsetting the pot is tricky, and the results are strings of curdled milk scum. A good technique is obviously necessary here.

Posset and the first syllabubs would separate into a sweet alcoholic drink in the bottom of the vessel, and creamy curds or foam on the top. Special syllabub pots were developed with a spout from the bottom of the cup to drink the liquor more easily without getting the curds on your nose in polite company. The 'grace' or foam on top was eaten with a spoon.

Posset was often served at weddings and traditionally a wedding ring was thrown in, the finder of which was reputed to be the next in line for marriage. Sir Fleetwood Fletcher wrote the following poem for the New York Gazette of February 13th 1744.

A Receipt for all young ladies that are going to be married. To make a Sack-Posset

From famed Barbadoes on the Western Main
Fetch sugar half a pound; fetch sack from Spain
A pint; and from the Eastern Indian Coast
Nutmeg, the glory of our Northern toast.
O'er flaming coals together let them heat
Till the all-conquering sack dissolves the sweet.
O'er such another fire set eggs, twice ten,
New born from crowing cock and speckled hen;
Stir them with steady hand, and conscience pricking
To see the untimely fate of twenty chicken.
From shining shelf take down your brazen skillet,
A quart of milk from gentle cow will fill it.
When boiled and cooked, put milk and sack to egg.
Unite them firmly like the triple League.

Then covered close, together let them dwell
Till Miss twice sings: You must not kiss and tell.
Each lad and lass snatch up their murdering spoon,
And fall on fiercely like a starved dragoon. (see recipe 3)

One version of direct milked syllabub uses unsweetened verjuice (unripe grape juice – see last years recipe), the curds removed, and the remaining liquid beaten with cream, sugar and sack. This is then left until a clear liquid forms under a thick foam of 'spoonmeat' (see recipe 1)

In the days before electric whisks, the syllabub had to be whipped for hours with a birch whisk or a rosemary sprig. This must have been quite a task.

Her elbow small she oft does rub;
tickled with hope of sillabub. (Davenant 1668)

In 1758 Dr Hayles invented a labour-saving 'engine' which used a pair of bellows to aerate the syllabub. Another option was to use a 'dry cow', which was a sort of bicycle pump to inject the milk with force. These early syllabubs creamed off the tiny bubbles and left them to form a soft foam which was floated on the liquor. In the 18th century it was discovered that by reducing the alcohol and increasing the heavy cream an 'everlasting' syllabub could be made with much less effort. This was to be the topping of the Georgian trifle. (see recipe 2)

This year I have provided three recipes, hoping that Clifford finds the space, showing just how varied the recipes were. They all serve 6-8 people.

To make a plain syllabub (Sir Kenelm Digby 1671)
A cold drink or desert in layers

500 ml verjuice (sour juice from unripe grapes, crabapples, seville oranges etc)
500 ml whole milk
250 ml double cream
100g approx caster sugar (to taste)
Little shot of brandy or sack if liked

Mix the verjuice and milk and leave for 10 minutes for the curds to form. Strain off the curds through a sieve (known as a sile in the 17th century) lined with a piece of kitchen roll (this may take up to 30 minutes). Meanwhile, whip the double cream and add the sugar and alcohol if using. Gently whip the cream into the liquor. Pour into pretty glasses and leave in a cool place for several hours for the layers to form. You could provide straws and spoons to show that the layers are intentional.

To make a whipt silebub (1677)
A creamy, cold desert – simple version

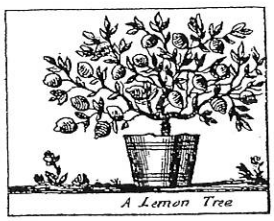
2 egg whites, whipped
250 ml double cream, whipped
150 ml sherry or fortified wine
Juice of 1 whole lemon (add the finely grated zest too if you like)
100 g approx caster sugar (to taste)

Place all the ingredients into a big bowl and whisk for 30 minutes. Pour into individual dishes and sprinkle with grated nutmeg and ground rosemary. This keeps well and although quite runny it is delicious. Serve with biscuits or sponge cake fingers.

To make a sack-Posset (Fletcher 1744)
A warm drink

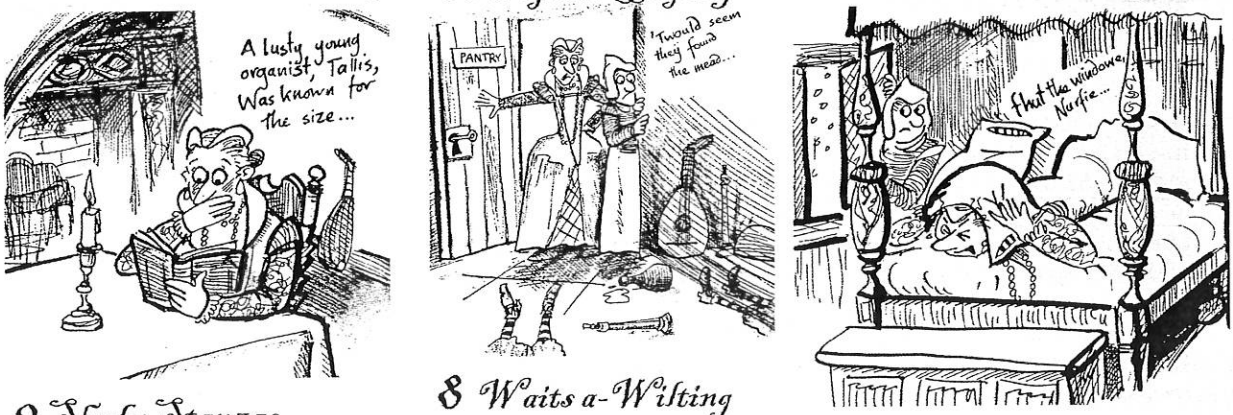
25g caster sugar (approx)
250 ml sack
Sprinkling of grated nutmeg
4 eggs
500 ml whole milk

Warm the sugar, sack, nutmeg and milk in a large heatproof bowl over a pan of simmering water. Whisk the eggs in a jug and then pour the eggs slowly into the liquor, whisking all the time until warm and slightly thickened – be careful not to overheat. This makes lots of foam! Serve immediately in heatproof glasses. Ideal for carol singing!



On the Twelve Dayes of Christemas, My True love fent to me:

12 Mummers Strumming
11 Papists Griping
10 Luters Leering



9 Shady Stanzas
8 Waits a-Wilting
7 Swains a-Singing

6 Glees Degrading
5 Groundlings
4 Appalling Bards

3 Henchmen
2 Total Duds

And... a Part Writ in a Rare Key.