

Early Music

REVIEW

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Editor: Clifford Bartlett
Associate Editor: Brian Clark
Administration: Elaine Bartlett
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Reviewers:

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King's Music, Redcroft, Banks End, Wyton,
Huntingdon, Cambs, PE28 2AA
e-mail clifford.bartlett@btopenworld.com
www.kings-music.co.uk
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current exchange rate

The proposed cuts in Arts Council funding are justified, not just by shortage of money, but by a desire to concentrate on excellence. One of the possible 180 victims happens to be the Early Music Network. Strangely, it seems not to have sought much publicity: if it prepared a press release, it wasn't sent to us, nor was support from National Early Music Association requested. I hope that its letter to *The Times* with a few famous signatures helps.

I was interested in the criterion given for what should be supported: 'excellence'. At first, it seems obvious. But who defines excellence? What might seem excellent to some may seem unsatisfactory to others. For instance, the staging and singing of the English Touring Opera quartet of baroque operas toured in autumn 2006 seemed so inadequate to me and to people I discussed it with, but were praised by the non-specialist opera critics. Despite doubts as to their excellence, it toured two 18th-century operas last year, with considerable subsidy. But even if there were agreement over excellence, I am not sure that it is the only criterion. If there is only one theatre within a 50-mile radius and it isn't up to scratch, the remedy is not to abandon it, thus depriving a swathe of the country of live theatre, but to improve it. Cutting off a grant might work in London, where there is plenty of choice; but to deprive an area of theatre merely because it doesn't meet metropolitan standards would be irresponsible.

Back in the 1970s, when early music was new, the standard of excellence may not always have been as high as among conventional performers. But it was worth Arts Council support because it invigorated concert life and offered music that required a different manner of performance to be successful. Standards caught up and attitudes changed; but had the idea of 'excellence' been strictly applied, the public support that it received (especially for touring through the Early Music Network) would have been much less, and early-music would have been confined to major cities and not toured to concert venues in smaller towns.

Also, structures matter, and the dismantling of an organisation is more damaging than cutting a few performances. Once broken, the relationship between venue or series and audience takes a long time to grow again. If, when the Olympics are over, money is restored to the arts, the channels through which it can flow will have gone and the audiences may have found other pastimes.

EMR and King's Music have received no grants from anyone, except when *EMR* was started the Arts Council insisted that the Early Music Centre gave a little help in kind. CB

REVIEWS OF MUSIC

Clifford Bartlett

HARP CONSORTS

William Lawes *The Harp Consorts* 'for the harpe, base violl, violin and theorbo'. General Editor: Jane Achtman; harp part editors: Maxine Eilander, Cheryl Ann Fulton and Stephen Stubbs PRB Productions (VOC62), 2007. Score & parts \$70, score only \$35, harp \$18, other parts each \$17.00

This edition is most welcome. The music is important, not only for its own sake, but because of the scoring; it is not uncommon to hear early harps in 17th-century music now, but exactly what they would have played is mostly conjectural. If keyboard instruments have a written-out part at all, they tend to have the top and bottom of the texture and no fill in. I'm not a harpist, but I am worried by remarks in the commentary that lines in the harp parts that double violin or gamba have been removed. It reminds me of the puzzlement thirty or so years ago at the function of organ parts in viol consort music, one suggestion being that the treble parts were to show the organist what *not* to play. Now (deriving, I think, chiefly from a talk and demonstration by Peter Holman at the 1992 Jenkins Conference, included in the proceedings of the event), we realise that playing organ parts makes sense, even if they seem a bit congested. Are the editors absolutely certain that the doubling harp parts of nos. 1-15 really don't work? At least the harp part gives the fuller versions as well.

Staying with the harp, which is, after all, the unique feature of the set, its partbook includes a lengthy discussion of the appropriate instrument, the conclusion being that the most likely single type was the gut-strung triple harp, but with the possibility of the Irish harp playing the older-style pavans and the triple harp the faster, more Frenchified dance suites. The version of nos. 1-20 in Christ Church MS 5 could be played on either a triple or a chromatic Irish harp. It is considered unlikely but possible that the music is for the large chromatic Irish harp only. I'm in no position to judge, but if any early harpists have strong feelings, please send us your comments.

The edition itself is very thorough. The introduction is comprehensive, with sections on the composer, music at court, the organisation into suites, the compositional structure, the art of division, the instruments, the sources and editorial practice. The critical commentary is very clear, as is the edition itself, and the production excellent. The way the divided repeats in the viol part are set on a second stave within the score is neat, even if it makes the bar-numbering in the part look odd. The only problem may be the shortage of harpists with suitable instruments. But we've sold enough *Hapffenschlaegers* over the years, so there must be some who have moved on to 17th-century harps.

D. PURCELL 1698 ST CECILIA SONG

Daniel Purcell *Ode for St. Cecilia's Day 1698* edited by Richard Charteris PRB Productions (BO48) 2007. xix + 59pp, \$28.00 (Score with parts: \$40.00)

Daniel Purcell's *St Cecilia's Day Song* *Begin, begin the noble Song*, with words by Samuel Wesley (father of John and Charles and grandfather of the composer Samuel, who also set the text) was written for the 1698 Festival. One only has to glance at the first page to see that it is a grandiose piece: the occasion had increased considerably in magnificence since Purcell's 1683 *Welcome to all the pleasures*, the first work in a series that ran annually for about 20 years. The edition of the 1683 piece called it *an Entertainment*, others were called *Songs*; the word *ode* seems to refer to the poem rather than the music, so it is a pity that it is used as title here, especially since both MSS are headed *A Song...* The MS that has been accessible since the mid-19th century (Guildhall Library G.Mus. 458) seems to have been a library copy, made from the recently-acquired British Library Mus 1177. Both are in the same hand, one closely associated with the composer.

There seem to be very few editorial problems, but the critical commentary is rather pedantic for a fairly minor work, as is the editorial discussion in the introduction, which seems to show little awareness of what one might expect from sources of the period. Much more information could be expressed more neatly and concisely in the edition itself. Various aspects of it seem odd to me – and I've probably edited more music from the 1690s than nearly anyone else. But they don't make it unusable, so I have merely passed on some comments to PRB.

As for the music, it was certainly worth publishing. Daniel may not stand direct comparison with brother (or cousin) Henry, but has he flair and provides rewarding music for the soloists. After a trumpet overture, there is a virtuosic bass Verse, not a low Gostling piece but for Leveridge, with a range mostly in the octave ranging down a ninth from the note above middle C. A plain-looking chorus is given rhythmic interest by have the two poetic lines of unexpected lengths. The most striking solo is 'The trumpet calls', for high alto (C2, not C3 clef, though not high by modern counter-tenor standards) in duet with the trumpet. The tenor takes his turn in a florid minor Verse needing a light touch for the wide-ranging, florid semiquaver passages. There are also duets for AT and AB. (It would have been useful if the list of movements had indicated soloists.) A pity this didn't appear ten years ago for the anniversary. I'm not sure if it would be sensible to pair it in a concert with *Hail, bright Cecilia!* – it's a bit too similar. But if you've got the forces, it would be worth trying it with something else.

BÄRENREITER VOCAL SCORES

Bärenreiter has been quite slow in issuing performance material from the Neue Bach-Ausgabe, apart from the large-scale works that are obviously worth the investment. One wonders whether there is really much point in them competing with Breitkopf and Carus at this stage. Perhaps they should concentrate on filling the gaps: there are still a few cantatas for which there are no parts available for sale, and hire rates seem to have soared recently.

Anyway, it is useful to have the early version of the St Matthew Passion (confusingly numbered BWV 244b: the Bach Compendium logically numbers the earlier version D 3 a and the later one D 3 b, but to try to foist a new numbering system on the public would cause confusion). Andreas Glöckner's introduction is slightly more cautious about a 1727 origin for the work than other recent writers. He includes a couple of bits of information that I hadn't registered before: the swallow's-nest organ at St Thomas's (needed for the opening chorus) was repaired in 1727, not as previously assumed in 1736; and the main source for the early version was copied, not by Altnickol, but by a pupil of his, Johann Christoph Farlau. The vocal score costs £13.50 (BA 5099a). Other performance material is available: (hard-back full score £119.50, wind set £57, strings £7.00 each and realised organ part £21.50), all under the number BA 5099; regrettably, there is no study score. There is an anonymous English translation added, with the recits unnecessarily awkward through having to fit the rhythms of the German text too closely; it would sound better if more flexible, but the notation would be too complex. A gesture could be made to idiomatic keyboard writing by printing alternating octaves for repeated demisemi-quavers, since that is what must be played for the rending of the veil of the Temple.

There is also a vocal score of Early Versions of the Mass in B minor (BA 5293a; £13.00), which does have a logical BWV number, 232¹. This contains the original *Missa* (Kyrie and Gloria), which survives in the parts copied by Bach and members of his family and sent to the Elector Friedrich August II in 1733; the autograph score is overlaid by changes for the later version. As emerged from Joshua Rifkin's comments on my review of his Breitkopf edition of the later version, trying to show both in one edition involves some degree of selectivity and lack of clarity, so it is good to have it available independently, with performance material (hardback full score £85.00, wind set £49.50, strings each £5.50 and organ part £21.50: BA 5293). This is supplemented by an earlier version of the Credo intonation (BWV 232¹/1), a tone lower and possibly written in the early 1740s, though its function isn't clear. Finally, there is the Sanctus BWV 232^{III}, written for Christmas 1724 and deserving to be independently numbered. This isn't a coherent volume to be performed from beginning to end, but it seems sensible to include the two smaller pieces, which only add 24 pages to the book. Sensibly, no English text is added. (Performance material: bound full score £85.00, wind set £49.50, strings £5.50 each, organ part £21.50.)

The remaining two new Bach vocal scores are standard versions: the Coffee Cantata, BWV 211 (BA 10211a, £5.00; study score TP 1211 £10.50; parts BA 102111 flute £2.00, strings each £2.50, kbd £4.50;) and The Peasant Cantata, BWV 212 (BA10212a £5.50; study score TP 1212, £10.50; parts BA 10212 wind £3.50, strings each £3.00, kbd £7.00). In both cases there is acceptable performing material from Breitkopf, which may be preferable if you need a large-size score and don't have NBA available: Breitkopf has big ones at about the same price as Bärenreiter's study scores. The added English translations, again anonymous, are quite funny. I wonder if it would have been helpful for performers to have included a short bibliography of studies on the pieces, such as Katherine R. Goodman's 'From Salon to Kaffeekranz: Gender Wars and the Coffee Cantata in Bach's Leipzig' in *Bach's Changing World* edited by Carol K. Baron (Rochester UP, 2006), which might well deepen a singer's understanding of what the work is about and affect its presentation.

Bärenreiter published their score of Handel's *L'Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato* in 1965; this vocal score has taken 40 years to appear (BA 4023a; £27.50) and there are still no orchestral parts on sale – I presume that the ones in Luck's Orchestral Library catalogue are unsuitable. This puts a price on quality, since it is costs twice as much as the old Novello vocal score; it also seems expensive compared with the surely poorer-selling Haydn opera score reviewed below. The version originally performed in 1740 was augmented in 1741 and there were further changes in 1743; these are conveniently listed at the end of the volume. The introduction does not make clear what has determined the basic version: it is mostly 1741, but only one Italian text is included. Presumably the existing full score had to be followed. It's good that it exists. Those who don't like the idea of moderation can follow Handel's later example of substituting the *Ode to St. Cecilia* for Part III, though that needs a separate score. I have some sympathy with the need to avoid the *moderato* ending of 'These pleasure, moderation, give': the music doesn't compare with 'These pleasures, melancholy, give' which ends Part II. The PR sheet calls the work 'Merriment, Melancholy and Moderation': it might sell it better than the Italian title.

Finally in this batch, Haydn's *Lo Speciale* (BA 4641a; £20.00), based on the Collected Works edition of 1959. None of the editions above have any indication of orchestration except on the back of the title page, so it is strange (but welcome) that they are included in the piano part of this later work, where to do so is more difficult than in less varied baroque orchestration. No help is given to facilitate performance of a comedy that lacks music for most of its last Act. The existence of a vocal score presumably implies the expectation of it being used – scholars would prefer a study score. The work has been performed, indeed, it was the first Haydn opera to achieve 'modern' performance in 1899 under Mahler's direction. Perhaps the skilled pasticher who created the hoax Haydn piano sonatas a few years ago (and who has a track record of completing the incomplete) should have been employed to fill the gaps.

CANTATA 188

Bach *Cantata 188 "Ich habe meine Zuversicht"* rekonstruiert und herausgegeben von Werner Breig Breitkopf & Härtel (PB 4688), 2007. [vi] + 65pp, €24.00. Vocal score)EB 7188) €6.00.

The title is familiar and recordings exist. But only bars 249-272 of the first movement survive. It may seem odd that the number of missing bars is known, but that it because it is based on the D minor harpsichord concerto, itself based on a lost violin concerto. The autograph was split into fragments and given or sold to autograph collectors in the 19th century; most of it has been traced, but not the opening, and no early parts survive. In terms of space, in fact, the Sinfonia took up well over half of the autograph score, as it does of the modern edition. The scoring of the concerto version is augmented by two oboes and taille (and presumably a bassoon). The surviving section of the movement is just a cadenza and the closing ritornello, in which the wind double the strings. The editor gives them some independence, functioning a bit like a continuo instrument adding chords, a sensible function if there is no harpsichord. The editor presses too hard for the necessity of one.

There is a problem with the compass of the organ right hand, which the editor 'solves' by notating the high section at the end an octave lower with the instruction to use a 4' stop but leaving the rest at the notational pitch of the concerto. Surely the registration change would be noticed, even if there were anywhere to make the change, which there isn't. Bach must have expected the part to be played at the lower octave throughout. He would also have played it in C minor: publishers haven't yet got round to allowing for the increasing availability of chamber organs that are geared to the cornett standard pitch of a semitone above 440, which means that they can play music like this as notated with an A415 orchestra. The organ appears solo again in the second aria. The editor suggests that the part may have been intended for violin, in which case the organ can play chords. But he reckons that if the organ plays the solo part, a harpsichord is needed as well. He does not allow for the organist playing the bass on the pedals and the realisation with his left hand. We normally assume that continuo parts were played on manuals only, but Bach may not have followed our conventions. This marvellous aria should be in every alto's repertoire, and it has the advantage of being a rare example of a Bach vocal solo for which only a keyboard is required as accompaniment. The tenor aria, which follows the Sinfonia, is scored for solo oboe and strings and is more routine (if that phrase can be used at all of Bach). A secco recit for bass separates the arias and a short accompanied recit for soprano precedes the closing chorale. The editor reckons the work lasts about 20 minutes.

The vocal score has a four-stave version of the Sinfonia and a realisation hopping between the staves of the second aria: but all that is needed is the solo part. The singers don't really need the Sinfonia anyway, just pages 21-36. Performance material is also available.

HARMONISCHER GOTTESDIENST

Telemann *Harmonischer Gottesdienst... Advent and Christmas Cantatas*. High voice. Edited by Gustav Fock, Ute Poetzsch. Bärenreiter (BA 5891), 2006, xvi + 63pp + 2 parts, £21.50.

Telemann *Harmonischer Gottesdienst... Cantatas for the Sundays after Trinity*. Middle Voice. Edited by Gustav Fock, Ute Poetzsch. Bärenreiter (BA 5896), 2007, xvi + 119pp + 2 parts, £21.50.

These are samples from a revised and re-ordered reprint from vols 2-5 of Telemann's *Musikalische Werke* (a title that avoids any suggestion of intended completeness) published in the 1950s. All have identical prices, and there are two parallel sets for Christmas (BA 5891 & 5894), Easter (5892 & 5895) and Trinity (BA 5893 & 5896). It isn't clear how many other volumes are required to complete the 72 cantatas; an index of the whole series in each volume would have been useful, if only in small print in two columns on a single blank page. Each set comprises a score (with keyboard realisation), a treble part, and a bass part with the voice part cued in for the recits. This begs the question of how one score can be used by voice and keyboard – a common problem for publishers, who don't want to push prices up for people who really only want a score by having to include two scores in a package, but then sell a set that can only be used for performance if a second score is photocopied.

Apart from separating the cantatas by vocal range (G2 and C1 clef, the only two used in the collection), they are assembled in liturgical order, starting from Advent rather than new year as in the original edition, and with pieces out of order put into the sequence. The introduction puzzled me occasionally, and I suspected the translation, or perhaps the attempt to summarise Telemann's own foreword. This has information on appoggiature and transposition, as well as more general points. It is included in facsimile, but it is not very helpful that the English preface refers to it: if you can read Telemann's German, you don't need an English preface. In fact, a complete English translation of Telemann's preface would enable the editorial one to be far shorter. The Fuzeau facsimile helpfully has it in French and English. I don't understand the reference at the end of the Preface to a *Bassettchen* as a three-string cello in the cantata for the second Sunday after Epiphany. That cantata isn't in either of the volumes, so should have been replaced by another example, and checking the cantata in the facsimile, I can't see the word anywhere, nor are there passages that are not in the bass clef. I think I would rather stay with the German series title than adopt the translation *Musical Church Service*.

So this vast collection of music for voice, melody instrument and continuo (and Telemann is explicit that you don't need to follow his suggested scorings) is now available again. The cantatas were aimed at domestic as well as church performance, and the wise singer will have some of them at home ready to exploit the skills of visiting instrumentalists.

LUCCA MASSES

Fifteenth-Century Liturgical Music VI: Mass Setting from the Lucca Choirbook Transcribed and edited by Reinhard Strohm (*Early English Church Music*, 49). Stainer & Bell for the British Academy, 2007. xvi + 200pp, £65.00

First, apologies for printing this outside our normal chronological sequence: I knew I'd missed something out, and when this re-emerged, I'd already made the previous reviews snug in their format. So I've placed it last instead.

This is a companion to a facsimile of the Lucca Choirbook – *Lucca, Archivio di Stato, MS 238 & other fragments* – which was published last year by Chicago University Press (\$185.00). I haven't received a review copy of that, but it is evident from the description on the publisher's website that it contains an extensive study of the source, which was discovered when in 1963 the young Strohm saw some interesting music used as bindings in the Lucca state archives. (Strohm gives the year as 1967 in his *Music in Late Medieval Bruges*.) To quote the Chicago UP blurb, 'the recovered volume comprises what remains of a gigantic cathedral codex commissioned in Bruges around 1463 and containing English, Franco-Flemish, and Italian sacred music of the fifteenth century – including works by the celebrated composers Guillaume Du Fay and Henricus Isaac'. It reached Lucca through Giovanni Arnolfini, famous then as a banker but subsequently for his portrait by Jan van Eyck. This edition picks out seven masses, one by Henricus 'Tik, the rest anonymous, and a Kyrie by Walter Ffrie, that are or are assumed to be English. It seems a slightly odd way to complete the publication of so important a source, but that is probably because it covers a variety of differing repertoires, with some music that doesn't need publishing from a fragmentary MS.

I seem to concentrate in my reviews of recent *EECM* volumes on the 'diplomatic transcription' style now current. In this case, I'm not so much objecting in general but to the failure to adjust to circumstances. The facsimile is likely to be fairly widely available, since it is issued by a major publisher and is quite cheap (page for page cheaper than the *EECM* volume). So there is no need to reproduce the original notation quite so closely, and the music could be a little more user-friendly – though more than most other volumes in the series, this really is of use primarily to scholars. Five masses are incomplete, a particular shame for the two five-voice masses, of which all that survive are bits of the Credo and the complete Osanna of the *Missa Sancta Maria virgo* and the Gloria of the *Missa Te gloriosus*. It isn't always immediately clear whether a sparse-looking section is really a duo or has other parts that are lost as well. What is complete certainly looks worth performing, but I wouldn't trust myself to evaluate it from the page. That's not just a comment on my ability to read the notation. Putting it into this spacious score isn't quite enough to facilitate reading the music's vertical aspect. I can see the patterns from a distance, but they vanish at reading distance. Early scores usually had lines prominently drawn through each system – maybe for good reason.

THE YOUNG THOMAS TALLIS

Garry Broughton

BBC TV's recent early 16th-century soap opera *The Tudors*, as well as rewriting English history (Henry VIII's sister Margaret, forced to marry the decrepit King of Portugal, promptly murders him in disgust; Cardinal Wolsey, deprived of the chancellorship, promptly commits suicide...) has made a notable contribution to musical history in supplying a great amount of new information on Tallis's early life.

Until now, nothing was known about him prior to his appearance as *joculator organorum* at Dover Priory in 1532, but now we know that he first comes to notice singing lute songs at the famous meeting between Henry VIII and Francis I at the Field of the Cloth of Gold in June 1520 [so Tallis was aware of continental musical styles very early; cf. p. 22 below]. He was next seen playing what looked like a replica of the V & A Queen Elizabeth's Virginalls (c.1570) at outdoor festivities in honour of the visit of the Emperor Charles V to England in 1522. A little later we find him busily composing amidst the bustle of the court and refusing the attentions of two attractive young ladies with the excuse that if he doesn't finish his composition now, he will have forgotten it by morning.

Tallis's female groupies are soon outranked by a male admirer, Sir William Compton, Esquire of the Body to the King. Hearing him play the organ, Sir William declares him to be greater than Orpheus himself and takes him back to his country seat at Compton Wynyates in Warwickshire. Tallis also become a firm friend of the slightly older St Thomas Wyatt, whom he comforts for having been superseded in Anne Boleyn's affections by the King and whom he accompanies on an ambassadorial visit to Paris. Tallis also agrees to set some of Wyatt's verse to music.

His existence at Compton Wynyates, composing in bed with Sir William asleep beside him, is rudely shattered by the epidemic of 'sweating sickness' that swept England in 1528. Sir William is one of its first victims and Tallis is so affected that he smashes his lute upon the hastily erected cross on Sir William's grave and goes back to court to conduct the Chapel Royal. With Sir William out of the picture, Tallis's female admirers reappear and he singles one of them for attention, since he has seen a light 'like as halo' around her head. 'You're weird', says Joan. Alas, Joan too is carried off by the sickness, so Thomas starts to woo her sister Jane – they are both aware of Joan's continuing ghostly presence... We await Series II for further revelations.

The credits give no hints of sources for this information, but the music consultant is David Fallis [one of EMR's original subscribers]

We are grateful to Garry Broughton for following up the suggestion that this new information be circulated in print; it will be useful for checking whether students writing essays on Tallis have acquired information not available merely by consulting Google.

FLORENTINE INTERMEDI

Hugh Keyte

La Pellegrina: Intermedii 1589 Capriccio Stravagante Renaissance Orchestra, Collegium Vocale Gent, Skip Sempé 69' 10" + disc of interviews Paradizo PA0004

In this recording of a public concert given in May 2007 in the Brussels Palais des Beaux-Arts, Skip Sempé presents the music from what was probably the most sumptuous musico-dramatic production of its age. The six intermedii (interludes) that accompanied the five acts of Girolamo Bargagli's comedy *La pellegrina* in Florence in May 1589 were the climax of the lengthy celebrations that marked an important dynastic marriage. A galaxy of artists, poets and composers was assembled at the Tuscan court to create what were, so to speak, six short proto-operas struggling to escape the chrysalis of the old intermedio format.

Grand Duke Ferdinand, an ex-cardinal, had succeeded his brother Francesco two years previously in circumstances that still arouse suspicion – his predecessor and his wife had both died rather suddenly, and their embalmed bodies are currently being investigated to establish whether

'marsh fever' really was the cause of death. He was anxious to consolidate his position and, as part of his foreign policy, was concerned to publicise his union with Princess Christine de Lorraine, favourite grand-daughter of the all-powerful Queen Mother of France, Caterina des Médicis.² Hence the unprecedented scale of the Florentine festivities; hence the obsessively detailed account of the whole affair that Ferdinando commissioned from the courtier and Dante-scholar Bastiano de' Rossi; and hence, after the phenomenal success of the intermedii, the repeat performances with two different plays and two ducally-commissioned souvenir publications – the set of six deceptively plausible engravings that purported to show the six stage scenes, and a print of most of the music, overseen by court composer Cristofano Malvezzi (*Intermedii et concerti*, 1591).

Factual accuracy was not a priority. These publications were propaganda exercises, intended to reassure Ferdinando's often-rebellious subjects and to impress other courts and the world in general with the artistic acumen, organisational skill and bottomless purse of the house of Medici. Rossi's account had been prepared long in



Orazio Scarabelli, after Bernardo Buontalenti: engraving of the Pisan stage set for *La pellegrina*

advance and his descriptions of the intermedi were replete with errors, preserving long-superseded preliminary intentions and providing a list of instruments for the individual musical items that were mostly rank fantasy.

In comparison with the untrustworthiness of Rossi and the six engravings, Malvezzi's musical publication is a marvel. Perhaps it was justifiable pride in his own considerable contribution that led him to take such pains. There are a few notational errors and misattributions and quite a swathe of what were probably unavoidable omissions³, but the detailed scorings he gives for each number are undoubtedly accurate, if notoriously difficult to apply.

The great mistake of many commentators (including D. P. Walker in his generally admirable published edition of the music: CNRS, 1963) is to treat the instrumentations of Rossi and Malvezzi as of equal worth. Sempé goes further. In the extended booklet note and the separate interviews in English and French that comprise a second CD, he rejects both, suggesting that they represent random points on a continuum of revision and rethinking during the protracted rehearsals. He also (tacitly) uses the precedent of previous Medici productions to justify his use of two harpsichords and a virginals and (oddly) a single recorder. And he believes there were off-stage instruments doubling on-stage singers, a sonic device to boost clarity and carrying-power which was probably not necessary in Buontalenti's new Uffizi Theatre – though if they are present in the recording, they are not distinguishable. (The only off-stage instruments in 1589 were three small organs, probably in the wings and on the rear-stage gallery, which provided a kind of continuo in most, perhaps all, items.)

For the most part, Sempé re-scores: a perfectly valid option. Malvezzi would have expected purchasers of his print to cherry-pick items that appealed to them and score them according to available resources and venue. That is what he will inevitably have done himself when the two large-scale 'final' numbers were later recycled, provided with new sacred Latin texts, and used for tableau-like cloud-borne presentations in the cathedral nave. (Striggio's 40-part motet had been composed for such a presentation.) But the case is quite different when the entire set of intermedi are revived – something that Malvezzi would have viewed with amazement. New instrumentation is still valid, but it must, in Sempé's own words, 'reflect the stage action'. Alas, his does not, and in the four intermedi that survive virtually complete (I, II, V VI), this is particularly regrettable. Combined with the worryingly fast speeds he often affects and the excessive ritenutos at the end of nearly every individual item, the feeling is less of the dramatic unities that these intermedi undoubtedly were than of a succession of loosely-connected musical numbers.

To ensure that the music reflects the staging we need first to have a clear idea of the plots and sets, as well as the position on stage of the participants. Here Sempé is at sea – like, it must be admitted, most commentators. A crucial consideration is that in many cases the number of participants known to have been on stage is considerably smaller than the specified number of voices and instruments because of the ability of some performers to sing and play different parts simultaneously.⁴ It was his failure to appreciate this fact that led Aby Warburg, the first modern writer on the 1589 Intermedi, to invent a phantom – and physically-impossible – back-stage gallery

Below Catherine de' Medici Right Ferdinando de' Medici



holding ranks of uncostumed supplementary players, a chimera that lives on in unconsidered citations of later commentators.

Sempé compounds the problem by according Rossi's account the status of an 'eye-witness account'. The sole route to an accurate picture is to conflate Malvezzi's scorings and the MS account by Barthold von Gadenstedt, a talented German tourist who was in the 1589 audience.⁵ He brought to bear an artist's eye, a musician's ear, and a dependable memory, though his detail needs to be compared with (cautiously) Rossi, the lists of performers, the costume designs, etc.

Are such considerations really relevant to the performance? A couple of examples will show their importance. Vital to the coherence of Intermedio II (see box) is the precise vocal and instrumental correspondence of the rival groups of the nine Muses and nine Pierides. Sempé's scoring of Marenzio's madrigalian settings fails to provide this, so any feeling of meaningful dramatic progression goes by the board. (So, naturally, does the final transformation, which would be absurd to reproduce except in a stage production.)

In Intermedio I, the spacial element is yet more crucial. It

Intermedio II

On Mount Helicon

Apollo (viola bastarda)

6 singers & 10 players

Hamadryads (wood-nymphs)

left mound

6 singers & 3 players

Pierides

right mound

6 singers & 3 players

Muses

Three groups of 'female' performers are ranged upon and around three mounds, one of imposing size, that have risen from the stage set of a beautiful garden. The scoring of the nine Muses is identical with that of their boastful imitators, the Pierides. Bidden by the jury of Hamadryads (wood nymphs), the Pierides perform first in the singing competition described by Ovid. The six singers step forth the players remain in the cave within the mound. Next, the Muses do the same, but the sweetness of their songs means that Nature echoes back each phrase, producing a 12-part double-choir texture. This trick effect must have been achieved by the Pierides covertly providing the echo, the singers' masks concealing their lip movements, the players hidden behind them in the cave. The Hamadryads then deliver their verdict, the Muses and Pierides excitedly respond, and dramatic verisimilitude is abandoned as all three groups combine in an ecstatic 18-part apostrophe to the heavens, earth and the winds: have they ever heard such sweet singing? In a final Buontalenti coup-de-théâtre, the Pierides are turned into magpies (i.e. replaced by dancers) and flap squawking about the stage and off into the wings.

climaxes in the gradual cloud-borne ascent of the 15 Sirens to join the divinities that have materialised above them. All 15 Sirens sing, in three 5-part choirs; eight of them also accompany on delicate instruments that suit the nature of these gentle motivators of the celestial spheres. Rising, they are in dialogue with a second 15-part triple choir of divinities above, which is supported by a great array of instruments, much heavier *in toto* and mostly played by twelve classical Heroes in the rear-stage cloud-gallery, placed in the rear-stage gallery. The ascent completed, full forces combine in the concluding 6-part madrigal, to overwhelming effect.

Here, Sempé's failure to reflect the stage action is equally disastrous. We can hardly expect vertical movement, obviously, but we do need to hear the two distinct and contrasted triple choirs in dialogue and to appreciate the scale of their eventual coalition. His Sirens are disconcertingly beefy (choral, I think). I can discern little consistent contrast or obvious dialogue, and the climatic number is actually quieter than what precedes it.

Fundamentally, I suspect that these intermedii resist adequate performance with the kind of depleted forces that Sempé employs: no *lire da braccio*, only one harp, no *lirone*, no *psalterio* (whatever that might have been), no regal, no bandora, and few plucked strings. The sheer scale of the instrumentation of I & VI was intrinsic to their effect, while the huge number of instruments allowed deliberately unorthodox, ear-tickling combinations in the other, smaller intermedii. Sempé stresses the participation of complete instrumental families in the original scheme, though his viol consort and cornett+trombones are not matched by the complete cittern-topped Lautenchor line-up that Malvezzi specifies. More to the point, these instruments were quite sparingly used in their family groupings, whereas Sempé's more rule-of-thumb scorings sometimes reduce pre-baroque subtlety to something perilously akin to banality. The music needed, after all, to hold its own against the visual surprises and delights with which the easily-bored courtly audience was constantly regaled.

Perhaps all this seems unnecessarily critical. But Sempé's reading is no plucky first attempt at this Everest of 16th-century musical theatre. It is some 15 years since Sempé borrowed from me the score that I had prepared for Andrew Parrott's 1986 Prom and 1988 EMI recording.⁶ It is disappointing that he would seem to have stepped backwards rather than forward. Like his performance, his booklet notes and the interviews on the second CD do little to suggest profound engagement with the daunting problems posed by any resuscitation of this superb music. His verbal expression is consistently awkward, with a diffuse, magpie quality that too often recalls the work of a diligent undergraduate adrift in unfamiliar waters. The sources (so copiously cited) have been sadly misunderstood and the entire venture (above all in its small scale) seems to me to have been misconceived.

What is good about the recording? There is fine singing from Monika Mauch in Circe's aria (IV). Sempé (I

presume) has convincingly and extensively embellished both Amfitrite's aria (the opening of V) and the sailors' sinfonia later in the same intermedio – though his pair of violins on the top parts are much less effective than what I believe was intended: a violin and a regal – a deliberately eccentric, perhaps 'maritime', scoring that reflects the harsh disposition of the piratical player. There are other things to enjoy, notably the contribution of the 'renaissance orchestra' when (as at the beginning of VI) Sempé's tempi allow time for the music to breathe and the moving internal parts to make their due effect. And many of the oddly-infrequent and often too-brief passages for solo ensembles are a delight.

I also like some of the liberties taken with the letter of the score. In II, Sempé's repetition of the opening Sinfonia after the announcement of the singing competition may even have happened: it would have allowed the singers of the Muses and Pierides to step forward, showing off their ravishing costumes – though they would have had to look sharp about it, given Sempé's tempo. In purely musical terms, it was a good idea to give some of the tiny tutti sections in the final *ballo* to instruments alone, sometimes with an un-notated repeat, though these would hardly work if they accompanied the dance-steps that Malvezzi meticulously records.⁷

But in general, this version fails to live up to the EMI/Parrott version, or even the Hans-Marin Linde one, let alone the near-ideal, though rescored, performances of II & VI directed by John Beckett for Music Reservata.⁸

¹ *Intermedii* is the Latin plural of *intermedium*; the terminology preferred here is the Italian *intermedio*/intermedi.

² In the event, the old lady died, so the wedding had to be postponed, allowing useful extra rehearsal time. But the vast Mount Helicon machine of Intermedio II remained as a tribute, recalling the peripatetic musician-bearing mountain in a celebrated *al fresco* entertainment that she had mounted, as recorded in one of her wedding-present tapestries.

³ Caccini's florid aria for the sorceress Circe that opened Intermedio IV was perhaps omitted as a consequence of factional rivalry – Malvezzi adhered to the camp of the stage director, Emilio de' Cavalieri, whereas Caccini's connection was with the creator of the concept, Count Giovanni de' Bardi. Sempé follows previous directors in restoring it from elsewhere, but does not attempt to make good two other major omissions. It was perhaps the Lombard dance masters (or Cavalieri) who provided the music for the central *ballo* of III, which depicted Apollo's battle with Python, and the half-hour or so of vocal and instrumental music that led up to the great concluding *ballo* of VI. In IV, if the descent into the Inferno was accompanied by music rather than the screams of the damned, it would presumably have been vamped by the trombonists.

⁴ Singing to one's own accompaniment (on keyboard, lute or viol) is not unusual. CB attended a concert some years ago at which Robert Oliver (one of our regular reviewers) sang one part and played another on viol in a programme of four-part chansons with three performers. The double-bassist of the Frazer-Hayes Four (who provided the music for many a radio comedy programme) told me that he used to play the bass-line of their five-part arrangements while singing an inside part – it took two years of practice before he dared do it in public.

⁵ Karl Steinacker *Ostfälische Kulturbeziehungen Zu Italien Im 16. Jahrhundert*; Barthold Von Gadenstedt's *Italienreise 1587-1589*. Braunschweig, E. Appelhans & Co., 1941.

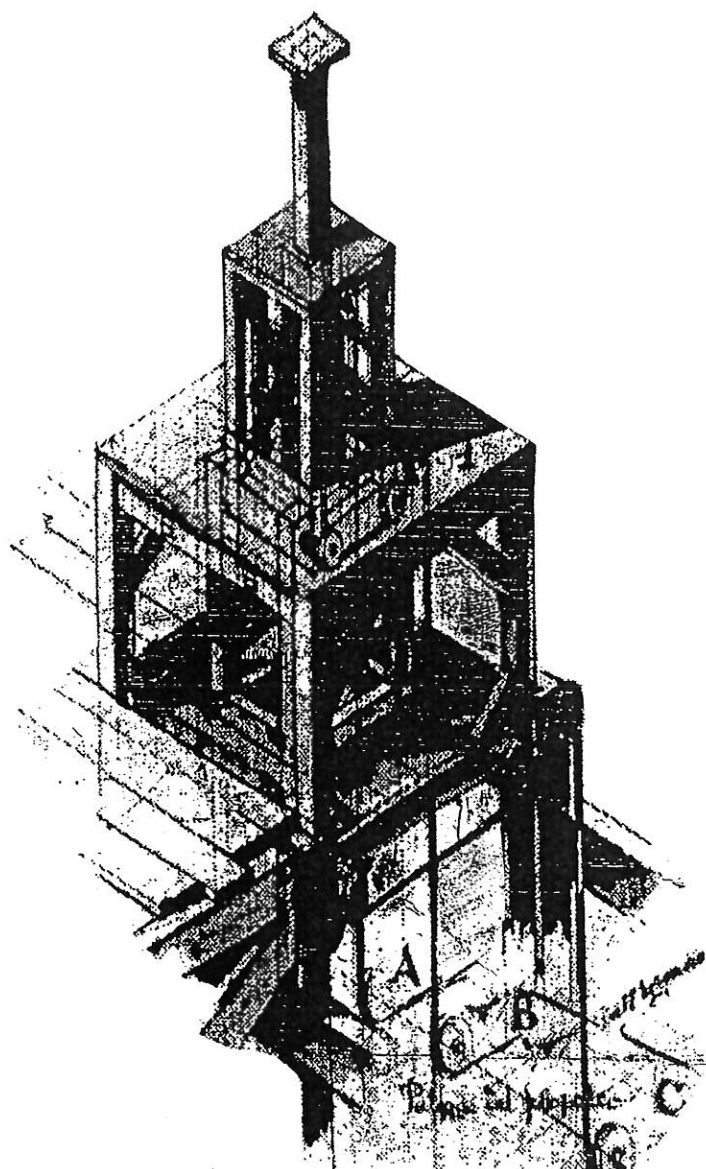
⁶ This was developed from a version prepared for a BBC live broadcast for the European Broadcasting Union in 1979. The soundtrack of the 1988

recording (minus Intermedio II) was used for a disastrous TV and video version. There is also a 1973 EMI recording by Hans-Marin Linde which is less concerned with the original scoring and staging, and another by Paul van Nevel from 1998 (Sony/Columbia 63362).

⁷ Less successful here is the loss of the distinction between the great mass of performers and the three female soloists with their guitars and tambourine. (The singers were probably three of the nine Muses, dancing with their six sisters on the half-height forestage that could be revealed within what we would call the pit.

⁸ *A Florentine Festival* Argo ZRG 602 [LP]

Below Bernardo Buontalenti (1531-1608): design for a stage machine of the type that may have been used for the two ascending side-mounds in Intermedio III. Above it, Buontalenti wrote: 'I tre elementi si muovono alla stesso tempo con un solo argano.' (The three sections are moved at the same rate by a single winch.)



An Attempt to Extinguish the New Light on the Old Bow? A Response to Kevin C. MacDonald

Robert E. Seletsky

In "The Transition from Clip-In to Screw-Adjusted Bows,"ⁱ Kevin C. MacDonald bases his quarrel with current scholarship on a selective and inaccurate reading of my 2004 "New Light on the Old Bow."ⁱⁱ He inexplicably defends David Boyden's outdated, irresponsible and defective chronology, although Boyden is known to have eschewed then-current expertise (1970s) in favor of discredited assumptions and groundless personal hypotheses.ⁱⁱⁱ MacDonald describes recent thought as a conspiratorial "game of Chinese whispers" (less racially charged names include "Telephone" and "Whisper down the lane"), including an allegation that the revered patriarch of period violin performance and pedagogy, Jaap Schröder, somehow used his new book on the *Bach Solos*^{iv} to further the purported "agenda." Contrary to MacDonald's inference, Professor Schröder never deliberately "mis-cited" me: the p.15 footnote stating that "the clip-in bow was standard up to c.1780" contains a rather obvious misprint currently being corrected by his publisher. MacDonald's concerns that my ideas have altered ensembles' equipment requirements are disingenuous: assorted reproduction clip-in short bows have long been used for 17th-century music, some performers sensibly extending that application to early 18th-century works, and no directors I know insist upon clip-in long bows.

It is difficult to see any methodology in MacDonald's writing; his conclusions, drawn from the same sources I used, are misleading, unfounded, and ill-considered. The earliest reference to the screw-frog is Castagnery's cited 1747 catalogue, hence my own c.1750 wider adoption date; Bernard Millant similarly establishes a c.1748 introduction date.^v MacDonald's extrapolation nearly two decades earlier is a reckless leap of (il)logic. Prior catalogue price distinctions unconnected with materials probably differentiate short from long bows, particularly in Paris; they contain no cryptic language referring to the as-yet nonexistent screw-bow. With interesting developments usually yielding period commentary, its complete absence with regard to a new and noteworthy invention indicates that either [1] no development occurred or [2] it was not interesting enough to merit comment. I add, incredulously, that MacDonald claims I "place the advent of the screw-frogs in the 'third quarter of the 18th century' [i.e. 1750-1775]," a misquotation undermining my credibility: that phrase refers specifically to the development of methods for refitting former clip-in bows with screw-frogs.^{vi}

A suggestion about the origin of French fluting leads MacDonald to impute ubiquitous innovation to Italian *luthiers*, presumably implying their invention of the screw-adjuster as well. On the contrary, Italian makers were demonstrably conservative into the 19th century – thus the late overall acceptance of the long bow in Italy and a

scarcity of extant Italian transitional bows. Therefore, ascribing Tartini's use of a clip-in bow with early transitional characteristics (its heightened pike-head unfamiliar to writer Christoph Gottlieb von Murr in 1760^{vii}) to "middle-aged trepidation" (actually, "elderly" as Tartini was born in 1692) – feebly comparing it with clinging to "out-of-date word-processing programmes" – is utterly unjustified. Moreover, during and after his lifetime, Tartini was credited, often inaccurately, with every innovation in bow technology *including* the screw-adjuster; that his bow didn't have one simply demonstrates that it was little-known or unpopular in his region at the time. (For the record, despite being middle-aged, I don't cling to outmoded word-processing programmes any more than I do to outmoded notions about the bow; MacDonald might do well to follow my example.) The fluted, somewhat high-headed screw-bows in the Florence Medici Collection to which MacDonald alludes are of mid 18th-century origin or later, the published earlier estimates pre-dating any serious interest in old bows. The frontispiece engraving of Veracini in his 1744 *Sonate accademiche* reveals a single line near the terminus of his long bow: it's probably reeding as seen on the original clip-in long bow illustrated in my article.^{viii} MacDonald's suggestion that it is a screw-adjuster contradicts his earliest reference of 1747. Moreover, 18th-century buttons, screw and ornamental, were typically constructed with turned or carved decoration; materials like ivory, bone, ebony; and/or diameters different from their sticks – usually wider. We see a wide turned button in MacDonald's own illustration from Diderot's 1765 *Encyclopédie*; note that in a reference work of that date, the bow is still typified as having a "baroque" head, which Boyden/MacDonald would wish us to believe had already been supplanted by later types.

The screw-adjuster on the decorative 1749 presentation bow for Empress Maria-Theresa in Vienna is not what MacDonald implies: only a round sphere terminating the otherwise fixed ornamental button is attached to a screw which turns in the frog's eyelet; however, no room for movement is left on either side of the frog's flat seating area, so it is stationary.^{ix} The screw attachment may have been observed abroad by the Empress' bow maker, its function misunderstood. It does not speak to Austrian developments in bow-making. MacDonald presumes, disturbingly, that Leopold Mozart's *silence* about the screw-adjusted bow indicates ownership: it's more likely an indication that he did *not* own one. In the 1756 *Violinschule*, when the screw-adjuster was relatively new and probably unknown in conservative Austria (Viennese builders were making violins with "baroque" set-ups well into the 19th century), there was simply nothing to say; and additions in the 1769 edition that MacDonald

mentions merely amplified some points as space permitted, without introducing anything new. But the bow in Fig. II & III of Chapter II shows no adjuster: MacDonald is misconstruing a tiny, narrow, turned stick termination, which seems not even to be an added button, as an adjuster; buttons, as I said, were never minute or narrower than the stick.^x MacDonald suggests that the ornamental ivory button on a Walmsley bow (Hill Collection no. 21)^{xi} is an “impractical addition... imitative” of a screw-adjuster, an interpretation disconcertingly reminiscent of Boyden’s thoughtless proposal that the “knobs” on bows depicted in Mersenne’s 1636 *Harmonie Universelle* – interestingly, nearly identical to the termination of Leopold’s bow in *Violinschule*, Chapter II, Figs. II and III – may “adjust a movable frog as in modern bows”.^{xii} Such decorations, integral to the stick or attached, were characteristic, as seen on extant examples and in copious iconography for three centuries (e.g., an elaborate one in Bartolomeo Passerotti [1529–92], *King David*).^{xiii} Like many clip-in long bows, the Walmsley bow has a stick-extension behind the frog to add visual balance. During conversions to screw-bows, such extensions were cut off to compensate for the weight of added iron screws. The design of the screw-bow ascribed to Walmsley’s pupil Thomas Smith (Hill Collection no. 22),^{xiv} conversely, is better understood as an attempt to retain familiar aesthetic clip-in norms despite the impossibility of a stick extension, its frog meeting the stick with an “impractical” snow-plough shaped front seen on all English clip-in frogs. Clip-in originals can now be copied as screw-bows without compromises, owing to new lighter metals like titanium. Benjamin Banks’ 1757 advertisement of “the best screw bows” probably indicates a recently available commodity rather than a decades-old tool that Salisbury “provincials” had somehow missed; “the best” may be intended to interest clients who had previously experienced unsatisfactory examples.^{xv}

The French frog with flat platform and stabilising pin is the first secure screw-frog attachment, also serving as a means for refitting clip-in bows with screw-frogs. As MacDonald questioned my motives for re-dating the square-headed transitional “Cramer” bow, emblematic of the French attachment method, twenty years after Boyden’s careless c.1750, I would say, besides the fact that everyone was still using pike-headed long or short bows, that Wilhelm Cramer was only five years old in 1750. MacDonald’s putative 1769 English example of a modern three-faceted frog-attachment is consistent with my c.1775 wide adoption date; again, to answer his skepticism regarding my conclusions, that estimate resulted from examining and discussing a vast number of bows and iconographic examples with highly experienced, thoughtful experts. Earlier date assignments proved insupportable; e.g., many extant faceted 18th-century bows in various styles, previously dated c.1765 or earlier, could be traced to John Betts’ shop, which only opened in 1780. MacDonald’s other examples are misleading. A Banks stamp reveals no chronology, given that the Salisbury shop was open until 1811 and the stamp traveled with son

James Banks to Liverpool when the business relocated during that year. Bernard Millant was understandably conflicted about his pre-1764 “Tourte-père” attributions (2000), opining “very probably” with the strong reservation that “certainty is difficult because of their rarity,” the A. Tourte stamp termed “an enigma.”^{xvi} With faceted frog-attachments, I must respectfully disagree even with those tentative attributions. Otherwise, one would have to accept the unbelievable: that the Tourte family began with the superior but unknown faceted method, switched to the less stable flat French attachment for over a decade, and then returned to the modern system – a bizarre and untenable proposition. Likewise, Mr. MacDonald’s reactionary, erroneous propositions are untenable in light of the better-researched information we now have. The discovery of new data shedding further light on the subject is always more than welcome – indeed, I am grateful that *Early Music* is always willing to publish addenda to my articles based on such information; but an uncritical rehash of inaccurate, happily discarded assumptions is most unwelcome. The above response is written, therefore, out of concern that fellow performers might be confused by the unfortunate resurfacing of bad data and myths.

ⁱ Kevin C. MacDonald, “The Transition from Clip-In to Screw-Adjusted Bows,” *Early Music Review* 122, 12/2007, pp. 31–3.

ⁱⁱ Robert E. Seletsky, “New light on the old bow – part 1”: *Early Music* 5/2004, p. 286–301; “part 2”: *Early Music* 8/2004, p. 415–426; additions in Correspondence, 11/2004 & 2/2007.

ⁱⁱⁱ Boyden’s defensiveness about his uncorroborated theorizing was amply demonstrated when a very distinguished colleague’s reasonable query was met with the dismissive retort “Bow-loney!” Probably the last incarnation of Boyden’s inaccuracies appeared as “The violin bow in the 18th century,” *Early Music*, 4/1980, p. 199–212.

^{iv} Jaap Schröder, *Bach’s Solo Violin Works: a Performer’s Guide* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007).

^v Bernard Millant and Jean François Raffin, *L’archet: les “Tourte” et les archetiers français*, 3 vols. (Paris: L’Archet Éditions, 2000), vol. 1, p. 46 (French), p. 48 (English trans.).

^{vi} Seletsky, “New light—part 2,” *Early Music* 8/2004, p. 420.

^{vii} quoted in E.L. Gerber, *Neues Lexikon der Tonkünstler* (1813–14), iv, col. 372.

^{viii} Seletsky, “New light – pt. 1,” *Early Music* 5/2004, illus. 8b; stick termination in close-up: illus. 5 [drawing] & pt. 2, 8/2004, illus. 12a [photo].

^{ix} Rudolf Hopfner, *Streichbogen-Katalog Sammlung alter Musikinstrumenten und Sammlungen der Gesellschaft der Musikfreunden in Wien* (Tützing: Hans Schneider, 1998), p. 76–77 (Sammlung nr. 638).

^x Leopold Mozart, *Violinschule* (Augsburg, 1756, 2/1769; 3/1787); trans. and compiled by Editha Klocker (London, Oxford University Press, 1948; 2/1951), pp. 55–56. It’s amusing that of the two possible engravings, MacDonald chose “The Faulty Position” (Fig. III) as his example. Note that the bow is also shown in Chapter II, Fig. IV and V (p. 59), in Chapter V, Fig. I–IV (p. 97–99), and in the frontispiece, all with an unornamented terminus.

^{xi} David D. Boyden, *The Hill Collection, Ashmolean Museum Oxford* (Oxford: W.E. Hill & Sons and Oxford University Press, 1969), plate 21.

^{xii} David D. Boyden, *The History of Violin Playing* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 112.

^{xiii} in: Emanuel Winternitz, *Musical Instruments and Their Symbolism in Western Art* (1967, 2/New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), plate 32a.

^{xiv} Boyden, *The Hill Collection*, plate 22.

^{xv} Albert W. Cooper, *Benjamin Banks, the Salisbury Violin Maker* (Surrey: Ashford, 1989), p. 28.

^{xvi} Millant and Raffin, op. Cit.

See also letter from David Hawthorne and the replacement of the illustration which the computer distorted in the layout process in last issue and which I didn’t spot (pp. 38–9)

LONDON CONCERTS

Andrew Benson-Wilson

POPPEA AND THE PERI

The second of English National Opera's Monteverdi cycle (all using the Chinese-American director Chen Shi-Zheng, the Indonesian Orange Blossom Dance Company and conductor Laurence Cummings) brought *Poppea* to the vast Coliseum stage. Chen Shi-Zheng seems to be following the school of opera directing where personal self-expression (or perhaps, vanity) takes precedence over musical or textural considerations. It was only the perceptive conducting of Laurence Cummings and some outstanding singing and instrumental playing (notably from the huge continuo forces) that prevented this production collapsing into farce. It was full of curiosities, not least that most of the action seemed to take place under water. The Orange Blossom Dance Company, attractive as they might have been in any other context, spent most of the time just getting in the way. And, however randy one might feel, I am not sure if it was entirely appropriate to copulate in Seneca's blood-soaked bath – particularly with the lifeless Seneca still in it. The skeletal prow of a yacht projected from stage right (with much audible clanking of safety harnesses whenever anyone attempted to climb up to it) providing a catwalk for the often scantily-clad Kate Royal. Her portrayal of Poppea was more Page 3 than the intensely powerful and erotic character that I think Monteverdi had in mind. I also wondered if she had the right voice, impressive as it is, for this role. Royal's ENO debut was the focus for the ENO publicity department, aided by some seductive photographs; but for me it was the return of Robert Lloyd (as a magnificent Seneca), after an interval of some 20 years, that was the more memorable, alongside some splendid singing from Anna Greveliu (Nerone), Doreen Curran (Ottavia, singing from on top of what looked like a giant pumpkin), Tim Mead (Ottone), Joanna Seara (Damigella), Katherin Manley (Fortune) and Lucy Crowe (Drusilla), all of whom had to cope with some daft directorial situations, including the inevitable shedding of most of their clothes.

Schumann often thought about the development of German opera, but only actually managed to write one towards the end of his life. Up until then, arguably, the closest he came to opera was his 1843 oratorio *Das Paradies und die Peri*, a work that, despite the enthusiasm that it received in Schumann's lifetime, has since had more than its fair share of criticism. As has so often proved to be the case, it takes a period instrument orchestra (the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Royal Festival Hall 7 Dec) and Sir Simon Rattle, to shed new light onto Schumann's musical strengths – not least in dispelling the myth that he couldn't orchestrate. Yes, the story-line is pretty slushy, but no more so than many more-overtly Christian oratorios. The setting in a Persian court makes more sense in the context of the huge contemporary interest throughout Europe in

all things Oriental. The Peri ('a creature of unearthly beauty who satisfied her hunger on the aroma of blossoms') was the result of a union between a fallen angel and a mortal and was therefore not eligible for entry into Paradise. Unless, that is, she can find 'the gift that is most dear to Heaven'. In her travels to find such a gift, she encounters a mortally wounded soldier in India, a dying lover in Egypt, and finally, in Syria, a lifelong sinner who repents at the sight of a young boy saying his prayers. Cue general rejoicing, of the "Oh! Am I not happy? I am, I am!" variety. Sally Matthews was a wonderful Peri (although her 'unearthly beauty' was concealed by some appalling stage lighting – both the two key soloists standing at the front of the stage were in total shadow). Mark Padmore put his Evangelist experience to good use as the key commentator, and Bernarda Fink was excellent as the Angel. Kate Royal didn't quite catch the mood of The Maiden – she needs to absorb her natural vibrato into her voice, something that Sally Matthews has now done. The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment continue in the ongoing search for new leaders, this time giving Nadja Zwienen a chance. Schumann wrote that this was an oratorio "not for a place of prayer, but rather for cheerful folk", and the loud and raucous off-stage laughter as the pre-concert talk started suggested that the OAE were getting themselves in the mood. Simon Rattle always managed to reach parts of the OAE that others fail to reveal, yet again producing a memorable performance. No string vibrato, of course, and some lovely moments for the horns, clarinets and bassoons. The 32-strong Choir of the Enlightenment included far too many wobbly voices for my liking – rather curious considering the valiant attempts that the Orchestra make for musical integrity. However, even the Orchestra shirked at providing the requested ophicleide, substituting a tuba. The impressively detailed programme included some slightly strange translations – even with my appalling German, I doubt that 'sie sinkt' means 'she stinks'!

IN MEMORY OF KATHERINE MCGILLIVRAY AND SEVERAL 60th BIRTHDAYS

Only somebody like Trevor Pinnock would consider celebrating their 60th birthday by founding a new orchestra (the European Brandenburg Ensemble), spending the day itself starting to record a CD and giving a concert of all six of Bach's Brandenburg Concertos, followed by a year touring the world with the same repertoire. One of their last concerts (Cadogan Hall, 13 Nov) was also the launch of the CD. Time Out billed it as 'Bach's Six, Trev's Sixty'. Trev certainly showed no sign of slowing up, nor did the excellent group of players, all of whom exhibited a remarkable freshness and vigour despite having performed the same works so many times. Although many of the players were from the pool of usual suspects, there

were a number of new faces. Particularly memorable performances came from Katharina Spreckelsen (oboe), Katy Bircher (flute), Robert Ehrlich and Antje Hensel (recorders), Jane Rogers and Emilia Benjamin (violas), Susanne Heinrich (viola da Gamba). But soaring above these was leader Kati Debretzeni, with frequent moments of pure musical and technical brilliance, not least her elaborations of the two-chord *Adagio* in No 3 and in the opening movement of No 4 – and, of course, our Trev himself, looking pleased as punch, as well he should. He retains the unerring ability to lead as well as cooperate with his fellow musicians. His introduction to the programme note referred to the tragic death of their viola player, Katherine McGillivray during the night after the first day of rehearsals. He writes 'The strengthening power of Bach's music and the knowledge that he himself lost many of his children enabled us to complete our week in tribute to Katherine'. It was therefore entirely fitting that this concert was also performed in memory of Katherine.

A week or so later (on St Cecilia's day, 22 Nov), the Cadogan Hall saw another concert in her memory. This was also a launch for the new charity for musicians set up in her memory – the Get a Life Fund (www.getalifefund.org.uk), dedicated to funding sabbaticals for musicians, something that Katherine herself was able to do, following a private donation, in the year before her untimely death. This concert was also Catherine Mackintosh's celebration of her own 60th birthday, for which she revived her group, The Catherine Wheel, after a gap of about 10 years since their two Wigmore Hall concerts. I am not sure what the collective noun of Catherines might be (calling it a 'cattery' might get me a slap), but this mixed programme of JS and CPE Bach, Vivaldi and Mozart gave the these 5 Catherines, 3 Katharines, 2 Katherines, Cecilia Catherine, Katie, Katy, Kathryn, Katharina and Katrina ample chance to shine. Particularly notable were Katy Bircher in CPE Bach's A major Flute Concerto (with a gorgeous extended *Largo con sordini* and concluding with one of the most beautiful cadenzas I have ever heard, making a magical use of silence) and Katharine Fuge, soprano, singing Bach's cantata *Weichet nur, betrübte Schatten* and Vivaldi's *Nulla in mundo pax sincera*. And, of course, the birthday girl herself, in sparkling form. The words of both the vocal works contained references to 'chaste love', something that not all musicians strive for, although the linked references to 'uncertainty and change' and the 'contented soul' were particularly apposite on this occasion. The last word was given to Katherine McGillivray, with encores featuring her own attractive, and very Scottish, compositions. It says something for the twin focuses of this concert that there was such a good turn out from other professional musicians.

Another 60th birthday was the Diamond Jubilee of the London Bach Society, celebrated by an invitation concert (14 Nov) at St Bartholomew-the-Great, where its founder, Paul Steinitz, was Director of Music. Margaret Steinitz's programme essay outlined the influential history of the Society since the daring promotion of German music in London in the years immediately after the War. Many of

the musicians who had been inspired by and worked with the related Steinitz Bach Players were present. It was appropriate that the evening should start with a focus on the organ, the instrument that remained closest to Bach's heart throughout his life, with Steven Devine's organ obbligato in the Sinfonia to the Cantata *Ich geh' und suche mit Verlangen*. The Society's work with younger musicians was the focus of a group of three vocal works by Bach ancestors, sung by the Choir of Clare College Chapel. Johann Ludwig Bach's *Das ist meine Freude* was the most compelling and by far the best sung by this influential choir, many of whose alumna have gone on to make their name on the professional circuit. One of these is excellent young soprano Angharad Gruffydd Jones, who closed the evening with a stunning performance of Bach's joyous Cantata *Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen*. Paul Sharp kept up the tradition of trumpeters turning up right at the end and stealing the show, but I was equally enthralled by Anthony Robson's restrained direction of the Steinitz Bach Players. Audience participation is a tradition of the Society, reflected by their singing of the chorale from Bach's Cantata *Herz und Mund und Tat und Leben*. Overall, the highlight for me was the 4th Brandenburg Concerto, featuring some outstanding playing from the orchestra leader, Rudolfo Richter, displaying his extraordinary sense of the rhetorical ebb and flow of the musical line together, and recorder players Rachel Beckett and Anthony Robson.

SOLO VOICES

The Barbican (celebrating its own 25th birthday) brought back one of their 'Great Performer' series favourites, the mezzo-soprano Magdalena Kožená, together with the Venice Baroque Orchestra conducted by the resourceful Andrea Marcon and a programme of Handel and Vivaldi (15 Nov). Mezzo-soprano is merely the mid-point of Kožená's remarkable vocal range – from pure tenor to sheer soprano. Her rapid and shallow vibrato adds depth to her voice, but never interferes with intonation or pitch. Her technical grasp was evident in the vertiginous descent in 'Dopo notte, atra e funesta' from *Ariodante*. One of Kožená's many strengths is her unerring ability to penetrate the emotional depths of the character she is portraying, and her approach to ornamentation and elaboration is clearly centred on this aspect of performance. She publicly acknowledges the help of Andrea Marcon in developing her musical style, not least in her approach to rhetoric and pulse. Although her physical stage persona appears rather demur and shy, she has an extraordinary dramatic musical presence. Her 'Scherzo infida in grembo al drudo' at the end of the first half could easily have led to a mass suicide in the lobbies. Her energies are clearly devoted to the music rather than self-aggrandisement – indeed, there was far more overt showmanship from the lutenist (who attempted to turn at least two Vivaldi Concertos into Lute Concertos, nearly bursting into tears in the process), the 'look-at-me' 2nd cellist and the inevitable 'man-who-yells-Brava' that these occasions seems to attract. Unlike some solo singer concerts, Kožená integrated extremely well with the sprightly Venice Baroque Orchestra, who played with their customary expressive vigour under the gripping direction of Andrea Marcon.

Italians were to the fore in The English Concert's Cadogan Hall concert (29 Nov) with Sara Mingardo (a wonderfully pure contralto) and Rinaldo Alessandrini (both making their EC debut) with a programme of concertos by Dall'Abaco, Corelli, Mascitti and Geminiani and two vocal works by A. Scarlatti and Vivaldi. Like Magdalena Kožená, Sara Mingardo knows just how to hit the emotional G-spot, although the unremitting gloom of the two works did rather restrict her emotional range. The final aria of Scarlatti's *Infirmata, vulnerata* gave her a chance to lighten up a bit, but Vivaldi's intense *Cessate, omai cessate* was pure drama – the sort of portrayal of earthly love that must have kept the admissions departments of Venice's nunneries very busy. When she sings *barbare* or *ingrate*, she means it – hell hath no fury, indeed! The sequence of sparkling instrumental works was all that stood in the way of a mass audience depression, with particularly impressive contributions from their leader Kati Debretzeni and fellow violinist Walter Reiter, cellist Jonathan Byers and David Gordon as organ continuist. Two lesser-known instrumental works were included. Evaristo Dall'Abaco's *Concerto a quarto* Op. 2/1 was an exciting multi-sectional work, one of which is a rather stately fugue interrupted by some maverick 2nd violin motifs and a percussive theorbo. Michele Mascitti's *Concerto Grosso* Op. 7/2 was not as musically gripping as the Dall'Abaco work, although there was a very striking slow movement the featured some impeccable phrasing from Kati Debretzeni.

One solo singer gave homage to another in 'One God, One Farinelli' at St. Alfege's Church, Greenwich (24 Nov). As Michael Church wrote in his *Independent* review of a performance of this Farinelli showcase at the Battersea Arts Centre in 2000, 'Castrati were poor boys brutally doctored to give pleasure to the rich: it would be perverse to regret their passing. One person who does seem to regret their passing is countertenor Nicholas Clapton, who added the enigmatic subtitle 'What Delicious Horror' to his programme. Clapton can also be found in a leg-crossing video clip on the internet demonstrating various methods of castration, featuring what might be termed 'period instruments'. Incidentally, Farinelli's passing has recently been interrupted by the disinterment of his few remaining bones from the Certosa cemetery in Bologna. Works by Handel, Porpora (Farinelli's teacher in Naples), Giacomelli, Hasse, Farinelli himself (Carlo Broschi) and his brother, Riccardo Broschi (all from Farinelli's own repertoire) were interspersed by spoken reflections on Farinelli's life. Contemporary reports suggest that he was an exception in not sharing the notorious vanity of his fellow castrati, and that he was amiable with polite manners and a gentle disposition. Nicholas Clapton's manners couldn't really be faulted, but I am not sure if he quite got the lack of vanity or the gentility and amiability of his subject. A motionless stage presence was apparently one of Farinelli's hall-marks, but were his facial expressions quite as extreme as demonstrated here? The actual vocal style and timbre is, of course, something we can only hazard a guess at. Burney wrote of his 'brilliancy and rapidity of execution' and his ability to start a note with delicacy and 'swell by minute degrees to an amazing

volume'. Clapton has done a lot of research on the castrato voice and on Farinelli himself, though I am not sure to what extent he changed his natural vocal style to match that of his hero. But I was surprised at the fact that there seemed to be no semblance of identity to individual notes in vocal runs – Clapton joined them all together in lengthy swoops, leaps and twists through and around what I guess were written as individual notes. His vibrato was so extreme as to not only involve dramatic changes in volume, but also (and more alarmingly) pitch – and the pulse of the vibrato was so similar to that of trills that the latter became almost unrecognisable. Many countertenors have a metallic edginess to their voice (that unkind critics might refer to as the 'strangled duck syndrome'), but Clapton chose a vocal timbre that pushed this to extremes. He also sang very loudly more-or-less throughout. To his credit, he and harpsichord accompanist David Wright did look very fetching in their full eighteenth-century garb.

One group that has always impressed me is The Bach Players, directed (if that is the right word) with commendable reticence by violinist Nicolette Moonen. Their concerts always strike me as a gathering of friends, on with the audience eavesdrops, an atmosphere that produces consistent outstandingly musical performances. They have found a new London base at St John's Downshire Hill where they continue to explore the lesser-known byways of the repertoire, this time with two Bach cantatas for the 16th Sunday after Trinity (*Komm, du süsse Todestunde* and *Wer weiß, wie nahe mir mein Ende*), three contrapuncti from the Art of Fugue and three short works by Rosenmüller. The four singers and eight players (all of whom were given detailed biographies in the programme – a further reflection on the nature of this group) were all on top form, but special mention must go to the four singers (Angharad Gruffydd Jones, Sally Bruce-Payne, Nicholas Mulroy and Peter Harvey) and players Rudolfo Richter, Catherine Latham, James Eastaway and Silas Standage.

ORGAN EVENTS

I don't often cover organ events, mainly because so few come within *EMR's* remit. But three events in November are worth a mention, two because they involve important reconstructions of historic London organs. St Botolph without Aldgate houses what is (arguably) the oldest surviving church organ in England – there are organs with older pipes and cases, but this has the oldest collection of pipes in their original positions on original wind chests. Although there were earlier organs in St Botolph, this one dates back to around 1705, when Renatus Harris built a new instrument, most of which survives in the 2006 reconstruction by Goetze & Gwynn. It was stored and returned when the church was rebuilt by George Dance in 1744. As part of a British Institute of Organ Studies study day (24 Nov), David Ponsford gave a recital of works by Blow, Locke, Purcell, Croft, Walond, Stanley and two foreign composers whose works were known in England at the time, Froberger and Louis Couperin. Although many of the chosen composers pre-dated the organ by some time, the Restoration works sounded particularly

attractive and were played with a commendable sense of period style. A lovely improvised opening introduced Froberger's dramatic Toccata II (which also exists in a manuscript by John Blow), played on the very bold Pleno throughout, the strong mixtures adding an additional layer of complexity to the central chromatic section (which can also be very effectively played on a contrasting less-powerful registration). David Ponsford demonstrated some delightfully sprightly ornamentation and some nice paired-finger articulation in Blow's A minor Cornet Voluntary, and caught the mood of Matthew Locke's very Baroque Voluntary in A beautifully. The 18th century composers that made up the second part of the recital showed the characteristic range of colour available on the typical English organ of the period, including Trumpets, Hautboy, Vox Humane, Bassoon and Cornets. There is an attractive and user-friendly booklet on the organ available from the church.

Another contender for the 'oldest organ' tag is that in St Giles in the Fields – it contains pipework from 1678, 1698 and 1734, but in its reconstructed form (by William Drake) speaks with a voice reflecting the early to mid-19th century sound from its 1856 rebuilding. In the endless debates about what might make the 'ideal' English organ, I have often thought that a late 17th century organ with conservative additions (and no subtractions) in the mid-18th and early 19th-centuries as being a major contender. Sadly, none like this exist, but the St Giles organ is not far off and, along with St Botolph's, is a step on the way to an understanding of the historic English organ. In contrast to the almost rustically bold voice of St Botolph's, this organ speaks with gentlemanly restraint and sophistication. Dame Gillian Weir's opening recital (28 Nov) demonstrated just how flexible this organ can be, with a remarkably eclectic programme that only included one work composed with the specific sound of the early to mid-19th century organ in mind. Somewhat curious registrations and interpretations clouded some of the pieces, and works such as Walond's Cornet Voluntary lacked the articulation and sense of musical phrasing which is essential if music of this genre is not to sound trite. Interestingly, it was in the music of Bach that the organ really came to light (it dates from a period when Bach's music was being rediscovered with considerable gusto in England). A couple of weeks later (5 Dec), Margaret Phillips also gave a recital. I arrived what I thought would be 15 minutes early, only to find that I was actually 45 minutes late, so can only comment on the last few pieces – a sparkling Voluntary by John James, featuring the Cornet and Sesquialtra stops, a magnificent Voluntary (Op 6/2) by Samuel Wesley and a Fugue of Wesley's arranged in grand style by WT Best (and possibly reflecting the sort of composition that Wesley might have come up with if he had lived another 30 years or so). As with the Bach works in the earlier recital, the organ sounded wonderful, and Margaret Phillips demonstrated an innate understanding of just how such an instrument (and repertoire) should be played.

The enterprising London Organ Forum organised a day devoted to the music of Buxtehude, aptly entitled 'Fantastic

Rhetoric' (The Little Oratory, South Kensington, 10 Nov). Ashley Solomon (from the Royal College of Music) started by giving an introduction to some of Buxtehude's instrumental genres. His talk contained a number of curiosities, one being his interpretation of the indication *con discrezione* in a score as suggesting that that particular passage can be left out, rather than the usual, and more obvious, suggestion that it means that the player should perform that section in a free, rather rhapsodic style, independent of the underlying pulse – in other words, at the player's own discretion. Another curiosity was that he handed over a sizeable chunk of his allotted time to a performance of an equally sizeable chunk of Buxtehude's enormous set of harpsichord variations on *La Capricciosa* by Royal College of Music student Erik Dippenaar – curious, because Eric was due to (and did) play exactly the same piece in the concluding concert. He managed it brilliantly though – both times. An impressive group of Royal Academy of Music students then performed the first of three of the six cantatas from *Membra Jesu Nostri* that they performed throughout the day – delightful as all three of them were, it was shame that we didn't hear a wider representation of Buxtehude's vocal music. And did such small-scale force really need to be conducted? Sara Struntz, Claire Bracher and the busy Erik Dippenaar then gave an insightful performance of the Trio Sonata in G (Op 1). The afternoon was given over to a masterclass by Pieter van Dijk, the fortunate organist at Alkmaar's Laurenskerk, for five Royal College students. There are many ways of interpreting Buxtehude's organ music as there are organists, but Pieter van Dijk steered a sensible course through the many aspects of performance, with something of a stress on rhetorical analysis. His concluding recital, with more contributions from RCM students (the sensuous *Ad cor* cantata from *Membra Jesu Nostri*, with its distinctive use of five viols), showed just how important clarity of articulation and sensitivity of touch is to organ performance. His playing of *Mit Fried und Freud ich far dahin* and the *Klaglied* was as exquisite as his concluding Toccata in D minor was exuberant.

GAMBA FESTIVAL

A few days later I came across the same Royal College of Music viol players at the two-day Viola da Gamba Festival (an event that has already made the correspondence pages of *EMR*), organised by the enterprising gamba student, Claire Bracher at the RCM (14/15 Nov). The day started with Claire's own talk on Simpson and the English Tradition, which even managed to include a handout on Puritan hats! Then followed masterclasses by Richard Boothby and Reiko Ichise from the RCM and the distinguished German viol player Hille Perl, who had brought several of her own Bremen students with her. She came up with some particularly inspiring comments, including practising with your eyes closed (as the brain absorbs the physical much easier than the visual), avoiding pulling faces and 'dare to learn', as it is only by hitting the wrong notes that we learn to hit the right notes. This was a fascinating event by a young student who appears to have more-or-less single-handedly rejuvenated the Royal College of Music's Early Music Department.

MEDIEVAL MUSIC

I have followed the fortunes of Mediva for most of their ten-year history, not always, it has to be said, with unalloyed enthusiasm. But they have recently been re-invented into a much tighter and, dare I say, rather more professional format – or formats, as they now exist in five incarnations (Mediva:pure, Mediva:alta, Multi:mediva, Mediva:plugged and Mediva:electronica). It was the first that gave a lively and enthusiastically-received concert at St Alfege's Greenwich (11 Nov), with four performers on a combination of shawms, recorders, friscaletto (a teeny-weeny recorder), fiddle, percussion and voice. Their programme included works from the Rossi Codex, Francesca Landini and Jacopo da Bologna (from the Squarcialupi Codex) and a sequence of dances from the British Museum MS 29987. Musically, this was impressive, with effective use of the range of instruments. They had made an effort in their staging, with only the metal music stands looking a bit out of place amongst the red cloth. But they could do with tightening up their presentation a bit – there were one or two 'what-do-we-do-next' moments.

Another mostly mediaeval group are Eclipse Baroque Fusion, the 'fusion' of their title indicating their eclectic approach to the repertoire, linking styles from different periods. In their programme 'Forgotten Secrets', given for the Basingstoke Concert Club on 1 December, they combined mediaeval and Sephardic music with present day incarnations of those ancient melodies (including some learnt from the percussionist's grandmother in Uruguay) and flamenco. The core members of the group are Joy Smith (harps, psaltery and hammered dulcimer) and Layil Barr (recorders and viol) together with percussionist Andres Ticino and, for this programme, guest singers Clare Norburn and Ulises Diaz-Ropera Condo, the latter (as his name might suggest) providing the Flamenco input. *EMR* readers might argue with the group's programme note contention that authentic early instrument are 'rarely seen and heard'" (although that probably does apply to Basingstoke), but I have to admit to never before having heard a Melodica in a period instrument group! In a very wide-ranging concert (perhaps too wide-ranging), by far the most successful pieces were those featuring virtuoso recorder and hammered dulcimer – the former including a double recorder and, in one piece, some very effective percussion effects created by tonguing without actually blowing a note. I also liked the songs presented with a spoken text and the heterophonic combination of singer Clare Norburn and viol.

MUSIC FOR CHRISTMAS

The extremely stiff competition that medieval groups like Mediva and Eclipse Baroque Fusion face is thrown into sharp focus when heard against groups like The Dufay Collective. And, unfortunately for the first two groups, that is just what I managed to do at the Dufay's concert, 'Godoy Sire Cristemas – Music for a Medieval Christmas' (Turner Sims Concert Hall, 6 Dec). Now in their 20th year, they have lost none of the innovative freshness and

outstanding professionalism, although Peter Skuce's off-beat sense of humour has sadly not improved. Vivian Ellis's evocative voice is a key aspect of their performance. She makes very effective use of 'period' pronunciation without venturing into Zummerzet parody. Other notable contributions came from William Lyons on a variety of wind instruments and Clare Salaman on *vielle* and hurdy-gurdy.

Emmanuelle Haïm and her *Le Concert d'Astrée* Orchestra and Chorus has joined the list of Barbican regulars that make up the bulk of their annual 'Great Performers' series and their rather short programme of Handel's *Dixit Dominus* and Bach's *Magnificat* was just the thing to boost the Barbican's ticket sales (and to sell CDs – this was yet another Barbican programme dedicated to a recent CD release). Given the captive audience (who would turn up in droves to hear Haïm conduct Three Blind Mice), it was a shame that the lesser known earlier E-flat version (with its Christmas choruses) of the *Magnificat* was not performed. Replacement singers are also becoming a regular features of Barbican concerts, in this case it was the home-grown soprano and tenor Amy Freston and Paul Agnew who stood in for the big-name Natalie Dessay and Lothar Odinius. As is often the case with stand-ins, both impressed, although I do find Paul Agnew's increasingly deep vibrato a bit of a worry. Amy Freston's *Tecum in principium* and *Quia respexit humilitatem* (the latter with some exquisite oboe d'amore playing from Patrick Beaugiraud) were both individual highlights of the two works. Haïm's conducting presented a number of oddities. She is not the first conductor to appear awkward and uncoordinated on stage, but her jerky and muscularly-tense style does seem to be having an increasingly unsettling effect on the performers.

The Gabrieli Consort, now settled firmly into their new home at Christ Church Spitalfields, offered an imaginative programme of Christmas music from Lutheran Germany and 20th-century England (4 Dec). As with some of their previous concerts, they gave two performances, at 7.00 and 9.00. What initially seemed an unlikely combination of styles worked well, with five groups of pieces combining works from both periods. Michael Praetorius was the key representation of Lutheran Germany with four works, including the evocative *Quem pastores laudavere* where four boys (or female sopranos, in this case) sing from the galleries to represent the angels. 20th-century England had a much wider focus, including Holst, Howells, Warlock, Wishart, Leighton and Jonathan Dove (no stranger to Spitalfields). Although the 20th-century works were, by and large, better sung (notably because the vibrato of choir and soloists was not as pronounced), it was in the Praetorius that the Gabrieli Consort came into their own, with a huge array of instruments spread round the stage and galleries including, in the final *In dulci jubilo*, a battery of tenor and bass violins sitting precariously on the very edge of the balcony front (I wonder if their insurance covered this). The final verse was introduced by a huge drum role and trumpet fanfare worthy of Berlioz. For those who love the Gabrieli's recordings of this music from Roskilde, the lack of a beefy organ sound was noticeable – but give it a few years and the planned

reconstruction of the historically important organ in Spitalfields should be completed. Of the many soloists, Grace Davidson was by far the best, with Amy Moore not far behind.

Finally, three concerts selected from the 22nd annual Christmas Festival at St John's, Smith Square. The Cardinal's Musick (18 Dec) took a relatively rare step away from their usual Catholic repertoire into the German-speaking Lutheran world of Schütz, Scheidt, two Praetorius's and Bach - 'all Protestants, but don't let that put you off' as Andrew Carwood (recently translated to the post of Director of Music at St Paul's Cathedral) put it in his introduction. The single continuo organ was a far cry from the Gabrieli Consort's big-band approach, and put the focus on the vocal quality of the works. Fortunately, the singers were on particularly good form (notably the alto line) and produced a glorious blend of sound. I particularly liked the *Gaudete omnes* and double choir *Magnificat quati toni* by Hieronymus Praetorius - an underrated composer (indeed, a hardly-ever-rated-at-all composer) who also wrote some magnificent organ music and who deserves to be better known (and hopefully will become so if The Cardinal's Musick recording project comes to fruition). In the *Magnificat*, the chromatic *Et exultavit*, the rapid-fire *dispersit superbos* and the evocative *Esurientes implevit bonus: et divites dismissit inanes* were magical moments, as was the joyous conclusion.

Chapelle du Roi's concert, 'Christmas at the Chapel Royal' (21 Dec) explored two major events in 1554 - the absolution of England from the collective charge of heresy, and the expectation that Queen Mary was due to have a baby with her new husband, Prince (later King) Philip of Spain. Retaining their strong link with the music of Tallis, Chapelle du Roi's programme followed the plausible theory that two of Tallis's greatest works (*Sucipe quæso* incompletely-extant mass *Puer natus est nobis*) were written for these events. The *Agnus Dei* has a delightfully gentle, rocking movement with a constant repetition of a bell-like interval throughout all the voices. One feature that was highlighted in the *Gloria* was that director Alistair Dixon's was not afraid to drop a few voices down to the very edge of their compass. In fact, this concert was notable for its gentle volume, in contrast to the more forthright sound of the Cardinal's Musick. This approach pulls the audience into the sound world of the performers and, for me, makes for more concentrated listening. This was particularly so in Tallis's most moving *Videte Miraculum*, with its characteristic moments of harmonic tension. The nine-strong choir produced a well-integrated sound, free from the soprano vibrato and alto tone issues that often let such choirs down - the former produced a lovely pure tone and intonation, the latter a clean and unaffected timbre.

Peter Philips seems to be rather proud of his own sense of humour. Not only did he programme Lambe and Mouton together (in the Tallis Scholars' Christmas concert, 22 Dec), but he specifically pointed out the pun in the programme and, in case any of us hadn't got it, also announced it from the stage. Perhaps he should have

booked Paul Agnew as well. The pastoral composers appeared in the second half with their respective versions of *Nesciens mater virgo virum*, both written at about the same time but in very different styles. Lambe represents the Eton Choirbook genre, with his rather anarchic approach to rhythm and texture and word setting, often treating each word as a separate musical entity. Mouton comes from the Flemish school, with its sometimes mind-numbingly complicated mathematical approach to musical construction. In the case of *Nesciens mater*, this involved writing four simultaneous canons at the fifth, with the four voices of the second choir repeated eight beats later by choir one, a fifth higher. Rather than listen to the explanation before, I would have preferred to hear the work, then hear the description perhaps followed by a repeat of the piece. Palestrina was the focus of the first half, with his *Missa Hodie Christus natus est*, preceded by the motet, the rather awkward homophonic opening of the latter soon giving way to the peals of *Noe, Noe* that come at the end of each line. In a nice symmetry, similar cries of *Noe* and *Alleluia* appeared in the last four pieces - Mouton's *Quaramus cum pastoribus* and three versions of *Regina caeli* by White, Lassus and Guerrero. The Tallis Scholars were particularly impressive on this occasion, with a gentler, more relaxed (and less forced) vocal style that I have formally associated them with. It turned out to be perfect for the acoustic and the repertoire. It was also nice to have another slice of Heironymous Praetorius, with the encore of his *In dulci jubilo*.

Hieronymus Praetorius seems to be gaining ground. His *Collected Works* are being issued by *Corpus Mensurabilis Musicae*, and Philip Thorby has justifiably been enthusing about him at some recent workshops. CB

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MUSICA INVOLATA

Brian Clark

I was alerted to the existence of this Sardinian record company by that avid Telemanniac, Dave Bellinger, when he discovered that they had recently issued a world premiere recording of the *VI Nouvelles Sonates* of 1730/31. When I did a Google search, I came upon a website that listed five CDs as currently available, with two more in the pipeline.

Telemann's *VI Nouvelles Sonatines* have not survived the passage of time in tact; while two of them survive in manuscripts for recorder and continuo, the printed bass part is lost. Various attempts have been made to fill the lacuna and this recording uses the continuo player's completion, which I must confess is very, very convincing – a stylistic mix of supportive bass and melodic partner. L'Apothéose are Enrico Di Felice (flute), Daniele Bovo (cello) and Francesco Bianco, and they give an excellent account of themselves and this fine music. (*Inviolata* 0703, 65') The Sonatines are all four movement works (broadly speaking slow-fast-slow-fast) but there is such variety within each, it's a mini-encyclopaedia of Telemann's melodic styles.

Enrico Di Felice is the solo flautist in "J. S. Bach / C. P. E. Bach: Solo pour la flute traversière" (*Inviolata* 0702, 58"). He plays three works, two by the father (BWV 1013 and 1033) and one by the son (H.562 / W.132). While I was thrilled by his Telemann and thoroughly enjoyed the Agus chamber music reviewed below, I found this all a little stilted. I understand the importance of phrasing (I've been on enough Philip Thorby courses to understand the principles), but I felt I was being guided by the hand through labyrinths, or told by satnav where my kitchen is. The recorded sound is slightly to blame for this, perhaps, as it is closely enough miked to pick up intake of breath, but I think the player must accept most responsibility. If one is going to make stresses within a phrase, it cannot be done at the expense of the flow of the music – sometimes you have to focus on the building, not the bricks. I don't mean to sound dismissive, and I admit that there are some lovely moments – the lowest regions of his low-pitch instrument are just beautiful, for example – and you should always sample before you buy anyway (which you can by visiting the company's website).

Attilio Motzo's "J. S. Bach Sei Solo a Violino senza Basso accompagnato" (*Inviolata* 0701a and 0701b, 56" / 75") are exemplary, no-fuss performances with equal amounts of technical dexterity and musicality. No matter how complex Bach's music gets (and, trust me, at times it is quite daunting what he expects the violinist to pull off), Motzo remains calm and focussed on conveying the composer's message. Although the faster movements are very impressive, he is perhaps at his best in those movements where there is a clear sense of melody and

accompaniment – light bow strokes and a delightful touch when spreading chords (as, of course, one has to) enhance the effect, sometimes with magical effect.

The final CD currently available is Joseph Agus's *Notturmi* op. 4, *Sonate in trio* op. 6, played by a slightly differently configuration of L'Apothéose (flautist Enrico Di Felice is the only player common to both discs, and here he is joined by two violins, viola, cello, five-stringed guitar and fortepiano – although these are essentially trio sonatas so no more than two of the first four players are ever involved at any one time!). The seven works on the disc are Op. 4, Nos. 2, 3 and 6 and Op. 6, Nos. 1, 4, 5 and 6. By cleverly varying the scoring (in accordance with the composer's instructions) the disc avoids becoming "samey", and it's particularly interesting to hear combinations like viola, cello and fortepiano, or string trio. Agus (1732-1800) was born in Cagliari (home of *Inviolata*, remember) but he turns up in London around 1750, and both collections were printed there in the 1770s. If you're looking for some smaller-scale chamber music from this period, Agus will not let you down – the melody instruments enjoy tuneful discourse, with equal time in the limelight. L'Apothéose once again give stylistic accounts which can only help publicize Agus's output. (*Inviolata* 0704, 74' 42")

Musica involata, Viale Marconi 141, 09131 Cagliari, Italy
www.inviolata.com

APOLLO'S FIRE

Brian Clark

When I was contacted recently by Jeannette Sorrell of Apollo's Fire (also known as the Cleveland Baroque Orchestra) to help with some music for an interesting concert they were planning around the contest for the Leipzig job left vacant on Kuhnau's death, I decided to take a look at their website. As well as lots of information about the group and their activities, I found a list of recordings, none of which I'd seen or heard of before, so I asked Jeannette if she would send some over for review. So here goes.

Since I am very interested in Telemann's music, I started with "Don Quichotte: Concertos and Suites by Telemann" (KOCH International Classics KIC CD 7576, 63' 33"). The works on the disc include the eponymous *Burlesque* (a suite in G), an *Ouverture Burlesque* (TWV 55: B8), a *Concerto Polonois* (TWV 43: G7), the ever-popular "flute and recorder" concerto (TWV 52: e1), and the boisterous *Grillen-Sinfonie* with its two prominent violone parts (TWV 50: 1). From the very opening, I was enthralled – there is a sort of communal ease about the band, a sense of humour and genuine enjoyment that one can really feel from the performances. This is not just going through the motions of playing Telemann's music, this is understanding that his is not the Bachian ideal; that

he is writing to entertain – what a radical idea! The rest of the recital is as enjoyable, and look out for Colombine in the Overture Burlesque – she’s enchanting.

Recorded in 2004, Mozart’s Symphony 35 in D, K385, and Symphony 41 in C, K551 (KOCH International Classics KIC CD 7574, 63’ 58”) are perhaps more challenging for the orchestra, but they rise to that challenge extremely well. The strings are lively and bright, the winds relishing the clarity that period performance brings – they can sing through the strings without extra effort – and the horns punctuate the whole thing wonderfully. Jeannette Sorrell shows that she’s no mere harpsichordist turned conductor: she’s got things to say, and they sound good to me. Just listen to her drive the Presto finale of the Haffner symphony to get an idea of what I mean. Not mentioned on the front cover is the Overture to “Don Giovanni” – if this is a taste of things to come, by which I mean if we were ever to be treated to the whole opera from these forces and some top-notch singers, I’d possibly pay the airfare to hear it live.

John Gibbons joins the group for Mozart: Piano Concertos in D minor K466 and A K488 (KOCH International Classics KIC CD 7575, 57’ 15”). These are possibly the best known of the piano concertos and for very good reason. The recordings were made a year apart, but there’s no variation in the high standards of performance. Gibbons plays the Beethoven cadenzas in the D minor concerto, and Mozart’s own in K488. Both of these works featured in an essay I wrote while at university, where I remember making a special mention of the flute / oboe / bassoon writing, and it is a real treat to hear them in these well-paced accounts, with a rich but never over-powering string foundation and, when required, those blustery horns – I just love them!

The third Mozart recording features the composer’s Requiem (KOCH International Classics KIC CD 7574, 63’ 58”), featuring a new completion of the *Lacrimosa* by the band’s principal cellist, René Schiffer (he also wrote a concerto à la tango in baroque style that is included on their Vivaldi disc that I reviewed a few years ago in EMR). The Requiem is a live recording from the orchestra’s 10th centenary Gala in 2002. The soloists are Elizabeth Weigle, Margaret Bragle, Rodrigo del Pozo and Michael McMurray, and they are joined by Apollo’s Singers (around 40 in number). The sound quality is excellent, and the performance thoroughly enjoyable – the choir (with mixed male and female altos, but no women graduating down to the tenor section...) have obviously worked hard at phrasing and shaping, but always produce a glorious sound. When I conducted the work in 1991, the newspaper reviewer commented that I appeared to be dancing my way through the *Libera eas* and *Quam olim Abrahæ* sections – well it sounds to me as if Ms. Sorrell was doing just the same...

The group’s most recent recording is Christmas Vespers: Music of Michael Praetorius (KOCH International Classics KIC CD 7673, 74’ 75”). This time the group is joined by Apollo’s Singers (fewer in number this time) and Apollo’s

Musettes (two boys, seven girls), The Oberlin Choristers and The Children’s Choirs of St Paul’s Church. Recreations are all very well on a historical level, but for the audience / congregation really to appreciate what is being attempted, they must be able to connect with the musicians, and Jeannette Sorrell addresses this problem with a stroke of simplicity – perform some of the music with English texts! While some might hold up their hands in horror, I would suggest they listen to a CD of Dutch theatre music and then tell me that they really appreciated it *on every level*. This recital has two parts, the first a “service” for Advent (although I think it unlikely that such an event would have included dances from *Terpsichore*), and the second Vespers for Christmas Day. The highlights for me (without a shadow of a doubt) are the fantastic *Wachet auf!* and the genius trick to leading from the Processional (*Nun komm der Heiden Heiland*) straight into Praetorius’s setting with a glorious flourish in the strings and three theorboes! It’s a magical moment.

The group is about to go on tour with a Vivaldi programme featuring Jennifer Larmore – if that ever comes out on CD, it’ll be well worth hearing.

Monteverdi La mia Turca



This is the title page of the volume from which two pages are reproduced overleaf. The *alfabeto* chord symbols are explained in most books on the early guitar. The song is also given with the bass in staff notation for keyboard, lute or theorbo; there should be no difficulty in filling out the chords. The volume has the following items by Monteverdi:

Ohime ch'io cado DEL SIG. CLAUDIO MONTEVERDE
La mia Turca *Del Medesimo*
Si dolce e'l tormento *Dell'Istesso* [in EMR 85]

Del Medemo.

L

A mia Turca che d'Amor non hà fè Torce il piè S'io le narro il

mio dolor Ond' al doppio mio martoro languen-

do moro.

2 Poi romita se ne stà
Enon vol
Che del Sol
Goda pur di sua beltà
Onde al doppio mio martoro
Languendo moro.

3 Per la cruda intenerir
Non mi val
Nel mio mal
Prego, Lacrime, ò Sospir
Onde al doppio mio martoro
Languendo moro.

4 Dime ride e dell' Arcier
Che nel fen
De velen
Tutti sparfe i miei pensier
Onde al doppio mio martoro
Languendo moro.

Rendi l'arco inuitto Amor Per pietà In lei fa

Che non fia tanto rigor Onde al doppio mio martoro Io più non

moro Io più non moro ii Io più non

moro.

REVIEWS OF BOOKS

Clifford Bartlett & Brian Clark

Theodor Dumitrescu *The Early Tudor Court and International Musical Relations* Ashgate, 2007. xix + 330pp, £60. ISBN 978 0 7546 5542 8

The presence of foreign musicians in London during the reign of Henry VIII is well known. Dumitrescu pushes the date back to Henry VII's reign, and enormously enriches the picture of the cultural relationship between the English and European courts. It is, to some extent, Hamlet without the Prince: 'a compositional/stylistic examination has not been attempted here' (p. 5), though there are hints that one might follow. It is evident that continental music was available: in Henry VIII's MS (to use the convenient title of *Musica Britannica* 18), it lies side by side with English music, with Henry himself dabbling in foreign styles. The CD of pioneering madrigals of Verdelot reviewed on p 28 is based on a source in England in the late 1520s. But how do they and the motets in the same MS relate to the flowering Marian antiphons that are a characteristic glory of English music in the first half (or more) of the 16th-century century? Did the Chapel Royal also sing Josquin? If they did, why such a lack of cross-fertilisation? I hope that Dumitrescu will explain.

But the book should be valued for its own sake. It has chapters on the cultural models available for the Henries, the international exchanges (such as the Field of the Cloth of Gold) and the way the kings built up their own musical establishments on continental ideals. Foreign influence is evident, not merely from biographical evidence of foreign musicians but by the import of MSS and the awareness by English musicians of foreign musical theorists. This is all impressively done. I'm not sure if the musical examples are anything but curiosities, especially the canon whose *ficta* demands modulations from G to G double flat. It strikes me as a dubious editorial principle that you don't need to show accidentals as editorial if you've printed a quasi-facsimile as well: in bars 34-5 of *Psallite felices*, the singer needs to know that neither the sharps nor the natural are in the source; and why is the editorial tie of the old-notation version not observed in the modern version? This is a wide-ranging study, correcting the isolationist view of English culture of the period and relating music to the international court culture. CB

GERMAN ANTHOLOGIES

Susan Lewis Hammond *Editing Music in Early Modern Germany* Ashgate, 2007. xviii + 265pp, £55.00. ISBN 978 0 7546 5573 2

When this arrived, I tried to think which editors might be featured. Winterfeld, Proske, the BG editors, Chrysander? But no, the author is using the term in the sense used by historians, which has infiltrated musicology through those

who don't care that in normal parlance in the arts, 'modern' means 'early 20th century' – illogical but universal. I don't know when 'modern' starts in German historiography – a glance at Google was very confusing. But assuming that 'modern' is opposed to medieval and encompasses renaissance, then I would expect the book to be about the role of the early German publishers: those who produced all those Tenorlied collections, or Georg Rhau, or even (in the mid-16th century) Johannes von Berg. But no: this volume starts after that, and is concerned with the anthologies of Italian madrigals, first in Italian then Germanified. The word 'editing' is used in the sense of 'making an anthology', not 'establishing the text'. At some stage during the production of the book, did not someone ask: why doesn't the title say what the book is about? [I don't think we can blame the author for a problem with her name: Amazon gives it as Lewis-Hammond – perhaps, to justify myself in case it has been corrected, I should say that I consulted Amazon on 25 Jan 2008.]

But on to the substance. The British among our readers will be aware of the significance of the Italian madrigal on English taste in the decades around 1600, but rather less informed of the situation in Germany. As in England, the fifth column of the Italianites was the publication of madrigal anthologies. English composers quickly naturalised the style and went their own way; German ones reacted slightly differently. There were more anthologies, and the effect of translation was deeper than in England since the language itself needed more fundamental change. As in the Villancico volume reviewed below, more attention is paid to the words than the music, which wasn't changed in the way the words were, especially when a suitable form of German verse had to be found for found that would fit the music. I would like to have been told how accurately the editors reproduced the music of their sources. It's an interesting book, in a slightly train-spotting way. The first chapter, 'The Anthology and the Birth of the Professional Music Editor' is worth reading even if you fear that the rest might be a bit esoteric. The third word of the main text on p. 96 should be *never*, not *ever*. CB

VILLANCICO

Devotional Music in the Iberian World, 1450-1800: The Villancico and Related Genres Edited by Tess Knighton, Álvaro Torrente. Ashgate, 2007. xvii + 491pp, £70.00 ISBN 978 0 7546 5841 2

The usual way of discovery of an unknown repertoire is that first it is edited, then scholars study how it should be performed and analyse it, and finally it is placed in its historical, social and intellectual context (I am resisting 'contextualised' for as long as I can!) Performance tends to come with the second or third stage. Here things seem to

be topsy turvey. There's an assumption in this volume that it is an unknown field. It is, however, quite popular among early-music performers and listeners, with a variety of CDs (the third Latin-American offering from Ex Cathedra arrived too late for review in this issue). Several Early Music Fora have had courses for non-specialists to sing and play the repertoire, and the attraction of the music and the intellectual ingenuity of the poetry in European Hispanic music has been appreciated for some time. The magnificent villancicos by Cererols were published in 1932 (2nd edition 1983) and a few were in circulation in the 1970s – *Serafín* in particular has become quite well-known; but Cererols doesn't appear in the index of this book. Despite the thorough bibliography, it is difficult to discover from it how to find the music; and with the easier accessibility of recordings (mostly with complete texts and translations) than scores, the absence of a discography is old-fashioned.

Most of our readers probably relate to music more than the words, however much they expect the music to owe its shape to literary forms and its rhythms to the words themselves. But one does not need to know many villancicos to realise that the balance in them is very different. Even if many refrains may be heard chiefly as music, the texts of the verses are clearly audible and full of verbal ingenuity, whether learned or vulgar. The words are prominent in the discussions in this volume: quotations of texts far outweigh musical examples. There is far too much here to make even a brief attempt to engage with the individual contributions of the 15 authors. The sheer quantity of villancicos is amazing. Many cathedrals had new cycles each year, with between 30 and 50 pieces, often lengthy: most were sung at Christmas (in some places nine at a single matins), with a few at Corpus Christi and the Assumption. There's a lengthy chapter on how they fitted the liturgy at Salamanca Cathedral; a friend with more liturgical experience than me found it disappointing. What might seem to be the inclusiveness of the way that all races find their way to the manger in so many poems is argued away as the opposite. This is primarily a book for scholars (and a valuable one); the rest of us will pick up what we can from CD booklets. CB

PACHELBEL CATALOGUED

Jean M. Perrault *The Thematic Catalogue of the Musical Works of Johann Pachelbel*, Edited by Donna K. Fitch, foreword by Christoph Wolff The Scarecrow Press, 2004. ISBN 0-8108-4970-4 xiv+415. £50.

Jean (pronounced "jeen", according to the editor, his step-daughter) Perrault was a librarian and a meticulous cataloguer. His sudden death in 2001 meant that his work on Pachelbel might have been lost, so we should be grateful that the time and effort has been found to present this weighty volume and all its valuable information.

After a general introduction, there are seven pages explaining the entries in the List of Works, then comes that list itself (of which I'll write more below). These are followed by 'An Essay on Authorities', which is rather a

philosophical musing on what information we ought (or perhaps ought not) to take from manuscript sources. Lists of the manuscripts and the published sources come next, then no fewer than seven appendices – an essay on the Magnificat-Fugues and Pachelbel's (mis)understanding of modal theory and indices of Variant work titles, form, titles, Besetzungen, Movement and section titles, Variant manuscript codes/names, as well as Dates on source material and a list of Works of questioned ascription – and finally an annotated bibliography, an Addendum of works discovered since the lists were compiled and notes about the author and the editor.

Perrault's catalogue is organised alphabetically, regardless of form, and each piece is allocated a number, running from 1 (a chorale-prelude *Ach Gott, vom Himmel sieh darein*) to 516 (the apparently mostly lost *Zwillingspartita* for two violins). Below incipits (which are sometimes quite astonishing in their complexity – in one of the Magnificats, 17 voices are shown on three systems!) come references to manuscripts and printed versions (which can include English translations of original texts, and arrangements of the famed Canon with editorial viola parts) and any notes that Perrault had made about the works. He further subdivides works by section; this is understandable in the case of suites, where dances quite sensibly have their own codes, or chorale-partitas where each variation is described in the catalogue, but I'm a little more sceptical of its use when vocal works are dissected. The through-numbering also creates problems: what does one do if a new source is identified, for example? The answer is that it slots into its correct alphabetical place and adds *bis* to the previous number. (Would it become *bis.bis* or *tris* if more than one Suite in G were to turn up?) Talking of suites, entry 453 is a Suite for violin, two violas and "k[eyboard] i[nstrument] (b.c.?)" with the sequence Sonata allegro, Allemande, Trezza, Aria presto, Courante, Sarabande and Gigue, which has an additional note: 'may be identical to 449 [the F sharp minor suite]... whose movement titles match those of the present work'. This is caution of attribution taken a little too far, in my opinion.

Exhaustive as the lists may have been when they were compiled, and despite the great detail included in the volume (some of which I really struggle to appreciate, I confess), I imagine its value lies in the bibliographical information that other librarians will find exceedingly useful and in providing the incipits that might help researchers to identify other sources for Pachelbel's works. Sadly, the lists of publications were always doomed to be out of date (I have published quite a lot of music by Pachelbel in my time), and one hopes that some of the lost works will be re-discovered. Indeed, I can add two pieces to the listings (from the Großfahner/Eschenbergen collection, currently in Weimar):

6 bis Ach Herr, wie ist meiner Feinde so viel
(Bass solo, violin and continuo) 346/Pao1

358 bis Mein Freund ist die rechte Speis
(Soprano solo, violin scordatura [CGCF], and continuo) 347/Pao2

I'm sure that my copy of Perrault's listing will be well used, and often annotated. He may be well known among organists (and fans of the ubiquitous Canon, of course), but his church music remains sorely neglected – having all this information at my finger tips will inspire me to produce more editions in the hope that it will become more popular! Where many baroque composers lost the Renaissance art of seemingly effortless voice-leading, Pachelbel (like Erlebach) has that ability to write counterpoint in such a tuneful way that everyone can enjoy gracious lines without angularity; it's a real pleasure to sing!

BC

BACH-REZEPTION

"Zu gross, zu unerreichbar": Bach-Rezeption im Zeitalter Mendelssohns und Schumanns herausgegeben von Anselm Hartinger, Christoph Wolff und Peter Wollny
Breitkopf & Härtel, 2007 487pp, €32.00 ISBN 978 3 7651 0386 5

This volume of essays came about at the instigation of the Bach-Archiv, the Mendelssohn-Haus and the Schumann-Haus in Leipzig with the financial backing of several government agencies. I was struck at the opening by the essential truth of Carl Dahlhaus's quoted statement that a book about 18th-century music might be written without paying much attention to Bach, but one about composers in the next century would have to devote considerable space to his enormous influence.

There are four distinct sections:

Music, aesthetics and historical reflections.

Bach and Tradition in the compositional activities of Mendelssohn, Schumann and their contemporaries.

Aspects of performance practice.

The benefits of source study.

Although the first two are interesting in the wide variety of information they provide about aspects of 19th-century life and Bach's influences (and also that of C. P. E. Bach, which seems to have been understated thus far), the sections on performance practice and sources are more likely to be of interest to our readership, even if HIP performances of Romanticized Bach are still few and far between. (I requested a review copy of Hermann Max's recent *Schumann / Bach St. John Passion* from cpo, but it never arrived.) Peter Ward Jones discusses the differences between the continuo and organ parts for an 1841 St Matthew Passion performance, while Andreas Glöckner is typically revelatory in his article on Zelter at the Sing-Akademie in Berlin. Time and again, we learn how much of an influence Bach had on Fanny Mendelssohn – she could think of nothing closer to God than playing the opening of BWV 106 on the piano, and it was she who provided the title to the volume, writing after the first of her brother's 'Historical concerts' at the Leipzig Gewandhaus: the full quotation is 'Bach stands there too great, too untouchable'. I especially enjoyed the anecdote related in Helmut Loos' survey of Bach in 19th-century Riga. Heinrich Dorn (who in Leipzig had taught Schumann counterpoint) became the church music director in Riga in

1832. The next year he became city cantor and, from then on, was obliged to arrange musical celebrations for Christmas Day, Good Friday and Easter Sunday. Good Friday was his first opportunity and he opted to include six numbers from the (hitherto unknown) St Matthew Passion. Called to the Oberpastor's office the next day, Dorn expected to be congratulated on the success of the event but instead the cleric, 'red with anger, shaking the wordbook at me, asked if I were not ashamed to produce such a "thing" in a service, if I thought Riga was a century behind the times, and if I'd ever heard such German spoken in current society!' So much for Bach-Rezeption!

I'm not sure that this is a book for Bach scholars, but I would consider it compulsory for anyone interested in 19th-century music in general, and Mendelssohn and Schumann in particular.

BC

To be reviewed in the next issue

Cappelle musicali fra corte, stato e chiesa nell'Italia del Rinascimento: Atti del Convegno internazionale, Camaiore, 21-23 ottobre 2005 a cura di Franco Piperno, Gabriella Biagi Ravenni e Andrew Chegai (*Historiae Musicae Cultores*, 108). Florence: Olschki, 2007. ix + 439pp, £ €47.00. ISBN 978 88 222 5649 2

Cinco Siglos de Música de Tecla Española... Five Centuries of Spanish Keyboard Music: Proceedings of FIMTE Symposia 2002-2004 Edited by Luisa Morales LEAL, 2007. lii + 407pp. ISBN 978 84 611 8235

Warren and Ursula Kirkendale *Music and Meaning: Studie in Music History and the Neighbouring Disciplines* (*Historiae Musicae Cultores*, 113) xi + 643pp, €66.00 ISBN 978 88 222 5659 1

Ursula Kirkendale *Antonio Caldara: Life and Venetian Roman Oratorios* (*Historiae Musicae Cultores*, 114) 552pp, €62.00 ISBN 978 88 222 5714 7

The Viola da Gamba Society Index of Manuscripts Containing Consort Music, Compiled by Andrew Ashbee, Robert Thompson and Jonathan Wainwright. Vol. 2 Ashgate, 2008 xv + 422pp, £60.00 ISBN 978 0 754 63866 5

A. C. N. Mackenzie of Ord *The Temperament of Keyboard Music: Its Character; its Musicality; and its History* The author, 2007. xiv + 248pp + 2 CDs, £75.00 ISBN 978 0 9556030 0 6

Derek Carew *The Mechanical Music: The Piano, Pianism and Piano Music, c. 1760-1850* Ashgate, 2007. xxi + 595pp, 51pl, £55.00. ISBN 978 0 85967 969 5

Derek Carew *The Companion to the Mechanical Music...* Ashgate, 2007. ix + 328pp, £55.00. ISBN 978 0 7546 6311 9

Music to be reviewed includes the facsimile of *The Winchester Troper* (EECM 50) and D'India's *Villanelle*, 1608 & 1612

LUDWIG SENNFL or COSMAS ALDER

We printed in the last issue one of the pieces studied at the Sennfl weekend that was described so enthusiastically by Kathleen Berg. Its inclusion was rather an afterthought and I did not look at it very closely. Had I bothered to list the sources or read it through, I would have started asking questions. Instead, these questions were asked by our Christmas guest, Hugh Keyte. The problem is that there are rather a lot of, to be polite, infelicities in the writing. Here is Hugh's list of the most obvious:

Bar 5: parallel 5ths between S I & II.
 Bars 6-7: four parallel 8ves between S II & T I.
 Bars 21 - 2: four unisons between S I & II.
 Bars 24, 25: anomalous text in S II.
 Bar 28: (swift) parallel 5ths between S II and B.
 Bars 33, 37: parallel 5ths between S II and T I, unless the Tenor Gs are to be sharpened: in which case, what about the comparable Gs in the identical bars 34 and 38 (T II and S I), though the former would seem to be ruled out by the minim G in S II.
 Bars 35, 39: S I & II treading on each other's toes.
 Bar 40: parallel 5ths between S I and T I.

It is apparent that S II is involved in all these instances except the last, which can be corrected to match bar 36 (as is done in the edition I found on-line). Hugh guessed that this S II is probably a later addition: even if there had been no infelicities, the part isn't really necessary and a configuration of C1C1C4C4F4 is a bit unusual. The most common scoring of the Tenorlied is in four parts, and a check in the standard bibliography/catalogue of the form (*Das Tenorlied* by Norbert Böcker-Heil, Harald Heckmann & Ilse Kindermann, Bärenreiter, 1979) confirms that S 2 is not integral to the piece; indeed, none of the sources there has the fifth part. Of the six sources listed, three are ascribed to Sennfl (or to be precise, to Senffel, Senfel & Senfl) and two are anonymous. In one MS (Basel F. x 5-9, from around 1540) it is ascribed to Cosmas Alder. The five-voice version is ascribed to Senfl (information from *Collected Works* vol. 6, note to No. 20); the editor does not give the exact spelling of the composer's name in the source, Breslau [Wrocław] Ms. Mus. 10). The *Collected Works* surprisingly prints this five-voice version without even relegating the extra voice to small print.

One advantage of the removal of S II is that further possibilities of *musica ficta* are opened up, e.g. the Gs between two As in bars 33-34 & 37-38. This spurious part should be ignored for performance. But how come it was written? The infelicities would have been obvious (especially the octaves in bars 6-7) if the composer had been filling a blank stave in a score. But all the sources are in parts, and I wonder whether, instead of first writing the music out in score with a blank stave – for us the obvious way of going about the task – the composer of the fifth part was working direct from part-books. If so, the part, while not brilliant, at least reveals a skill that modern

students of harmony and counterpoint are not taught to exercise. It would be interesting to see if there were similar additional parts in other pieces in the same MS.

Although surviving in Tenorlied sources, the piece is hardly a typical example of that repertoire: the tenor doesn't carry a simple tune, and the style is more imitative. It would be convenient if the four-voice version were ascribed to Sennfl, the five-part one to Alder. But it seems that Cosmas Alder composed it for a religious play in 1538. I haven't been able to trace this information to its source, but there is a page on the work in the English version of Friedrich Blume's *Geschichte der evangelischen Kirchenmusik*, Bärenreiter 1964, translated and expanded as *Protestant Church Music: a History*, Norton/Gollancz 1974, pp. 90-91.

The reason why this has become one of Sennfl's best-known pieces is probably because it is included in Davison and Apel's *Historical Anthology of Music* (Harvard UP, 1946), an astonishing publication for its time, even if a few of the items there are now curiosities. CB

LISTENING TO SPEM

I caught a half-hour programme on Radio 4 today (29th Jan) while having a lunch break from the final checking of this issue. I missed the opening announcement, but was immediately drawn to the opening of *Spem in alium*. It started historically – very disappointing, full of errors (the first piece for 40 parts! What about Striggio?) and dubious assumptions (composed for a church: what about Arundel House?) But the way the talk ran above a performance which periodically came to the fore worked well. What interested me particularly was the three examples that were produced of the effect the music had on non-specialists. A lawyer spending long days in an appeal for a man on death row in Alabama prepared each night for the next day's proceedings with *Spem* playing in the background, then listened to it more fully to wind down for bed. A memorable performance at Ted Hughes's memorial service was recalled. And most intriguingly, a visitor to an art event who came across a room with 40 loudspeakers, each playing one voice part. The background performance changed to something much more vigorous (was it the actual sound-track of the event?) and I longed to be able to experience the music thus. The recent performance that has moved me most (I've mentioned it before) was at the EEMF/TVEMF workshop with Philip Thorby at Waltham Abbey a couple of years ago, in which I decided not to take my normal place at the organ but just wandered round, feeling the music as a whole but getting continually different aural perspectives of it (and feeling both that I was overhearing something outside me yet at the same time that it was being sung for me). I find recordings of it disappointing, but the 40-speaker one sounds really exciting. Does it still exist somewhere? CB

DUFAY DISCS

D. James Ross

Du fay *Missa Se la face ay pale* Diabolus in musica, Antoine Guerber 67' 05"
Alpha 908 (rec 2003) (with catalogue)

Du Fay *Mille Bonjours!* Diabolus in musica, Antoine Guerber 75' 57"
Alpha 116

Dufay *Music for St Anthony of Padua* The Binchois Consort, Andrew Kirkman 59' 02"
Hyperion Helios CDH55271 (rec 1996) ££

It is a mark of the continuing interest in early polyphony and the stalwart work done by small independent labels that these three fine recordings of music by Guillaume Dufay have appeared more or less at the same time. You will have noticed from the titles that the healthy debate about Dufay's 'surname' remains unresolved – in fact in the paperwork associated with Alpha 908 the Du Fay of the title changes to Dufay on the back and inside. But enough of angels on the head of a pin! In this performance of the first of Dufay's 'mature' masses, the four-part setting based on his own secular song *Se la face ay pale* and probably dating from the early 1450s, his complete musical assurance is unmistakable, and the mass movements are sung with corresponding authority by Diabolus in Musica. The decision to place Dufay's setting of the Ordinary in at least a partial liturgical setting is an inspired one, with the polyphonic Propers for Trinity Sunday, taken from Trento MS 88 and probably also by Dufay, and the plainchant items providing us with a complementary context which is both informative and musically enlightening. It is worth remembering that church composers would never have sanctioned the cavalier way in which most performers nowadays cherry-pick the polyphonic Ordinaries of Mass settings while generally ignoring the simpler Proper settings and chant.

The present recording recalls something of a golden age when it looked as if liturgical contexts might become the norm, but which ultimately collapsed in the face of pragmatism – two masses per CD were undoubtedly easier to market than one! The varied styles of chant performance employed here by Diabolus in Musica, from the rather lugubrious to the positively animated, dovetail nicely with the simple faburden settings of the Propers and the more complex polyphony of the Ordinary itself. Metaphors of jewels in their proper settings or stained glass framed by sober stonework spring to mind, and as this recording appears as part of a project to connect music with the visual arts, such imagery might just be relevant here.

Alpha 116 finds three versatile singers from Diabolus in Musica joined by a soprano and a small instrumental

consort to explore Dufay's songs. Grouping their selection according to theme and alternating ensemble sections with instrumental interludes, the group provides us with an enjoyable and informative guided tour of this delicate and beautifully crafted repertoire. Over the years I have come to realise that the answer to this exquisite music with its transparent textures and elegant texts is lightness of touch. This of course leaves performers very exposed, but fortunately here we have singers and players of the first order whose articulation, intonation and phrasing are all impeccable. If I occasionally found myself looking for just a little more passion from the voices, these proved to be consistently satisfying readings. A performance of the iconic song *Se la face ay pale* on the clavictherium was a particular delight.

The bargain price re-issue on Helios of a 1996 recording of Dufay's Mass for St Anthony of Padua, both Propers and Ordinary, as well as a motet praising the saint, recalls the exciting detective story related in the programme notes which allowed David Fallows to trace this music, once thought to be lost. The reason for Dufay's particular devotion to St Anthony of Padua remains a mystery, as does the curiously low level of musical interrelationship between the movements of both Propers and Ordinary. The former is perhaps unsurprising given the diversity of chants underlying the polyphony, but by the 1440s when the Ordinary was probably set, one might have anticipated a much greater degree of homogeneity between its movements. I recalled the singing of The Binchois Consort on this recording as being particularly admirable, and indeed the intervening decade has done little to change that opinion, while Andrew Kirkman's direction is dynamic and thoroughly idiomatic. Again, Trento MS 88 proves an indispensable source for Propers, most probably set by Dufay. Having myself used the same source in a liturgical reconstruction of a Mass for St Michael with the polyphonic Propers of the *Missa de Angelis* in conjunction with a polyphonic Ordinary by Robert Carver, himself an admirer of Dufay, I hope that the fashion of complementing Ordinaries with relevant Propers may provide us with some more informative liturgically-informed presentations in the future. The Hyperion recording from 1996, when such reconstructions were still common, and the new Alpha recording both make a powerful case for the many advantages of presenting religious music in an authentic liturgical context.

A reader was amused to see a reference to a judge named Kyrie James being appointed to the Parole Board. Is an applicant favoured if he brings a choir to sing the Kyrie eleison of Dufay's *Missa S. Jacobi*?

CD REVIEWS

CHANT

Time after Christmas: Gregorian Chant CD26

Easter: Gregorian Chant CD12

Pentecost: Gregorian Chant CD493

Issued by the Abbaye Saint-Joseph, Flavigny-sur Ozerain (available from editions@clairval.com)

These three recordings are part of a series produced by the monks of the Abbaye Saint-Joseph de Clairval, Flavigny-sur-Ozerain in Burgundy, as an expression of the central position the liturgy occupies in their lives and as a means of supporting the community. It is a little disconcerting for a reviewer to find no CD booklet and only sparse information on the liner. A search on the internet reveals an illustrated website and we learn that the present community of around fifty members was established in the 1970s on the site of a Benedictine foundation. Following the Rule of Saint Benedict, 'Ora et labora', they set up workshops for publishing, painting icons and sculpting in stone. There is in the same village a seminary of the Society of Saint Pius X, a traditionalist branch of the Roman Catholic Church deemed schismatic for its recalcitrant celebration of the Mass in Latin rather than the vernacular.

What we hear in these recordings is the monks proceeding through their worship in light tenor voices, pronouncing the Latin gently without emphasis, and moving in a calm sequence, punctuated only by the knocks and creakings of a live performance. *Time after Christmas*, arranged in two continuous tracks, opens sonorously with a fine organ setting of 'A solis ortus' by Jean Titelouze (1562/3 – 1633), considered the founder of the French organ school. Although one can understand self-effacing anonymity on the part of monks, the organist, whether guest or monk, certainly deserves to be named. In *Easter* the acoustics of the vaulted church lend themselves, in a toccata by Eugène Gigout (1844 – 1925), to exceptional clarity of multilayered sound, from intricate fluting to a barrel-organ effect. 'Exsultet' chanted before the paschal candle by a soloist with calm control, prolonging notes at the end of each sequence of words, gives the impression of rippling air blowing the flame. Elsewhere the singing is more congregational, though suitably restrained until the joyfully tuneful latter part of the second long track. In *Pentecost* the monastic

choir and schola proceed through the ritual in verbal unity, the organ's only function being a necessary assistance to tuning.

In *EMR* we look for authenticity and, as there was a break in continuity with the French Revolution, a brief but detailed note about the preservation and revival of Gregorian Chant at Flavigny might have been appreciated by musicians, had there been a scholarly booklet. However, if we are to believe reports in the media, Pope Benedict would like Gregorian chant to be more widely used, and the Flavigny recordings may be in greater demand among Roman Catholics.

Diana Maynard

MIEVEAL

Faventina: The liturgical music of Codex Faenza 117 (1380-1420) Mala Punica, Pedro Memelsdorff 64' 24"

Ambrosie AM 105

One normally thinks of the Faenza Codex as the earliest extensive source of keyboard music (though I remember a lecture at which Andrew Lawrence-King demonstrated its efficacy on the harp). This recording proposes a more varied use of some of the pieces for Mass and Vespers. Mala Punica start without preconceptions, working from the MS itself (which reveals far more information than can be gleaned from the facsimile). Some of it sounds very strange – which is no bad thing. Even the chant is a shock. No point in description: this deserves to be widely heard. Evaluation can follow later. The booklet is informative and almost persuasive, though what sort of English does the translator speak if *praxis* represents French *usage*. I'm reminded, not in detail but in revolutionary effect, of my first hearing of Esther Lamandier in trecento secular music nearly thirty years ago. CB

15th CENTURY

Dufay three CDs reviewed on p. 26

Josquin Desprez *Missa D'ung aultre amer, Motets & Chansons* Alamire, Andrew Lawrence-King harp, David Skinner dir Obsidian CD701 68' 27"

Memelsdorf's *Faenza Codex* may be the most interesting disc this issue, but this is

most enjoyable. It is mostly early Josquin, but it is hardly immature, and if you don't know his music and wish to hide your shame, this is a good place to start. The opening performance of Ockeghem's title-song (Clare Wilkinson with harp) has a beauty which will lead you on to the Mass and other delights. The other two Obsidian/Skinner discs reviewed this month are good, but this is outstanding. David Skinner's booklet note (a bit more legible than most white on black) is excellent. CB

16th CENTURY

Lambert de Sayve *Sacred music* Oltremontano, Capilla Flamenca, Wim Becu Et cetera KTC 4022

Missa Dominus regnavit a16 + motets; Gabrieli: Canzon primi toni a10; Priuli Canzone & sonata

On hearing this recording my first thought is that Lambert de Sayve, a Flemish composer at the court of Maximilian II, should be heard much more, rubbing shoulders as he did with the better known Christophe Strauss and Jacob Handl, and with whose music his compares rather well. The pieces are very well architected, rather like a mixture of Andrea and Giovanni Gabrieli. This characteristic is brought out extremely well, suiting as it does the natural style of the groups' director Wim Becu; the well-known bass sackbut. Perhaps under the same influence, the recorded sound is very naturalistic: centre-heavy, without the high (cornett, violin) parts being artificially boosted as is so often the case. We can really relish the shaping and impeccable tuning of the sackbut ensemble. Quite remarkable! The voices are very well matched and integrated, including as they do the cornett-voiced Katelijn van Laethem, well known from, among others, the Huelgas Ensemble recordings. The disc – mainly psalms, motets and a mass – is dotted with the more suave and modern-sounding pieces by Priuli completing a beautifully balanced programme performed to perfection. Steven Cassidy

Parsons *First Great Service, Responds for the Dead* Voces Cantabiles, Barnaby Smith Naxos 8.570451 £ 69' 44" + *Ave Maria, Magnificat*

If you only know Parsons' *Ave Maria*, you will be in for a bit of a shock, since much of the music is melismatic and looks back to

the composer's youth. Musically, it should be a pleasing shock, but it has elements of pain too, since Barnaby Smith still adheres to the minor-third-up theory of English church music. The reconstruction of the missing top part of the Magnificat is done on the assumption that it was in G2 clef for treble, which comes out rather shrill when transposed. The English service sounds more comfortable, and the Responds for the Dead have means on top. The singing does the music justice: Parsons is more than a one-work composer, and this would definitely be worth buying even if it were not in the bottom price range. CB

Verdelot *Madrigals for a Tudor King*
Alamire, David Skinner 66' 58"
Obsidian CD703

If you hadn't associated Verdelot with the English court, don't worry: he didn't come here himself, but the MS published by Colin Slim as *A Gift of Madrigals and Motets* (the Newberry Partbooks) was probably a gift from the city of Florence to Henry VIII. It found its way from him to Francis Tregian (hence the presence of two of its madrigals in Egerton 3665), and is next heard of in the library of W. H. Cummings. The London dealer Quaritz acquired four of the partbooks in May 1917 for £32.10s,* but did not manage to sell them until 1935, since when they have been in Chicago; the missing Altus book emerged in 1978. The stylistic contrast with what was produced in England at the time (and, indeed, much later, as the Parsons disc testifies) makes clear that Florence in the 1520s was several decades ahead of England (or was it: see p. 22). The disc nicely varies between vocal ensemble and voice and lute (an explicit alternative thanks to Willaert's example) and lute solo (Lynda Sayce). The musical connection with England is a bit remote: rather enjoy it as a pleasing anthology of the pioneering Italian madrigalist. My only criticism is that the vocal ensemble sounds a bit too much like a small choir, perhaps a matter of recording rather than vocal over-projection? CB

*Price from a c. 1927 Quaritz stock list that I meant to throw away long ago but have at last used.

Zarlino *Canticum canticorum Salamonis*,
1549 Ensemble Plus Ultra, Michael Noone
Glossa GCD 921406 78' 56"
Pater noster... Ave Maria, Veni Sancte Spiritus

There are some lovely moments here, such as the soprano and tenor imitating one another, and the overlapping phrases in *Veni sancte spiritus*. The singing through-

out is controlled and beautiful, with well-matched voices; the women's voices are particularly lovely. The most impressive feature of the performance is the legato singing, which makes a delightful feature of the passing notes in the various parts.

The music is mostly unremarkable; with little harmonic variety or rhythmic innovation, this CD runs the risk of appearing to be 'Renaissance music by the yard'; the occasional triple-time sections are very tasteful, but do not contribute much variety to the overall effect. These are motets for liturgical use, but there is not enough to sustain the listener's interest for a whole recording. One problem is that the sound is rather marshmallowy, and though the singers are obviously trying to get the words over, they are fighting a losing battle against the church acoustic – which is obviously gorgeous to sing in. This is a pity, as one of the points of recording this repertoire is that Zarlino chose a controversial translation of the Song of Songs for his motets, setting a long text in each one, with the ambition of setting the entire book to music – but the words are just not clear enough.

This is the first recording of these recently-discovered motets by Zarlino (a pupil of Willaert and *maestro di cappella* at St Mark's, Venice) and represents an impressive scholarly achievement. The motets are well worth hearing, and I would be glad to see them published for general use, but the programming would need care. Selene Mills

The Domestication of the Animal World and other domestic music from the 16th and 17th century. Brisk Recorder Quartet
Amsterdam 62' 25"

Globe GLO 5228 Disc 1. CD; disc 2 DVD
Campion: music from The Lords' Masque +
Ashton, Bevin, Brade, Byrd, Tye

The Domestication of the Animal World is taken from Thomas Campion's *The Lords' Masque* performed in 1613 for the marriage of Princess Elizabeth, the daughter of James I, and Frederic Count Palatine. Dances for the animals enchanted and tamed by Orpheus's playing alternate with harp improvisations. Some of the dances are attractive arrangements of popular tunes of the time, including *The Nightingale's Response*, a consort version of the song made well-known by Van Eyck's *English Nightingale* variations, and *The Camel's Dance*, also known as *Hollis berrie*. The CD starts with a suite of dances assembled from the music of

William Brade, played with Brisk's usual attention to intonation, ensemble and clarity, with stylishly ornamented repeats. Consort music by English composers of the late 16th and early 17th centuries played on recorders, viols, or a mixture of both, makes up the rest of the programme. There are two pieces based on *In nomine* and two versions of *Browning*, better known as *The leaves be green*, by Bevin and Byrd, as well as a lovely *Fantasia a 6* by Byrd. Along with the CD of the whole programme you get a bonus DVD of the Masque music alone, with an animated film in a variety of media made by four students from the Art, Media and Technology Department of the Utrecht School of the Arts. Victoria Helby

Du fond de ma Pensée: Vocal Music of the French Reformation Chant 1450 61' 32"
Christophorus CHR 77297

Music by Appenzeller, Bourgeois, Caulery, de l'Estocart, Du Caurroy, Goudimel, Lassus, Le Jeune, le Roy, Morlaye, Waelrant

Calvinists may have favoured monophonic psalms in church, but musical adherents to the faith often cultivated more elaborate music at home, and this fine recording presents some of the second generation of psalm settings that broke away from the Geneva Psalter tunes to free polyphony. The four singers (from Japan, Italy, Switzerland and Latvia) sing with clarity and decorum but have a hard job in a series of such short pieces. If one excludes Appenzeller's ten-minute *Du fond de ma pensée*, we have 30 pieces lasting on average about 1'40". That is far too short for them to have much presence; surely the singers for whom they were intended knew the Geneva Psalter as well as Methodists know (or at least used to know) all the verses of a large numbers of hymns: the presence of only one underlaid verse doesn't mean that they were not treated as stanzaic. Despite the variety of the occasional song with lute, the relentless brevity leads to monotony. A pity, since the music deserves hearing; an affordable anthology of the scores would also be worth having. CB

Elizium: Elizabethan Ballads, Ayres & Dances Pantagruel (Hannah Morrison voice, Dominik Schneider fl, gittern, voice, Mark Wheeler plucker) 74' 23"
Totentanz Records TOT23046

I would enjoy this as a live show: a well-assembled programme of ballads and similar pieces across the popular/art-music divide (if there really is a divide at this period) performed with verve and clarity.

A few aspects worry me more on disc than they might in a concert hall. The settings seem a bit high for the voice – which makes Hannah Morrison's success in making the words audible particularly commendable, but pushes her sound perhaps a bit too far towards the art-music world. Also, I found myself longing to hear a fiddle occasionally rather than recorder. I like the way the booklet lets the music speak for itself, but prints full texts (with German translations) in a period font which is perhaps a substitute for the period costumes in which the group performs. *CB*

Madame d'amours: Music for Renaissance Flute-consort The Attaignant Consort (Kate Clark *dir/fl* Frédérique Chauvet, Marion Moonen, Marcello Gatti *fl*) + Matthieu Langlois *fl*, Marta Graziolino *harp*, Nigel North *lute* 79' 59"

Ramée 0706

Music by Clemens, Dowland, Ferrabosco, Gombert, Henry VIII, Hofhaimer, Isaac, Janequin, Josquin, Obrecht, Paladin, Rore, Schlick, Sermisy etc.

The list of tracks on this generously long CD reads rather like the 16th-century top thirty, but is none the worse for that. Here we have music for the renaissance flute consort, interspersed with flute and harp solos. There are simple three and four-part consorts, some with added lute or harp, consorts with divisions, and solos with divisions by contemporary composers – Rognoni, Bassano, Ortiz and Van Eyck. Most of the music is originally vocal, a lot of it from the French chanson repertoire, and the poetry of the songs is supplied so that we can hear how the music conveys the spirit of the words in the same way that its sixteenth-century audience would have done. The excellent notes for this CD are some of the most useful and comprehensive I have seen. The Attaignant Consort make a lovely sound, and this is a recording which I am happy to recommend.

Victoria Helby

La Pellegrina: Intermedii 1589 Capriccio Stravagante Renaissance Orchestra, Collegium Vocale Gent, Skip Sempé 69' 10"
Paradizo PA0004 *see p. 6*

Renaissance Pop Songs Ensemble für frühe Musik Augsburg 62' 51" (rec 1989)
Christophorus CHE 0130-2 £

I found this surprisingly attractive: no need to sound superior about it. For a start, the repertoire is by no means as hackneyed as one might expect from the title and many

of the vocal pieces were unfamiliar. The common problem with small groups that there are not enough singers to manage a four-voice piece without instruments does not apply here, since the five performers are effectively versatile. Janequin's *Il estoit une fillette* is sung delightfully. A bit more help with the texts than a two-line summary is needed to get the fun out of *Von üppiklichen dingen*, though the singer seems to be enjoying himself. Well worth reissuing. *CB*

17th CENTURY

Biber Mensa sonora The Purcell Quartet Chandos Chaconne CHAN 0748 59' 13"
Vln Sonata in A

I have heard all but one of the Purcell Quartet's Biber recordings (for some unknown reason, we seem to have missed the *Fidicinium sacro-profanum* set) and this latest instalment maintains the high levels of its precedents. The publication consists of six suites, possibly intended as background music for banquets and similar court/church occasions. Peter Holman's booklet note argues for a line-up of violin, two violas and continuo, while the performers opt for the more modern standard quartet. After the first three suites, Catherine Mackintosh takes a solo turn in the composer's A major violin sonata that survives only in a manuscript at Kromeriz. I'm not entirely sure why the booklet note bothers to list all 12 of the variations, since they are not on separate tracks and only four of them have tempo markings – most of which are mentioned in Peter's note. I must confess that I was not particularly taken with the piece. Be that as it may, this is the best recording of *Mensa Sonora* I've heard and I heartily recommend its uncomplicated wares to our readership. *BC*

Buxtehude Vocal Music – 2 Johan Reuter B, Copenhagen Royal Chapel Choir, The Dufay Collective, Ebbe Munk 51' 02"
(rec 2000)
Naxos 8.570494 £
BuxWV 4, 13, 15, 31, Anh. 1

Buxtehude continues to enjoy widespread coverage, and it is wonderful to hear yet more little-known vocal music. Seeing the name 'Dufay Collective', I was a bit worried that Buxtehude wouldn't work on rebecs, etc., but this is their baroque incarnation! The bass soloist Johan Reuter brings a certain gravitas to his verses, although it seems a little odd to have a

group of boys respond, even if they do produce a lovely sound. The string players lend the music greater shape and bring even seemingly simple chorales to real rhythmic life in a way that the choir does not, so there's a slight lack of real engagement. *BC*

Cazzati Absalone ed altre cantata Ensemble Céladon, Paulin Bündgen *A/dir* 70' 29"
Arion ARN68753

This CD had me umming and ahing quite a lot. Initially I was not keen: the cantatas seemed a little uninspired and uninspiring. However, I'm glad I put it aside and came back to it. While I still rate his instrumental music far more highly than the vocal works, I have to confess that some of the sacred pieces (settings of the four Marian antiphons) did appeal much more second time around. There is a very jaunty rhythm in the 'Gaude virgo gloriosa' from *Ave regina coelorum* (not to mention some very colourful harmonies), and the beautifully controlled singing makes the experience all the nicer. Bündgen's partners in Ensemble Céladon are excellent – sweetly singing violins (and Jean Tubéry's cornetto), supported by gamba, triple harp, lute/theorbo and organ. This is a real treat for the ears. *BC*

Dowland Lute Songs; Britten Nocturnal Mark Padmore *T*, Elizabeth Kenny *lute*, Craig Ogden *gtr* 75' 25"
Hyperion CDA67648

Recently, outstanding recordings of lute songs seem to be like buses – you wait ages, then several turn up at once. Hot on the (w)heels of excellent discs by, for example, Emma Kirkby and Charles Daniels, comes this release which sandwiches Britten's *Nocturnal* for guitar between two groups of favourite Dowland songs. As one would expect, Padmore sings the songs beautifully and intelligently, but it is Kenny's lute accompaniment that is the real highlight, almost as much as her expert construction of the programme. The sequence of the songs and solos has been thoroughly considered; 'Come heavy Sleep', for example, begins with a perfect 'prelude' – it follows without a break a gentle solo lute version of 'Sleep, wayward thoughts', much as the *Nocturnal* eventually morphs into the same song. The result is wonderful – we're carefully prepared for this lovely song, and the progression seems perfectly natural. (How I wish I'd thought of that!)

Ogden's beautifully played performance of the Britten *Nocturnal* is understated in

comparison with that of the original performer, Julian Bream – here it almost sounds like a different piece, but this enables it all the better to sit alongside the generally relaxed atmosphere of Padmore and Kenny's songs. Surely one of the most important guitar pieces of the 20th century, the Nocturnal always used to remind me of a kind of assembly kit with no instructions, where all of the component parts of 'Come heavy sleep' are tried out in different combinations to see what they make. Ultimately, of course, everything fits back together to make Dowland's original, which pierces the darkness, but the piece ends with a bitter-sweet master-stroke – a 'not-the-repeat-of-the-last-section-after-all' twist – unmistakably Britten.

A simply brilliant disc. I can't praise it enough. A bronze Liz Kenny should be on the empty plinth in Trafalgar Square, in my opinion.
David Hill

Dowland Pavans, Galliards and Almains:
Lute Music – 3 Nigel North 66' 22"
Naxos 8.570449 £

Nigel North takes the title for this, his third volume of music by John Dowland, from Anthony Holborne's *Pavans, Galliards, Almains, and other short Aeirs* (London, 1599). There are seven sets of pieces, each one consisting of a pavan, a galliard and an almain. The CD gets off to a slow start with the enigmatically titled pavan *Solus cum sola*, and the oxymoronic *Melancholy Galliard*, followed by the ever-lively *John Smith's Almain*. North adds his own divisions to pieces where there are none for repeated sections, for example, *Dr Case's Pavan*. They are stylishly done, and sound quite convincing. As with previous CDs in this series, North's rhythm is deliberately wayward. The aim is presumably to add expression, but the effect is to compromise the essential character of the dance. The speeds of the galliards vary (with some justification): an immeasurably slow *Melancholy Galliard*, a very slow *Sir Robert Sidney his Galliard* (with extraordinarily complex divisions), a rather staid *Lady Rich her Galliard*, and a brisk *Battle Galliard* complete with some wonderful burbling ornaments in the bass. The last track is an almain from Margaret Board's *Lute Book*, a late source, where many of the pieces are highly ornamented. Robert Spencer, who owned it, believed that Dowland taught Margaret Board the lute, and that two of the pieces in her book were copied by Dowland. North omits quite a few of the ornaments in this Almain, although he adds an extra

one of his own right at the end. He plays a 9-course lute by the Swedish luthier Lars Jönsson. It is tuned at A=400 (about a semitone and a half below modern pitch), which provides welcome warmth and sonority.
Stewart McCoy

Falconieri Dolci Sospiri La primavera
Et'cetera KTC 1337 59' 09"

This is another CD I had problems with. Falconieri's name always excites me when I see it, but here I felt slightly let down by my expectations. Yet again, I put it aside and came back to it about a week later and I've listened to it several times since, each with more enjoyment than before, and yet still not really connecting. This is surprising, as the performances are stylish and well-paced, idiomatic and dramatic without being over-done, and yet the music still just lacks that special something that makes it memorable. I hope *La Primavera* (two singers and a variety of instrumentalists) will explore similar repertoire.
BC

Praetorius Puer natus in Bethlehem:
Advent and Christmas Music Bremer Barock Consort, Manfred Cordes 67' 33"
cpo 777 327-2

A solis ortu cardine, Conditor alme siderum, Gelobet seist du, In dulci jubilo, Puer natus in Bethlehem, Resonet in laudibus/Joseph lieber, Veni redemptor/ Nun komm der Heiden

Recordings of Praetorius have concentrated on his magnificent large-scale music, as indeed has been my performing experience, so it is refreshing to hear this disc of his smaller chorale arrangements. The impression I get from the programme is that it shows how the music might have been played and sung at home, even if the total number of performers (7 singers, 4 recorders, 5 viols, harp and small organ) is perhaps rather large for the normal household. The scorings are varied from one setting to another for the verses, which presents the variety of the music and ways it might have been scored. Eight seasonal hymns are taken. Three are hymns that had been sung for centuries in the catholic liturgy (*Veni redemptor gentium* is also in its Lutheran form of *Nun komm der Heiden Heiland*), *Puer natus, Gelobet seist du, In dulci jubilo Resonet in laudibus/Joseph lieber* are later medieval songs, and *Vom Himmel hoch* is by Luther – it should be standard to name the author or rough century of origin under the texts in the booklet, just as one expects them in a hymn book. The

programme is attractive, and also an invitation to go and do likewise, if you have access to the Praetorius Collected Works. This is a refreshing alternative to noisy and boisterous Christmas discs, with an extraordinary variety of sounds and styles: buy early for Xmas 2008. CB

Schütz Geistliche Chor-Musik 1648 Dresdener Kammerchor, Capella Sagittariana, Hans-Christoph Rademann 102' 29" (2 CDs)
Carus 83.232

I'm torn between the usefulness of having this important publication available on a single well-sung pair of discs and a certain suspicion at the 'collected works' approach to recording. Listening to too many of these motets at once should be resisted. Maybe amateur singers might have bought sets of part-books and sung through them, but if used in church, each piece would have been an individual item, in a different style from the surrounding music. I enjoyed particularly the pieces I know from singing or playing (the organ is optional, but I feel that something is lost without it – but perhaps that's because I'm happier on the keyboard than singing). I don't know if it is accidental that these are clustered at the end of the collection, but I certainly found disc 2 more enjoyable. The music flows from the words, and it is really worth getting inside it. The performances (20 singers are shown on the cover picture) are sensitive, though at times phrases could have been shaped just a bit more eloquently if some of the accents could have been less equal than others, and I missed the magic of the falling thirds at the end of *Ich bin ein rechter Weinstock*: they are barely noticeable on paper, but make the piece in a good performance. There are many other such felicities, and performers will vary which moments they catch. This is a set worth having for marvellous, though often understated, music intelligently sung. CB

Stradella San Giovanni Battista (1675)
Academia Montis Regalis, Alessandro de Marchi 77' 34"
Hyperion CDA67617

Perhaps I just wasn't in a mood for 17th-century Italian music, because I found this recording quite difficult to get into. Once again, the performance is very good, with some superb (if full-blooded!) singing and great playing – the contrast between the *concertino* group and the orchestral tutti is very dramatic, although I can't be sure that Stradella would have approved of preceding his work with part of a trio sonata

by another composer, solely to make the point! (In fact, there are other bleeding chunks of other people's music at various points, including three movements from a Colista Sinfonia spread over the second half – the recording even ends with one.) Stradella is something of a conundrum: we know he was an important figure, and yet his music seems to defy all attempts to resurrect it – perhaps this new recording, with the director's reconstructions and re-workings, will mark a fresh beginning? BC

Tomkins *These Distracted Times* Fretwork, Alamire, Choir of Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, David Skinner 66' 54"
Obsidian CD702

I'm probably not the only listener whose first encounter with verse anthems was with those of Gibbons, and it is difficult for any other composer to match music that has been part of my internally imagined sound-hoard for four or five decades and sets the standard against which novelties must be compared. This is particularly so when the first vocal piece, following a fine viol pavane, includes a psalm text which Gibbons set so memorably: 'For I am a stranger with thee... O spare me a little...' Tomkins passes that test very well. There are two styles of singing. The service is quite straightforward, 'expression' coming from the clear articulation of the varied rhythms that Tomkins extrapolates from the text. The anthems, however, are done much more emotionally, distinguishing in style what in Catholic terms one might call the ordinary and the proper of the service. David Skinner writes as if he is defending a doubtful conclusion in arguing for liturgical performance with viols rather than cornetts and sackbuts (for which Andrew Parrott has argued strongly). One can imagine anthems being played for private amusement, but probably not services – if my experience of modern vocal ensemble practice is anything to go by: I can think of only one occasion at which I've sung a service out of church. The fifth service is unusual in featuring a bass solo (with a range from bottom F, sung as notated at A=440). The *Sad Pavan*... seemed a bit clinical on the organ without the subtle spreading of the chords that a harpsichord can offer. His most often-sung piece, *When David heard* from earlier 'distracted times', is sung quite plainly but movingly, pitched between the high- and low-clef notations. This is a well-chosen collection, which makes an excellent case for the often-overshadowed Tomkins, though the singing isn't quite so striking as on the

group's Josquin disc (see p.27). CB

Three of the new company Obsidian's discs are reviewed in the issue: congratulations on their very high standards of production and content.

Weelkes *Anthems* Winchester Cathedral Choir, Timothy Byram Wigfield org, David Hill 65' 32" (rec 1991)
Hyperion Helios CDH55259 ££

Weelkes's church music crops up occasionally on anthology discs, but deserves greater recognition. The first solo singing that we hear (in *Alleluia! I heard a voice*) is hardly encouraging – was there really no better take? But it's an impressive collection, with David Hill not letting the choir hang around, and it sounds more plausible than many other cathedral choirs in early repertoire. CB

An Italian Sojourn Trio Settecento (Rachel Barton Pine vln, John Mark Rozendaal vlc, David Schrader hpscd) 70' 51"
Cedille CDR 90000 099

Castello op. x.8 in d; Corelli op. 5/3, Handel HWV 364a, Locatelli op. 6/2, Marini, Stradella, Tartini *La Pastorella*, Veracini op. 2/12

When I flicked through the CDs that arrived for review, I wasn't looking forward to this one as it had all the hallmarks of being a debut disc of someone fresh out of college. If nothing, this reminded me of how limiting and restrictive life in the styx can be – Rachel Barton Pine is a fantastic fiddler, equally at home on a modern instrument playing Paganini and its earlier cousins in repertoire such as this. Throughout the recital I was amazed by her dazzling technique, although the virtuosity was never purely for display, and her ornamentation shows time and again that she has got under the skin of the music too. According to the booklet notes, the group have made other recordings on Cedille, and I hope there will be more – perhaps entire CDs devoted to single composers, or even single printed works? BC

Gloria in excelsis Deo: La Grande Messa Barocca nel Monastero de Lambach St. Florianer Sangknaben, Ars Antiqua Austria, Gunar Letzbor 66' 29"
Symphonia SY 06220

Joseph Balthasar Hochreither *Missa ad multos annos*; Benjamin Ludwig Ramhaufski *Missa a23*

In much the same way that I was astonished and impressed by the cpo disc below, this excellent disc made me wonder just how much fine music is out there,

unknown simply because the composers are so obscure. If I played either of the two masses here to you with absolutely no introduction, you would almost certainly be able to place them in Austria in the 17th century – there's an air of grandiose pomp and splendour which is unmistakable, and of course that fantastic combination of violins and trombones at the very opening, followed by a Kyrie setting of confident and harmonically strong contrapuntal ingenuity. This is among my favourite discs this month – I hope Letzbor has more such surprises up his sleeve! BC

L'Harmonie des Nations: European Music at the Bavarian Court Stylus Phantasticus
Accent ACC 24200 68' 05"

Dall'Abaco op. 2/1 & 5, Kerll Sonata a3 in c; Muffat *Nobilis juvenus, Sollicitudo*, Pachelbel Partita II in c; Pez Sonata 7 & 12

This is one of my favourite discs this time around. Initially I was slightly surprised at the performers' decision to use violas da gamba for the inner parts of the Muffat and dall'Abaco pieces, but I was persuaded by the booklet's argument that Maximilian II of Bavaria was obsessed by the instrument and, actually, the final result is spectacular. The disc is arranged in a neat arc: Pachelbel and Kerll are represented by one work each, nestled between two pieces by the overly neglected Johann Christoph Pez, who is enveloped by dall'Abaco and finally Muffat opens and closes a most impressive recital. There were moments when my eyebrows arched – I don't recall, for example, Muffat suggesting that the harpsichord should play the melody solo while the strings accompany *pizzicato* – but the beautiful playing and ornamentation from Stylus Phantasticus is quite enchanting. I hope they go on to record a lot more dall'Abaco (I don't know why he isn't much better known!) and Pez. BC

Machet die Tore weit: Baroque Christmas Cantatas from Central Germany Sächsisches Vocalensemble, soloists, Batzdorfer Hofkapelle, Matthias Jung 57' 55"
cpo 777 332-2

Music by Bessel, Erlebach, Jacobi, Liebe, Petritz, Schelle

This disc arrived just after Christmas, but no matter – although the record company clearly missed a trick, their continued enthusiasm for exploring such repertoire is to be both admired and supported. I consider myself to be quite *au fait* with mid-17th-century German church music, but I had not even heard of two of the

composers featured here, let alone heard any of their music. The latter is also true of Christian Liebe and Christian August Jacobi. If I've heard quite a bit of Schelle's output, it is still Erlebach with whom I'm most familiar, having published quite a bit, who comes out at the top of my list. His setting of *Fürchtet euch nicht* is given an exquisite reading by Matthias Jung and his two groups. All of the cantatas are in the so-called concerto-aria form, in which the centrepiece is a strophic song (often variations over the same bass) with ritornello framed by tuttis. This recital goes to show how successful a form it was, and just how many fine examples there are awaiting discovery by choirs everywhere. In the next issue, I hope to be reviewing another cpo excellence – a two-disc set of similar works by Erlebach! BC

Old Gaultiers Nightingall: French and English Lute Music in 'accords nouveaux'
Anthony Bailes lute 72' 31"
Ramée RAM 0707
Music by Bouvier, Pierre Gaultier, Mace, Mesangeau

The title of the CD, 'Old Gaultiers Nightingall', comes from a piece of music for the lute popular in 17th-century England, and is a modified version of Antoine Boesset's song 'O trop heureux' from the *Ballet de la Reyne*. Old Gaultier was Ennemond Gaultier, who, with René Mesangeau, was largely responsible for establishing the French style of lute playing in the early part of the 17th century. The old 16th-century dances – pavans, galliards and almaines, enhanced with elaborate divisions for their repeated sections – were replaced by ad hoc suites of courantes, sarabandes, and allemandes, often preceded by a prelude, and without the virtuosic divisions to be found in the music of English composers like Dowland. There are notes séparées, notes inégales, considerable ornamentation, and the creation of a variety of moods, a style which was to have a strong influence on French keyboard composers. In their quest for, above all, sonority, the French lutenists experimented with various tunings, just as the English were to do with their lute viols. Today, weird tunings, for both viol and lute, are associated with experiment and transition, and for many, the music is not worth the bother of restringing and retuning, assuming you have a lute with enough strings. Anthony Bailes' varied anthology shows that this repertoire does indeed have considerable quality, although it requires thought and good taste from the player and careful listening from the

audience. Amongst music by French composers there is a suite of seven pieces by Thomas Mace taken from *Musick's Monument* (London, 1676), with low notes very much in evidence. It includes the piece associated with Mace's *Mistress* (see the incredible background story of telepathy in his book), some bird song in his *Nightingale*, and a jaunty *Tattle de Moy* to finish. Of the lute-playing Gaultiers, Pierre is less well known than Ennemond, Jacques and Denis. He spent much of his life in Italy, where his one book was published in 1638. Italian influences include the use of campanella passages, associated more with the guitar and theorbo than the lute. Bailes' playing, on a 12-course lute by Paul Thomson, is exquisite. Stewart McCoy

Theatermuziek uit de Gouden Eeuw: Dutch Theatre Music 1600-1650 Camerata Trajectina 73'
Globe GLO 6062
Plays by J. H. Krael, P. C. Hooft, J. J. Starter, J. van den Vondel

Like the Bohemian disc I review below, this is surely only going to have limited appeal. The music is pleasant enough (in a sort of *Beggar's Opera* sort of way) and it's stylishly done in the Dutch equivalent of Olde Englishe, to the extent that the booklet notes, which include a lengthy introduction followed by a short description of each item in Dutch, a translation of that into English, and then the sung text, with translations of some expressions into modern Dutch – so you can imagine how much an amateur Dutch speaker like me could actually understand! Ten singers (including two boy sopranos) join eight players in reconstructions of music as it might have been heard in the early 17th century. There's a fair amount of humour, which is evident even to the blissfully ignorant! BC

LATE BAROQUE

Bach Weltliche Kantaten 30a & 207 Monika Frimmer, Robin Blaze, Markus Schäfer, Stephan MacLeod SATB, Les Chantres du Centre de Musique Baroque de Versailles, Café Zimmermann, Gustav Leonhardt 72' 47"
Alpha Alpha 118

Bach's homage cantatas are some of his least-known works; their obsequious poetry, honouring various Saxon nobles and academics, is even more foreign to today's taste than the soul-scourging texts

of the sacred cantatas. The music, though, is usually attractive and often in a surprisingly fashionable style, as evident on this disc recorded by Gustav Leonhardt and Café Zimmermann. The arias of Cantata 30a display an array of different dance-metres, all of which are nicely animated by the instrumentalists. Cantata 207 starts with a resplendent chorus based on the third movement of Brandenburg Concerto no. 1, which also receives a rousing performance. The singers are confronted by some of Bach's most ungrateful lines, including long melismas and extremes of register, yet they bring just the right mix of drama and grace to their parts. Particularly enjoyable is Robin Blaze's evocation of delight in the second aria of Cantata 30a, with mincing syncopations above the brisk pizzicato accompaniment. The performers subtly project the pictorial elements in the music, such as the ostinato figure for unison violins and violas suggesting the act of engraving in the third aria of Cantata 207. A rewarding disc. Stephen Rose

Bach Motetten Trinity Baroque, Arno Jochem vlne, James Johnstone org, Julian Podger dir 77' 03"
Raum Klang RK 2601
BWV 225-229, 601, 622, 733

This is sheer joy – the sort of Bach singing one imagines might be possible but rarely hears. Julian Podger established Trinity Baroque while an undergraduate at Trinity College Cambridge, and it gives me great pleasure to hear how he and his friends have soared into the first class of European singers.

These wonderful motets must have been murdered by many a choir, or late-night hotel-room full of travelling singers (myself included), but in this strongly textured performance the listener understands that they were written to convey the meaning of the words, mostly from St Paul's letters to the Romans, and not simply as marvellous counterpoint exercises. The youth and energy of these singers is evident, but also their commitment. Not only is each phrase beautifully expressive, but individual words are placed with real care, and the whole of each section is coloured by the expression in the voices, and – I imagine – in the singers' faces. Thus, the first section of *Komm, Jesu, komm* is hesitant and timid, but where the text changes to 'Komm, komm, ich will mich dir ergeben' the voices are hopeful and glad. The tempi are just right to express the words; the skill of the singers is that they can adapt the speed of the notes to fit 'the rhythm of careful speech', and

make it sound effortless. The sections of text are separated with careful placings of final chords, and well-judged pauses. The German pronunciation and tuning sound faultless. Inner parts are beautifully warm and overall balance favours the lower parts; the sopranos dance over the texture without dominating it – a very welcome feature – but each singer knows the importance of his/her part at any moment, so some remarkable phrases are revealed which are usually hidden in the choral texture, e.g. the wonderful tenor line in the 'Jesu, meine Freude' chorale. Blandness has no place here; there are moments of harshness ('Lass den Satan wittern') terror ('trotz der Furcht dazu'), comfort, and sweetness, and an almost Lieder-like subtlety within each part – a great achievement in an ensemble performance. The discreet continuo (organ and violone) is occasionally brought further to the fore, for example in the chorales, but even in the background helps to enliven the rhythms.

Each of the five motets is preceded by a short intonation, providing a further pointer to the listener as to the mood of what is to come. The sixth 'Bach motet', *Lobet den Herrn*, is omitted, and instead three solo pieces (BWV 227, 601 and 733) are played on the organ of the Wenzelskirche, Naumburg, whose maintenance was overseen by Bach himself. This recording brings us very close to the great man's heart. *Selene Mills*

Bach Christmas Oratorio Malin Hartelius, Kristina Hammarström, Jörg Dürfmüller, Detlef Roth SATB, Cappella Amsterdam (Daniel Reuss), Combattimento Consort Amsterdam, Jan Willem de Vriend Challenge CC 76607 [SACD] (2 CDs)

First, my apologies for not reviewing this in the December issue. I was the culprit. The cause was the format: it wasn't with the rest of the CDs for review, and I only came across it when I was clearing up the books and music after the issue was sent out.

So I'll start with the format. This is a 76-page hardback book the size of a DVD case. The text is entirely English (apart from the German libretto), so there is a considerable amount of reading matter: an interview with the conductor, a substantial programme note by Frits de Haen and, of particular interest, an essay on the liturgy, theology and unity of the work by Robin Leaver. There are also seven photographs on the theme of mother and baby.

As for the music, this is a fine, stylish performance on, I suppose, modern instruments (though I read somewhere recently that Combattimento Consort play on 19th-

century ones: the book says nothing about this). On the authenticity front, some might also be disappointed by the use of a choir of 33 (the extra voice is a bass) while Bach's performing material has just four vocal parts (including solos) for each of the cantatas, except for a separate soprano echo part for Cantata IV. (The sets seem complete, since there are two copies of each violin I & II part.) I wouldn't reject the performance on those grounds, and there is a lot in its favour. One gets the feeling of musicians understanding the music and enjoying it, and I prefer not to hear performers being driven by a desire to produce the best CD on the market. Other performances do get more out of the piece, but at the expense of an imposed excitement. It doesn't quite pass the test of thorough attentive listening to details, but we enjoyed playing it on our long drive to Poland just after Christmas: the choir, soloists and players seemed to be of one mind and the music came over positively and unselfconsciously. *CB*

Bach Mass in B minor Carolyn Sampson, Rachel Nicholls, Robin Blaze, Gerd Türk, Peter Kooij SSATB, Bach Collegium Japan, Masaaki Suzuki 107' 11 BIS-SACD-1701/02 (2 CDs in box)

Suzuki's recording communicates the grandeur of the B minor Mass, yet is also sensitive to the varied styles of its individual movements. Compared to other readings (such as those of Harry Christophers or Robert King), Suzuki tends to take the fast choruses quicker and the slow choruses more slowly. The opening of the Gloria is an outburst of rhythmic energy, almost at the fastest speed possible for the voices. By contrast, the first Kyrie is taken at a measured pace, gaining a penitential gravity and allowing close attention to Bach's articulation marks. Later, midway through the Credo, the 'Et incarnatus' has a rapt stillness that makes this movement seem like the still centre of the Mass (rather than the succeeding 'Crucifixus'). In the arias, Suzuki chooses unexceptional tempi, but characterises each movement effectively, whether with delicacy as in the 'Domine Deus' or with raucousness as in the 'Quoniam tu solus'. The solo singing is of a high standard, with Robin Blaze offering a rendition of the Agnus Dei that is all the more poignant for his vocal purity. Suzuki appears to follow Bach's autograph score as his primary text, omitting the performance details (such as the Scotch snaps in the

'Domine Deus') that can be gleaned from the Dresden performing parts of the Kyrie and Gloria. Suzuki also makes greater use of dual continuo accompaniment than most previous recordings, with the harpsichord featuring in almost all movements. This excellent recording is complemented by a long, thoughtful booklet essay by Klaus Hoffmann; and I must congratulate BIS on plastic-free packaging that is both elegant and environmentally friendly.

Stephen Rose

Bach Orgelbüchlein Helga Schauerte (1674 Donat organ at Luckau), Immortal Bach Ensemble (chorales) (2 CDs)

Syrius SYR 141412

available as DV stereo, CD-DTS & DV audio

Recordings of Bach's *Orgelbüchlein* can be presented in many different ways, and this is one of the most listenable versions I have come across. The key is the inclusion, not only of the sung chorales, but also additional versions of the chorale melody, sung by soloists and various combinations of the eight singers of the attractively named Immortal Bach Ensemble. The organ is potentially a very interesting one although, as the booklet note acknowledges, it is in need of a further restoration – particularly to deal with such issues as tuning and voicing. But it nonetheless produces an pleasant sound. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

Bach Sonatas for Viola da Gamba and Harpsichord Mikko Perkola, Aapo Häkkinen 75' 42" Naxos 8.570201 £

BWV 1027-9 + 583-4, 963, 967

The disc joins a crowded field, and a distinguished one. You might suspect that it is a rite of passage for an ambitious virtuoso to record his Bach sonatas. However, one can only welcome this one. Perkola makes a beautiful tone, with a variety of colour that is rare, and I greatly enjoyed the ensemble between the two players. To the three sonatas are added two Organ trios (BWV 583 and 584), played by the two instruments, and two keyboard sonatas for solo harpsichord (BWV 967 and 963 – with the 'Hen and Cuckoo' fugue), which makes a nicely balanced programme, and a very generous 75 minutes playing time. The playing makes you sit up and take notice – the tempi are often deliberate, and the phrasing understated for the most part, which makes for greater enjoyment on repeated hearings. The players pull the tempo round at various times, and the approach is very legato,

even in the fast movements. There are one or two moments in the G minor sonata with which I disagree, for example the somewhat overstated and slow finish to the final movement, but these are more than outweighed by the exceptional qualities that are displayed here – a lovely poetic feeling, particularly in the slow movements, with beautiful sustained bowings, freedom of movement within the beat, melting pianissimos, and a singer's ability to find new colours (that he is a singer I gather from his playing as well as from the booklet biog. I enjoyed this disc very much, and look forward to hearing more of this player.

Robert Oliver

Bach *Brandenburg Concertos* European Brandenburg Ensemble, Trevor Pinnock
Avie AV 2119 94' 23 (2 CDs)

Trevor Pinnock's new recording of the *Brandenburg Concertos* is alive to the heterogeneity of the set. Pinnock varies the size of his orchestra according to the scoring and style of individual pieces: thus *Concertos* nos. 5 and 6 use solo strings, enhancing their feel as chamber music, whereas *Concerto* no. 1 receives a richer rendition with two upper strings per part. The recording also incorporates Peter McCarthy's research into the pitch of the violone part [see his article in our previous issue], using an 8' instrument for *Concertos* nos. 2 and 4–6 (enhancing their intimacy and adding agility to the fast movements). By contrast, the use of the 16' violone grosso in *Concerto* no. 1 (as specified on Bach's manuscript) gives a gravity apt for the grander scoring of this work. In *Concerto* no. 3, the choice of the 16' instrument (as specified on a set of parts copied by Penzel in 1755) complements the effect of the three concertato cellos.

Compared to Pinnock's 1982 recording (Archiv), the fast movements are performed quicker (with the exception of *Concerto* no. 5), and the instrumental playing has fewer raw edges than that of twenty-five years ago. To be sure, the intonation is somewhat piquant in the first movement of *Concerto* no. 2. Elsewhere, though, there is a delicacy in the string and wind playing, particularly in Katy Bircher's beautifully phrased flute lines in *Concerto* no. 5 (and her sensitive placing of notes in the middle movement). Best of all, Pinnock's players achieve a joyful sparkle in some of the finales, notably of *Concertos* nos. 5 and 6. Such elated playing adds meaning to the dedication to Katherine McGilivray (who died unexpectedly after the first day of

rehearsals), as well as to Pinnock's statement that the performances 'remain fundamentally a celebration of music and life'. This is a fine recording and one to which I will return time and time again.

Stephen Rose

Stjernekländ: Bach Christmas chorale preludes and Bach-inspired Norwegian folk melodies and improvisations Andreas Liebig and Sinikka Langeland (1741 Wagner organ, Nidaros Cathedral, Trondheim, Norway) 71'37
Heilo HCD7166

This CD (released in 2002) has grown on me since I received it along with the Andreas Liebig organ CD reviewed in the last *EMR*. The combination of organ and folk singing is not an obvious one, but in this well thought out programme it works well, not least because the Norwegian folk melodies and improvisations are based on melodies that Bach used, many of which have migrated into the Norwegian tradition. Sinikka Langeland also sings the solo melodies of Bach organ chorale preludes with distinctive Norwegian folk ornamentation. Naturally the style of singing is folk, rather than classical in origin, but that is one of the things that has grown on me with repeated listening. And if it takes time for the folk elements of this programme to sink in, the organ performances of Bach's Christmas chorale preludes (from the *Orgelbüchlein*, the 'Leipzig' Chorales and the Canonic Variations on *Von Himmel hoch*) are superb, both in their intensely musical interpretations and in the magnificent 1741 Wagner organ in Trondheim's Nidaros Cathedral – one of the finest organs around for Bach interpretation.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Couperin *Pièces de Violes* Markku Luolajan-Mikkola, Mikko Perkola *viols*, Aapo Häkkinen *hpscd* 66' 36"
Avie AV 2132

Pièces...1728 + Concert 10, 12 & 13 (1724)

The two suites for bass viol and continuo, published in 1728 by Couperin, together with those *concerts* for two bass instruments from *Les Goûts-réunis* (published in 1725, but mentioning his *Pièces de violes* as available then) provide a generous 66 minutes on this excellent recording. Markku Luolajan-Mikkola plays these very demanding works with a fluency that belies their difficulties, and the performances are very authoritative, straight-forward and free of mannerism. I have minor complaints, matters of taste, concerning details of his

ornamentation: he understates many trills and the *ports de voix* to the point of almost removing them as an element of the melody, and this sometimes dims the sense of climax. He chooses to ignore some slurs, for example in the A Major suite at the end of *La Chemise blanche*. While it is true that Couperin's ornamentation marks, and particularly slurs, in the *Pièces de violes* are open to interpretation, I do feel that some are explicit. But one can only admire his control and power, and these wonderful suites receive superb performances. The accompaniment is excellent, and in the *concerts* the two viols are beautifully matched.

Robert Oliver

Handel *Esther* HWB 50b (version of 1732) Rosemary Joshua *Esther*, James Bowman *Ahasuerus*, Susan Bickley *Mordecai*, Christopher Purves *Hanah*, Rebecca Outram *Israelite Woman*, Andrew Kennedy *First Israelite*, Cecilia Osmond *2nd Israelite*, Angus Smith *Harbonah*, London Handel Orchestra & Choir, Laurence Cummings 137' 19"
Somm SOMMCD 238-9

I remember from my BBC days Basil Lam's justifications over several canteen lunches on the desirability of concocting some version that would include the best of the concise Canons settings and the 1732 revival. At the time I didn't know either version enough to comment on the arguments or the result. Such mixes would be frowned on now, and here we have the later, thoroughly remodelled version as it stands. The history of the work is clearly set forth by Anthony Hicks in the booklet, and he and Peter Jones prepared the edition. If you try following the recording with Chrysander's score, don't think that what you hear is wrong. The vocal line of the opening *accompagnato*, for instance, was different in 1732. It must be one of the most difficult openings for a singer – and not one of the main roles: exposed and soft, as the opening words 'Breathe soft' suggest: the orchestra, not having that clue, is marked *pp*. Rebecca Outram manages it magically. The singing is good throughout, though the recording doesn't quite get the bloom of the orchestra.

There has been a five year gap between the making and issue of this recording, which celebrated the 25th anniversary of the London Handel Festival. So James Bowman isn't making a comeback, though it is a pity he didn't record 'Endless fame' a few years earlier. It's a bit disconcerting having the music interrupted by chunks of the Coronation Anthems, but Handel wasn't expecting

another Coronation soon (in fact, he died before the next one), and was naturally reluctant to waste good music. But rather more than borrowed arias, they make one feel that the version is a bit of a patchwork. I wouldn't recommend buying this if you don't have recordings of *Samson*, *Saul*, *Solomon*, *Semele*, *Hercules* or *Jephtha* (a random list), but all enthusiastic Handelians should buy it – if you haven't already. CB

Handel Complete Sonatas and Works for Violin & Continuo Adrian Butterfield vln, Katherine Sharman vlc, Laurence Cummings hpscd 65' 13"
Somm SOMMCD 068

HWV 46b, 358-9, 361, 364, 167, 406-8, 412

I thoroughly enjoyed listening to this discs several times through. I'm embarrassed to admit that I did not even know all of the music, and I am astounded that there is a world premiere recording – the Allegro for unaccompanied violin (if indeed that is what Handel intended when he wrote it down), HWV407. Adrian Butterfield plays beautifully throughout (although I would question the sudden and slightly jarring leap into the stratosphere towards the very end) and is lent wonderful support by Katherine Sharman and Laurence Cummings (of whom Butterfield writes that he could have wished for no better companions). This should be required listening for anyone playing these works. Will this dream team now undertake some Geminiani or Corelli, please. BC

Handel Trio Sonatas Convivium (Anthony Robson ob, Elizabeth Wallfisch vln, Richard Tunnicliffe vlc, Paul Nicholson hpscd) 64' 16"
Hyperion Helios CDH55289 (rec 1998) £

I need only quote the following from the back cover: 'Unashamedly fine performances. I can happily recommend this to Handelians (even if the music is by someone else) and chamber music fans alike, it's a real pleasure.' Thank you, Brian (from issue 59, p. 26). The disc contains the six dubious sonatas HWV 380-385 plus the sonata sometimes called op. 2/8 (HWV 393), which seems to have suffered transformation into a concerto for two cellos sometime in the last century or so – someone hoped I might be able to trace it a few days ago, so information welcome; a few weeks previously, it was sought as a trio sonata for two cellos. CB

Handel-Inspired Paul Ayres (1998 Goetze & Gwynn 'Handel House' chamber organ, St George's Hanover Square) 72' 25"
Priory PRCD894

During the formative stages of the Handel House Museum project, the trustees commissioned a 'Handel' chamber organ. Although it eventually didn't find space in the museum itself, it is now housed, very appropriately, in the nearby St George's Hanover Square, Handel's own church. Paul Ayres is assistant organist there, and has compiled a fascinating collection of music by, and inspired by, Handel. Most of the latter category stem from a composition competition organised by Ayres. This produced 98 compositions for small chamber organ, the winning eight of which are included on this CD. Composers range from a retired consultant paediatrician to a 16-year old choirboy, via some published and prize-winning composers hailing from Japan, the Punjab and Poland. The CD finishes with Paul Ayres own *Departure of the Queen of Sheba*, with the well-known music inverted (but, given the title, should it have been reversed?). In case anybody thinks that Handel organs had swell pedals, the final fade-out as the Queen's procession dances off into the desert was not produced by the organ. Chamber organs like this are not easy to play, and Paul Ayres does a magnificent job in bringing out both the intimate quality and a surprising aural presence. He combines an excellent sense of articulation and phrasing – he also does clever things with the stops and/or the winding system (the organ is foot pumped) in one of the new works, producing attractive vibrato-like effects. Although half the repertoire is outside the remit of *EMR*, I can recommend it. Andrew Benson-Wilson

That's the second Departure of the Queen of Sheba that I've come across in a couple of days; there is also one (more or less playable on Handel's instrumentation) by Alec Roth. CB

Scarlatti Stabat Mater Vox Luminis Ricercar RIC 258 64' 01"

+ *Miserere* a4, *Salve Regina* a2, *Te Deum* a8

Scarlatti Sacred Vocal Music Immortal Bach Ensemble, Morten Schuldt-Jensen Naxos 8.570382 64' 06" £
Cibavit nos Dominus, *Magnificat*, *Missa breve* 'La Stella', *Stabat mater*, *Te Deum*

A score of Domenico Scarlatti's *Stabat Mater* has lain on my shelves for 30 years and, to my shame, I have never heard the work. It was gratifying, therefore, to receive two copies for review and to get

to know the ten-part setting. Unlike those of Vivaldi and Pergolesi, Scarlatti's work is through-composed with linking sections, rather than in separate movements. Almost entirely contrapuntal in its richness, with virtually none of the contrasting homophonic sections that might be expected, it is perhaps not as rich in its harmonies as the shorter *Te Deum* setting, the other item common to both recordings. If you prefer a broader, more reflective approach, then the *Vox Luminis* is the one to go for, whereas the tempi of the *Immortal Bach Ensemble* are altogether more brisk and the clarity of recording enables the complexity of the textures to be more transparent. IBE's phrasing is more pronounced and the drama shines through, although I was conscious of a little more vibrato in some of the solo voices. Whereas both use organ and theorbo continuo, the IBE recording uses a 16' violone in places; I did, however, find that the organ in the VL recording occasionally slightly obtrusive. Whereas VL have the delightful soprano and alto *Salve Regina* duet and the sombre 4-part a cappella *Miserere*, with its plain-song movements interleaved, IBE have a full 8-part mass setting, a work of contrasting styles, and the more sombre *Magnificat*. (Even though it is titled 'Missa breve' it is a full mass setting, albeit the movements are quite short). The fillers on the VL are two keyboard sonatas (K.87 & 417) somewhat perversely played on organ. My personal choice is firmly for the Morten Schuldt-Jensen's interpretation on Naxos, but if you prefer less excitement and more renaissance purity, then go for *Vox Luminis* – but skip the 'organ' sonatas!

Ian Graham-Jones

Those who use duration as a criterion of value are unlikely to find the difference between these two discs much help. CB

Scarlatti Sonate per Clavicembalo vol. II Enrico Baiano hpscd 75' 09"
Symphonia SY 05218

K 3, 24, 69, 99, 113, 115, 118-120, 132, 148-9, 184, 213-6, 268

I missed vol I of this series but this one had me pinned to my seat, never quite knowing what to expect next. Baiano is well-known for his excellent playing of the 17th-century repertoire, especially in the early days of the Cappella dei Turchini. He lays out his vision of Scarlatti's sonatas in some very perceptive sleeve notes, seeing them more as toccatas in which a continuous variety is displayed in the manner of those of the 17th century. So he stresses rhetorical contrast and makes good use of silences. These performances are the polar

£ = bargain price (up to £6.00)

££ = mid-price

other CDs full price, as far as we know

opposite of those metronomical ones which regular readers will know I dislike. Baiano may stray a bit far in the other direction occasionally, but the result is very convincing, bringing out the rhetorical qualities of his eclectic mixture of sonatas. He plays on a Blanchet copy by Olivier Fadini which really enlivens the music and is excellently recorded for maximum effect with good use of registration. His scales are exhilarating, particularly at the ends of sections where he combines them with *accelerandos*; the virtuosity is breathtaking at times. This recording may not yet be to everyone's taste but the Neapolitan Baiano does a great service to the composer by connecting him to his roots in the 17th century, while not ignoring Spanish influence, and expanding the parameters for his interpretation. Do listen to it – there is great musical intelligence at work here.

Noel O'Regan

Telemann Cantatas Annette Markert A, Ila Parnaso Musicale 49' 38" (rec 1990)
Christophorus CHE 0125-2

Ach Herr strafe mich nicht (TWV 7:1), Seufzen, Kummer, Angst und Tränen (TWV 20:67), Tirsis am Scheidewege (TWV 20:22) (rec 1990)

This is a re-release of a recording from 1990. The alto soloist, Annette Markert, is very good indeed, and she is very neatly and stylishly accompanied. The works are a setting of Psalm 6 and two cantatas about that most unhappy of lovers, Tirsis (one with strings and recorder). I was most impressed by Markert's range: I'm afraid that most counter-tenors would struggle to give such evenness and balance of tone, especially in the lower ranges – and she can be virtuosic when required. I wrote a few issues ago that there are large numbers of altos out there who have begun reclaiming material from counter-tenors: I hope that *vogue* continues (to be honest), but am glad to accept that this recording reminds us that such voices have always been around. Recommended.

BC

Vivaldi Concerti per archi Berliner Barock Solisten, Rainer Kussmaul 62' 39"

Avi Music 8553060

RV 156, 413, 522, 531, 553, 565, 580

From the presentation of this disc, I assumed that I was going to hear a programme of concerti a4, but not a bit of it – the works include the concerto for two cellos, a concerto for four violins and strings RV553, and three works from the composer's Op. 3 *L'estro armonico*, and is rounded off with the string concerto in G minor RV156. Playing 'on old but

modernized instruments' with bows from the period is quite common in Europe but strikes me as such a strange concept – 'let's just change part of the sound world', it seems to say. Whatever side of that argument you are on, there is no disputing the fact that the Berliner Barock Solisten are a fine group and their performances here are impossible to fault on their own terms. How much good it did the instruments to be photoshot on a sunny beach is another question entirely.

BC

Vivaldi Juditha triumphans. Highlights Magdalena Kožená *Juditha*, Maria José Trillu *Holofernes*, Marina Comparato *Vagaus*, Anke Hermann *Abra*, Tiziano Carro *Ozias*, Academia Montis Reglis, Alessandro de Marchi 70' 31"

Naïve OP 30450 (rec. 2000)

These and the following two discs of highlights offer an overture and a sample of each singer; they give a flavour of Vivaldi's operatic and oratorical style, while avoiding the tedium of long passages of recitative and also the problem of the over-intensity of Magdalena Kožená's Handel disc, which I reviewed in the last issue; there is plenty of variety here. The *Affekt* (to use an over-worked German word) of most arias is such that there is little need to worry about meaning and context. Just enjoy them. *Juditha* is the weakest, and our reviewer of the original release, Sue Powell, was pretty scathing. The flair of Alexandrini makes the other two more stimulating, despite his exaggeration. This disc is particularly notable for a chance to hear the young Magdalena Kožená. In retrospect, One can hear the star quality from her first note – in retrospect, at least! Five of the ten arias here are from her: well worth hearing.

CB

Vivaldi L'Olimpiade. Highlights. Sara Mingardo *Licida*, Roberta Invernizzi *Megagle*, Sonia Prina *Aristea*, Marianna Kulikova *Argene*, Laura Giordano *Aminta*, Riccardo Novaro *Clistene*, Sergio Foresti *Alcandro*, Concerto Italiano, Rinaldo Alessandrini 65' 04" (rec 2002)

Naïve OP 30451

Here there is a greater equality in the choice of arias, but I don't favour the two most famous singers. I'm prejudiced so buy it and check!

CB

Vivaldi La Verità in cemento. Highlights Gemma Bertagnolli *Rosane*, Guilleamette Laurens *Rustena*, Sara Mingardo *Melindo*, Nathalie Stutzmann *Damira*, Philippe

Jaroussky *Zelim*, Anthony Rolfe Johnson *Mamud*, Ensemble Matheus, Jean-Christophe Spinosi 66' 36" (rec 2002)
Naïve OP 30452

BC wrote of the original release of *La Verità...* (OP 30365): 'the cast is exceptionally high calibre with some of the older stars of the early music world rubbing shoulders with their worthy successors. The instrumental playing, while crisp and lively, is just a little over-cooked for my liking: some of the over-accented attacks and the *al niente* diminuendi are simply too Romantic. Of course the music must be brought to life, and of course this approach might be invigorating for players and audience alike in live performance, but as purely aural entertainment I'm afraid it detracted from what otherwise I thought was a well-sung, well-paced and well-considered performance of an opera which has long been overdue a recording of this stature.' I concur.

CB

The Sound of Cultures Vol. 5 Bohemia Ars Antiqua Austria, Gunar Letzbor 64' 37"

Symphonia SY 05216

Music by Habermann, Losy, Reichenauer, Stölzel, Vivaldi RV85, etc

I've reviewed various other discs in this series and they are pretty much a mixed bunch. This volume includes music for horns (as one would expect, since Bohemian hornists were legend in the 18th century), and other music related to hunting (some Czech songs, sung in a folksy-ish style), and pieces by Stölzel and Vivaldi, as well as home-grown trio sonatas. Although there is some interesting material, the Vivaldi stands head and shoulders above the rest, and this will have a limited appeal, I imagine.

BC

CLASSICAL

Cimaroso Overtures – 2 Toronto Chamber Orchestra, Kevin Mallon 67' 27"
Naxos 8.570279 £

Alessandro d'Indie, Artaserse, Giannina e Bernadone, *Il fanatico per gli anticui Romani*, L'Armide, L'Italiana a Londra, La Circe, La donna sempre al suo peggior s'appiglia,

A lively, well-performed selection of overtures by the not-quite-forgotten master of late-18th century opera. Care has been taken to stir the mixture, so there is plenty of variety of mood. Cimarosa's skilful orchestral writing is nicely reflected in the alert playing of the Toronto CO, Kevin Mallon is adept at picking the right tone for each piece. Most of them are single-movements *sinfonias*, though four are in

the three-movement layout then still common. If it's the vigorous trumpet and timpani flourishes of the militaristic ones that command attention, there are plenty of lighter, witty touches elsewhere. A useful note and clean recording add to the pleasure. At present hardly any of these overtures is otherwise available.

Peter Branscombe

Haydn *Die Schöpfung* Genia Kühmeier Gabriel, Toby Spence Uriel, Dietrich Henschel Raphael, Sophie Karthäuser Eva, Markus Werba Adam, Les Arts Florissants, William Christie 103' 00"

Virgin Classics 0946 3 95235 2 8

Here is a splendid new recording of *Die Schöpfung* to add to the long list of distinguished earlier versions. From beginning to end there is no sense of special pleading, no striving for effect, simply a beautifully observant, enthusiastic performance of Haydn's grandest score. There is any amount of telling detail from Les Arts Florissants with its period instruments (45 players; there are 28 in the excellent chorus), but it is Christie's sure judgment of momentum, balance and overall impact that ensures this is such a rewarding experience. All five soloists are fine, none more than Toby Spence in the tenor music. Genia Kühmeier soon recovers from a poor start, phrasing Gabriel's coloratura with agile grace, and Sophie Karthäuser's Eve is well worth her place in Eden. Both the low-voiced men are good, firm singers, nicely in character. Among much sensitive ornamentation there are one or two oddities. The recording may be faulted only in the slightly exaggerated prominence accorded the solo singers. There are notes and three-language sung texts. This joyous, exuberant realization can be confidently recommended; it may indeed prove to be the most impressive of all. Peter Branscombe

Mozart *Complete Clavier Works Vol. 7* Siegbert Rampe 77' 56"

Dabringhaus & Grimm MDG 341 1307-2 Sonatas K. 14, K. 281, Variations K. 24, 25, 500, 573, Pieces K. 158, K. 453a, KAnh. 206a, K. 624

Another instalment in Rampe's survey of Mozart's complete solo keyboard works. As on the earlier CDs in the series, the music is – very properly – played on the harpsichord and the clavichord as well as the fortepiano, and it's particularly interesting to hear K. 281 on a fine 2-manual Shudi, complete with machine pedal and Venetian swell. Rampe is a brilliant harpsichord player and (with Shudi's aid) convincingly

reproduces all Mozart's dynamic markings. The choice of instrument is not as far-fetched as it may seem, for a few London harpsichords found their way to Austria, and there is at least circumstantial evidence that Countess Lodron of Salzburg had one and played it in the triple concerto K. 242, which Mozart wrote for her and her two daughters in 1776.

But I'm less keen on Rampe's clavichord playing. Mercifully, he's ditched the instrument with the noisy action I complained about in my reviews of Vols. 5 and 6 in the February and August issues of *EMR*, but I have the sense that occasionally he's not quite in control: the odd note sticks out, or fails to sound, or goes slightly sharp because the key is hit too hard (the chord at the start of the second section of K. 453a is particularly nasty). For the 'Duport' variations, K. 573, Rampe uses a copy of a Viennese fortepiano by Johann Schanz made several years after Mozart's death, which seems a rather odd choice: it can hardly have been what Mozart played in Potsdam in 1789! (Johann Schanz should not be confused with his elder brother Wenzel, who in 1788 sold an instrument – probably a square piano – to Haydn; Wenzel died before Johann became a maker, and there's no evidence that their instruments were similar.) Richard Maunder

Ryba *Böhmische Hirtenmesse* Georg Münzei, Oliver Pegelow, Heinz Kruse, Franz Grundheber SATB, Jürgen Henscen org, Hamburger Knabenchor & Kammerorchester St Nikolai, Ekkehard Richter 36' 24"

Christophorus CHE 0127-2 (rec 1981)

This is one of those folksy middle-European Christmas masses in which the mystery of the Incarnation is intertwined with the life of the local community, rather like the Hispanic villancicos. This was first performed in Rožmitál on Christmas night 1796, and presumably sounded rather less hefty than this performance. It would also have been sung in Czeck, not in German as here; the booklet only gives the German text. It sounds pretty, but a bit too smooth and polite. There isn't very much point in marketing it in the English-speaking world except as pleasing background music.

CB

For information on the town and the composer, see <http://www.radio.cz/fr/article/48676>

Salieri *Les Danaïdes* Sophie Marin-Degor Hypermnestre, Kirsten Blaise Plancippe, Christoph Genz Lyncée, Wolfgang Frisch Pélagus, Hans Christoph Begemann Danaüs, Schloss Ludwigsburg Festival Ch & Orch, Michael Hofstetter 112' 18"

OEHMS OC 909 (2 CDs)

Les Danaïdes (1784) was Salieri's first opera for Paris. The libretto, by du Roulet and Tschudi after Calzabigi, had been intended for Gluck. He, however, was too old and frail to undertake the commission, and mild subterfuge encouraged the authorities to claim that young Salieri had only written the score under the old master's supervision. In the event the opera enjoyed a rousing success, Salieri's reputation was made, and he wrote two further works for Paris – apart from all the ones he wrote for Vienna. *Les Danaïdes* is Gluckian in feel, though with distinctly Italianate touches. Five rather brief acts are well laid out, though the story itself is pretty preposterous: King Danaus, to avenge wrong done him by his late brother, Egyptus, commands his fifty nubile daughters to marry, then kill, their fifty cousin-bridegrooms; 98% of them fail to survive their wedding night, leaving Lynceus to exact vengeance on Danaus, and flee to Egypt with the non-murderous Hypermnestra. The final scene depicts the underworld torments of the accursed king and almost all his daughters. Salieri matches these requirements with a fine score, rich in orchestral detail (imaginative use of trombones), though I think most modern listeners would agree with me that it is all highly competent, but unmemorable. The new recording is less good than Gianluigi Gelmetti's Stuttgart-based performance on EMI (1990; nla), though Hofstetter's period-instrument reading is alert and expressive. But none of his soloists is entirely happy in the French language, or blessed with a voice that it is a real pleasure to listen to. Notes and full libretto in French, German and English are to be commended, but, annoyingly, the libretto lacks track-numbers, making orientation needlessly difficult. Peter Branscombe *though of good classical pedigree. Those who delight in arcane knowledge can find the 100 wives and husbands named in Lempriere or on the www.

19th CENTURY

Alice Mary Smith *Symphonies in a & c; Andante for Clarinet* Angela Malsburg cl, London Mozart Players, Howard Shelley Chandos CHAN 10283 66' 06"

To be reviewed along with the scores by BC in our next issue.

LETTERS

Dear Editor,

In the December issue of *Early Music* review Brian Clarke wrote an interesting, if somewhat controversial, review of the new Zelenka offering from Fiori Musicali on the Metronome label. Reviews are of necessity subjective, but this particular review crossed the delicate line between subjectivity and bias. Let me explain.

Firstly, Brian Clarke suggests that it was 'slightly unadventurous' to have chosen to record the works offered rather than some Zelenka mass(es). The longest work of the three, the *Requiem* (ZWV 45), has only ever been recorded twice before (on the Claves and Panton labels), one recording of which (on Panton) became unavailable some years ago. With only one other recording still available (from the eighties), this can hardly be regarded as an over-recorded work. Not only that, the new offering is the British premiere recording.

Secondly, and related to the above, the implication at two separate places in the review that recordings of masses would have been preferable is premature. Despite several concert performances, the widely acknowledged best interpreters of these masses (Frieder Bernius, Hans-Christoff Rademann and Marek Stryncl) have not produced any recording of a single Zelenka mass in the last 6 years, so to produce a good one is no mean feat. Even so, I suspect that this is where Penelope Rapson and her group will head next in their exploration of Zelenka's repertoire.

Thirdly, Brian Clarke compared the Fiori Musicali offering to recordings by Paul Dombrecht and his group (Il Fondamento). While this comparison is certainly relevant in the case of the shorter *Miserere* (ZWV 57), to my knowledge Paul Dombrecht has *never recorded the Requiem* ZWV 45. Dombrecht's recording of *Requiem* ZWV 48 was issued on the same CD as ZWV 57 (on the Pascaille label), but it has a different style. It is neither wise nor fair to compare recordings of two entirely different works—or did Brian Clarke actually mix them up? That would certainly be an unfortunate error.

Lastly, the phrase 'a product of the English collegiate system' is confusing. What is Brian Clarke actually referring to? Presumably his liking for the other British recording of the *Lamentation* means that it is exempt from such a scathing description; after all, there exists one other recording from Europe that by general consensus has never been surpassed (René Jacobs). Regarding the other two works on the CD, we have no idea how the Dresden Chapel Choir would have sounded with its highly-prized Italian castrati; so *all* recordings are an approximation. Besides, ZWV 45 may never have been performed in Dresden.

This letter has taken up more space than the review itself, but perhaps it has to, to make good the damage caused by an uninformed contribution. I say to Penelope Rapson: well done, indeed. You have introduced the British public to some great works. I do agree with Brian Clarke about one thing, though – that you can now go a step further.

Alistair Kidd

Firstly, I hold up my hand and acknowledge that, having listened to the *Miserere*, I had just assumed that the *Requiem* settings were the same. I apologise for that. We are none of us perfect, as Mr Kidd's spelling of my name and that of the Belgian record company shows. Do check out his website – the news page gives details of a fine performance of a previously unrecorded mass. BC

Discover Zelenka at www.idzelenka.net

Since only eight of the 21 masses have been recorded (information from the above website), it does indeed seem a pity that one is recorded for the third time. I can't see any particular virtue in it being a premier British recording: that's taking nationalism too far. CB

Dear Editor,

I am writing to comment on the article by Kevin C. MacDonald, published in Issue 122. It's impossible not to notice careless logic, re-nuanced paraphrasing, the reiteration of a mis-quote, and unwarranted leaps to conclusions; in short, bad scholarship. I disagree categorically with his conclusions, and I see, after another careful reading of even the sources he consults, that so do all serious scholars of the subject.

I am wondering why Mr. MacDonald is even launching his tirade against Dr. Seletsky. His language – 'a game of Chinese whispers', 'a new vogue in clip-in bows', 'no longer appropriate for HIP use' – suggests that he is personally aggrieved by the possibility that more clip-in bows should exist on the planet.

As a maker of historical bows, and not an 'amateur maker' as Dr. MacDonald admits to being, I can attest to the validity of accurate copies of existing early bows, and making them clip-in if the originals happen to be clip-ins. Nevertheless, many makers add the screw-frog feature to copies of clip-in originals. Well, adding a screw-mechanism to a clip-in bow is inaccurate in many cases. The return to accuracy seems to be Mr. MacDonald's main worry, as he defends screw-frog reproductions by mentioning their primacy in recent decades of new making.

In the early bow world, makers have played pretty fast and loose with models for decades. Admittedly, it is difficult to find, personally examine, and play any early bows on which it's worth basing our work, so many early bow makers have freely re-interpreted the baroque bow. It is reasonable for the modern bow maker to reinterpret the bow; after all, an active modern bow maker might see hundreds of first-class examples in a year on which to model his or her work, and thousands of bows overall during the same period. A lucky baroque bow maker might see only a handful of first-class original examples in his or her *lifetime*.

The context in which the baroque bow was created does not exist any more. I think that as makers, we should re-dedicate ourselves to trusting the existing examples, rather than refitting them as we imagine period makers might have done 'if only they had known what we know'.

Dr. MacDonald's article, as well as being sloppy, is then irrelevant to the player whose imagined convenience he thinks he is defending. My own experience has shown me that when a good player experiences a bow (or an instrument) that is really faithful to a worthy original, he or she perceives its validity, and, as Jaap Schroeder has said, the equipment will lead them to a new understanding of the music.

David Hawthorne

Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA

See also the article on pp. 10-11. In view of the criticism, perhaps I should say that two people, not makers but each involved in professional baroque string performance for at least 30 years, coincidentally on the same day mentioned that the article was the best item in the December issue. CB

Keith Rogers – instrument maker

1943 - 2008

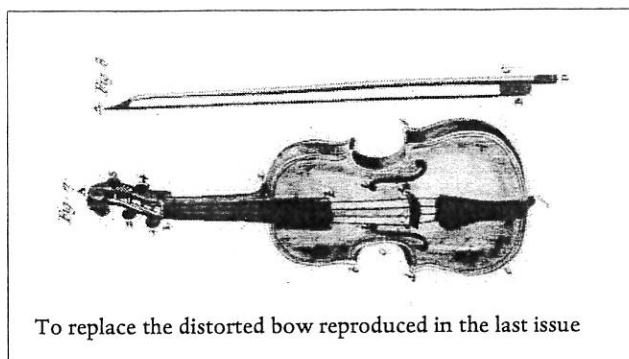
Keith Rogers, cornett, serpent and oboe maker at Christopher Monk Instruments (CMI), died on the 21st January after a lengthy struggle with pancreatic cancer.

Following a career in teaching, which culminated in the positions of Director of Music at two leading Northern Ireland grammar schools, as well as spending several years as a recorder maker, Keith joined the Christopher Monk workshops in April 1992. Here, in partnership with the cornett player Jeremy West, and succeeding the late Christopher Monk (founding father of the cornett and serpent revivals), Keith spent the remainder of his life making copies of historic wind instruments. Building on his skills and experience as a recorder maker, he quickly adapted to the demands made by 'all instruments that wiggle' (as they are affectionately known at CMI); instruments which are demanding on both player and maker alike. Using the treasure trove of clues and evidence extant in Christopher Monk's own workshop, Keith picked his way through this mysterious and vexing labyrinth. But it was his unique mix of powerful intellect and enviable manual dexterity that enabled him so successfully to create fabulous wind instruments. Examples of his work live (and play) on and may be found across the world from New York to New Zealand, Aberdeen to Argentina.

An experiment to make an oboe da caccia using the same methods employed to manufacture a serpent, lead to a lasting partnership with leading oboe player and authority, Dick Earle. A da caccia (eventually built in the traditional way rather than using the method above), along with several models of historic oboe, became available as a result. For more than a decade these beautiful instruments have been sent to appreciative players from five continents.

Keith Rogers was born and brought up in Sussex; he studied music at the University of Wales at Bangor (BA Hons 1st Class 1965), lived in Belfast, then in London and, most recently, in rural Norfolk. He is survived by his wife, Kathryn, four daughters and six grandchildren.

Jeremy West



H. Wiley Hitchcock (1923 – 2008) was one of those few scholars who will be remembered by a single initial. The cataloguer of Charpentier was an expert on the composer long before he became popular and widely-performed. He also founded the Institute for Studies in American Music at Brooklyn College of the City of New York (1971) and edited, with Stanley Sadie, *The New Grove Dictionary of American Music* (1986).

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BUXTEHUDE AT FRAMLINGHAM

Saturday 1st December 2007 at St Michael's, Framlingham, Suffolk

Jon Hutchings

Dieterich Buxtehude's greatest work, arguably, is his seven-cantata cycle, *Membra Jesu nostri*, written in 1680. During the 300th anniversary of his death, we were treated to a wealth of Buxtehude concerts, from John Scott's recital at the BBC Proms to more local concerts, perhaps featuring a cantata or two or some organ pieces. Dedicated to the Swedish composer Gustaf Düben, the cycle addresses seven parts of Christ's body upon the Cross, using the medieval poem (*Salve salutare mundi*) probably by the Cistercian Abbot Arnulf of Leuven, though for centuries ascribed to Bernard of Clairvaux under the title *Rhythmica oratio*.

The Delightful Companions, aptly named, and Friends gave a performance of the cycle on a cold and frosty December evening. St Michael's in Framlingham is an unusual church, in that its chancel is much bigger than the nave, holding the tombs of the Howard family. Fortunately for those present, the acoustics of the chancel are something special, allowing the music a halo of resonance.

The concert began with the viol consort performing four movements from the 1617 Banchetto Musicale suites by Johann Hermann Schein. Like Johann Schelle fifty years later, Schein began in Dresden, establishing friendships with Scheidt and Schütz, and moved to Leipzig, eventually holding the position of cantor at the Thomasschule. These suites were a neat piece of programming – the viols play only in the sixth cantata, which leaves a question as to what else can those performers do in a concert. Fortunately for us, the atmosphere for the concert was set, with the rich sinuous tone of the viols enticing in all listeners. The triple-time movements, like those found in the Buxtehude, were gentle despite their melancholic tonality. The polyphony of the movements had imitation, but nothing so strict that it distracted from the music itself.

And so to the cantata-cycle. With the early 17th century mystical painting *The Glory* illuminated behind them, the five singers took their places, and the opening sad strains of the first cantata began. What a fine band this was – a home-grown group of Framlingham period instrumentalists. The chamber organ chuffed along beautifully, and the theorist, Jamie Akers, played with such sensitivity that the sound was one glorious whole. All of this, naturally, was led with great aplomb by Peter Leech – a man whose direction was subtle and non-obtrusive (both aurally and visually), and allowed the work to retain its consort independence, albeit with informed direction. His programme notes were particularly excellent.

The singers were well chosen: Helen Chapman floated bird-like on the first soprano part, enjoying every moment without pushing too far; Claire Tomlin, a different shade of soprano, matched Helen beautifully, and is obviously a strong consort singer. Countertenors are a fascinating group – will he sound like a woman (David Daniels), have a voice of astonishing clarity (Robin Blaze), or such

warmth that you cannot help but be captivated (James Bowman)? Fortunately Timothy Travers-Brown sang with a beautiful full-bodied tone and pinpoint accuracy that brought nuances of the text to a new perception. Robin Burlton was a delightful tenor – light yet focused in tone, with a voice that seemed perfectly matched to the acoustic; Alastair Chapman's strong bass conjured up the majesty of the text, and was not afraid to sing tricky phrases quietly and with clarity when required.

Each cantata, despite being similar in rhythm, was given its own style: the sadness of the first movement was captured perfectly, setting the tone for this concert in aid of two hospices (St Elizabeth's, Ipswich and Arthur Rank, Cambridge). I personally prefer the second sonata to go a little slower (as in Suzuki's recording on BIS), but this light and agile reading was carefully played and brought much enjoyment. The sound-world changed dramatically in the sixth cantata, and the timbre of viols with the lower three voices brought a richness different from the lighter soprano readings earlier. Here was devotion rather than solemnity. Those musicians in the audience much enjoyed the stretching out of the final cadences in the choruses, with the leading note and tonic clashing for what seemed an eternity, making the resolve all the more satisfying: the movement within the cadences, and overlapping of parts, was easily heard and deftly manoeuvred.

A moment of stillness hung in the air after the final cadence of the final cantata, the triple-time rhythms of the Amen being particularly well indicated – I had not heard it performed so clearly before. The music finished, those performing proved true to their name, as they wandered around the church speaking with members of the audience, all eager to hear more Buxtehude and more of the singers. This was, truly, a delightful performance.

