

# Early Music REVIEW

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2 Reviews of music CB  
7 Performing the Temperaments *Judy Tarling*  
8 London Concerts *Andrew Benson-Wilson*  
12 Gabrieli & Monteverdi in Birmingham CB  
14 Reviews of Books CB, BC, *Barbara Sachs*  
21 ♫ Finger: Overture *Love's at a Loss*  
25 CD Reviews  
41 More on bows *Kevin Macdonald & Stephen Marvin*  
43 In memoriam David Bolton

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C. A. J. Bartlett

I'm not very good at listening to sermons, but I was struck by the text of one recently: the notorious aphorism of Donald Rumsfeld about the different sorts of knowledge. It was treated by the press as laughable at the time, but on reflection it is profound, worthy of comparison with Socrates' assertion that he was wiser than other men because only he was wise enough to know that he knew nothing. My thoughts turned to its application to the performance of medieval music, and I missed the rest of the sermon.

With chant, at least we know the notes, once the use of a stave became normal. Any addition of ornaments etc. seems unlikely, since built into the system there is already an ability to notate some different sounds and melismas appear regularly in certain types of chant. But what about rhythm? Even an equal-note interpretation requires some shaping, but systematic theories imposed on the notation have not been widely accepted. Nor have we any idea of the frequency of organum or other free melodic lines, as in the Winchester Psalter (see p. 2). In secular music, knowledge of the notes may take us most of the way, but many interpretations stray far into the area of what we don't know. It would, in fact, be interesting to review performances by plotting ideas on a graph to show degrees of certainty, plausibility and ignorance. Were drums really as pervasive as one might guess from modern recordings?

Far more difficult, though, is to guess what we don't know that we don't know. A new discovery could upturn our knowledge in so many areas. Who, thirty years ago, would have realized that Bach's *St Matthew Passion* was intended for and works utterly convincingly with eight singers (plus a few bit parts); yet the new John Butt recording (see p. 33) joins the older one by Paul McCreesh in giving an audibly-convincing demonstration that taking readily-available information – the number of extant parts – and believing it isn't just a musicological curiosity. And although in the 1970s Sandy Mackenzie may have felt that everyone accepted modern equal temperament (see p. 19), a variety of other temperaments (some mathematically correct, some *ad hoc*) are used now as a matter of course by performers in the early-music world.

CB

## REVIEWS OF MUSIC

Clifford Bartlett

## THE WINCHESTER TROPER

*The Winchester Troper: facsimile edition and introduction* by Susan Rankin (Early English Church Music, 50). Stainer & Bell, 2007. xii + 105pp + facsimiles, £95.00. ISBN 978 0 85249 894 1

This is a complete facsimile of the all 198 folios of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, MS 473, part of the extensive collection of books that came to the college on the death of Archbishop Matthew Parker in 1575. I wouldn't normally quote publisher's blurb, but the page on it in Stainer & Bell's house magazine *The Bell* is a succinct account which I could not improve on.

[The MS] is a small, thick book, made for the personal use of a cantor of the Old Minster of Winchester in the early 11<sup>th</sup> century, and added to until the early 12<sup>th</sup>. On its 200 folios substantial new repertoires of new liturgical music are copied: these tropes, sequences, proses and *organa* were composed as amplification and ornamentation of the older Gregorian chant.

The foundations of these new repertoires lie in the new monastic enterprise inaugurated at the Old Minster by Æthelwold in the 960s, and demonstrate the centrality of liturgical music to the public delivery of intercessions for the founders and benefactors of the community, as well as for the monks themselves... The most innovative music in the book, a series of 174 *organa* (second parts composed to accompany chant melodies) represents a musical practice not recorded as a repertoire anywhere else in Europe before the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

This colour facsimile of the manuscript has an introduction explaining how and when the book was made, how it was used, and how its liturgical repertoires were designed. Studies of the hands of over fifty text scribes are accompanied by the first full account of Anglo-Saxon musical notation. A study of compositional technique shown in the *organa* explores their relation to grammatical and rhetorical teaching. The comprehensive introduction by Susan Rankin is accompanied by a complete inventory of the book and indexes of all chants.

The name Winchester Troper is ambiguous, in that it is also used for an Oxford MS. Bodley 775, also written for the Old Minster at Winchester, perhaps a couple of decades after the Cambridge MS. Both were probably for use by the cantor to supplement the main liturgical books. The Cambridge MS fits the title Troper, so the Oxford MS needs a new title.

In virtually every respect this publication deserves congratulation to the British Council, Early English Church music, and especially Susan Rankin, whose introduction, were it published separately, would make a substantial book. This, however, raises the question of format. The Troper itself is quite small: 14.5 x 9 cm. If one function of a facsimile is to give some representation of

the original as a physical object, 42.5 x 31.5 cm isn't very close. The individual pages are reproduced with two openings of the MS per page, surrounded by very ample margins, where what was really needed was something like the facsimiles of the two Wolfenbüttel MSS of Notre-Dame music. The introduction doesn't need large pages: indeed, it is quite hard work reading it without a bookstand on a large table. It is only the 15 pages of tables that require the format, which seems to be the tail wagging the dog, though I can see that any other way of presenting the data would have been difficult (though not beyond the wit of ingenious typography of merely printing the tables across rather than down the page).

The size causes a practical problem. Where do you shelf it? It won't fit with other EECM volumes, and librarians may well be cursing the series anyway for its recent change in format. Outsize volumes have a habit of disappearing. For example, a few years ago, I needed to find the facsimile of Biber's *Salzburg Mass*, which was published in the Collected Works of Benevoli, who was then thought to be the composer. Several libraries had the series, but the only one I found that had that volume was the British Library. My corner for outsize scores, with various *Spem in alium*, *Ecce beatam lucem*, C. P. E. Bach's *Heilig*, Ferneyhough's *Transit* and a few A3 photocopies, is full. With a smaller mid-page gap and tighter margins, the facsimiles would just have fitted two-to-a-page in the current EECM format. When Susan Rankin's transcription of the music appears, anyone studying the MS is going to need that and the facsimile side by side, together with the index, and will be continually referring to the introduction. So the ideal configuration would have been a facsimile volume matching the size of the MS, the introduction in normal book format, the transcription perhaps as a standard EECM volume and the inventory probably squashed a bit to fit with the transcription. But I don't know how near Susan's transcription is to publication.

I don't want to seem to condemn the product. It is excellent that so important a source is now available in a fine colour reproduction, made while the MS was disbound so that the whole of each page is visible. The 9 chapters of introduction are thorough on the MS as a physical object, its contents and its function. The introduction ends with some early quotations on the power of music, one from Wulfstan, cantor at the Old Minster half a century before the MS was written. 'Music is the power of modes or tropes of musical art, so that they may make those rejoicing to rejoice more and those grieving to grieve more.' ('Modes' and 'tropes' may have meant something different to Wulfstan from their current usage by chant scholars.) This volume brings the music it contains nearer to being able to speak to us.

## LASSUS MOTETS a 5

Orlando di Lasso *Sämtliche Werke... Band 7. Motetten IV (Magnum opus musicum, Teile IV): Motetten für 5 Stimmen neu herausgegeben von Bernhold Schmid*. Breitkopf & Härtel (SON 337), 2007. cix + 191 pp €171.00

This includes Motets 212-248, 36 of the 167 five-voice motets (149-315) in the posthumous anthology which is the basis for the old Collected Works. The new volume includes the seven-page preface that Haberl supplied for the original 1896 edition. The cix in the pagination listed in the heading shows the extent to which this is no mere reprint, though the important change isn't so visible. The music looks the same, with its preservation of original clefs, but each piece is re-edited with a collation of all the sources, going back a half-century before *Magnum opus musicum*. The new preface has a much fuller list of sources, detailed collations for each piece, texts printed separately (with sources stated, though regrettably liturgical use is not given for Biblical texts) and a broad selection of facsimile pages. I've commented at length about two previous volumes (I & III =Motets I & II: the *Sämtliche Werke* series alternates motet and secular volumes). The general issues remain the same. Those who can read the clefs (perhaps not a declining number now that some amateur singers are using facsimiles) will find this and the other volumes an amazing source of repertoire. The status of Lassus in his own time still has not been restored among people who sing this sort of music, despite a mouthing of Palestrina, Victoria Lassus and perhaps Byrd as co-equal masters of the period. Reading Warren Kirkendale's regrets at the way musicology is moving (see pp 14-15) makes me want to draw attention to editions like this as the absolutely fundamental job of the profession: supplying musical texts of the greatest possible accuracy, backed up with full commentaries. The difference between this and Haberl's edition shows that we can perform the task better now, though I fear that doing so doesn't rank high in the order of value among most academics. Haberl's edition has been in use (even if it needed updating) for more than a century: contrast it with the likely shelf-life of most of the musicological books which pour from the academic presses but which are hardly likely to be useful (except to students of the history of scholarship) in 2018, let alone 2108! If you want lasting fame, try editing!

## D'INDIA VILLANELLE

Sigismondo D'India *Villanelle a 3, 4 e 5 voci, Libro primo (1608) e secondo (1612)*. A cura di Concetta Assenza. (*Musiche Rinasimentale Sicialiane*, 25). Olschki, 2007. xxxv + 53pp, €32.00. ISBN 978 88 222 5673 7

One tends to think of d'India as a rather serious, *seconda pratica* composer, a status that these lighter pieces might seem to contradict. Admittedly, the villanella is more literate and more musically correct than when it was first taken up by composers who were happy to imitate vernacular parallel triads. A few consecutive fifths survive, but not blatantly, and places like bar 2 of no. VIII of the

first book seem rather out of place. Most of the pieces are for three voices (SSB). Book I closes with two each for four and five parts (though *Occhi belli*, no. XVIII, is called an *Aria a 5*), Book II has 14 SSA items, four for SSAB and three for SSATB (I've followed the original numbering and counted paired pieces as separate.) The music is attractive, perhaps a little playful (I don't think, for instance, that strange chord sequence Eb G C A D G in *Al nascer mio* is to be taken seriously, despite the death and torment associated with it in stanza 2); but these songs are useful to lighten a madrigal programme in texture or for students to get into the style. Many of these pieces seem to have the ambiguity of mood that we know from the best English madrigals, and performers will need to test the tone of each moment of emotional tension: is it to be taken straight, ironically or as parody? The trios look as if they will work with TTB (or, for that matter, SSA), making the collection more flexible. There is the customary extensive introduction, edition of texts etc.

## CHEAP &amp; CHEERFUL HANDL &amp; BYRD

The fanfares which conclude the Gallus/Handl *Laudate Dominum* a16 that I mentioned in December turned out to be banal rather than joyful when tried on a mixed vocal/instrumental ensemble. Two Christmas motets by him for four voices (with parts for instruments) from Cheap, Choice, Brave and New Music Editions are more conventional. *Pueri concinite* (CCBN 16007) is scored, in terms of original clefs, for SSSA, and was presumably intended for choirboys. The editor supplies parts in a variety of clefs, allowing for recorders or viols to play at pitch or down an octave. The score has the bottom part in octave-treble, but there is a part at notated pitch. The continually-crossing parts may be more effective in performance than they look on paper. *Regem natum* (CCBN 16008) is for standard SATB, with the alto part in high tenor range (in octave-treble in the score but with a separate part at the right octave). It looks rather more interesting. The tune of 'Noe, noe, noe' seems familiar, reminding me of Sweelinck but not quite corresponding. Is there a common pattern with other settings?

Particularly useful is an edition of Byrd's pair of verse-anthems for Easter *Christ rising* and *Christ is risen againe*, which concludes his *Songs of sundrie natures*, 1589. (The bold may like to try the facsimile: Performers' Facsimiles, 163.) The work circulated in ecclesiastical sources with an organ rather than viol accompaniment (see *The Byrd Edition* 11 p. 113). It is scored for two solo voices (C1 clef, with a range of a ninth from middle C), and ATTB chorus and viols. The edition gives a reduction of the four lower voices, so it can easily be used without viols. Enough parts are provided for performance in a variety of ways (a standard virtue of CCBN editions). One oddity is that the first chorus section in each part has the second voice tacet, whereas in the church sources, both voices sing, which is sensible if choral forces are used; a pity that it didn't occur to the Vince Kelly to cue it into the part, though normally he is good at allowing for all plausible (and maybe some implausible) performance possibilities.

*These came without prices, and I can't find them on line.*

## PURCELL SOCIETY

*Louis Grabu Albion and Albanius* Edited under the supervision of the Purcell Society by Bryan White (*Purcell Society Edition Companion Series*, vol. 1) Stainer & Bell, 2007. xxiii + 243pp, £80.00 ISBN 978 85249 905 4

*Henry Purcell Symphony Songs* Edited under the supervision of the Purcell Society by Bruce Wood (*The Works of Henry Purcell*, vol. 27) Stainer & Bell, 2007. xxxvii + 134pp, £65.00. ISBN 978 0 85249 900 9

The Purcell Society has been linked with Novello since it began in 1876. These two volumes are the first to appear from Stainer and Bell. From the outside, it seems a sensible move. Stainer and Bell, with *Musica Britannica* and *Early English Church Music*, along with the relics and successors of Edmund Fellowes's madrigal and lute-song publications, are the major publishers of scholarly editions of English music (+ one Scottish anthology in MB). Purcell does look rather out of place in the monthly Music Sales list of chiefly popular and pop repertoire, while the alternative fare at Stainer and Bell is chiefly Sidney Carter's and F. Pratt Green's hymns. (One dull sermon, I browsed through the Green contributions to the hymn-book to see if I could find any without defective rhymes: I found only one.) There has been no change of ownership of earlier editions, which are still published by Novello.

As the Society completes the re-editing of Purcell's works, it has decided to issue editions of significant works by other composers of the period; *Venus and Adonis* is announced for this year. *Albion and Albanius* is a very familiar title: it crops up in any discussion of early English opera, but frustratingly has not been easy of access: it was an obvious candidate for a facsimile edition in *The London Stage* (another project that found its way to Stainer and Bell). Bryan White (who is the editor of NEMA's journal *Early Music Performer*) has written in *Early Music* and elsewhere about the work, and he produced an edition for performance at Dartington in 1997. He provides a concise and informative introduction, and his editorial work included examining 17 of the 25 extant copies. The variants show a systematic attempt by the original publisher to correct errors.

The score itself is well produced with sensible editorial decisions. The three middle parts of the original five-part scoring (clefs G1 C1 C2 C3 F4) are transcribed in alto clef, since the original scoring is for violas. Fine for an academic edition or for specialist performers, but I hope that an alternative treble-clef part is provided for the second part in the hire material for school and amateur use. The three-part *petit cœur* sections, with two G1 parts and continuo, require two violins and bass. (Should the publisher allow for one-to-a-part performance by including 2<sup>nd</sup> G1 solo part with the treble-clef alternative for the first viola as well as in the 1<sup>st</sup> violin part?) The comments on performance-practice are sound. Does one assume that the French orchestral layout implies a more French performance style than is appropriate in the four-part scoring favoured in Purcell's theatre music of the following decade. (Grabu's work was performed in 1685.)

It is disappointing that Dryden's libretto is not also included: printing reduced-format libretti with four pages on one is a useful way of making them available without too much extra expense, though the pages are a bit smaller than those of, for instance, the Halle Händel-Ausgabe.

I haven't attempted to evaluate the dramatic shape of the work from the score, but the music itself is variable. It would certainly be worth offprinting an orchestral suite. Grabu's setting of English has often been criticized, and it is easy to find examples. More worrying is the four-square rhythms of the solo vocal writing, and it was perhaps a mistake to issue the volume alongside one of Purcell's vocal music.

The contents of the *Symphony Songs* volume do not match the original vol. 27, and the title is new. The 'form' wasn't identified until comparatively recently: the edition might have devoted at least a footnote to its invention; I would guess it has been around for 20 years or so. The items edited here all survive as a group in Purcell's autograph (British Library R.h.8). There are eight pieces for solo voices and instruments, followed by a setting of Cowley's 'In a deep vision's intellectual scene' for SSB and continuo, which is included in the same MS group.

There are several changes in style compared with previous volumes. This (and the Draghi) are hard-bound, following the recent practice of MB and EECM. The page size is A4, a little larger than the Purcell Society volumes of the last 30 years (though nowhere near the original vol. 27, which measures 40x x 28.5 cm). One feature that should have been changed, but hasn't, is the retention of a separate two-stave continuo realization. I had thought that was a consequence of the Novello influence on the Purcell Society, but evidently not. I presume that it is there just to establish a copyright. But the volume is significantly longer (so presumably more expensive) since systems of two or three staves are expanded to four or five, generating far more page-turns than necessary, especially annoying when there are turns within repeated sections. Apart from layout problems, they make the edition more ephemeral than it need be: realizations will date much more quickly than the edition itself. How do we know that Purcell expected a harpsichord rather than organ (chamber organs were surely still used for secular music) or theorbo (a facsimile of a page of perhaps a theorbo part is printed on p. xxv). No-one can write a part idiomatic to all three instruments, so why bother? And the realizations are at times distinctly odd. I can't imagine any sensitive player repeating the chords on beats 1 & 2 and 3 & 4 of the first bar of *Hark how the wild musicians sing*, and surely the semiquaver in bar 3, if it needs a right hand note at all, doesn't need two?

The appearance is fine in other respects. The texts are printed separately, in original orthography when there is an authentic source, but modernized as underlay. It would be helpful for those looking for repertoire for specific ensembles if the scoring had been concisely shown in the contents list: eg '2 vln, TTB'.

The symphony songs are not among Purcell's best-known works. It goes without saying, though that they are worth investigating. Instrumental parts are stated to be available, and Stainer and Bell has an established system for granting permission to photocopy scores.

#### BLOW SYMPHONY SONGS

The latest batch from Cedric Lee's Green Man Press includes three sets of Symphony Songs by John Blow. Blo 1 (£7.50) contains two duets for soprano, bass, two violins and continuo, *Septimus and Acme* (text by Cowley) and *Go Perjur'd Man* (Herrick). Blo 3 (£5.00) has *Poor Celadon* for alto, two violins and continuo. These are edited from Blow's anthology *Amphion Anglicus*, a collection of excerpts and independent songs comparable to Purcell's posthumous collection *Orpheus Britannicus*. There are no serious editorial problems. If it's worth noting the missing bar-lines of *Septimus* at 118/9 and 121/2, it should be done for 58/9, which has the same music as 121/2, though 55/56 isn't elided. There's a misprint at bar 97: last two notes should be dotted quaver and semiquaver (and to be pedantic, I checked my copy of the original as well as the Gregg Press facsimile). A couple of footnotes appear on the wrong page. Both these duets have a previous history, having been published in *The Theater of Music* in the 1680s, and *Go perjur'd man* has further MS versions. Blo 2 (£6.90) contains the earlier, considerably different version of *Septimus and Acme* (oh, so easy to give an intentional misprint!), with the variant spellings *Septimus* in the title and *Septimnus* in the underlay. To save a drive to our storeroom a few miles away, where my classical literature is kept, I tried to check the Catullus poem on which the text is based. But googling "Septimus Catullus" produced a weird list of Wikipedia possible questions, beginning with 'What ACME stands for like [sic] in ACME screw?', 'Who was Catullus?', 'Can I get pregnant from having sex whilst on the pill whilst on antibiotics?', 'Why is our dog panting excessively?', etc. (I am resisting the temptation to ask readers to guess what ACME might be an acronym for to make an ACME screw connect with the third question.) The answer to my search, achieved from another site, is *Acmen Septimus suos amores* (poem 45), which doesn't explain the superfluous *N*, and that doesn't seem to come from Cowley either (though one would have to search critical editions of both poets to get a definite answer). I would have thought that an editor might have been intrigued by the difference and investigated, and should at least have mentioned Catullus, whose reputation for naughtiness might attract buyers. I hope the length of this digression doesn't make it look as if I'm being critical of the edition, which is fine.

Blo 3 (£5.00) is *Poor Celadon* (*Loving above Himself*) for alto/high tenor, two violins and continuo. The compass is narrow, rising an octave from the A below middle C, with a few light B flats. The realisation is a demonstration of why keyboard realisations are often written too high. It is quite right that its tessitura is low, but it looks awkward with so many notes below the stave – it would look better in alto clef, but I suspect that most accompanists who could read alto clef wouldn't need a realisation anyway.

Green Man has also produced the popular opening movement of Handel's *Eternal source of light divine* for alto and trumpet with keyboard and also transposed for soprano. Full score and string parts at both pitches are available from King's Music.

#### MOZART PIANO CONCERTOS

*Mozart Konzert für Klavier und Orchester in C major, KV 647...* edited by Norbert Gertsch. Breitkopf & Härtel (PB 15106), 2007. [iv] + 68 pp, €32.00.

*Mozart Konzert für Klavier und Orchester in A major, KV 647...* edited by Ernst-Günter Heinemann. Breitkopf & Härtel (PB 15107), 2008. [iv] + 74 pp, €36.00.

These are published in conjunction with Henle-Verlag. This is a pairing that has been in operation for various of Henle's Collected Works series. I can't imagine them embarking on a new Complete Mozart, but the NMA piano concertos is due for a new look. Performance material, versions for two pianos and study scores are available from Breitkopf. Facsimiles of the autographs of both concertos have been published: K. 467 by Dover Books in 1985, K. 488 by Henle (HN 3216) in 2005.

Both volumes begin with a one-page introduction in German (repeated in English) and end with two pages of critical commentary (in German only). The layout is remarkably similar to the Bärenreiter score: Breitkopf sometimes cuts out staves to get a third system onto a page, but the systems themselves match precisely until bar 170 of the first movement. They are the same in the slow movement but diverge at bar 48 in the finale. Presumably the editor worked on a Bärenreiter score and the typesetter retained the layout. The blank-stave omissions, however, enable the new edition to save 10 pages. Both editions give the piano two staves throughout. Mozart himself didn't bother to copy out the continuo line into the piano left-hand stave in *tuttis*: it wasn't really necessary, since he placed the piano solo immediately above the bass. I wouldn't advocate a modern score placing the violins on the top stave, but Mozart's placing of the solo part is eminently sensible, so why not preserve it? It would be a way of making the new score obviously different for other modern ones.

The A-major concerto has less straightforward history than used to be thought, since it was begun at the end of 1784 and taken up again in early 1786: the completion date in Mozart's thematic catalogue is 2 March 1786. The edition doesn't make clear how much of the work might (at least in outline) have been written in 1784: I find elsewhere that it is eight leaves, but not how many bars that implies. Mozart's original draft had two oboes, but these were later (perhaps when he turned again to the incomplete work) changed them to clarinets. Some users might be interested to know, for a variety of reasons upon which I will not speculate, what Mozart wrote when, and whether the filling-out of the score of first eight leaves happened in 1784 or 1786. No doubt this is dealt with in the introduction to the facsimile, but there is room here for a couple of sentences.

I'm intrigued by the fact that the autograph of K467 is preserved in the Heinemann Collection of the Pierpont Morgan Library and the name of the editor of K.488 is Heinemann. Any connection?

As to what score to use, I'd go for these as being more recent and at least as easy to read. But the changes are not significant enough to invest in a new set of parts.

#### BACH & HAYDN

To conclude, a miscellaneous group from Henle Verlag. There is strong competition for any new edition of Bach's cello suites from the Bärenreiter package with facsimiles of all the sources, extensive commentary and edition. Henle offers a study score (HN 9666; €19.00) with a summary of the relationship of the sources, coming down in favour of the best-known, Anna Magdalena's copy, which is included in facsimile as well as the modern edition. Henle's editor believes that the differences in articulation etc are modernisations by scribes rather than alternatives going back to the composer. The commentary does, however, record differences of substance, since the relationship between the sources is by no means direct. This is a useful edition if you need to carry one around with you or if you just want something to accompany a CD.

The new Peters critical edition of Haydn's quartets started at op. 20. The earlier sets may not be quite so original, but

I suspect that they would be played more often if Haydn had died at the same age as Mozart. A study score version of the critical edition of op. 17 at a reasonable price (HN 9206; €17.50) is worth having. There is a short introduction and a critical commentary. The editor is Georg Feder, and it is taken from the complete edition. Parts are also available.

Haydn's *Sinfonia Concertante* has lost the first word of its title in the collected works, which is a pity, since it cuts it off from other works of the type, especially Mozart's for violin and viola and the four-instrument work that hovers on the edge of his oeuvre. The ensemble (oboe, bassoon, violin and cello, with piano reduction) isn't one that is very likely to assemble casually, but there is certainly a need for an ensemble playing it to rehearse together rather than first meet on the day of the concert with the orchestra, so an up-to-date edition separate from the orchestral material is useful (HN 154; €22.00). Considering that it was written in London when the composer was at the height of his powers, performances are amazingly rare.

*Alice Mary Smith Symphonies* Alice Mary Smith Two Overtures: 'The Masque of Pandora' (1878) and 'Jason, or The Argonauts and the Sirens' (1879) edited by Ian Graham Jones (*Recent Researches in the Music of the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century*, 38 & 45) A-R Editions, 2003 & 2007. Scores £170.00 & £135.00; parts for hire

We are very pleased to see these editions by one of our team of reviewers. See CD review on p. 40.

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## PERFORMING THE TEMPERAMENTS

JUDY TARLING

A one-day conference on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> February organised by the Warburg Institute and the Institute of Musical Research called 'Performing the Temperaments' was followed by a concert at Goodenough College to demonstrate the day's findings. The programme brought together an exchange of ideas between musicians, astrologists, humorists (that is, the four, not the funny sort) and medical historians, and was convened by Charles Burnett and Lucía Díaz Marroquín.

Charles Burnett set the tone for the day by describing Kircher's cure for the bite of the tarantula. The variability of the type of biter and the body rhythms of the bitten were required to be in balance if any cure was to be achieved. Balancing the type of medicine with the humour or temperament of the receiver was the most important factor in bringing about change. A recorded performance of Kircher's Tarantella was unexpectedly soothing.

Christopher Bonfield opened the day's papers with a look inside medieval hospitals. Preceded by a short history of music therapy NHS style, we were not surprised to learn that five hundred years ago rest, exercise, cleanliness and diet were preferable to gluttony, dirt and too much sex. Hospitals in the medieval period were essentially churches with beds. The healing power of the ritual of the mass in colour and sound was all that could be expected in such institutions, which lacked doctors in the modern sense of the term. The acknowledgement of the healing properties of music, which could not be measured but brought about both physical and spiritual healing, was demonstrated by its use in several hospitals in Norwich, Leicester, London and especially St. Leonard's hospital in York, which was rich in music, with 40 choristers. The soothing repetitions of the *Pater noster* lowered the pulse rate, and gazing at rich vestments raised the spirits of the sick. After 1400, the Black Death caused a change in layout as patients were segregated from the clergy by physical barriers.

Next, Ms. Marroquin gave us a modern academic definition of 'performativity', which seemed to me merely to paraphrase the standard rhetoric texts, and discussed and demonstrated some functions of musical ornaments and their humoral affects.

After lunch Iain Fenlon argued that Monteverdi's personal voice was subverted by his attempt to codify the passions by means of stock rhetorical figures in an attempt to emulate his master Zarlino and become a serious theorist. Regrettably, the surviving fragment of *Arianna* was seen as the only vestige and the high point of his true creative voice, which became muted by his attempts to create new theoretical ideas.

Charles Burnett then read a paper by Luis Antonio Gonzales Marin, who was indisposed, about emotions in

the sacred repertory of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries in Spain. Until this point, I had not been convinced of the importance of the four humours in music, even in music therapy, (perhaps prejudiced by my own rhetorical approach to performance), but it was here that I learned that the humours were more acknowledged in Spanish music than in the rest of the European tradition of music making. We listened to several extracts demonstrating the representation of humours in the music through the device of allegorical figures such as the Christian virtues.

After tea and a short presentation from Dorian Greenbaum linking the humours and astrological signs, it was discovered that although music included ideas from astrology, surprisingly, the reverse was not the case. We also learned that, in imitation of Jupiter who governs the physical attributes, everyone wanted to be hot and moist (i.e. sanguine). Penelope Gouk then joined for a round table discussion led by Charles Burnett. Leading us into the 18<sup>th</sup> century, still with Galen and ancient ideas about music and healing, Gouk found examples of the humours in music, especially the fiery choleric (four kinds of madness in Purcell's *Rosy Bowers*). Discussion took place around the question of whether the listener wanted to hear music sympathetic to his or her temperament (thereby reinforcing it) or music which could alter the personal temperament into better balance (do melancholics really want to be cheered up?).

The concert at Goodenough College which followed (and the first occurrence of the musical temperament of the day, set by Mark Ransom) was a selection of short extracts demonstrating the presence of the temperamental humours in 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>-century music. The programme was devised by Lucía Díaz Marroquín, with Norbert Meyn (tenor), Mario Villoria Morillo (baritone) and accompanied by Iain Farrington (harpsichord and piano). Useful introductions gave us clues as to which temperament we were meant to be looking for. The performances, given from memory, enabled the singers to use gesture, and the men especially gave us the full flavour of the humoral feeling. Polyphemus's choleric rage was suitably comic, illustrating a commonplace Spanish tradition of low voices singing semi-quavers.

Although there was not much discussion of performing issues (mainly compositional ones) and nobody even mentioned musical temperaments in the tuning sense, the day brought together some interesting and unusual juxtapositions. For performers of Baroque music it is probable that the medieval idea of the fixed humours is generally secondary in consideration, if it is considered at all, to the movable 'passions' we are more familiar with. It was also good to hear new ideas about music from the Spanish cultural perspective, which perhaps is too often overshadowed by other nationalist points of view.

## LONDON CONCERTS

Andrew Benson-Wilson

## PIANO TRIOS

The Music Collection (Susan Alexander-Max, Simon Standage and Jennifer Morsches) gave a lovely concert of three well chosen piano trios by Haydn, Beethoven and Mendelssohn at the Wigmore Hall (11 Jan). Haydn's late (c. 1795) Trio in G (Hob XV: 25) came close to a Mendelssohnian song without words in the elegiac simplicity of its opening Andante, but revealed a more bucolic feel in the forceful Gypsy-style Finale. Although the Beethoven Trio in C minor (Op. 1/3) was written a year or so earlier, it was a world apart in style, not least because of its disquietingly dark and opening mood, which was intensified, rather than relieved by the succeeding movements. Mendelssohn's Trio in D minor (Op. 49, from 1839) opened with an expansive cello melody, played beautifully by the impressive Jennifer Morsches. The Andante was one of the few moments in this concert where the piano takes the lead. After the sort of delightful Scherzo that only Mendelssohn could have written, the concert ended with some of the intensity of Beethoven. The fortepiano was after Nanette Streicher, 1814, and coped well with a repertoire which, in terms of the development of the piano, was one of considerable change. I was impressed by the fact that the piano never dominated the texture, even in the Beethoven – although I wonder if Beethoven himself might have made more of the piano p

## INDIAN QUEEN, VENUS &amp; ADONIS

The always impressive Early Opera Company gave a sell-out performance of some of Purcell's music for *The Indian Queen* and Blow's *Venus and Adonis* (Wigmore Hall, 16 Jan). The rather brief first half interspersed a selection of Act Three Indian Queen pieces with two Trumpet Overtures (given excellent performances by Paul Sharpe), an extract from Fame's Act One Masque and the delightful song 'I attempt from love's sickness to fly', the first of a number of memorable contributions from Lucy Crowe. She was Venus in the Blow work, alongside Gail Pearson as Cupid and Andrew Foster Williams as Adonis, with a supporting chorus of four singers, from which Jeremy Budd stood out. Although this was a concert performance, I would have preferred a bit more personal interaction between Venus and Adonis, something that Gail Pearson did well as Cupid. That said, the singing was excellent from all, as was the impressive line up of instrumentalists, and the direction of Christian Curnyn (who also impressed with his harpsichord continuo). As is well known, the original performance was given 'for the entertainment of the King' Charles II, an event made more entertaining by the fact that Venus was sung by one of his favourite mistresses, Mary (Moll) Davies, and Cupid was their illegitimate daughter, Lady Mary Tudor, then aged about 10. In these circumstances, Cupid's opening tirade against the loose morals of the court was particularly telling.

The Classical Opera Company cast its spotlight on 'The London Bach' in their Wigmore Hall concert (22 Jan), the Bach in question being, of course, Johann Christian. This was a good choice to open their annual series of January Wigmore Hall concerts, each devoted to a single 18th-century composer. J. C. Bach is usually footnoted as an influence on the then 9-year old Mozart, but his music is worth deeper exploration, particularly as an example of equally overlooked years of the galant style. Admittedly, some of his instrumental works can appear rather slight. The opening *Allegro assai* of the Symphony in G (Op. 3/6), for example, only just about got going before it suddenly stopped, and the opening of the Harpsichord Concerto in D (Op 1) was almost all figuration, however virtuosic. But it is worth noting the environment in which such pieces were written – the set was written for chamber performance for the 18-year old Queen Charlotte, JCB's singing pupil. The Op. 6/6 Symphony in G minor showed what a difference ten years can make to a composer. It was still short, by mature Mozart standards, but bubbled with ideas. But even here, the Finale didn't really go anywhere, moving with great gusto until it ran out of steam. The real meat of this programme was in the five operatic extracts, sung with great conviction by Susan Gritton and Sophie Bevan, whose her 'farewell' Aria *Ah se a morir mi chiama* from *Lucio Silla* was gorgeous, with an excellently paced cadenza and link back from B to A section. Ian Page directed an impressive group of instrumentalists, with Steven Devine an excellent harpsichord soloist.

## FRETWORK'S BACH

Fretwork's recordings of Bach's organ and keyboard works on viols are amongst my favourite CDs, so I was looking forward to hearing them live at one of the enterprising 'Music in the Village' concerts in St Mary's Church, Walthamstow (24 Jan). A huge audience showed the success of this concert series, started fairly recently by Peter McCarthy, otherwise normally engaged in propping up various double bass instruments. I recommend Fretwork's recordings of Bach to organists as a way of understanding the subtleties of Bach's voice writing and the expression that organist should strive for, even if they cannot achieve on their chosen instrument. But I am afraid that Fretwork were not on their usual form on the night. I have heard them often enough to know that they can perform better, but as all musicians will attest, these things happen. The main issues this evening were rather erratic timing (one player sometime pushing the pace of the others, including an over-eager 'Giant' in *Wir glauben all*), occasional lack of coordination, a less-than-professional stage manner (including several occasions when players needed to search through the music on their stand for the next piece) and more than one false entry. However unmusical Bach can be on the organ, it is hard for an organist to bring in a voice a bar early! That said, there

were undoubtedly highlights. The middle section of BWV 572 (the *Pièce d'Orgue*) revealed a gentle melancholy that is rarely heard in organ performances, *Vor deinen Thron* featured a beautiful solo line from Susanna Pell and the concluding *Passacaglia* was given a most revealing interpretation, particularly in the use of plucked strings. [That would have been a welcome addition to the CD of 5 versions of the *Passacaglia* reviewed on page 34! CB.]

#### YOUNG PERFORMERS

'Concerto' was the title of a concert for soloists and strings given by a collection of youngish musicians at All Saints Church, Blackheath (20 Jan), although only two of the works actually bore that title. After the opening Bach Orchestral Suite 2, Tal Arbel gave us three of Marais' *Pieces de Viole en Re mineur/majeur*, starting with the exploratory *Prélude* from the 2<sup>nd</sup> book and finishing with the virtuosic *Chaconne* from the 3<sup>rd</sup> book – excellent playing, including some assured forays above the frets. She was followed by soprano Revital Raviv, who stole the show with three Handel arias. Although she has the range of a soprano, she has a rich and slightly mezzo-ish tinge to her voice which she combines with excellent intonation, clearly articulated runs, an attractive use of gentle vibrato on held notes and an engagingly straightforward stage manner. Bach's Brandenburg Concerto 5 featured Felicity Broome-Skelton *violin*, Sarig Sela *recorder* and David Wright *harpsichord*, producing an audible 'wow' and applause from the audience for his extended solo passages. It might have been the acoustics of the church but, from my seat, the upper registers of the harpsichord seemed to produce some curiously tinny sounds. The dynamics of the supporting players were nicely honed, allowing the harpsichord to move in and out of focus. The joys of giving January concerts in churches was emphasised by the sight of some of the musicians warming their hands beforehand on the votive candles left conveniently lit in a side chapel.

One of the most exciting young groups to emerge in recent years has been Ensemble Amaranthos. They impressed me at last year's York Early Music Network Young Artists Competition, and continue to do so. As with many groups who meet at the various conservatories around the world, they are international, hailing from Portugal, Germany, England, South Africa and Greece. Of course, the tricky part is keeping international groups like this together alongside individual and international career demands. Their rather unusual combination of flute (Marta Gonçalves), violin (Sara Deborah Struntz), viola da gamba (Claire Bracher), harpsichord (Erik Dippenaar) and cello (Elektra Miliadou) makes for a colourful ensemble in addition to a wide range of smaller combinations, the latter being a distinctive feature of their concert for the Tilford Bach Society at Farnham Castle (25 Jan). With works by Telemann, Simpson, Geminiani, Handel, Loeillet, Pepusch, Blow and Purcell their programme represented the musical life of London and Paris in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century – 'The Spell of the Metropoles'. Ensemble Amaranthos combines an extraordinary musical and technical proficiency with an admirable professional presentation. They take a very evident delight in their

music making, and the little smiles between them are a delight for the audience, drawing us into their own world. If there is a leader, it is not apparent. They all play as equals, with no one dominant instrument or personality. Individually they are all exceptional musicians but, together, they create a synergy that raises them to even more exalted heights. For my money, Ensemble Amaranthos are one of the finest young groups around.

Two other young groups that made their mark at the York Early Music Network Young Artists Competition were on show in London – Melopoetica and Stile Antico. Melopoetica (Barbara Barros and Siv Thomassen, violins, Iason Ioannou, cello, Erik Dippenaar, harpsichord) gave a Sunday afternoon concert at Holy Innocents, Paddenswick Road, Hammersmith (17 Feb) with a programme of Vivaldi, Corelli, Geminiani, Locatelli, Castello, Rosenmüller and Cazzati. Their approach is based on the exploration of the passions and rhetoric within the music, something that they achieve with remarkable aplomb. Their playing is intense and emotional and reveals features of the music that could easily be overlooked. As well as the musical insight they bring to their performance, they have remarkable technical skill and a most compelling stage presentation which they have successfully honed over the past year or so, toning down some of the excess theatricality. One of their key features is the visual and musical buzz between the two violinists – this was particularly apparent in the Rosenmüller Sonata where the conversational dialogue between the violins veered from haughty to sensuous, flirty and jovial. The continuo support from harpsichord and cello was impressively stable, although both had a chance to shine individually in Geminiani's cello sonata op. 5/3. It is very rewarding to witness young performers like this as they develop and mature.

Although they missed out on the first prize in York in 2005, Stile Antico won the audience prize and an impressive CD deal with Harmonia Mundi and their first two CDs have won a number of prestigious awards. Their concert at St Andrew's in Park Walk, Fulham (23 Feb) gave a taster of their next CD, 'Song of Songs', based on the extraordinary and often highly erotic poetry of Solomon that managed to find its way into the Bible. Not surprisingly, this has evoked similarly highly charged responses from composers down the ages, including those featured in this programme – Clemens non Papa, Palestrina, Lassus, Victoria, Lhéritier, Ceballos, Vivanco and Gombert. One of the key features of Stile Antico is that the young singers perform without a director. They also mix the voice groups up, giving a broad spectrum to their sound. Standing in a shallow arc, the interaction and creative tension between the singers is both visually and aurally compelling. A very minor technical point for groups that perform with this geometry is that, for those standing in the middle of the arc, it is easy to create occasional eye contact with the audience (although only a few do so). However, this is harder for those at the sides, facing in towards their fellow singers. Although I can understand their wish to look at the audience, the very obvious head turning is far more visually distracting – and

does raise the question of whether, in doing so, they are taking the eye off the musical ball. I have seen them a few times, and feel that they draw the audience in extraordinarily well without the need for any obvious eye contact with the audience. Their vocal cohesion is exemplary – indeed, I hope they will understand what I mean when I say that, for the sake of their vocal integrity, I hope none of them are tempted into the world of operatic singing. At the moment, none of them has more than a pleasantly gentle vibrato, and the sound is very different from *a capella* groups that are made up of solo singers.

A few weeks earlier, St Andrew's, Park Walk was also the venue for the launch of the new young group The Rare Theatrical (1 Feb), a collaboration between a harpsichordist, a gamba-playing musicologist, and a dancer/stage director (Christopher Bucknall, Caroline Ritchie and Jessica Clara Bridge). Their short programme presented a fascinating approach at exploring the dramatic element of Purcell's music, incorporating dancers and actors into their programme. The concert started at the back of the church, with a solo bass viol a Hume pavan as two dancers scampered their way around the darkened church towards the player where they entwined themselves with those members of the audience who had twigged that things would start from the back – and with three semi-naked men, carefully carrying candles. They then alternated vocal and instrumental works, each with contributions from two female dancers and the scantily clad male actors (two of whom turned out to be part of a vocal chorus). I felt for soprano Amy Carson as she sang 'O Solitude' while closely surrounded by five candle holding supporters – quite how she found enough oxygen to sing I don't know, but she did so beautifully. Apart from the candles, this was the most un-theatrical of all the numbers, but for me it was the most dramatic and fetching. Amy Carson just stood and sang, her clear and unaffected voice revealing an innocent edge that matched the music wonderfully. She is a promising young singer and I hope she avoids, or manages to control, the things that may happen to her voice as she matures. Bass Jonathan Sells was the other main vocal contributor and was equally impressive, both as a singer, and as an actor in the concluding Frost Scene from King Arthur. His earlier 'When Night her purple veil had softly spread' was beautifully sung, although the theatricals on the other side of the stage (one man responding to come-hitherish looks from a pretty young thing draped over the pulpit, concluding in some discarded clothes) distracted from his contribution. Although I am all in favour of the combination of music and theatre, this aspect is something that the group will need to consider for future events. The five players audibly grew in confidence as the concert progressed. St Andrew's, Park Walk is an impressive venue for concerts: the acoustics are good, they drum up a considerable local audience, they lay on lavish refreshments. I hope that these two concerts will encourage them to continue to support the younger musicians that need access to such concert venues.

While I am mentioning young performers, I should give a brief mention of a lunchtime concert of clavichord music

by C. P. E. and W. F. Bach, given by clavichord students at the Royal Academy of Music (29 Jan). The playing showed an impressive insight into the interpretation implications of this tricky repertoire, although stage presentation could do with a bit of work, not least in what to do with pages of music when you have finished playing them. Dropping them on the floor, for example, is not to be recommended, particularly given the acoustic environment of a clavichord concert.

Another brief mention goes to a production of Christopher Marlowe's *Dido Queen of Carthage*, presented as a procession through the state rooms of Kensington Palace (4 Feb) by the theatre group 'angels in the architecture'. I had expected a great deal more musical input than there was (hence my presence), although their were passing references to Purcell's rather different take on the story. The sheer logistics of shepherding a large crowd from room to room rather got in the way of the flow of the text – at one stage the audience was even divided into 'seducers' and 'seduced' on the whim of ushers, and led into separate rooms accordingly. They might not have realised it, but the key seduction scene took place on the plinth of Mr Clay's Musical Clock, the internal organ of which plays music transcribed by Handel. I much preferred the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenments combination of extracts from Marlowe's text with Purcell's music (including puppets) in the QEH last October.

#### GABRIELI CONSORT

The Gabrieli Consort gave two concerts in their London home at Christ Church Spitalfields, starting with Handel's extraordinary *La Resurrezione* (29 Jan). Written in Rome for Easter 1708 during the papal ban on opera, this ended up as opera in all but name. Paul McCreesh and his singers responded to the operatic nature of the music with a vigorous and dramatic interpretation and presentation, ranging from the bluff and bluster of Lucifer to the sensuous lamenting of Mary Magdalene and Mary Cleophas and the sparkling certainty of the Angel. The opening Overture is in the form of a two movement Sonata followed immediately by the Angels first aria, *Disserratevi, o porte d'Averno*, in effect, forming the third movement of the Overture. Rosemary Joshua rather overplayed the drama of the descending opening flourish, with facial contortions and grimaces that suggested she had fallen off a ladder rather than descended from heaven – it was all too much of an effort. However she did rein in her vibrato for most of the evening, as did most of the other singers, thereby allowed Handel's vocal textures to be revealed. Jonathan Lemalu impressed as The Devil. His first appearance, hands in pockets, highlighted his disdain for the Angel and with his powerful physique he looked as though he could eat Rosemary Joshua for breakfast. He even got his own exit aria towards the end, as he stomped off into the darkest abyss of the wings, although he was required to sheepishly return to the stage for the final chorus. The two Marys (Gillian Webster and Sonia Prina) excelled in revealing the deeper emotions of the story, the former notably in the Maddalena's opening pastoral aria 'Ferma l'ali' (which also featured beautiful

recorder playing from Rebecca Miles and Katy Bircher (I think – I couldn't actually see them) and viola da gamba playing from Reiko Ichise) and the latter in Cleophe's 'Piangete, si, piagente', where her anguish was visibly apparent. The role of San Giovanni is not as developed emotionally as the other protagonists, but Topi Lehtipuu's light and lyrical tenor was very effective, particularly in the gentle aria 'Quando è parto'. Andrew Skidmore made several notable contributions as obbligato and continuo cello.

The Consort's second concert (21 Feb), 'Three Odes for St Cecilia', should really have been given on 22 November (Saint Cecilia's day, Britten's birthday and the day after Purcell's death)! It contrasted two Purcell Odes with Benjamin Britten's *Hymn to St Cecilia*, starting with Purcell's early *Welcome to all the Pleasures*, with the aria 'Here the Deities approve' that is probably better known in the harpsichord version used by Joseph McHardy for his continuo – could this be a clue to how Purcell might have realised a bass? Grace Davidson and Amy Moore were attractive soprano soloists in the duet 'While Joys Celestial their bright Souls invade'. Paul McCreesh timed and paced the conclusion well, with its repeated incantations of 'Io, Io'. The intimate nature and scoring of this work was contrasted with the much grander *Hail, bright Cecilia* that concluded the concert (after the interval bubbly – a feature of the Gabrieli Spitalfields concerts). McCreesh highlighted Purcell's lush orchestration of the later work. Although there were some vocal weaknesses amongst the soloists (including a couple of swooping basses and an edgy soprano whose lapses of intonation coincided with the line 'Thou tun'st this world below, the spheres above'), there were excellent contributions from tenors Richard Butler, Jeremy Budd and Christopher Watson, the first two taking countertenor lines with their high tenor register to good effect. The other remarkable vocal contribution came from soprano Grace Davidson in Britten's 'O dear white children casual as birds' verse – a moment of breathtaking intensity. Impressive instrumental contributions came from Alexandra Bellamy and Frances Norbury *oboes*, Rebecca Miles and Catherine Latham *recorders*, and, as ever, Catherine Martin *leader*.

#### TITO MANLIO

Those members of the audience who had come to the Barbican (19 Feb) to hear the CD cast of Vivaldi's *Tito Manlio* performed by Accademia Bizantina under Ottavio Dantone (part of the Naïve Vivaldi project) would have been disappointed to find only a few of the CD cast performing. Opera plots can be hard enough to follow as it is, but the programme note failed to give any indication of what was happening (it is a Romeo and Juliet-style family conflict with more gore and less love, but similar intrafamily complications that are particularly apparent by the varying reactions to the jailing of one of the brood). The programme also underestimated the ending time by 45 minutes which, after a third act that was beginning to overstay its welcome, led to a number of people leaving. Written for a wedding that in the end did not take place (and the jury is out as to whether a scaled down performance was given anyway), the orchestration is

sumptuous by Vivaldi's standards. Apparently written in five days, the music has much to commend it although, overall, the opera lacks the insight into the human condition that Handel and many others managed. Marina De Liso, standing in for Sonia Prina, was the first of a number of impressive soloists, her first aria contrasting a languorous melody above a very catchy obbligato cello. Carlo Lepore's solid bass suited the title role and Roberta Invernizzi was excellent in the trouser role of Lucio, notably in her lengthy aria at the start of Act 2 (accompanied by some highly rhetorical oboe playing). Helpfully for such concert performances, all the trouser roles actually wore trousers, although Karina Gauvin was otherwise hard to visualise as the son of Tito Manlio. Her voice was also, for my tastes at least, a little over-operatic. Ann Hallenberg and José Lo Monaco also impressed, as did director Ottavio Dantone and Accademia Bizantina (notably Stefano Montanari *leader*, Marco Frezzato *cello*, Elisabeth Baumer *oboe*, and Ermes Pecchinini and Fabio Fontana *horns*).

#### McGILLIVRAY & STEGER

The English Concert's concerto concert at the Wigmore Hall (20 Feb) demonstrated two contrasting approaches to solo instrumental playing. First we had Alison McGillivray playing (what is now considered not to be) Vivaldi's Concerto in G for cello, strings and continuo (RV415). Although this was undoubtedly a virtuosic piece, Alison McGillivray avoided the overt showmanship that the word 'virtuosic' can conjure up in a performance that was as delicate as it was musical. Even though the musical content of the piece was minimal, I felt that it was being given ample chance to redeem itself in playing that was about the music, not the performer. In sharp contrast came recorder player Maurice Steger in a performance where personal promotion and showmanship took precedence over all. His performance of Telemann's Overture in A minor for recorder, strings and continuo (TWV55: a2) and Sammartini's similarly scored Concerto in F were played so frenetically fast that all sense of musical line was lost. This was not helped by his Gatling gun approach to tonguing – "ta-ta-ta-ta" rather than "ta-ra-la-ra"! Although the audience loved every minute, and some of the reviewers in the dailies gave him some extraordinarily gushing reviews, I am afraid the whole thing left me cold. Not only was the music completely sidelined, but I also found it the what-a-clever-boy-am-I stage antics frankly unsavoury. This wasn't his intention, but to me it all came over as very nervous. It certainly got nowhere near that quiet confident stage manner which, to me, is the mark of the true professional. And checking whether one's flies are undone is probably best confined to the Green Room. Give me the Alison McGillivray approach any day. Of course, it is not unknown for Laurence Cummings to apply a bit of turbo charge, but he and the English Concert demonstrated that it is perfectly possible to play both fast and musically in the rest of the programme, notably in the little outburst that is Vivaldi's Concerto in G minor for strings and continuo (RV156) with its well-known whirligig opening Allegro.

## BIRMINGHAM CONCERTS

Clifford Bartlett

SACRED SYMPHONIES:  
BAROQUE MUSIC FROM VENICE III

After commenting briefly on Ex Cathedra's Monteverdi *Vespers* at the Birmingham Oratory last year, I thought I should listen to a performance from somewhere nearer the front and wearing my critics hat. I was worried then by the difficulty of relating sound and position: by the time the sound reached the back rows, the location of its source was ambiguous, with few visual clues to place the sound. But at this polychoral programme (16 Feb), from where I sat (row G), there was no problem in this respect, and if the sources of the sound were not audible further back, at least the musicians were much more easily visible to aid the eye. The choirs were clearly separate, though (apart from an opening motet from the back gallery), the separation was horizontal rather than vertical.

The first half was mostly Giovanni Gabrieli from the 1597 (apart from a couple of Grillo canzonas), the other half drawing on the posthumous 1615 print. The chronological division turned out to be a musical one as well. I wondered whether it would be a fruitful line of research to associate the 1597 music with San Marco and the 1615 with San Rocco. The 1597 textures are more dependent on block sounds, and Venetian musicians would have taken advantage of the different levels in the Basilica. How forces were assembled in San Rocco isn't so clear; galleries could have been built, but the space is more intimate and, especially with a crowded assembly of lavishly-robed citizens, the sound would have been less resonant. The difference in styles was readily apparent in the audibility of the theorbo: in the first half, Linda Sayce might as well have sat in the audience, but the second half began with *In ecclesiis*, where she was an essential player.

It was that piece which brought to a head my difficulty in assessing the concert. I've known it for nearly 50 years, thanks to its presence in Davison and Apel's *Historical Anthology of Music*, but had received its first 'modern' edition back in the 1830s. This was presumably responsible for it having been known to performers for so long and being probably Gabrieli's best-known motet. It is one of those pieces that I have in my head too well for any performance, however good, to match my conception of it. However well I might know a Tchaikovsky or Mahler symphony, a conductor can work himself and his musicians into such a frenzy that he can replace my image by his. But that sort of conducting doesn't work with early music – attempts to do so kill the music stone dead.

Gabrieli is a composer I love, but more from playing than listening. A sackbut and cornet ensemble produces such a marvelous sound, but I have some sympathy with my friend Jan sitting a bit further back, who found it rather boring. (Admittedly, she confessed in the interval that she

didn't like early instruments, but she nevertheless attends most of Ex Cathedra's concerts.) I think there were two reasons. The speeds were probably a bit too quick for the building, and the ornamentation made the music too difficult to hear and diminished each piece's individuality. His Majesty's Sagbutts and Cornetts were perhaps a bit carried away with their virtuosity and successful study of division manuals. There was one particular place where this undermined the music. Most canzonas are in duple time, with just occasional triple sections. But Canzon VII is, unusually, in (or at least can be transcribed in) 6/8. One keeps wondering when the expected duple will come, but it goes on so long that we assume eventually that it will end without changing. But no: there is a duple coda. What we heard was a series of slow chords smothered by a continual scurry of what sounded like performers' embellishments, though in fact they are part of the fabric of the piece. If Gabrieli felt it worth writing out the details, it suggests that the elaborate playing that we had heard elsewhere was perhaps beyond the call of duty, even of the best players in Venice. Where is the line between improvisation and composition?

Ex Cathedra has a problem: its repertoire is to a large extent based on early music (though not exclusively: the previous concert was of modern American music), but the choral requirement for Gabrieli is, at least according to current scholarship or hunches, quite minimal – mostly the fairly simple contribution of a small (not 42-voice) four-part capella contrasting with 'choirs' that were intended primarily for instruments with a solo voice or two. So a choir conductor has three options:

- i) abandon his base and select a few singers for each concert,
- ii) remain loyal to his base and select only music that does need lots of voices (which is difficult),
- iii) adapt the performance style to fit.

Jeffery adopts iii, and makes it work very well, and in a church like the Oratory, it makes a lot of sense. (In San Marco, I doubt if projecting to the far end of the building was ever an issue: the big-wigs were all up front.) But the balance with instruments is changed, and they are tempted to play louder, not adjusting down when accompanying solo voices, which were sometimes difficult to hear.

The highlight for me was not Gabrieli but the middle of a group of three Monteverdi madrigals contrafacted (or contrafaked?) into motets by Coppini: *Stabat virgo Maria*. I doubt if I would have felt comfortable with a choral performance of the Italian text (*Era l'amina mia*), but somehow it worked in Latin. (Coppini's whole collection is available for free download at [www.jpj.dk/coppini.htm](http://www.jpj.dk/coppini.htm))

I was disappointed that there was only one organ, centrally placed with the theorbo in front of it. The basic layout was three choirs, so one expected at least three

organs (the famous Coryat account of Gabrieli at San Rocco mentions seven of them). Furthermore, the single organ didn't have the power for the slow chords that hold together the rhythm of the *tutti*s. But maybe I'm biased: I know Gabrieli from playing organ continuo. I have also been involved in the process of working out how his scoring works, so come from a different background from most of the other listeners. The audience was enthusiastic, and the performers certainly put on a good show.

To turn to another bee in my bonnet, whether it's a word that he peppers his rehearsals with or not, Jeffrey Skidmore is well aware of the importance of *tactus*. The music moved in time, the shaping of the phrases within it followed the pattern of the text, producing performances that were eloquent and moving. I don't think that the Oratory is an ideal venue acoustically: perhaps the sound gets lost in the dome (though at least the temperature is comfortable, which is of some importance in February). Ex Cathedra needs a capacious building, since they have a strong following, though I wondered why none of the early-music enthusiasts that I saw at *Orfeo* at the Town Hall a couple of months earlier were present. Perhaps Jeffery particularly attracts non-specialists like Jan rather than the early-music crowd.

Jan was far more enthusiastic about Ex Cathedra's *St John Passion* a few weeks later, which I didn't hear. She particularly commented on the dramatic performance of the Evangelist, Nicholas Mulroy, who also stands out in the Dunedin Consort's *St Matthew Passion* CD: see p. 33. I hope he has been booked already for Ex Cathedra's 2009 Good Friday *St Matthew* in Symphony Hall (in the English version premiered there last year), with a recording probably to follow.

#### BIRMINGHAM CONSERVATOIRE

##### *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*

The party after Francesca McManus's funeral in December was a great occasion for chatting to people who were more familiar on the concert platform or the phone. One of them was Andrew King, who was very excited about the forthcoming production of *Poppea* at the Birmingham Conservatoire which he was directing and invited me to attend. It's an opera in many ways about young people, though doesn't seem so in most professional performances, and some aspects of it might relate to the nightlife apparent in Broad Street, which I happened to drive down by mistake a couple of hours after midnight on my way home from the Gabrieli concert. There were four performances (6-8 Feb) at the Crescent Theatre, actually in Broad Street, though there were no drunken revellers visible when the opera ended at 10.30: it began at 7.00 and had one fairly short interval. The Venice MS version was, I think, uncut: if anything was missing, I didn't spot it.

It is an ideal work for a student production. There are lots of roles, and the double cast (four performances with two casts) must have occupied a significant proportion of the potential operas singers at the Conservatoire. It is

absolutely essential for the singers to be exactly in time and in tune – it's much easier to fudge these in later music. Keeping time wasn't a problem, but intonation was. On the night I went (the Friday), one singer was excellent, one missed virtually every note, and the rest were somewhere between. On the occasions that I have heard bits of the TV competitions for budding pop stars, I've been impressed by the way the judges stress singing in tune. In the operatic world, however much vibrato you add, the basic note must be there. Virtually all the singers were worse when they were involved in stage business.

It was refreshing to see a staging that avoided too many gimmicks. The worst was to follow the fashion of interpreting the Nerone/Lucano scene as a gay love-duet. It's clear from the sections of text that were set in the Naples but not in the Venice MS that the librettist had no such idea, and I wouldn't have expected Monteverdi himself to have made the cut so that he could change the interpretation. But in a staging where there is cross-dressing and physical contact between the singers, this gives Nerone (played by a woman) a break from the tension of acting love scenes with Poppea to relax into heterosexual mode, even though in terms of the characters it isn't. The Poppea/Nerone relationship certainly looked awkward while the Nerone/Lucano scene didn't. But it's no reason to mis-interpret the opera. Nerone & Lucano are being laddish, and the gay interpretation undermines the marvellous transition from the end of the duet to 'Son rubini amorosi'. (The plot summary in the programme correctly states: 'Nerone celebrates Seneca's death with his friend Lucano and sings of his love for Poppea'.) The production was otherwise right in making Nerone infatuated, with Poppea playing him for her ambition. I liked the way they stood apart in the final duet.

We arrived late (I didn't know that the performance was in a theatre, not in the Conservatoire), so saw the first half from the back row. I commented at the interval (regrettably after Seneca's death: three-act operas shouldn't be split into two) that it was a pity there was only one harpsichord and one theorbo. When we took our nearer seats for the second half, another harpsichord became visible. But the playing was half-hearted and nowhere near rich enough. Luckily, the theorbo was excellent.

I won't run through the cast, apart from mentioning the outstanding Poppea, Andrea Tjäder. She was in tune, accurate, musical and sexy (the last evident even when I shut my eyes). If she can act so well in other roles, and can control her vocal development, she should have a brilliant career in early opera. Whether it is possible to retain an 'early music' voice and sing later opera is something I hope the NEMA Conference on voice in York next year will discuss.

Finally, it was pleasing to hear the music in a smallish theatre in which the singers could perform without over-stretching their voices. Ideally, it should perhaps have been more shoe-box shaped to have the right resonance. But this is, more than most later operas, a play set to music, so the theatrical ambience worked well.

## REVIEWS OF BOOKS

## Clifford Bartlett etc.

## MUSIC &amp; MEANING

Warren and Ursula Kirkendale *Music and Meaning: Studies in Music History and the Neighbouring Disciplines* (Historiae Musicae Cultores, 113). Florence: Olschki, 2007. xi + 643pp, €66.00 ISBN 978 88 222 5659 1

My first encounter with the name 'Kirkendale' must have been Ursula's 1967 *JAMS* article 'The Ruspoli Documents on Handel', which enabled so many of Handel's cantatas to be dated. It provided considerable information on *La Resurrezione*, which came in useful in preparing for Ars Nova's performance in 1976 and later for my edition, which most performers have used in the last 15 years. Coincidentally I am writing this on the Easter Sunday 300 years after the original performance: I hope modern commemorations offered not only historically informed performances but note that in the interval 'a quantity of liquors, frozen things, confection, and coffee was carried around and presented to everyone' (p. 304); that, however, though placed among Ursula's description of the 1708 event, it is extrapolated from a German visitor in 1715. Quoting a page number raises a problem. With such a classic article, most Handelians will have a copy of it in some form or other: from subscribing at the time, from receiving offprints (I've another copy presented by the author to Alec Hyatt King), from being a later member of the AMS and buying back issues cheaply, or as a photocopy. So the original page number (235) would be more useful to most readers. This is a very elegant volume, a pleasure to handle; but the more workaday Ashgate Variorum collections of articles are more useful, in that the original layout and paginations are retained, so that existing references are valid. They also keep author's second thoughts separate, while here they are incorporated in the newly-set text. It's a bit like sending an article back to the author for proofing and the author, instead of marking changes, substitutes his corrections invisibly.

The other article here that particularly intrigued me when it appeared in *Acta Musicologica* in 1972 is 'Franceschina, Giometta, and their companions in a madrigal "a diversi linguaggi" by Luca Marenzio and Orazio Vecchi'. Initially, it was the bibliography of the two title songs that drew me to it, but when an edition of the madrigal appeared in *Das Chorwerk* 125 (Möseler, 1975) the interest became more practical, and Peter Holman devised a complete concert programme round it. Unlike the *Resurrezione* mentioned above, I didn't participate in the performance, but can date it quite precisely. Elaine and I had married in August 1975 and a couple of months later bought a house in Stoke Newington. Our first visitors were for a rehearsal of *Diversi linguaggi*, and the house was musically christened by the nine singers. The names in the programme (16 Nov. 1775) are Nancy Long, Rachel Bevan, Emma Kirkby, John York Skinner, Michael Procter, Rogers Covey-Crump, Andrew

Parrott, Michael Morton and Richard Lloyd-Morgan, though my memory is of David Thomas as bass. I quote this, partly because readers will know some of the names, but also because Warren Kirkendale, who prides himself on the accuracy of his scholarship, gives 30-31 August 1991 at the Utrecht Festival as the first performance. It is salutary that scholars who pride themselves on their accuracy when trying to give exact dates to performances several centuries ago can be 16 years out for one that took place on London's South Bank so recently. As I've mentioned before (particular with reference to Eccles's *Semele*), it's amazing how many first performances some works receive. The information on performance is added as footnote 2 in the reprint, thus immediately putting the footnotes out of phase from the original article.

I've been writing personally, partly to make a couple of general points, but also to show by the use I made of an article by each of the Kirkendales. The article that follows Franceschina & Giometta also impinges, since it is a revaluation of Cavalieri. Having also edited and played the *Rappresentazione...*, I am happy to praise Cavalieri, but also having edited and played Monteverdi's *Orfeo*, the conclusion that 'Cavalieri had nothing to fear from a comparison with Monteverdi, but surpassed him as an innovator' (p. 216) seems odd. As composers, Monteverdi wins hands down, and surpassing as an innovator, if true, is not necessarily a great virtue. But that article was written to commemorate Cavalieri's 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary, so may be excused.

The volume is strangely arranged, in a sandwich with Warren as the bread and Ursula as jam. There is some chronology in the topics, with Warren's first section mostly centered around 1600, Ursula's on late baroque, and Warren coming back for Mozart and Beethoven. But the work that has had most impact on the academic community in the latter part of their careers, the rhetorical explication of Bach's *Musical Offering*, is shared between them and is split: we are advised to read the chapters in the order 2, 12, 13 and 3, which seems a very odd way to present them. Had I been publisher jotting down ideas for an order, I would have first have placed them as a single sequence, preceded them by Warren's other major discussion of music and classical rhetoric, 'Ciceronians versus Aristotelians' (*JAMS* 1979), then thought of a sensible way to group the rest.

I've often touched on my suspicions of the value of the 'naming of parts' approach to rhetoric, though in an age when Tony Blair can be praised as a good public speaker, perhaps rhetoric should again become part of our education. (Or was Blair's style the new rhetoric, developed deliberately to contrast with the articulate John Major: we don't now trust people who speak either directly or in an oratorical manner.) It does seem odd that a technique

perfected by Demosthenes and Cicero intended to convince a court on behalf of clients who were often guilty should be a particularly useful model for a composer.

It's a bit frustrating reading just one side of a polemic. I was amused by the Wolff-baiting over the *Musical Offering* (this is the same Christoph Wolff who claims to be a Bach expert but is so reluctant to accept that the sets of parts he has presumably studied have any relevance to the size of forces that could use them). I'm suspicious of someone who can change his mind so much as Wolff over the work's printing, but on the other hand the Kirkendale certainty is also overdone. The publication of a work requiring such different formats must have presented a problem to Bach and his printer, and who knows whether he too thought one way right one day, another the next, or possibly left the layout to the printer, so all arguments for the significance of the order are built on sand.

The great merit of the essays here is the combination of detailed archival research with a feel for musicology as a serious study of intellectual ideas. The penultimate chapter is an interview with Warren articulating some aspects of his philosophy. 'Music should express something, and we have to try to find out how it expresses human emotions, experiences, and ideas'. (Presumably the Italian commas are the responsibility of the publisher; they are sometimes called Oxford commas: they certainly seem to be preferred by Oxonians, but I thought Oxford commas were in circumstances like 'Lewis and Short, and Liddell and Scott'; The Oxford Manual of Style defines Oxford comma as 'a serial comma', which I don't understand.) I chose those two pairs of names of classical lexicographers in deference to the importance given to knowledge of languages (p. 586). 'Translations of quotations in foreign languages have been added reluctantly', we are told at the head of the references (p. 601), a sentiment I find regrettable. Even if one has a working knowledge of a language, there are specialities of usage in documents for which help is needed, and having both the original and what the author thinks it means can be helpful in spotting a distortion of his argument – that is a general remark, not *ad hominem*.

I am conscious that I haven't engaged significantly with the substance of the articles reproduced here, or even mentioned all the topics. Perhaps the length of this review (I rarely give myself more than a page) suggests that I value and respect them, despite a few doubts expressed above and others not mentioned. The Kirkendales (Warren at least: there is less biographical information about Ursula) are scholars of the last generation for whom the classical tradition of the Greek and Latin classics was still alive. Modern musicology seems to them (as to me, with a similar background) strange, especially the new conformism that has struck the USA over the last couple of decades (p. 586). I suspect that some reviewers will see this collection as a monument to a past age. I hope that it reminds readers of the values their work represents and makes it more accessible. They may not have raised a monument as permanent as Horace, but Olschki have done their best.

## CALDARA

Ursula Kirkendale *Antonio Caldara: Life and Venetian Roman Oratorios (Historiae Musicae Cultores, 114)*. Florence: Olschki, 2007. 552pp, €62.00 ISBN 978 88 222 5714 7

Whenever I visit one of the bigger libraries, I scan the open shelves for volumes devoted to lesser-known composers, mostly (I think) in the hope of finding that someone has written the book that I've always thought I should write but don't really have the time (or the financial resources!) about some of my favourites, like Legrenzi, Schmelzer, Bertali or even Erlebach (see p. 29 below). Alas, these remain unwritten, but one composer who is now very well served is Antonio Caldara, thanks to this amplified translation of Ursula Kirkendale's 1961 dissertation by her husband, Warren. I was amused by the latter's comment in his preface that since the Kirkendales 'are convinced that [a source-based historical] approach will always be necessary for a topic such as treated here and an adoption of the ideologies currently fashionable in American "new musicology" ("political correctness" etc) would not benefit it, we offer no apology for not "updating" [the book] in this sense.' Hallelujah! Let's hope this starts a shift back to such an approach.

To say that there is a wealth of information in this volume is an understatement; in fact, there's a slight danger that there's too much detail, certainly for the general reader. For the serious researcher – or, dare I suggest such a thing, future editors and performers of Caldara's oratorios? – everything they could need is here, down to the payments for copyists and the names of some of the performers for particular events. After an up-to-date account of the composer's life as is currently possible, Kirkendale deals with the Venetian-Roman oratorios, placing them in the Venetian tradition, then detailing their 'plots', texts and musical styles. Appendices include original language transcripts of documents, a generous number of plates including samples of Caldara's copyists' hands, a lengthy multilingual bibliography and various indices. Not only is this an invaluable and comprehensive book, it is also a beautiful one – Leo S. Olschki produce volumes of such astonishing quality, cleanly printed on luxurious paper, whose smell and touch are an irresistible reminder that the internet will never entirely replace the book as a source of both information and pleasure. Brian Clark

## RENAISSANCE CAPELLE MUSICALE

*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

How do you translate *Cappelle*? The abstract of the first paper, by Perluigi Petrobelli (whose spoken English was fluent enough when I knew him) leaves it in Italian, which is probably safest. This is a series of conference papers on the organisation of professional musical ensembles in the

employ of churches, courts and town councils. It might have been interesting for the editors to have drawn up a list of questions whose answers could be tabulated and compared (like school exam results): number of musicians, what was their voice/instrument, what were they paid, where did the money come from, etc. But the availability and comparability of that sort of information is too variable, and anyway would have given no idea of the differing political and social backgrounds from state to state. This volume gives the reader some idea of the variety (and sometimes similarities) of how music was organised, and the index enables some musicians to be traced, though that isn't the purpose of the book. Half the contributions are in English, the rest in Italian; each essay has a summary in the other language. The variety is too great to summarise the book usefully. Several passing references to trombones intrigued me: establishments with just one or two rather than the trio we expect. Sadly, there is no entry for the instrument in the index. The limitation of the archival research on which this book relies is pointed out by Gianluca d'Agostino: 'The main problem for the scholar is to investigate the connections between what is known about the musical institutions and the musical repertory preserved in surviving sources' (p. 180). The article that most interested me was Julie E Cumming's on the source of the music Petrucci printed and its recirculation in MS form. (The article also reminded me that I didn't try to get hold of a review copy of Stanley Boorman's eagerly-awaited study of Petrucci, published by Oxford UP in 2006.) Like most conference publications, there is no indication what was collectively learnt from it, but it was certainly worth issuing these papers.

#### ENGLISH VIOL MANUSCRIPTS

*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

Vol. I was published in 2001, and I'm tempted to reproduce the description I wrote of that in *EMR* 78. This follows the same pattern for another 45 MSS. It would have been nice for either volume to have given some explanation of how the MSS are allocated between them. For those working on the sources, the information here is invaluable. But these days, with wider publication of the repertoire, there is less need for players to think of it in relation to the sources. Unlike when I first encountered the viol, there is now a layer of scholarship between manuscripts and players. In most respects, it is to the good: the do-it-yourself approach could be a bit naïve – which is not to underestimate the invaluable indexing work done by Gordon Dodd and his associates. But the pride in discovery that some of the pioneers felt has gone, as has the direct contact with 17th-century players that came through sharing manuscripts with them. That's a spurious nostalgia for me, since I haven't played a viol for a decade or so. But thirty years ago I'd have devoured at least some of the entries here and examined them closely, though I doubt if there are errors to be easily caught. The amateur contribution is still to the fore (two of the three

authors had careers as schoolteachers, not in universities), but the result is unquestionably professional of the highest standard. Access to English viol music has long been facilitated through the *Viol da Gamba Society*'s thematic catalogue by composer; this offers another approach through the MSS. The two belong together.

*The on-line Viola da Gamba Society Journal is available at <http://www.joedesign.ch/VdGS/files/VdGSJournal/Vol-01.pdf>*

#### ITALIAN CONTINUO

**Salvatore Carchiolo** *Una perfezione d'armonia meravigliosa: prassi cembalo-organistica del basso continuo italiano dalle origini all'inizio del XVIII secolo*. LIM Editrice, 2007. XIII+395pp, €35,00 ISBN 88-7096-467-1

The title of this ambitious study, 'A perfection of marvellous harmony', is a quotation from an anonymous and highly informative manuscript treatise from circa 1700, *Le regole per accompagnare*. The subtitle limits it to the practice of Italian basso continuo realisation on the organ and harpsichord from its origin to the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It is well conceived and written, the result being that citation, explication, speculation, intuition and exemplification are all combined to transmit the knowledge that the author (who studied at the Sweelinck Conservatorium and teaches in Catania) has acquired in two decades of work as a continuo player, researcher and teacher.

Before trying to describe this masterful discussion of a crucial field of performance art, let me say that I, too, have taught continuo for decades, studied the prefaces and tracts, and attempted to extrapolate the procedures most appropriate to various music from their tenets. Nevertheless I have learned a lot from Carchiolo's brilliant analysis. Challenged, but not daunted, I anticipate referring to it often as I work.

The book has seven sections, of which the first three set the historical-theoretical perspective for the rest. The last four go into detail, and follow a unique plan which avoids the pitfalls that characterize other books on the subject. Most proceed either source by source or topic by topic. Consequently they either attempt to organize the general comparisons to be drawn between the contents of each source, or they present a compendium of stylistic solutions which are at times mutually exclusive and not even contemporaneous. In the end such an anthological approach, from which we have all learned about continuo practice, is necessarily superficial and unspecific.

Here, instead, we have the earlier (sections 4+5) and later (6+7) periods covered twice, the emphasis shifting – Section 4: the sources up to 1630 (Viadana, Agazzari, Bianciardi, Sabbatini and, finally given the warranted consideration, the early monodists); section 5: the style of basso continuo in the early 1600s (analytical detail, quotes, comparisons, building on the ground already explored); section 6: the sources from the late 1600s to the early 1700s (Penna, Gasparini, *Regole...*, other manuscripts and prints, Germanic sources such as Muffat, Heinichen); and section

7: the style in the latter period (including Geminiani and examples up to Manfredini 1775, which result from previous trends).

Throughout the period in which accompaniments were to be realised, vertical harmony and horizontal part writing were both appropriate, if in inverse proportion. The experienced player of today is at a great risk of producing a convenient, personal style of accompaniment which ignores major differences in the implicit contrapuntal/harmonic fabric of particular authors, genres, pieces. It's almost a question-begging situation, because our habits make the music sound right to us as we play it. This even applies to accompanists well-trained in counterpoint: every school had its rules and every particular composition manifests a varying degree of strict adherence to those rules, which we have to discover and apply.

In the course of analysis of this historical development, Carchiolo presents many examples of the sort of doubts that we should entertain. I remember John Toll – who was extremely scrupulous about detail, but also very instinctive – saying offhand (about Monteverdi!) that 'you can always tell what to do...', which is like Ralph Kirkpatrick's remark that if you have carefully fingered a couple of Scarlatti sonatas you can play them all without fingering them! Maybe both were joking. For sure, the generous exposition by Carchiolo is enlightening because he addresses what is problematic.

In section 5, for example, he clarifies many sticky matters with reference to the *Tractatus compositionis augmentatus* (ca. 1655) of Christoph Bernhard, who went beyond the notion of general licences to discuss which ones were justified by basso continuo in particular. All the composers of the early period have left us music, the counterpoint of which the accompanist must actually reconstruct. Another question usefully explored is that of false relations (including so-called *ficta* and retrospective alterations), which I fear we have become very careless about. Some sources provide precise guidelines which are not only fundamental for accompanying, but for performance in general.

For the later period the theme of the book is to demonstrate the Italian style of enriching and embellishing the accompaniment, as other books have shown. Carchiolo, however, starts from the harmonic detail and audacious chord contaminations, which are more significant than mere in-harmonic, inessential additions. The distinction is drawn between density and dissonance, and players will be surprised by unusual chords explicitly required by the figuring (e.g. 7/#6/3s) in relatively early sources.

Four appendices, a bibliography and an analytical index follow the 334-page body of the book. The appendices include Viadana's preface; A. Scarlatti's cantata *Da sventura a sventura* with a transcription of a rigorously contrapuntal realisation (ca. 1690) found in various copies; the anonymous *Son un certo spiritello* realised in a dense, dissonant, full manner from the *Regole di accompagnare*; two movements of Corelli's Op. 5 n. 4 in Antonio Tonelli's realisation (from an undated late 18<sup>th</sup> century manuscript

in Modena containing realisations of all the op. 5 sonatas). The index of names, topics, Latin, rhetorical, and musical terms is quite detailed, though the crucially important manuscript *Regole...* isn't listed separately – it does pop up under specific terms. An oversight.

There are a dozen or so typos missed in proof-reading the book, the most serious being a few mistakes in the musical examples, and a renumbering of the sections which are referred to by the pre-adjusted paragraph numbers. An errata sheet would be useful. Hopefully either LIM or an English-language publisher will consider having this exceptional book translated into English: 100,000 words on a most necessary topic, at present available only to readers of Italian. *Barbara Sachs*

*I would certainly welcome a translation. CB*

#### SPANISH KEYBOARD MUSIC

*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 €75.00

The earlier contributions here focus particularly on intabulations, which form a considerable proportion of early Spanish (and other) keyboard music but tend to be neglected. There is a mass of information, but there's still a lot of collecting of examples rather than understanding. In particular, there is a clear difference between simply putting the source into tablature with a bit of unoriginal movement at cadence and original recreation of new works from old.

The most substantial contribution is by Michael Latcham, a thorough study of four 18th-century cembali that survive only through descriptions of the period which ascribe to them the ability to produce dynamic effects. His final sentence has wider implications if one deletes the first four words: 'At the Spanish court, instruments appear to have been chosen according to the circumstances as much as anything else.' If Domenico Scarlatti had come to London, would he have worried too much about what he played, provided that it was in good order? Jane Clark suggests Jacobite links with the first publication of the *Essercizi* in London, which accounts for the secrecy and misinformation surrounding it.

The volume contains contributions from three conferences of the *Festival Internacional de Música de Tecla Española* organised by Luisa Morales. That of 2002 included images of 11 early Spanish keyboard instruments from before 1600, and the book begins with reproductions of these, annotated by her. She is also the player on a disc of Soler reviewed on p. 36. She is evidently doing a tremendous job in encouraging research on Spanish keyboard music, and this well-produced volume is required reading for those interested in the subject.

## SCARLATTI FOR TODAY

*Domenico Scarlatti Adventures: Essays to commemorate the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of his Death* Edited by Massimiliano Sala & W. Dean Sutcliffe. Ut Orpheus Edizioni, 2008. xiii + 458pp, €120.00. ISBN 978 88 8109 462 2

Ideas on Domenico Scarlatti have been changing over the last few years. After my experience of Pagano's book, which I found unsatisfactory and unreadable, I was tempted to find someone else to review this. But I started reading it and was hooked. Most of the dozen contributors had something new to say and could express it clearly. First comes the discovery by Colin Timms of a new cantata (which would be more exciting if the previously-known cantatas were more often performed). Knowledge of Scarlatti's movements in the 1720s are sparse, but have more body to them after reading João Pedro D'Alvarenga's study. But the exciting contributions are detailed studies of how the sonatas are put together. In particular, there are analyses that really show how some of the sonatas work in a way that will help the player and listener. Gesture, improvisation and the sheer physicality of the music come together to bring the music to life (brought home to me, coincidentally, by one of our readers through an invitation to a feast of Scarlatti at the inauguration of his harpsichord). If you think analysis a waste of time, this is the book to make you change your mind. And there's a fascinating interpretation of the *Essercizi* as an graded demonstration of what Liszt might have called transcendental technique. Anyone seriously interested in playing Scarlatti needs to absorb the content of this book. It isn't always easy reading, but it could be much harder! There are some contributions in Italian, but the sections that matter are in English.

## THE PIANO &amp; ITS MUSIC

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

Despite the title, it is clear that Derek Carew has little interest in the 18th century, where his discussion of the music is perfunctory and his knowledge of piano history is out of date and inadequate. Much of the book is devoted to 19th-century pianists and their compositions, and some little-known but interesting figures are included. My general impression is that these chapters are reasonably sound, though do not offer any startling new insights. I'm not qualified to judge Carew's standard of accuracy here, but I hope that it's higher than in his discussion of pre-1800 music, where even what little he has to say is unreliable. That Haydn was 'strongly oriented towards the piano . . . after c. 1770' is not merely a matter of 'some controversy' as Carew later says; it is simply not compatible with what is known of keyboard instruments in Vienna and its environs at that time, and the description of various works of the 1770s by Haydn and Mozart as

'piano sonatas' or 'piano concertos' is tendentious. (Incidentally, the discussion of the minuet in Haydn's later sonata Hob. XVI:33 makes no sense because the musical examples to which reference is made are from the first movement, not the second.) Mozart did not *arrange* his concertos K. 413, 414 and 415 for piano and string quartet: he composed them from the start with optional wind parts. John Burton's *Ten Sonatas for the Harpsichord, Organ or Piano Forte* were published in 1767, not 1766, so it is hard to see why this set is named as 'one of the first title pages in English to mention the piano' instead of J. C. Bach's Op. 5 sonatas of the previous year, whose title-page gives precedence to the 'Piano Forte'.

Part of the trouble is that Carew relies far too much on outdated secondary sources and, although he lists some recent books and articles in the bibliographies, there is little sign that he has learned much from them. Research has moved on, and many ideas that may have seemed reasonable guesses twenty years ago have subsequently been shown to be erroneous. There is no longer any excuse, for example, for saying that 'the earliest surviving [German square piano] is by . . . Johann Socher dating from 1742'; or that J. C. Bach's performance on 2 June 1768 was 'the first solo use of the piano in London'; or that Mozart's K. 271 was elicited by 'the visit [to Salzburg] of the French keyboard virtuosa, Mlle Jeunehomme'. Much of what Carew says about the history of the piano is just plain wrong. Stein did not develop his *Prellmechanik* action 'around the early 1770s', and the instrument in Leipzig dates from 1783, not 1773. Such instruments were therefore not 'fully developed by the time W. A. Mozart was twenty', and it is unlikely that Mozart's famous letter of 1777 about Stein's instruments refers to 'Viennese' action. Consequently the English grand was not 'later than the "Viennese" piano', for the earliest extant Backers is dated 1772 and its number (21) implies that he had already been making them for a few years (incidentally, the instrument at Fenton House is not a genuine Backers). There is no evidence whatever that Friederici 'invented the first square piano', or that he made any of the three upright pianos attributed to him (one of them, at least, is plainly from a much later period). The action of Zumpe's square piano owes nothing to Cristofori's, and since the first of these squares was made in 1766 J. C. Bach cannot have 'expressed preference for the new instrument' in 1762 (and his Op. 1 concertos, published not in 1770 but in 1763, are still explicitly for harpsichord, so cannot have 'guaranteed the piano respectability'). Square pianos with 'extra keys' normally had seven, not 'four or five', to extend their compass from f to c'; and Southwell's pioneering instrument was made in 1784, not 1794. It is not true that knee-levers 'gave way to pedals', for they co-existed from c. 1770 to c. 1800; Broadwood's patent of 1783 has nothing to do with the sustaining pedal, which Backers had been installing since at least 1772 on grands, and Beyer from about 1775 on squares. The so-called 'Anglo-German' action is not a synthesis of the English and Viennese actions, but had been made in Vienna since the early 1780s by Kober and others: indeed, it is probable that the original action of Mozart's Walter was of this type. It is a

myth that 'Viennese' pianos have a lighter action than their English counterparts: true, their key-dip is shallower, but (to quote Michael Cole) 'the touch of a 18th-century Walter or any similar Viennese piano is considerably heavier in the bass than a comparable English piano'. Where on earth did Carew get the notion that on Viennese pianos 'the case was separate from the instrument itself'?

What he says about other keyboard instruments is just as ill-informed. To write that 'the clavichord, because of the quick decay-time of its sound, needed no such [piano-style] damping' shows that he is unaware that one function of the listing-cloth is to damp the sound when the key is released. And the key cannot be 'shaken from side to side' to produce *Bebung*. Such statements make one wonder whether Carew has ever actually played a clavichord. To say that two unison strings on the harpsichord are 'sounded simultaneously with a single jack', too, shows that he has never looked under a jack-rail. The *Tangentenflügel* does not have an action 'like a clavichord', nor is there any evidence that Stein ever made such instruments; it is most unlikely that Späth made them as early as 1751.

Other mistakes - especially in the *Companion* - are far too numerous to list, but it's worth mentioning that Mozart was appointed honorary *Konzertmeister*, not *Kapellmeister*, to the Salzburg court in 1769, and that it was his contemporary Thomas Linley, not his future pupil Thomas Attwood, whom he met in Italy the following year. The portable instrument that Mozart (or more likely his father) bought from Stein was a clavichord, not a piano; it was not made by Späth and Schmahl as stated elsewhere. I doubt if John Field was 'Russian nationalized', or that Charles Avison can be included among the 'notaries' of northern England. Scarlatti's *Essercizi* (London, 1738) consists of thirty one-movement sonatas, not '500-odd'. Not all sarabands are 'slow', and many late eighteenth-century minuets are not 'slow or moderately slow'. The solfa system was invented many centuries before 1842. In strict mean-tone tuning thirds are not 'tuned slightly sharp or flat'; on the contrary, many major thirds are pure. Viols are neither 'precursors to' nor 'shaped like' the violin family.

Far too many dates are misquoted. I hadn't previously realized what extraordinarily long lives some well known composers lived. Clementi must have been over 140 when he 'moved on in 1893' from St Petersburg, and Handel was nearly as old when 'by 1820' his London opera enterprise was 'finally up and running'. Mozart evidently did pretty well too, writing *Le nozze di Figaro* and *Don Giovanni* in 1776 and 1788 respectively; by contrast, his father's publication of his *Violinschule* in 1826 shows that he only just achieved centenarian status. I'm particularly intrigued by Sir John Stevenson of Dublin, who died in 1833 at the age of minus 138 (born 1971): perhaps time runs backwards in Ireland.

No doubt such mistakes are the result of inexcusably careless proof-reading, but others are less easily explained.

The Heilmann piano illustrated in Plate 22 certainly does not date from 'c. 1775', for its action is plainly modelled on Stein's, who did not use solid hammer-heads until 1783. Some extraordinary anachronisms are perpetrated. Mozart can hardly have had 'the full resources of the 'Viennese' piano of the period' in mind when he wrote the A minor sonata K. 310 in Paris in 1778. Nor can he have acted as a consultant to 'Streicher', the name taken by Nannette Stein on her marriage in 1794, three years after Mozart died. Most bizarre of all is the notion that Zelenka, who taught Quantz counterpoint in 1716, was 'one of Albrechtsberger's pupils'.

Carew's knowledge of general history is equally shaky. It is nonsense to claim Canaletto as one of the notabilities born in the 1760s, or to say that the steam train was invented in the 1830s. The *camera obscura* was in use hundreds of years before Daguerre 'succeeded in fixing images ... as early as 1816' (by painting, that is, not yet by any sort of photographic process). His geography is no better. Augsburg (Stein's workplace and Leopold Mozart's home town) is not in Austria, nor can Savoy be described as 'an area of south-west France' bordering on 'the provinces of Tyrol and Styria (both Austrian)'. As for his arithmetic, the statement that the Mozart family arrived in London 'in the early summer of 1764, when the boy [Wolfgang] was ten' displays a regrettable lack of precision, and the total of the 'Fortepiano' column in Table 2 should be 669, not 760 (the correct total is given in the book from which Table 2 is (mis)quoted).

I hope this review will at least save readers from spending a great deal of money (over £100 for the two volumes) on such an appallingly unreliable book. I am astonished that a firm like Ashgate should have accepted it for publication: it will do their reputation no good at all.

Richard Maunder

#### ONE TEMPERAMENT FOR ALL?

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

This is based on the author's 1979 M.Litt thesis at Bristol University. I encountered him several times there earlier in that decade, and remember him as a harpsichord enthusiast, concerned with pitch (especially 'Handel's tuning fork') rather than temperament. I don't remember his instruments, but he had an original harpsichord of c.1619 and I wonder whether he might have influenced my purchasing a split-key Italian-style harpsichord later that decade, rather than just Peter Holman's recommendation. It does seem a pity that the book was not published at the time. We are now much more aware of temperaments, and it is no longer a recondite subject in which an author can feel that he is a voice crying in the wilderness.

The problem of the book is visible in the headings of the two CDs that accompany it. Each is played on an organ tuned to a temperament called Ord I with music ranging

from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Most players concerned with historical tuning would expect such a repertoire to use several tunings, especially when appended to a book on the subject. But Mackenzie is more concerned with discovering an ideal unequal temperament than reviving the particular tunings described by sources of the past. I might have been more aware of the virtues or otherwise of Ord I if some pieces had also been recorded in alternative temperaments; but without that, I was more intent on other musical aspects of an attractive anthology.

The tuning Ord I is the author's attempt to reconstruct what he calls the 'common' method of tuning. (The title is presumably a pun on 'ordinary' and his name.) He quotes (pp. 86-98) various references to a 'common way' assuming it was a specific but lost system of tuning. My reading of them, however, is that they indicate something much less precise: that people usually tuned their instruments without using any formal system but by getting the chief chords more-or-less OK and putting up with problems in remoter keys. It is not surprising that 'when compositions of old masters are performed in concert, and with the organ or harpsichord tuned in the common manner, the effect is frequently very disagreeable. This is particularly the case with the songs of HANDEL, GALUPPI, LEO, PERGOLESI, and others, who wrote in a great variety of keys, and very often in those, For which the common way of tuning is not at all calculated.' (p. 93, quoting Tiberius Cavallo's paper to the Royal Society, 1788). It isn't necessary to take the word 'calculated' to imply any mathematical precision.

It seems to me necessary, in any discussion of tuning, to distinguish between systems worked out by mathematical means and those done by ear. Those who tune harpsichords frequently by ear will vary their practice, perhaps finding that their version of a standard temperament has changed over the years, or bending a temperament slightly to make it more suitable for the music about to be played. I am suspicious at the attempt to discover a 'lost art'. More important is the variety of temperaments that have been used over the centuries; but the object of the book seems rather to be to persuade us to replace the variety that we have become used to over the three decades since the ideas in this book were formulated with a hypothetical standard temperament with a 'systematic variety of principal intervals'

There is a vast amount of valuable information assembled here in the wide range of quotations, which makes the absence of an index infuriating. Although I doubt whether suggested changes in notating intervals and describing temperaments will catch on, his critique of the standard nomenclature and of the confusion of some distinguished authorities is stimulating, and his colour diagrams of a variety of temperaments present the problems and solutions clearly for the less numerate (though the numbers are all there as well). Despite the maths, there is much here for the general reader.

Just as perfect pitch isn't necessarily an advantage to professional musicians, so too discriminating an ear may

be a handicap. Mackenzie evidently has a good ear. Others, however, even professional musicians, may be less concerned with the weaknesses of equal temperament. 20<sup>th</sup>-century music, with its wide tonality (or none), demands it, and the 12-tone system implies equality. (It is, incidentally, interesting that twelve-tonery began at what may well have been the time when string players changed their concept of tuning: for the date, see Ross W. Duffin's excellent *How equal temperament ruined harmony*, Norton, 2007.\*). There has been no serious attempt to change tuning practices since then, so even musicians with excellent pitch-discrimination must have adjusted to live with it. However, those involved in music from periods when a variety of temperaments were available will continue to seek the varying tunings that the music seems to demand.

\* Duffin's book benefits from taking the tuning arguments beyond keyboard instruments; organs and harpsichords have to be played with singers, strings and wind, which all have their own take on the ideal tuning for any particular piece of music.

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GOTTFRIED FINGER  
(1655?–1730),  
ed. ROGER MCKONE

## 1 Overture

1st Treble (Violin I)

2nd Treble (Violin II)

Tenor (Viola)

Bass (Violoncello)

6

[B]

12

17

23



Musical score page 23. The score consists of four staves. The top staff is in G major (one sharp). The second staff is in G major (one sharp). The third staff is in B major (two sharps). The bottom staff is in B major (two sharps). The music is in common time. The notation includes various note heads and stems, with some notes beamed together.

30



Musical score page 30. The score consists of four staves. The top staff is in G major (one sharp). The second staff is in G major (one sharp). The third staff is in B major (two sharps). The bottom staff is in B major (two sharps). The music is in common time. The notation includes various note heads and stems, with some notes beamed together.

37



Musical score page 37. The score consists of four staves. The top staff is in G major (one sharp). The second staff is in G major (one sharp). The third staff is in B major (two sharps). The bottom staff is in B major (two sharps). The music is in common time. The notation includes various note heads and stems, with some notes beamed together.

42



Musical score page 42. The score consists of four staves. The top staff is in G major (one sharp). The second staff is in G major (one sharp). The third staff is in B major (two sharps). The bottom staff is in B major (two sharps). The music is in common time. The notation includes various note heads and stems, with some notes beamed together. A bracket labeled [D] is located above the third staff.

48



Musical score page 48. The score consists of four staves. The top staff is in treble clef, the second in alto clef, the third in bass clef, and the bottom in bass clef. The key signature is one sharp. The music is in common time, with measures 48 through 51 shown. Measure 48 starts with a quarter note, followed by eighth notes and sixteenth note patterns. Measure 49 begins with a half note. Measure 50 starts with a quarter note. Measure 51 starts with a half note.

54



Musical score page 54. The score consists of four staves. The top staff is in treble clef, the second in alto clef, the third in bass clef, and the bottom in bass clef. The key signature is one sharp. The music is in common time, with measures 54 through 57 shown. Measure 54 starts with a half note. Measure 55 begins with a quarter note. Measure 56 starts with a half note. Measure 57 starts with a half note.

59



Musical score page 59. The score consists of four staves. The top staff is in treble clef, the second in alto clef, the third in bass clef, and the bottom in bass clef. The key signature is one sharp. The music is in common time, with measures 59 through 62 shown. Measure 59 starts with a half note. Measure 60 begins with a quarter note. Measure 61 starts with a half note. Measure 62 starts with a half note.

64



Musical score page 64. The score consists of four staves. The top staff is in treble clef, the second in alto clef, the third in bass clef, and the bottom in bass clef. The key signature is one sharp. The music is in common time, with measures 64 through 67 shown. Measure 64 starts with a half note. Measure 65 begins with a quarter note. Measure 66 starts with a half note. Measure 67 starts with a half note.

70

Handwritten musical score for four voices (SATB) in common time, key signature of one sharp. The vocal parts are: Soprano (S), Alto (A), Bass (B), and Tenor (T). The score consists of four systems of music, each with four measures. The vocal parts are written in black ink on five-line staff paper. The bass part (B) has a bass clef, and the other three parts have a soprano clef. The tenor part (T) is written in a lower octave than its normal range. The music is written in a cursive, flowing style.

76

Handwritten musical score for four voices (SATB) in common time, key signature of one sharp. The vocal parts are: Soprano (S), Alto (A), Bass (B), and Tenor (T). The score consists of four systems of music, each with four measures. The vocal parts are written in black ink on five-line staff paper. The bass part (B) has a bass clef, and the other three parts have a soprano clef. The tenor part (T) is written in a lower octave than its normal range. The music is written in a cursive, flowing style.

81

Handwritten musical score for four voices (SATB) in common time, key signature of one sharp. The vocal parts are: Soprano (S), Alto (A), Bass (B), and Tenor (T). The score consists of four systems of music, each with four measures. The vocal parts are written in black ink on five-line staff paper. The bass part (B) has a bass clef, and the other three parts have a soprano clef. The tenor part (T) is written in a lower octave than its normal range. The music is written in a cursive, flowing style. The score includes a repeat sign with endings: 1. and 2.

86

Handwritten musical score for four voices (SATB) in common time, key signature of one sharp. The vocal parts are: Soprano (S), Alto (A), Bass (B), and Tenor (T). The score consists of four systems of music, each with four measures. The vocal parts are written in black ink on five-line staff paper. The bass part (B) has a bass clef, and the other three parts have a soprano clef. The tenor part (T) is written in a lower octave than its normal range. The music is written in a cursive, flowing style. The score includes a repeat sign with endings: [B].

## CD REVIEWS

## CHANT

*Apostle of Ireland: Medieval Irish plainchant. An Office for St. Patrick*  
 William Taylor *Clarsach*, Cantly, Rebecca Tavener 78' 02"  
 Divine Art ddd25065

The Scottish women's voice ensemble Cantly continue their exploration of medieval music associated with Scottish and Irish saints with this haunting recreation of a medieval office for St Patrick. Sourced from MSS in Trinity College Dublin and the National Library of Scotland in Edinburgh the music has been transcribed and edited by Dr Ann Buckley, and in these lovely performances powerfully evokes the celebration of the saint in a medieval establishment dedicated to his honour. The easy and expressive vocal production of the four singers is expertly supported on the medieval wire-strung clarsach by William Taylor, while the variety of ways in which the music is presented makes this the opposite of an arid academic exercise. These performances glow with energy and vitality, they dance and soar and float and twinkle. Rebecca Tavener, William Taylor and Cantly are to be warmly congratulated for their commitment to the hitherto largely overlooked but musically rich early heritage of the Scottish and Irish churches, and for bringing this remarkable and beautiful repertoire to life through the commissioning of performance editions and through their idiomatic and evocative musicianship.

D. James Ross

*The Divine Liturgy of St John Chrysostom: Medieval Chant of the Russian Orthodox Church* Choir of Danilov Monastery Moscow, Georgy Safonov dir 77'45"  
 Christophorus CHR 77287

This recording marks further progress towards deciphering, reconstructing and reviving the monophonic znamenny chant from ancient manuscripts. Readers may be familiar with 'Suprasl' (OPS 30-229, 1999) based on transcriptions by Anatoly Konotop from the 1598 and 1601 heirmologia preserved at the Monastery of Suprasl, now within the borders of Poland though originally part of Lithuania. For the present CD, to fill the gaps in the St John Chrysostom Liturgy as set down in 1598, Konotop has reconstructed texts from structural models and melodic formulae. The liturgy is now presented as a devotional service by the choir of Danilov Monastery Moscow.

It is hard to say why the rendering of

chant strikes a response in the listener. After all, this is not a musical performance. Word clarity is ensured by chanting in monotone and even the melodic fragments proceed in successive tones, apart from the cadence. Znamenny chant (with twelve pitches, every three representing a different accordance – low, sombre, bright, very bright – tonality based on eight groups of typical melodic patterns – expressing festive solemnity, sweet tenderness, and other moods – notated by signs indicating rhythm, duration, volume and manner) has its own subtleties. With the simple elements of voice tone and texture interchange, changes in tempo, and adaptation of volume and manner to the significance of the words the choir convey excitement, calmness, sympathy, mystery and solemnity, and humility.

From a historical point of view this revival of znamenny chant is significant since it precedes other influences upon Orthodox chant and reflects the early contacts between Mount Athos and Suprasl Monastery. Bartholomew, Patriarch of Constantinople, by his visits has encouraged restoration at Suprasl, and, as for Danilov Monastery, Moscow, we can only rejoice that it was rescued from its plight as a reform institution for boys, and that znamenny chant has returned to Russia after three centuries. Diana Maynard

## MEDIEVAL

*Ave maris stella: Veneration of Mary in the Middle Ages* Estampie (Sigrid Hausen, Monika Spägle voices, Michael Pop *ud*, harp, fl, Ernst Schwindl *insts*, Johannes Bengen *perc*) 65' 59"  
 Christophorus CHR 77289

This begins with the title hymn in a version a little removed from Monteverdi's. It is followed by a programme of Marian pieces by Hildegard, Guiraut Riquier, Philippe de Vitry, Oswald von Wolkenstein and anon, some monophonic, some genuinely polyphonic, and some with editorial/improvised parts. The instrumental contributions are mostly tactful, though it is a pity to include a couple of the hackneyed extant monophonic dances when the players are quite capable of concocting their own. It is a pleasing disc, though since so much of the texted music from the period is Marian, it might seem difficult to offer a very coherent focus for selection. The booklet note relates four aspects of the Marian cult (*dolorosa*, *regina*, *auxiliatrix* and *virgo*) to *plancus*, song of praise, miracle story and spiritual *Minnelied*, which at least justifies

a variety of music and text. Each piece has a paragraph devoted to it in the booklet in German, English and French but only the original words. CB

*The Dowland Project* Romaria (John Potter T, Milos Valent *vln*, *vla*, John Surman *wind*, Stephen Stubbs *gtr*, *vihuela*) ECM New Series 476 5780 77'03"

Forget Dowland: the nearest we get is a version of a Credo by Lassus. Much of the music is medieval. The simple opening track is beautiful: if you sample it, you'll want to hear more. The accompaniments make no attempt to be 'authentic' (so, mercifully, percussion is absent): the musicians just approach the music with imagination and make from it something new. At this stage of our discovery of early music and our recognition that we haven't much idea what instruments did when playing with voices, we can be confident enough to make our own attempts, guided by the music itself, to fill the gaps that surround the notes. This is done brilliantly and convincingly, though I hope no-one tries to imitate it too specifically. If I have any doubts, it is about the absence of an audience (this is explicitly a recording in which the owner of the record company, Manfred Eicher, is producer and audience as well). Sometimes I felt that the performances were just a little too laid back, and might have benefited from a live atmosphere and rather more listeners: this is more like the introversion of musicians playing for themselves than the more extrovert style of improvisers playing with and on the audience as well as each other. But I might be missing something. CB

*Llibre Vermell Choeur de Chambre de Namur, Psallentes, Les Pastoureaux, Millenarium 79' 30"*  
 Ricercar RIC 260

There's a fundamental problem in recording the pilgrims' songs in the *Llibre Vermell* of Montserrat: deciding on the appropriate level of formality, musicality and sophistication. The booklet quotes a note between the first two songs in the MS: 'Sometimes the pilgrims who were holding vigil in the church of Holy Mary of Montserrat wanted to sing and dance, as they also did in front of the cathedral by day. They were only allowed to sing respectable and pious songs, and it is for this reason that some are copied on the upper and lower parts of the page. They are to be used with restraint and with discretion, so that there is no disturbance of those who have given themselves over

to unceasing and devout prayer and meditation...' That excludes the boisterous interpretations that we usually hear. A more sober interpretation of the songs in popular style than we usually hear are placed with more formal items from the liturgy. Despite the various groups participating in this recording, I get no sense of a mix of regular liturgy and non-professional singing by pilgrims. There's a compromise to be made between perfection and reality. It's like recording hymns, where choirs sound wrong, but a genuine congregational experience only works if you participating, not listening at home. It's a difficult judgment to get the compromise right, and this sounds more like the monks of Monserrat putting on a highly-controlled performance to a visiting official to show that their music doesn't get out of hand. But if that doesn't worry you, it's a well-researched and delivered performance, imaginatively put together. CB

#### 14<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

*The Medieval Romantics: French Songs and Motets 1340-1440* Gothic Voices, Christopher Page 55' 35"

Hyperion Helios CDH55293 £ (rec 1991) da Firenze, Dufay, Lymburgia, Machaut, de Porta, Senleches, Solage. *Velut*

The composers range from Machaut to Dufay, enough range to give variety while still operating within the same musical language. The beauty of this once-so-remote music is all immaculately tuned and articulated: what else do you expect from Gothic Voices? Despite the repeats, nothing outstay its welcome, the *formes fixes* giving a feeling of inevitability. I hope those who didn't collect the set first time are doing so now. CB

#### 15<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

*Dufay Motets, hymns, chansons, Sanctus papale* Blue Heron, Scott Metcalfe 73' 58" Blue Heron BHCD 1001

We should have reviewed this months ago; Scott Metcalfe and his father (an *EMR* subscriber) kept asking if I'd received it, and at last I have. It was worth waiting for. It doesn't have the hard edge that made groups like Gothic Voices so exciting, nor are instruments entirely excluded from chansons. But Scott knows what he is doing, as do his singers (try the quick *J'atendray* and for contrast the following *Mon cuer me fait*) and the performances convince — though I reckon that, in this sort of music, if you notice even a brief cadential *rallentando*, it's too much. This disc shows off the mellifluous beauty of much of the music. It is somewhat laid-back, but not overly so. If I say that it is an ideal introduction

to Dufay, I don't wish to discourage more experienced listeners. It's a good, unhampered programme: buy it! CB

Dufay (*Hilliard Live 4*) The Hilliard Ensemble 65' 23"

Coro 16055

*Missa Se la face ay pale* etc

This is the last of a set of four discs which appeared originally on the Hilliard-live label in association with BBC Radio 3 and which is now receiving wider distribution on the Sixteen's Coro label. Recorded live in 1998, it represents the ensemble at its vintage best with some exquisitely expressive music-making and ne'er a slip in 65 minutes of demanding singing. The tempi are more satisfactory than on the group's earlier all-Dufay CD of 1987 on EMI, where limpidness threatens to overwhelm forward momentum. While the Mass *Se la face ay pale* is relatively familiar, some of the motets are less so. The superlative singing makes this whole disc a consistent joy to listen to. It is hard to imagine more authoritative performances of this repertoire, and providing you like your Dufay one male voice to a part this is for you. D. James Ross

#### 16<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

Byrd & Tallis *Heavenly harmonies stile antico* 78' 51"

Harmonia Mundi HMU 807463

The lower-cased stile antico (symbol of democracy?) has done very well for itself in the last few years (see p. 9). I'll get out of the way my habitual criticism of the Tallis. Which alternate with the more elaborate Byrd motets. Will no-one treat them as hymns and sing at least some of Archbishop Parker's (or anyone else's) texts. That apart, this is a distinguished and impressive recording, with three pieces from the 1589 *Cantiones Sacrae*, five from 1591, and the introit, offertory and communion for Pentecost from *Gradualia II*. I think I detect one problem from not having a conductor (nor a non-conducting director either, it seems). The 13 singers need to learn how to resist gilding the lily, to keep the music moving and to shape phrases without over-imposed dynamics. *Ne irascaris*, for instance, is very powerful, but I don't want to play it again, which somewhat defeats the point of buying a CD. They also need someone to point out when a voice protrudes: didn't they listen to playbacks, or was Robina Young double-booked? But don't be put off: this is a very fine recording. CB

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

Ludford *Missa Benedicta & antennes votives* Choir of New College Oxford, Edward Higginbottom 63' 13"  
K617 K617206

*Ave cuius conception & Domine Jesu Christe*

Unbelievably, almost fifteen years have passed since the ground-breaking four-volume series of Ludford recordings by The Cardinal's Musick appeared on ASV. The excitement generated by the unveiling of this hitherto largely neglected English Renaissance master was considerable — the loss of a tenor partbook from the unique source of his music had delayed the production of performance editions. However, the anticipated flood of Ludford recordings never materialised, nor has he yet broken through to become a regular feature in choral concerts. This is very surprising as his rich polyphony is extremely accessible and flawlessly composed. The present recording of the six-part Mass *Benedicta et venerabilis* and two votive antiphons is therefore a welcome development. Although all the works featured in the ASV series, this is their first recording using an authentic all-male choir, which the programme note also claims is of the same size as its 16th-century predecessor; although I question whether the original choir would have boasted seventeen juvenile trebles. This is an important factor in the success of this recording, because although the adult component of the choir has the necessary warmth and depth to make the most of Ludford's bottom-heavy harmonies, the treble line has elements of raggedness which I so often find in cathedral choirs with large numbers of boy trebles on the top line. If, as David Wulstan long ago postulated, Renaissance choirs had fewer but more mature trebles, they would almost certainly have sounded much more like The Cardinal's Musick than the New College Choir. This is a small reservation which fans of cathedral choirs will be happy to overlook, and these intelligent, exciting readings have much to recommend them. The partial liturgical context, a feature which also distinguishes the ASV series, includes some beautifully sung plainsong and all the polyphony is simply bursting with energy. D. James Ross

Monte *Motets, madrigals & Chansons* Ensemble Orlando Fribourg, Laurent Gendre 51' 17"  
Claves 50-2712

In contrast to the sublime performance of English music by The Sixteen reviewed elsewhere, this is a pleasant but rather lacklustre account of continental music of the same era. There are some good voices, but the countertenors' insistent tone pre-

dominates and the sopranos are somewhat insipid. Their performance is pedestrian, with too many stresses in each bar and little sense of the overall phrases. The playing by the cornett and sackbut ensemble 'In Echo' adds enormously to the pleasure to be derived from this disc: the instrumentalists play in a more 'vocal' manner than the singers, understanding better the principles of phrasing. An interesting contrast can be made between tracks 8 and 9: the first, *Anima dolorosa*, is sung by solo voices and is lively and exciting; whereas the following *Ogni mio ben crudel* is sung by the full choir of ten, and is uninspired and laborious, unlike the affecting version of the same piece played by the brass group in track 5.

The disc presents a good overview of Monte's prolific output, including sacred motets, Italian madrigals and French chansons, and it is interesting to see a less flamboyant and experimental composer than the slightly younger Lassus dealing with similar musical forms. I was surprised to read the CV of the director Laurent Gendre: he studied piano and conducting, and earns his rösti and gruyère by conducting operas and symphonies. It's tempting to say he should have stuck to what he knows, but on the other hand, who else has devoted a whole CD to the works of Monte? Answer: Stephen Darlington with the choir of Christ Church, Oxford, in 2000. Must check it out.

Selene Mills

Newsidler *Ein newgeordent künstlich Lautenbuch* Bart Roose lute 66' 33"  
Passacaille 945

Perhaps deterred by its arcane system of notation, modern lutenists tend to fight shy of 16<sup>th</sup>-century German lute music, yet there is a wealth of material to explore. Hans Newsidler published many interesting collections of lute music, thoughtfully arranged in order of difficulty, with advice on fingering for the left and right hands. Some of his ordering was designed to introduce the characters of German tablature gradually. His first two volumes were published in 1536, and it is from these that Bart Roose selected pieces for his anthology. Many of them would have been old-fashioned by 1536: *Benedictus* and *Lamora* by Isaac, two settings of *Tandernacken* (one by Lapicida, the other by Obrecht), Josquin's *Adieu mes amours*, together with songs by Hofhaimer, Senfl, Pierre de la Rue, and Ghiselin.\*

One surprising aspect of the intabulations in the first volume is that Newsidler sometimes omits whole voices, intabulating just two of a three- or four-part song. It seems that he really intended the music to be played as a solo in this incomplete form, not as an accompaniment for other instruments or voices.

The pieces in *Das Ander Theil* (the second volume) are harder to play, with all voices included, and with more elaborate divisions. One distinctive feature of these divisions is the dissonance created by the addition of accented passing notes, notably in the second setting of Hofhaimer's *Mein einigs A*. Ever the pragmatist, Newsidler introduces double sharps to avoid awkward left-hand stretches to a lower course. There are four occurrences in *Ein sehr kunstreicher Preambel oder Fantasey* (track 8), at 4 mins, 43 secs; 7, 1; 7, 54; and 10, 2. This is possibly the longest lute composition I have ever heard, at 12' 38".

Bart Roose plays a six-course lute made by Peter Van Wonteghem after Hans Frei (c. 1520-30), with octave stringing for the lowest three courses, and tempered in 5<sup>th</sup> comma meantone. The intonation of the 6<sup>th</sup> course is unfortunately somewhat wayward. His playing is clean and expressive, and he lets the music speak for itself, without self-indulgent excess. In the final *hupff auff to Wascha Mesa*, Roose faithfully reproduces what Newsidler printed, but I would be inclined to alter the harmony of bars 5 and 6, to maintain the characteristic chord sequence of the Passamezzo Antico.

Stewart McCoy

Formschneider's *Trium vocum carmina of 1538*, also published in Nuremberg, is equally archaic. CB

Philips Complete Keyboard Works Vol. 2  
Siegbert Rampe kbd 73' 24"  
Dabringhaus & Grimm MDG 341 1435-2

This should have been an interesting project but it left me underwhelmed by the playing and by some unsympathetic recording. Rampe uses four instruments: a 15<sup>th</sup>-century organ from Soet-Ostönnen with later additions, a c. 1670 organ by Hans Scherer the Younger from Tangermünde, the 1637 Andreas Ruckers from the Germanisches Nationalmuseum in Nuremberg and a copy by Jörg Gobeli of a c. 1670 South German clavichord. The very early organ makes an exciting sound for the opening Fantasia in G but it is recorded so closely that its nine minutes of rather unsubtle playing using the trumpet stop becomes an assault on the ears. This is followed by some overly-percussive playing on an at times out-of-tune clavichord. Things do pick up with the Ruckers, particularly in the *Pavana* and *Gagliarda Pagget* which does finally show some real sensitivity to Philips' music. The later organ offers more variety of tone, reflected in the playing which is rounded off with a rousing shorter Fantasie in D on full organ, working much better than the opening piece.

Noel O'Regan

Sweelinck Choral Works vol. 2  
Netherlands Chamber Choir, Jan Boeke, Philipe Herreweghe, Peter Philips 62'53"  
Et'cetera KTC1319

I reviewed vol. 1 of this reissued series (KTC1318) in *EMR* 121, and have little different to say here. The music is excellent, the choir sings well, but the psalms are probably meant to be for domestic, not choral forces. But nevertheless well worth getting for the amazingly unsung music. CB

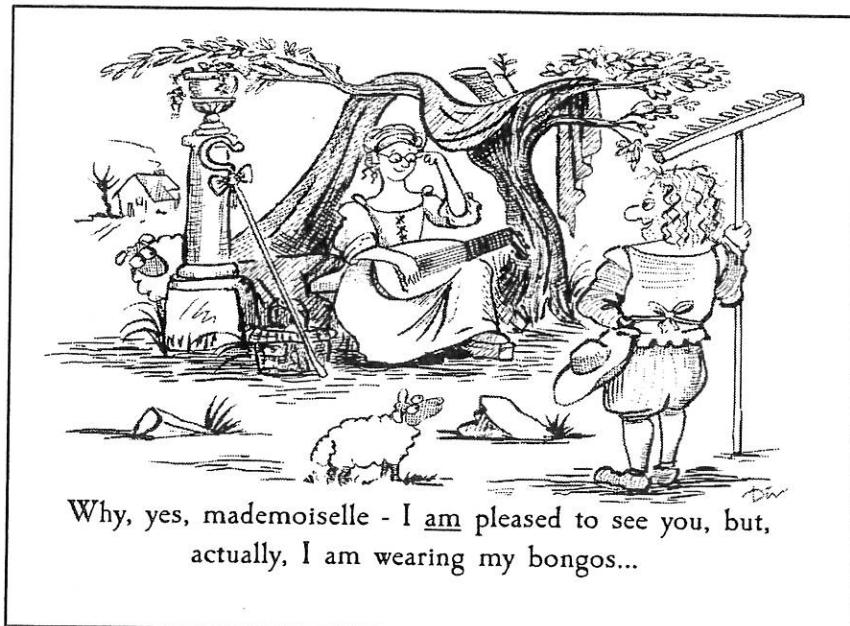
*Chanson à plaisir: Music from the Time of Adrian le Roy* Fires of Love (Frances Cooper S & perc, Marcus Claridge perc, Gordon Ferries lute, gtr, perc, Jonathan Hugh-Jones B, rec, lutes) 78' 40"  
Delphian DCD34063

Acadelt, Attaingnant, Certon, Crecquillon, Didier le Blanc, Le Roy, Morlaye, Sermisy

I am puzzled by this disc. This is lovely repertoire, as many readers will already know, and Fires of Love is a splendidly accomplished Edinburgh-based group who make a lovely ensemble. Punctuated by lovely lute and guitar pieces, most of the songs are beautifully sung by the lovely Frances Cooper. If her lovely voice was the last thing I ever heard, I'd be happy. Lovely music, lovely singing.

If you are beginning to suspect there is a whopping 'but' coming after all this loveliness, then you are right. The notes mention 'the addition of improvised percussion to bring out the spirited dance rhythms of the time'. All well and good, though some might question the use of percussion to enhance songs that are already so skilfully written as to virtually dance off the page. I was certainly not expecting bongos. That's right – bongos. Those little drums you hold between the knees in Cuban music – the Yorkshire Terriers of Latin percussion. As well as featuring a large tabor-like drum, the photograph of the recording sessions in the CD box shows the ensemble employs bongos, a djembe and a maraca-like gourd – all instruments that escaped the eagle eyes of Virdung, Praetorius and Mersenne, a more cynical officer of the Authenticity Police might snipe.

The choice of these instruments, unusual though their selection for late 16<sup>th</sup> century song may be, is not a problem in itself, of course, but their application here is, I feel. The vocal line of the first track, 'Puis que vivre' is punctuated by such distractingly loud and deep drum bonks, that poor Frances Cooper is pushed to the background, and Gordon Ferries' delicate lute accompaniment becomes almost completely masked. How does this serve the music, I wonder? Should a drum be louder than a soprano in early lute-accompanied song?



The best rendition of the famous 'Une jeune fillette' that I've ever heard is cruelly interfered with in its second and fourth verses by more insistent ethnic drum thumping; a lute galliard by Attignant has drum and what sounds like a thumped dried bean rattle accompaniment, and so on. The Parisian sources of all the original publications from which the songs have been selected are meticulously recorded in the sleeve notes, and the background to the music is illuminated in an excellent sleeve note, so clearly Fires of Love are concerned with authenticity, but this wacky modern percussion business seems to fly in the face of such research. Improvising a saxophone over a Morales motet to create a modern synthesis is one thing, but whacking a dried bean pod to a lute solo? How does this help to 'vividly re-create the many facets of (Le Roy's) musical world' as the sleeve notes claim?

Fortunately, by no means all of the songs are thus adorned with Havana nightclub percussion, and there is still plenty to enjoy on the many tracks performed 'straight'. Perhaps this approach works much better live, and I'm just a grumpy old dinosaur, but here we seem to have silly bonkers to complement the (alleged) silly pluckers elsewhere. *David Hill*

*Flower of Cities All: Music in London 1580-1620* The English Cornett and Sackbut Ensemble 74' 16"

Deux-Elles DXL 1118

Music by Adson, J. Bassano, Bennet, Byrd, Dowland, Farnaby, Haussmann, Holborne, Parsons, Wighorpe

The programme includes consort and lute songs, pieces for solo lute and virginals as well as instrumental pieces for the ensemble, in a wide ranging survey of music from the capital. The group can

create a soft-edged sound which suits the mistiness of Byrd and cleanly navigates all its cerebral complexity. These pieces play to the strengths of the ensemble and are the revelation on this disk. The countertenor Mark Chambers communicates the music with clarity and sensitivity, the music appearing to come first, rather than the voice - avoiding the common countertenor pitfall. His approach is mirrored in the ability of the instrumentalists to drift away with great delicacy. Another really successful sound colour is the changes of light throughout the programme, which make for good listening. The well-measured virginal playing of Robert Howarth is worth a mention too. My only reservation is in placing Parson's *The song called trumpets* at the head of the programme. This slightly lumpen rendition is at odds with the rest, and leaves the later marvelous playing with more work to do to overcome first impressions. *Stephen Cassidy*

*Treasure of Tudor England: Parsons, White, Tye* The Sixteen, Harry Christophers 63' 43"

Coro 16056

Parsons *Ave Maria*, *O bone Jesu*; Tye *Agnus* (*Missa Euge bone*), *Peccavimus cum patribus*; White *Christe qui lux*, *Lamentations a5*

If only I weren't playing in a different concert tonight, nothing would prevent me from - somehow - getting hold of a ticket for The Sixteen's concert in St John's College Chapel, the first in this year's Choral Pilgrimage. The recording, launched just ahead of this major UK tour, is quite sublime and should be bought by everyone remotely interested in choral music. The singing is as near perfect as it is possible to get, and the music itself is quite wonderful. Alongside

the familiar treats of Parsons's *Ave Maria* and White's *Lamentations*, we are given Parsons's less well-known but extremely gorgeous *O bone Jesu*, and Tye's rich and passionate *Peccavimus cum patribus nostris*. The inclusion of only the *Agnus Dei* from Tye's *Missa Euge bone* is the only concession to Classic FM's sponsorship, but one can understand the temptation to include such a 'lollipop': was there ever a more poignant interrupted cadence than that at the end of the second *Agnus*?

The singers are totally at home in this music, but never let contempt or complacency seep into their familiarity. Rather, they understand the idiom deeply, and convey it gloriously to the audience. Harry Christophers's direction intervenes just enough to let the music keep pace with the changing moods of the words; the pace never flags, and never rushes where sensitivity is needed. Solo voices are used appropriately, e.g. for the opening *Ave Maria*, but the vocal blend is so good that it is sometimes hard to distinguish whether soloists or the full choir are singing. This recording combines the best of all worlds - female trebles, male altos, straight voices which can also sing strongly without belting. All I can do is envy you if you manage to hear the performance live as well as on this superb recording. *Selene Mills*

*There is a list of The Sixteen's tour of this programme in our Diary, p. 5.*

#### 17<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

*Araujo The Burning in Snow: Baroque Music from Latin America - 3* Ex Cathedra Consort & baroque Ensemble, Jeffrey Skidmore 75' 35" Hyperion CDA67600 + Diego José de Salazar *Salga el torillo* & anon *Hanacpachap cussicuinin*

Juan de Araujo was born in Spain in 1648, emigrated to South America with his family as a child, and from 1680 till his death in 1712 was organist at La Plata Cathedral (now Sucre in Bolivia). Most recordings of Latin American church music have been anthologies, but this is a one-composer selection except for the presence of the haunting native hymn *Hanacpachap cussicuinin* (publ. 1631), whose 20 verses are spread through the disc. It is not literally in Sapphic meter as the booklet claims, since the stanzas have six lines, not four. Araujo's music is very different: sophisticated and marvellously expressive, and Ex Cathedra makes the most of it. The poetry too is worthy of attention: Very enjoyable, though one wants to sing, not just listen. *CB*

*Belli L'Orfeo dolente*

*see below under Firenze 1616*

Buxtehude *Eine Lübecker Abendmusik* La Capella Ducale, Musica Fiata, Roland Wilson 78' 18" cpo 777 318-2 BuxWV 34, 36, 51, 72, 110, 112-3

This is a fabulous recital. The repertoire ranges from a duet for Tenor and Bass with string accompaniment to some of Buxtehude's most extravagant works, including the monumental *Benedicam Dominum* and the even more colourful *Mein Gemüt erfreut sich*, complete with dulcians and recorders. Roland Wilson, rather than trying to re-create a particular occasion, has simply opted to seek out works where the composer turns his hands to showy settings of religious texts that seem to have delight and entertainment as their central drive. These Abendmusik were just that – recitals to delight the Hansestadt Bürgers with all the opulence the church and city could muster. It should come as no surprise to regular readers of these pages that La Capella Ducale and Musica Fiata are outstanding performers of this music – I'm sure Buxtehude would have been delighted to stand in Roland Wilson's shoes. I look forward to hearing the results of his next project very much – every disc so far has been the equal or better of its predecessor. BC

Buxtehude *In te Domine speravi: Cantatas and Motets* Currende, Erik Van Nevel 58' 28" Accent ACC 24184 58' 28" BuxWV 12, 41, 53, 60, 78

Currende perform five works by Buxtehude. The ten singers (two sets of SSATB) are accompanied by two violins, two gambas, violone and organ. Typically Eric Van Nevel has chosen works that show the composer at his absolute best – Buxtehude can write glorious tunes as easily as he pulls off taut, skilfully worked counterpoint and yet he manages to capture the ecstasy of religious rapture and wring every drop of pathos and grief from the darker texts. Initially I was worried by there just being two singers for each voice (especially when the booklet notes overstate things by talking about choirs!) but actually the resulting warmth is, I think, just what I was missing in the Erlebach cantatas below. As CB has often said, the best celebrations of composers' anniversaries are actually from the following year – 2008 is certainly proving a fantastic year for fans of Buxtehude (whose numbers should be growing, surely!) BC

Buxtehude *Sonatas Op. 1* L'Estravagante (Stefano Montanari vln, Rodney Prada gamba, Maurizio Salerno hpscd) 60' 30" Arts 47731-8 SACD

Buxtehude *Sonatas Op. 2* L'Estravagante Arts 47732-8 SACD 67' 14"

These two SACDs have been in and out of my machine quite a lot in the last few weeks – these are works I have known and loved for a long time, and these are among the best performances I have heard... BC

*Brian hadn't finished his review by the deadline (or the rest got lost in transit), but this opening is recommendation enough.* CB

Buxtehude *Opera Omnia VI: Harpsichord Works 2* Ton Koopman 97' 02" (2 CDs) Challenge Classics CC72245

This sixth volume in the Buxtehude *Opera Omnia*, like *Harpsichord Works 1*, includes a piece discovered in the present century. Koopman uses three instruments to keep our ears tickled – harpsichords in Flemish and Italian veins and a Flemish virginal. Although apparently written for amateur, domestic performance the music is more than merely well crafted and with this artist was never going to sound dull anyway. Occasionally one wishes for a moment of repose at a double bar but overall the interpretations are sweeping and authoritative. This release would be a good present and a welcome surprise for anyone who knows Buxtehude only from his organ music or *Membra Jesu nostri*. David Hansell

Buxtehude &... *Organ Works* Kei Koto org 216' 11" (3 CDs) Claves 50-2704/06

Bach, Buxtehude, H & J Praetorius, Radeck, Scheidemann, Strunck, Tunder, Weckmann

This is an interesting collection of pieces by Buxtehude, Radeck, Strunck, Scheidemann, Jacob Praetorius, Hieronymus Praetorius III, Weckmann, Tunder and Bach, performed on three of the most famous northern European organ (Hamburg Jacobikirche, Groningen Martinikerk, Roskilde) plus two lesser known ones in Payerne and Tangermünde. The much later, and French style, Payerne organ is slightly out of place for this repertoire, although it is only used for two pieces, one being a transcription of a section of one of Buxtehude's instrumental Sonatas. Interestingly for such a little-known composer as Radeck (a contemporary of Buxtehude), his *Jesus Christus unser Heiland* is found on this recording as well as the Friedhelm Flamme CD reviewed above. The first CD is all Buxtehude played on two organs, the second includes the Radeck piece and the final CD is entitled 'Magnificat', with examples by the remaining composers. The Tunder work is the magnificent *Magnificat octavi toni fantasia*, until recently assumed to be a

work of Scheidemann. Kei Koto's playing owes much to the teaching of Harald Vogel, although there are some aspects that I doubt he would approve of, notably the tendency to turn triplets into *notes inégale* (CD 2/5) and the curious phrasing of the opening of the Praeludium in g (149). There are a number of other interesting interpretations, including the play-over of the bass theme of the Passacaglia before the piece starts (thereby scuppering all the number theorists), segueing the Sarabande from the harpsichord Suite in E minor into the start of the Ciaccona in e minor and adding a continuo realisation to the opening bass solo of Bach's *Meine Seele erhebt den Herren* from the Schübler Chorales. That said, there is much of real quality in the playing and the repertoire is a fascinating one, much of it little known, even to organists. If you think you can live with these interpretations, this triple CD set is worth exploring.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Erlebach *Selected Sacred Cantatas* Dorothee Mields, Margaret C. Hunter, Alexander Schneider, Andreas Post, Matthias Vieweg SSATB, Les Amis e Philippe, Ludger Rémy 103' 12" (2 CDs in box) cpo 777 346-2

I had been looking forward to this 2-CD set for weeks and weeks. On the face of it, I should be delighted to have new recordings of nine works by a composer whose output I have come to love, performed by some of the leading musicians in that field. There is nothing to fault the performances per se; the singing and playing are very enjoyable indeed, and there is enough variety of style between the works to make the listening experience a rich one. I think what I actually missed most was a chorus – while working on editions of other works, I've always had in mind a ripieno group of singers who would strengthen the soloists in the framing tutti that are so characteristic of this repertoire. Manfred Fechner's sleeve notes suggest that the surviving material reflected the later practice of the Fürstenschule in Grimma and that the original performances would only have used solo singers. I find the results unsatisfactory, and I would have thought that varying the texture by recording at least one of the works according to the Grimma sources would have been valid in a project such as this since it seems unlikely that another group will now explore the remaining cantatas – although clearly there is a wealth of beautiful material still awaiting re-discovery by performers! It was, however, especially nice to hear a band of early double reeds getting in on the act – well done to Rémy for including such pieces. BC

Van Eyck *Daphne* Anthonello (Yoshimichi Hamada *recs*, Kaori Ishikawa *gamba*, Marie Nishiyama *harp*, Isao Moriyasu *fl, rec*) Enchiradiis EN 2020 (rec 2003) 67' 12"

Recorder players like to play *Der Fluyten Lust-hof*, so there is already a good choice of performances. This one is a bit different. It isn't just that some of the pieces are at least partly accompanied by gamba and harp, and two are on cornetto. Hamada makes a beautiful sound and you don't at first notice that he is subtly introducing some rather modern effects into one or two of the pieces. This comes to a head in *Boffons* with its swanee whistle effects, and *Batali* too is dramatised with some extended techniques. This may sound rather off-putting, so I should say that most of the performances are much less controversial and the playing is of a high quality. If you listen to this CD with the music in hand, as I did the first time, you are likely to be frustrated trying to work out which variations are being played because sections from different variations, and even Van Eyck's different versions of the same piece, are woven together. *Fantasia and eco* actually starts at modo 3 so you never hear the original theme. It's all rather like being there with Van Eyck and his friends extemporising in the churchyard, and although you may think that some of the effects are a bit over-the-top I can certainly recommend listening to this CD. *Victoria Helby*

J. C. F. Fischer *Missa St. Michaelis Archangeli*, *Missa in contrapuncto*, Suite 1 in C Veronika Winter, Jenny Haecker, Henning Voss, Nils Giebelhausen, Matthias Gerchen SSATB, Handel's Company, Kammerchor der MarienKantorei Lemgo, Rainer Johannes Homburg 68' 10" Dabringhaus & Grimm MDG 905 1477-6 SACD

I'm glad to see we got this disc – somehow we managed to miss the same ensembles' recording of cantatas for Christmas and a Te Deum by Stölzel. Hearing their take on Fischer, that is all the more regrettable. While I would personally have opted to place the orchestral suite between the two mass settings, it is nonetheless a pleasure. There is some added percussion in the *Air des Combattants*, and a lot of finely phrased playing (with more than a nod to *inégalité*) throughout the other movements, the crowning glory of which is the final Chaconne – complete with what sound like castanets. The two masses are in different styles – the *Missa Sancti Michaelis Archangeli* has orchestra, while the *Missä in Contrapuncto* is a cappella. It has the further attraction of having two settings of the Kyrie, one for Advent, the other (performed as an extra track) for Lent – each uses a different

chorale as its basis. The music truly deserves to be better known, and these performances do the performers credit. There are some moments of absolute delight in the St Michael mass. BC

Fontana *Sonate A 1.2.3*. Almageste Arion ARN68759 61' 10" Sonatas 2-6, 9, 11-13, 15

This has not been an easy CD to review. The music is enjoyable – and remarkable for the length of some of the sonatas (most composers of the early 17<sup>th</sup> century preferring shorter works). I just could not get my head around the booklet note's contention that somehow Fontana's inspiration came from plainchant, so we have intonations to various pieces as if they were movements of a mass. The playing is of a very high standard from all the performers, but I felt that occasionally the dulcian/fagotto was too prominent at the expense of the violin and, although I have absolutely no problem with the substitution of cornetto for a second violin, it would have been nice to hear at least one of the trios played on strings alone. BC

Gagliano *La Dafne* Chantal Santon *Dafne*, Matthieu Abelli *Apollo*, Guillemette Laurens *Venere*, Daphné Touchais *Amore*, Jay Bernfeld, Fuoco e Cenere 60.28 Arion ARN68776

I've generally been critical of Jay Bernfeld ever since I witnessed him attacking his gamba in some French cantatas at the Boston Festival in the mid-1990s. But here he has done a very good job, tamed his aggression and assembled a fine cast to give a compelling performance of this impressive work. It doesn't quite sustain comparison with Monteverdi's *Orfeo* (performed in Mantua the previous year), but it's well worth hearing (and, indeed, performing: I reviewed a new edition in *EMR* 121, p. 4). I am less aware now of the harmonic weaknesses I mentioned there – perhaps what I felt at the keyboard doesn't impinge on the listener. The recorders are somewhat too prominent, but that doesn't stop me giving this a strong recommendation. Like the Belli *L'Orfeo dolente* reviewed below, this is a convincing and stylish performance, with the similar annoyance of not leaving the recitative accompaniment to the plucked instruments. Singers really have learnt how this music works now. CB

Biagio Marini – Dario Castello *La Fenice*, Jean Tubéry 98' 30 (2 CDs) Ricercar RIC 261 ££ (rec 1995-6)

This is a re-issue of two discs originally part of La Fenice's 'Heritage of Monteverdi' series – all of which are superb.

They are the two where virtuoso ensemble playing take pride of place. The Castello in particular is a signal recording. There are larger scale pieces including strings and sackbuts, which are vivacious and full of imagination; but it is the cornetting of Jean Tubéry and Yoshimichi Hamada, as duet and as part of trios and quartets, which is truly remarkable. They appear to use telepathy to keep their connection through the considerable liberties which need to be taken to bring off this extraordinary repertoire. The Marini feels more serious after this, and the programme is very well crafted as it builds the atmosphere towards the austere vocal *Misereri a tre voce*. This carries the burden of decorations added to the voices – which is an interesting approach, and makes it stay in the ear afterwards. The join between the instrumental and vocal part of the programme is effected by the *canzona a quattro cornetti* (generously dedicated to their teacher Bruce Dickey in the original recording notes) and the soave and sombre *Passacalio a quattro* for mute cornett and three sackbuts. These two pieces alone will justify buying the pair of discs. *Stephen Cassidy*

Monteverdi *Fire & Ashes* I Fagiolini, Robert Hollingworth 78' 55" Chandos *Chaconne* CHAN 0749

This is an anthology with Book VII & VIII predominating, a variety of shorter pieces leading up to the sestina *Lagrime d'amante al sepolcro dell'amata* and the ballet *Tirsi e Clori*. The performances are dramatic, brilliant, expressive and well-sung. Perfect, then? Not quite. The stiff-upper-lip Anglo-Saxon in me finds it a bit exaggerated, in a way that I don't remember in the live *Full Monteverdi* (see next review for the DVD, which I hadn't seen when I wrote this). But perhaps this is just a bit more Italian. The music can certainly take it! I hope Jay Bernfeld is cool about the identity theft! CB

*The Full Monteverdi: a film by John La Bouchardière* I Fagiolini, Robert Hollingworth 60' Naxos 2.110224 DVD

I remembered right: the performance is less extreme, though may be perhaps more spacious than the live show that I heard, and possibly not quite so well sung (or was I less critical at the event?) What the film doesn't do is recreate anything like that performance. I don't know how much it varied from place to place, but the one I saw had the singers and actors emerging from the tables at which the audience was sitting. What visual dialogue we followed depended on the individual member of the audience, not any direction, and on the casual intimacy

between singers, actors and listener. I had no idea if any story ran from madrigal to madrigal or whether the music was just being acted out as it flowed. The film forces concentration on each line of the story separately, which is far less original, but also contradicts the acoustic we are hearing – something that always infuriates me on TV. It turns music into background music.

It seems to be a rule of film-makers that action be primarily conceived in a series of close-ups. So the viewer is given no choice what to watch, and no visual representation that the music is for five voices. I think I'd have been happier if it had been filmed simply as if from the gallery of where I saw it (Queens' College, Cambridge), with the camera closing in on couples some of the time but always going back to long shots of us drinking at tables. As it is, I'd rather play the music without the visuals and remember one of the outstanding concerts I've attended. Bad luck those who missed it, though I am aware that they may find more here than someone who is not very enthusiastic about film as an artistic form: I haven't been a regular film goer since I was a student. Thank you, Robert, for making sure that I saw the real show. Sorry I can't be more enthusiastic. CB

Monteverdi *Arie e Duetti* Axel Köhler, Mieke van der Sluis SA, Lautten Compagnie 60' 06"  
Capriccio 67 202 (rec 1993)

One is used to Monteverdi's sacred and secular music being on different discs, so this is unusual in starting with five motets. It took me a while to warm to the voices, but both are stylish and skilful, with the soprano appealing particularly. The accompaniments are interesting without being distracting. The dances from the *Ballo delle Ingrate* on a company of lutes worked well, though I hope it doesn't set a precedent. A very pleasing disc. CB

Pachelbel *Orgelwerke* Joseph Kelemen (1702 Sterzing organ, Erfurt-Büssleben and 1722 Crapp-organ, Pappenheim) OEHMS OC613 75' 08"

The organ in Erfurt-Büssleben is the only surviving organ of the ten that Georg Christoph Sterzing is known to have built. It owes its survival to it being moved to Büssleben during the 1802 secularisation from the city centre church of St Peter's which was destroyed by the Prussians a few years later. Although it only just manages to be considered as being of Pachelbel's time (indeed, it is the only remaining Thuringian organ from Pachelbel's time), it sounds good, notably in its meantone tuning for those pieces

written for such a temperament – others are transposed to suit. Johann Christoph Crapp is considered to have built the organ at Pappenheim on the grounds that he was living in the town at the time. It reflects the Southern German tradition, with no reeds, a very limited pedal compass and some very attractive flute registers. It seems to have been tuned to a well-tempered system from the start. The joins between the organs are not that noticeable, despite being at different pitch and temperament. The programme includes a representative example of Pachelbel's organ writing, including the lovely Ciaccona in f (here transposed to d). As to the playing, I am afraid that the very first two notes raised concerns – by phrasing the first two notes of the pedal theme together Joseph Kelemen gives an incorrect idea of where the pulse is. The fact that he chose a different articulation for the repeat makes me wonder whether both the playing and the editing could have been tighter. And the big chordal sequence in the opening work shows that the winding of the Sterzing organ needs rather more careful handling than it was given.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Lully *ou le Musicien du Soleil* (vol. 9): *Musiques pour le Mariage de Louis XIV* Jean-Denis Monjory speaker, Françoise Masset, Céline Rucci, François-Nicolas Geslot, Florian Westphal SSAB, La Simphonie du Marais, Hugo Reyne 98' 10" Accord 442 9894 (2 CDs)  
*Jubilate Deo*, ballets, & excerpts from Cavalli *Ercole amante*

Hugo Reyne had hoped to launch his Lully series with this programme: it finally appears as Volume 9. All these projects have been immaculately researched and never less than very well performed and presented. But this one may have less appeal to a non-French speaking audience. The programme (recorded live and topped and tailed with applause just to prove it) is a selection of the music composed for Louis XIV's wedding, including various ballets by Lully, his first sacred work *Jubilate Deo* and Cavalli's *Ercole amante* (extracts). The music is introduced by readings (in French) from an account of the ceremonies but neither these texts nor their translations appear in the booklet, even in a summarised form. Perhaps this is a case of an excellent live event needing a re-think for presentation on disc. The songs and dances are so much of their context it is a shame that not everyone will be able to appreciate this. The performances themselves, with the exception of some added percussion that will not meet with universal approval, are very good and the flow from narration to music and back again is seamless but not even the fine

explicatory essays quite compensate for the lack of the full script. David Hansell

Purcell *Here let my life* James Bowman, Daniel Taylor, The Theatre of Music Analakta AN 29948 58'25"  
Duets & songs by Purcell + M Maute *Concerto on the Death of Henry Purcell*

This is a joy. Bowman and Taylor only sing together in two duets (as well as having three solos each), 'Sound the Trumpet' and 'In Vain the Amorous Flute', both sung exquisitely – I particularly liked the hard 't's of that sprightly hautboy. Incidentally, the latter duet is not mentioned at all on the outer box – it's to be found as track 11, and as well as the word *Abdelazar* slipping off the description of the suite to that play, there are several niggling mistakes on the box: 'Sound of the Trumpet' for example! Daniel Taylor's Montreal based baroque band, Theatre of Early Music contribute two major items: as well as the most wonderfully passionate rendition of the Suite from *Abdelazar* that I've ever heard, which is worth the price of the disc alone, there is a real curiosity: a *Concerto on the Death of Henry Purcell* by recorder virtuoso Matthias Maute. This is 'written in the musical language of the 1720s', according to the composer, and is extraordinary! Far better than mere pastiche, it's basically a 'new' baroque recorder concerto, with nods to Vivaldi, Bach and Handel - but a rather good one to boot; almost better than some of the genuine fare, dare I say?

The core performance here is Bowman's beautiful performance of 'Here let my Life' – a song I have to confess was completely new to me. Yet again, Purcell weaves a tiny masterpiece from Abraham Cowley's rather gloomy text. This is a wonderful disc. Don't be put off by the puzzling, dull cover photograph of two toddlers playing in a Canadian farm paddock. It probably has some deeply ironic 'post-modern' significance to the graphic designer, but I fail to grasp its relevance! David Hill

A. Scarlatti *Venere, Adone e Amore: Serenatas and Cantatas* Jane Edwards, Tessa Miller, Miriam Allan, Vivien Hamilton, James Sanderson SSSCt, Chacona, Rosalind Halton 202' 27" ABC Classics 476 6170 (3 CDs in box)

A bonanza for Scarlattians. *Venus and Adonis* occupies the first disc, performed at the Neapolitan marine site of Posillipo in 1696 and again a decade later for Ruspoli in Rome. The other two discs contain cantatas for solo and duet, with one work classified as a serenata (though shorter than several of the cantatas) and a Christmas pastoral (not the popular one). Rosalind Halton guides the listener

with substantial notes, and a separate booklet has the texts; she is also director and harpsichordist (and has a useful Scarlatti website). The soloists are up to the task, in command of the music but not pushing it too hard. Scarlatti is heard much less than his reputation demands, and this music, with its poised expression, deserves to be heard. CB

**Schütz** *Die Vögel unter dem Himmel*  
National Youth Choir of Great Britain,  
Mike Brewer; John Kitchen org 74' 16"  
Delphian DCD34043

+organ music by Scheidemann, Scheidt &  
Sweelinck  
Release date 24-4-08: to be reviewed in the next  
issue

**Bazimakoo: Music and songs by Henry Purcell and the Restoration Rat Pack**  
Dante Ferrara 76' 27"  
Gargantua Records GRGCD 07055

I don't get the point of this. The dirty rounds by Purcell and contemporaries may perhaps be fun to sing in some circumstances, but are hardly worth buying a disc to listen to, especially with such erratic intonation. There is also a lack of any convincing ambience for the music. Nor is there any particular reason to seek out pieces played on instruments that (except the cittern) are exotic to restoration London. A pity that the music isn't as convincing as the design of the cover. CB

**Hanff, Radeck, Steffens Complete Organ Works** Friedhelm Flamme (1721/2 Christian Vater organ, Bockhorn) 68' 51"  
cpo 777 271-2 SACD  
Complete organ works of Brunckhorst, Erich, Hanff, Radeck, Ritter, Steffens

Friedhelm Flamme continues his review of the North German repertoire with this CD which includes the complete surviving organ works of no fewer than six North German composers – a sad reflection of the amount of material that has been lost over the years. As well as the three in the title, Brunckhorst, Ritter and Erich and are also included, the first two by just one piece each. Steffens is one of the earliest known North German composers and his four impressive works reflect the state of play before the Sweelinck students took over Hamburg's churches, and break the notion that North German organ music owes everything to Sweelinck. Erich is of interest in being a pupil of Buxtehude – his chorale *Es ist das Heil uns kommen her* is an interesting example of the post-Buxtehude style, a school of composition that has been almost totally overshadowed by Bach. Despite the usual alterations over the years, the organ in Bockhorn's St Cosma & St Damian church is arguably

the instrument by Vater that remains closest of its original character. Although its early 18th-century date is a bit late for the likes of Steffens and possibly Radeck, the sound world suits the repertoire of all the composers. As with the other CDs in this series, Friedhelm Flamme brings a considerable degree of insight into his performances, with exemplary touch and articulation. The organ has a delightful flexibility of winding, which Flamme knows just how to control. Recommended.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

**Firenze 1616 Le Poème Harmonique**,  
Vincent Dumestre 58' 47"  
Belli *L'Orfeo Dolente* + music by Caccini,  
Malvezzi, Saracini

If you listen to the opening, you will be drawn in by a stunning performance of Saracini's *Io moro*, and it's well worth continuing. Apart from that and two songs by Caccini, the disc is devoted to what survives of Caccini's *Il Rapimento di Cefalo*, performed at the wedding of Maria de' Medici and Henri IV in 1600 just three days after Peri's *Euridice* to an audience of some 4000. The main work is Domenico Belli's *L'Orfeo dolente*, an impressive setting of the familiar story (though without a part for Euridice) published in 1616. I was sure I had a facsimile of this, but can't find it, so haven't been able to check one or two matters I wished to. But I'm very impressed. It comprises five intermedi, beginning with Orfeo's descent to the underworld. The performance is fine, apart from the string bass in the recitative section: the keyboard, archlute and theorbo are quite sufficient; indeed, at times there seem to be more than just three chordal instruments, so rich do they sound. The singing is extremely stylish. Buy it. CB

*This would be an excellent piece for an Early Music Forum course if there's an edition available: it has rather more chorus than most early opera, and there are opportunities for instruments as well as solo voices.*

**Journey** Les Boréades, Francis Colpron ATMA Baroque ALCD2 1037 (with 2006/7 catalogue) 73' 34" ££  
Music by Boismortier, Cavalli, Clérambault, Corrette, Marini, Mealli, Merula, Purcell, Rebel, S. Rossi, Schmelzer

This 'Journey' is a compilation of tracks from previous recordings by the fine Canadian ensemble, Les Boréades. The music ranges from Cavalli and Purcell to Telemann and Boismortier. The recorder features prominently and, although I have no problem with that (especially when it is played so well), I'm not sure I want to hear it in Schmelzer's *Fechtschule*. Some of the Purcell phrasing is beautiful – it

fairly put me in a fine mood thinking ahead to next year's delights. BC

**Polish Baroque: Pekiel and his Contemporaries** Ensemble Européen William Byrd, Ensemble Ventosum, Graham O'Reilly Ambronay AMY010 73' 13"  
Lilius, Mielczewski, Podbielski, Szarzynski, Zielenksi

This is a wonderful recording, showing what a magnificent court ensemble must have existed in Poland during the 17th century, and showcasing the talents of the Ensemble européen William Byrd, directed by Graham O'Reilly. The central work is Pekiel's excellent *Missa Concertata 'La Lombardesca'*, whose name suggests an old Italian dance, although none has been found that fits the bill. The remainder of the recital is made up of instrumental and vocal music by other Polish composers like Mielczewski, Szarzynski, Podbielski and Zielenksi. The nine singers are joined by strings, two cornetti and three sackbuts and an impressive continuo line-up of bassoon, harpsichord/organ, chitarone/guitar, harp and organ. The recorded sound is clear and bright, and all in all this is a true revelation – if the Italian composers and singers who were hired in such large numbers by north European rulers get most of the credit for the style, clearly the local composers assimilated and mastered it completely and utterly. This has been one of my favourite discs this month.

BC

**Tonos al arpa** Marta Infante mS, Manuel Vilas hp 66' 12"  
Enchiradiis EN 2021  
Music by Sebastián Durón, Joseph Gaz, Juan de Navas, Francisco Valls & (mostly) anon

This is an interesting recital of mostly anonymous songs, performed by mezzo soprano and harp. The rhythmic variety of the various Spanish forms is possibly greater than any other music in Europe, and it is this that sustains the recital because, in truth, listening to the whole at one sitting is quite a challenge. Marta Infante's voice is pleasant enough, and the rich harmonics of the harp are an ideal companion; but ultimately it's the sort of disc that you should put in a six-disc player and press the random button if you're to get maximum pleasure from an enjoyable recital.

BC

**The Wonders of the World: A 17th Century English Masque** Miriam Allan S, Echo du Danube, Rob Wyn Jones narrator 68' 02"  
Accent ACC 24185 SACD  
Brade, Dowland, Locke, Maynard, Morley

This sort of thematic arrangement of short pieces in some sort of conceptual shape takes me back to around 1970. They

worked for me then (at least as participant), and some of the pieces here are firmly in my mind from concerts then. Indeed, a fellow participant then, Tim Crawford, receives an acknowledgment in the booklet. I'm not sure if this attempt works. The link to the masque isn't precise enough, while the association with Maynard that the title leads one to expect is minimal – perhaps because his music isn't strong enough. The performances are enjoyable, and I liked Miriam Allan's singing (as I did in the Australian Scarlatti disc reviewed above). But the choice of instruments is a bit eccentric, for London at the time and the psaltery isn't quite a substitute for a cittern. As so often with this sort of programme, it's probably far better live than on disc. CB

#### LATE BAROQUE

**Bach Cantatas 85, 169, 170, 200 (Vol. 37)**  
Robin Blaze A, Bach Collegium Japan,  
Masaaki Suzuki 77' 21"  
BIS-SACD-1621

Recordings of Bach's cantatas for solo alto normally include Cantatas 54 and 170. Because Suzuki's series is ordered chronologically, this disc excludes Cantata 54 (a Weimar work) and focuses upon the alto cantatas written at Leipzig in 1726, all of which also have obbligato organ parts. The performances of Cantatas 169 and 170 use a full-size organ (rather than the box instruments customarily heard on recordings), giving a welcome richness and grandeur. It is a shame that Suzuki reverts to a box instrument for Cantata 35, whose lengthy sinfonia cries out for a fuller sound. The organ soloist is Suzuki himself, who brings a lively energy to the fast movements, while carefully placing his phrases in the slow arias. Robin Blaze's singing is unfailingly accurate in intonation, with a tender expressiveness in the more melodious arias (such as the opening movement of BWV 170, or the Handelian aria BWV 200). Blaze is slightly less successful at projecting the text, particularly by comparison with Andreas Scholl's 1997 recording of BWV 35 and 170. In the second aria of BWV 170 – where convoluted chromaticism and labyrinthine modulations depict wayward sinners – Blaze's attention seems more on the complex details of his part, whereas Scholl projects the overall Affekt behind these individual musical figures. On the whole, though, these are strong performances, with the consistency and careful preparation we have come to expect from the Bach Collegium Japan. Stephen Rose

**Bach Christus, der ist mein Leben: Cantatas 27, 84, 95 & 161** Dorothee Mields, Matthew White, Hans Jörg

Mammel, Thomas Baur SATB, Collegium Vocale Gent, Philippe Herreweghe 62' 38" Harmonia Mundi HMC 901969

Few choral and instrumental conductors have better mastered the art of Bach-interpretation than Philippe Herreweghe, and this recording, which concentrates on heavenly-aspiring cantatas of faith, confirms this to me, even though for my taste, a chorus of soloists would improve things. However, to identify even a mildly competitive record in mood, luxury of balanced sound, and instinct regarding speeds and word-painting detail would probably be beyond me, and I shall return happily to this disc for interpretative enlightenment. To underline the wisdom of the package, we are yet again privileged to be able to enjoy the commentaries of Peter Wollny of the Leipzig Bach Archiv. Not one to miss!

Stephen Daw

**Bach Der Streit zwischen Phoebus und Pan BWV 201** Simone Nold, Annette Markert, Markus Schäfer, Werner Güra, Konrad Jarnot, Stephan Genz SATTBB, Münchener Bach-Chor, Bach Collegium München, Hansjörg Albrecht 62' 22" Oehms OC 914

In this disc, Hansjörg Albrecht presents Bach's Cantata 201, *Der Streit zwischen Phoebus und Pan*, as a short comic opera: the performance is framed by instrumental and vocal movements from other secular cantatas, and the booklet note imagines a scenario whereby the cantata received a staged performance in a temporary outdoor theatre in the Leipzig marketplace in 1729. Certainly this is a sparkling rendition, vividly dramatising the story of a contest between the artful singing of Phoebus and the empty showiness of Pan. The cast of soloists is young but enthusiastic, with Konrad Jarnot offering a poignant rendition of Phoebus's aria 'Mit Verlangen'. The Bach Collegium München, although using modern instruments, play nimbly and with clear articulation, pointing up such features as the figure suggesting a donkey's braying in Midas's aria. An entertaining and imaginative performance.

Stephen Rose

**Bach Bassarien** Gächinger Kantorei, Bach-Collegium Stuttgart, Württembergische Kammerorchester Heilbronn, Helmuth Rilling 78' 24" Hänsler Classic C 98.244

This contains 18 arias from, presumably, Rilling's complete recording of the church cantatas, so with modern instruments played in a slightly underphrased and stolid style. I suspect that its main use will be for bass singers wanting to hear a

chunk of the repertoire to find arias they would like to learn: for that purpose, a companion set of vocal scores might have been useful (though there's a web site with the complete cantata vocal scores). It could also be used as a party game: guess the singer – amazingly, none of them are named. There are, however, texts and translations. Sitting for some days on a shelf next to *Bazimakoo*, it's obvious German meaning fled in place of a meaningless division into Bassa-rien, which my mind then interpreted as Bassarids! But there's nothing ecstatic enough here to scare a bass Orpheus. CB

**Bach Matthew Passion (c.1742)** Choir I: Susan Hamilton, Clare Wilkinson, Nicholas Mulroy Evangelist, Matthew Brook Jesus SATB. Choir II: Cecilia Osmond, Annie Gill, Malcolm Bennett, Brian Bannatyne-Scott SATB, Dunedin Consort and Players, John Butt 161' 26"(3 CDs) Linn KDC 313

The Dunedin-Butt team have rightly won critical claim and awards for their *Messiah*, and I'm sure this will be equally successful. The obvious comparison with a one-to-a-part version is The Gabrieli Consort/Paul McCreesh. Fortunately, they are completely different. Paul has the best singers and players available, and they give a performance that would be ideal in the concert hall. John's is more like listening to the work in church at a Good Friday service: admittedly, few churches could call on singers and players as good as those here, let alone a conductor who has written a book about Bach's phrasing. Their 'choral' singing is more like an ensemble used to working with each other, and the solos are slightly less prima-donna and primo-uomo-ish. I don't want to exaggerate the difference, but one performance will suit one mood, one another.

Paul's recording sticks in my mind partly because I happened to play much of it while enjoying a sunny Easter Saturday on the west coast of Britannia a few years ago, while I have no such geographical memory for John's (just the *Mir* and *M25!*) But I've listened to it a lot since that initial play-through, and each time it feels right. One soprano sticks out a bit at first, but she or my ears have adjusted after a few minutes. Much more than usual, the narration really does sound like the main point of the work (as it should, though rarely does). The Evangelist, Nicholas Mulroy, is the star of the show here. (See also p. 13) But going back to the comparison with a church performance, I did wonder whether it would have been even more powerful in English at least for the recits and chorales.

There's no need to fear or feel particularly excited about the c. 1742 version. The chief difference is a harpsichord for

the second organ, though its presence is underwhelming. A spy playing for the recording explained that John Butt was mostly concentrating on direction and just playing the bass. His booklet note is fascinating, though sometimes seems to be special pleading.

Now John has moved into the top league of performers (he's long had that status as an academic), I probably won't be able to ask him to weigh up his rivals for us any more. Many congratulations to him and his team (including Linn Records) for this achievement which stands out, not because it is necessarily better than other performances, but for achieving something different with such confidence and success. CB

**Bach Intégrale, vol. 4** Helga Schauerte (1735 Gottfried Silbermann organ, Petrikirche, Freiberg) 76' 31"

**Syrius SYR 141413**  
BWV 572, 574-5, 578-9, 582, 588-9, 696-699, 701, 703-4, 711, 717, 720-1, 727

The 1735 Gottfried Silbermann organ at Freiberg's Petrikirche is not as well known as his famous instrument in the Dom, but it is a worthy example of this master organ builder's work. This is the first recording since its 2007 restoration, and the sound is far more coherent than it was when I played it a few years ago. This style of organ is arguably one that Bach favoured, and this collection of works from his Weimar period certainly sounds well on it. Unlike the rather spiky North German organs than many people have come to associate with Bach performance, the Saxon organs of his time favoured 8' stops over high mixtures – the two manuals on this organ have five 8' stops and four 4' stops between them, giving a solidity to the sound that Bach seems to have approved of. It is difficult to pin down the concerns I have with the playing on this CD, but there is a feeling of slight rhythmic unsteadiness, including speed changes and occasional articulation awkwardness – for example, on track 6 where the combination of the tremulant and very short, and slightly uneven, chords just does not work. Schauerte's articulation can also appear rather choppy, running the risk of losing momentum. I am also not convinced that the performance is note perfect – this may be acceptable in recital but not on CD. So this is a CD to listen to before you buy – track 6, perhaps. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

**Bach Passacaglia: 5 Versions of BWV 582**  
Christophorus CHR 77292 73' 02"  
Christian Rieger (Silbermann 1769 organ, Ettenheim-Münster); arr. d'Albert (Ernst Breidenbach *pf*); arr. Liszt/Töpfer (Johannes Matthias Michel *org*); arr. *pf* duet (Oliver Kolb, Ernst Breidenbach); arr. Stokowski Branden-

burgisches Staatsorchester Frankfurt, Nikos Athinäos

An interesting idea. Andrew Benson-Wilson probably won't speak to me again, but I must confess that I preferred the piano versions to the organ. The mass of multi-octave sounds muddy the notes, and I needed a score to see what I was hearing. The duet version is less bombastic than the solo piano. Liszt-Töpfer just seemed odd. Stokowski is disappointing: not enough panache! Sadly, no performance on pedal harpsichord or clavichord: I suspect that would be ideal. I'm disappointed that only one version has a cadenza at the pause before the coda. CB

**Bach Early Works** Andreas Staier *hpscd*  
Harmonia Mundi HMC 901960 65' 47"  
BWV 767, 818a, 912, 914, 916, 992

A special welcome must be given to Andreas Staier for this delightful disc of early Bach. Not only are the works all most authoritatively played, and on a splendidly copied instrument, presently housed in Brussels, but the short notes, by no less a figure than Peter Wollny, are also most apt. Despite a number of earlier recordings claiming to feature Bach's early compositions, this must surely be adjudged to be the best. *Stephen Daw*

**Bach Sonata in a, Partita in d, BWV 1003-4;** Barry Guy Aglais Maya Homburger *vln* 69' 42"  
Maya Recordings MCD 0802  
info@maya-recordings.com

This is the second of three projected discs aiming to feature not only Bach's *Six Solos* for unaccompanied violin but also, as a bonus, three compositions by Barry Guy, who has played the double bass for a number of years in jazz and early music ensembles in London and elsewhere. To play absolutely anything alongside good accounts (for so indeed they are) of Bach's incomparable masterpieces risks the less desirable kinds of comparisons, but Barry Guy succeeds, through his sheer imagination and his very real understanding of string sonorities and listeners' most reasonable expectations. This is, indeed, a disc and a series, to which I, for one, shall happily return. *Stephen Daw*

**Bach Cello Suites** Anne Gastinel  
Naïve V 5121 140' 00" (2 CDs)

I was a little disheartened to read in the booklet notes that this was a modern instrument performance. Once again, I was reminded of the old adage about judging books by their cover – Anne Gastinel's has turned out to be one of the most interesting and enjoyable of the many accounts I have listened to in the

past few months. I always say that, if you're going to record something that every player worth his or her salt has already tackled, you have to have something fresh to say. Here it's a question of opening up the phrasing, taking a little more time to explore the sounds Bach's lines create in your instrument, and just relishing the beauty of the sound. She does not abandon vibrato outright (why should she?), but there's definitely more than a nod to HIP – it's very difficult to express in words how this reading differs from previous recordings, so I suggest you seek it out and try it for yourself. BC

**Couperin/Lalande Leçons de Ténèbres**  
Emma Kirkby, Agnès Mellon SS, Charles Medlam *viol*, Terence Charleston *org*  
BIS-CD-1575 69' 12"

The *Tenebrae* texts have often brought out the best in composers, and performances of their settings the best in performers. This disc maintains the tradition. Also on the BIS label is a very good counter-tenor version of the Couperin: here Dame Emma invites comparison with her famous *L'Oiseau* lyre recording with Judith Nelson. However, immediate comparisons are rendered impossible as she sings Couperin's first solo *Leçon* on this new release, having previously taken the second. (Couperin's third setting is the only duet in this recital.) Seldom can *agrément*s have been more agreeable or *roulades* so exquisitely turned as they are here. The lines are shaped most gloriously, the added richness that time has brought to her voice being used to great advantage. As both fellow soloist and duet partner Agnès Mellon complements rather than competes. Her voice is darker in colour but her sense of style is equally assured and both ladies sing some of the most convincing and consistent 'French' Latin pronunciation around. Lalande's settings are rather more Italianate in style and thus an interesting contrast. This may be available a little too late for Holy Week 2008. Buy early for 2009.

*David Hansell*

**Fasch Passio Jesu Christi** Zoltán Megyesi Evangelist, Péter Cser Jesus, Mária Zádori Daughter of Zion, Schola Cantorum Budapestiensis. Capella Savaria Baroque Orchestra, Mary Téry-Smith 71' 24"  
Naxos 8.870326 £  
Ouverture in d, FWV K: d5

As far as I'm aware, this is the first disc to mark the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of Johann Friedrich Fasch. The recital consists of an orchestral suite (FWV K: d5) for two oboes, bassoon and strings and the only fully-authenticated Passion to have survived. The text is adapted from the famous reflection on the Easter story

by Brockes, which was set in varying degrees by many of the leading composers of the day. Fasch's setting seems only to have come down to us in modified versions, so Mary Térey-Smith's decision to make further small changes (substituting flute for an oboe obbligato, for example) are perfectly acceptable. Capella Savaria are a fine baroque orchestra, and they play very well. There are three solo singers who take the roles of Evangelist (Tenor), Jesus (Bass) and the Daughter of Zion (soprano). The movements are generally brief and in a similar style to Fasch's great friend, Stölzel. In conjunction with this CD review, I would like to mention an edition of the work by Rolf Haas, which I acquired from Strube Verlag (Edition 1148, ISMN M-2009-0270-9) which prints the full instrumental parts and compresses the vocal parts onto two staves very neatly. It also has a written-out keyboard part for continuo players. This score costs €15.50, but there is also a Chorpartitur (which I assume just contains the voice parts for the choruses and chorales) at €1.75. Instrumental parts are available separately at very reasonable prices ([www.strube.de](http://www.strube.de)). Naxos's fine account will surely encourage others to explore Fasch's music during 2008 – and hopefully beyond!

BC

Handel *Amadigi di Gaula* Maria Riccarda Wesseling *Amadigi*, Elena de la Merced *Oriana*, Sharon Rostorf-Zamir *Melissa*, Jordi Domenèch *Dardano*, Buija Reixach *Orgando*, Al Ayre Español, Eduardo López Banzo 158' 20" (2 CDs)

Ambroisie AM 133

This new *Amadigi* compliments Marc Minkowski's recording issued on Erato in 1991, often impressively, but does not displace it. Banzo's approach clearly has its origins in the style of exaggeration and eccentricity that baroque period ensembles have recently favoured, especially on the European continent (Minkowski had not yet embraced it when he made his recording), but avoids its worst excesses. Fast tempos are pretty fast, but remain credible, and the measured pace of slower numbers is convincingly sustained by expressive intensity from the excellent singers and players. There is some unnecessary instrumental colouring in the recitatives, but the articulation of the text is finely nuanced, and the continuo group serves the music attentively without becoming assertive. As the opera progresses, however, eccentricity sometimes gains the upper hand: the drone basses in Dardano's aria 'Tu mia speranza' prompt Banzo to convert it into what seems to be an evocation of an elephantine hurdy-gurdy, with bizarre swells in the bass line, and occasional percussive

effects in the strings become rather too sour when Dardano's ghost appears to announce Melissa's downfall. Real percussion, including a tambourine, is superfluously added to the final numbers.

Elena de la Merced is an appealing, fresh-voiced heroine, especially moving in 'S'estinto è l'idol mio', while Sharon Rostorf-Zamir, with a shade more edge, vividly reveals both the pain and the rage in Melissa's character. Wesseling's bright mezzo is very apt for the title role, and makes happy contrast to Domenèch's dark-voiced Dardano, a countertenor with unusual power in his lower register. On content alone, Banzo's adoption of the 4/4 version of Melissa's aria 'Io godo, scherzo e rido' (printed in the Appendix of the HHA edition and otherwise unrecorded) gives the new issue special interest, but his pacing of the slow numbers adds about 10 minutes to Minkowski's overall timing and seems to have enforced a couple of annoyingly trivial cuts, probably made at the editing stage to get the work onto two CDs (with timings of 79' 59" and 78' 21"). Oriana's lovely aria 'Gioie venite' is reduced to A + B + ritornello form, and the recitative before Amadigi's trumpet aria 'Sento la gioia' is confined to Orgando's brief utterance, with loss of the moment when the two lovers joyously embrace, their troubles finally over. Thus while Minkowski remains the 'library' choice, Banzo's highly-charged interpretation is well worth acquiring, and perhaps will have the greater appeal to general listeners.

Anthony Hicks

Handel *The Choice of Hercules* Arleen Auger, Venceslava Hruba-Freiberger, Alain Zaepffel, Eberhard Büchner SSAT, Leipziger Universitätschor, Neues Bachisches Collegium Musicum Leipzig, Max Pommer Capriccio 67 206 (rec 1983) 51' 28" ££

Despite being way down the list of most people's favourite Handel works, this 'Musical Interlude' definitely deserves the occasional airing. This recording, however, is of variable quality, on the whole the faster movements being more acceptable than the slower ones. The sopranos would be fine under more stylish direction, but modern bands can now produce a more plausible sound than this.

CB

Handel *Semele* Rosemary Joshua *Semele*, Gail Pearson *Iris*, Hilary Summers *Juno / Ino*, Stephen Wallace *Athamas*, Richard Croft *Jupiter / Apollo*, Brindley Sherratt *Cadmus / Somnus*, Early Opera Company, Christian Curnyn 169' 35" (3 CDs) Chandos Chaconne CHAN 0745

*Semele* is one of Handel's best-liked musical dramas, but it has had patchy representation on disc. This new studio recording

has the distinction of being the first using period instruments to present the work complete in the version of its first performance on 10 March 1744. (Well, almost: for no obvious reason, Handel's notated timpani roll signalling Stygian acceptance of Jupiter's fatal vow is replaced by a sound effect thunderclap.) Cupid's aria (cut by Handel before performance but included on Sir John Eliot Gardner's 1983 recording) is accordingly absent, while the arias 'The morning lark' (for Semele) and 'Despair no more shall wound me' (for Athamas), often omitted, are present. It is also a very good performance, directed by Christian Curnyn with a fluency that maintains a sense of unfolding drama while allowing the moments of sheer musical beauty (such as 'But hark! the heav'ly sphere turns round') to make their mark.

Rosemary Joshua is fresh and alluring in the title role, though she is a little careful in 'Myself I shall adore' and her embellishments include some inelegant above-the-stave leaps. Hilary Summers, doubling as Juno and Ino as Handel originally envisaged, makes characterful use of her attractive contralto voice in both roles. Richard Croft's Jupiter lacks warmth at first, but is movingly intense as Juno's trap closes on him in Act 3. The smaller roles are well taken, and the professional chorus bring clear focus to the vocal lines.

There is just one significant snag. In addition to an extensive and well-informed note by David Vickers, the booklet includes an anonymous announcement that the orchestral string players 'employ historically accurate equal tension stringing, with the majority (violins and double-bass) using no metal wound strings'. Unfortunately, this apparent fastidiousness in recreating historic sound is completely undermined by the presence of a fairly close-miked theorbo that clangs its way with decidedly metallic sonority along the bass line of most of the score, swapping with the especially unpleasant (and unhistoric) sound of the strummed baroque guitar in 'Now Love that everlasting boy invites'. Handel is reported to have had a lute available in 1744, but there is no evidence that it or any of its relations played in *Semele*, and the usage here is a blemish on an otherwise highly recommendable issue.

Anthony Hicks

Handel *Serse* Anita Terzian *Serse*, Deborah Cole *Arsamenes*, Sarah Schumann-Halley *Amastris*, Norman Andersson *Ariodates*, Anna Teal *Romilda*, Phoebe Atkinson *Atalanta*, Ryan Allen *Elviro*, Amadeus Orchestra, Agnieszka Duczmal 187' 54" VMS Musical Treasures 612 (rec 1989) ££

This reissue of a Polish recording is quite creditable, though as with the slightly older *The Choice of Hercules*, the faster

movements, which are not as extreme as modern fashion, are more acceptable than the slower ones. The recordings by McGegan and Minkowski are preferable, but if you are a poor student or one of those people who must have everything and missed this first time, it certainly has something to offer. There is an English plot summary but no libretto. CB

**Handel Organ Concertos op. IV** Lorenzo Ghelmi. La Divina Armonia 71' 40"  
Passacaille 944

If you want to be taken for a roller-coaster ride for 71 minutes, then Lorenzo Ghelmi's performance, with a period ensemble equally sensitively driven, is the one for you. Rarely does one hear such exciting organ playing, and the improvisatory passages – sometimes in unexpected places, such as before the first chord in the score – certainly to me, have the 'wow factor'. No. 6, the Harp concerto, is played by Margaret Koll on a suitable period instrument, with archlute continuo. The organ is a 2007 instrument by Giovanni Pradella, with distinctly European colouring. If you prefer a more English chamber organ sound, with slightly more reserved English string playing, then why not consider the 2005 recording of the set by Matthew Halls and *Sonnerie* (with Frances Kelly on harp). *Ian Graham-Jones*

**Handel Concerti Grossi Op. 6/7-12**  
Boston Baroque, Martin Pearlman  
Telarc CD-80688 79' 33"

This disc completes the set of twelve; we reviewed a reissue of a 1992 disc in *EMR* 105. Boston Baroque produce fine, warm spirited string playing with clear textures and well-thought-out, detailed phrasing. The tempi are well judged, and the dance movements are well characterised. The only slightly quirky feature is the virtual inaudibility of the harpsichord, whereas the organ sound, used in the quieter movements was, in contrast, sometimes a little too forward. The organ cadenzas in some of the *adagio* linking sections were noticeably individual, a welcome change from the often almost standard formulae adopted at baroque Phrygian cadence progressions. For sheer musicality and verve, this is an excellent recording. The booklet, being in English only, gives ample space for a discussion on the sources and borrowings of each movement.

*Ian Graham-Jones*

**Scarlatti 16 Sonatas** Ton Koopman *hpscd*  
Capriccio 67 204 (rec 1988) 68' 21"  
K 115, 146, 159, 208-9, 216, 361, 380, 420, 461,  
490-2, 513, 544-5

Recorded in 1986 and now remastered, this still sets a very high standard by

which more recent recordings can be measured. Koopman has selected some of the best-known sonatas, including K 490-492. It is well-recorded and close-miked for maximum effect. Playing on a copy of a Stephanini harpsichord by W. Kroesbergen, he achieves a successful characterisation of each sonata, with some quirky tempi as in a painfully slow K490. Koopman is not afraid to add some flourishes of his own, which are idiomatic, and his virtuosity is certainly impressive as is the sense of his commitment to the music. A good introduction to the composer's variety of moods.

*Noel O'Regan*

**Soler and Scarlatti in London: a Selection of Blended Sonatas** Luisa Morales *hpscd*  
FIMTE ([www.fimte.org](http://www.fimte.org)) 64' 21"

Groups of sonatas by the two composers are alternated here, bringing home the musical continuity between them, played on Vermillion's late Kirckman of 1798. The notes describe the influence of English harpsichords in Spain and Morales makes full use of the Kirckman's broad palette of colours, constantly changing registration and giving full rein to its extrovert personality, which suits her choice of sonatas admirably, particularly those of Soler. She is the founder-director of FIMTE – the annual festival of Spanish keyboard music which has published this CD – and has worked a lot with dancers on early Spanish dance and its influence on the keyboard music. The CD opens with a fandango attributed to Scarlatti which swirls with controlled swagger. Her playing has tremendous forward drive, particularly effective in the Soler which never palls here. This CD is thoroughly recommended. *Noel O'Regan*  
see also p. 17

**Telemann: Les trésors cachés** Arion, Jaap ter Linden 71' 13"  
Early-music.com EMCCD-7766  
TWV 51: G 2, 53; C 1, 55; D 4, e8, E8

This CD is very much on a mission to expose the shameful neglect that much of Telemann's outstanding music has fallen into in modern times – each of the five works in the recital are 100% deserving of a place in any baroque band's repertoire, from the relatively simple *Concerto alla Francese* and the reconstructed G major concerto for flute, to the large-scale ouverture-suites (one of which contains more than a hint of music from Detouches's *Omphale*). The last piece is one of three surviving from a printed set which include a pair of horns. Although they do little more than colour the string sound, it is actually a dramatic difference – this is another of the composer's suites full of French movement names like *Les*

*Gladiateurs* and *Les Querelleurs*. The recorded sound is fantastically bright, and the playing first rate from all quarters. Definitely one of my recommendations from this month's lists. BC

**Telemann Wind Concertos Vol. 1** La Stagione Frankfurt. Michael Schneider, cond; Camerata Köln 55' 24"  
cpo 777 032-2  
TWV 43: g3 (rec, 2 vln, bc).51: d1 (ob), E1 (fl).  
52: D2, (2 horns) e1(rec, fl)

Congratulations to cpo on yet another wonderful idea for a project – Michael Schneider and his two groups (La Stagione Frankfurt and Concerto Köln) are well-practised in the art of bringing Telemann to life in the most vibrant and ebullient fashion, they are ideal candidates for a complete series of the concertos with wind instrument soloists. Telemann, as we know, was proficient on most of the instruments of his day, and he reportedly said he enjoyed composing concertos more than anything else. The five works on this first CD include the familiar in the shape of the E minor flute & recorder concerto, but stray off the beaten path from the outset with a strikingly tuneful D major concerto for two horns and strings. The other three works have only one soloist – oboe, recorder and flute in that order – and each of them shows the musicians (and the composer) off to great effect. One small error on the outside of the booklet – the E major flute concerto starts on Track 18. Roll on the second disc! BC

**Telemann XII solos à violon ou traversiere avec la basse chiffree** Münchner Cammer-Music (123' 18") (2CDs)  
New Classical Adventure 60145-314

Telemann was in his mid 50s when these twelve four-movement sonatas were published, and quite clearly at the peak of his mastery of solo writing. This fabulous recording features one of my favourite violinists, Mary Utiger, who has sadly disappeared from the regular scene over the past few years, and flautist Michael Schmidt-Casdorff, and the fine continuo team of Hartwig Groth on gamba, Joachim Held on lute/theorbo and Christine Schornsheim, harpsichord. Except for Solo No. 8 which has a striking patchwork third movement, each of the sonatas is cast in the *da chiesa* style, although there are some interesting tempo markings: *Tardi e semplicemente* and *Teneramente* among them. I don't think it's necessarily because I'm a fiddler that I favour Utiger's accounts – there is something essentially fiery about her interpretations of some of the faster minor key movements that really sets the performances alight. Should there still be

anyone out there (a BBC producer, for example) who still thinks Telemann is not worth major airtime, please listen to Track 1 of the second CD of this set – two and a half minutes are all it will surely take to convert you. BC

Telemann *Die Tageszeiten* Barbara Schlick, Hilke Helling, David Cordier, Christoph Prégardien, Hein Meens, Stephen Varcoe, Harry van der Kamp SAATTBB, Rheinische Kantorei, Das Kleine Konzert, Hermann Max 69' 27" Capriccio 67 203 (rec 1988-9)  
+ *Daran ist erscheinen die Liebe Gottes*

Telemann's vocal music is enjoying something of a Renaissance at the moment, with Hermann Max at the very forefront of the movement to re-discover the composer's finest church cantatas. This recording from 1988 and 1989 shows that Telemann is pretty much in his blood, with finely paced accounts of both *Die Tageszeiten* and the Whitsun cantata, *Daran ist erscheinen die Liebe Gottes*, with its prominent recorder part. BC

Vivaldi *Suonate da camera a tre...* op. 1 Enrico Gatti & Ensemble Aurora 99' 14" Glossa GCD 921203 (2 CDs)

This is an important set of sonatas and not one that has been recorded very frequently. Michael Talbot describes the set as the Cinderella of the composer's printed *opera* and suggests its youthful naivety as a possible cause (the set was printed in the composer's 20s). These gently phrased and slightly understated performances from two poised and intelligent violinists, accompanied by cello, archlute and harpsichord/organ, argue most eloquently for a re-assessment; in their hands, what can scarcely be described as anything other than an audacious attempt to challenge Corelli on home ground become miniature masterpieces, wholly lacking in the showiness that would become Vivaldi's hallmark in later life – and they are immensely enjoyable on their own terms. BC

We find that virtually everyone who asks us for the facsimile of op. 1 really only wants No. 12 (Folia). CB

Vivaldi *La Tempesta di Mare* Concerto Köln, Werner Ehrhardt 59'59" Capriccio 67 201 (rec 1990) RV 131, 155-6, 433, 439, 552, 579

Originally recorded in 1990, this is an enjoyable disc that combines two well-known named concertos (the title piece and *La notte* in its Op. 10 version for flute), three ripieno pieces, one of Vivaldi's most colourfully scored works (chalumeau and three *viole all'inglese* amongst the instruments), another flute concerto from Op.

10, and the concerto for violin and three echo violins. All in all, a delightful way to spend an hour or so. BC

Vivaldi *Nisi Dominus* RV 608, *Stabat Mater* RV 621 Marie-Nicole Lemieux, Philippe Jaroussky, A Ct, Ensemble Matheus, Jean-Christophe Spinosi 41' 57" Naïve OP 30453 + *Crucifixus* from RV 592

This disc is interesting for its simple premise – two of the iconic works by Vivaldi for the 'alto' voice, one performed by counter-tenor, the other by a female contralto. The excellent Philippe Jaroussky (who comes as close to a counter-tenor to whom I could listen for hours as possible, I think) sings the *Nisi Dominus*, while Marie-Nicole Lemieux performs the temporally appropriate *Stabat mater*. In between, there's something of a bleeding chunk, a *Crucifixus* setting from a *Credo* that survives in a Polish manuscript. The contrast in the voices could not be more marked – Jaroussky has that brightness associated with falsetto, while Lemieux's *bassetto* register (for want of a better word) is rich and chocolaty, such as no male alto could ever manage. At the end of the day, it's actually very difficult to say that I prefer one over the other – impossible at the end of the day! Jean-Christophe Spinosi and Ensemble Matheus provide a superb sonic backdrop to such wonderful singing – this really is becoming something of a dream team. BC

Vivaldi *Arie ritrovate* Sonia Prina A, Stefano Montanari vln, Accademia Bizantina, Ottavio Dantone 70' 26" Naïve (Tesori del Piamonte, 37) OP 30443 Arias from *La verità in cimento*, *Orlando furioso*, Scanderbeg, Teuzzone, Tito Manlio; Concerti RV 136, 369

The outstanding aspect of this enjoyable CD is the incredibly powerful voice of Sonia Prina. Her star has been in the ascendant for some years now, but here she really reaches something of diva status, with a rich, focussed alto tone, dramatically bright at the top, rich and resonant at the bottom. Driven on (where necessary) by a turbo-charged Accademia Bizantina, she gives great personality to each of these arias (taken from four different operas), with huge dynamic drive. The disc is completed by a ripieno concerto, and an equally exciting account of RV 369 for solo violin by the group's leader, Stefano Montanari. This is one of the most enjoyable discs from Naïve's Vivaldi Edition so far. BC

*The Perfection of Music: Masterpieces of the French Baroque. Vol. III: Concert Spirituel* Sara Maciver S, Kate Clark fl, Sophie Gent vln, Ensemble Battistin ABC Classics ABC 476 6182 56' 51"

This disc is the third to emanate from an ongoing research project into music of the French Baroque in which Australian scholars and performers are working in association with the ABC. The recordings date from 2004-2006 and were packaged for release in 2007. The works are a representative selection of those heard at the *Concert Spirituel* in the first two decades of its existence from 1725 – varied chamber works, ending as was customary, with a psalm setting. All five works are excellent examples of their genre and it is especially good to hear a work (by Boismortier) for treble instruments without continuo and a concerto by Buffardin, whose historical reputation is solely as a player. Guillemain's quartet invites comparison with Telemann's famous collection, a comparison it survives very well. All the performances are very well prepared, though not to the point of being simply well drilled, and reach a peak in the final psalm for soprano, two violins and continuo. Sara Maciver is in outstanding form and lifts what was already a fine recital on to another plane. The only disappointments are the programme's relative brevity and her use of an Italianate, rather than a French pronunciation of the Latin. The booklet offers full supporting information, though only in English.

David Hansell

*Gloria in excelsis Deo* Tafelmusik Chamber Choir & Baroque Orchestra, Ivars Taurins CBC Records SMCD 5244 67' 40" Bach *Gloria* BWV 191; Mondonville *Dominus regnavit*; Vivaldi *Gloria* RV 589

This is the programme with which the fine Tafelmusik Chamber Choir celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2006. A different pronunciation of the Latin texts is bravely used for each work and the singers and players sound thoroughly at home with the contrasting styles. Overall, the Mondonville – everything a *Grand Motet* should be – is the most successful performance. The choir savours the expansive nature of the opening fugue, able to concentrate on shaping their lines without competition from the trumpets. In the Bach (three re-cycled movements from the *B minor*'s *Gloria*) the divided sopranos are not recorded very kindly and are sometimes hard to hear amid the general hurly-burly. Vivaldi's *Gloria* (the 'usual' one) is given a joyful interpretation in which counter-tenor Matthew White's beautiful contributions are particularly striking. The booklet contains short but adequate notes and translations

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

of the texts into French and English. This must have been an enjoyable concert, is an enjoyable disc and would be a welcome gift for anyone still feeling their way with the choral (whatever that means) music of the late Baroque. David Hansell

## CLASSICAL

**Boccherini Flute Quintets Op 19 (G 425-430)** Auser Musici (Carlo Ipata fl Luca Ronconi & Francesco La Bruna vln Teresa Ceccato viola Luigi Puxeddu cello) 68'59" Hyperion CDA67646

These six quintets, published as Op. 15 by La Chevardière in Paris in 1776, are described in Boccherini's autograph score dated 1775 as quintettini op. 6, and it is on these two sources that the performances are based. They are little quintets because they have only two movements rather than because of any lack of substance in the music. They are attractive pieces, full of contrasting moods, though the majority are in major keys. Carlo Ipata's copy of a Grenser flute is sometimes obscured by the larger dynamic range of the strings and there are one or two moments of poor intonation, but on the whole these are enjoyable performances. Number 4 is particularly attractive, with its beautifully paced *Adagio assai*, lyrical flute and virtuoso cello playing. The final quintet, with the title *Las Parejas*, depicts in its Entrada, March and Galope a Spanish horse race in which two riders race holding hands. Victoria Helby

**Haydn Harpsichord Concertos in F & G (Hob. XVIII 3 & 4); Divertimento in F (Hob. II:2)** Ewald Demeyere hpscd, La Petite Bande, Sigiswald Kuijken 64'13" Accent ACC 24188

I don't remember ever being disappointed by a recording made by Sigiswald Kuijken and his expert little group, here a dozen strong. Their accounts of these three early Haydn pieces are delightful and thoroughly rewarding. The two concertos are not just light divertimento-style works but solidly constructed and resourceful compositions, played with an engaging wit and, in the slow movements, appreciative poise. Ewald Demeyere is a nimble-fingered, sensitive harpsichordist – the maker of the pleasingly clear-toned instrument should have been identified. The divertimento, in five movements, is notable for its high horn parts, and the writing for five-part strings (divided violas) and a pair of oboes is impressively fresh and witty. Tempos are unhurried, the playing is of the highest class. As usual with Accent, great care has been taken to make this issue pleasing to the eye as well as the ear (though, as so often happens

with foreign labels, the English translation is unidiomatic). Peter Branscombe

**L Mozart Die Bauernhochzeit, Cassatio in G ('Kindersinfonie')** W A Mozart Fugue from *Gallimathias musicum*, K32, Symphony in Eb, K16 Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra, Ton Koopman W A Mozart 12 Variations in C on 'Ah, vous dirai-je, maman', K265 Tini Mathot fp 58' 45" Challenge Classics CC72189

What fun they must have had with the making of this CD! Certainly the results are fun to listen to, and revealing as well. Mozart is sometimes criticized for callousness for writing *Ein musikalischer Spass* so soon after learning of his father's death. Perhaps it's not too fanciful to suggest that, in his sense of loss, Mozart may have recalled the rumbustiousness of his father's unbuttoned compositions during his own early years; they were in sharp contrast to Leopold's more normal strict style. Be that as it may, the two pieces from the time of the family's northern European tour are interesting experiments, whereas the set of keyboard variations is a major achievement (perhaps written for a pupil?) from early in Mozart's final decade in Vienna. It is well played by Tini Mathot on an unidentified fortepiano. Koopman's Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra is in good form, though the contribution from the aviary is almost overwhelming. The recording is otherwise fresh and well focused. Good three-language notes, though text and translation of the dialect song in the first Menuetto of the 'Children's Symphony' should have been provided. Peter Branscombe

**Mozart Essential Symphonies Vol. IV: Nos 22, 33, 38 Prague** Radio-Sinfonie-Orchester Stuttgart des SWR, Roger Norrington 67'30" Hänssler Classic 93.214

It seems only the other day that I was greeting enthusiastically volume I of this ongoing series, which contained nos 1, 25 and 41 (93.211). This time again the programme includes works from early, middle and late in Mozart's career. And again we hear fresh, vividly propelled yet properly eloquent readings, taken live at the European Music Festival, Stuttgart, in 2006, with an orchestra for each work of appropriate size. Attractive as are Norrington's accounts of K162 and 319, the focus inevitably falls on the 'Prague'. Comparison with the new Mackerras version shows little difference in approach between these major achievements of two brilliant exponents of historical practice. Both produce the unusual balance of an opening *Adagio-Allegro* equal in overall timing to the two later movements. Norrington's

Andante is slightly slower than Mackerras's spacious approach. Both are highly impressive, and I count myself very fortunate to have both. Peter Branscombe

**Mozart Symphonies 38, 39, 40 & 41** Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Mackerras Linn CKD 308 139'18" (2 CDs)

Right from the ominous opening bars of the 'Prague' it is clear that these are going to be powerful, individual readings. There is nothing unconsidered, nothing hurried in the dashing, carefully articulated allegros, with expressive strings, penetrating (period) brass and crisp timpani. The woodwinds have plenty of opportunities to show their considerable skills, expertly balanced against the strings. Sir Charles's sure feel for tempo ensures that the Andantes unfold at an ideal pace, and the minuets and trios, while nicely contrasted, are much more than mere dance movements (I did think the pace chosen for the Menuetto of K543 was over fast for *Allegretto*). The booklet has a fine article by Neal Zaslaw and a thoughtful note from Mackerras himself. The recording is of excellent quality, clear and focused. One tiny criticism of the otherwise admirable Linn presentation and packaging: not until one lifts the second CD does one actually see the picture of Mozart in the famous Masonic lodge painting – the album cover cuts off the extremities of the canvas. Peter Branscombe

**Salieri Overtures & Ballet Music** Mannheim Mozartorchester, Thomas Fey 68'02" Hänssler Classic CD 98.506

This attractive and colourful programme includes what are claimed to be the world première recordings of the overture to *Daliso e Delmira* (1776), extended ballet music from *Pafio e Mirra* (1778), and the overtures to Salieri's only opera in German, *Der Rauchfangkehrer* (1781), *Les Horaces* (1786) and the unperformed *Catilina* (1790-92). Further, we hear the overture and six orchestral excerpts from *Les Danaïdes* of 1784, and the CD opens with the overture to *Armida* (1771). Much of the music is programmatic, all of it tuneful and expertly scored. The oboist excels in a Larghetto from *Pafio*, but the playing throughout is expressive and, though the orchestra uses modern instruments, there is evidence of good historic practice. Notes in German and English provide a useful introduction to Thomas Fey's perspicacious and well-recorded programme. Peter Branscombe

£ = bargain price (up to £6.00)

££ = mid-price

other discs full price

as far as we know

*English Classical Violin Concertos*  
Elizabeth Wallfisch, The Parley of Instruments, Peter Holman 64' 05" (rec 1996)  
Hyperion Helios CDH55260 £  
James Brooks *Concerto 1 in D*; Thomas Linley Jr *Concerto in F*; Thomas Shaw *Concerto in G*; Samuel Wesley *Concerto 2 in D*

I heard this CD on its first release and absolutely loved it. I was astonished that the violin concerto had reached such levels in classical England and was surprised that none of the pieces seemed to have survived in the repertoire. Sadly, it seems very much to have been a flash in the pan, as I have not heard of anyone else performing or recording the works again since, which is a real shame, as these are four challenging, tuneful pieces that deserve to be heard again and again. BC

#### 19<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

*Bellini La sonnambula* Natalie Dessay  
Amina, Jaël Azzaretti Lisa, Sara Mingardo  
Teresa, Francesco Meli *Elvino*, Carlo Colombara *Il conte Rodolfo*, Chorus and Orchestra of L'Opéra de Lyon, Evelino Pidò (2 CDs) 130' 26"  
Virgin Classics 0-0946 395138 2 6

This fine new recording of a simple, affecting opera is not a period performance, though in directness of utterance and dedication to Bellini's intentions (the score is based on the new Critical Edition) it certainly warrants the coverage in *EMR* that the receipt of a review copy was requesting. It is a work that stands or falls by the assumption of Amina, the sleepwalking country lass who gives the work its name. Of course it is also vital to have fine artists in the roles of her untrusting fiancé Elvino, the innkeeper Lisa who is her rival for Elvino, *Il conte Rodolfo*, returning to his former home and immediately involved in the storyline, and Teresa, the heroine's kindly adoptive mother. These requirements are all well met in this performance. Natalie Dessay rises to the challenge. Her purity of voice, assured technique and feeling for phrase and verbal emphasis are affecting. What she lacks, when one looks back to reports on contemporary Aminas, are radiance above the stave, and a sense of total immersion in the role. The fact that Dessay's approach to the part is cool certainly does not invalidate her assumption. Not until the final sleepwalking scene, though ('Ah, non credea mirarti'), in which her innocence is conclusively demonstrated, does Dessay fully reveal the individuality of timbre and penetration of Bellini's essence that one admires on so many famous old records, most recently in the various versions of Maria Callas and Joan Sutherland. The libretto is clearly printed in four languages, and

there is a good introductory article. The recording team have solved most of the problems of balance. Peter Branscombe

*Boëly Un Versailles à Paris* Jacqueline Robin pf 94' 02" (2 CDs)  
Arion ARN268778 (recd. 1978, 1981)  
Op. 1/1 & 2, 2/7/12/16/17/19/23/30, op. 6/12/13/15/18/23, op. 13/8-10/16/19/24, op. 16/2, 46/12, 48/11, 49/2, 50/4, 52/11, 54/11

Even in his own time Alexandre Pierre-François Boëly (1785-1858) was obscure, content to earn a discreet living as a piano teacher and organist of St Germain-l'Auverrois. Only his inner circle of friends, including the pianists Cramer and Kalkbrenner and the young Saint-Saëns knew anything of his music. But it's really good. At times there are echoes and pre-echoes of Beethoven, Schubert, Mendelssohn and Schumann but these are by no means always to Boëly's disadvantage. The sustaining pedal of the modern Bösendorfer used sometimes muddies the bass, but there is always brilliance and clarity in the treble. The pianist was a much-loved teacher at the Paris Conservatoire for many years and this re-release marks the first anniversary of her death. David Hansell

*Clementi The Complete Piano Sonatas*  
— 1 Howard Shelley 153' 34" (2 CDs)  
Hyperion CDA67632 ££  
Op. 1, 2, 7, 8, WO 13,

Shelley plays everything on a Steinway, so it's not clear why this recording was sent to *EMR* for review. A modern piano is far from ideal for Clementi's youthful harpsichord music, and even for the later Op. 7 and Op. 8 sonatas it's hardly in keeping with the spirit of HIP. What a pity! Richard Maunder

*Pleyel Wind Serenades* Consortium Classicum 71' 29" (rec 1992)  
Dabringhaus & Grimm MDG 301 0460-2  
Octets in B flat & E flat, Sextets in B flat & E flat

The booklet author tells us that these are all early works; their style would anyway suggest as much. They are tuneful, well constructed pieces, lively and, in the slow movements, graceful. The performances are well up to the normal high standard of Dieter Klöcker's group, with skilful mastery of the unusually demanding horn parts and many touches of virtuosity from the other players in this fine demonstration of teamwork. The recording is firm and well balanced. Sleeve and essay fail to identify the sources of the works, indeed to tell us anything about them individually: Rita Benton's *Thematic Catalogue* of 1977 is no help either. Recommended – and not just as music to dine or talk through. Peter Branscombe

*Schubert Mass in Eb*, D950. Susan Gritton, Pamela Helen Stephen, Mark Padmore, James Gilchrist, Matthew Rose *SmSTTB* Collegium Musicum 90, Richard Hickox Chandos CHAN 0750 52' 54"

This profound yet uneasy setting is one of Schubert's last and most challenging compositions. While being quintessentially Schubertian, it looks back towards Bach and forward to Bruckner. Its originality is remarkable, and it is good to be able to welcome a revelatory performance and recording, in which every detail of Schubert's often complex structures comes through with clear, natural balance; the important timpani part is unusually well realized. Both choir and orchestra shine, relishing the drama that is so often lacking in Schubert's stage works and, under Hickox's perceptive and enthusiastic direction, also appreciating to the full the many reflective passages. Outstanding among the distinguished team of soloists are the tenors who, with the soprano, make their belated entry in the 'Incarnatus'. But all five solo singers combine with conductor, chorus and orchestra to make this a truly memorable performance. The three-language documentation is all that one could ask for, with full listing of the orchestra, identification of the instruments, and a valuable essay by Brian Newbould. Peter Branscombe

*Schubert Schwanengesang*, Mendelssohn *Sechs Lieder* Jan Kobow ten, Kristian Bezuidenhout fp/pf 64' 38"  
ATMA Classique ACD2 2339

This austere, beautifully articulated performance of Schubert's last lieder has as a welcome bonus six affecting Mendelssohn settings of poems by Heine, some of them far better known in later versions by Schumann. So we have seven Rellstab songs, and twelve by Heine, with just the wonderful Seidl *Taubenpost* in the middle, rather solemnly put across. We are given notes, the lied texts and translations, but disappointingly we are told nothing about Paul McNulty's copy of Conrad Graf's pianoforte/fortepiano op 318 (c.1819), clearly a noble instrument that conjures up, in Kristian Bezuidenhout's firm and sensitive hands, both the delicate eddies of the sea (*Die Stadt*), the turmoil of the soldier's mind before battle (*Kriegers Ahnung*), and the massive weight borne by Heine's *Atlas*. An unusual and rewarding issue, very well recorded. Peter Branscombe

*Schubert Works for Fortepiano* vol. 3. Jan Vermeulen (fp Nannette Streicher, 1826)  
Et cetera KTC 1332 135' 05" (2 CDs)  
D 459, 575, 845, 960

Another instalment of Vermeulen's series

of Schubert's piano music, played on an 1826 Streicher und Sohn. I'm even more impressed than I was when I reviewed Vol. 2 in the October 2007 *EMR*. The instrument is wonderful (I suspect it's been overhauled: the slightly out-of-tune notes in the extreme treble I noticed occasionally in Vol. 2 are now almost totally absent). And the player is ideally suited both to it and to the music. He produces an amazing range of dynamics and a remarkable variety of different articulations (many of them virtually impossible on the modern piano, of course). Vermeulen has an impeccable sense of timing: you never feel that a speed is misjudged, and even the silences are exactly right. These superb performances are everything one could wish for, and really do for once bring tears to the eye and send shivers down the spine.

Richard Maunder

Spech *Fortepiano pieces and songs* Katalin Halmai mS, Anikó Horváth, Ágnes Ratkó fp 67' 10"  
Hungaroton Classic HCD 32489

Johann B Spech (1767-1836) played an important role in Hungarian musical life in the Beethoven period (he conducted *Die Ruinen von Athen* and *König Stephan* at the Pest première). On the evidence of this charming recital, 'Music of Hungarian Parlours', he was equally adept at setting conventional German verse, an impressive *Romance* from his Paris years, and pleasing Italian arias – all very nicely, if at times over-vibrantly, sung by Katalin Halmai. Spech's piano pieces are bolder: the Sonata in F, op 5, makes a strong impression, as in their different ways do a group of three fugues, op 39, and in conclusion a Theme and Variations in Eb of 1808. An oddity of an otherwise well-documented issue is that there is no indication which of the fortepianists, teacher and pupil, plays which of the 26 tracks. Peter Branscombe

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

It's still relatively rare that new editions of little-known works appear at the same time as first recordings, but that is exactly what has happened with the two symphonies by Alice Mary Smith. Howard Shelley and The London Mozart Players have recorded both Smith's symphonies and a delightful Andante for Clarinet and orchestra (CHAN 10283, 66' 06"). When I was invited to a 'quartet evening' at a friend's house the other night, I took the CD along with me to

gauge others' reactions and was not at all surprised that everyone there thoroughly enjoyed the music – having not been told who it was by, guesses ranged from the Mendelssohn and Schumann that I'd expected to Brahms and, interestingly, 'sounds a bit like Stanford'.

Ian Graham-Jones was responsible for two A-R Editions: one contains the pair of symphonies, while the other has two concert overtures (one taken from a masque to a text by Longfellow). There is more space in the introductions to each volume for discussions both of the composer's life and influences (among them Sterndale Bennett and Macfarren – although it must be said that the latter was not always very kind in his criticism), as well as a quite detailed exploration of the works and some of their performance history. Smith is the first British woman known to have written a symphony – and had it performed. It is a pity that Ian Graham-Jones's efforts to find a publisher for his monograph on Alice Mary Smith have so far proved unsuccessful, for here is a woman composer who quite clearly deserves to be better known. These typically fine editions from A-R (clean scores with minimal editorial intrusion and detailed critical notes) will hopefully encourage other performers to take up the cause, and perhaps even explore some of the other treasures that survive in manuscript. I certainly hope that Shelley and Co. will record some of the concert overtures? CB

#### VARIOUS

Die Singphoniker 25 Jahre 151' 39" (2 CDs)  
cpo 777 291-2

Die Singphoniker are a German male-voice group, in many ways similar to the King's Singers, but with a normal make-up of tenor, baritone, bass-baritone, bass and a piano-playing bass. (The King's Singers have a countertenor and no piano.) This set is an anthology of 49 tracks from previous recordings, making an attractive introduction to their repertoire. For serious listeners, there is a variety of German part-songs that are likely to be unfamiliar to the Anglophone market: music by Lassus, M. Haydn, Schubert, Mendelssohn, Brahms, Grieg, Reger, R. Strauss, Bartok and a track of plainsong. These are mixed with arrangements of much lighter material, of which I enjoyed particularly a Schubertian 'I want to hold your hand' (no doubt some Beatle buff will recognise whether the text is the one they recorded themselves in German). Fun as background music, even Lassus, with his song about types of noses, but with some excellent 'straight' tracks as well. CB



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## LETTERS ON BOWS

Kevin Macdonald &amp; Stephen Marvin

Dear Clifford

Having survived decades of debating subjects which really matter (such as the origins of African states and the consequences of the slave trade) without too much vitriol being spilled, I am stunned at the acidity of Robert Seletsky and David Hawthorne's attacks against me in the February 2008 issue of EMR. Their polemical attacks, while substantive in Seletsky's case, are rich with assertion and assumption of *mauvais foi* on my part which simply is not there. I am said, for example, to infer that Jaap Schroeder deliberately mis-cited Seletsky when I did nothing of the sort. I am said to believe that Baroque heads went out of existence by the time of the 1765 *Encyclopédie* – again, I made very little mention of bow head shape in my article, and certainly nothing to this effect (indeed, I also made no claim for c.1750 Cramer head bows as Seletsky alleges elsewhere). Hawthorne claims that I 're-nuance' my paraphrasing and that I 'reiterate a mis-quote'. Someone making such claims should clearly illustrate his case with concrete examples rather than just blustering. I could go on.... I have indeed principally used sources that Seletsky has already cited. What was, and is, remarkable to me is the degree to which Seletsky himself in his previous publications has dodged, under-used, or not dismissed through logical argumentation the contents of several relatively recent sources which appear to contradict his hypotheses (especially the work of Milliot and the various authors of *l'Archet*). The present article is the first time I have seen him confront many of these directly, and it makes for interesting reading. Obviously, I cede many points to his superior experience on the topic. However, I invite readers of this brief response to re-read Seletsky's articles in *Early Music*, my article published last December in this review, and the sources in question; judge for yourselves.

Kevin MacDonald

*I regret that a further letter on the issue which I should have included in the February issue was omitted by mistake. I include it here, together with Kevin's separate reply.* CB

Dear Clifford,

*Technological Development in Classical Bows, a rebuttal*

Kevin C. MacDonald has written in these pages (Issue 122, pp. 31-33) with evident consternation about recent articles and other references concerning the development of the screw-mechanism in 18th century bows. His view is that we should reject recent scholarship which places this development roughly in mid-century. Recently, I published a two part article in *The Strad*, which gave a broader chronology of 'classical' bows, demonstrating that the familiar pike-head Baroque design, accompanied by significant concave cambre and a screw tightening

mechanism, is indicative of later 18th century bows exclusively. These Baroque Model bows coexisted with the more familiar high-tip Tourte, Meauchand, Dodd and "Cramer" examples, right into the 19th century. The clip-in frog bow without screw, especially the long models, still with little cambre, were slowly replaced or refitted. The innovation of the screw tightener is quite possibly of French origin. The technique seems to have spread first to England and found favour only slowly, perhaps over 20 years or more, in the Germanic countries and Italy... At least, this is what the evidence has led me to believe at present.

MacDonald informed me of his article here by email, as we had communicated previously through *The Strad* magazine's 'Soundpost' letters. I must say I remain unclear as to his intentions, even after some private correspondence. If he believes evidence will surface one day that screw mechanism bows were well known before 1750, then I and others will be pleased and will embrace the news. Presently, no such evidence exists. There has been no 'whispering campaign', simply recognition of a clarified timeline. My articles in particular were not intended primarily as new scholarship, but as a practical guide to Classical Bows, in particular, bows Mozart would have known. It had become clear to me as a performer and bowmaker that there was still widespread misunderstanding of the history of mid to late 18th century bows. Even in the best ensembles in North America, England and Europe in which I have performed, there is insufficient attention paid. Clarification of bow types and styles appropriate to particular music is of interest to serious musicians and others who study performance practice. Previous dating of early bows by David Boyden and others was not based on a thorough examination of sources, and deserves no deference or 'balance'. The only thorough study of early bows, by Robert E. Seletsky, posits c. 1750 for recognition of the screw tightening mechanism in common use. 1750 may in fact be generous, considering sources only identify some Paris shops with this technology in the few years preceding mid century, and there is no unambiguous evidence of screw-mechanism bows anywhere else before these inventory listings. There are few, if any, examples of these earliest French screw bows, the design of which was evidently not particularly successful. I can only guess – for now – that the flat-track system was the first successful method, as many such examples do survive.

The Mozarts must eventually have discovered screw-tightened bows. In the famous 1780 portrait it can be argued that the bow visible has this mechanism, and the surviving bow purported to have accompanied Wolfgang's violin is of this design. (See my articles in *The Strad* for more information. W. A. Mozart had been to

Paris several times; however, even the 1787 edition of Leopold's *Violinschule* still depicts only clip-in bows, suggesting that Austrian and German violinists were not universally coveting the newer styles.)

Many, however, have been misled by iconography, where often clip-in bows with ornamental buttons appear. This is not entirely blameworthy in that the transition was gradual, and 'real' turning screw buttons resembled and were derived from such ornament. Similarly, the innovation of the flat frog track, seen in many early screw-mechanism sticks, is derived from clip-in bow technology. This was followed by the development, perhaps as early as 1765 or 1770?, of the facet-fitted frog, possibly by a member of the Tourte family. In England, several makers or shops adapted this later technique, but there is again no clear evidence for dating. (I mistakenly identified some rather atavistic Betts (stamped) bows, with shallow facet-fitted frogs, as perhaps being as early as 1765, only to discover recently that John Betts had not established his own shop until 1780, further confirming Seletsky's argument that this was a later 18th century technique.)

The diversity of designs and woods for bows, post 1750, which have emerged, is truly astonishing. My suggestion that performers might use any design screw-mechanism model, Baroque pattern or High-Tip pattern for Mozart – or any music after 1760-1770 – was based on these now-understood records and discoveries. I still maintain as a general rule that clip-in models, both short and long, are more appropriate for most performance before c. 1750, and short models only for music before 1720.

The Maria-Theresa bow, 1749, mentioned by MacDonald is not in fact a screw adjusted bow, and is all but non-functional. Only the end of the ornamental button turns and does not adjust the hair tension significantly. Despite MacDonald's several assertions (and perhaps wishful thinking) I know of no examples of Germanic or Italian bows with this mechanism until many years later. They are mostly high-tip-pattern examples, and there are very few of these which survive, suggesting they were not particularly successful. A close examination of MacDonald's submission reveals that he takes old scholarship and simple guesses of others and builds his arguments upon them. The *actual* sources and documents he cites are good ones, but do not in themselves lead to the conclusions he posits.

There is no basis whatever to suggest as MacDonald does that the origin of the screw-frog is in the 1730's. In the unlikely event that some such remnants are discovered, with clear dating, it would still be of academic interest only, as it is clear that screw-frog bows were not in common use throughout Europe and England until mid-century and in many areas, well after. (See Locatelli, for example.) In short, I find MacDonald's arguments for retro-dating the screw mechanism unconvincing and unhelpful.

I am personally grateful that Robert E. Seletsky has published the foundation document upon which a full study of more than two centuries of bowmaking can

proceed. Further, I believe that my article on the bow during Mozart's life (as corrected on my website: [www.historicalbows.com](http://www.historicalbows.com)) remains quite accurate, and is the only practical document I know of pertaining to this crucial period of high creativity.

Stephen Marvin

Stephen Marvin is a violinist, bowmaker and writer living in Toronto. Website: [www.historicalbows.com](http://www.historicalbows.com)

Dear Clifford,

I had hoped to end all of this with my initial reply, and yet it seems that will not be possible. I therefore request your patience.

This is the second time that Stephen Marvin has found my attempts at contribution to studies of the Transitional Bow 'unhelpful'. The last time was in reply to a letter I posted in *The Strad* in reply to his aforesaid article. But 'unhelpful' to whom? Certainly not to Marvin himself, who admitted to me in our private correspondence that he had modified the 'start date' for screw bows on the Mozart article posted on his web page after our exchange (compare *Strad* August 2006, pg. 37 wherein would not have had screw adjusters before '1760 or 1770' to the e-version of his article now with a '1750' date found at his website).

As to my 'intentions', I can state them here quite explicitly, as I did to Marvin himself in our correspondence: to use archival data, rather than interpretations of artwork or reading between the lines in violin tutors, to arrive at a more clearly datable chronology for the bow. As original sticks cannot be dated, and portraits are filtered through the eyes and assumptions of the artist, surely documentary evidence is the very best data we have about actual consumption (e.g. succession inventories and advertisements)? I am not attempting a 'drastic retro-dating' as Marvin and his East Coast comrades assume, I am merely using dates as they *exist* in historic textual material, and arguing from them. Remarkably, all the denigration held in replies to my article is over a margin of no more than 17 years in the *invention* of the screw-bow!!! Now, given that we have the documented fact that in 1747 and 1748 in Paris, two dealers (Castagnery and Ouvrard) had inventories consisting of half or more of screw adjusted bows, what would you assume? As my interlocutors do that 1750 is a very good date for the origin of the screw bow? Or, that the invention or introduction of the screw-bow to Paris was in the 1740s or perhaps even the 1730s? That is what French musicological scholar Sylvette Milliot claims (see references cited in my original article). Yet, I am somehow guilty of using 'old scholarship' (no more than a decade old in the case of Milliot [1997], Hopfner [1998], and Gaudfroy [2000]) and the 'simple guesses' (hypotheses to others), of three major non-Anglophone European scholars to construct an argument. Marvin and others would perhaps do better to confront these scholars directly instead of shooting at the messenger.

As to the Maria-Theresa bow... It has a screw at the end which passes through a nut within the stick. Marvin

admits above that 'it does not adjust the hair tension significantly' – but yet it still makes a small adjustment. As the bow itself is a non-functional display item made of ivory, one would hardly expect an adjuster to do much good. Why go to all the trouble to make a screw mechanism if it would be an invisible and useless? If something looks like a duck, and quacks like a duck, it is likely to be a duck. It would make more sense to argue that the maker, perhaps even a jeweller, made the bow in the screw fashion in mimicry of existing screw-bows (after all, it could have more easily been made as a clip-in).

As to a possible 1730s origin for the screw bow, I can only go back to my mother discipline (archaeology) for an explanation. The closest thing we have to a reliable law in archaeology is that of seriation: that new object types are rare when they first appear, become common for a period, and then fade away. Usually, when we see a good deal of something archaeologically at a certain date, but nothing before, we can be confident that there is a longer chronology which is for the moment (perhaps forever) invisible to us. So, if 13 of 29 bows for sale in Castagnery's workshop in 1747 are screw-adjusted, they did not just appear – there is a longer history to the design. We therefore are more probably at the beginning of the screw adjuster 'bulge', and not at its first flower – even if that only means 8 to 17 years!

Therefore all I ask is that we keep an open mind, rather than establishing an inflexible new orthodoxy of the bow.

[Full bibliographic references are in my original article in *EMR* 122] *Kevin MacDonald*

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## DAVID BOLTON

(1930-2008)

Richard Vendome &  
Christopher Stembidge

David Bolton, who died suddenly on 23rd February at the age of 77, was the son of an Anglican priest and schoolmaster. An unassuming but impressive scientist, linguist, musician, teacher and instrument maker, he was educated at Winchester College and at Balliol College, Oxford, before serving in the Royal Navy, where he took the opportunity to learn Russian at the JSSL. In 1954 he began his career as an industrial chemist; at various times he and his wife Marion lived in Holland, Denmark and Norway. His work at ICI led them to settle in Middlesbrough in 1964.

On being made redundant from ICI David retrained as a cello teacher and worked for the Cleveland County Music Service. A stay in Holland among early music enthusiasts kindled his interest in the harpsichord. Not having trained formally as an instrument maker, he had a passion to demythologise the craft as far as possible. His early keyboard business traded under the characteristically prosaic name 'Bolton Kits', and was based on a single brilliant invention which brought his old and new careers together, the 'Bolton jack', a high-tech but simple plastic component at the core of the harpsichord mechanism, unsurpassed by other makers; this was launched at the Early Music Exhibition in 1981, with a promise that complete instrument kits would follow. He soon developed a wide range of instruments including the Italian and French harpsichord, spinet, the English and Flemish virginals, and the fretted and unfretted clavichord. His ingenious portable pipe organs, which can be taken apart and transported in the back of a car, are a recent addition. The 'Black Hole', a floor pad widely used by cellists, is another of his inventions. A couple of years ago he took part in a project to restore and install an early 19th century organ given by Richard Vendome to St George's Basilica in Gozo, and last November he went to Moscow to help set up an early keyboard instrument enterprise; makers of such instruments are almost unknown in Russia. His enthusiasm and physical stamina belied both his slight frame and his age.

A fine keyboard player, cellist, viol player and singer, David contributed widely to the musical life of the north east, and developed a strong association with NORVIS, the early music summer school based in Durham. Bolton kits formed the basis of the instrument making courses which he ran at Raymond and Mary Abbotson's beautiful house, Dovecote, near Kirkbymoorside. His sensitivity to the healing properties of music was nurtured by his association with the Abbotsons, and he was an active supporter of their Trust for Music Therapy. His wickedly dry sense of humour was greatly appreciated at Botton Village (Steiner Waldorf) School, where he brought out the best in his cello pupils – at least one going on to a very high standard – and he helped with the making of lyres

and a double bass. As a woodworker he was keen to plant trees for future generations; when Marion bought a field in Swaledale, he helped plant it with a thousand trees, and they subsequently donated the site, Midge Hole, to the Woodland Trust.

David Bolton was a modern polymath whose qualities are increasing hard to come by, an entertaining conversationalist whose company rarely left one's perspectives unaltered.

Richard Vendome

I first met David Bolton at the Early Music Exhibition in Earl's Court in 1991 when I begged him to sell me his unfinished demonstration model of a short-octave fretted clavichord. This was badly needed in a newly-independent Estonia. I also told him that I needed kits for many of my students for making a later type of fretted clavichord, based on Hubert or similar. He would think about it. Two or three years later he came to my house in Italy with the prototype of this. We spent a week working out the right stringing and since then I and many of my students and acquaintances have acquired such instruments in kit or finished form from him. It is a great success. I once recorded on such an instrument in David's bathroom in Middlesbrough!

When, some years later, I asked him to help me find a way of getting such things to Russia, he saw little point in trying to send kits there and suggested that we should find a competent carpenter. He would be happy to provide plans and instructions and would even consider coming over to help people finish their instruments. He spoke a beautiful old-fashioned Russian – so convincingly that the ticket-office at the Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg did not think of trying to exact from him the inflated foreign tourist rate when he went there a couple of years ago. He subsequently visited Russia several times as a rep for ICI, his employer from 1954 until 1980 when they paid for him to retrain as a cello teacher. In Holland (1970-72) he had got interested in harpsichord making and after assembling a Zuckermann realised that there were things in it that needn't be, so decided to design a 'basic kit' to save shipping costs for the customers.

Looking for a good carpenter in Russia proved to be like searching for a needle in a haystack. As my friend the Dresden organ builder Kristian Wegscheider pointed out, Stalin had destroyed the artisan tradition. In Soviet Russia doors, furniture and even musical instruments were produced in factories. Kristian suggested I should look for someone working as a restorer in a museum. On my next visit to Moscow I met Dmitri Belov, who not only proudly showed me some 18<sup>th</sup> century furniture he had restored in Arkhangelskoye museum outside Moscow, but also proved to be completing his studies in organ and composition at the Moscow Conservatory.

David invited Dmitri to stay in Middlesbrough for a month and learn how to make his first clavichord. The visit was a great success. This spawned great activity back in Moscow and many Bolton-Belov clavichords now exist, one of which may be seen at the Gnessin Academy of

Music. David made his last trip to Russia shortly before last Christmas, when he helped Dmitry make a spinet.

He has played an important role in helping early musicians, especially those of modest means, to acquire instruments. I consider his clavichords to be amongst the best made in recent times.

Christopher Stembridge

*David Hugh Bolton: born 18 November 1930 at Greenwich, London, died 23 February 2008 at Acklam, Middlesbrough. Survived by his widow Marion, his son Peter and daughter Catherine.*

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