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King's Music, Redcroft, Banks End, Wyton,
Huntingdon, Cambs, PE28 2AA
clifford.bartlett@btopenworld.com
www.kings-music.co.uk
tel +44 (0)1480 452076 fax +44(0)1480 450821
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Sunday 27 July: a bit late to be writing an editorial for an issue that should arrive on at least UK readers' doormats on August 1st, and I still haven't looked at BC's proof corrections, sorted out a page layout, found contents to make a multiple of four pages, chosen a piece of music to include, and run the final copy off the computer. All we have to do then is to set the photocopier going, stuff the magazine, diary (copied last week) and any advertising leaflets envelopes, stick on labels, and apply the rubber post stamp. So think yourselves very lucky if it reaches you just a few days late.

I could, of course, have moved the whole process a couple of weeks earlier. That was the target. But having failed, I wasn't going to miss my one week of concentrated music-making. It is inspiring to absorb oneself in music of a particular time and place. This year at the Beauchamp Summer School it was Mantua around 1600. Monteverdi was represented by the 1610 Mass, that marvellous mix of Gombert's themes and Monteverdi's tonal clarity. There was also the vocal imagination of Wert's motets, *Ascendente Jesu* in particular. We tried to work out whether there was anything inherently Jewish in Salamone Rossi's Hebrew settings: the sound is certainly as remote from Italian as possible. We also strayed elsewhere; violins tried their hands at Dario Castello, for instance.

A unique feature of the course is the amount of virtually unknown music that Alan Lumsden edits for us each year. The discovery last week was a *Dixit Dominus* a16 by the Roman Benevoli (he who did NOT write Biber's *Missa Salisburgensis* a53). This is big horizontally as well as vertically. The first run-through was exciting, and it gained in stature as we worked at it. While probably written for four small groups, it worked well with our larger forces (roughly a voice and instrument to each part). An incidental highlight for me was suddenly hearing some really beautiful cornet playing in an extensive melismatic passage coming from behind me (played by one of our reviewers). Irrespective of the music itself, the great delight at Beauchamp is the mix of voices, cornetts, sackbuts and curtals (plus, of course, organs), working together for at least half the daily sessions. On top of that, there is Philip Thorby's insight into the texts and rhythms, his energy, his questioning of lazy assumptions and his humour. And there is plenty of wine and local cider. *CB*

REVIEWS OF MUSIC & BOOKS

Clifford Bartlett

CROCE QUATERCENTENARY

Giovannni Croce *Quatercentenary Edition of the Sacred Music. Vol. I: Messe a 5 e 6 voci 1596/1599* Edited by Michael Procter With an Introduction by Martin Morell. Edition Michael Procter (4001), 2008. xl + 93pp.

Considering his position as Maestro at San Marco while Giovanni Gabrieli was organist and followed as Maestro a few years after his death by Monteverdi, it is surprising that Croce's music has had so little exposure. The last (?only) edition of his music that I have reviewed was his *Musica Sacra* of 1596, as published in English in 1608, curiously included in *The English Madrigalists* (vol. 41) and to be included, in three languages, in vol. XIII of this edition. This volume, the first of 14, has a substantial biographical introduction, drawing largely from Laura Davey's 1998 Oxford D. Phil. (not PhD as in footnote 6) thesis. He now has a definite date of birth: 24 June 1556 and his life is presented more richly than I have seen elsewhere. There is also a survey of his works. The project has assistance from Richard Charteris who has 'abandoned his own projected Complete Edition to join our team'; what about the non-sacred parts of a complete edition? I had thought that a Croce series was being published in CMM; the index to its 2007 catalogue lists it as series 107, but in the body of the catalogue, CMM 107 is Hans Tischler's 15-volume Trouvère edition published in 1997. What happened to the *Opera Omnia* stated by by Siro Cicilino (a name unknown to Google) in Padua in 1977? Individual works have been issued by Joed and by Beauchamp Press.

This volume contains four masses: three published in 1596 and a fourth included with their reprint in 1599. Two copies of the first edition survive (in Ferrara and Bologna), both incomplete; the extant partbooks are not listed. The 1599 edition (at Brescia) is complete, so no composition is needed. Detailed editorial problems seem to be minimal. More generally, the edition preserves original note-values and has four-minim bars. Alto-clef parts are notated as octave-treble. It would have been nice to have had a facsimile – always useful for checking what an editor has assumed without coming clean. But everything here gives confidence that this is a reliable transcription. It is good to have more than a singe note to show the incipit in the original notation. The music is clear to read, well laid out, compact to be economical but not too small to read. The three 1596 masses a5 are: Sexti Toni (C1C3C4C4F4), Tertii Toni (G2C2C3C3F3) & Octavi Toni C1C3C4C4F4) a5 and the 1599 Messa Quarta a6 (G2G2C2C3C3F3). They seem to me just a touch too melliflous and a bit too easy-going: I'd be interested if readers who have sung them at Michael's courses or elsewhere can report that I'm far too lukewarm.

BACH'S EARLIEST MS

Weimarer Orgeltabulatur... Herausgegeben von Michael Maul und Peter Wollny Bärenreiter (BVK 1957), 2007. xxxv 48pp + facsimiles, £63.50. ISBN 978 3 7618 1957 9

At the very last chance of including a review in this issue, I came across a batch of Bärenreiter scores that had arrived at the beginning of the year. So my apologies to the publisher and our readers for the delay.

We've already had publicity of the discovery and a CD; here is the cause of the fuss. Not any new music by Bach, but a fragment of Buxtehude's chorale setting *Nun freut euch* BuxWV 210 copied by Bach around 1698-9 and Reinken's famous *An Wasserflüssen Babylon,* copied a year or two later. The editors noticed a reference to some music in an 1840 catalogue in the theological section of the Anna Amelia Library in Weimar and found four folders with these and three pieces in another hand in organ tablature. Two of them, in Bach's hand, are several years earlier than any other music that can be specifically associated with him and have been used here as a basis (the sceptical might say an excuse) for a reconsideration of Bach's musical development and particularly his relationship to Georg Böhm in Lüneburg. The suggestions here are very plausible, but could, of course, collapse with the next discovery or another interpretation.

What you get for your money is a box containing a volume with a long introduction in German and English and an edition of the five pieces – one other leaf has a Pachelbel setting of *An Wasserflüssen* and a damaged fourth leaf with two further Pachelbel pieces. The paper implies that these were written in Mühlhausen while Bach was there by a scribe who can be identified as Johann Martin Schubart, a pupil of Bach who, according to J. G. Walther, 'was taught to play the clavier by Herr Johann Sebastian Bach, with whom he boarded without interruption from 1707 to 1717'. Ornamentation added to one of the pieces may have been related to lessons Bach gave him. The impact of these pieces is more to the world of scholarship than the performer. But those who wish to play the new sources can take advantage of the edition, whose commentary doesn't collate its readings with other sources, or practise their tablature reading from the facsimiles. It is good that they are available, and we now know how long Bach knew Reinken's setting of a choral on which he was, in 1720, to improvise so successfully in front of the aging composer.

I wonder how libraries will deal with this. The box has no title on the spine so it can't be identified on a shelf, nor does it have anything to keep its top in place. The presence of unbound folios will make sure that it can't be

borrowed, so the transcriptions won't be played. And there is the problem of whether to shelf an anthology containing no Bach with his music, since that is the reason for the publication to exist.

COMPLETE C. P. E. BACH

Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach *The Complete Works* Los Altos CA, The Packard Humanities Institute
Series I: Keyboard Music. Vol. 5.1 ***Miscellaneous Sonatas from Prints I* Edited by Darrell M. Berg.** *Miscellaneous Sonatas from Prints I.* xvi + 8 facs + 133pp, 2007.$20.00 ISBN 971 8 933280 15 8
Series I: Keyboard Music. Vol. 5.2 ***Miscellaneous Sonatas from Prints II* Edited by Darrell M. Berg.** xvi + 8 facs + 126pp, 2007.$20.00 ISBN 971 8 933280 16 5
Series IV: Oratorios and Passions. Vol. 4.1. ***Passion according to St. Matthew (1769)* Incorporating Music by Johann Sebastian Bach. Edited by Ulrich Leisinger.**, 2008. xxiv + 8 facs + 227pp, $25.00. ISBN 978 1 933280 19 6

The previous attempt at a Collected Works from Oxford UP didn't get very far and seems to have sunk without trace. This attempt has started well. It has found evidently generous patronage from The Packard Humanities Institute. If you assume it must be connected with Hewlett-Packard, read the web-site (www.packhum.org), and you won't be much the wiser except that whatever connection there was doesn't exist now.

It annoys me that so many Collected Works are heavily subsidised yet still come out as expensive to buy: wouldn't the sponsors pay a touch more to reach a wider public if the case were persuasively made to them. This project doesn't fall into that trap. A glance at the prices above (and divide them by two for GB pounds) shows that Packard evidently believe that what they subsidise should be accessible: the Oratorio volume would probably cost over £100 as part of the NBA, and a Bärenreiter reissue in study score format could be as expensive as this bound full score and would have all the editorial information omitted.

Mention of the Neue Bach-Ausgabe isn't entirely irrelevant, since a subsidiary series might well be set up to publish works related to JSB, and CPE's St Matthew Passion, written in 1768 for performances in 1769, incorporates a considerable amount of his father's setting: chorales and turbae, with some influence on the recitatives. The borrowings will not have worried the Hamburg audience, who would not have heard JSB's work; but the presence of music familiar from another context is disconcerting, especially if you know the JSB Passion well enough to be aware of transposition of the chorales and the absence of a double chorus – 'chorus', of course, in the older sense. Confirmation that the idea of JSB using single voices is not entirely wild is given here, since there were only six singers to cover soloists and chorus. The commentary lists all the parts, which are the main source since the autograph score was partially used for another purpose, but isn't explicit that each voice sung all the choruses as well as the solos noted: the number of pages of each part, however, implies that they did.

The dismemberment of the score is because CPEB later used it to make a passion cantata (Wq 233), which replaced the Biblical narrative by a contemporary paraphrase, separating the original recitatives and chorales. So the main source is the set of parts used for a series of somewhere between 10 and 14 performances between 5 February and 24 March: i.e. more like the run of an opera (though at different churches) than the two performances JSB church pieces received in any year.

The edition is beautifully produced – economically spaced with the smallest margins that would satisfy good design, but not over-cramped. There is an informative introduction and well-chosen facsimiles. It is interesting to compare two copies of a page of a violin part. It brings home to performers who don't see original material the question of how rehearsals might have taken place without letters or bar numbers: did they never stop mid-movement? The second copyist doesn't even preserve the same line layout as the first. Information on sources is thorough.

There is a section on performance practice. As expected, the parts confirm that both oboists also played the flute parts; there are also duplicate copies of each part without the flutes. The scribe of Fl/Ob II made no attempt to adjust doublings of the alto voice that took the instruments out of range. The suggestion that they played an octave higher is made tentatively, but it's a fairly normal pattern in written-out Violin II parts through the 19th century and earlier, absolutely standard in English West-Gallery tradition, and no doubt in lots of other places. Acoustically, it seems, at a bare minimum, not to worry anyone, and is more effective than just bending some notes the octave. (The same applies in reverse to adding a viola to a continuo line.) So perhaps the Violin II part may have been played up the octave as well. Expectation is confounded by the two bassoons parts, which only contain the obbligato movements. The two string bass parts are both labelled Violoncello, with nothing for violone, so presumably if there was a 16' pitch sound, it came from the organ. But since cello II was copied from cello I, perhaps the scribe wasn't concerned which instrument played it and it may have been intended for violone.

There are few sources for the editor to collate in the Passion. But turning to the two keyboard volumes, the situation is much more complicated. Three categories are used for the volumes: autograph MSS (or with autograph annotations), non-autograph MSS and early prints, along with 79 MSS and one print not used for the edition. There is a problem in that, unlike the sets CPEB published, the isolated pieces often appeared in print some years after composition, sometimes after a modicum of revision. Despite that, however, the critical commentary is less fearsome than one might expect. Much of it, in fact, is taken up with slurs, appoggiaturas and ornament signs. With many composers, such differences might have been thought insignificant: after all, ornamentation was a matter for the performer, not the composer. But as the author of the most famous guide to keyboard playing (and the son of JSB, who was careful to notate his music with utmost precision), CPEB paid careful attention to such

details, making the post-*Versuch* editions accord with the practices it favoured.

Normally, one would hope for a quick release of a players' version of fine editions like this. But since the volumes cost only ten pounds (and are even quite cheap if you pay the post from the USA), the only practical problem is whether the format and extra weight that the binding adds makes them suitable for a music stand. They open flat, but clavichordists may have problems.

Readers who are concerned with such matters will have noticed that, having used H number for CPEB's works when *EMR* began, we have generally reverted to Wq. I am glad to see that this edition also prefers Wq and only use H when there is no Wq number. H may be more accurate chronologically, but it splits up works published as a set, which (apart from inertia) is probably the main reason why Helm's numbers haven't caught on. (Frustratingly I have to look up Wotquenne numbers in Helm, since my Wotquenne vanished some years ago.)

So far 19 volumes have appeared (in a very short time): six for keyboard (including one of organ works), nine for orchestra (including three sets of symphonies), three passions (1769, 1770, 1772), and one of Works for Special Occasions. Performance material is available: I'm probably ordering the Symphonies a12 for a customer soon, so will report on what it is like. The project clearly has enormous support from the Packard Humanities Institute as well as the scholars involved, and the musical community owes them enormous gratitude. Now that editions are catching up with recordings, which are quite plentiful, a wider range of performers will show interest in his music.

The website is www.cpebach.org; orders to ORDERS@PSSC.COM. But check on postal costs. The three review copies came by FedEx, which is probably expensive: were I to send them to the USA, the cost would be over £50.00, though it may be less from west to east. Instrumental parts are available via download: contact Ruth Libbey at rlibbey@packhum.org

J. G. NAUMANN

Katrin Bemmann *Die katholische Kirchenmusik Johann Gottlieb Naumanns (1741-1801) Ein Beitrag zur Überlieferungs- und Rezeptionsgeschichte. Verlag Dr. Kovač (Hamburg, 2008)*: Studien zur Musikwissenschaft, Band 13. ISSN 1613-1185. ISBN 978-3-8300-3614-2. 514pp. €98.

Johann Gottlieb Naumann worked at the Dresden court from 1764, when he became *Kirchencompositeur* (only one year after the post-Seven Years War Saxon capital had disbanded the Italian opera and 'retired' Hasse) until his death in 1801. In 1758 he had travelled to Italy, where he studied with Tartini. In 1762, he returned, this time studying (on Tartini's recommendation) with Sammartini in Bologna. Although he is possibly best known today as an opera composer, his output of sacred music is considerable and includes Masses, Vespers psalms, settings of the Miserere and Te Deum, offertories, hymns and motets.

More than half of this excellent volume is taken up with as thorough and detailed a thematic catalogue as one is ever likely to find. Katrin Bemmann must have devoted weeks of her life to checking meticulously the huge amounts of archival material involved. More than 100 pages are devoted to Naumann's music for the mass. The situation is complicated (not uniquely in the Dresden context) on account of what seems to have been a local habit of building settings from disparate sources. Thus, as well as the eight 'complete masses' (prefixed by a Roman I in Bemmann's system – there's no indication, if we are to use these in an NWV way) there are 15 entries under II (Kyrie settings), 13 under III (Glorias), 13 under IV (Credos), 18 under V (Sanctus) and 17 under VI (Agnus Dei). Section VII is offertories, and there are 20 entries. Each gives the scoring (with variants for sub-sections where relevant), the date and place of composition (often with information on how this was ascertained), the number of the bars, instrumental and vocal incipits, a detailed description and information about the location of the autograph score (if there is one), location of copies (with such essential information as whether these are scores and/or parts, if they are bound with other Naumann pieces, as well as their provenance, if known), and finally references to the three contemporary Dresden catalogues of Naumann's music.

Taking an example at random, we learn that III.9 is a *Gloria breve* setting in C major, dated August 1778 by the composer (who here uses the Italian version of his name – he seems never to have settled on which language to use!) which is bound in Dresden with settings of the other four sections of the Ordinary to make up what the *'new'* catalogue of the Catholic chapel calls *Missa Nr. 7*, while the catalogue of Naumann's masses describes *Missa Nr. 7* as having a different Credo. Two copied scores (one in Dresden, the other in Vienna) match the autograph, while two further copies (one in Dresden, the other in Brno) differ from both forms given in the mass catalogue. Now one begins to realize the complications. Added to this, Naumann seems to have been in the habit of re-working pieces (always indicating this on the scores by the use of R or "Rin" (for *rinovata*) and the date – a cataloguer's dream!) so Bemmann is obliged to use suffix letters to distinguish versions (in at least one case being obliged to create an original version on account of a score being marked "Rin" but showing no signs of re-working from which to postulate an original). Further complications arise when sacred works turn out to be contrafacta of operatic extracts with no direct link to Naumann. This, in fact, is where I take my hat off to the author. Not only has she rigorously documented the *Uberlieferungsgeschichte* (one of those fantastically handy German words that evades elegant translation) of this wonderful music, but she has not blinkered herself in doing so – how many researchers seriously have acquainted themselves so thoroughly with a composer's secular output in order to identify *bona fide* sacred music?

It surprises me that Naumann's music is not better known. Undoubtedly, this exemplary study will encourage others to explore his sacred output – and I look forward to hearing the results. *BC*

IN BRIEF

Giovanni Gabrieli *Motet 'Beata es virgo' for six voices* (Richard Charteris) PRB Productions (PRB B050), 2008. 7pp, $4.00

This Marian motet is, in original clef terms, for SSATBarB, though for modern voices AATBarBB is ideal. It will work with a conventional choir as SSATBB, but needs transposing up a tone or so. I am so used to looking at fully-texted Gabrieli pieces to see which parts are more suited to instruments, that I wondered how it would work with only the Cantus sung, or perhaps Cantus and Tenor. Certainly a possibility. But this really is one of the comparatively few pieces by Gabrieli that is suitable for a choir without instruments, with melifluous lines in the late-renaissance polyphonic style. So not typical: you could sing it as an encore and challenge the audience to 'guess the composer' and see if anyone gets it right.

J. S. Bach *Sonata for Flute and Continuo in C, BWV 1033* (Barthold Kuijken) Breitkopf (EB 8690), 2008. €12.50.

The composer appears on the cover as Johann Sebastian(?) Bach(?), which may be one question mark short. The authenticity of this as a work of JSB was questioned in the Flute volume of the Neue Bach-Ausgabe. The main source is in the hand of CPEB, written c.1731 but with the ascription not added till over 50 years later. Other MSS seem to descend from this. So the problem is: why did CPEB ascribe to his father a work that is stylistically unlikely to have been by him. The suggestion by Robert Marshall that JSB wrote it for unaccompanied flute and CPEB added the bass is rejected here, since the piece wouldn't work unaccompanied; but stylistically, it is too early in style for Bach to have written explicitly for that exercise as late as the 1730s. Kuijken doesn't come to definite conclusions, but favours it being brought together in the Bach household, with CPEB in old age affirming his father's authorship since he had copied it from a MS in his hand. That MS is entirely hypothetical, but since the main source is in parts, there must once have been a score. The edition isn't in parts: there's a score with realisation by Ewald Demeyere and two copies of a score without (with sensible page turns), i.e. the format one normally expects for duo sonatas. I suspect that the musicology may be overkill for some users, but not, I'm sure, for our readers.

J. C. Bach *Oh portento! Oh stupor! Chorus for SATB Voices and Orchestra* (John Arthur) PRB Productions (PRB CL016), 2008. iv + 12pp, $10.00 score, £17.00 score & parts.

Unlike CPE, JC Bach has had a Collected Works for a couple of decades, produced on the cheap (but at high prices) from facsimiles and modern MS with the help of enthusiasts like Richard Maunder and the late Ernest Warburton. But they missed one item in JCB's hand in the British Library (RM 24.a.8), a setting of a chorus from Metastasio's *Betulia liberata*. The music isn't known to be from any complete setting, but is a free adaptation of a section from JCB's 1758 *Gloria*. This is its first publication. It looks attractive, but the problem is how to programme it. John Arthur mentions in his introduction that the MS contains five other similar works; one wonders if they would make the basis of a concert. No vocal material is mentioned as being available.

Haydn *Symphony in C 'L'Ours', Hob. I:82.* (BA 4690); *Symphony in G minor 'La Poule', Hob. I:83* (BA 4687). Bärenreiter [2007], each £21.00

These both derive from the Henle Joseph Haydn Werke, the former dates from 1999, the former from 1971. Strangely for Bärenreiter, neither volume has a publication date. There isn't much to say about the edition. The source situation isn't complex, and although there is no commentary included, a few variants that might affect a performance are footnoted. Parts are available, and judging for those I have seen for other symphonies, they are easy to read.

Mozart *String Quintets vol.* 1 [K. 174] (Ernst Herttrich/ Wolf-Dieter Seiffert). Henle (777), 2008. Parts €24.00; Score (9777), €12.00.

A neat study-score seems a sensible companion to a set of parts, though they are also sold separately. The introduction and critical commentary are included in the violin I part as well as the score. What puzzles me is a vol. 1 that contains only one of the six quintets: are they really going to be pulished each separately?. More useful than 'Band I' on the cover would be 'K. 174'. The final form of the work is followed by the original trio and a rejected version of the finale, both in the parts as well as the score so that players can try them through. Editorial problems are few, since there is only one source to consider, the autograph. The Neue Mozart-Ausgabe was published while the autograph was unavailable, so Henle is preferable unless you are comparing it with NMA's 2001 corrected issue.

Cimarosa *Requiem for SATB soli, choir and orchestra* (Reinmar Emans) Breitkopf & Härtel (PB 5284), 2008. iv + 144pp, €51.00; Vocal score (EB 8636) €22.00. Orchestral material on sale.

Curiously, the key of the work isn't stated on the score, but occurs on the invoice: G minor. Since there is at least one other requiem (in F), that is a bit careless. But no complaints otherwise. It was written at high speed in Petersburg in December 1787 for the wife of the envoy of the Kingdom of Naples and Sicily, the Duchess of Serra Capriola; the editor hasn't investigated how soon the funeral took place (it was probably cold enough there in December for the body not to need rapid burial) and whether the Requiem was performed at it. It was performed in Rome in 1801 at a memorial service for the composer. The autograph is a fair copy, for which no date is suggested, but there are hints in other sources of an earlier version. What is called 'the original part material' also survives, and provides some details not in the score. But I can see no indication whether 'original' means 'in St Petersburg' or if score and parts were produced for some later performance. Did Russians import paper from Italy? If not, a study of the MSS would give clues and might also

hint at when the independently-notated *Libera me* fits in. It is also odd in requiring oboes and bassoons whereas the rest of the score is for strings. That feature may make it an attraction for performers. There are not many such substantial post-baroque choral works that need only strings, so if the solos can be supplied by members of the choir, it could make quite a good programme with a string orchestra piece in the first half, the Requiem following as a long (65') second half. I'm not thinking in terms of authentic orchestras, but rather Grieg, Dvorak and Elgar. Conductors looking for unhackneyed repertoire should look at this. There are a lot of Largos, but it isn't all slow and the Largos are quite lively.

I must apologise for leaving until the next issue Terence Charleston's impressive and forward-looking edition of Albertus Bryne's keyboard music. It has high priority for the next issue.

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FASCH FESTTAGE 2008

Brian Clark

Johann Friedrich Fasch became Kapellmeister at the princely residence of Anhalt-Zerbst in 1722 and remained there (despite increasing personal unhappiness in an unsympathetic religious environment) until his death in 1758. For over 20 years now, the city of Zerbst (located halfway between Magdeburg and Leipzig) has helped to finance a festival to celebrate his life and works, and host a conference, either about him or his son, Carl Fasch, whose main claim to fame is the foundation of the Berlin Sing-Akademie which would eventually be taken over by Mendelssohn and play an important role in the re-discovery of Bach's music.

For the 10th Internationale Fasch-Festtage, I suggested that the conference should focus on the city itself. It took place over three days in mid April, with seven sessions, the first of which was preceded (as usual) by a short recital by early music students from the Hochschule für Musik und Theater "Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy" in Leipzig. As well as a trio sonata by Fasch, we were treated to a keyboard suite by one of Fasch's predecessors, Johann Baptist Kuch, and another trio sonata by Pepusch (whose works are listed in the 1743 inventory of the court library).

After the conference was formally opened by Bürgermeister Behrendt (a staunch supporter of the Festtage since I can remember), the first session started with Wolfgang Ruf's introduction to the role of the Princes of Anhalt (not just Zerbst) in the development of music in the region. Dirk Hermann – who has almost single-handedly engineered a rescue programme for the ruins of the castle – gave a beautifully illustrated talk about the interior of the building, including many images that I had never seen before. He additionally offered conference participants a guided tour at the end of the afternoon session. The latter included an introduction to the wonderful exhibition which Susanne Schuster had set up at the Museum der Stadt Zerbst by the lady herself, Michael Maul talking about a volume of keyboard music he found recently and the reasons he believes it to be of Zerbst provenance (interestingly, it had staff notation *and* the same music in organ tablature below, almost as if it were a teaching volume), and Konstanze Musketa (the International Fasch-Gesellschaft e. V.'s President) talking about the Kantorei and Kurrende in Zerbst (i.e., the practice of choirboys singing in the streets after services to gain some money or food).

The opening concert featured a new piece by Steffen Schleiemacher, a fanfare on the name FASCH (F – A – E flat – C- B natural) and some early baroque *Turmmusik*. Then came the official openings of the fortnight's events by Bürgermeister Behrendt and the regional Minister of Culture, Jan-Hendrik Olbertz – both of them delighted that the attention of all Germany and the early music world should be on Anhalt-Zerbst during this time. The concert itself included three first performances – and sinfonia in D and a serenata by Johann Wilhelm Hertel (the latter supposedly written for performance in Zerbst the year after Fasch died), and another serenata, this time by Fasch, written in 1757 for the birthday of Catherine the Great of Russia (who had spent most of her youth in Zerbst). While the Hertel had many high points (there is a particularly striking Alto aria), the Fasch was the more impressive for the still-fertile imagination of the aging composer (he was in his 70th year, but still discovering interesting combinations like pairs of flutes and bassoons at the double octave, and writing sprightly polonaises with horns!).

The second day of the conference had three sessions. Rashid-Sasha Pegah explored music at the courts mentioned in Fasch's account of his "journeyman's tour", while Barbara Reul (as session chair) read a paper about Johann Ulich in the absence of its indisposed author, Cordula Timm-Hartmann. Finally, Samantha Owens discussed the "ownership" and dissemination of music during Fasch's lifetime, showing that courts often assumed that *any* music written whilst in their employ was their property – which several composers, including Brescianello, sought to disprove! Nigel Springthorpe opened the second session with the revelation that much of the music hitherto attributed to Fasch's successor, Johann George Röllig, is possibly actually by his younger brother, Johann Christoph Röllig, who was active in Meissen. The Dresden connection was explored further by Manfred Fechner (who tried to draw conclusions about the varying numbers of parts copied there from Fasch's scores with regards to possibly dating them), and Jan Stockigt, who argued (amongst other things) that the surviving Zerbst source for a Zelenka mass presents reliable evidence for the compositional work undertaken by copyists at the court of August the Strong. She has proposed that a new edition of the work be undertaken with these parts (currently in the Dessau section of the Landeshauptarchiv Sachsen-Anhalt) as the primary source.

Two more papers after a fine lunch (one of the regular pleasures of a trip to the town is the excellent cuisine and accommodation of the Hotel von Rephuns Garten) brought the day to a close. Maik Richter revealed that Fasch had written several serenatas for court entertainments in Köthen (the connection was long known, but documentary evidence had been sparse), while Klaus-Peter Koch looked at the north German connections of some of the composers listed in the 1743 inventory. With time to spare, we were then treated to Mary Olieskewicz's news that she had located a new Fasch autograph in the Sing-Akademie collection in Berlin, namely a three movement E minor sonata for two flutes and continuo, which she had even managed to record in advance of the conference.

The Marienkirche in Dessau was the venue for the second concert, a programme of orchestral music (which will soon appear on cpo, I am informed) performed by Les Amis de Philippe, directed by Ludger Rémy. Two overtures and two concertos with large woodwind ensembles framed to sinfonias for strings only, all six works being heard in public for the first time. I will write more when the CD arrives for review, but the live experience was wonderful – and reminded just *why* I'm such a Fasch-ist!

I assumed the role of session chair at the beginning of the third day. Barbara Reul spoke about some of the many important new documents she has unearthed in Dessau – including lists of instruments and the responsibilities of Fasch's predecessors – while Bert Siegmund explored Fasch's most extensive cantata cycle and Stephan Blaut described the source material for some of the earliest serenatas performed in Zerbst (sadly only the printed libretti in most cases!) My own paper on the Hertel serenata heard in the first concert opened the final session – just *why* he'd been asked to compose it in the first place, is as much of a mystery as everything else surrounding the death of its dedicatee only ten days after the birthday it was supposed to celebrate. Undine Wagner then spoke about Carl Hoeckh, an Austrian violinist who was Fasch's *Konzertmeister*. The final paper was supposed to have been about Fasch and his son visiting Hertel at Strelitz in 1751, but Andreas Waczkat withdrew at the last minute.

So many people deserve thanks and congratulations – Susanne Schuster and the staff of the Internationale Fasch-Gesellschaft e. V. (especially the irrepressible Karen Spott, whose enthusiasm and humour steadies many nerves!), the out-going president Konstanze Musketa, who has to devote her time to preparations for next year's Handel celebrations, the town hall (the Bürgermeister and his ever-helpful colleague, Herr Dittmann), the Kultus-ministerium of Sachsen-Anhalt for financial support, and not forgetting the Ständige Konferenze Mitteldeutsche Barockmusik, and MDR Figaro, the regional radio station, who broadcast several events live. The next Fasch get-together is provisionally scheduled for 2011, possibly themed around Carl Fasch – I wish Barbara Reul, the new President, every success!

200 Years of Music at Versailles

20 Years of Research and Performance 20 Days of Reviewing

David Hansell

200 Ans de Musique à Versailles ***Voyage au Coeur du Baroque Français*** Various performers, 20 CDs MBF1107

The Centre de Musique Baroque de Versailles is a centre for the study and performance of 17th and 18th century French music, founded at the instigation of the French Ministry of Culture in 1987. It maintains an extensive programme of research, publication and performance, an annual focus being the *Grandes Journées*, a festival that usually focuses on the work of one composer. Major editing projects include critical edtitions of the works of Charpentier, Du Mont (Dumont), Brossard, Moulinié and Desmarest. Their website is in French but the printed catalogue gives the crucial information in English as well. Whenever I have wanted their material it has always arrived quickly and has been very user friendly. The Centre's activities also include an adult and a children's choir (*Les Chantres* and *Les Pages* respectively, directed by Olivier Schneebeli). Since 1996 the organisation has been housed, aptly enough, in the Hôtel des Menus-Plaisirs at the Palace of Versailles.

This bumper issue was released to great acclaim in France last year to mark the Centre's 20th anniversary. The 20 discs are all live recordings of concerts which have taken place at Versailles, mostly during the anniversary season. Some include music from more than one occasion, there is occasional audience noise (including applause) and audible page turning; but none of this is genuinely disturbing (though see CDs 17 and 18, below). A 21st disc includes all the documentation in PDF format – a substantial booklet about the palace and its musical life and then separate pamphlets for each disc. All of this is in French only and A5 size. Similarly, non-French texts of vocal music are translated only into French. The dedicated website ***www.coffretbaroque.com*** does rather give the impression (by being available in English and giving chapter headings of the main book in English) that everything will be at least bi-lingual but this is not the case, as far as I can discover. What is available as a free download in English is a booklet of composer biographies.

Star names abound amongst the performers, all of whom appear 'with the friendly co-operation' of their record companies. Individual discs are in slim cardboard cases and the whole collection is in a robust (except for the hinge) cardboard box. It is priced at around £50.

Louis XIII

CD1

Boesset ***Airs de cour*** **Ballard & Anon** ***Lute solos*** Monique Zanetti *S*, Claire Antonini *lute* 34' 41"

Antoine Boesset was the French Dowland, for want of a better comparison. There is some really lovely music on this disc, though I found the singer's unvarying vibrato rather wearing after a while and preferred to concentrate on the fine lute playing.

CD2

Boesset, Moulinié etc. ***Airs de cour;*** **Chambonnières** ***Pièces de clavecin*** Il Seminario Musicale, Gérard Lesne 53' 51"

More fine pieces here. Some of the song performances suffer from too fussy an approach, with changes of scoring between stanzas. Again the instrumental pieces offer the greatest pleasures.

Louis XIV

CD3

Lully ***Isis (extracts) and Amadis (extracts)*** Les Pages et Les Chantres... de Versailles, Musica Florea, Olivier Schneebeli 73' 26"

Veronique Gens is the star soloist in these sequences and very good she is too. The Versailles choirs sing well in support and blend convincingly with the orchestra.

CD4

Destouches, Colasse, Lully, Marais, Charpentier ***Operatic extracts*** Le Concert Spirituel, Hervé Niquet 49' 12"

The Marais extract is the amazing *Chaconne* from *Sémélé*. The vocal highlight is Stéphanie d'Oustrac in her signature role of *Médée*.

CD5

Couperin ***Concerts royaux 1 & 2*** Les Folies Francaises; **Lalande, Lully (fils)** ***Symphonies pour les soupers du Roi*** Musica Florea, Marek Strynd 60'16"

I found the Couperin rather lack-lustre and The Folies were over-inclined to tamper with the scoring, as so many performers of these splendid pieces are. The *symphonies*, though, are tremendous fun. Both music and playing are lively and unpretentious.

CD6

Couperin ***Troisieme Leçon de Ténèbres*** Les Arts Florissants, William Christie; **Charpentier** ***Litanies de la Vierge (H83), Miserere (H193)*** Ensemble Jacques Moderne, Joël Suhubiette 53' 10"

Mesdemoiselles Petibon and Daneman give a suitably mannered performance of the Couperin. The harpsichord is a little too far back for the rich harmonies to make their fullest effect but the singing is excellent. The Charpentier performances are absolutely thrilling.

CD7
Dumont *Exultat Animus, Magnificat* Ricercar Consort, Philippe Pierlot; **Lully** *Miserere* Les Pages et les Chantres de Versailles, Musica Florea, Olivier Schneebeli; **Desmarest** *De profundis* Le Concert Spirituel, Hervé Niquet 65'25"

More wonders from the Chapel Royal of Louis XIV. The high quality of the music and the opportunity to perform it *in situ* brings out the best in all the performers.

CD8
Charpentier *Messe des morts (H10)* Ricercar Consort, Philippe Pierlot; **De Brossard** *In convertendo* Ensemble Baroque de Limoges, Christoph Coin; **Desmarest** *Usque-quo Domine* Les Arts Florissants/William Christie 73'02"

As I listen I am being reminded with increasing forcefulness why I love this music. We should be grateful that Louis preferred Low Mass with a musical accompaniment of *Grands Motets*. Charpentier's relatively prolific output of masses reflects his association with the Jesuits and the Sainte-Chapelle, rather than the court. H10 is stunning – exceptional in its thorough integration of the orchestra into the expression of the text. CDs 6, 7 and 8 alone would make this mega-box worthwhile for me – and I've still got 12 discs to go.

Louis XV
CD9
Rameau *Hippolyte et Aricie (Act II and extracts from Act IV)* Les Musiciens de Louvre, Marc Minkowski; **Rameau** *Les Talens Lyriques (Overture, one air, two Dances), Hippolyte et Aricie (Overture, two airs), Zoroaste (two airs)* Les Talens Lyriques/Christophe Rousset 65' 48"

It does feel odd to go back to the overture of *H et A*, having already heard Act II. However, both ensembles are very secure in Rameau's complex style. There is a tremendous sweep to Minkowski's performance and even Rousset's extracts make an immediate impact.

CD10
Rebel & Francoeur *Zélindor, roi des Sylphes* Ausonia, Frédérick Haas and Mira Glodeanu 50' 38"

Dating from 1745, this one act *Divertissement* is one of a number of works on which these two composers collaborated. Inevitably, Love triumphs and is celebrated in the fine *chaconne*. The orchestral playing is very good, especially the solo flautist. The singers combine excellent control of ornamentation with sometimes unruly vibrato, but this disc is a musical discovery well worth making.

CD11
Colin de Blamont *Égine* Les Nouveaux Caractères, Sébastien d,'Hérin 49' 26"

Another short *divertissement*, first performed in the small theatre in Madame de Pompadour's apartments. That the composer was much influenced by Rameau can be heard in the colourful writing for bassoon and piccolo. As on CD10, the brilliance and discipline of the orchestra are not always matched by the singers, but the piece is another little gem. I enjoyed the rich-textured harpsichord continuo.

CD12
Mondonville *Dominus regnavit,* **Rameau** *In convertendo* Les Arts Florissants, William Christie 45' 19"
These two magnificent pieces receive compelling performances from Christie and his team. I actually played this three times continuously. The disc takes the whole project on to a new plane of excellence.

CD13
Campra *Confitebor tibi Domine,* **Mondonville** *Nisi Dominus* Le Parnasse Français, Louis Castelain; **Balbastre, Corette, Daquin** *Organ music* Olivier Latry 55' 00"

More very good sacred music in fine performances, even if they don't quite hit the heights of CD12. Olivier Latry is something of a god in the French musical firmament and he does play these rather decadent pieces with impeccable taste. (See also CD20.)

CD14
Lalande *Les Folies de Cardenio (extracts)* Ensemble Baroque de Limoges, Christophe Coin; **Mondonville** *Sonates en symphonies Op3.4 & Op3.6* Les Musiciens du Louve/Marc Minkowski 60' 28"

Les Folies... was an elaborate ballet performed around Christmas 1720. The young king was a member of the cast. For me, this performance of Lalande's lively score is spoiled by an excess of added percussion which was probably quite fun in concert but becomes tedious upon repetition. Mondonville's *Sonates* however are very rewarding. Were they by an Italian composer they would be called *concerti grossi*. Their general musical style is a vibrant mixture of Vivaldi and early-ish Haydn.

Louis XVI
CD15
Sacchini *Oedipe à Colonne (extracts),* **Piccini** *Didon (extracts), Didone abbandonata (extract)* Cappella della Pietà de'Turchini, Antonio Florio 50' 53"
However unlikely it may seem, Sacchini and Piccini were the darlings of the *Concert Spirituel* in the 1770s. These extracts are from their most successful extended French works and are in fact, mainly orchestral and very well crafted. Piccini's *Didon* overture is a three movement *sinfonia*.

CD16
Sacchini, Kreutzer, Monsigny, Lesueur, Gossec, Philidor *Operatic extracts* Les Agréments, Guy van Waas; **Grétry** *Operatic extracts* Les Paladins, Jérôme Correas 62' 35"

THis disc has the title 'French opera at the gateway of Romanticism'. It might equally well be entitled 'The missing link' or 'How Rameau became Berlioz'. Two contrasting repertoires are represented here – the lofty

heroic opera of the *Académie Royale* and the more virtuosic style of the *Opéra-comique*. The various extracts are really well chosen – a charateristic of this entire set – though in the performances the depth and *sempre* nature of Pierre-Yves Pruvot's vibrato for Guy van Waas becomes a concern. For Jérôme Correas, Isabelle Poulenard is more selective in this regard and thus more expressive.

CD17
Gossec *Symphonie concertante (extract)*, **Leduc** *Symphony in E flat*, **Rigel** *Symphony in D minor* Le Cercle de l'Harmonie, Jérémie Rhorer 30' 32"

This is very odd. The first track is only 1:25 long and has an untidy end in the dominant. Then there is applause. Has someone 'cut the tape' in the wrong place? This is the least satisfactorily engineered disc in the set, as elsewhere there are odd clicks which do not sound to me like woodwind keys or baton on music stand. The symphonies, though, are lively and very capable stuff in the *lingua franca* of the mature classical era. Like all the other orchestras *Le Cercle de l'Harmonie* are excellent.

CD18
Balbastre *Prelude in C*, **Jadin** *Sonata Op5.2*, **Mozart** *Sonata K310 & Variations K264* Andreas Staier *fp* 47' 37"

Staier plays on a fine instrument with a bright treble and an amiable buzz in the bass. He is disinclined to treat it gently, or to put that another way, is willing to push it to its expressive extremes in both *forte* and *piano*. His playing is wonderful – but I'd like to shoot the audience. Their contribution is only just acceptable and I wonder if it precluded the issue of rather more of this recital.

CD19
Devienne *Flute 4tet Op66.1*, **Vachon** *String 4tet Op5.2*, **Cambini** *String 4tet Op18.2*, **Boccherini** *Flute 5tet Op21.6* Quatuor Cambini, Alexis Kossenko (flute) 47' 45"

This is perhaps the slightest music in the collection and the heavy articulation in the works with flute do not help their cause. On the other hand, Cambini's quartet (he composed almost 150) is a work of substance given a commited performance.

CD20
Gossec *Terribilis est*, **Giroust** *Benedic Anima mea* Choeur de Chambre de Namur, Les Agrémens, Jean-Claude Malgoire; **Rigel** *La Sortie d'Égypte* Les Chantres de Versailles, Orchestre des Folies Français, Olivier Schneebeli; **Sëjean, Lasceux & Balbastre** *Organ music* Olivier Latry 76' 55"

Gossec lived long enough (95 years) to have known Rameau, Mozart and Berlioz. His musical language is closest to the second of these. In the performances of both this and the Giroust I have what have become the routine reservations about the mis-match of solo vocal and orchestral timbres but am glad to have the opportunity to get to know the music. This anthology ends with further extracts from Olivier Latry's 2007 recital. (See also CD13.) He gives us a colourful trip around the Versailles chapel organ, ending (a stroke of genius from someone) with Balbastre's *Marche des Marseillois...*, which brings the house and, indeed, the House, down.

Listening to a large collection like this in a concentrated period of time is bound to throw up some general observations. My first is that the CMBV does a marvellous job helped, stimulated and given a focus by the palace in which it is based. Secondly, Mondonville is a fine composer. Fourthly, HIP orchestral playing in France is in great shape. Fifthly, unless you already have most of this music on your shelves this issue is excellent value. Finally, the York conference on singing can't come soon enough. Time after time *EMR* reviewers comment on the unhappy effect of combining a modern operatic voice with a period instrument orchestra. This dilemma has to be resolved.

The day after I sent CB the above review the latest catalogue update of editions arrived from Versaililes. It lists motets by Campra, Charpentier and Du Mont as well as orchestral music by Dieupart. Less familiar names are Foncès, Michel, Montéclair, Royer and Seurat. Also highlighted is the relatively new online shop http://editions.cmbv.fr. UK readers who prefer a personal approach might like to know that the CMBV publications can be ordered from Jacks, Pipes and Hammers (+44 (0)1422 882 751) or King's Music.

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L'ARLÉSIENNE

Clifford Bartlett

Bizet *Carmen: Prélude et entractes, L'Arlésienne: Musique de scène et suites d'orchestre* Les Musiciens du Louvre, Grenoble, Marc Minkowski 59' Naïve V5130

It was nearly twenty years ago when the conductor of a small orchestra which Collins Classics had set up as a sort of house band phoned me to order the parts of Bizet's *L'Arlésienne* Suites. 'Why not do it properly?' I asked. 'What do you mean?' 'There's a lot more music than in the Suites, and it's written for a small band.' So from this conversation came a project to record the complete L'Arlésienne music, and later a semi-dramatic performance with a script that I put together for an actress and actor that told enough of the story for the music to make sense. Fortunately, the BBC lent us their set of the orchestral parts, prepared for a performance several decades earlier, in return for a rather more usable set of parts and a new score, since they only had a photocopy of Bizet's manuscript. We restored the complete score (that had been reorchestrated to match Bizet's enlarged scoring of the music included in Suite I) published in 1874, the job being very neatly done by my friend Lydia Smallwood, whose obituary we printed two years ago. We've subsequently sold perhaps twenty sets of parts, so there must have been performances around the world in addition to those directed by Christopher Hogwood, who had also prepared an edition.

I was looking forward to hearing this new recording by Marc Minkowski and Les musiciens du Louvre: they are always exciting (perhaps at times to excess), but would make a contrast to the Collins more subdued performance. But alas, I was disappointed even before hearing a note. The original scoring is so much more interesting than the orchestral version. Bizet enlarged it because at the time, the chamber orchestra did not exist: smaller orchestras were merely ones in small places or not wealthy enough to be full-size. To secure a place in the repertoire, the scoring had to be standardised. (The same applied 35 years later in England; as I wrote when reviewing the complete Vaughan Williams *Wasps*, I was not allowed to edit it as a successor to the Bizet because it would have involved restoring the original scoring of the Suite, and VW preferred the fuller version rather than the theatrical band.) But Minkowski rejects Bizet's scoring on the grounds that its only reason was the limited resources of the theatre. Really? What theatre would normally have a string strength of 4.3.1.5.2? Surely that must be choice, not a standard ensemble? (The 5th cellist is required just for one chord, which can be fudged anyway.) Gone are two essential instruments: the piano, which performs a sort of continuo function, and the harmonium (omitted from the list of the original instrumentation given in the booklet notes), which extraordinarily joins the piccolo in treble octaves when the farandole counterpoints with the sung carol (the march that is the basis for the variations that form the Overture). If we discovered a Handel score in which the autograph specified exactly how many strings were required, conductors would be vying with each other to be the first to perform the 'authentic' version rather than playing it on a standard modern-baroque band. (Or would they? Most seem uninterested in the evidence of the surviving parts of Bach's cantatas).

But Minkowski's acknowledgment that he couldn't make the original version work is an admission of failure: it *does* work. It isn't just a matter of scoring; to play the music complete would need booklet notes that gave a clear account of the plot. The summary given here doesn't enable the music to be fitted to the story and misses the folk idea that ties the plot together – that a mentally handicapped child brings good luck. At the end of the play, the child is cured and his brother commits suicide. But space was found for a vague essay on music and Provence that is mostly about Gounod and mentions Bizet only once.

So what we have here are lively performances of a *Carmen* suite and the two normal *L'Arlésienne* suites, one orchestrated by Bizet, the other by Guiraud. If that's what you want, fine. Despite the dating 1872 on the movement list, the extra items on tracks 9-16 are not in the original scoring. A wasted opportunity. A shame that Minkowski had no confidence in Bizet's instrumental imagination. I doubt if we'll ever see the play with the full music; it's not strong enough to sustain a whole evening with five acts. (Radio 4 squashed it into its 3/4 hour post-Archers afternoon slot a few years ago). But at least the music deserves to be heard in context, with the help of booklet notes if on CD or with some attempt to sketch out the story if live.

LONDON CONCERTS

Andrew Benson-Wilson

BRANDENBURGS

Richard Egarr is not the shyest and most retiring character so a foot injury was milked to the full as he hobbled in, wincing dramatically, to introduce the Academy of Ancient Music's performance of all six Brandenburg Concertos (Wigmore Hall 5 May). Played in the order 1, 6, 2, 5, 3 and 4 (and at French Baroque pitch, a tone below A440), this was a sparkling evening with some excellent playing by the Academy soloists, notably violinist Rudolfo Richter, Joseph Crouch *cello*, Rachel Brown *flute*, Robert Ehrlich and Antje Hensel *recorders*, Frank de Bruine *oboe*, Andrew Clark and David Bently *horns* Richard Egarr *harpsichord*. As director, Egarr delved into some rather unexpected musical cubby holes, usually revealing something of interest. Some of the more energetic tempi were balanced by some beautifully expressive moments, particularly in the string concerto No 3, although the frequent large rallentandos that concluded some movements were a bit of a stylistic anachronism. Egarr's big harpsichord moment in No 5 was rhapsodic and exploratory, with each section treated as a hill to be clambered up and then gleefully tumbled down. Intonation was a bit of an issue, possibly the instruments rebelling against being tuned down.

B-MINOR MASS

The Purcell Singers are a varying-sized choir of experienced, but I assume generally amateur, singers that get together around three weeks before concerts under their founder and conductor Mark Ford. Their latest outing was to St John's, Smith Square (31 May) with Bach's B minor Mass together with an orchestra that was more-or-less a re-badged La Serenissima. The 44-strong choir produced a coherent and well-balanced sound. Although the speeds could have been pushed a little more at times, and the articulation made more apparent, Mark Ford's commendably restrained conducting let the music unfold as it wanted to, without forcing it in any particular direction. The soloists (Julia Doyle, Julia Gooding, Robin Blaze, Mark Wilde and Colin Baldy) were outstanding – I particularly liked their very apparent involvement in the music, with most of them quietly joining in the choir pieces, and one seeming to sing along with most of the instrumental parts as well. Particularly effective amongst the players were Gareth Deats *cello*, Stephen Preston *flute*, Gail Hennessy *oboe,* the three trumpeters Neil Brough, Matthew Wells and Paul Sharpe, and organist Robert Howarth, playing the rarely heard resident St John's Smith Square chamber organ (known in the trade as the 'raspberry ripple') that not only looks like an organ, with visible pipes above the head of the players, but also sounds like one – a welcome change from the little box organs that are often barely audible.

FENTON HOUSE EARLY KEYBOARD ENSEMBLE COMPETITION

This is a new competition, set up by the Benton Fletcher Collection at the National Trusts' Fenton House, Hampstead, in conjunction with Finchcocks and the Cobbe Collection at Hatchlands. It is planned to run it in alternate years with the Fenton House Broadwood Keyboard Competition. After an earlier round featuring 12 competitors, five were chosen for the Final on 29 May. There was a limit to the group size (perhaps bearing in mind the very limited performing space at Fenton House) which some normally larger groups managed to circumvent.

Amaranthos (in a three player variant to their normal six-strong line-up) opened the evening with works by Pepusch, a chamber version of the Ouverture to *The Beggar's Opera* and the 1708 Sonata in B-flat, the latter managing to look both backward to the *stylus phantasticus* in the opening Adagio and forward to the Rococo in the following Gavotta. Sara Deborah Struntz played an impressively expressive leading role on violin, with excellent support from Elecktra Miliadou *cello* and Erik Dippenaar playing Fenton House's imposing 1770 Broadwood harpsichord.

Corona Baroque fielded soprano Emily Atkinson alongside Eva P. Caballero *flute*, Poppy Walshaw *cello* and Masumi Yamamoto *harpsichord* with the cantata *Ariane et Bachus* by Montéclair.

Trio Tambourin lived up to their name with vigorous performances of two *Tambourins* by Rameau alongside the contrasting *La Lanoplinière* and *La Timide* from the *Troisième Concert* in A. The three players were Anne Marie Christensen *violin*, Jennifer Barron *gamba* and Asako Ogawa *harpsichord*, all students at Trinity College of Music who got together just a few months before the competition.

The Little Baroque Company met at the Royal Academy of Music in 2007. They kept up the French theme with some very passionate playing from violinist Helen Kruger of the Sonata VI in C minor for violin and continuo from the *Troiseième Livre* of Leclair, complete with lots of double stopping. Cellist Kinga Gáborjáni came up with a very industrious opening to the final Allegro. Laura Tivendale provided some attractive harpsichord continuo, completing the three-strong line-up drawn from their normal five or more members.

Musici Infatigabiles included the remaining members of Amaranthos who, like The Little Baroque Company, were unable to enter the competition in the full line-up: Marta Goncalves *flute* and Claire Bracher *gamba*, together with Erik Dippenaar *harpsichord*, who played in both incarnations. They played the same Rameau pieces as Trio Tambourin, albeit with different scoring, including some gorgeous flute and piccolo playing by Marta Goncalves. Amaranthos/Musici Infatigabiles were the most experi-

enced of the groups in the final, and this showed through in their respective performances, and in the end, it was their Musici Infatigabiles badge which won the first prize (a monetary prize, and concerts at Fenton House, Finchocks and Hatchlands). The audience prize went to The Little Baroque Company. The three judges were chaired by Steven Devine, the winner of the first (1993) Broadwood Harpsichord Competition at Fenton House, together with Linda Nicholson and David Owen Norris.

A SMALL REVOLUTION AT THE CASTLE

The Tilford Bach Society is renowned for encouraging younger performers, although on this occasion it was the experienced string quartet, The Revolutionary Drawing Room (Adrian Butterfield, Jean Paterson, Rachel Stott and Ruth Alford) who entertained society members and others in the Great Hall of the Bishop's Palace at Farnham Castle – a particularly grand drawing room (30 May). Their programme contrasted Haydn and Mendelssohn (a nice prelude to next year's anniversary of the death of the former and the birth of the latter in 1809) starting with Haydn's Quartet in C (Op. 74/1). Rather neatly, the first half opened as it finished, with prominent V-I chords. Haydn's tiny moments of despondency in the first movement were quickly bounced off before the forceful unison passages of the *Andantino grazioso* and the rather emotional *Menuet Allegro*. His Quartet in F minor (Op. 20/5) reflected a more intimate world with its delightful little flights of fancy in the gently rocking *Adagio* before the final *Fuga a 2 soggetti* which seemed to be a cross between 'And with His stripes' and a runaway horse. Mendelssohn was found in uncharacteristically melancholy mood in his Quartet in E flat (Op 12), perhaps reflecting a period of teenage angst for the 19 year old composer. The yearning opening *Adagio* was relieved by a jovial song without words second movement before the yearning intensified into real passion in the *Andante espressivo* and the Finale, with its massive unison passages and false ending - the Mendelssonian sun did try to shine through before it finally set. These were excellent performances of a repertoire that does not always get the period instruments and style that it deserves.

ORLANDO GOES TO BATTLE

The Orlando Chamber Choir is a 22-strong amateur chamber choir that generally specialises in Renaissance and Baroque music under their current conductor, the enthusiastic James Weeks. Their programme of French and Spanish music about battle and victory (St Mary le Bow, 6 June) got off to an obvious start with Janequin's *La Guerre*, a piece that doesn't really allow for a great deal of subtlety. However, subtlety was something that I did miss in some of the other pieces, not least in volume. The vast acoustic was far too tempting for the singers who gave their all more-or-less *con belto* throughout. The two pieces by the little known Montserrat composer, Joan Cererols, were works that really did cry out for something a little less *forte*. The choir couldn't stretch to performing his singularly appropriate *Missa de Batalla*, but his *Suspended, cielos* and *¡Ay! Que me muero* showed him to be a composer of some merit.[1] Although there were one or two overly prominent sopranos and rather too much vibrato for my taste, the singers otherwise produced a pretty good consort sound. And there are many professional sopranos who haven't managed to twig that the higher up they go, the louder they get. The choral pieces were contrasted with two organ pieces by Sebastian Aguilera de Heredia played with considerable bravery by Gavin Roberts on one of the most inappropriate organs you can imagine – Spanish organs are a world unto themselves and the audience would have been astonished if they had been able to hear some authentic Spanish reeds. Cabezón's *Diferencias sobre el canto del Cavallero* were played on a smaller Victorian chamber organ, showing just how much pieces like this need the right temperament.

IN MEMORIA – IN A WATERWORKS

It is not often that early music concerts get a plug in the Architects Journal, but The Clerks Group managed it with performances of their new programme 'In Memoria' which took place in a some extraordinary buildings from times past – a semi-derelict Edwardian swimming baths, a Victorian sewage pumping station and (on 7 June) in the pit between the Kempton Great Engines, two 82' high, 800 ton inverted vertical triple expansion engines dating from 1928 and housed in the huge building attached to the waterworks that drivers heading towards the M3 on the A 316 pass on their way out of London. It is also not often that I will get the chance to mention 'oil smells' and 'men in white coats' in a review (or indeed in one sentence), but both were evident in this palace of industrial might. The programme was billed as 'An unforgettable soundscape of words and music on the themes of death and remembrance, featuring ancient chant from the Mass of the Dead, motets by Josquin Desprez, Guillaume Dufay and Jean Ockeghem and a new work by composer and sound artist Antony Pitts'. And it did what it said on the billing, not least the 'unforgettable' bit. Watched over by the volunteers (in white coats) who power up the engines every now and then, the six singers interspersed their contributions with a recorded compilation of words, music and what sounded like electronic wizardry composed by Antony Pitts who, with The Clerks' director, Edward Wickham, was responsible for devising this imaginative programme (and, presumably, for helping to devise the bevy of little Pitts and Wickhams that featured on the soundtrack). The key 'live' vocal works were laments on the death of Binchois, Ockeghem and Obrecht by Ockeghem and Josquin (*Mort tu as navré, Nymphes des bois* and *Absolve quaesumus*), Dufay's *Ave regina coelorum* (which he intended to be sung at his own death) and Josquin's *Pater noster/Ave Maria* that he asked to be sung every year in front of his house. Released from his recorded soundtrack, Antony Pitts's own *Thou wast present as on this day* also featured, along with a bird high in the rafters that chose this contemporary work to sing along to – not an early music lover, it would seem. Apart from its resident bird, the venue contributed the distant sound of

1 The Mass and the two villancicos are available from King's Music.

running water, an occasional car horn from the proto-M3 (reminding us that death may not be that far off) and a wonderful burst of sunlight through the clouds that illuminated the entire space during the chanting of the concluding Gradual: *Requiem aeternam.* At a time when classical music is looking for ways to expand its horizons, projects like this take on a major significance. If a DVD is not already planned, then it should be.

CORONATION IN GLYNDEBOURNE..

Glyndebourne is one of those places where stultifying manners are thrown into sharp relief, so a disturbance in the front row of the stalls in the last thing one would expect at the start of an opera. But disturbance there was at the beginning of Glyndebourne's new production of Monteverdi's *L'incoronazione di Poppea* when a woman pushed her way towards the middle of the front row where she loudly remonstrated with somebody (who turns out to be a Nun) who appeared to be sitting in her seat. The curtain then collapses to the floor in a heap, to reveal a parallel audience sitting on the stage, weighty Glyndebourne programme books in laps, facing us. Amore bounces on to the stage, and we realise that the front-row ructions have been caused by Fortune and Virtue, the prologue's protagonists. Amore, in a wonderful piece of spirited acting (and singing) by the delightfully coquettish Amy Freston, is the pivot for this show, remaining on stage more-or-less throughout the proceedings. The other strong feature of the staging is fabric. Ream and reams of it, all the same deep red velvet colour, enveloping the stage vertically and horizontally and engulfing the voices of most of the singers, and sometimes the singers and the vast array of Glyndebourne hangers-on themselves. Apart from the foreseeable effect on acoustics, I found this a striking and not unsuccessful (vaguely 1950s) staging, as it focussed the mind on the individual characters, albeit, generally making them look rather small.

The opening cliché-ridden silliness reappeared at the interval, when Amore sat front stage laying out her picnic, and the end, but was otherwise mercifully relatively absent from the rest of the direction (by Robert Carson), although other silliness took its place, not least the fact that the bath that in most performances is wheeled on for Seneca to die in did no such thing – Seneca himself just wandered off-stage rather woefully, presumably to slit his wrists somewhere in the wings, while the bath remained a focal point of the action, together with a bed – along with a few chairs, the only bits of stage furniture that there were. The post-Seneca scene between Nero and Lucan was, as usual, treated as a homoerotic romp, although the fact that Nero was a trouser role rather restricted the ensuing nakedness. But is was one of the key moments in the recognition of just how unpleasant Alice Coote's outstandingly sung Nero was – it is Lucan, rather than Seneca, that ends up being the one to die in the bath, thrust under the waves by the appalling Nero. As for Poppea, well all I need to say is – Danielle de Niese! She seems to be making Glydnebourne rather more than just her singing home, having come, seen and conquered just about everything going, from Christies to critics. Fortunately I was sitting far enough back from the stage not to be overcome with the sort of lustful dribbling that some critics have succumbed, but it has to be said that she has an extraordinary stage presence, even if there are some doubts in my mind about the suitability of her voice for music of this period. Her Poppea was as flitteringly erotic, seductive and ambitious as Coote's Nero was horribly psychopathic – it seemed inevitable that their concluding duet (with Poppea wrapped in the regal red curtains) would be sung as they physically drifted apart. She had got what she wanted – and it wasn't Nero.

Ottone (Christophe Dumaux) and Drusilla (Marie Arnet) made a rather more pleasant couple, as did Damigella and the pageboy Valletto (Claire Ormshaw and Lucia Cirillo) – but their delightful love duet was omited – a real love duet, this time, but more importantly one of the key musical precursers of the finale (whoever wrote it). The two drag roles (Wolfgang Ablinger-Sperrhacke as Arnalta and Dominique Visse as Nutrice, Ottavia's nurse) were the predictable bit of fun. Tamara Mumford was a youthful but expressive Ottavia and Marie Arnet was a bonny Drusilla. Emmanuelle Haïm directed the excellent Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment (fielding one of their two new leaders, Kati Debretzeni) with perceptive insight both in her musical direction and the orchestration (using two violins, viola, cello, violone, viola da gamba, lirone, harp, three theorbos/guitars, three recorders, dulcian, two cornets, percussion, harpsichords and organ), giving the work rather more space than usual. Despite reservations, this was a welcome new interpretation of this extraordinary opera – it deserves being recorded for release on DVD. It will be interesting to see how it goes down at the Proms. [More on the opera, with references to the performance, in Part 2 of this issue.]

... AND IN GARSINGtTON

Not long after Poppea got her coronation at Glyndebourne, Dario eventually manages to get his in the delightful surroundings of Garsington Opera (just south east of Oxford, but having to find another location after 2010) in Vivaldi's *L'incoronazione di Dario.* This is apparently the first time Garsington has ventured into baroque opera, and they have done it with considerable aplomb and success with the first UK performance of one of Vivaldi's huge collection of little-known operas. Musically, it is clear from the start that Vivaldi isn't Handel – or Monteverdi, for that matter. He lived in an entirely different musical environment and his audiences were worlds away from many other opera composers. In many ways, this is little more than a comedy romp to entertain the Venetian's as 1717 carnival draws to a close – there are few much deep psychological insights or grand musical occasions that leap out and grab you. But the plot, daft as it is, is a great deal more understandable than most opera plots, and the music bubbles along pleasantly enough. Works like this have the potential to engage non-specialist opera audiences far more than many a weightier opera. As to the plot; well the title is a bit of a giveaway. At the start, Dario is just one of three suitors

for the hand (and attached imperial title) of Statira, the witless eldest daughter and the heir to the throne of Cyrus, the first Emperor of Persia, whose ghost makes a brief early appearance encouraging Statira and her horrid little sister, Argene, to stop grieving for him. The stupendously naïve Statira somehow manages to get engaged to all three of them at the same time, to the irritation of horrid little sister who also fancies Dario. The rest of the action is essentially the resolution of these issues, but with a great deal of angst for Dario who at one stage storms off round the Garsington gardens slashing the heads off flowers. There are some attractive plot byways to wander down – one being the sisters' tutor Niceno who, like everybody else, takes a fancy to Statira; there is a lovely scene of a singing lesson where the lecherous Niceno's ever-increasing lust is portrayed by the on-stage gamba player (Richard Campbell) whose increasingly elaborate musical embellishments mirror the state of Niceno's trouser department – or, more likely, his mind.

The strong cast was led by Paul Nilon as Dario, whose acting and singing ability pulled a great deal more emotion out of the text than might have been there. Equal billing goes to the compellingly engaging Croatian mezzo, Renata Pokupič, as Statira. Her voice sits astride the soprano/mezzo range, and an early aria rather cruelly exposed a pronounced register break; but from then on her singing was faultless. Yet it was her extraordinary acting ability that really captured my attention. She has a wonderfully expressive stage presence and can project underlying emotion beautifully. The other suitors were Oronte (Nicholas Watts) and Arpago (Katharine Manley), the latter looking less like a soldier than anything I can think of. Laurence Cummings conducted with his usual high-energy musical sensitivity. The Garsington orchestra were essentially the modern instrument Guildhall Strings (together with some specialist period performers) who made an excellent job of adapting period style.

GARSINGTON *COSÌ*

Garsington Opera's *Così fan tutte* was a return of their 2004 production, directed by John Cox. Having been impressed with their *Dario,* I wanted to see what they would do to Mozart. And it was worth it – this was an excellent production, with an impressive young cast and more fine playing from the modern instrument orchestra, conducted this time by Steuart Bedford. Fiordiligi (the excellent Erica Eloff, winner of the 2008 Handel Singing Competition and heard to much better effect in this opera setting than in the confined acoustics of a London church) and Dorabella (the equally impressive Anna Stéphany) were cast as rather straight-laced ladies (perhaps reflecting the First World War setting), in contrast to the rather over-egged buffoonery of Ferrando (Ashley Catling) and Guglielmo (D'Arcy Bleiker) in their Albanian guise. It was the girls who produced by far the better vocal quality. Teuta Koço (who, incidentally, was born in Albania) kept her well-acted Despina on the right side of being silly, although Riccardo Novaro's well-sung Don Alfonso seemed to be based more on his casting as a hotel manager rather than da Ponte's more imposing and worldly-wise Don – he was portrayed as the same age as Ferrando and Guglielmo which didn't help. The setting was a hotel, which allowed for much wandering about by the chorus. Garsington's staging managed to contain enough of the spaces-off to make sense of all the asides and looking-on action. And, of course, there was the flower garden (a fascinating combination of Italian formality and English country garden), open to the right of the stage. Just after the two lads had set off 'to war', the hotel was turned into a field hospital and the girls become nurses – a neat conceit that encompassed the following action. Perhaps inevitably, the twist was that no sooner did the boys had come out of their Albanian disguise and been rather shakily reunited with their original partners, than they were commandeered to set off for a real war, exiting with all the male hotel staff through the country house gardens to a war that caused the destruction of so many English country houses.

Country house opera is a curious affair – it can be as entertaining for the audience watching possibilities as for the actual opera. Despite the veneer of apparently exquisite behaviour, I witnessed some real humdingers, not least blatant queue-jumping, the unseemly gangway scramble for the exits and, in *Dario*, the ill-manners of a disgraced former Government Minister who, as soon as the applause started, very visibly bumbled his way down towards the stage-side exits to get out to his picnic, and later his car, before anybody else. Football ground behaviour – and he didn't even clap on the way![2] Nonetheless, I was impressed that both these productions avoided pandering to the arguably less than enlightened tastes of the country house set – Glyndebourne this isn't. But perhaps it was the Garsington ghosts, including a previous owner, Lady Ottoline Morrell, and her Bloomsbury chums, Bertrand Russell, Aldous Huxley, Virginia Woolf, Lytton Strachey and D.H. Lawrence, that set the tone.

ORLANDO at the WIGMORE

One of the highlights of 2006 was the production of Handel's *Orlando* by the new Independent Opera at Sadler's Wells in the Lilian Baylis Theatre at Sadler's Wells. This enterprising showcase for young opera singers is going from strength to strength, having recently set up an Artist Support scheme, a wide-ranging programme of scholarships and fellowships to assist singers in that critical moment just before their careers take off. As one of the recipients put it – bookings for next year don't pay the bills this year. They brought the 2006 *Orlando* to the Wigmore Hall (one of the partners in the Artist Support scheme) in a concert performance (21 June). Shorn of the acting and staging (both of which were extremely impressive in the staged version), the focus was the music itself, explored with compelling insight by conductor Gary Cooper and the original cast of William Towers (Orlando), Rebecca Ryan (Angelica), Christopher Ainslie (Medoro) and Nicholas Warden (Zoroastro) together with a new Dorinda (Marlene

2. They have a better class of politicians at Buxton: Roy Hattersley and Shirley Williams behaved perfectly.[CB]

Grimson). A number of these singers are beneficiaries of the new Artist Support scheme. Independent Opera also seem to have tapped into new audience members – the packed Wigmore Hall including many that were refreshingly non-stereotypical of the London (or country house) opera scene.

RAM *LA CALISTO*

The Royal Academy Opera's production of Cavalli's ill-fated *La Calisto* (Royal Academy of Music, 1 May) was one of the best student productions I have seen, not least for its imaginative staging and direction by John Ramster (making much of the bawdy nature of this Arcadian romp, including some eye-wateringly ithyphallic satyrs). This was the first performance of a new edition by Peter Foster following detective work on the original performance by Beth and Jonathan Glixon. The single surviving score seems to have been the continuo part for the original production, lacking the detail of the rest of the instrumentation. In this performance the orchestra was slightly enlarged from Cavalli's own specification to account for the different acoustics. Vocally I had my usual concerns over vocal vibrato – are students not taught how to control vibrato, or is it something that they haven't managed to do? Two completely different casts were used for the two nights. This is quite common with student productions and I am usually reluctant to pick out any individual singers from the night I happened to be there – but will mention Jessica Dean, Emma Carrington and Adriana Festeu for their impressive performances as Calisto, Diana and Endimione.

LUFTHANSA FESTIVAL – 15-21 MAY

This year's Lufthansa Festival flew under the banner of 'The Triumph of Peace', the first season under the new Artistic Director, Lindsay Kemp. I couldn't get to the first two big-band concerts (The English Concert and Carolyn Sampson under Laurence Cummings and Collegium Vocale Gent under Philippe Herreweghe) so, for me, the festival started with the Saturday afternoon concert (St John's, Smith Square, 17 May), 'Knock'd on the Head' (music from the time of the English Civil War) with the viol consort, Concordia and soprano Elin Manahan Thomas. Concordia was on excellent form with their performances of Jenkins *Newark Siege* and two six-part Lawes consort setts – the musical heart of the concert. The vocal works were by William Lawes, Purcell and, a few generations earlier, Orlando Gibbons. I first reviewed Elin Manahan Thomas in 2001 as she was leaving Clare College Cambridge and was about to start at the Royal College of Music. I wrote 'it will be a good test of the London conservatories to see if she survives her forthcoming studies with her "early music" voice intact'. Unfortunately this doesn't seem to have happened and, as is so often the case, vibrato became a major issue for me, as it clouded the clarity of her undoubtedly fine voice more-or-less throughout and imparted an unsettlingly nervous edge to her voice. Only very occasionally, usually at the start of a long held note, did I get a glimpse of the beautiful purity that Elin's voice is capable of. That said, she has been doing pretty well for herself, not least in an important recent recording contract. And she certainly showed that she was capable of exploring the darker emotions underlying works like Purcell's *Bess of Bedlam* and Lawes' sadly prophetic *When man for sin thy judgement feels* as well as peeps into the lighter aspects of Lawes' life with *Gather ye rosebuds* and *O my Clarissa*.

The Saturday evening concert was Florence's Ensemble San Felice, under Federico Bardazzi, with Handel's 1707 Florentine opera *Rodrigo*. This could well have been one of the highlights of the Festival but, in practice, was far from it, mainly because, apart from Laura Cherici as Esilena, the vocal standard was nowhere near what London audiences (and reviewers) have come to expect. A number of voices were unsteady, intonation was a problem for most and there was a general lack of coordination between vocalists and instrumentalists. A noticeable reduction in the audience after the interval suggests that I was not alone in my views. Lovers of posh frocks may have enjoyed the sumptuous costumes reflecting the projected line-drawing images from the original production and the continuo cellist impressed me but, otherwise, this is probably a concert to draw a quiet veil over.

Things started to look up in the Monday concerts (18 May), starting with Ensemble Pierre Robert's 'Peace Sacred, Peace Profane' which featured two works written to celebrate peace treaties – Sébastien de Brossard's 1697 *Canticum eucharistum pro pace* and Jean-Baptiste Lully's 1686 *Idylle sur la Paix*. The latter was the more immediately appealing work, perhaps because of its clearer musical structure. De Brossard's work is a curious compilation of musical titbits, possibly the result of trying to cobble together no fewer than 72 biblical verses. It started with a standard French overture, which was played with commendable grace and sophistication. Lully's work was commissioned by the Marquis de Seignelay for the visit to his château of Louis XIV. Seignelay distinguished himself in the war that led to the Truce of Ratisbon by blowing Genoa to bits and had then become secretary of state for the navy. Lully came up with the sort of sycophantic tosh that was expected on occasions like this, with references to several bits of the world than the Marquis had blown up, including the 'still smoking' Tripoli. The work concluded with the little ballet, *Chaconne pour Madame la Princesse de Conti* – and I hope she appreciated it. The orchestra provided a bit of distraction, firstly by the battle for supremacy that seemed to be going on between the first violinist and the director – the former had rather oddly sat himself on a platform, thereby blocking the view and sound of some of his fellow musicians, and then attempted to conduct entries along with the director. I was also not impressed by the players' casual chatting amongst themselves during the final applause.

The late night concert (18 May) was 'Captaine Humes Poeticall Musicke' with the three viols of Paolo Pandolfo's Labyrinto and the excellent soprano Céline Scheen. This delightful concert was just what late night concerts should be, aided by the evident enjoyment of the performers. The French-speaking Belgian Céline Scheen produced a

lovely focussed tone and some beguiling English pronunciations – and it was interesting to hear Dowland set against the sonorous and elegiac tone of the viols rather than the gentle pluck of a lute. This certainly was one of the highlights of the Festival.

My reviewing of the Festival ended on 19 May with two other highlights, starting with soprano Maria Cristina Kiehr and her Concerto Soave and their programme *'Et in terra pax'* – a concept that Christians throughout the ages seem to have had trouble in adopting. As Tim Carter pointed out in his programme note 'Peace was in short supply in the 17th century'. The schism between Catholics and Protestants resulted in the death of around 20% of the population of central Europe during the Thirty Years War alone. As well as butchering their fellow Christians, both sides also fought back musically, and this programme looked at the Catholic contribution from the various states within the Italian peninsula. A couple of the works reflected the joyful glee with which the Bible greets the death of those it doesn't like, in this case in the Parting of the Red Sea and in Judith's delivery of Bethulia from siege – Mazzocchi's *Passagio del Mar Rosso* and *Giuditta libera la Bettulia dell'assedio,* the former with 'the People were heard to laugh at that bloodied gulf'; the latter ending with the touching words 'she bears the trophy,... the dreadful head of the murdered leader, and turns the tears of the suffering elders to laughter'. A beautifully sung and excellently played concert. And, as if to redress the balance of the programme, Maria Cristina Kiehr's encore was a sung version of a Bach organ chorale prelude.

From the opposite end of the religious divide, the late night concert (19 May) was Musica ad Rhenum with flautist Jed Wentz and some entirely secular 'Music from the Court of Frederick the Great' – a King known for his religious tolerance as well as his warmongering and musical tastes. His own flute sonata in D minor was included, ending with what sounded like a stamp of the regal foot. Frederick's favourite court musician, Quantz, was represented by a flute sonata in D from op. 1; the Trio Sonata from Bach's 'Musical Offering' was also an obvious inclusion. Telemann was a bit of an outsider, not only for not having any connection with the Berlin Court but also because Frederick was not a lover of the sort of French music that features in Telemann's Suite in E minor (*Nouveaux quatours*). This was another excellent concert, with outstanding contributions from all four players. A rival reviewing appointment with Messiaen prevented me attending the last concert of the Festival, now firmly entrenched as a Festival tradition in Westminster Abbey.

SPITALFIELDS FESTIVAL – 2-20 JUNE

The Spitalfields Festival continues its wide-ranging musical and educational focus with music ranging from the 14th century to many first performances of works probably completed the day before their first hearing. They have been increasing the number of short, one-hour concerts, something that seems to appeal to audiences. They started with a show that was repeated twice on the same evening, as the Gabrieli Consort stepped away from their usual repertoire to give us a fully staged version of Pergolesi little intermezzo, *La Serva Padrona* in the evocative surroundings of Wiltons Music Hall (3 June). Vivien Heilbron's production set the action in the world of PG Wodehouse, complete with potted plants and a hat stand. In fact, the last time I saw this work, it was the hat stand that, bizarrely, took the place of the silent third member of the cast, Vespone, the manservant to the Berty Woosterish Uberto whose maid, Serpina, inveigles him into marriage ('Oh how I love your manly ire – it almost sets my heart on fire'). So far, so *commedia dell'arte.* The Vespone in this performance was noticeably more effective than a hat stand, with some clever and genuinely funny silent acting from Aitor Basauri Barruetabeña. The two vocal roles were taken by Amy Freston (Amore in Glyndebourne's *Poppea*) and Andrew Foster-Williams, both wonderful singers with clear diction and fine acting skills. Although Paul McCreesh was listed as the music director, he kept out of the way of the musicians on the night, leaving the talented little band to get on with it, presumably under the direction of the Gabrieli's excellent leader, Catherine Martin.

Like the Gabrieli Consort, Mediva have been regular performers at the Spitalfield Festival. They returned (Wiltons Music Hall 5 June) with 'La Dolce Vita', a programme of love songs and dances from 14th century Italy using shawms, recorders, fiddle, gittern, slide trumpet, lute and organetto. The latter (a proper hand-pumped 'portative' organ) was a very welcome addition to the usual mediaeval instrumental line up – an instrument so often depicted in iconography but so rarely seen in performance. One big disappointment (for me, at least) was that a concert that featured this lovely little organ, as well as the music of Landini (who was best known as a player of that same instrument), didn't include any of his pieces played on the organetto! As well as Landini, music by Padova, Ciconia and Anon also featured. The instruments were divided into their *bassa* and *alta cappella* incarnations, the latter sensibly played from further back on the stage. This was a well-presented programme with some very effective playing and singing.

The Spitalfields Festival has traditionally combined early and contemporary music. Although the early music element seems to be reducing, some concerts include both in the same programme. One of these was given by the impressive choir Exaudi, directed by James Weeks (Shoreditch Parish Church, 13 June). Set against works by Evan Johnson and Brian Ferneyhough were John Sheppard's *Libera nos I&II* and Marian antiphons by John Taverner. Exaudi produced an exceptional clarity of tone and timbre, notably the three sopranos. A similar combination of old and new came from The Clerks, directed by Edward Wickham (Shoreditch Parish Church, 14 June), and the first performance of a commissioned work, '20 Ways to Improve your Life' by Christopher Fox which they set against Orlando Gibbons similarly inspired 'Cryes of London' and works by Cornish, Ockeghem, Taverner and Busnois. This was a neatly presented concert spanning the centuries, with the Fox work broken into snippets and interspersed with the earlier works.

Appearances at the Festival's former home at Christ Church Spitalfields seem to be becoming less frequent – I understand this is because of the high charges after the church's restoration, which is singularly inappropriate considering the fame that the Festival brought to it while it was in its derelict state. One concert that was particularly appropriate for the lively acoustics of Christ Church was given on 17 June by Her Majestys Sagbutts & Cornetts, directed by Jeremy West, together with soprano Faye Newton, tenor Nicholas Mulroy and baritone Eamonn Dougan – all three with voices than blend beautifully with instruments. The music was by Andrea and Giovanni Gabrieli and the lesser-known but fine composer, Giovanni Battista Grillo, successor to Giovanni Gabrieli as organist at the Scuola Grande di San Rocco and later organist at St Mark's under Monteverdi. The former was represented by an organ Ricercar, beautifully played by Gary Cooper, and *O sacrum convivium*, equally beautifully sung by Faye Newton (with some outstanding ornaments integrated into the musical line), accompanied by five sagbutts. Grillo's contribution included two delightfully expressive pieces for two voices and harpsichord (*Quam pulchri sunt* and *Dic mihi, o bone Jesu*) together with larger scale works that link the musical world of Gabrieli and Monteverdi. Grillo is a composer worth seeking out – and the Her Majestys Sagbutts & Cornetts recent CD of his works is a good way of doing just that.

CHELSEA FESTIVAL

Music is just one part of the eclectic Chelsea Festival, and the musical span is wide. For example, this year's Festival started with a reconstruction, not of Venetian Festal music but of Pink Floyd's 1970 album, 'Atom Heart Mother'. Amongst the other musical highlights were I Fagiolini's exploration of Spanish music under the typically catchy title of 'Dance, Death... and Salad – music to eat, dance and die to'. Although dancing, eating and (fortunately) dying were noticeably absent from their concert at St Luke's, Sydney St (19 June), the music provided a range of human experiences, starting with the attempted seduction of three Moorish girls (Fernandes *Tres morillas*), curiously interpreted by having three men sing the girls' parts with a soprano singing taking the man's role. The anonymous *La vieda* (The widow – to music) was one of the ensaladas in the programme, the implied 'mixtures' (the real meaning of 'ensalada', as opposed to 'salad') including a complex mixture of time signatures. The inclusion of the words *Guárdame las vacas* led to a loverly vihuela solo on the same musical theme (based on the Romanesca) played by Eligio Quinteiro. Juan del Encina's *Levanta Pascual* told of a bored shepherd being encouraged to go to watch the battle with the Moors at Granada, and featured some nicely subtle characterisations by tenor Nicholas Mulroy, who also produced one of the high points of the evening with Encica's *Qu'es de ti, desconsolado?* telling of the capture of Granada by Ferdinand and Isabella. The same story, as seen by the lamenting and defeated Moorish King of Granada, was told in Encina's *Una sañosa perfi*, although I am not sure why his tale, all in the first-person, was divided amongst four voices. Far from subtle characterisation featured in the final work, Mateo da Flecho's *El Fuego*, choreographed by Peter Wilson and presented with I Fagiolini's characteristically theatrical style. All good fun.

Nicola Benedetti's first venture into musical direction came with a very curious concert of Bach and Handel at the Cadogan Hall (20 June). By far the most impressive pieces were Benedetti's own solo performances of extracts from Bach Partita No 2, starting with the Saraband and the Gigue at the opening of the concert and the Chaconne at the beginning of the second half. Her performance as soloist in Bach's Violin Concerto win A minor was similarly impressive. Nicola Benedetti is not a specialist period performer and played with a modern instrument, but her musical insight was impeccable. The big problem for her on this occasion was the company that she kept – the Armonico Consort. Their playing was barely up to the standards of amateur modern instrument orchestras 40 years ago with, apart from anything else, strong vibrato, particularly from the dominant principal cellist. Phrasing, articulation – all were at fault. The standard of the orchestra was nothing to do with her attempts at leading, which were cruelly undermined by the harpsichord player (Christopher Monks, Armonico Consort's director), who did his best to take the lead away from her. In the second half where, after Benedetti's excellent Chaconne, the choir of the Armonico Consort (who bill themselves as 'highly talented') joined the orchestra for a frankly poor performance of Handel's *Dixit Dominus*. As for Ms Benedetti, she should find somebody who knows something about period performance, have her violin restructured, find a proper professional period instrumental ensemble (or even just a good harpsichord player) and then give Bach concerts – she would be a welcome addition to the period performance world and has the talent to join some of her fellow classical violinists who have successfully made the leap. I would happily spend an evening listening to her playing Bach, in better company.

The last concert of the Festival was a disappointment. It is rare that I find much to criticise in the usually excellent Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, but this performance by their Cornett and Sackbut Ensemble was distinctly under par, particularly so soon after hearing Her Majestys Sagbutts & Cornetts. Individually they were fine, but the whole just didn't hang together. The venue didn't help – the Royal Hospital Chapel is a long, rather narrow space that did not suit the repertoire. This event also appeared to be something of a bean-feast for Festival regulars, with an hour long interval for picnics which many people, including me, knew nothing about – there was nothing in the programme or on the tickets to warn people of this. Several thought this occasion worthy of black tie dress. In addition, the presence of a couple of the most minor incarnations of royalty possible was an unnecessary disturbance, not least at the end when they and the Festival's organisers chattered idly while blocking the exit from the church, seemingly oblivious to the rather obvious fact that nobody else could get out. The highlight of the programme of music from St Marks was the singing of soprano Julia Doyle.

SAMSON at BUXTON

Clifford Bartlett

My earliest encounters with Handel on stage were the performances of the Handel Opera Society in the late 1950s and 1960s, mostly at Sadlers Wells Theatre. These tended to alternate between operas and staged oratorios, and under the influence of Winton Dean's *Handel's Oratorios and Masque* (Oxford UP, 1959), there was a feeling that the oratorios, though written for concert performance, were more inherently dramatic than the operas, which were hidebound by their artificiality, embodied particularly in the almost invariable sequence of da capo arias. We have now learnt to love the operatic aria, and with the exception of *Semele* (based on an operatic libretto anyway), I can only remember the untypical *Hercules* and *Theodora* being fully staged of late.

I had in my head the belief that Samson was one of Handel's most powerful oratorios, but found that very little of it sounded at all familiar: I should have done some homework, such as read Milton's *Samson Agonistes* which, rather than the Bible, is Handel's source. (But I probably would have chickened out. I found reading it virtually impossible as a student; I think that it needs to be declaimed aloud, not read silently.) And I must have heard it less than any other of Handel's main oratorios: in fact, probably only at the Handel Opera Society performance in 1970 with Ronald Dowd in the title role, and with the small part of the Israelite Messenger taken by Peter Jones, who now has a busy retirement typesetting Handel operas and oratorios. So I was probably less familiar with the work than I should have been.

I had a few words at the interval with the harpsichordist, Alastair Ross, who challenged on how I would review it in view of my usual distaste for modernised productions. Since the work wasn't intended to be staged, there was no particular authenticity in doing so in a hypothetical style of the period, especially in the absence of any tradition of staging works with so much weight placed on choral singing. 'What to do with the chorus' is a major problem when they are on stage, and lets down many oratorio productions (nearly all that I have seen, in fact); the maximum imagination is needed to provide something visual that matches the power of the choral music. Samson doesn't have the choral weight of *Saul* or *Solomon*, but a unique emotional power and formal variety.

What director could resist the preliminary statement in the libretto of the premiere in 1743:

SCENE, *Before the Prison in Gaza.*

This was a sombre, modern-dress production, and a warning notice prepared us for the shock of someone being shot on stage. I didn't follow all of the visual activity. For instance, did the double or triple shadows of the singers mean anything? There is a danger in trying to modernise too specifically: not all analogies work. One didn't need to read the programme book to make the analogy of Samson's destruction of his enemies in his death with modern suicide bombers. There is a danger in trying to modernise too specifically; the oratorio favours one side but the current situation is more complex.

This was a concentrated, powerful production, with a high-quality cast. Tom Randle's Samson was outstanding. It's a great part. Had it been an Italian opera, the role would probably have been written for a castrato; but Samson equals Handel's only major tenor operatic creation, Bajazet, in *Tamerlano*. None of the other characters have such individuality, but Micah (Rebecca de Pont Davies) had an impressive sound with a precision and clarity that the old-fashioned contraltos lacked, while retaining some of their virtues. Russel Smythe as Manoa, Samson's Father, sang well enough, but the elaboration of his Jewish appearance seemed excessive and distracting compared with other members of the cast. The other bass, Jonathan Best (Harapha), described as 'a Giant' in the 1743 wordbook but just as 'a Philistine leader' in the Buxton programme, towered over Samson, and had a suitable blustery manner, though at times the unison stretches with the orchestra were not entirely synchronised. Rebecca Bottone (Dalila) sang beautifully and tenderly in her attempted reconciliation with Samson – the libretto gave Handel no scope to show the more dangerous sides of her character. I was interested to hear Elin Manahan Thomas live, after being critical of her on disc. Her 'Let the bright Seraphim' was far better than on her CD, and she finished up as *Dea ex machina* trying to make the two sides friends during the concluding chorus: we can but hope. Like the chorus, she played for both sides.

The chorus was not, as I first assumed, *The Sixteen,* though there were coincidentally 16 of them, but *The Buxton Festival Chorus*. They acted with a fluency that put to shame the staged oratorios I've seen: congratulations to the director, Daniel Slater, for making their placing and movements seem so natural, and the neatness with which they changed from Israelites to Philistines, as well as for their expressive singing of such marvellous choral writing. The Orchestra of The Sixteen was led by Walter Reiter, with a good line up: a pity they weren't visible. They took a while to settle in the Sinfonia, but were excellent otherwise. I was puzzled by the presence of a continuo harp: was it inspired by the B section of the final aria?

Let the Cherubick Host, in tuneful Choirs,
Touch their immortal Harps with golden Wires

The festival programme book contained two excellent essays, and the rest of its contents made me wish I could have stayed to more of the Festival (especially for *Riders to the Sea*). Alas, there's music to sell and a magazine to publish!

CD REVIEWS

CHANT

Reviews of two Cappella Romana issues are deferred until the next issue.

MEDIEVAL

Ludus Danielis The Dufay Collective, William Lyons 68' 23"
Harmonia Mundi HMU 907479

I'm convinced that most of the medieval liturgical dramas should be performed more-or-less as chant, perhaps with some rhythmicisation of verse sections, but without instrumental participation. There may, however, be more excuse with the *Play of Daniel* in view of the liturgical licence available on the days after Christmas and the play itself has a far more secular tone than those for Christmas Day. But maybe not quite like this, since the instrumentation seems rather too 'composed', despite the reference to improvisation in the booklet. As far as I know, there is no evidence of 'composition on chant between the formally written and the informally improvised. One could imagine what we hear here developing through a long rehearsal period, but that is not very likely in the Christmas season when every day was full of services with elaborate music. Putting such matters aside, however, this is a persuasive presentation with a top-rate group of singers (including John Potter *Daniel*, Harvey Brought *Darius*, Simon Grant *Balthasar*, Vivien Ellis *Queen* and Lara Sanabras *Angel*, as well as the experienced and imaginative instrumental contribution that one expects from The Dufay Collective. If you don't share my *a priori* doubts, buy and enjoy it. *CB*

Lancaster and Valois: French and English Music c1350-1420 Gothic Voices, Christopher Page 59' 07"
Hyperion Helios CDH55294 (rec 1991) ££
Music by Cesaris, Cordier, Fonteyns, Machaut Pycard, Solage, Sturgeon & anon

Gothic Voices present more clearly the bold and uncompromising aspect of medieval art more freshly than other ensembles. The clarity of intonation and line has the freshness of an illuminated page of MS revealed for the first time for two thirds of a millennium. There is a slight softening in the post-Machaut music here, but not enough to make the music stand alone without the usual compromises. One would expect it to seem less of a shock since 1991, but the performance style has not been widely imitated nor superseded. *CB*

15th CENTURY

Karl der Kühne und die burgundische Hofmusik Les Haults Ménestrels de Charles le Téméraire, etc 71. 07
Raum Klang RK 2801
Music by Binchois, Busnois, Dufay, Hayne, La Rue, Morton, Obrecht, the Duke and anon.

This compilation relates to the exhibition *Charles the Bold (1433-1477) – Burgundy in its Glory and Decline* shown in Berne last year and Bruges from March to July this year – so you've missed it! The group listed above is the main contributor, with 8 of the 18 tracks and 20' running time. These come from Swiss Radio. 7 tracks are from various Raum Klang CDs, The Hilliard Ensemble contributes Dufay's *Magnanimae gentis laudes*, which isn't one of their strongest performances: a bit soggy compared with Gothic Voices, despite sharing one singer with the ensemble on the disc reviewed above. Two Dufay pieces come from a 1974 David Munrow recording, which receives an excessively long credit to EMI and Virgin on the back cover; the singing of the Gloria of the *Missa Se la face ay pale* hasn't dated at all. Other contributors are Les Flamboyants, Lena Susanne Norin, La Morra and Amarcord. I find the hopping from style to style a bit disconcerting, but this gives a feel of the period and the booklet note manages in less than four pages to sketch a context. *CB*

16th CENTURY

Morales *Missa Queramus cum pastoribus* Choir of Westminster Cathedral, James O'Donnell 65' 25"
Hyperion Helios CDH55276 ££ (rec 1992)
+*Andreas Christi famulus, Clamabat cum pastoribus, O sacrum convivium, Regina caeli,, Sancta Maria succure miseris &* Mouton *Queramus.*

This 1992 recording, now reissued on Helios, stands the test of time. As well as the Mass and its Mouton model, there are five motets covering a good spread of Morales' output. It has all the hallmarks of this choir's well-tested approach to Iberian music: bright sound, lots of enthusiasm, excellent handling of Morales' long lines, especially by the boys, good pulse and forward propulsion. We have, of course, heard this type of music sung more by smaller groups since this recording first appeared, and the full rich sound here can become a bit overpowering, though it is satisfactorily broken for the Benedictus and Agnus II. It is still a very worthwhile introduction to some marvellous music by Morales. *Noel O'Regan*

Sweelinck *Choral Works vol. 3* Netherlands Chamber Choir, Paul van Nevel
Et'cetera KTC 1320 53' 30" (rec 1989-90)

I'm never quite sure which century Sweelinck belongs to, but born in 1562, his vocal music is firmly in the late renaissance contrapuntal style, even if the first volume of his French psalms was issued in 1604 and his *Cantiones Sacrae* in 1619; the enormous influence of his keyboard music, however, makes it easier to associate him with the new century. The performances here are more consistent than previous volumes, with a single, excellent conductor. The music is well shaped, the choir excellent (though wobble is turned on a bit by soloists) and the use of a cornett/dulcian/sackbut quartet is effective. My attention did wander after a few tracks, but not for long: the best pieces are in the latter part of the programme. I was surprised how effective the SA bicinium *Che giovar* (track 5) was, and similarly the two tricinia that follow (I don't think I have opened vol. 8 of the Breitkopf *Werken* before). Then comes the powerful *O Domine Jesu Christe*, first with the three lower parts on wind, then repeated tutti with ornaments. I puzzled about the setting of *Mein jungen Leben* when hearing the disc without reading the booklet, but assumed (rightly) that it was an arrangement (by the conductor) of the keyboard setting, but it is effective and would convince in a non-specialist choral concert. The printed texts omit the last piece, from the same set as the other tricinia, reduced from a madrigal in Marenzio Book I a6, an odd choice to end the programme. Strongly recommended. *CB*

Victoria *Paribus vocibus* Lluis Vich Vocalis 65' 34"
La Mà du Guido LMG4006

This is an enterprising group and a worthwhile project. The title refers to the fact that the pieces here are all for restricted voice-groupings, mainly SSAT transposed down an octave, sung by six tenors and six basses. It includes four psalms from the unpublished collection in Rome's Biblioteca Nazionale, recorded here for the first time as far as I know. There are also two Magnificats, a hymn, some Tenebrae responsories and some motets. Where the pitch and overall range is low these work very well, but in some pieces the high tenors are over-prominent, sounding strained and using too much vibrato. These parts might have been better sung by an alto or a high floating tenor. The style of singing is

generally too heavy in the polyphony – more Welsh male-voice choir than showing the lightness and flexibility this music needs. The alternatim plainchant in psalms, hymn and Magnificats is very well done, however, and the recording has a certain authenticity, though maybe more of the 19th century than the 16th, and it is certainly good to have these psalms made available. *Noel O'Regan*

Al compás de la Vihuela Rafael Bonavita
Enchiriadis EN 2022 63' 46"
Music by Fuenllana, Milan, Mudarra, Narváez, Pisador, Valderrabano + Bonavita

In the spirit of 16th-century improvisation Rafael Bonavita superimposes his own divisions on well-known 16th-century pieces for the vihuela. That in itself is commendable, but, for my taste, his input takes something away from the music, rather than adds to it, and the result is disappointing.

His divisions on Pisador's *La Mañana de San Juan* are fiery stuff, but they are not the sort of thing one normally expects from the vihuela, and I found the strumming and pseudo-Moorish accidentals unconvincing. It is followed by Bonavita's own fantasy, which sounds as if he is trying to get something off his chest. It is technically impressive, with super-fast runs, but I can't say I enjoyed it.

There follows Narváez's *Fantasia del 4to tono*, a piece I must have played hundreds of times, yet it took me a while to recognise it, with so many slowly rolled chords, and all the two-note chords played *séparés*. Good ensemble is not supposed to be a problem for a soloist, but Bonavita sounds like two people, who just can't keep time together. Narváez's *Guárdame las vacas* suffers similar treatment, with extra notes added (including a reference to *Greensleeves*), and what may be described as a flexible pulse. The piece was perfectly alright as Narváez wrote it in the first place.

Bonavita next adds his own divisions to one of Luis de Milán's little Pavanas. For me, it is over-elaborate, and what was a charming piece of dance music is turned into a flurry of virtuosic ramblings. Rather than evoking a stately renaissance dance performed simply, with grace and elegance, I found myself imagining some wild, insane, drunk individual staggering headlong down a long flight of stairs.

Mudarra's variations on *Conde Claros* are interspersed with frenetic strums complete with taps on the soundboard, reminiscent of 20th-century folk guitar. His well-known *Fantasia que contrahaze la harpa en la manera de Ludovico* is mercifully played as printed, but for a few harmless upper mordents. The CD continues in a similar vein, ending with Bonavita's own composition *Mi cancion*, which is in a modern style, and is quite a pleasant piece.

The microphone must have been placed very close for the recording. It makes the tone of the vihuela sound aggressive and unsubtle, and picks up loud gasps and heavy breathing from the player. *Stewart McCoy*

Crai, crai, crai: Music at the Spanish Court of Naples Ensemble Oni Wytars
Raum Klang RK 2706
Music by Cortese, Dalza, de Macque, Narváez, Ortiz, Trabaci & anon

This has applause, and was recorded at a concert in the Montalbâne medieval festival last year. The range of the programme is shown by the first two items, the title song (better know as *Dale si le das*) and a Trabaci organ canzona. Familiar names among the cast give confidence: Belinda Sykes, Michael Posch, and Ian Harrison. A distinctive feature is the sound of the vocal ensemble items, which presumably relates to modern Spanish folk styles. The organ is German (Emmaus Chapel, Hatzfeld), but was chosen for its harsh sound, abetted by mean tone tuning, Refreshing! *CB*

A Garden of Early Delights Pamela Thorby *rec*, Andrew Lawrence-King *harp, psaltery*
Linn CKD 291 SACD
Music by G. Bassano, Castello, Dowland, Fontana, Marini, Ortiz. van Eyck, Schop

The subtitle of this CD, 'A mixed bouquet of diverse, joyous, unusual and eloquent pieces from the renaissance and early baroque periods', gives a good idea of what you can expect. These are sparkling and fresh performances of mostly well-known pieces, and you are sure to enjoy Pamela Thorby's seemingly effortless playing of the *glosas*, *passaggi* and other embellishments on Ganassi-style recorders, as well as the more expressive pieces, some for baroque triple harp alone. The use of the harp, and once the psaltery, gives an added dimension to the Van Eyck pieces, though it does perhaps slightly obscure some of the rapid diminutions in *Wat zal men op den Avond doen*. That is my only quibble, however. This is a most interesting and enjoyable collection, and the Super Audio CD recording is complemented by some really excellent notes in the booklet. *Victoria Helby*

A Noble Noyse of Musicke: Vocal & Instrumental master works of the English Renaissance The Royal Wind Music. Paul Leenhouts, *rec, dir*+ Christopher Field *cT*, Israel Golani *lute*, Matthias Havinga *org*, Johan Hofmann *virginal* 63' 13"
Lindoro MPC-0118
Music by Allison, Bull, Byrd, Campion, Collard, Coprario, Danyel, Mure, Redford, Tallis & anon

This is not a disc which fits in any of the normal pigeonholes. Paul Leenhouts, of Loeki Stardust recorder quartet fame, has formed a group of recorders – large in number and large in size, including a specially recreated sub contra bass. To hear a recorder playing at true cello pitch is a new experience. The narrower scale than the equivalent organ pipe, and of course the individual human player, contribute to a rich consort sound. This tour of 16th and early 17th century English repertoire also encompasses other instruments: Virginal music by Bull, pieces from the Mulliner book played on a recognisably contemporary Dutch organ, music from the Scottish Rowallan Lute Book including the bizarrely abstract *Gypsies Lilt*, and consort songs performed by a male alto with the distant cumulus of 8' recorders looming in the background. The repertoire is what gives unity to the disc, and the playing is exemplary as one would expect from the pedigree. Who needs pigeonholes?
Stephen Cassidy

17th CENTURY

Buxtehude *Opera omnia VII: Vocal Works 3* Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra & Choir 147' 17" (2 CDs)
Challenge CC72246
BWV 4, 7, 24-5, 41, 47, 62,63, 68, 72, 77, 79, 116, 119A & B, 122 [Last volume]

This recording offers an attractive mix of well-known pieces (such as the meditation on death *Ich habe Lust abzuscheiden* BuxWV 47) with lesser known works (such as the aria *Auf, stimmet die Saiten* BuxWV 116, for the wedding of the Lübeck burgomaster, with its unusual accompaniment of muted trumpets and muted trombones). Koopman's performances are always nimble, with lively tempi giving an attractive ebullience to arias such as BuxWV 62, 68 and 72. He is also excellent at maintaining momentum across sectional pieces such as *Nun danket alle Gott* BuxWV 79. There is less the focus on individual words or on sheer beauty of timbre than is found in the recordings by the Purcell Quartet, and this is perhaps a drawback in *Ich habe Lust abzuscheiden*, which is taken at an unusually slow tempo. The vocal lines are mostly sung by soloists, with the choir as a reinforcing capella in some of the larger pieces (and also for the chorale line in versus 1 of *Herzlich lieb hab' ich dich* BuxWV 41).

In covering such a cross-section of Buxtehude's vocal output, this recording confronts many issues of performance

practice, in particular the choice of continuo instruments (lute and regal are here prominent) and the role of unusual scorings (such as the muted brass in the wedding aria BuxWV 116). There is not space in this review to address all the arguments, which have implications for pitch, tempo and ornamentation. But I found it interesting to follow the recording in conjunction with the evidence given in Kerala Snyder's *Dieterich Buxtehude: organist in Lübeck* (2nd ed., 2007). By exploring every corner of Buxtehude's output, Koopman shows the range of instrumentation demanded by this Lübeck composer; and the sheer gusto of this recording should arouse further enthusiasm for Buxtehude's vocal works.

Stephen Rose

Buxtehude/Bach ***Organ Music for Christmas Time*** Siegbert Rampe 62' 54"
Dabringhaus & Grimm MDG 341 1511-2
BuxWV *139, 155, 163, 189, 197, 202, 211, 217, 223;* **BWV** 540, 572a. 599, 601, 604, 606, 609, 614

Since 2005, Siegbert Rampe has been Professor of Early Music and Historical Keyboard Instruments at Arizona State University, where this modern organ (Fritts, 1992) is housed. Built in the style of Schnitger, it is more suitable for Buxtehude than Bach. The recording is less close than many organ recordings, allowing the acoustic of the room to have more effect. The programme includes three variants on well known pieces, including a version of Bach's *Piece d'Orgue* copied by Bach's cousin Walther in 1715 with a more-or-less manuals only version of the central section marked *'Gayment'*. Whether this was the 'original' version, as Rampe states, is open to question. The extraordinarily frenetic pace of opening and closing sections lose all sense of detail in the acoustic, and the central *Gayment* section is played on a 16' pleno that really doesn't suit the tempo adopted. Rampe's version gallops in at 6'10" compared, for example, with Margaret Phillips at 9'05". There is also a slightly shorter version of the Toccata in F which avoids the pedal top F that doesn't seem to have been available on any organ that Bach knew. As with many Buxtehude works, the Toccata in d (BuxWV155) provides interpretational difficulties that all organists have to ponder before performance – Rampe's version is similar to many others.

I have a number of concerns about these performances, starting with the use of far too many inappropriate French-style ornaments (try tracks 2, 3 and 16 for example). Much of the North German and Bach repertoire suffered from the editorial addition of French ornaments by the likes of Walther and other copyists, so it is a shame that Rampe chooses to add more of the same to works that were otherwise untroubled by such stylistic oddities. Buxtehude's *Wie schön leuchet der Morgenstern* is a good example of this early editorial addition of the French style, although to give him his due, Rampe's very solid performance avoids the rather fey interpretations often heard, producing a far more North German-sounding performance. A CD worth listening to before you buy. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

Buxtehude ***Suites in g and e, More Palatino, Courant Zimble*** Lars Ulrik Mortensen *hpscd* 52' 46" £
Naxos 8.570580 £ (rec 1998)
BuxWV 170, 171, 174, 215, 235, 242, 2456, 247

Robin Bigwood wrote in *EMR* 57 (Feb 2000) of the original issue (Da Capo 8.224117): 'I can't fault this disc – the sound is lovely, the playing superb, and the repertoire fascinating.' He also liked the imaginative ordering of the pieces, without the usual segregation into genres. *CB*

de Visée ***Pièces de Théorbe*** Fred Jacobs
Metronome MET CD 1072 56' 56"

Robert de Visée is best known today for his music for 5-course baroque guitar published in France in the 1680s, but his music for solo theorbo is rarely heard. In style it is similar to other music from the court of Louis XIV – suites of allemandes, courantes, sarabandes, gigues, and so on, and sometimes with a clue to their character in the title; there are notes séparées, notes inégales, and many ornaments, especially appoggiaturas, but melodies are clearly stated, not disguised in *style brisé*.

What makes the theorbo repertory so distinctive is its extraordinarily low tessitura. The first two courses are tuned an octave lower than they would be on a lute, leaving the 3rd course the highest in pitch. This string is tuned to the B below middle C, and even the highest possible note at the 10th fret is only the A above middle C. The tuning presents all kinds of problems to the soloist, because the overall range is reduced by a 7th, and the melody line has to be taken up the neck on the 3rd course.

The overall effect is deep and gloomy, but Fred Jacobs shows that an instrument normally used for accompanying can be a suitable solo medium for French music, 'pour flatter l'oreille'. He produces a bright, clear sound, and plays with tastefully restrained expression. His fingers are particularly agile with the Gigue *Le Rémouleur* in the G major Suite, which bounces along nicely. Apart from the pieces composed by De Visée, there is a selection of pieces taken from his intabulations of Lully's operas. The CD ends with a selection of pieces in A minor, of which *La Plainte ou Tombeau de Mesdemoiselles de Visée, Allemande de Mr. Leur Père* is especially poignant. *Stewart McCoy*

Robert Dowland ***A Musicall Banquet***
Monika Mauch *S*, Nigel North lute 72' 54"
ECS New Series ECM 1938

I know of only three complete recordings of Musical Banquet: by Rooley's Consort of Musicke, Nigel Rogers and Anthony Bailes, and Andreas Scholl with Sting's chum, Edin Karamazov. This new version by Mauch and North surpasses all of them easily, not least because they alone perform the music almost exactly as it appears in the original published songbook. As with Scholl's (much less successful) disc, the songs are presented in a carefully rearranged sequence which juggles the English, French, Spanish and Italian songs that Robert and John Dowland gathered in groups by nationality, interspersed with several carefully chosen lute solos, none more appropriate than the Galliard by Daniel Batchelar which shares material with the song that then follows – Batchelar's *To plead my faith*. These extra lute pieces help to dispel any danger of 'soprano lutesong, mostly in g major/minor' fatigue, but Monika Mauch is a superb, understated interpreter of these songs, and less is definitely more here. Her unaccented pronunciation of all of the four languages is perfect, and every word of text is perfectly delivered. (Please take note, Herr Scholl).

I could rave about details of this disc for pages, but suffice it to say, this is an essential library record for anyone interested in the lute song, beautifully sung (and beautifully played by Nigel North), and a jolly good listen as a programme, of course. The style of singing lute songs continues to evolve for the better, I feel, and we are now hearing much more considered, word-based interpretations than was the case when Rooley made his pioneering recording.

As Nigel North states in the booklet notes, the menu of songs is more likely to have been compiled by Dowland senior than junior, so *Musicall Banquet* is really "John Dowland's Third-and-a-half Booke of Songes', featuring ayres the master himself thought worthy of inclusion alongside three of his own, which means that we should take the anthology very seriously. It is a complete concert selection as it stands, after all, and it's worth reflecting that this particular songbook is a unique 'lute song time capsule', of just what was popular and being performed in England in the same year (1610) as a momentous Italian publication. *David Hill*

Geist *Spirit of Geist: Royal Concertos* Capella Rediviva 65' 03"
Daphne 1020
Dixit Dominus, Domine qui das salutem I, II, III, Domine in virtute tua, Exaudi Deus orationem, Io Musae novo Sol rutilat, Quis hostis in coelis, Zitto hoggi Faune

It was this disc that drew my attention to the Daphne label in the first place. I am currently editing all of Geist's music in the hope that someone will want to celebrate the 300th anniversary of his death in 2011. Born in Germany, Geist spent his working life in Scandinavia, firstly employed by Gustav Düben in Stockholm. This recording from 2003 features six works with definite royal connections, while it seems more than likely that the remainder (*Dixit Dominus* and the first and third settings of *Domine qui das salutem*) were also heard at court functions. Capella Rediviva (five singers, two trumpets and timpani, strings, and continuo) are directed by Boo Peter Tillberg in lively performances – if Bach overshadows his contemporaries, then the same can be said to only a slightly lesser extent about Buxtehude, certainly in northern Germany. Geist's surviving output (just over 60 works) is mostly small scale, but his is a voice worth hearing. It's a pity that these performances seem (in part) to have been based on the faulty editions in *Erbe deutscher Musik*, so the *Dixit Dominus*, for example, is missing a tenor part at one point. This is, however, a fine tribute to an interesting composer, and an enjoyable recital. *BC*

Marini *Echoes from Venice* Corde 67'
Daphne 1004

This recording is the perfect introduction to Marini's instrumental music. It opens with the *sonata per sonar con due corde* in which the solo violinist is frequently required to play chords. He developed this idea further in the *Capriccio, che due Violini Sonana quarto parti*. Indeed, violinist Ulrike Wahlberg and her group Corde explore the whole range of the composer's output, from solo sonatas to works for two violins and three trombones. There are also curiosities such as the *Sonata senza cadenza* in which the music just seems to refuse to settle in any particular key. In contrast, there are balletti, the sonata based on the popular song *Fuggi dolente core* and a sonata for three violins. The playing is bold and beautifully recorded, and the programme so varied that this is one CD I could happily sit and listen to from beginning to end. *BC*

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

Monteverdi *Primo/Nono Libro dei Madrigali (1587 & 1651)* La Venexiana 73'00"
Glossa GCD 920921 (Monteverdi Edition 01)

The first and last of Monteverdi's madrigal books appear here in new recordings. If you want the complete set, don't hesitate. But if your interest in Monteverdi is more selective, this doesn't have top priority. Book I appeared when the composer was 20. It is a promising beginning and had he died soon after, a musicologist might have stumbled across and published it, a few items may have been recorded, but it is is unlikely that a famous ensemble would have recorded it complete. It is interesting to detect signs of the mature composer, but he doesn't quite get inside the texts and express them with the originality that was his later hallmark. Book IX was issued posthumously in 1651 and, unlike Monteverdi's own publications, lacks coherence and any sign of careful selection. It is possible that he had previously declined to publish them, and some were already in print, the most familiar being the duet *Zefiro torna*. Four items first published in Book VIII are, sensibly, omitted from the disc. The performances are individually convincing, but in cumulation I became a little annoyed by the tight vibrato of the singers and the repetion of effects by the composer. If you want the complete works, fine; but if you don't know Monteverdi well, go for the intervening Books. *CB*

Purcell *Complete Chamber Music* Musica Amphion, Pieter-Jan Belder 412' 49"
Brilliant Classics 83647 (7 CDs) £

This is the first review copy we have received from this, well, brilliant series of cheap boxes of swathes of the repertoire in new recordings. This has discs devoted to the 1683 and 1697 trio sonatas, the viol fantasies, miscellaneous ensemble pieces, the 8 suites for harpsichord and two others of keyboard music (played by the director), but not the stage music, even though some of it sounds well just with a quartet and the miscellaneous pieces on disc 3 are no more or less orchestral. I was very impressed by the quality of the performances. I won't go as far as to say that there are not more characterful versions of any individual item, but I have no hesitation in recommending this at about the cost of one full price CD. *CB*

For review in the next issue we have Pieter Jan Belder's first two discs of Soler's sonatas, four discs of Handel's 1720 & 1733 collections by Michael Borgstede and vol. 5 of Haydn's Scottish Songs with Lorna Anderson & Jamie MacDougall. This is the sign of a new marketing initiative from Brilliant, who have now gone far beyond just selling to a Dutch chain of chemists.

Purcell/Sasha Waltz: *Dido & Aeneas, Choreographic Opera* Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin, Vocalconsort Berlin. 98'
Arthaus 101 311 DVD
deferred till the next issue

Romanus Weichlein *Missa Rectorum cordium a15, Lambach 1687* St Florianer Sängerknaben, Vokalensemble Nova, Ars Antiqua Austria, Gunar Letzbor *dir* 50' 22"
Symphonia SY 06223
+ Canon über das Post-Hörni, Dominus, Eripe me Domine

I thoroughly enjoyed the previous recording of Weichlein's music by these performers. My initial reaction to the present CD was 'what on earth is going on here?' The opening track is a canonic piece for strings based on the sound of the post horn, and although I came to sort of enjoy it on subsequent hearings, it is still frankly an odd way to start a recording which thereafter becomes rather more serious. The next two tracks are Offices for Holy Week – they are marked Tr1 and Tr2 in the booklet without any explanation of what these refer to – and the notes tell us that they might be the work of Weichlein's brother. They are in a quite different style to the mass, which is scored for six voices with strings, three trumpets and drums, two trombones and continuo. Four boys take each of the three upper voices, while four adults cover the tenor and bass parts. Starting with a rousing fanfare, the mass is a typical late 17th-century Austrian mass – the text is broken into chunks and set as a patchwork of solo and tutti sections, some in *stile recitativo* others contrapuntally, often with high violin parts. Even if Weichlein doesn't quite have Bertali's knack of expanding the tonality very far away from the tonic, this is still an enjoyable work, which must have been very impressive in the Lambach monastery. *BC*

Codex Caioni: Chronicles of a Transylvanian Wedding Day XVIII-21 Le Baroque Nomade, Jean-Christophe Frisch 66' 31"
Arion ARN68785

I only kept this disc because Dürer's hare on the cover looked so like the lion-headed rabbit that we acquired from the local animal rescue centre recently. But I'm extremely glad I did: it's brilliant in idea and execution. On 17 March 1634 Mátiás Seregély, organist at a Franciscan monastery in Lazarea/ Szárhegy (now in Romania but with a Hungarian population) began an anthology in German tablature. This was continued by the more famous Johannes Caioni (1629-87), who became vicar general of Transylvania in 1676 but retired to the same monastery and took over the MS. Judging from the description we are given, it seems to be a prac-

tical volume for accompaniment rather than a record of complete scores, so considerable scholarship and imagination is needed to make the music performable; no trace of incompleteness is audible.

The repertoire is international: the first, folksy track is followed by Praetorius and Carissimi. The performances change style depending on the type of music, the local fiddle style having a characteristic intonation which is completely different from that used by the same players (presumably on the same instruments) for early baroque Italian music. I was enthralled. The dance music really comes to life. There are a couple of visual clips on the group's website www.codexcaioni.com, but the concluding Uccellini *Pergamasca* was as vivid without seeing the dancing. Much of the music is vocal, the four singers being extremely stylish in Italianate church music, yet Cyrille Gerstenhaber's track 16, a ten-minute solo (based on a melody that may be Georgian), is a powerful folk-based piece, presumably largely evolved from improvisation by the singer.

There were links between Transylvania and Italy: Diruta's famous treastise, for instance, was dedicated to a Transylvanian prince, though he refused an offer to work there, and a Gypsy story is quoted that some slave musicians were sent to Venice to brush up their skills: they returned with two innovations, a cimbalom and the minor chord. The programme works because the folk and art styles illuminate each other and the performers are masters of both: definitely my CD of the month; and if you live in France, it's worth checking the concert details on their website. *CB*

The group has concerts in France on 17, 22 25 Aug, 24, 26 Nov, 2 Dec.

Es el amor, ay, ay: Tonos humanos del barroco español Regina Iberica, Laura Casanova *dir* 59' 33"
Verso **VRS 2056**
Music by Arañés, Durón, Hidalgo, Serqueira de Lima, Marín, Romeo, Torréjon y Velasco, Vado

This recital of 17 *tonos* from the Spanish baroque features contributions from the usual suspects alongside some lesser-known names (Serquiera de Lima, Arañés and Imaña). The performers are a soprano and a tenor, with a continuo team of a fairly thin sounding harpsichord and cello. They are joined for one piece extracted from a stage work by Durón by a gambist. Using a variety of different poetic forms, the *tono* consists basically of a verse and refrain structure, and is normally for one or two voices. 'Es el amor' (the title piece) is an anonymous work, and also the title of an 18th track, which is subtitled "una broma musical" (i.e. a musical joke) which features everyone (including the session photographer) in an improvisation which, sadly, brings the music to life in a way that the more studied approach didn't. *BC*

The Intimate Sonata Fanfare Consort, Thomas Freas 54' 17"
Champignon International **CI-CD102**
Music by KH Biber, Corbett, Corelli, Fantini, Legrenzi, Marini, Merula & anon

This recital begins and ends with sonatas in D for trumpet, two violins and continuo. The former is by Corelli, and the trumpeter (Thom Freas) suggests in his booklet note that the latter might also be by the master. There are also two sonatas for the same line-up by Karl Heinrich Biber and a composer identified in the source by the initials R. P. F. G. Two trio sonatas Legrenzi for strings, a sonata by William Corbett for trumpet, violin and continuo are the other ensemble works. Three trumpet sonatas by Fantini, a violin sonata by Marini and Merula's keyboard *Sonata cromatica* make up the programme. While much of the playing is enjoyable, I certainly missed the presence of a cello – the double bass is just too distant acoustically from the fairly thin harpsichord sound. In terms of the ordering, I think I would have placed the Legrenzi pieces between the fully-scored works. It would have avoided the whole tone step between tracks, not to mention the huge difference in style. It would nice to hear this group with a viola and cello tackling concertos by Telemann and Fasch. *BC*

Music of the Great Swedish Power Period Ulrika Westerberg *vln*, The Tre Kronor Baroque Ensemble 63' 04"
Daphne **1025**
Music by Albrici, Brade, Gustav Düben, Förster, Furchheim, Kindermann, von Sidon, N. A. Strungk and anon

The rather ungainly title of this disc should not put anyone off enjoying this tremendous programme of mid to late 17th-century violin music. Ulrika Westerberg is joined by fellow violinist Elin Gabrielsson and a continuo team of viola da gamba, harpsichord, violone, theorbo, organ and harp (not all at once, I hasten to add) in music by little-known composers. The trios are by Kaspar Förster, Albrici, Nicolaus Adam Strungk, Furchheim and – inevitably for this period – the ubiquitous Mr Anon. Another 'bellissima' sonata for violin, gamba and continuo of unknown origin is attributed, quite plausibly, to Antonio Bertali by the note-writer, Lars Berglund. Solo works include a suite for harpsichord by Gustav Düben (whose name is often heard, unlike his music!) which is accompanied by theorbo. If this is the sort of disc you would avoid for fear of knowing none of the names, don't worry – the music is delightful, and the performances are excellent. *BC*

Musique pour Mazarin! 'Qui a le coeur a tout' Le Jardin Secret (Elizabeth Dobbin *S*, David Blunden, Sofie Vanden Eynde, Fromina Lischka, Marisan Minnin *bc*)
Coro **COR16060** 64' 26"
Music by Campra, Carissimi, Charpentier, L. Couperin, Demachy, Guédron, Lully, Michi, Pasqualini, L. Rossi, MA Rossi

This ensemble was the winner of the 2007 York Early Music Festival competition and the opportunity to make this recording is part of the prize. I first listened to the disc before reading the notes or, indeed, noting who the artists were and was struck by the strong sense of continuity and 'programme' through the 21 items. AB-W's comments on their York performance (*EMR* 120) suggest that this is something they have managed to carry in to the studio from the concert hall, a welcome achievement. The ensemble consists of soprano and four multi-tasking continuo players, and the music explores the links and contrasts between French and Italian music, both vocal and instrumental, in the 17th century, ending neatly with an *air* from Campra's *L'Europe Galante*. Elizabeth Dobbin sings passionately but with complete control, employing a variety of stylish ornamentation. She is richly accompanied by her talented colleagues, who may in time come to feel that individual pieces do not need a change of sonority for each section. Fun though they are, I also wonder about the appropriateness of some of the 'arrangements'. I was quite happy with track 10 as a vivacious song with guitar and can't say that the single line harpsichord overlay in the interludes did anything for either me or the music. But this is clearly a gifted group who deserve their success, not least for their thorough research and brilliant programming skills. *David Hansell*

Sound the Trumpet: Music by Henry Purcell and his followers Mark Bennett, Michael Laird *tpts*, Frank de Bruine *ob*, Judy Tarling *vln*, The Parley of Instruments, Peter Holman 70' 31" (rec 1995)
Hyperion Helios **CDH55258** ££
Music by Barrett, Corbett, Croft, Eccles, Finger, Paisible, Purcell

We wrote in *EMR* 19 'Had the English Orpheus been a trumpeter, this is how he might have played'. The Purcell contribution comprises Symphonies from *The Indian Queen, The Yorkshire Feast Song* and *King Arthur*, but the piece that struck me on the first issue and again now is the nine-movement suite with two trumpets by William Corbett that opens the pro-

gramme. This will probably be used chiefly as background music, but some of the slow movements (eg tracks 40 & 45) immediately demand attention, the lively trumpet writing is far less predictable than one might expect. *CB*

Spaerens Vreuchden-Bron: Harlem – City of Music in the Golden Age Barocco Locco, Fritz Heller 68' 15"
Aliud ACD HD 031-2 SACD
Music by Ban, Grebber, Helmbrecker, Luidhens, Noordt, Padbrué, Patoulet

The oversize package (one expects it to contain a DVD) accommodates extensive notes giving the history of Haarlem in the 17th century, when the city became a haven for artistic refugees. This commendable enterprise presents music by composers who are lesser known, and for the most part deserve to be heard. The motet *O vos omnes* by Cornelius Padbrue is poised and well crafted. As a whole, though, the group feels as if it could benefit from an external ear. Whilst carefully performed, much of the music passes by deferentially, without an apparent purpose, and there are drifts in tuning here and there. Who knows if the music was intended as a quite reverence or to seize attention? Certainly over-performance would be out of place, but with the addition of a little flair in line with the artistic flowering as described in the interesting notes, the disc would have a real centre. *Stephen Cassidy*

The Trio Sonata in 17th-Century Germany London Baroque 73' 06"
BIS-CD-1545
a Kempis Symphonia 2 *Dolorosa*; **Becker** Sonata 26 (1674); **Biber** Partita 6; **Buxtehude** Sonata in G BuxWV 271; **Hacquart** Sonata 6; **Kerll** Sonata in F; **Rosenmüller** Sonata in e; **Schmelzer** *Lanterley*; **Vierdanck** Suite in A; **Weckmann** Sonata in G

This thoroughly enjoyable recital includes some of the best-known trio sonatas from 17th-century Germany, Schmelzer's *Lanterley* and one of Biber's *Harmonia Artificiosa-ariosa* set, as well as some works that will be new to most readers, such as Nicolaus a Kempis's Symphonia No. 2, sub-titled *La Dolorosa*, and works by Hacquart and Vierdanck. With musicians of the standard of London Baroque, one could not hope for better exponents of the repertoire – the two violins are perfectly matched and balanced, and the continuo combination of bass viol and harpsichord or organ creates a rich though never obtrusive harmonic backdrop for the often showy treble lines. I hope they will do a follow-up disc with more music from the same composers, and maybe throw in a few more new names? *BC*

LATE BAROQUE

Bach ***Cantatas vol. 39*** **(28, 68, 85, 175, 183)** Carolyn Sampson, Robin Blaze, Gerd Türk, Peter Kooij *SATB*, Bach Collegium Japan, Masaaki Suzuki 72' 42"
BIS-SACD-1641

With this disc, the *violoncello da spalla* ('shoulder cello') continues its rise to prominence. Already popularised by Sigiswald Kuijken on his recent recordings of Bach cantatas, the instrument is here played by Dmitry Badiarov (the builder of many of the current instruments). It is slightly larger than a viola, but has thick, double-wire-wound strings allowing low notes to be attained. Suzuki presents the instrument as the answer to the violoncello piccolo part in four cantatas on this disc. This review is not the place to air the scholarly arguments for and against the use of the instrument in Bach; Gregory Barnett struck a sceptical note in his recent presentation at the Baroque conference in Leeds on 4 July. On this recording the instrument gives a nimble yet penetrating tone to its obbligato lines, although one misses the striking visual aspect of low notes coming from a small, shoulder-held instrument. Otherwise this recording shows the usual virtues of Suzuki's Bach, notably a clear projection of the words and Affekt of each movement, and attention both to detail and to overall structure. *Stephen Rose*

J S Bach ***Organ Works Vol III - Clavierübung Part III.*** Margaret Phillips (1724-30 Trost organ, Waltershausen, Germany). 128'56"(2CDs)
REGCD276 ££
+ Partite diverse sopra Sei gegrüßet Jesu Gütig & Pièce d'Orgue.

J S Bach ***Organ Works Vol IV*** Margaret Phillips (1976 Metzler organ, Trinity College, Cambridge) 136'35" 2CDs
REGCD258 ££
BWV 527, 534, 540, 547, 561, 587, 590, 593, *Christmas Chorale Preludes.*

Margaret Phillips' Bach organ series has gone into overdrive with the release of two double CD volumes, the first recorded on an organ that Bach may well have known, the second on a modern instrument. The Waltershausen organ is the largest organ in Thuringia from Bach's time. Although Trost was slightly outside the mainstream Thuringian and Saxon organ tradition (and proved to be very forward looking), his two important remaining instruments perhaps indicate the sort of organ Bach had in mind more than that of any other builder. With their wide range of colour stops, including fistfuls of 8' flue stops (eight on the Walterhausen Hauptwerk) that may well have been intended to be drawn together in sizeable clumps, there is scope for the sort of inventive registrations that it is believed Bach was attracted to. An apparent oddity in comparison to other organs of this period is that there are only two mixtures (both of them with tierce ranks) amongst the total of 53 stops (six of which are transmissions from the Hauptwerk to the Pedal). *Kyrie, Gott heiliger Geist* is played on an enormous registration (23 stops!), using both of the two tierce mixtures and the 32' reed. The following piece *(Allein Gott)* works very well on an 8+2' registration that is normally frowned upon. Amongst many other attractive registrations, the simplest is one of the most effective – a single, delightfully chiffy Gedackt 8' with tremulant heard in the last chorale of the set, the smaller version of *Jesus Christus, unser Heiland.* This double CD includes both the larger and smaller version of the chorales, with the latter interspersed rather than played as a separate set. It also includes the four Duets that are very much part of the overall concept, not least in numerical and theological terms. The ten variations of the *Partite diverse sopra Sei gegrüßet, Jesu Gütig* demonstrate more organ colours and the *Pièce d'Orgue,* with similar Trinity allusions as the Clavierübung III, makes a suitable conclusion, albeit a little hectic in the final section.

The second double CD is a miscellaneous collection of pieces with a connection, conjectured or real, with Advent and Christmas. Many of them are of uncertain provenance. It was recorded in Trinity College Chapel, Cambridge on the 1976 organ built in the 1694/1708 case (and incorporating a few Father Smith pipes) by the Zürich firm of Metzler – a very controversial instrument at the time, but one that has turned out to be one of the few English organs of the 1970s to have a real musical identity and to pay more than a nod to the niceties of historic continental instruments. Although it speaks a very different language to the Trost organ at Waltershausen (being biased, as most organs were at that time, towards the North German rather than Thuringian organ school), it gives a very good account of Bach, speaking with clarity. Margaret Phillips plays with something of a sense of inevitability, her methodically rock-steady pulse and consistent articulation reducing any sense of personal musical interpretation (as opposed to just playing the notes) to a particularly high degree of subtlety. I can think of no other musical instrument (period or otherwise) which would be played in such a fashion, but for some reason it is commonplace amongst

organists. Although this can produce performances of the utmost tedium, Margaret Phillips manages to avoid this – indeed, the rhythmic steadiness of works such as the Toccata in F add to the build up of musical intensity. This playing style makes her recordings particularly good as reference works, devoid of the mannerisms and individual quirks that many organists feel obliged to litter their playing with. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

Bach ***Keyboard Partitas*** **BWV 825-830** Nicholas Parle *hpscd* 163' 23" (3 CDs) ABC Classics **ABC 476 6405** ££
Bach ***Partitas*** Pascak Dubreuil *hpscd* Ramée **RAM 0804** 159' 31" (2 CDs)

These will be reviewed by Noel O'Regan in our next issue

Bach ***Goldberg Variations*** Ciarra Massini *hpscd* 78' 59" Symphonia **SY 06222**

From the start it was clear to me that this was going to be a somewhat mannered, idiosyncratic performance, with the aria's melody notes sounding after the bass on almost every beat. Expressive playing it may be, but I found the excessive rubato employed in many of the variations annoyingly cloying. The booklet gives no information on Chiarra Massini, the instrument (other than that it is by Joel Katzman) or temperament used, and the detail on the work does little more than recount the dubious Forkel story and explain the basic structure of the work. Chiara Massini's formidable technique must nevertheless be acknowledged in achieving the Goldbergs, with all repeats, in 79 minutes, compared with the more reflective approach of, for example, Richard Egarr's 2006 recording – incidentally on a similar Katzman instrument – in 90 minutes. Egarr uses the recently discovered 'Bach' temperament, giving the music interesting colours, notably in the chromatic variations, and has the bonus of the 14 'Goldberg' canons. *Ian Graham-Jones*

Bach ***Goldberg Variations: version for string trio by Dmitry Sitkovetski*** Swiss Chamber Soloists (Hanna Weinmeister *vln*, Jürg Dähler *vla*, Thomas Grossenbacher *vlc* on Stainer insts) 78' 56" Neos Classics **NEOS 30801**

Another, even more exotic, version of the 'Goldbergs' is performed on period instruments (not a misprint for the singular!) in an arrangement for string trio made by Dmitri Sitkovetsky in 1985 'in memoriam Glenn Gould'. The three soloists (violin, viola, cello) take into account the *urtext* New Bach Edition in their performance. This 'crossover' of baroque HIP string technique plus a scholarly edition with an arrangement for a completely non-period ensemble may seem somewhat bizarre, but their slick, technically secure playing makes for easy listening. The transcription together with the ensemble's interpretation does, however, completely alter the intended characteristics of some of the variations. The French Overture, for example, loses all of its nobility, while the rumbustuous Quodlibet, with its missing fourth voice part, is just too delicate. Tempi of some of the faster variations are almost too fast, while others are just too genteel, resulting in (with all repeats) virtually the same timing as the Massini recording above. Although I doubt whether many *EMR* readers will be tempted with this unusual approach, I would recommend it as excellent 'muzak' for the shopping arcade, restaurant visit, or party. *Ian Graham-Jones*

Bachs Schüler ***Motets*** Vocal Concerto Dresden, Dresdner Instrumental-Concert, Peter Koop 59' 33" Carus **83.263**
Altnickol *Befiehl du deine Wege*; **CPEB** *Bitten*; **JCFB** *Wachet auf*; **Doles** *Wer bin ich Herr?* **Homilius** *Die Elenden sollen essen*; **Kirnberger** *An den Flüssen Babylonis*; **Krebs** *Erforsche mich*

These interesting works and parts of works composed by pupils of JSB, including two of his own sons, provide a useful background to his own compositions, especially BWV 140, 75 and 270-272. all of which might have served as either textual or musical influences. or both in combination. However, anybody expecting to identify such teacher-pupil relationships may not be strongly impressed by very many of these pieces, in which Peter Kopp's singers and players play quite stylishly, but without conveying any plausible idea of wonderful discoveries. Probably the best of these composers is Homilius, a near-contemporary of C P E Bach, and a number of whose compositions are now being published by Carus. This is the most significant inclusion here. *Stephen Daw*

Couperin ***Pièces de Violes*** Philippe Pierlot, Emmanuel Balssa *viols*, Eduardo Egüez *theorbo/gtr*, Pierre Hantaï *hpscd* 67' 56" *Mirare* **MIR 040**

The two Suites, the *Pièces de Violes*, composed towards the end of Couperin's life, are his only works for solo viol, and are insufficient to fill a CD. They are therefore complemented by two *Concerts*, transcriptions of harpsichord pieces from the four books of *Pièces de Clavecin*, presumably by Phillippe Beaussant, though the booklet is not clear on this. It is unsurprising the two suites are perhaps less well known, for they are difficult works, less idiomatic than that the music of his violist contemporaries Marais and Forqueray. Phillipe Pierlot gives stunning performances of them, ably supported by the continuo bass viol, harpsichord, and in the more reflective movements, theorbo. The longer *Première Suite* of dances concludes with a fine lengthy *Passacaille*, while the *Deuxième Suite*, in just four movements, is perhaps more Italianate in structure, with a two-part invention-like *Prélude*, a *Fuguète*, a superb *Pompe Funebre* and a movement in two sections, *La Chemise Blanche*. For harpsichordists that may know the pieces randomly forming the two *Concerts*, they are surprisingly successful and convincing transcriptions. This is gem of a CD, thoroughly recommended. It's just a pity that the English translation lists Pierlot as "conductor and basso viola"! *Ian Graham-Jones*

Denoyé — Corrette/Vivaldi ***Hommages*** Judith Gauthier, Rodrigo del Pozo, Christophe Einhorn, Jean-Louis Georgel SATB, Le Parlement de Musique, La Maîtrise de Bretagne, Martin Gester 67' 08" Ambronay **AMY014**
Denoyé *Messe á Grand Choeur et Symphonie (1758)*; **Corrette** *Laudate Dominum d'après Vivaldi*

Denoyé worked in Strasbourg in the 1750s, dying in 1759. This, his only work, is dated July 1758 anjd was discovered in Stockholm by Jean-Luc Gester (Martin's brother), who did a lot of work on music in Alsace before his untimely death in 2006.It's an impressive setting, imaginatively presented with instrumental interludes between movements. It's certainly more than a fill-up to the main attraction, Corrette's ingenious recomposition of Vivaldi's *Spring* to a psalm text. It's a piece that many will have heard about: here's a chance to hear it, and it is fascinating. If any listener who had not encountered the Vivaldi heard it, I doubt whether he would realise that it is based on a pre-existing work, apart from some suspicion of the prominence of a solo violin. This isn't an ideal recording: it is of a live concert, and the balance (for example between the three solo violins and the solo soprano at her entrance in the second movement) isn't very good, and it would help if she could trill. But it's enough to show that Corrette can write a fine motet. *CB*

The edition used here will shortly be available from King's Music

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

Handel *O Praise the Lord: Psalms and Anthems* Iris-Anna Deckert, Susan Eitrich, Vranz Vitzhum, Dieter Wagner, Andreas Weller, Jens Hamann *SSATTB*, Gli Scarlattisti, Capella Principale, Jochen M. Arnold 70' 27"
Carus CV 83.421
I will Magnify thee, Laudate pueri, Nisi Dominus, O praise the Lord with one consent (HWV 250b, 237, 238, 250b)
Handel *Dettingen Te Deum* Neal Davies *B*, Choir of Trinity College Cambridge, Academy of Ancient Music, Richard Marlow *org*, Stephen Layton *cond* 60' 33"
Hyperion CDA67678
+ Organ Concerto 14 in A HWV 296a, *Zadok*

Both recordings, of sacred works spanning Handel's career, have the smoothness and lustre of church marble. A problem with sacred recordings in this rather secular age is that some betray the lack of conviction of their musicians. This is not the case with Jochen Arnold, a theologian and church musician, and as a result the bright sparkle of the early *Nisi Dominus* and *Laudate Pueri* have some gravitas, too. Arnold's notes are scholarly, his choir and band are excellent, and he has a good line-up of soloists. I had initial concerns with the first soprano in *Laudate Pueri* as to whether she would get through the piece; the second listening was much more relaxing, and actually her slightly treble-ish voice rather suits the work. The pieces themselves are great – full of excitement and freshness. There are some splendid moments, such as the ethereal *Cum dederit delectis* (*Nisi Dominus*) and *Quis sicut Dominus* (*Laudate Pueri*), with Handel's favourite separation of the choir to represent earth and heaven. The two English works, *I will magnify thee* and *O praise the Lord with one consent*, show Handel's developing style to suit his environs: these anthems are no less inventive and lush, but they are slightly more Anglo-Saxon – a tasty stout rather than chianti. They are executed with love and elegance, and in all, this is a highly recommendable disc – and one disc which nicely reflects a biographer's famous comment that Handel was 'German by birth, Italian by style and English by choice'.

The *Dettingen Te Deum* was one of Handel's slight mistakes. Assuming that George II's victory over France at Dettingen would be celebrated in the manner of the victory at Utrecht some years earlier, he composed it on a massive scale. But no-one except George (who had wanted to lead an army all his life) was particularly bothered by Dettingen. Still, if it did not get quite the reception that it deserved, the *Dettingen Te Deum* is nonetheless a cracking work and a deservedly popular part of Handel's corpus. This recording shows off the piece's martial exuberance. The first movement, in particular, is stirring stuff, and David Blackadder (trumpet) is magnificent. Trinity Choir is also good form. The only slight disappointment is Neal Davies, who sounds rather laboured, and made me wonder why he was employed, rather than one of the Trinity basses (the alto, after all, is a Trinitarian). Occasionally, for example in *To thee all angels* and *When thou hadst overcome*, Layton does not enjoy the full contemplative majesty of the music, but tends to skim over their depth a little. However, this is an enjoyable performance, with plenty of vigour and style. *Zadok the Priest* is also nicely done (even if you have it on your disc of the four Coronation Anthems, you can never have enough *Zadoks*), and a good companion. The organ concerto in A is one of his most happy and charming works, and is played happily and charmingly by Richard Marlow, Stephen Layton's predecessor at Trinity. The organ he uses is rather sweet, but occasionally sounds weedy for the grandeur of the music and against the AAM in full flood. Still, his improvisations are both tasteful and interesting, and the concerto contributes to the warm satisfaction of this disc. *Katy Hawks*

Hasse *Flötenkonzerte* Laurence Dean, Christina Ahrens-Dean *fl*, Hannoversche Hofkapelle 72' 17"
Christophorus CHR 77294 (rec 2000)
Concertos in b, C, D, G; Sonata in A, Sinfonia a5 in G, Trio in e

In his day Hasse was both famous and admired, particularly for his operas, and the nine-year old Mozart expressed a wish to 'become immortal, like Handel and Hasse'. Hasse worked in a number of the musical centres of Europe including Dresden and Venice, and apart from the rather ordinary trio sonata these pieces show how well he could compose for the flute. The four concertos in the galant style are full of charming melodies and Laurence Dean's sensitive and stylish flute playing is well supported by the single strings of the Hannoversche Hofkapelle. The Sinfonia for two flutes, two violins and bc is particularly enjoyable, with its graceful Siciliana and danceable Menuett and Polonaise, a suite in all but name. This CD originally appeared in 2000 and has been reissued in memory of Laurence Dean who died in 2006. *Victoria Helby*

Royer *Premier Livre de pièces de clavecin, 1746* Christophe Rousset 58' 54"
Ambroisie AM 151

Christophe Rousset's recording of Royer's only collection of harpsichord music arrives five years after Jean-Patrice Brosse explored them as part of his major series of late *clavecinistes* discs. Given that William Christie's version was re-released last year, neither Royer's descendants nor even his ghost could ever have dreamed that he would one day be so well served. Like Brosse, Rousset uses a fine 18th century instrument of wide resources which he is not afraid to use, and this in itself is a reason to add this disc to your library. The music itself does not consistently demand attention, but amid the commonplace niceties are a few shocks (you couldn't possibly guess the content of *Le Vertigo* from its opening or even the title) that show why Royer enjoyed considerable acclaim as composer as well as personal success as teacher of the royal children and director of the *Concert Spirituel*. Also like Brosse, Rousset is not afraid to make a *grand bruit* when required, the *March des Scythes* being quite spectacular in this regard, almost to the point of violence. Anyone who enjoys French harpsichord music should have at least one recording of Royer's *livre*. You pays your money... *David Hansell*

G. B. Sammartini *Symphonies* Orchestra da Camera Milano Classica, Roberto Gini
Dynamic CDS 460 72' 56"
JC 7, 9, 14, 15, 33, 36, 37, 39, 65

The nine works on this fine CD date from c.1724-39. The performance plays, as far as I can tell from the orchestra's website (the booklet includes no information), on modern instruments. This excellent recording, however, is no half-hearted gesture – the performances are first rate, with plentiful open strings, nicely controlled ornamentation (in style) and basslines that don't plod through Sammartini's repeated quaver lines but breathe air into them and lighten the whole texture. For such a famous name in the history of music, it always surprises me that we hear so little of Sammartini's music. While a CD of nine symphonies might be more than you'd want to hear at one sitting, every single work in this recital would fit nicely into any orchestral programme. *BC*

Tartini *The Violin Concertos vol. 14* Federico & Guglielmo Guglielmi, Carlo Lazari, L'Arte dell' Arco 141' 18" (2 CDs)
Dynamic CDS 548/1-2
D 7, 28, 31, 33-4, 65, 68, 78, 102-3, 68

The latest volume in this impressive series consists of two CDs. The three soloists (Carlo Lazari, Federico and Giovanni Guglielmo) divide the twelve concertos (four, three and five respectively). Only three of the works have been recorded before (D. 28, 34 and 78). Tartini is another of those composers whose music, despite their huge reputations during their own lifetime, is much

neglected today – if you hear a baroque violin concerto in concert nowadays, the chances are that it will be by Bach or Vivaldi. I am not going to say that listening to eleven concertos one after the other is the best remedy for that situation, but I admire the Italian record company Dynamic and the musicians – who give truly enjoyable performances of some very challenging works – for their advocacy of Tartini's music. If this is to be a complete edition, though, I am surprised that the alternative slow movement for D. 31 was not also included – the fact that the manuscript in which it survives is not autograph does not necessarily rule out the possibility that it is Tartini's work. *BC*

Tůma ***Partite, sonate e sinfonie*** Concerto Italiano, Rinaldo Alessandrini 70' 23"
Naïve **OP 30436**

I was surprised when I discovered this disc among my bundle from Clifford. Widely acknowledged as one of the leading ensembles of the day, my only other experience of Concerto Italiano in non-Italian repertoire was their take on the Brandenburg Concertos. I rated those performances very highly (and, indeed, still listen to them quite often), and I must accord the same level of praise for this set, albeit from a position of ignorance. I have other recordings of music by Tůma but have never looked at MS sources, so have no concept about his style – and I was slightly put off by the booklet note assertion that the composer of the music recorded cannot be counted among the greatest of the period. My eyebrows arched noticeably at one point when the harpsichord seemed to be playing the melody and it made me suspicious of the rest of the disc. Whatever the 'authenticity' of this recording, the music speaks for itself and is well worth hearing. *BC*

Vivaldi ***Orlando Furioso*** Anne Desler *Orlando*, Nicki Kennedy *Angelica*, Marina De Liso *Alcina*, Lucia Sciannimanico *Bradamante*, Luca Dordolo *Medoro*, Thierry Gregoire *Ruggiero*, Martin Kronthaler *Astolfo*, Coro da Camera Italiano, Modo Antique, Federico Maria Sardelli 166' 53"
cpo **277 095-2** (3 CDs in box)

This three CD set of Vivaldi's 1727 setting of the 'lost on mad Alcina's island' story features seven soloists, a chorus, and an orchestra including flute, oboes, horns and trumpets. The continuo line-up for recitatives includes harpsichord, theorbo, guitar and some sort of buzzy bass stringed instrument, which I found that a little off-putting (as I did the staccato bassoon in one of Medoro's arias.) In fact, although I enjoyed much of the singing and I found the orchestral playing in the arias simply wonderful (listen to the opening of Orlando's Act II aria *Surge l'irato nembo* for Vivaldi in angry mode), some of the da capo decorations were quite far removed from the original line, and impressive as a two octave scale is, what would *il prete rosso* have made of it in context? Do professional singers make these up nowadays or is there someone sitting in a room composing them afresh? When all is said and done, though, this is a fine recording of an interesting piece – look out for the sung *Follia* in Act III and don't be as surprised as I was when you start to hear people singing in French... *BC*

Weiss ***Lute Sonatas vol. 2*** Yasunori Imamura 72' 34"
Claves **50-2809**
in D (18) & G (51) + Prelude & Fugue in C

This is Yasunori Imamura's second CD of music devoted to Weiss's compositions for solo lute. It begins with a Sonata (or Suite) in D [S/C 18] from the Weiss MS in the British Library. This suite is well known to classical guitarists and lute players, having been included in Ruggero Chiesa's two-volume Weiss anthology published by Suvini Zerboni back in 1967. Imamora precedes this suite with a Prelude and Capriccio which, as Tim Crawford points out in his liner notes, preceded the D major Suite in another source, but were attached to a different suite in the British Library MSt. The long, slow Prelude explores a variety of tonalities, now urgently pressing forwards, now relaxing, The lively Capriccio has constantly changing effects – imitative entries, broken chords, running passages, sequences, pedal points, a sudden shift to minor chords, and unsettling diminished 7ths – capricious indeed. This, and the slow, elaborate Allemande which follows, are typical Weiss: long movements, with their own unexpected logic, a passage of octaves, of parallel 6ths, an interrupted cadence out of nothing. There follow a slickly played courante, a cheeky little Angloise somehow reminiscent of a Mozart sonatina, a grand, eloquent Sarabande, and a Menuet. The suite ends with the well-known Passagaille.

After a Prelude and Fugue in C minor, Imamora plays a Suite in G minor [S/C 51], for which there is no extant prelude. Undeterred, he has composed his own very convincing prelude and fugue in the style of Weiss. This Suite is one of Weiss's later works, from the Dresden MS, with long, complex movements. The bustling, yet unhurried Courante is impressive.

Imamora's playing is slick, nicely poised, and well balanced between treble and bass. His bass line is particularly tidy, with lots of open strings dampened so that they don't ring on unnecessarily. The overall direction of the phrasing is not lost amongst the complexities superimposed by Weiss. In all respects it is a very satisfying CD. *Stewart McCoy*

German Lute Music of the XVIII Century vol. 2 Alberto Crugnola 77' 33"
Symphonia **SY 06221**
Music by Daube, Kühnel, Straube

Alberto Crugnola's interesting anthology shows that there were other competent composers writing for the lute in 18th-century Germany apart from Silvius Leopold Weiss. The CD begins with a suite in D minor by Kühnel (c.1670-1728). The opening Alemande is typical of his style, with sections consisting of broken chords, and others with a flowing melody supported by the bass, and an abundance of repeated notes. A movement called *Gracieux* replaces the more conventional Sarabande. The suite ends with a sober Gigue, followed by some strange tapping on the front of the lute. Whether or not this percussion was notated by the composer I cannot tell, but I have no idea why it is there.

The music of Johann Friedrich Daube (c.1733-1797) is less staid than Kühnel's, with sudden shifts and unexpected changes of direction – now into triplets, now to the minor, now flurries of fast notes, and so on. A slow Arioso replaces the Sarabande, and a cheeky little Harlequinade precedes the final Gigue. His music lacks the sophistication of Bach or Weiss, but it is fun, and no doubt successfully entertained many a bewigged nobleman in Stuttgart and, in the latter part of Daube's life, Vienna.

There are two Sonatas by Rudolph Straube (1717-1780 or 1785). He studied the harpsichord with J. S. Bach, although his lute music sounds more like Beethoven than Bach. He lived in England for the last twenty years of his life, where he taught the lute and the increasingly popular English guittar.

I like the way Crugnola interprets these pieces, capturing the various moods in an unfussy way, flamboyant if need be, but always within the tender constraints of the lute. He uses variations of dynamic to good effect. *Stewart McCoy*

Konzert am Hof zu Zerbst Chursächsische Capelle Leipzig 50' 15"
fasch@chursaechsische-capelle-leipzig.de
Music by J. F. Fasch, Höckh, J. C. Röllig

This CD (which is only available from the performers by email for 12 Euros + post) was made during a live concert as part of the 10th Internationale Fasch-Festtage (see p. 6), which were devoted to music at the Court of Zerbst. Two of the five pieces are by Fasch himself (a lively

Sinfonia that could easily have been written a generation later, and a canonic sonata, displaying his contrapuntal ingenuity). Another two are by his *Konzertmeister*, the Austrian-born violinist Carl Höckh (a D minor Parthia which was published in C. P. E. Bach's *Musicalisches Allerley* and a three movement Sinfonia that survives in Fasch's handwriting). The fifth work (at the centre of the recital) is another three movement sinfonia; it was only during the conference that was part of the Festtage that the identity of the work's composer was revealed not to be Johann Georg Röllig, the Zerbst organist, but his younger brother, Johann Christian, who was active around Dresden and Meissen at the time. What I find most striking about these lively and exciting performances is the way five players can successfully *sound* like an orchestra when they are heard in an appropriate space – I don't think I'm the only person who has reservations when we read of orchestral trios and quartets, but maybe we just didn't understand the idea: rather than an orchestra playing quartets, it's the other way round? In any case, Anne Schumann and her small group present world premiere recordings of five works that are surely worth hearing. *BC*

Les Grandes Eaux Musicales de Versailles
Les Talens Lyriques, Christophe Rousset
Ambroisie AM 167 76' 42"
Music by Desmarest, Gluck, Lully, Porpora, Rameau

This is the music that will accompany the 2008 fountain displays at Versailles, selected by Rousset from his back catalogue. It is aimed fairly and squarely at those who will attend, with information in four languages about the waterworks and the performers but relatively little about the music. Each piece will be heard in a different place as the visitors stroll round the gardens, so the music does not really have to work as a concert and it does make for slightly odd continuous listening. The three Rameau overtures (*Naïs*, *Zaïs*, and *Acante et Céphise*) are the highlights. This may be a cost-effective way of hearing them if you are not tempted by the complete operas. *David Hansell*

Musik der Hamburger Pfeffersäcke Elbipolis Barockorchester Hamburg, Yeree Suh *S*
Raumklang **RK 2703** 61' 04"
Keiser *Hercules & Hebe* suite; **Handel** Sinfonia Bb HWV 339 Sonata a5 HWV 288;' Telemann Ouverture & 2 arias from *L'Omphale*

This was one of my favourite discs this month. It was partly a question of the repertoire (early Handel, Telemann and Keiser), but mostly on account of the delightful playing of Elbipolis Barockorchester Hamburg. The booklet note takes the form of a fanciful letter to a friend *à la Burney* which is a nice way to skirt around the musicology. The ouverture to *L'Omphale* and two arias (which are beautifully sung by Korean soprano, Yeree Suh) owe more than a little to Destouches opera of that name. Handel is represented by two fine works in B flat (the three movement sinfonia and what here is called a Concerto), while Keiser is represented by a suite of movements from his opera *Hercules and Hebe*, including a menuet which the young Mr Handel must have known. This is the second CD I have heard by these musicians and I very much look forward to the third and fourth! *BC*

Lorraine at Emmanuel: celebrating the lives of Craig Smith and Lorraine Hunt Lieberson The Orchestra of Emmanuel Music, Craig Smith & John Harbison
Avie **AV2130** 60' 56" (rec 1992-99)
Bach BWV 30/5, 33/3; **Handel** *Hercules*: Dejanira's arias

This tribute CD includes music from two Bach cantatas (the opening track, *Kommt ihr angefochtnen Sünder* from BWV30, is particularly effective), and Dejanira's arias from Handel's *Hercules*. Strange as it is to have a sequence of bleeding chunks, it actually gives a very clear illustration of Handel's supreme ability to convey the sense of the libretto – and to build his characters dramatically in a way that few other baroque composers managed (or even attempted, if the truth be told). The resulting portrayal of Lorraine Hunt's interpretation of Dejanira, with the wide range of moods and colours that she gives her voice, is actually very impressive – especially in the final mad scene. The accompaniments are all on modern instruments, but Craig Smith (for whom this CD is also a tribute) draws fine performances from the players. *BC*

The Rise of the North Italian Violin Concerto, 1690-1740 Vol. 3: The Golden Age La Serenissima, Adrian Chandler 79' 33"
Avie **AV 2154**
Locatelli op. 4/11 & 12; **GB Sammartini** Concerto in Eb J73; **Tartini**: D 117; **Vivaldi** RV 562a, 569

The two enduring features of this series have been the fantastic sound of La Serenissima and the virtuosic confidence of its director, Adrian Chandler. The disc begins and ends (appropriately enough) with large Vivaldi concertos for violin and an orchestra of strings, oboes, bassoon, horns and, in the case of RV562a, timpani. Between the two come a pair of concertos by Locatelli (including Op. 4 No. 12 for four violins), a richly scored two movement work by Sammartini and a violin concerto in B flat in four movements by Tartini (not one included in the Dynamic set above). This is my favourite of the three disc so far – the music is absolutely first rate, and Chandler draws excellent performances from his ensemble. I look forward to hearing more from them. *BC*

CLASSICAL

Lidarti *Violin Concertos (in A, C, D, G)*
Francesco D'Orazio, Auser Musici 61' 25"
Hyperion **CDA67685**

One has to wonder when the author of the booklet notes effectively writes off the composer in question! In fact, the three violin concertos by Lidarti on this new Hyperion CD are well worth hearing, and – contrary to Dinko Fabris's opinion – would happily stand comparison with Haydn's works in the genre. Soloist Francesco D'Orazio gives fine accounts of Lidarti's technically demanding music and his cadenzas are nicely in the style of the period. The fourth work on the disc is a Quartet in G (which was also published as part of a set of Sinfonie), played by four members of Auser Musici. While the concerti are all in the fast-slow-fast form, the quartet follows a slow-fast-fast pattern. All four works reveal a composer with a keen sense of dramatic melody and confirm Lidarti's control of larger movements – the C major violin concerto lasts over 20 minutes. These are all world premiere recordings, and violinists looking for new repertoire should certainly hear it. *BC*

Müthel *Concertos and Chamber Music*
Musica Alta Ripa 135' 27" (2 CDs in box)
Dabringhaus & Grimm **NDG 309 0452-2**

Johann Gottfried Müthel was one of Bach's last pupils. Born at Mölln, Lauenburg in 1728, he spent almost his entire career in northern towns. In 1747 he was appointed chamber musician and organist to the duke of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, and in 1750 was granted a year's leave of absence. In 1753 he moved to Riga, where he remained until his death in 1788. This pair of CDs contains a wealth of music for various chamber groupings on the first CD, and three concertos on the second. The salon pieces range in size from three quite short Polonaises via sonatas for flute and harpsichord and solo harpsichord to the simply identified C-major 'Duetto di J.G. Müthel' for two harpsichords, a work in the conventional three movements that lasts little short of twenty minutes. The concertos are for harpsichord and strings (Bb), two bassoons and strings (Eb), and harpsichord, two bassoons and strings (D minor). *Peter Branscombe*

Wagenseil *Concerts choisis* Echo du Danube, Alexander Weimann 68' 59"
Accent ACC 24186
Ob, bsn in Eb WWV 345; harp in F WWV 281; fp, vln in A WWV 325; fl in DWWV 342

Georg Christoph Wagenseil (1715-1777) is one of the most important of the numerous minor masters who played a major role in the development of Viennese classical music. In his lifetime he was equally renowned as keyboard teacher (Maria Theresia was a pupil who went on to encourage and reward him) and as composer of works for keyboard, chamber ensemble, orchestra, opera house and church. This selection of four of his concertos (three of them never before recorded) should go some way towards making the music-loving public aware of his qualities. They are all attractive, well-constructed pieces with pleasing melodies and rich variety of mood and instrumentation. Echo du Danube, a fairly new group of around twenty players, bring the works to life, with Alexander Weimann (as solo violinist and director) securing spacious, eloquent phrasing in the slow movements, and poise and spirit in the allegros and minuettos. The generously illustrated three-language booklet includes good English translations of the informative essays, and the players and their instruments are all identified. The recording is close (key-work clearly audible at times) but satisfactory. I hope this will be the first of a series of CDs of Wagenseil and his contemporaries. *Peter Branscombe*

A Century of Domestic Keyboards 1727-1832 Joanna Leach 66' 21"
Athene ath23026
Music by Bach, Byrd, Couperin, Handel, Mendelssohn, Schubert, Soler,

It was an excellent idea to demonstrate four original English instruments in such good condition, but some of the music seems oddly suited to the particular instruments chosen. The Barton spinet of 1727, for instance, is a superb example of its type and Leach plays it very well, but it is far from ideal for the Couperin, which with no change of registration at all becomes a little monotonous. And why play nothing but Bach and Handel on the Longman & Broderip square of c. 1787? It would have been good to hear at least one genuine piano piece, for example the almost exactly contemporary Mozart Adagio, played (with a Soler sonata) on a Stodart of c. 1823 instead.

However, having had my grumbles I'm happy to report that this CD is completely redeemed by the Schubert on the Stodart and the Mendelssohn on the surprisingly modern-sounding Clementi of c. 1830. I very much enjoyed Leach's beautiful and sensitive performances of this delightful music. *Richard Maunder*

19th CENTURY

Bizet *Carmen: Prélude et entractes, L'Arl'esienne: Musique de scène et suites d'orchestre* Les Musiciens du Louvre, Grenoble, Marc Minkowski 59'
Naïve V5130

see review by CB on p. 10

Pleyel *Piano Works* Masha Dimitrieva *fp*
Gramola 98816 56' 30"
Sonatas Ben 436, 571 and 572, Sonatinas Ben 578 and 579, Rondos Ben 114 and 613, Andante from Ben 577

Much is made in the programme booklet of the fact that Pleyel's music is played on a genuine Pleyel piano. It's certainly a fine instrument in excellent condition, but I very much doubt if it's anything like the sort of piano the composer used when he wrote the music recorded here. None of it is dated in the booklet, but none of it sounds as if it was written later than 1800. It's curious, too, that only one of the pieces (Ben 613) was originally for piano (or harp); the others are the composer's own arrangements of his violin sonatas, a piano trio and a movement from a Sinfonia Concertante for two violins.

Dimitrievna is a fine player, but her style strikes me as more suited to the date of the instrument than to her choice of music. Pleyel's pieces are competently written and have a certain charm, but they are totally lacking in originality: they are utterly conventional, derivative, and hardly more than a string of clichés. I have a confession to make: I normally stick rigorously to my rule that I always listen to every note of a CD before writing a review; but I found this music so mind-numbingly boring that I could not bear to continue to the end of every movement. I may therefore have missed some undiscovered gems – but I rather doubt it. *Richard Maunder*

Saint-Saëns... *today playing all his 1905 interpretations* (Welte-Mignon Mystery, vol. ix) 55' 16"
Tacet 159
Piano-roll records by Saint-Saëns of some of his music + Beethoven op. 31/2 mov 2. Chopin op. 10/3 & 15/2, Schumann *Waldszenen* 9

I first came across piano-roll recordings in a series of broadcasts compiled by Deryck Cook in the 1960s. He was enthusiastic that they represented and illuminated how great musicians of the decade or so after 1900 actually played, without the distortions of early recording technique. Doubt has been expressed since then on placing such faith on the technology. This disc is Vol. IX of a series called *The Welte-Mignon Mystery*, a process used between 1904 and 1932. I'm in no position to evaluate the process, but it is striking how 'modern' these performances sound, not just because of the absence of the hiss that one would expect from such ancient recordings, but their general regularity and cleanness in style, which may, of course, be a specific feature of the composer-pianist himself, who was noted for his 'classical' style and manner. The main oddity is the occasional gap between chords. The same manner is applied to Beethoven (op, 31/1 slow movement), Schumann op,. 82/9 and Chopin's Nocturne op. 15/2 and Étude op. 10/3. These last three pieces have, of course, some rubato, though less than one might expect. But it's all rather gentle; one misses the physical impact that modern pianists bring to such music. Is that a change of taste or a weakness of the process? *CB*

VARIOUS

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see review by David Hansell on p. 8

The Artistry of Barthold Kuijken *fl* with Sigiswald Kuijken *vln*, Lucy van Dael *viola*, Wieland Kuijken *cello & gamba*, Robert Kohnen & Ewald Demeyere *hpscd*, Luc Devos *fp* 75' 04"
Accent ACC 24023 (rec 1978-2006)
Telemann Fantasia 7 in D; **Couperin** Concert I; **Bach** Sonata in e; **CPE Bach** Sonata with Bc in D Wq 131; **Mozart** Flute Quartet in D, K 285; **Schubert** Intro & Var. on Trockne Blumen

This is a selection made by Barthold Kuijken himself from the large number of recordings he has made for Accent during the last thirty years, beginning with his first, the Telemann, dating from 1978. Most of the others are more recent, and after this one the music is presented in order of composition, ending with Schubert's lovely variations on *Trockne Blumen*. Any sense of culture shock as the music moves forward in time is considerably reduced by the really long silence left at the end of each work. A better title for the CD might be 'The Flutes of Barthold Kuijken', because most of his very interesting notes relate to his choice of instrument to produce an appropriate and distinctive sound for each piece. The music and playing on this CD are most attractive and left me wanting to hear the rest of the recordings from which the tracks are taken, as Accent presumably intended. *Victoria Helby*

Birds on fire: Jewish music for viols
Fretwork 74' 52"
Harmonia Mundi HMU 907478
Music by the Bassani & Lupi, S. Rossi & Orlando Gough

This recording, all 75 minutes of it, is compulsive listening throughout. Apart from the quality of the music and the playing, both of which are outstanding, there are several interesting features. Four of the 6-part fantasias by Thomas Lupo, together with one each of the three and four-part consorts make him a featured composer, and his music deserves greater recognition outside the world of viol players to whom it is already familiar. It has a marvellous intensity, with great variety of style within his normal sectional form, from the imitative polyphony of no 1 to the exciting bass divisions of no 9. The music by Leonora Duarte, and the two Hebrew songs by Salmone Rossi – beautifully and 'artlessly' sung by Jeremy Avis – are strikingly effective. Fretwork's trademark variety of articulation, pointed rhythms and intense legato, warmth of sound and control of dynamics make enthralling listening.

The earlier repertoire – Bassano, dances from the Lumley part-books including three versions of *Desperada* – are all played on Renaissance viols, and the marked difference in tone immediately and effectively discriminates the different world from which they come.

Finally, the title piece by Orlando Gough. Its three movements are spread through the recording, and are derived from a novel set in the 1930's about a group of middle class Jewish families in an Austrian holiday resort. At night the band plays Jewish tunes, and Gough's music captures the Palm Court atmosphere, infused with bitter-sweet harmonies and cross rhythms which reminded me of Kurt Weill. It's remarkable music, very powerful, and full of foreboding, uncomfortable to listen to, yet compelling. It receives a virtuoso performance from Fretwork. Their control is marvellous, and although the idiom recalls that of the string quartet, it unmistakeably uses the sound world offered by 6-part consort of viols. Each movement opens with a melody played in octaves, very high on the treble, and quickly picks up rhythmic figures in the bass, sometimes ostinato for a while, before changing and moving through all the part, using pizzicato, swirling, klezmer-inspired melodies played in octaves. Augmented seconds lend a flavour accentuated in the third movement by embellishments which sound almost Indian. The final movement becomes more uneasy and fragmented, rising to a restless climax, and then a sudden softness like a lament, finishing with a pizzicato chord.

After this, the final item is Rossi's setting of Psalm 128, sung in Hebrew – one of the psalms rejoicing in the bounty of God – an ironic close to an important and significant recording. Viol players should have it of course, but so should lots of other people. It's my recording of the year. Tell your friends! *Robert Oliver*

Historic Organ Sound Archive 1.East Anglia
Eight organists playing twelve organs of historic interest in East Anglia 73'
BIOS CD BI47712
from bios-membership@phmusic.co.uk: £10 plus £1.50 delivery

This CD is an introductory taster for the Historic Organ Sound Archive (HOSA), an important and enterprising project that the British Institute of Organ Studies (BIOS) have incorporated into their long-standing National Pipe Organ Register (NPOR). With the aid of a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund, sound recordings of 44 organs of historic interest in East Anglia were added to the NPOR, and are accessible (free) through http://npor.emma cam.ac.uk/hosa_info.shtml where there is also further information about the project and the organs involved. A representative example of the NPOR is that for Haslingfield, Cambridgeshire, (http://npor. emma.cam.ac.uk/cgi-bin/Rsearch.cgi?Fn=Rsearch&rec_index=C00877,where other examples of HOSA recordings not included on this CD can be found.

This CD is a representative example of those recordings, covering twelve organs ranging from c1750 to 1909, with most from the 19th century. It starts in grand style with Marsh's duet version of *The Grand Hallelujah in the Messiah* played on the 1756 Sneztler organ originally built for the Duke of Bedford and now in Hillington, Norfolk, and works its way toward Parry and Elgar. Generally speaking, care has gone into the choice of music to suit the organ, although several post-date the music played and I am surprised that CPE Bach and a piece by one of the eight organists were allowed to creep in. The playing is generally excellent, although there is an odd cadential ornament at the end of track 7 and an unnecessary and horribly booming pedal at the end of the manuals-only piece at track 10 (the later organs are from a period of English organ building where pedal divisions often consisted of 'Big Boom' and 'Little Boom' and are not England's finest contribution to the world of the organ). Although not all the instruments are in tip-top condition, they all sound good.

This is a commendable enterprise from BIOS, revealing one of the lesser-known aspects of the English organ world – the wealth of important small village organs. Credit must go to Anne Page and Peter Harrison for their musical and recording contribution. I hope funding becomes available to venture into other parts of the UK. At the moment, the only other organ on the NPOR to have recorded examples attached is the internationally important instrument in Adlington Hall, Cheshire. Purchase of this CD will no doubt aid future recordings, and is to be encouraged. There are some real gems to be found here – what is now needed is for more of instruments like this to be heard in concert, possibly weaning English organ audiences away from the need for noise. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*
An article by Anne Page on the project appeared in EMR 120, p. 4.

Elemente: Trigonale 2007 119' 11" 2 CDs
Raumklang RK 2705 ££

This contains excerpts from the fifth (1907) Trigonale Early Music Festival in Carinthia, south Austria. It certainly whets the appetite for the Festival and makes a delightful souvenir for those who attended, though it is themed annually (words and music c.1600 was this year's topic), so there's no guarantee that the same groups will appear next year. The samples seven concerts from The Hilliard Ensemble (Machaut & Peter Erskine), Ensemble Unicorn (Cyprus c.1400), La Fenice (Cazzato, Falconieri, Rognoni & Merulo), Concertino Amarilli (cantatas by Mancini and Platti), The Harmony of Nations (Telemann *Les Nations anciens et modernes*), Il Giardino Armonico (WF Bach Sinfonia in F – the surprise of the set – and Mozart K138) and Christine Schornsheim (Haydn Sonata in b, Hob XVI:32). I enjoyed it as an anthology: the performances are good, and it certainly offers more congenial listening than switching on Radio 3 or ClassicFM. *CB*

A History of requiem, part II: Campra & Michael Haydn Laudantes Consort, Guy Janssens 76' 53"
Cypres CYP1651
Campra Stephan Van Dyck, Ivan Goossens, Conor Biggs *ATB* M Haydn Elke Janssens, Sandra Náze, Philip Defrancq, Arnout Malfliet *SmSTB*

The Campra setting, new to me, is a striking, attractive work, proceeding from an austere opening via richly-varied responses to the promptings of the text to a positively jolly 'Lux aeterna', before solemnity returns. The rapid changes of tempo and scoring are conveyed by Guy Janssens' Belgian choir and orchestra with panache, and the slow, solemn passages are eloquent (though dynamic contrasts are limited). The choir is quite large (39 for the Campra, 27 for the Haydn) by comparison with the period-instrument orchestra (15 and 20 respec-

tively) and the recorded balance is uneven at times. There are raw edges to some of the solo singing in the Campra, but the performance comes over impressively.

The Michael Haydn Requiem (performed at a higher pitch than the Campra) is a very fine work, played and sung with due commitment and impressive style (though the pronunciation is Italianate). The important wind parts are well played, and the solo quartet are easier on the ear than their counterparts in the French work. The booklet, in tiny print, contains admirable essays in French and English about the works and full details of the performers. The Latin texts of the two Requiem settings, along with French and English translations, are neatly set out. *Peter Branscombe*

Musica Notturna: Invocation à la Nuit
Montserrat Figueras. Hespèrion XXI, La Capella Reial de Catalunya, Le Concert des Nations, Jordi Savall 150' 58" (2 CDs)
Alia Vox **AV 98861 A+B** (rec 1993-2008)*
Music by Bach, Beethoven, Cárceres, Charpentier, Falla, Guerrero, Handel, Haydn, Holborne, Marais, Monteverdi, Morales, Mozart, Mussorgsky, Pärt, Purcell, Salinas, Velasco & anon
*so some tracks presumably by Hespèrion XX

Fans of the Savall clan will lap this two CD set up. It includes tracks from previous recordings as well as novelties (including Master Savall improvising in tribute to Marais), covering everything from medieval chant to Arvo Pärt. Mrs, Miss and Mr Savall feature prominently (as one would expect, of course), in a tremendous range of musical styles – I would never have expected to hear Montserrat Figueras sing Mussorgsky, for example, but it works well, and I enjoyed it much more than I did her entry as Music at last year's Edinburgh Festival run of Orfeo. The following track (Pärt's arrangement of an Estonian lullaby) has seriously dented his reputation, as far as I'm concerned. This sort of compilation will make an obvious present for anyone you know is a fan, but it's actually unlikely to appeal very widely to our readers as a "must have". *BC*

Stella Matutina Vox clamantis, Weekend Guitar Trio, Jaan-Eik Tulve *dir* 60'
Mirare **MIR 064**

The recognizably vocal contribution is plainsong, apart from Perotin's *Beata viscera*. This is surrounded by electronic sounds which presumably should be credited to a composer. I don't myself see how electronics and chant can be 'various ways of saying the same thing' unless 'the same' becomes too vague to mean very much. Some tracks work for me better than others, but the disc does offer an intriguing aural experience. The track that moved me most was the Machaut, beautifully sung, mostly as written, but with a touch of purely vocal imagination in the middle. The weekend guitarists contribute two tracks where there is a closer relationship between raw and manipulated sound. *CB*

LETTERS

Dear Clifford,
With reference to my article 'Byrd on a wire' in *EMR* 125 (June 2008), through my own confusion I have misrepresented Richard Rastall's view on whether the choral or the instrumental version of *In manus tuas* came first. Contrary what I wrote (and indeed meant to write) Richard is of the currently minority opinion that the motet came first, not the version for consort. Discussing the same piece on the previous page anent an article by David Pinto, I did manage to get this right. Why I subsequently got my wires crossed, I have no idea, especially as I had cross-checked the two references.

On page 17, the photographer's name should be Janet Clayton, not Chapman.
Richard Turbet

Dear Clifford,
A response to Dave Bellinger's feature in the last issue, Dave, well done; heartily endorsed by all of us, I'm sure.

But you're rather too polite, and I would cautiously suggest, you are missing the broader picture. When my personal campaign against Radio 3's programming was in full swing a few years ago, I too had a lengthy and very friendly conversation with Roger Wright. A critical letter of mine also formed the basis of a conversation on Feedback, when he took on a very combative and supportive Roger Bolton. On both occasions, my complaint was general. The BBC's charter stipulates a balance in broadcast output, and, by its highly selective programming, Radio 3 is contravening the terms of that charter. It devotes disproportionate airtime to current favoured themes (in particular World Music and Jazz), wastes good airtime by pointless 'jolly' interviews with artists, and dramatically neglects a whole range of minority musical interests. The result is an impoverished presentation, and a trendy superficiality which continues to drive away many previously loyal listeners.

It's a normal human tendency to appreciatively note – perhaps instinctively to 'home in on' broadcast items which reflect ones personal enthusiasms, as it is also to note their absence. In my case, the former seemed to be quite frequent during the 1960s and 1970s. This was a time when Early Music was flavour of the month: a new experience promoted and enjoyed by the relatively young.

Early Music as a basis for real exploration, both in depth of understanding and breadth of experience, is now a minority interest. As such, along with a large number of others, and other soundworlds, it does not fit into Radio 3's agenda, which is increasingly based, rather pathetically, on an attempt to woo the young by catering for their perceived tastes. This practice is now deeply rooted at Radio 3, and I fear we badly need a new radio station, rather than a new Radio 3 controller.

There is no doubt that the unsatisfactory response from Roger Wright to what we would see as constructive criticism, reflects such an agenda. It is unlikely, however, that the likes of us will ever see the paperwork which would confirm this!
Colin Booth

MONTEVERDI

Articles & reviews

We have a cluster of Monteverdi matters in this issue: two lengthy book reviews by CB, and two articles by players of the violone. Peter McCarthy recently expounded the problems of the bass instrument in the Brandenburg Concertos; in this issue he begins a discussion on the instruments (not just the violone) in Monteverdi's music. We print the first part of his article now: the continuation in our next issue explores the 1610 Vespers. Bill Hunt was probably a bit embarrassed to be playing so much at 16' pitch in the Glyndebourne *Poppea* this summer, but kept his interest alive by worrying at some notational problems. To preserve our policy of including some music in each issue, I have selected from *Poppea* the song that emerges from Lucano and Nerone's duet in Act II. The two sing the praises of Poppea (in most productions, while drinking, which suits the music) then Lucano drops out, leaving Nerone to sing this tender little song. Another side of Nerone's character or a delusion of alcohol? In the Venice MS, the pitch jumps from D into E minor: I have transposed it down to D minor, which also makes a better transition with the next scene, and added a second violin part: a single violin part is unusual. As in the example of page 3, the figures are editorial unless circled, and the triple note-values are halved. (The Naples MS has additional music before and after this passage.)

MONTEVERDI'S LAST OPERAS

Ellen Rosand *Monteverdi's Last Operas: A Venetian Trilogy* California UP, 2007. xxiv + 447pp, £35.00 ISBN 978 0 520 24934 9

This is a hefty book (1.212kg, according to the delivery note), complementing Rosand's *Opera in Seventeenth-Century Venice* (California UP 1991), which is even longer, though with slightly larger print. Having admitted to the author in a brief email correspondence on another subject that I hadn't read every word of that, with the excuse that I'd bought it, not received a review-copy, so had no obligation to devour every word, I must reassure her that I have read all of this, apart from the Italian texts in the appendices. But as explained below, I have concentrated my remarks on *L'incoronatione di Poppea* – Rosand doesn't take the option of the alternative title *La coronatione di Poppea* of the 1643 scenario and four of the MS libretti (including the important Udine one, which lacks the initial article).

The book starts with the myth of Venice (a topic on which the author's husband is an expert), then goes into great detail on the librettos and the musical sources. There is a chapter on genre, form and taste. But the bulk of the study is devoted to an approach by character with detailed analysis of text, music and their combination. There are many documents in the appendices, most interestingly a printing of the 1643 scenario combined (but typographically distinguishable from) the headings in the Udine libretto, giving the only means of access to what might have been included in the 1642-3 run.

I've been thinking a lot about *Poppea* lately. As I wrote in *EMR* 124 (p. 13), I saw a student production in Birmingham in February, and on 11 June, after I had embarked on this book, I caught the production at Glyndebourne. I wasn't there as a critic (my thanks to Bill Hunt and Emmanuelle Haïm for the tickets), but I can't promise not to say anything about the performance in what follows. I have studied *Poppea* more than *Il ritorno d'Ulisse,* and it has exercised my editorial skills more than any other music that I have tackled. I have also had some experience in playing it, as well as being advisor to the run of performances and subsequent recording by Richard Hickox in 1989. I have so much of it in my head and fingertips (which is where I seem to feel music) that it is one of those pieces that I wouldn't put on my desert island list because I have it internalised. So I'll focus on that rather than *Ritorno* (to use Rosand's abbreviation: wouldn't an Italian expect the article as well?) or *Le nozze d'Enea,* of which only the libretto survives – to my way of thinking, considerable less than half of the total work.

The section that most interested me (but which many readers may skip) is on the sources. It is particularly valuable for sorting out the relationship between the two scores (Venice and Naples) and the libretti. I have worked on my edition on three separate occasions.[1] During the process, I came to a view on the relationship of sources that differs considerably from that which Rosand favours. I did not have a chance to argue it out in detail, and at the time the Udine libretto had not been discovered.[2] I would have liked to have seen the conclusion I drew from close study of the detailed variants between the two MS scores and the 1656 edition of the libretto put under Rosand's scrutiny. (I did not have access to the Naples libretti.) So it is a shame that she was not aware of my edition; her bibliography only mentions my *Ulisse* because Jane Glover based her performing edition on it.[3]

1. Unfortunately, Rosand seems not to know my edition; despite it being used for at least two recordings and many performances.
2. I still haven't seen it, and was surprised to see Rosand citing it on p 62 note 44 as published in 1997. It must have been after then when I agreed to edit the work for the *Opera Omnia* and asked its organiser, Rafaello Monterosso, for a copy of the MS; but by the time I withdrew my offer (does any edition of the work, let alone an academic one, need a realised continuo part?) he hadn't told me that there was a version in print.
3. I gave her permission to use it for one production, but am surprised that she is circulating a version based on it.

Rosand assumes that Busenello's 1656 publication is a revised version. My view was that, like subsequent librettists whose work had been mauled by composers, he probably published it to show what he had really written. In 1642/3, Monteverdi was too famous to criticise, but by 1656 he had been dead for over a decade and fashions had changed. So I assume that the sections not set in the Venice MS were rejected by the composer. When there are differences between the two MSS, I felt that the Naples MS represented the deliberate filling out of the omissions and, in cases of awkwardnesses in the Venice MS, making a more hasty correction that more careful thought could resolve better.[4] So the Venice MS might represent what Monteverdi wrote to a greater extent than Rosand implies. I wish I had time to take account of the information that she gives on the sources and revisit them to see if my hunch is still defensible. I admit, though, that the section on the sources in my introduction may be over-simplified.

Much of the book is taken up with how the composer treats the libretto. Pointing out how the text is repeated, shuffled around and made the basis of dramatic action and musical form is interesting, but not unexpected, and once the point is made, with the 1656 text at hand one can spot many examples for oneself quite easily. I imagine that the overlap of scenes (eg I i - iii) is more significant on the printed page than in the theatre. Something that surprises me in recent Italian musicology is the attention paid to verse forms. It is evidently of some importance, but do Italians really listen to the words of recitative closely enough to check what the metrical patterns are and whether they are broken?[5] As an English listener, I'm far more aware of rhyme than line-length: are Italians different?

It is disappointing that, having shown how Monteverdi adjusts the text for his own effect, Rosand doesn't discuss whether Monteverdi actually contradicts or at least questions it in his setting. Back in the mid-1960s, when I was a regular visitor to Sadlers Wells – before the company became the English National Opera and while Colin Davis and Charles Mackerras were the main conductors – I spent a lot of mental effort on a potential book on the difference between what a libretto seemed to be saying about the characters and what the composer made of them. In *Peter Grimes*, for instance, Peter is much more sympathetic in the opera than in the libretto. I found examples even in operas where librettist and composer were the same (eg *The Ring*). The problem in understanding *Poppea* is that the baddies win, and do so with music that is utterly sensuous, in a way that all but the most repressed find appealing. Did Monteverdi produce the effect (*Affekt?*) that Busenello was intending? 360 years later, stage directors add a third meaning, often working more from the libretto than the music, since they are usually verbally rather than musically literate.

Rosand is good on how the music treats some characters. Much is left to the singer playing Seneca to show how much we should accept his values. The music probably takes him more seriously than Busenello's text, though it needs a strong performance to make us ignore the build-up of the scorn of the soldiers ('pedante Seneca') and ridicule of Valletto. Ottone is more of a problem. On stage, he generally comes over as a bit of a wimp, like Purcell's Aeneas. Part of the problem is that he is usually cast as a countertenor, whose wimpishness is exaggerated by the tessitura. This leads to an issue that Rosand doesn't fully explore. One of the strengths of Alan Curtis's argument that Ottone's music was mostly by another composer is that it explains, if doesn't remedy, the Ottone problem.[6] The discrepancy between the pitch of the ritornelli and Ottone's part in I, i suggests that there the problem was resolved by transposition: the lower pitch of the ritornelli must be from the earlier stage of of the work, since the two-sharp signature of the vocal sections is uncharacteristic of Monteverdi, so they would have originally been a tone lower. That makes the allocation to countertenor even weaker, since it gives a more awkward range from an octave above middle C to the G below. Rosand suggests that a female alto might be more effective (p. 326) – but do we really need any more cross-dressing?[7] It is, however, possible that the ineffectiveness of the part may derive, not from the singer, but from some of his music not being by Monteverdi. That really did need more discussion, and the conclusion might undermine Rosand's revaluation of his role. Ideally, of course, music should be judged on its own merits. But when a section of a work which we thought was by a major composer (eg Purcell's *Tempest* or bits of Mozart's *Requiem*) turns out to be by someone else, then we are quick to see its faults.[8]

A major problem is Ottone's sudden change of affection from Poppea to Drusilla. Rosand assumes that it is sham, and may be right. Hitherto I'd assumed that it was something we had to accept as part of the squashing of events that took several years in reality into the Aristotelian single day, even though the Ottone/Drusilla story isn't historical. Does the music give any hint that Ottone is dissembling in I xiii when she accosts him out of the blue with her love? An obvious way would to have a contrast in key. Ottone begins the scene in C, Drusilla responds in B flat, but there is no consistent pattern until Ottone's last statement. D minor isn't particularly striking for 'The storm in my heart is still. Ottone shall be no-one's but Drusilla's' But then a sudden change to a major chord sequence for 'Drusilla is on my lips, but Poppea in my heart'. The falsity of Ottone's words to Drusilla rings on into the interval. (See music on next page.)

As the opera stands, I don't think that the music supports

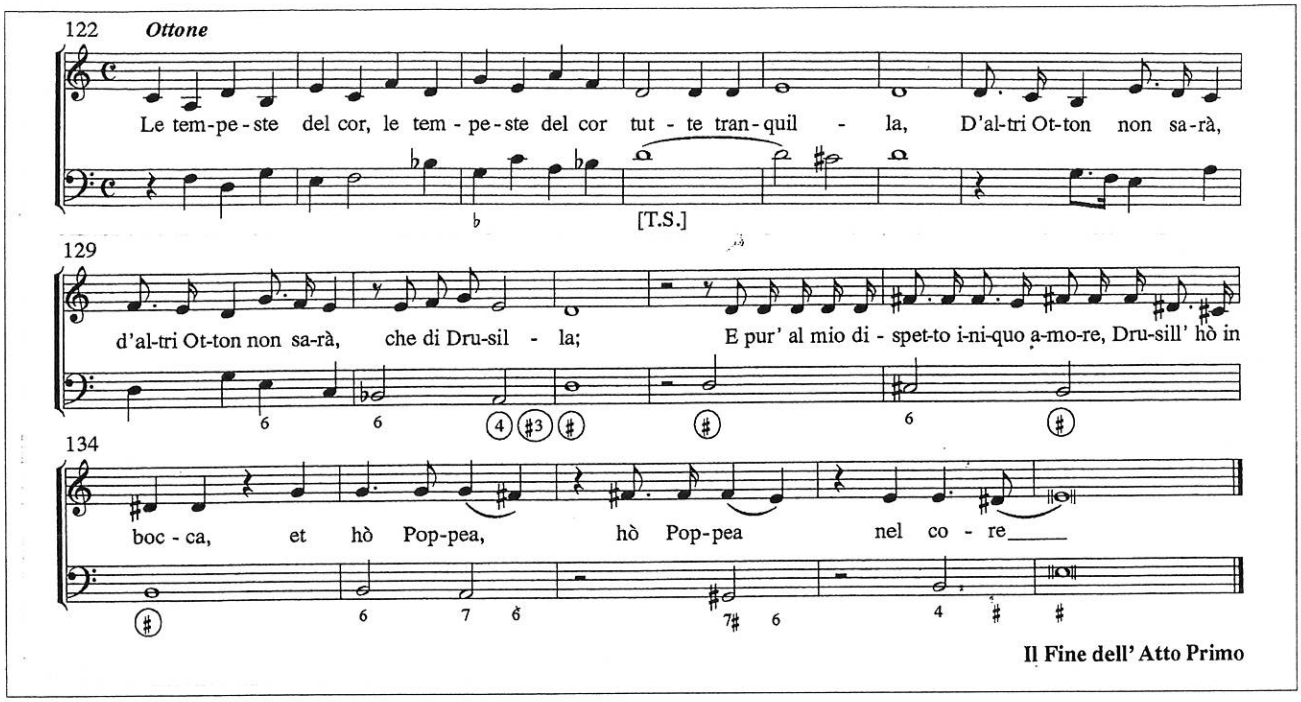
4. The current (1993) version of my edition doesn't have enough of a critical commentary to show examples; this information is much more detailed in its 1988 predecessor. I cut it on the assumption that a separate critical commentary would follow, but never found time.

5. How many English listeners are aware that *Messiah* has a prose text but *Samson*, written immediately after it, is in verse?

6. His '*La poppea impasticiata*, or, Who Wrote the Music to *L'Incoronazione* (1643)?' (*JAMS* 42, 1989, pp; 23-54) identified sections I had doubted on different grounds – the process of figuring the bass for them was more complex than figuring Monteverdi's basses is normally.

7. In addition to a female Nerone, Glyndebourne had men as Arnalta and Nutrice, one maybe modelled on Mrs Doubtfire.

8. Incidentally, someone (I think our cartoonist) suggested in a recent conversation that the comedy aspect of his wearing Drusilla's dress would be mitigated if both singers were of similar size.



Rosand's attempt to give Ottone a greater significance than usual. But it affects her discussion of the type of work *Poppea* is, compared with *Ritorno* and *Le nozze d'Enea.* The subtitle of the book promises/warns that the lost *Nozze* is part of the author's plot. The libretto survives, and much can be deduced from it without any music. But the unknown unknown[9] is how Monteverdi would have bent the words, and comparison of a libretto with an opera is not comparing like with like. It is perhaps symptomatic of Rosand's tendency to put too much faith in words. I'm not suggesting that Monteverdi doesn't set the words properly, but that his power in expressing them may give them a different meaning. *Ritorno* and *Nozze* are both tragedies. *Poppea*, however, has a happy end, so could qualify as a comedy (though isn't actually called that). A characteristic feature of a comedy is that it ends with a wedding.[10] *Poppea's* tragic element, Seneca's death, is got out of the way halfway through the work (though the common practice of having just one interval after it distorts the work, not so much because the three-act structure matters but because the death is then not followed immediately by Valletto & Damigella's light love-scene and Nerone & Lucano's 'Hor che Seneca é morte' scene, whose opening words are later taken up by Poppea (scene 12).[11] These are paralleled by two exiles, one happy, the other (Ottavia's) tragic.

However, if we consider the future of the two happy pairs – Nerone/Poppea and Ottone/Drusilla – we can see trouble ahead. In the former case, history tells us that Nerone kills Poppea and is killed himself a few years later. Over Ottone and Drusilla we can only surmise, but the happy-beyond-any-just-cause signature tune/leitmotiv 'O felice' will soon irritate the Poppea-in-my-heart Ottone to desperation. We've no evidence to tell what happens when Valletto and Damigella grow up.

But how do we take Nerone and Poppea's love-music? Rosand explains that Poppea wears the trousers (though in most productions she wears very little). But I can detect no irony in the love-music, and the point of the Nerone/Lucano scene[12] is surely to lead into the haunting 'Son rubini amorosi' (see p. 42). Poppea's ulterior motive is clear, and there is no doubt that Nerone is a very nasty piece of work – particularly in the Glyndebourne production, which showed levels of manic anger that I had never seen elsewhere but which are actually in the music, not superimposed on it. I think that for most people, the love music convinces. Rosand quotes (p. 189) Monteverdi's famous letter about being moved by men and women, not winds – nor, probably, by Gods or abstractions: I guess that Monteverdi didn't set the Prologue himself because he wasn't interested, but that when he met a love-scene he set it with all the passion he knew (and we know from so much of his music how passionate he was). My assumption is that he was not concerning himself with any overall message the opera may have had, just setting each scene with his usual ability to make each phrase live in the mind with powerful music.

9. Since a proof-reader thought this a misprint, perhaps I should mention the name Rumsfeld.

10. I have not embarked on a study of classical, renaissance and Italian dramatic theory; what comes to mind, apart from recollections of a literary education, is chiefly Tippett's writings on his profound comedy *A Midsummer Marriage* (another opera worthy of study for the relationship between the composer's own text and music).

11. I like the idea that the identical openings might suggest that the scenes take place at the same time.

12. A marvellous duet, among the finest scenes in the opera, but often distorted by being given a homosexual interpretation: it is surely an exchange between a couple of friends, who have often picked up women together in a pub and exchanged notes afterwards, rejoicing in the good fortune of one of them. The Glyndebourne interpretation was inexplicable. Lucano was one of a group – rule number one in opera production: a solo should look as well as sound like a solo, and similarly a duet: if the composer had wanted an ensemble he would have written it. By the end of the scene, things got rough. A bath was pushed on stage by a few of the 50 extras (no financial constraints!) – at least Seneca's corpse wasn't still in it – and they drowned him. The bath remained so that in subsequent scenes the female soloists could titillate the audience by their attempts to get in and out without revealing all.

This presents problems for those staging the work. They need to look at it as a whole but (as I mentioned above) tend to build their ideas on the words themselves, not the words as interpreted by the composer. Hence all sorts of concepts are imposed on the music that it doesn't support, and the tendency to see the Prologue as the key to the work is a mistake. They are not helped by the confused end, which reminds me of another work I have edited, Purcell's *King Arthur*. There is no problem with the first four acts: there is no autograph, but a MS by a known and reliable copyist that supplies everything except the instrumental pieces, which were already available in print. But the coherence falls apart in Act V, and the conclusion Peter Holman and I drew is that it was put together hastily and that a coherent manuscript never existed. In *King Arthur* another composer was also involved, and that seems to have been the case in *Poppea* too. So we don't know how Monteverdi would have ended the opera. He may have been too ill and not involved. But he may have lost interest and delegated the end, as the Prologue, to someone else. To end with a love duet seems quite Monteverdian, and even if the text was borrowed, that does not mean that the music was: Rosand accepts its authenticity.[13]

Rosand doesn't sum up the opera: what is it about? what does it mean as a whole? why is it so popular? My attempt at a brief conclusion from 1983 was:

> Busenello makes Amor quote the famous final line of Dante's Divine Comedy:
>
> *Amor che move il sol e l'altre stelle*
>
> (Love which moves the sun and the other stars).
>
> His intention is ironic: he is thinking of sexual passion, not divine love. But Monteverdi transforms it by the power of his music so that, despite the misdeed and intrigues of the opera, he bridges the gap between Busenello's and Dante's concept of love. That is a possible interpretation... Each performer will have different perceptions of the work as a whole.

Now I'm a bit more cynical and that is far too simplistic. Perhaps Monteverdi was concerned with showing three couples with different sorts of relationships, along with the unattached Seneca, whose life doesn't come across as very attractive. Cynicism is embodied in Arnalta and Nutrice, a tone set by the soldiers in Act I scene ii. But it is the love music (including the Nerone/Lucano duet) that dominates the work and which we chiefly enjoy, despite the death of Seneca and the lament of the embittered Ottavia (another nasty character). Why does so cynical a libretto produces so positive an opera?

I've gone off on my own thoughts in parallel with Rosand's book. I thoroughly recommend it. Much of its value is in the detail, which isn't susceptible to summary, and I don't want to bore readers with a bar-by-bar discussion on whether my emphasis might be slightly different from hers. She has recently won a Distinguished Achievement Award from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to enable her to create a Baroque opera company for Yale undergraduates. I hope she enjoys testing scholarship against performance; a report after a few years on how it may change her views would be interesting.

A few more comments on Glyndebourne, though I have left the review to Andrew Benson-Wilson. My criticism of the over-realistic amorous activity is very relevant, together with the problems of lesbian overtones I mentioned in *EMR* 124. Also the belief that 'the answer is in the prologue' (the director quoted in *The Guardian* 16 May, p. 13) is surely wrong: he's fallen into the trap of directing the libretto, not the opera. It may be Busenello's clue to the meaning, but Monteverdi was probably not interested enough to write its music himself. Following from that is the superfluous presence of Amore throughout, undermining the drama with the implication of her control – 'What fools these poor mortals be!' The opening (the curtain goes up on an audience watching the audience) was striking but of no obvious meaning related to the opera, and similarly the balancing close, with the 50 members smothered by Poppea's train.

The scoring was odd. The pit was full of instruments that seemed more appropriate to *Orfeo* than *Poppea*, with crescendos and diminuendos in the recitative achieved with the addition and subtraction of instruments like a Victorian organist changing stops every few notes of a hymn. When, twenty years ago, Richard Hickox asked me for advice on directing the work, my first suggestion was that it shouldn't be conducted. He directed rehearsals (though the absence of any musical direction between the initial week of musical rehearsals and the Sitzprobe was a disaster from which the performance didn't fully recover). but played second harpsichord at the performances. I don't know how much control Emmanuele Haïm had at Glyndebourne, but it was clear from our brief conversation that major decisions were taken without consultation. A disadvantage of working in a major opera house, where the musical director is lower in the pecking order than the stage director.

MONTEVERDI COMPANION

The Cambridge Companion to Monteverdi **edited by John Whenham and Richard Wistreich** Cambridge UP, 2007, xxi + 358 pp. hb £48.00 ISBN 978 -0 521 87525 7; pb £19.99 ISBN 978 0 521 697898 9

My apologies for the delayed review of this. Regular receipt of relevant publications from both Oxford and Cambridge has broken down over the last year or two. In the former case, it's probably because Oxford music books are now published several thousand miles west; Cambridge is still about 15 miles away, but I probably fell from their circulation list of new publications because I hadn't responded a couple of times when there was nothing relevant – though the person in charge of music books did once comment that I was rather critical, so it might have been intentional. I can imagine that my rather personal approach could be thought inappropriate, though it can be

13. I doubt whether the additional music from the Naples MS has any relevance – it's a long opera anyway, so I don't see the attraction in finding unnecessary music.

justified by arguing that I'm just more open about how I reached my present attitudes.

Any excess disapproval of academic books usually comes because I approach them from outside the academic world. I think that musicologists should be suspicious of the pressure to cut themselves off from those who make music and those who listen, in favour of a closer association with other academic disciplines; sometimes they keep their musical and musicological lives apart. You can theorise about history without doing anything to make it, but you miss the point of music if you don't somehow get inside it or it doesn't get inside you, and use that experience to inform your musicological investigation. Monteverdi is a particularly fascinating composer to study, since so there was so much change going on in his lifetime that is obvious now to even the most unreflective of listeners so that he is (or can be enticed to be) curious about why and how.

This is undoubtedly the best book available that covers both life and works. The allocation to a variety of contributors makes the cover less systematic than a single-author work might have been, but allows for different emphases which are stimulating rather than annoying. There are chapters on the major periods of his life, the lack of biographical detail being replaced by insight into his working and cultural surroundings. Technical terms are only used when necessary, and academic jargon is generally avoided: it is thickest in the chapter on Monteverdi and new musicologies. (Is musicology really so hidebound that it needs to be pluralised?) A potentially valuable feature is the selection of some individual pieces for more detailed study.

There is a tendency for musicologists to concentrate on form. My awareness of analysis in my early years was mostly reading and hearing[14] how symphonies worked. It is difficult to when information goes beyond what is useful in that it makes a work more satisfying, powerful, meaningful and enjoyable. How far into the dissection process should it go? A requirement of a good scholar is the urge to carry on an investigation as far as possible, as I often find in a small way by worrying at an insignificant point to try to find a conclusion.[15] Pulling a work apart may be useful if it encourages a composer to learn and use the knowledge to write different music of his own, but without copious sketches one reaches the point where analysis becomes surmise. Schenker tried to make analysis more organic, but his approach has become an esoteric branch of musicology which seems to have got out of hand. Some attempts to get inside the music here work better than others. The first is Geoffrew Chew on *Ecco mormorar l'onde* (Book II), drawing attention a variety of aspects, including its relationship to Wert and how it works harmonically. Massimo Ossi takes *Ahi, come a un vago* (Book V). Like Chew's contribution, this is a sophisticated study, but didn't work for me for reasons that are entirely my fault: though I've heard it, it isn't etched on my mind, but without that, I am trying to absorb facts that I cannot evaluate against experience. Taking the Leavis 'yes but' approach to detailed reading, I can only accept, not question. I can, however, do that with Jeffrey Kurtzman on the 1610 *Laetatus sum*, and that may be why I am disappointed by it. It is a pity that he chose a movement that is structurally so clear, then write about that aspect. The most striking feature is what he calls a walking (rather than a running) bass. Its meaning comes from how it is performed: lightly and joyfully (*Laetatus sum* – I'm happy!) So don't weigh it down with bass violin violone and curtal: theorbo and organ (probably not sustaining and with minimal chords) are enough. The melismatic treatment of *illuc* and *propter* that troubles Kurtzman is not because Monteverdi is reacting to those words in particular but taking the opportunity to continue the joyful theme with neutral words, which are set virtually in isolation from the phrases they introduce.

Tim Carter approaches the *Lamento della ninfa* with the expected subtlety. The problem for the performer is making sense of a ground, which normally works by imposing a fixed tempo as well as harmony, with the soprano's *tempo dell'affetto dell'animo e non a quello della mano.* The fact that the 1638 edition prints a score for the three male singers and continuo (a point that Carter might have mentioned) does suggest that they needed, in a modern way, to see what was happening: singers normally had partbooks. John Whenham takes the Magnificat a8 from *Selva morale*; it is one of the few places where editions are mentioned, though I now think that Andrew Parrott's solution for the missing parts needs adjusting (see below). Whenham raises the question of whether double-choir psalms (loosely including Magnficats as psalms) were always sung in the tub – the pulpit big enough for a great 'company of preachers' (at least for a dozen or so) on the south east side of the crossing. My hunch is that the practice was a relic from Willaert's much simpler scoring, which works with Monteverdi's *Credidi* and *Memento* or (much later), Cavalli's 1675 settings, but not with psalms needing soloists and continuo. Further research is needed. It is a pity that Ellen Rosand duplicates the discussion of the last scene of *Il ritorno d'Ulisse* from her book (reviewed above) rather than offering something new.

The book begins with Anthony Pryer on 'Approaching Monteverdi: his cultures and ours', which could easily have been unreadably 'new musicology' but is in fact extremely stimulating. One minor but intriguing point is that Monteverdi was actually born a Spanish citizen, in that Cremona lay in Milanese territory and Milan was, like Naples, under the control of the Spanish Habsburgs, which may perhaps have some as-yet unexplored relationship with the dedication of his 1638 and 1640/41

14. Before I discovered Tovey, my awareness of how music was arranged came chiefly from listening to Anthony Hopkins' radio series *Talking about music*, though I eventually gave him up when he made the break between Elgar's *Introduction* and *Allegro* in the wrong place and just sent an acknowledgment saying he didn't reply to letters when I sent one to point it out.

15. A current example is why a few bars in Handel's *Funeral Anthem* have A flats in Chrysander and more modern editions, except HHA and the forthcoming one from Carus, though they are not present in the main sources(HHA numbering, mov. 3 bars 21-30). Curiously, the Bärenreiter vocal score of the *Israel in Egypt* version based on HHA has some of these flats reinstated! While there is no doubt which is correct, I'd love to have time to chase how the mistake arose.

publications to the Austrian branch of the family. I'm not entirely convinced by a relationship of *Possente spirto* to the passamezzo antico, even if a D and G were added between Pryer's opening schematic D and F; I think rather that Monteverdi's pervasive harmonic awareness is related to the standard bass-patterns.

One of the contributors suggested that I should have been asked to write the final chapter on performance practice. Having written one for the forthcoming CUP Handel Encyclopaedia at very short notice and with no time to chase references to back up my beliefs, I am relieved that I wasn't. I'm fascinated by Richard Wistreich's article, which is utterly unlike what I would have written. It gives some specific details for modern practice, but primarily describes the expectations of performers at the time. It is useful to be told of the three styles of singing, chamber, church and open-air: obvious, but it is information that is not widely regarded.[16] I'm not sure if I would say that the normal instrumentation 'in Giovanni Gabrieli's sacred concertos is about eight – two violins or violas, two cornettos and four trombones', even though I'm quoted as authority: strings are much rarer than wind, and if numbers increase, there are more cornetts and particularly trombones, not strings (p. 277).[17] On p. 278, the wording that ad lib *viole (da braccio*, but lower members of the family, not violins) double the voices is misleading: it is clear from the pair of 'doubling' parts printed by mistake in *Selva morale* for the Magnificat a8 that they do not exactly double. Hugh Keyte has tried to work out rules for similar doublings notated by Gabrieli, but my hunch is that there was no full score and they were copied out from a continuo part which may or may not have had a sketchy *partitura* on a stave or two above it, but without clear voice-leading.

There is one chapter missing. Most writings about music miss what it is that really gets inside the emotions of listeners. I'd be delighted if, by 2010, some scholar were to survey a wide sample of those who know the 1610 *Vespers* well, either as performers or listeners, and get them to say, not so much in general what they like about it (most responses would be too vague to be useful), but which bits stick in their minds or are highlights. I choose that work, if work in the singular it be, because there will obviously be lots of performances coming up, and apart from that, it is the work that people are most likely to have performed as well as heard. My standard programme note for the work mentions particularly the Glorias: Monteverdi does something special for them. The first psalm and closing Magnificat both drop to solo tenor and continuo, but with no other resemblance. *Nisi Dominus* has the magical slip into an E flat chord, and the lower tessitura drops a hint that it might be sung *piano* as well. I find it difficult to keep my eyes dry at the 'Beata es' of *Audi coelum*, and it's certainly nothing to do with any veneration of the Virgin. I could go on. Others may have completely different touching points to the music. Understanding this seems to me as important as understanding the form, and may take us nearer to what the music is about that more formal approaches.

A few specific points.

p. 30. Tim Carter is right to justify trying to see behind the printed sources. Printers of the church music evidently worked from parts, not scores. An obvious example is in the 1610 *Duo Seraphim*, where bars 39-40 are omitted from the continuo: if there was any proof-reading against a score, that couldn't have happened, and it raises the question whether the printer worked from parts that had already been used (in which case two different versions were mixed) or whether they were specially copied, which would mean that they were not properly checked before delivery to the publisher. In either case, an editor should be alert to the sort of errors likely in an edition issued with no score available and be more confident in emending awkward passages.[18] I don't think that other editors have yet realised the significance of the instrumental parts of Magnificat II of the *Selve morale*: it has ramifications in other work from the publication as well such as the Gloria a7 and *Laudate Dominum I*.

p. 122. A nice example of stating the obvious and then writing a footnote to justify it. Excellent scholar though he be, one doesn't have to quote John Whenham to justify two stage sets for Orfeo: it's absolutely obvious in the stage directions, the use of the Prologue's ritornello at the end of Act II and beginning of Act V, and the presence of cornetts and sackbuts only in Acts III & IV: the idea was not discovered by him in 1986!

p. 152. For Jeffrey Kurtzman to say that the short cantus firmus in the *Sonata sopra Santa Maria*[19] appears eleven times without mentioning that each time slightly differently reinforces the feeling that his chapter seems to be written for a less sophisticated market: perhaps the specifications he received with his commission were not explicit enough. And the last instruments I'd mention to double in psalms (p. 153) are flutes or recorders: there is, as far as I know, minimal evidence for them being normally used in church music, and the special effect is lost if they are anticipated.[20] An assumption of no harpsichords in church might not be entirely true. In some places, a

16. The question of church singing being loud is discussed by Wistreich in *Early Music* 31 (2003), pp. 64-80: I had forgotten the reference when mentioning the point in passing a few issues ago. I assume that, if the 1610 *Vespers* had been performed in a private chapel, it would have been the chamber, not the church manner that was appropriate.

17. I hadn't played and edited as much Gabrieli in 1975 as I have since I compiled the table of explicit Gabrieli scorings that Peter Holman and I published in *Early Music* 3 (1975), pp. 25-32 I would suggest that the total number of violins did not exceed those needed for Gabrieli's *Sonata for three violins* and if more instruments were needed, they would be cornetts and trombones. But there seems to have been a complete change in how vocal and instrumental forces were used between Gabrieli and Monteverdi.

18. One advantage of the invention of regular barring was that it enabled a scribe or printer to tot up the number of bars as a check against dittograph or haplography.

19. Kurtzman changes the spelling of *Santa* in the 1610 editions titles to the Latin underlaid text *Sancta*.

20. When asked to advise on instrumentation for the *Vespers*, I always say 'don't book recorder players' to avoid the temptation to use them indiscriminately. There are usually a couple of players among the band or singers who can play their brief parts, probably the two spare cornett and sackbut players.

strangely literal interpretation of the ban on organs during Lent permitted the harpsichord as a substitute, and we read on p. 176 that Duval heard a mass at the Frari in 1608 in which spinets participated (together with oboes – one needs the exact word to make sense of that!)

p. 200-202. I was initially suspicious that we are meant to hear the bass of the 'O Maria' section of *Exultent caeli* as a passacaglia. I had previously thought of the section being archaically modal, but the interrupted passacaglia makes more sense: instead of the seventh chord being the tonic, it stays on the dominant. But I don't buy John Whenham's idea that since the words come from two different feasts, users would have picked out what is relevant to the occasion, like some items in Byrd's *Gradualia*! More likely, Monteverdi was choosing a text from various sources to fit any Marian occasion.

210. Surely the idea of two choirs both being placed in the tub goes back primarily to James Moore rather than David Bryant; both published their research in 1981, but Moore's thesis is dated 1979 and the unreadable score that is vol. 2 of the UMI publication was used as early as 1976 as source in the preparation for a BBC Cavalli Vespers at the Brompton Oratory with Roger Norrington in 1976 .[21]

p. 215. Those who perform a Monteverdi *Christmas Vespers* are reminded by John Whenham that on Christmas Eve the psalms were the *Cinque Laudete*; and I had forgotten that Moore mentions that the Doge celebrated vespers on Christmas Day across the water at S. Giorgio Maggiore, probably to chant; presumably the concertato forces had a rest after their efforts over the previous 24 hours.

p. 259. There doesn't seem to be anything odd in performing *Il combattimento* as an anti-war gesture: it may be misunderstanding the piece as written (I suspect that in 1624 the point, apart from the novelty of the martial music, was the pathos of the story, not that war was wrong, though the Muslim-Christian relationship is a more positive angle). Virtually everything staged is now transformed (and often distorted) into a different, often contemporary situation; see the review of Handel's *Samson* elsewhere in this issue.

There is a very thorough list of works in chronological order. References in the general index give the date, so it isn't too difficult to find titles whose date you do not know. I am particularly grateful that, for once, my editions are treated seriously and mostly mentioned along with the Collected Works and a small selection of others (though we have more than is mentioned there, including the 1610 Mass and Magnificat a6, at original pitch and transposed to allow for the *chiavette*). To repeat information from *EMR* 124, p. 12, Coppini's contrafacta of Monteverdi's madrigals are downloadable from www.jpj.dk/coppini.htm

Had I been asked to write a chapter, I would have liked to attempt one on the publication of Monteverdi's music, from the original editions until now. Wistreich's concluding paragraph to the book (p. 279) states: 'Interestingly, the nub of the challenge to performers comes back, finally, to the negotiations that are made at the interface between the musicians and the notation from which they read.' What was printed in Monteverdi's lifetime must tell us something about how musicians performed it: there are modern performing decisions that couldn't be made if you were using a set of the 1610 *Vespers* print, even if you do copy out a few parts, because the layout doesn't work. Some options can far too easily done from a modern score. It would be unreasonable to expect all performances to be from facsimiles. Monteverdi's music deserves the widest possible circulation, and personally I'm delighted that even more choirs will have a chance to experience the *Vespers* first hand, even though I'm thoroughly sceptical about the need for a choir at all. Compromise is necessary, as it is for playing Beethoven or early Stravinsky with a modern orchestra. (Shouldn't the bassoon at the opening of *The Rite of Spring* sound as if it's beyond its range – though that might be interpreted to justify the top Ds on the cornetti and violins in *Deposuit*!) But my experience of Monteverdi over the last half century (I think I first heard the *Vespers* in 1959) has been influenced enormously by the editions. Wistreich's previous sentence begins: 'The assimilation of historically informed performance skills into contemporary cultural frameworks creates challenging juxtapositions that require creativity and adaptability of musicians now, no less than other kinds of musical demands must have done in Monteverdi's time.' He concludes. after the sentence previously quoted: 'The continuing exploration of these processes in performance offers our best chance of appreciating the complexity of the relationship between composer, performer and listener, and places Monteverdi's music where it was always expected to be – at the centre of active performative interactions between all the participants.' It's a pity that the last sentence wasn't included in the instructions for contributors (though with some periphrasis for *performative*). I think that the book doesn't quite address itself to those three categories. But there is nevertheless a wealth of information and ideas here to make it essential for performers and listener as well as scholars – I'm not sure about composers. *CB*

21. I have no desire to diminish David's research; I knew him round about that time and he was very helpful with information on Gabrieli's *Dulcis Jesu*.

CLAUDIO MONTEVERDI'S *CONTRABASSO DA GAMBA*

Peter McCarthy

Two frequently performed works by Monteverdi specify a *contrabasso da gamba*: the partbooks of the *Sanctissimae Virgini Missa Senis Vocibus Ac Vesperae* published in 1610 and *Il Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda*, first performed for Signor Girolamo Mozzenigo in the Carnival of 1624, but published in 1638. It is the 1638 preface which refers to the *contrabasso da gamba*. Modern understanding of the word *contrabasso* suggests an instrument transposing down an octave, but words change in meaning over time. An Elizabethan audience may not have understood the word *gay* in the same way it might be interpreted today. Bowed bass doubling of the bass line in music at the beginning of the 17th century is already a contentious issue; doubling of the bass line at a lower octave would be surprising.

Il Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda was published in the eighth book of madrigals. Monteverdi is explicit that the *contrabasso da gamba* functions as an 8ft continuo instrument. The preface states 'gli ustrumenti, cioe quattro viole da brazzo, Soprano, Alto, Tenore, & Basso, et contrabasso da gamba, che continuera con il Clavicembalo, doveranno essere tocchi ad imitatione delle pasioni del' oratione'. (The instruments, four of the violin family – soprano, alto, tenor and bass – and a large *viola da gamba*, which plays continuo with the harpsichord, should be played in imitation of the passion of the words)[22].

The basso continuo partbook contains a complete score, but the continuo part also appears, with some differences, in the tenor part book. Andrea Bornstein[23] suggests that the *contrabasso da gamba* may have played from the bass line in the tenor part book. It is also plausible that it was played looking over the cembalist's shoulder. Figures would help if chords seemed a good idea. They are not impossible on the *contrabasso da gamba*: it is just a large viol.

With apologies for an anachronistic example, we know that J. S. Bach wrote out a violone part for first movement only of the early version of the 5th Brandenburg Concerto. The extensive figuration for the cembalo makes it difficult to pick out a bass line in that movement. The violone player may have spotted that the other ripienists were not about to play in the slow movement. It is straightforward to pick out a part from the cembalo part in the third movement and also when to come in – with the other ripienists. The 6 string G violone survived well into the 18th century in the German speaking countries.

What are the quattro viole da brazzo? Adriano Banchieri[24] gives tunings for 'gli Violini da braccio con quattro [corde]' as follows:

primo violino per il basso G d a e',
secondo violino accordato con i'terzo amendui per tenore, & alto d g d' a'
ultimo violino per il canto g d' a' e''

The ranges of the instrumental parts in the original basso continuo score of *Combattimento* are:

basso G to c' except for one F# in bar 146.
tenore f to b'
alto a to g''
soprano d' to g''
The continuo part descends to D between the concerted sections.

The low F# in the basso da brazzo line (not a separate line in the continuo book) is uncontroversial. Two other instruments cover it – cembalo and *contrabasso da gamba* – and since the *basso da braccia* has more than one possibility of tuning, editing the part to suit and using Banchieri's tuning might seem preferable in a piece that uses the low G so much. However, Praetorius also gives tunings for the Bass *Viola da Braccio*, two in fact: C G d a and F c g d'. F#, no problem. He does not offer a basso tuning starting on G and also differs from Banchieri in the tenor – c g d' a'

Banchieri's tuning for the *violone da gamba* is G' C F A d g, sometimes referred to now as G violone tuning (as opposed to D). This is the instrument Monteverdi calls the *contrabasso da gamba* in the *Combattimento* preface. An instrument by Ventura Linarol survives in the Vienna Kuntshistoriche Museum. It's total height is 173cm and body length 100cm. My copy of the Linarol has a string length of 94cm that permits G' to be easily obtained with an uncovered gut string without making it impossible to tune the top string to g. Total range on the fretted area of the fingerboard is G' to d'; including the notes that are easily obtained above the frets with the first finger still on the highest fret - G' to f'; the most facile range (ignoring the least accessible 6th string) C to f': more than enough for *Combattimento* and the exact range of the *basso da brazzo* F-clef parts in the Vespers.

A performance of *Combattimento* where cello or bass violin accompanies the singers with the cembalo and a 16ft bass instrument doubles it at the octave when the other string instruments play simply stands history on it's head.

However, one cannot deny that 16ft pitches were played in the 17th century. Organists could do it readily and the existence of large sub-bass instruments is incontrovertibly documented in contemporary sources. When were these instruments used? In the *Conclusioni nel suono dell'organo* (1609) Banchieri gives two tunings for the violone: the *violone da gamba* as above and also the 'violone in contrabasso', tuned D' G' C F A d. This low D tuning is

22. Translation by Andrea Bornstein from the King's Music revised edition of 2005. Subsequent references are to this edition.

23. in his complete edition of Book VIII; Ut Orpheus Edizioni, Rome, 2000

24 *Regola Per Accordare*, 1609

only mentioned twice before 1737: by Michael Praetorious in the 2nd volume of *Syntagam Musicum* published in 1620 at Wolfenbüttel and by Banchieri in 1609 (but omitted from the 1611 edition). Perhaps the example that Banchieri knew had ceased to exist by 1611. Zacconi only mentions the higher tuning for the 'basso di viola da gamba' in his Prattica di Musica of 1592.

Low tunings up to 1620:

1528	G' C F A d g	Agricola WITTENBURG
1546	G' C F A d g	Gerle NUREMBERG [25]
	A' D G B e a	
1592	G' C F A d g	Zacconi VENICE
1609		Banchieri BOLOGNA
	G' C F A d g	*violone da gamba*
	D' G' C E A d	*violone in contrabasso*
1611		Banchieri BOLOGNA
	G' C F A d g	*prima viola basso*
	lower tuning omitted	
1613	G' C F A d g	Cerone NAPLES
	A' D G B e a	
1620		Praetorius WOLFENBÜTTEL
	G' C F(E) A d g	*klein bass viol da gamba*
	F'# B' E A d g	*klein bass viol da gamba*
	A' D G B e a	*klein bass viol da gamba*
	F' C G d a	*gross quint bass*
	D' E' A' D G	*gar gross bass viol*
	E' A' D G c	*gross bass viol da gamba*
	D' G' C E A d	*gross bass viol da gamba*
	E' A' D G c f	*gross bass viol da gamba*

(Note that Praetorius calls the tuning D G c e a d' the *tenor viol da gamba*!)

Praetorius' working pitch was most likely Venetian cornetto pitch a=c.470[26], a little more than a semitone above a440. He worked at a time when a separation of a tone between what he called *ChorThon* (lower) and *Cammer-Thon* (higher) was commonplace. Thus, two tunings a tone apart could be the same instrument. Confusingly, the meaning of these terms changed over time.

Praetorius was trying to be really comprehensive. He gives three variants on the 'G violone' tuning. Two are one tone apart: they could be the same instrument. The gross quint bass is another 8ft tuning, as it reaches the top of the bass clef, but tuned more appropriately for those that preferred to play instruments tuned in 5ths. He includes it with the *da braccio* instruments.

The lowest strings of these instruments are very difficult to access; the gyrations required to play the bottom string of the viola da gamba become much greater as the size of the instrument increases. The *gross bass viol da gamba* and the *gar gross bass viol* tunings are clearly 16ft instruments as the top strings only just make it into the lower reaches of the bass clef except for E' A' D G c f. It is clear he knew of at least one 5 string and one 6 string instrument, used with alternative tunings by different musicians, or four large basses in each of these four tunings.

On page 47 of *De Organographia* Praetorius says 'Dieweil aber uff den gar grossen Bassgeigen oder Violonen wegen der grossen lenge und distanz zwischen dem obristen Kragnebunde und dem untern Steige die kleinen saiten ausshalten können' (Because of the great length and distance of the strings between the nut and the bridge of the very large bassgeiges and violones the thin strings can rarely take the strain.) Sybil Marcuse's measurement of the string length of the 16ft instruments in plates V and VI of the *Theatrum Instrumentorum* comes to 130 cm.[27] This is 25 cm longer than a 'standard' orchestral bass string length and it cannot be emphasised enough to the non bass-player how limited a contribution to concerted music an instrument this size can make, in terms of numbers of notes played. On a 'standard' size, the hand can stretch one tone. Adding 25 cms reduces that to a semitone, the arm stretched above the head to hold down the strings. One such instrument survives in storage at the Museum of Musical Instruments, Brussels. It was formerly part of the Count Pietro Correr's collection in Venice. It is unlabelled but attributed to Pietro Zenato (Treviso) c.1620.[28]

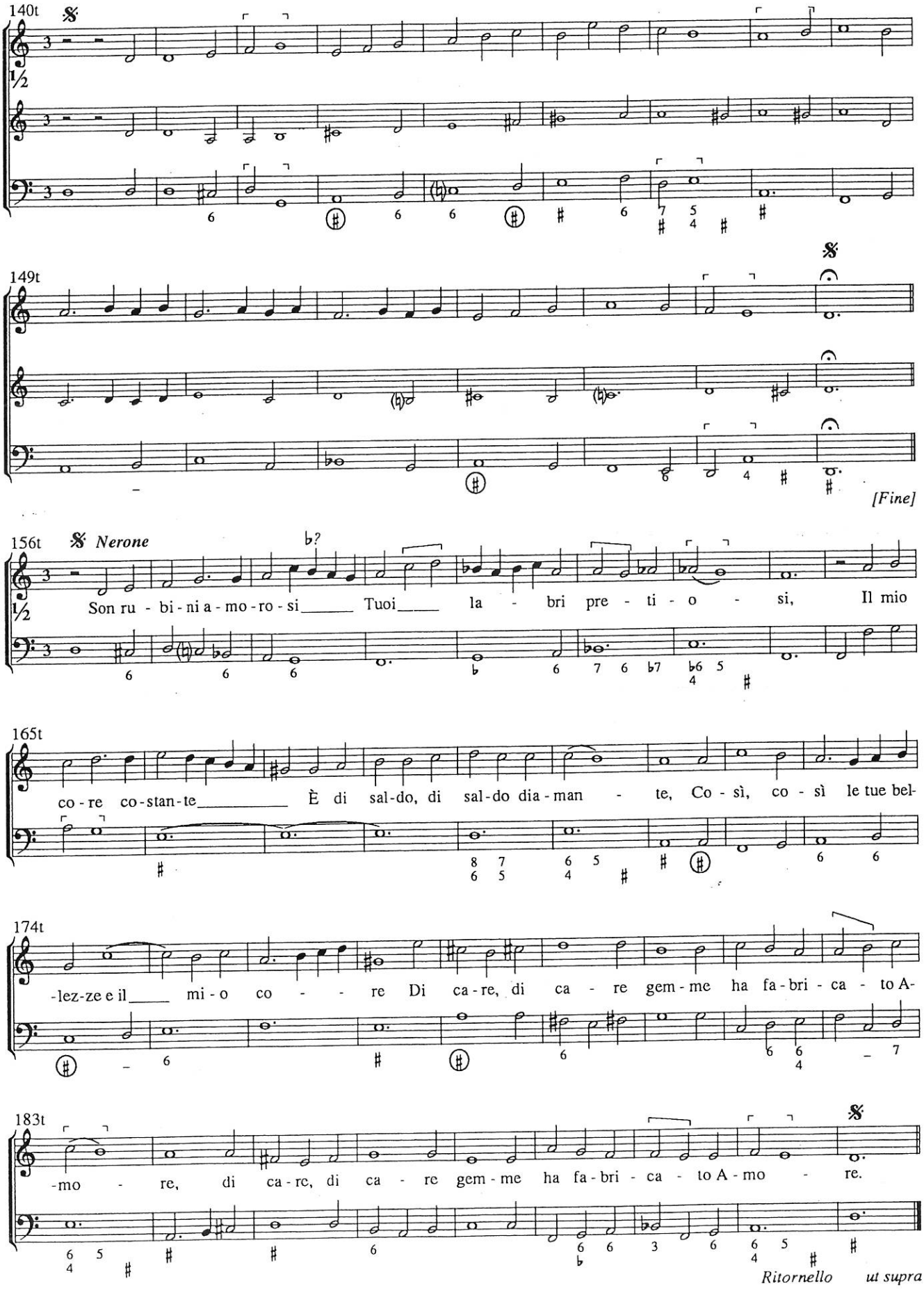
The addition of this 16ft sonority in a very large ensemble at key moments is incredibly impressive. In a lecture to the International Society of Bassists at Oklohoma City University in 2007, the Spanish musicologists Xosé Crisanto Gándara and Ma Jesús Navalpotro informed the conference that Philip II of Spain (1527-98) was given two great viols by his Neapolitan subjects. They were used once a year in the Holy Week Lamentations, reinforcing the solemnity and theatricality of the service.

Praetorius describes a contrabass trombone, one octave below the Bb tenor trombone, one of two that he knew of. It's lowest note is E' but Praetorius goes on to say that some players can play D' or even C' on it. The lowest note on the slide is E' so these must be 'pedal' notes of C and D an octave higher. They would take some preparation to produce (as Berlioz realised when including pedal notes in the *Grand Messe des Mortes*). One oktavposaune survives, possibly the one illustrated in plate VI of the *Theatrum Instrumentorum*, made by Georg Nicolaus Öller in 1639 for the German Church in Stockholm to support the bass pipes of the organ.[29]

The second (and larger) part of this article, with a detailed discussion of the instrumentation of the 1610 Vespers, *will appear in the next issue. We haven't quoted bibliographical details of the early sources. Many readers will recognise them from the name and date, and some will have bought the cheap three-volume facsimile of Praetorius's* Syntagma musicum *from Bärenreiter. Fuller references can easily be found in* Grove *or* Grove Music Online, *which can now be accessed at home, along with reference works like the* Oxford English Dictionary *and the* Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, *by members of most English public libraries.* CB

25. First published 1532, later expanded.
26. Bruce Haynes *History of Performing Pitch* Scarecrow Press, 2002, pp 76-7
27. Paul Brun *New history of the double bass* 2000
28. Information from conversation with Dr. Ephraim Segerman, and cf Paul Brun *op. cit.*]
29. My thanks to Wim Becu and Jamie Savan for this information].

Ritornello K



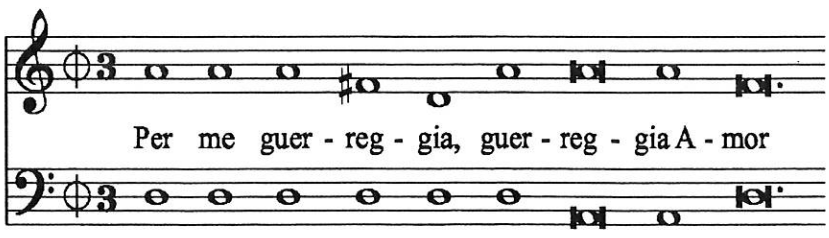
Monteverdi and the 'black art': archaeology in *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*

Bill Hunt

Playing as a member of the continuo in Glyndebourne Opera's recent production of Monteverdi's *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, a piece which I did not previously know in any detail, I could not help but be struck by one particular aspect of this great music. At least as impressive as Monteverdi's harmonic and melodic invention is the precision with which he sets poetic metre – the subtlety with which he positions the stresses of the verse in the musical framework, incorporating carefully measured breaths; the fluidity with which duple and triple metres move from one into the other over the tactus, to create the forward movement of continuous dialogue – a subject which deserves a whole article, even a book in itself. It is all the more jarring, therefore, to run into a passage where the text-setting is ungainly, even to the point of being unsingable with any conviction. I suggest that there are three such points in the piece where this is the case, none of which sound any more convincing to me after three weeks of rehearsal and fourteen performances than they did on first encounter. More daringly, perhaps, I suggest that these may all result from the same kind of mistake by one of the scribes of the Venice manuscript (the other source, a later Naples manuscript, does not really clarify the issues, for reasons to be explained) and that this may have interesting implications for other music of the period. I would be interested to know whether anyone knows of evidence to support this view.

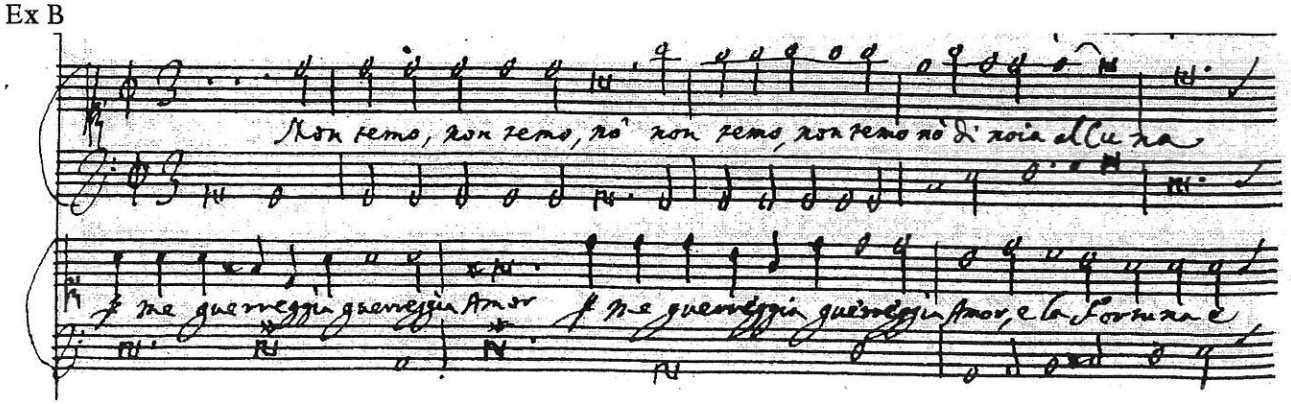
The first passage in question is in Act 1, Scene 4 (Novello p. 47. bars 183 to 196: King's Music p. 36, bars 190-202). All the following examples use original note values. Arnalta is warning Poppea of the dangers of her liaison with Nerone, and Poppea responds that she has no fears: *per me guerreggia, guerreggia Amor e la Fortuna* (Love fights for me, and Fortune). She has already sung this phrase twice earlier in the Act (at bars 33–42/35-45 and 78–86/82-90), each time with the triplet rhythm of the verse set naturally to a triple musical metre, and over a simple I – I – V harmonic movement. (Ex A).

Ex A



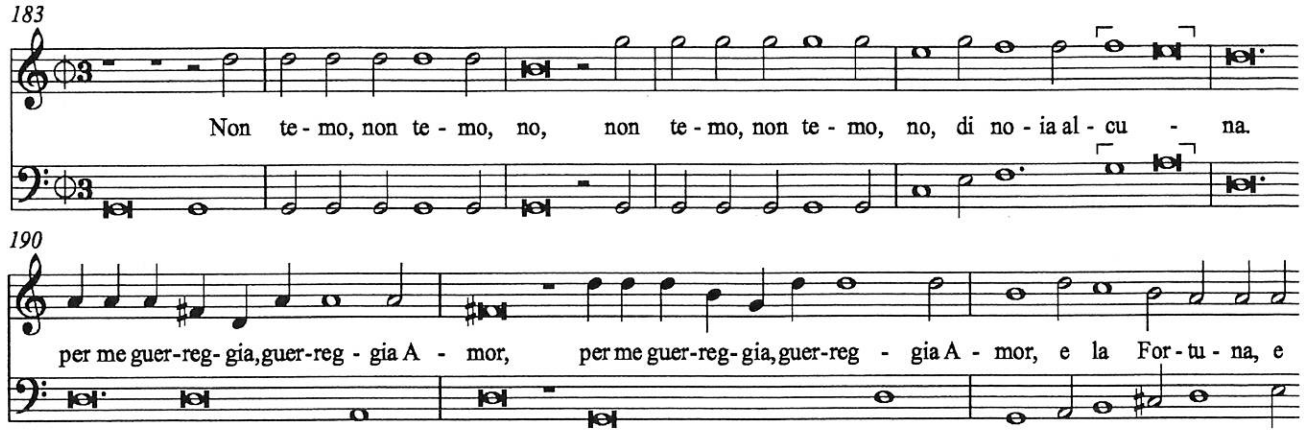
When we come to bar 183/190, the values of the 'running notes', though still under the same triple metre signature, are halved: semibreves have become minims. Leaving aside the question of whether this implies a different tempo (the same difference in values between clearly related triple metre passages occurs throughout the piece in both MSS) we are presented with (Venice folio 21v):

Ex B



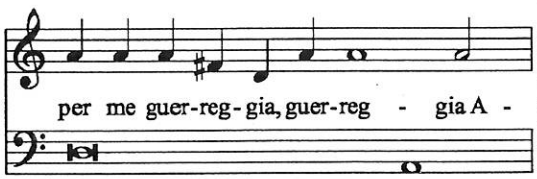
Rendered in modern typesetting (supplying Novello bar numbers, where these coincide, and substituting G2 clef for C1), this is:

Ex C



Leaving aside the issue of vertical alignment between staves (which is often awry in the MS, and is an unreliable guide – compare, for example, the first and second bars of the second system of the facsimile) there is an immediate problem with the first bar of the second system, namely that it does not add up between voice and bass. Despite the fact that bars in this passage, as in many other triple-metre passages, are of inconsistent length, the context strongly suggests a copyist error, namely the accidental repetition of the dotted breve D in the bass at the end of the first system – an error of significance, to which we shall later return. This is the view taken by Alan Curtis, editor of the Novello publication, and if the repeated dotted breve d is removed, we are left with

Ex D



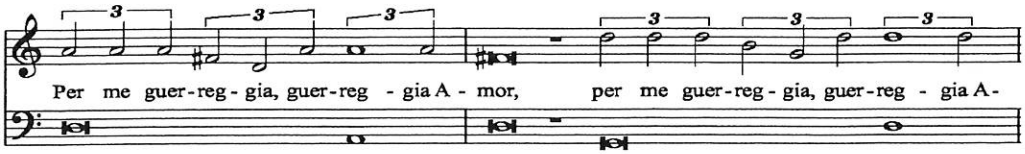
Taken at face value, everything now adds up and the pattern of the first bar fits with that of the second.[1] . We are now presented a different problem: how can the words in these first two bars of the second system be fitted to the fast notes at a feasible tempo? A little experimentation reveals that, taking these crotchets at the fastest possible speed for articulation of the text, the dotted breve tactus for the passage needs to be considerably slower than is compatible with earlier appearances of related material (albeit in different note-values) at bars 33 and 78. Emmanuelle Haïm, musical director of the Glyndebourne performances, chose to address the problem by starting the first system at a relatively fast speed and then halving it at the beginning of the second system – a practical solution, which, however pragmatic, is not justified by the notation *per se*. And one is still left with the strangely awkward misalignment of the voice line with the harmonic rhythm, when compared to these earlier passages. What if the notes which appear to be crotchets are in fact something quite different?

In two fascinating articles in *Music & Letters* on some earlier Monteverdi works, *L'Orfeo* and the *1610 Vespers*, Dr Roger Bowers points out the composer's use in several places of black notation (76/2, May, 1995, pp. 149-167 and 73/3, Aug, 1992, pp. 347–398). With this in mind, it occurred to me that these problematic bars of *Poppea* might be explained if the Venice scribe (Maria Cavalli) at this point had misunderstood the use of black notation in the exemplar which she was copying: that the crotchets should in fact be blackened minims, which – an inconvenient defect of the system – look the same. Put simply, these would produce a triplet division of each semibreve into three blackened minims, in place of the duple division into two normal minims, dictated by the signature of circle-stroke/3 mensuration shown at the start of this passage. The original intention, translated into

1 The King's Music editor, Clifford Bartlett, takes a different view of this passage (revised edition 1993) which involves alteration to values in both voice and bass lines, but this is also best left aside for the moment.

modern terms, might have been this:

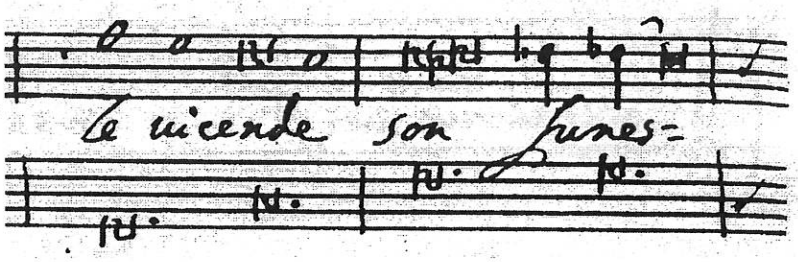
Ex E



The mistaken identity of blackened minims might explain the first two semibreve beats of each phrase, but how could my solution be extracted from the confusion remaining on the third?.

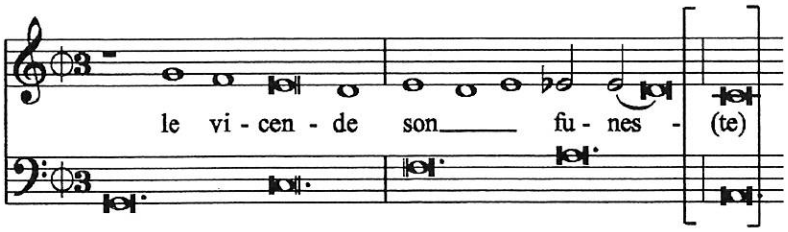
Lacking specialist knowledge of the black notational system, I consulted Dr Bowers, who kindly supplied a picture of how confusion may have arisen; I am most grateful to him for much of the following, which I hope I have reproduced accurately. Firstly, it is clear that black notation is indeed being used, at least in this section of the manuscript. The hemiola in the fourth bar of the passage in question (Ex. B & C), under *al-cu-na* uses blackened semibreve/blackened breve, conveying the rhythm semibreve/imperfect breve, occupying the duration of a single perfect (i.e. dotted) breve. This is the notation used for hemiolas throughout both the Venice and Naples MSS. Furthermore, two systems higher up the same folio, in the same grouping, the blackened semibreve is broken into two halves:

Ex F



These two halves are not crotchets, as might first appear, but blackened minims, which, in modern type-setting, should be rendered:

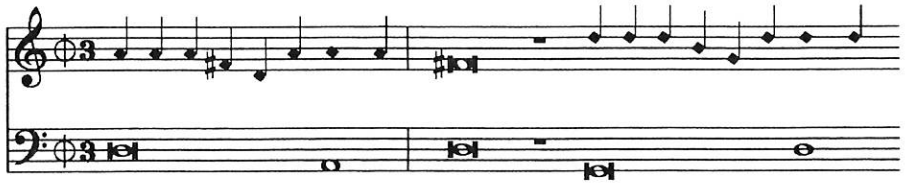
Ex G



(as is correctly shown in the King's Music edition, though not in the Novello, which seeks to steer a course between this and the Naples version). So the notational system used here clearly understands the principle of the blackened minim. To have conveyed the amended text suggested in my example above, the exemplar from which this Venice scribe was copying would have needed to show the final pair of notes in each bar (semibreve/minim) blackened, thus reducing their duration by a third. When notated with care, as in the prints of *L'Orfeo* and the *Vespers*, such blackened triplet groups might be accompanied by an Arabic numeral '3' for clarification, but this was not considered essential; the presence of one blackened semibreve would have given sufficient notice to a musician of the period that he was dealing with a passage of black notation. The scribe uses the mensuration sign circle-stroke/3 in a learned manner, including use of both the standard semiminim (crotchet) and the blackened minim, in circumstances where the context alone suffices to distinguish between them. He is able to cope with a blackened semibreve being split into two blackened minims, where this is associated with an adjacent blackened breve, but he is thrown when confronted with the following (black notation, where it occurs in this and all subsequent examples, is shown with

diamond noteheads, but purely in order to distinguish it from normal notation): a string of blackened minims, whose penultimate note is a blackened semibreve with no reassuringly adjacent blackened breve. He sees each blackened minim as a standard semiminim (crotchet), and can not understand how nine of these in the voice part can match twelve in the bass. With a bit of experimentation, he realizes that he can expand them to twelve by unblackening the two final notes, so this is what he does. In the wake of his confusion, he carelessly repeats the bassline's dotted breve D from the end of the previous system.

Ex H

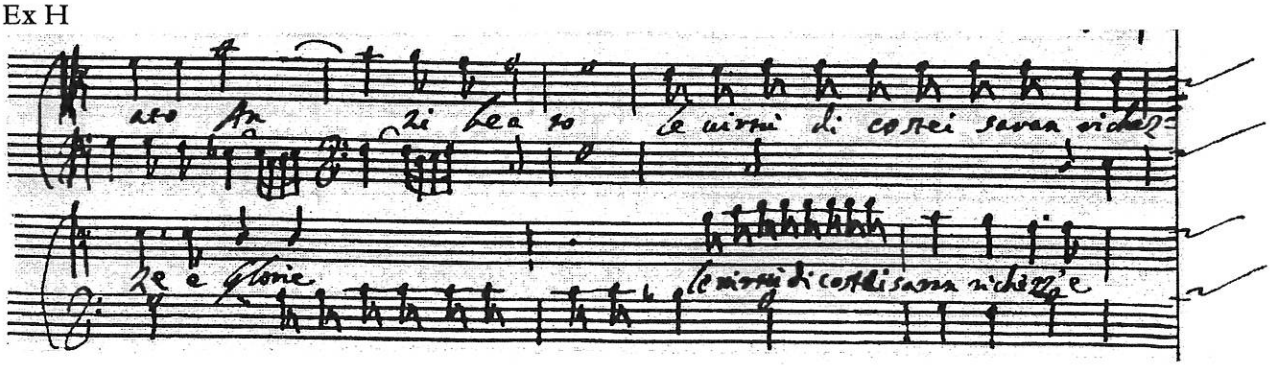


By this route, we are able to reconstruct the amended version which I postulate above. There are a number of reasons why it must surely be what Monteverdi intended. It restores the simple harmonic rhythm of the preceding versions of this phrase (at bars 33 and 78), which is distorted by the misalignment of voice and bass on the third semibreve of each bar (from bar 190). It maintains the rhythmic structure of vocal phrase, instead of stretching out of shape, so that the first two-thirds is crammed into one half of the bar, leaving the last third expanded into the other half. It achieves the intensification of expression through reduction into smaller note values – a technique used by Monteverdi in other works, such as *L'Orfeo* and *Il Combattimento di Tancredi et Clorinda* – by a uniform acceleration. And the text underlying the fast notes becomes singable at a tactus which makes sense for the whole passage from bar 183 (and indeed for the sections which lead into it) without the need for an abrupt gear-change. Yet, it seems that this may not have been easy to express in the notational system which Monteverdi was using. The scribe of the Naples MS rewrites the passage with a different mensural signature from bar 183, and with wholly different text and notes from 190–193; perhaps he could not understand what was before him and chose to recompose it.

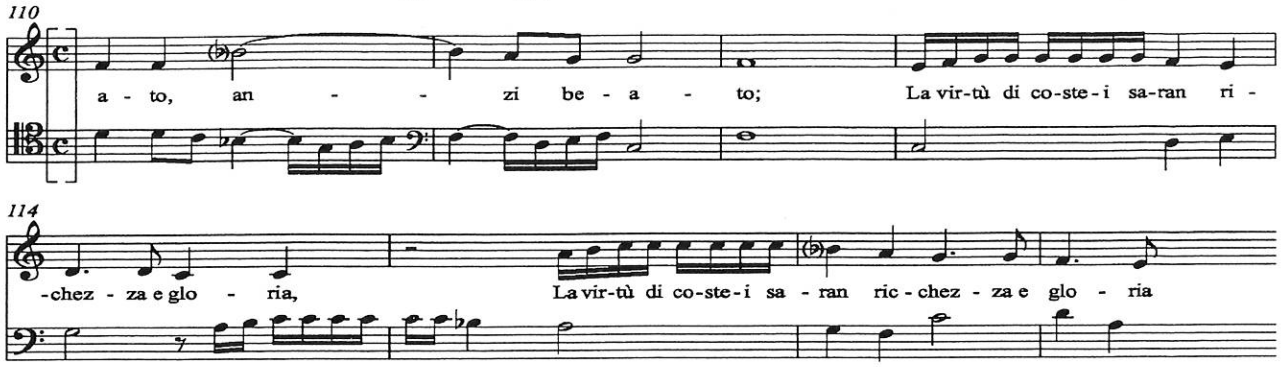
****

Inspired by the successful application of black notation to this problematic passage, I began to wonder about the two other examples of text-setting which had struck me as distinctly ungainly. But to apply the same theory to these requires a much greater leap of reconstruction. The first is in Act 3, Scene 4 (Novello p. 213, bars 110–116; KM p. 115-120), Venice f90:

Ex H

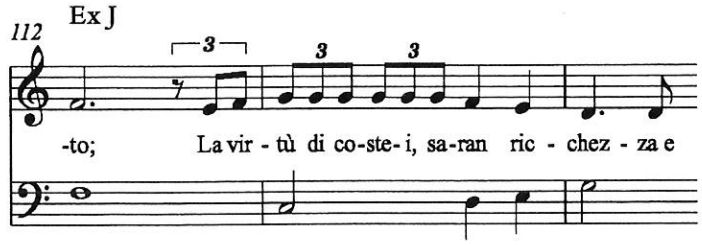


Ex I rendered in modern typesetting (with Novello bar numbers and G2 clef for C3):



(The apparently missing dot on the bass b flat in bar 115, which is, however, added in the later Naples MS, will be mentioned in a moment). Here, Ottone extols the virtue of Drusilla, who has begged Nerone to let her join Ottone in his banishment for the attempted murder of Poppea. Such a poetic sentiment is hardly the occasion for gabbling, one may think, yet the setting of this text in semiquavers produces just such a result. This is not a case of intensified expression through repetition in faster note-values, such as we saw in the passage discussed above. The words at bar 113 fall naturally into a triplet rhythm "La vir-/tù di co-/stei sa-/ran...", yet the duple division of the crotchets into sixteenths, and the speed at which these need to be sung in the context, give no room to articulate this. Over the course of fourteen Glyndebourne performances, the two singers sharing the role of Ottone tried many ways of distorting the musical rhythm in order to release the poetic one from its straitjacket, but the results were unconvincing (not to say increasingly difficult to accompany). The Novello edition even prints text accents in brackets above the relevant notes, to encourage the singer in this endeavour, but it is a forlorn hope. Furthermore, the placement of the first word *La* on the first sixteenth inevitably gives it a musical accent, whereas its melodic position, as the first of two notes rising to the phrase's plateau on the third, exactly mirrors its poetic position as the first of two anacruses. All this suggests strongly that a musical triplet is required:

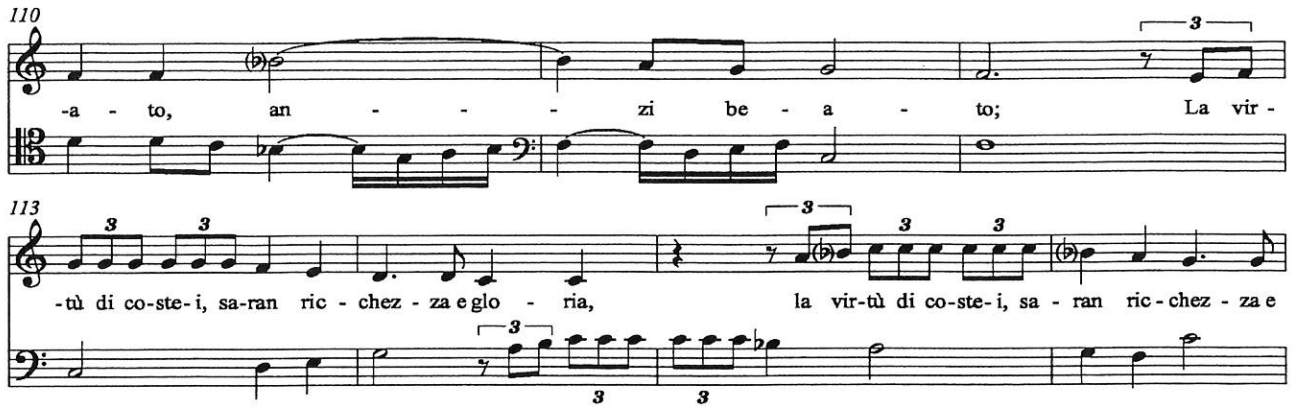
Ex J



This seems out of the question, since it involves redistributing notes across an existing barline (although the repetition of the vocal phrase at bar 115 does not). Then there is the matter of the instrumental echo of the same figure in bars 114–5. The composer's intention must surely have been to fit this elegantly between the two vocal phrases, but the result here seems inept and unworthy either of Monteverdi or of any composer whom he might have chosen to assist him writing Act 3 (if this is what happened). The bass player is required to play an unnatural off-beat accent on the b flat in bar 115 – a feature which has no parallel in the vocal phrases – and then hang around on it, waiting for the voice part to catch up. Could black notation explain this passage?

The appearance of blackened quavers would be the same as that of normal semiquavers, so to that extent the resulting triplet rhythm would immediately fit the text, as shown above. It could also have the effect of making the figure fit the gap in the bass with a neatly dovetailed join:

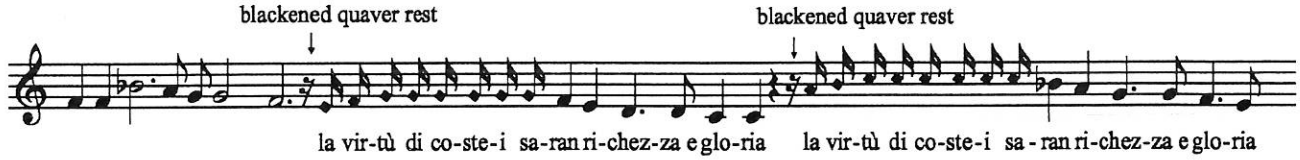
Ex J



It is interesting to note that the b flat in the bass in bar 115 now requires no dot for the bar to add up correctly – a possible sign that it was, indeed, never dotted. But for the suggested amendment above to be correct, a second note-redistribution across the barline is now necessary in the bass from 114 to 115. How could the Venice scribe have made such a fundamental copying error?

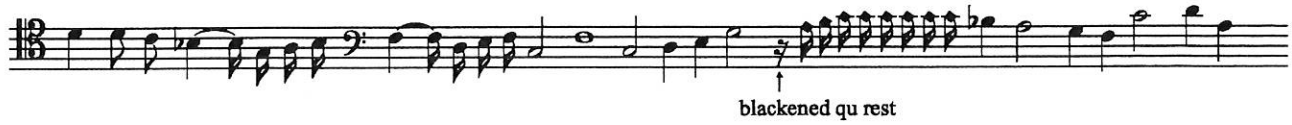
The answer, I suggest, lies in the fact that black notation is part of the mensural notational system, which operated without the need of barlines: the mensural signatures and the application of well established rules were sufficient without them. The problem for the Venice scribe was that she did not know these rules – at least, not enough of them. Though they were well known to Monteverdi, by the time she wrote this manuscript, they were already hopelessly arcane to a new generation of musicians, and lost amidst the huge notational changes that were taking place in Italy at this period. Could it be that what the scribe was copying looked something like this?

Ex K



and this?:

Ex L



In other words, he may have been copying not from an existing score but from two single staves on separate pieces of manuscript, each in mensural notation without barlines, and neither giving enough information for the partially learned scribe[2] to align them accurately into a new score.[3] It is possible that Monteverdi's original score would have contained some indications of the change from normal to black notation, such as an Arabic '3' above the triplet groupings, and that these were suppressed by a later copyist, resulting in the incomplete information from which the Venice scribe compiled his score.

The question of what symbols originally preceded each string of blackened quavers takes us even further into the realm of speculation, for there is more than one possibility. If they were blackened

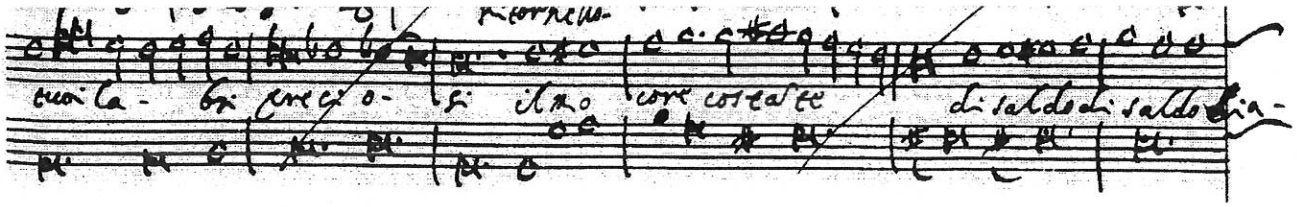
2. It is unlikely that a female musician would have had the rigorous academic music education that boys would have received. [CB]

3. Richard Campbell has kindly drawn my attention to an interesting parallel, which can be seen at very much the same period in the English theatre, where it was common practice for actors to be given manuscript parts containing only their own lines and with minimal cues of the other players' material. Confusion could result in inexperienced hands, as hilariously portrayed by Shakespeare in the 'Pyramus and Thisbe' rehearsal in *'A Midsummer Night's Dream'*, Act 3, Scene 1.

quaver rests, as suggested above, perhaps she mistook the ones in the voice part for normal semiminim (crotchet) rests, and decided to add each of them to the preceding symbol. At any rate, nothing she saw (I suggest) alerted her to the true identity of the blackened quavers, which she read as a normal, even grouping of semiquavers, and sought to align accordingly.

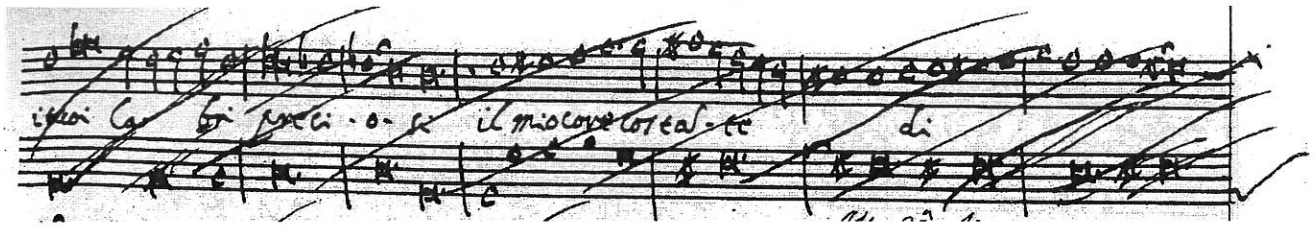
The notion that it was the Venice scribe who first introduced vertical barlines, in order to align previously unbarred parts, may help to explain other mistakes and curiosities in the MS. The careless repetition of the dotted breve in the bass of the passage first discussed (Ex. B & C, bar 190) is easier to understand if the bass part being copied was a single, unbarred stave, without a vocal line above it.[4] At another point in the MS, the scribe makes two attempts, each crossed out, at notating the same passage (Act 2, Scene 5, bars 122–127). This is on folio 66, bottom system:

Ex M



and this is on folio 67, first system:

Ex. N



This re-positioning of the barlines has no effect on the musical structure, since the dotted breve tactus is maintained; nor does it appear to represent a 're-thinking' of the music. An explanation may be that the scribe was compiling his score from separate, unbarred parts, and introducing barlines at various tactus points, as he went along, to maintain the vertical alignment of his bars.

Could it be that the Venice score was, at least to some extent, a rather hurriedly made collation, rather than a copy made from a pre-existing score – something that may have taken place after collecting up many individual pieces of manuscript at the end of a series of performances, which had probably involved both rewritings and transpositions (the music for Ottone, in particular)? I believe that the idea may be contrary to current theory on how such scores usually came into being, and of course there is no proof of it, but it seems consistent with other oddities in the Venice manuscript. Firstly, there are the several instances of ritornelli in one key, interspersed with vocal material in a key a tone higher, such as occurs at the beginning of Act 1 in the part of Ottone. If they were on individual pieces of MS, Ottone's part being written out at a later date than those of the strings, and each containing only the notes for that performer, this seems easily explicable. Ottone's rewritten part is in the new key of D, but the string players continue to play from their original parts in C, having been told now to transpose them up a tone. There is no need to rewrite their relatively easy parts on expensive new paper, and the Venice scribe's job is simply to assemble all the material, so he copies what is before him and does not try to transpose it himself. Then, there are the many inconsistencies of note values in triple metre sections. This is most evident in Act 2, Scene 11, where Ottone and Drusilla exchange short phrases, Ottone in a 3/2 tactus and Drusilla in 3/1. As the

4. Though I'm not sure if there is evidence for such parts in this sort of music at this period. Comment from readers on this point would be welcome, since it impinges on some of the following argument. [CB]

Novello and King's Music editors both observe, this surely results from the differing practices of musicians from the 'new school' and 'old school' respectively, and does not necessarily imply any difference in tactus speed (a situation somewhat equivalent to France in the 1960's, where one new franc replaced 100 of the old, yet the old folks would continue to calculate for years to come in *anciens francs*). It does not represent two different practices in one scribe. It is simply that Ottone's manuscript has been written out (in fact, recomposed) at a later date and by a different hand (the composer or Cavalli) from that of Drusilla, and the scribe is collating the two.[5] It is not his job to create consistency by converting one of them; everyone will still understand what is intended.

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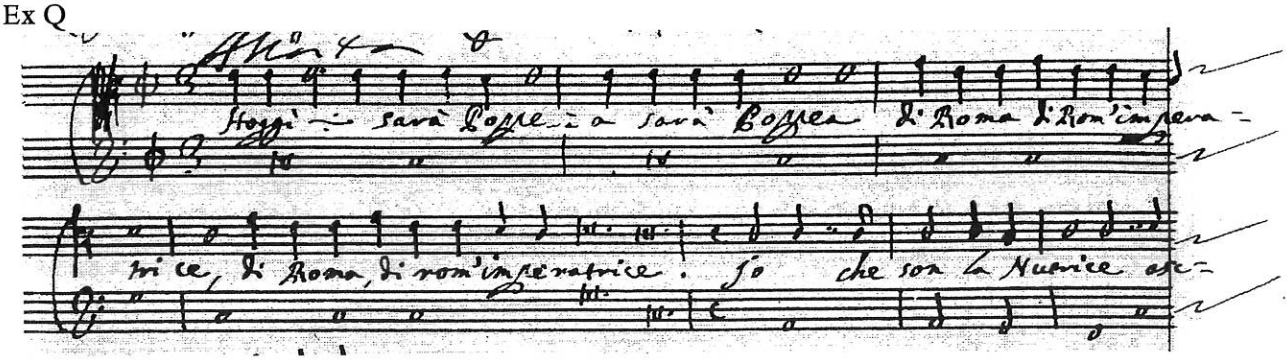
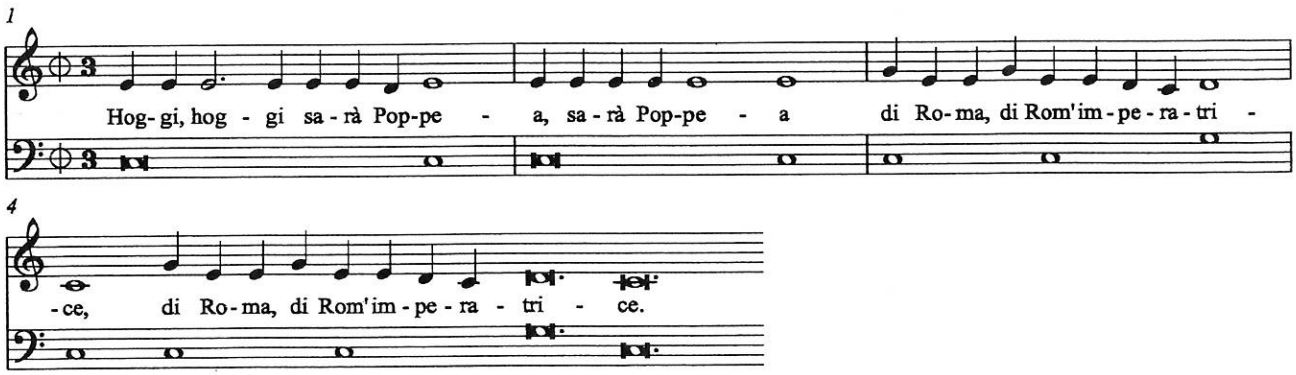
My third instance of odd text-setting occurs in Act 3, Scene 7 (Novello p. 226, bars 1–6; KM p. 178, bars 1-6); Venice folio 96:

Ex Q



rendered in modern typesetting (substituting G2 clef for C3):

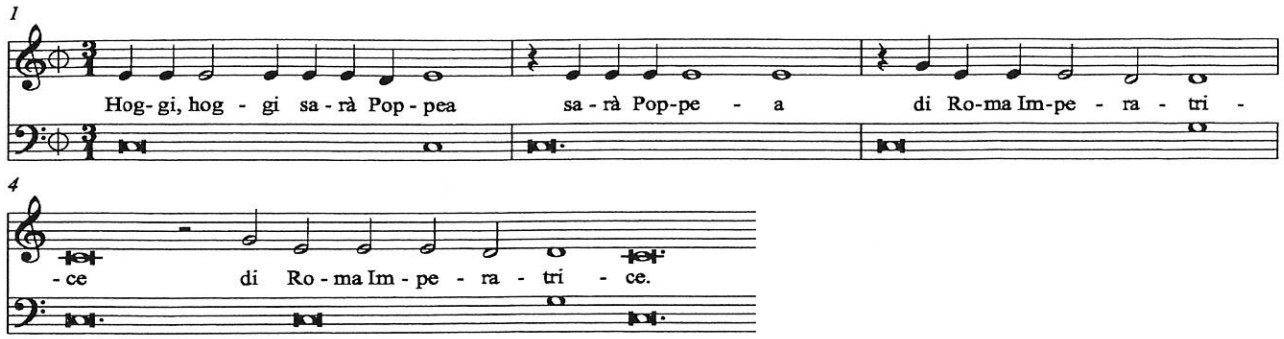
Ex R



Leaving aside the immediate problem of values in the first bar (the dot on the voice's minim E', which is not present in the Naples MS), the distribution of syllables to beats in bars 3 and 4 both looks and sounds odd. The singer, Arnalta, is a comic character, and he/she is here rushing onto stage in great excitement to announce the imminent coronation of Poppea, so a degree of verse-mangling is both understandable and comic. The breathless and inelegant setting of bars 1 and 2 can therefore be accepted as deliberate, and in practice can raise a good laugh. But the placement of the lowly preposition *di* on the downbeat crotchet of bar 3, and again on the second beat in bar 4, produces an accent which simply sounds clumsy, rather than funny. Should this g' be a falling anacrusis to *Roma* on the following e', imitating the g' anacrusis on the fourth crotchet, falling to the e' on the fifth? Significantly, perhaps, the Naples MS rewrites the music from bar 3 onwards, simplifying it but also removing the *di* from these two accented positions.

5. In Act II, not Mrs Cavalli, but less-competent and anonymous. [CB]

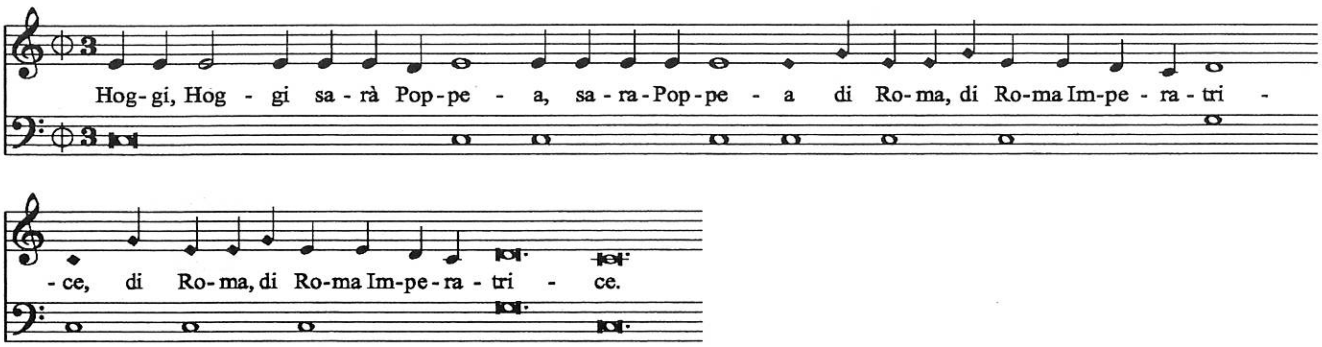
Ex S



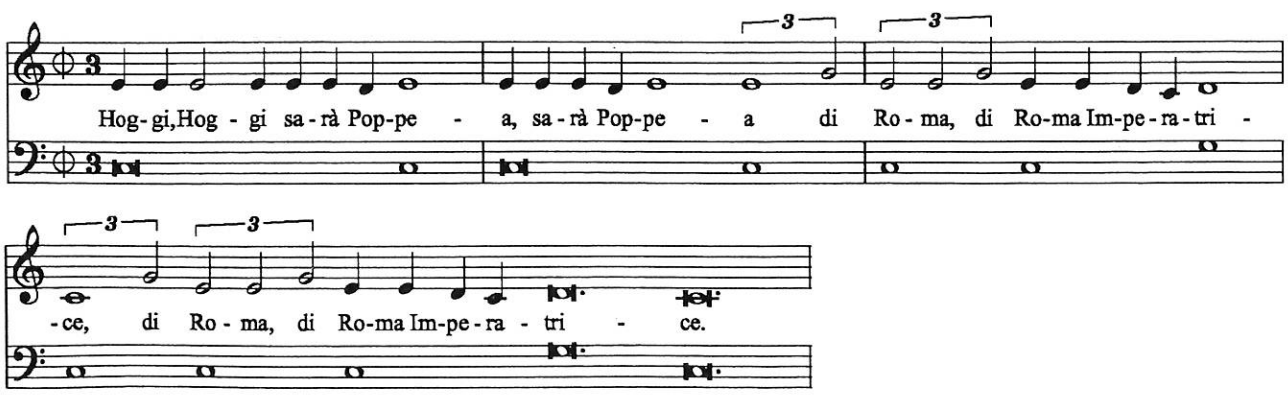
It should be pointed out, however, that this Naples version is closer to Busenello's published libretto in that it involves no internal repetition of *di Roma*. The printed text is simply *Hoggi sarà Poppea Di Roma Imperatrice,...*

Returning to the Venice version, I wonder whether the voice's semibreve c' on the third beat of bar 2 and on the downbeat of bar 4 might be further examples of blackened semibreves, which the scribe has misunderstood, originally appearing thus:

Ex T



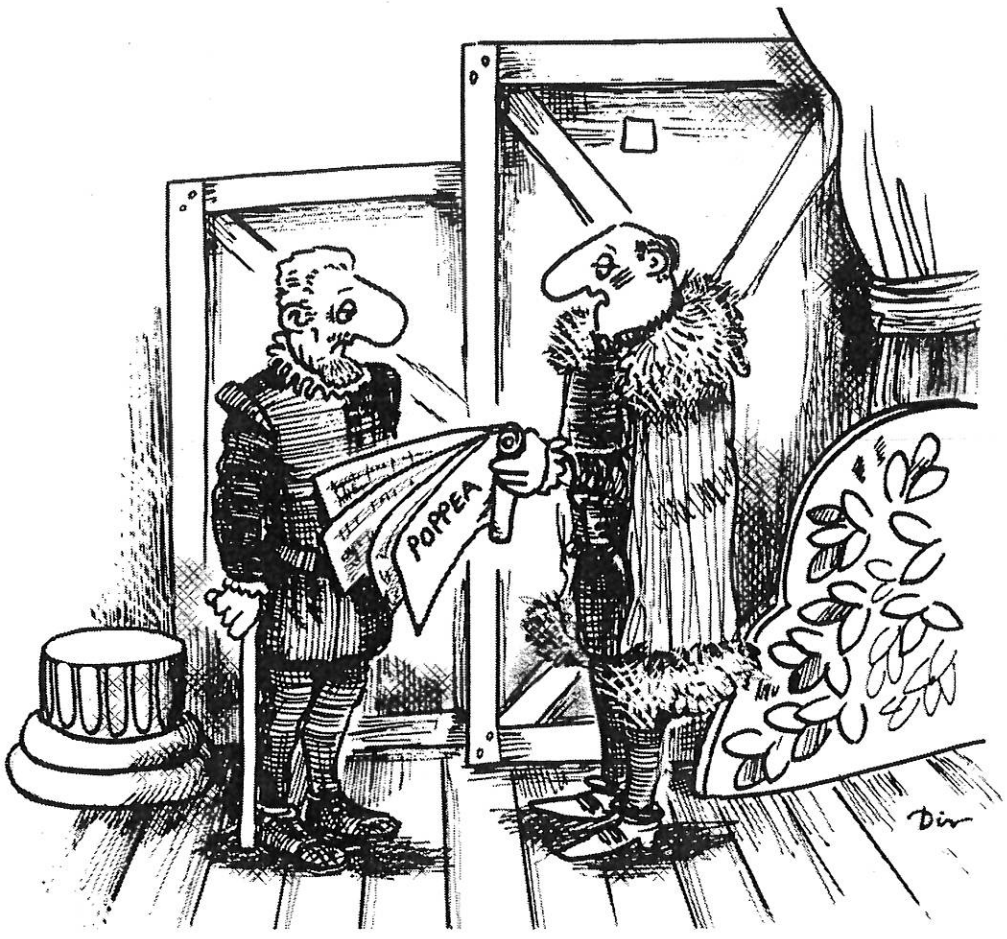
Ex U



The fact that the Venice scribe positioned the first *di* to the right of the barline, instead of to the left, would again be explained by there having been no barlines in his exemplar, and especially so if the voice and bass parts were separate. He failed to recognise the blackened semibreves in bars 2 and 4 for the same reason that he had done in Example B above. He likewise mistook the blackened minims for normal semiminims (crotchets) – an error which is understandable, if these two symbols occur consecutively without the clarification of an Arabic '3'. On the other hand, the subtle change

from triple to quadruple division of consecutive beats, which my suggestion produces, is perhaps a degree of nuance that does not belong in the mouth of a comic nurse, so I make it more tentatively than I do my first two suggestions. Perhaps the joke implicit in the mangled setting of the Venice version hasn't yet been sold to me.

If only the first two of my suggested amendments are correct, it seems unlikely that they are isolated incidents. I would be grateful and interested to know whether anyone has found similar examples of black notation that has gone unrecognised by the younger generation. I have not studied the score of *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse*, which, like other late Monteverdi works, may be another candidate for scrutiny. And if the proposition is true that the Venice score was compiled (at least in part) from individual parts which were both unbarred and without a second stave, yet interacted perfectly according to their internal mensural logic, what implications might there be for how this kind of music was performed? I have a few ideas.



Trust me, maestro - we need to lose this big tap-dancing finale...