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REVIEW

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Watching the Olympics on TV on the day when Britain seemed to win everything, it occurred to me that every country's perception of what was going on must be completely different, since media reporting must be similarly biased in every country. But even if present in the stadia, people must see and feel different things, and it made me think how different the experiences people can get from attending the same musical performance. This is particularly so in opera. The balance of interest varies. Some are mainly interested in the music: after all, that's why Mozart's setting of da Ponte are staged more often than those by Salieri, Martin y Soler or Storace. But back in the Baroque period, libretti had greater status than now (or at least, the literati gave them greater importance). Others are particularly drawn to the design of the sets: again, not just a modern phenomenon, since the perspective designs of the Baroque stage impressed audiences as much as very different design devices attract them now. Then there is the skill of the director. How these aspects balance in the mind of the watcher/listener must vary enormously. Some are more moved by the orchestra than the singers, or vice versa. Some get caught up in the story, some have a more abstract approach. *Götterdämmerung* may end with the cathartic collapse of the world Wagner has created, but it is also a marvellous piece of counterpoint and the climax of 20 hours of musical development.

But it isn't just opera that can be received in different ways. Some people listen to instrumental music moment-by-moment and react to the emotions or to the patterns, or just enjoy the tunes. One might argue that the more mature listener can enjoy all these modes of listening at once. But does the experience then become more distant, intellectual rather than emotional, and is the former necessarily more mature or nearer that which the composer expected? Should we investigate the route to authentic listening? Some listeners are concerned with the form of the music: they notice how the composer manipulates the key structure of a movement, for instance, or the melodic transformation. It is, however, notable that so often composers are reluctant to talk about such technical matters (and I tend to a bit suspicious of those who do!) It is easy for those of us in the music business to scorn the unsophisticated public. CB

REVIEWS OF MUSIC

Clifford Bartlett

BARBARA ed. BARBARA

Barbara Strozzi *Lagime mie: A Lament for soprano and continuo* Edited by Barbara Sachs Green Man Press (Str 2), 2008. 11pp + voice, kbd & bc parts, £6.00

This powerful lament comes from Strozzi's op. 7, *Diporti di Euterpe* (1659). A facsimile is readily available from SPES, though isn't very user-friendly, not so much for the voice part being in C1 clef – serious baroque singers should get used to that – but for an unhelpful layout for the accompanist, thanks to there being only two systems to a page. If you are using a string bass instrument (which the repeated pairs of quavers in the aria makes plausible), you would need to copy out a part, so might as well buy the edition, whose presence does, of course, make the music accessible to far more singers. It sorts out a few misprints, and also provides the text set out as a poem with facing translation. The only problem whose solution isn't obvious is the meaning of the final rubric *Lagime mie. ut supra*. This is the striking opening phrase, repeated at the end of the recitative section just before the Aria (bar 72). Going back to the beginning requires more than repeating the crucial phrase, since the version there (as opposed to the later one), ends on the dominant. The best solution seems to be to repeat bars 64-71. One would have expected some sort of ♯, but at least in the 1659 print it is more obvious by beginning a page. (The previous item in the book also has a vague *Da capo*.) One musical point: how does the listener hear the rhythm at the opening? Strozzi ties a single bass note for the first 2½ bars (see below). The soprano, however, places her strong beats on crotchets 2 and 4 (in two with D sharps clashing with the Bass E). Barbara Sachs repeats the chord on beat 3 of the first two bars, thus setting up a straightforward syn-copation. She may be right, but if the opening chord is spread to avoid it giving a rhythmic impetus, the change in apparent rhythm in bar 3 could be powerfully disorienting. Try both. I'm not criticising the realisation, just reminding that there may be more than solution.

BRYNE COMPUTERISED

Albertus Bryne *Keyboard music for harpsichord and organ Performing Edition & interactive CD-ROM* by Heather Windram & Terence Charleston Norsk Musikforlag (N.M.O. 12448), 2008 xxviii + 56pp + audio CD & CD-ROM. NOK 395,00

This is a brilliant way to produce an edition. First of all, there's a conventional printed version with an excellent, lengthy introduction and a good edition of the music. Then there's a performance of it on CD by Terence Charleston, which right from the first piece refreshingly shows that (however conscientious an editor might be) performance of music of this sort demands that it be treated as a beginning, not the end. It is available separately (*Deux-Elles* DXL 1124). Richard Maunder reviewed it in *EMR* 120, August 2007: 'highly recommended, for the music, the playing and the instruments.' The CD-ROM provides a facsimile of the source of each piece, a transcription placed below it giving as literal as possible an interpretation in modern notation, other sources, and the final version with commentary, all with the option of simultaneous sound. In the light of the excellent and convincing performance, one might think that editorial detail doesn't matter very much in that the creative variation is greater than the fiddly details listed in the critical commentary. There is no reason why improvisation shouldn't turn the music into something else, but Bryne emerges as a fine composer whose music warrants respect. The pieces are mostly short: how the method would work on, say, *Israel in Egypt*, my current project, with a 350-page score and a couple of dozen sources (mostly with nothing to offer, until one finds a problem insoluble from the main ones) is difficult to imagine. recommend this strongly for the music, the performance, the edition, and the demonstration of a way towards future editions. If students are still taught how to edit, this is an ideal course-book, and everyone interested in mid-17th-century English keyboard music should certainly have a copy.

The image shows a musical score for a piece titled "Lamento." The score is written on two staves. The top staff is for the voice (soprano) and the bottom staff is for the continuo (bass). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is common time (C). The music begins with a large 'L' and a 't.' marking. The lyrics "grime mi c à che vi" are written below the staves. The score is numbered 76 in the top right corner.

RICHARD I & PTOLEMY IX

Händel *Riccardo primo, Re d'Inghilterra... Opera in tre atti... HWV 23... Piano reduction... by Andreas Köhs. Bärenreiter (BA4081a), 2007. xvii + 245pp, £19.00.*

Händel *Tolomeo, Re d'Egitto... Drame per musica in tre atti... HWV 25... Piano reduction... by Michael Pacholke. Bärenreiter (BA4058a), 2007. xix + 296 pp, £32.00.*

There's one obvious and utterly unmusical question to ask here: why does an extra 50 pages add £13 to the price? And there's a curiosity about the title pages (not transcribed completely in our heading). We're given the name of the composer, the librettist, his main source, the German translator and the person who made the piano reduction, but not the editor of the edition on which this is based. In the case of *Tolomeo*, it is Pacholke, who is the editor of HHA II: 22 as well as German translator and piano reducer. Pacholke is also the translator of Richard I, but the editor is Terence Best. I wonder how many performances there are now in German: I would have thought that surtitles were the kiss of death to translations for formal operas like Handel's (though, of course, these days the formal staging in which they would have been performed in the late 1720s can now rarely be seen on stage).

The extra length of the *Ptolemy* score isn't related to the length of the opera itself (in fact, the closing chorus ends on p. 179 while that of *Richard* ends at p. 245). But *Ptolemy* survives in three different versions, so the 1730 revival takes up another 86 pages (giving the complete sequence of the opera, though only referring back to the items taken over from the original 1728 run) and a further 30 pages for the new items in the 1732 version (with references back to both 1728 and 1730). This presentation may be convenient as a way of presenting all the music for someone listening to a CD and able to pause to check where to go next, but it would be infuriating to use for a performance of the 1730 and 1732 versions. I hope that vocal and orchestral material is available so that an opera company can have a complete version of 1730 separate from 1728, since it clearly has claims to a proper hearing. The disadvantage of having everything in one volume is that directors will be encouraged to cherry-pick.

Richard suffered fewer changes, or rather, they took place in the stage between composition and performance, since the latter was delayed by the death of George I. It may have been coincidence that the title role was an English king, but there was certainly political capital to be made in adding allusions to the new monarch George II. The later version seems to be accepted as far superior to the version that received 11 performances in November and December 1727 and was never heard again in England until 1964, though there were performances in Hamburg and Brunswick in 1729. The lack of revival means that, by ignoring the unperformed version, there are no alternatives to clutter the score.

I still think that vocal scores of such works are superfluous. Chrysander's score takes only 88 pages. It isn't one of his best, and I'm not recommending it. And surely the

chords underlying secco recitative are obvious even to those who can't read the figuring (which isn't included): they are usually outlined by the vocal part anyway. But I've said that before. These are well-produced volumes with good introductions. If you want the full scores, the respective prices are £268.00 and £207.00.

PERGOLESI VESPER

Pergolesi *Vespro della Beata Virgine... Reconstructed and edited by Malcolm Bruno, Edward Higginbottom and Robert Ross. Bärenreiter (BA 7675) 2006. xxiii + 260pp, £67.00. Vocal score (BA 7675a) xi + 221pp, £20.00*

This compilation, containing most of Pergolesi's church music except the *Stabat mater*, is linked to a celebration of the feast of St Emidius, a bishop beheaded in Rome in 305. He became a protector against earthquakes, and as such his feast on 31 December (though elsewhere his day is 9 August) was celebrated in Naples in 1732 with some pomp after a series of bad quakes during the previous 18 months. Pergolesi is said to have written for the event a double-choir mass and three vesper psalms. The three psalms specified in a possibly dubious account are *Dixit*, *Confitebor* and *Laudate pueri*, which happen to survive (or were they mentioned in the account because they had survived?) *Dixit* is, as so often it was in the 17th century, for double choir. The Vespers are supplemented with *Domine ad adjuvandum*, the hymn *Lucis creator*, *Magnificat* and *Salve regina*. There is a concluding chanted *Ora pro nobis* with a choral and orchestral *Amen* concocted from the Gloria of the opening movement. Four instrumental pieces are included, in theory as antiphon substitutes, though they make a welcome change of texture anyway: violin sonatas in G & F# and cello sonatas in G & E.

The forces required are SSATB soli and (maybe) chorus (or another quintet of soloists for *Dixit*), pairs of oboes, trumpets and *trombe da caccia* (horns), strings and continuo (probably organ). There is a problem of how to deal with the double-choir psalm. Apart from needing extra soloists, there is a big layout problem. It's not too difficult to have the choir divided just for *Dixit*, or to remain divided throughout. But splitting the orchestra for one movement is time-consuming but rather odd to keep divided for the whole concert. (There's a similar problem in Handel's *Nisi Dominus*, where the division only comes in the Gloria.) The score doesn't make clear what happens in the movements for a single orchestra 'Virgam virtutis' and 'Tecum principium', each with solo soprano. It would make sense for one to be Choir I, the other Choir II. Are there no sources in parts that make this clear? Nor is it clear whether the suggestions for alternating phrases for two sopranos in the *Salve Regina* have any basis in the sources. The introduction is informative in many ways (particularly on performance issues), but a bit slap-dash on what information is included. Why, for instance, is Choir I of No. 6 of *Dixit* marked *senza organo sempre* although it is figured and Choir II has no such marking? It is difficult to know the status of the figuring: a lot has been added by the editors. In general, in fact, you have to trust them a bit more than one expects from a Bärenreiter edition.

If I conducted a choir in a catholic church which had regular need for individual vesper psalms with orchestra and which also gave concerts, this would be a worthwhile investment – except that under such circumstances, one would hope to have the instrumental parts at hand and not have to hire them every time. On the other hand, it isn't a work which a concert choir is likely to perform more than once – and don't deduce from that that it isn't worth performing; so it is good that vocal scores can be hired. Bärenreiter must be getting some reward from royalties from the Higginbottom CD, but this is unlikely to become a repertory work. On the whole, the smaller pieces are more enjoyable, more affecting than the bigger ones. I won't go quite so far as to say that the eight pages devoted to the four sonatas are the best in the volume, but my guess is that if I was a member of an amateur chamber choir, I'd be tired of the Psalms before the performance arrived. However, the post-baroque, pre-classical style isn't my favourite, so perhaps I'm missing something.

PS. The editors stress the need for 6/4 5/3 cadences to be fully figured. Their frequency is a sign of baroque passing on to the next style, so I was intrigued to find an example in *Israel in Egypt* (from the late 1730s), where two identical major chords, setting the word 'wonders', were figured 6/4 and 5/#. There is no other suggestion in any part that appoggiaturas were required, so do we assume that musicians in England and a composer of an older generation expected that sort of cadence to be performed thus? (In the Novello vocal score, the passage is p. 30, four bars from the end' in Chrysander, p. 216 bar 1)

C. P. E. BACH – BERLIN SYMPHONIES

C. P. E. Bach *Berlin Symphonies* Edited by Ekkehard Krüger and Tobias Schwinger (*The Complete Works Series III*, volume 1). The Packard Humanities Institute, 2008. [xxviii] + 195 pp, \$25.00. ISBN 978 1 933280 24 0

Following from my review of the CPEB Complete Works in our last edition, I ordered the three volumes of Symphonies for a customer and asked for a sample to review.* Sadly, I didn't have time to look at the two volumes of the later symphonies (Wq 182 & 183) before passing them on. The eight works included here, printed in the order in which Bach's circle knew them (though not necessarily as approved by the composer or in exact chronological order) are Wq 173 in G, 176 in D, 174 in C, 175 in F, 178 in e, 179 in Eb, 180 in G and 181 in F. (It would surely have been possible to list all eight on a single contents page rather than have the last out of sight on the reverse.) No. 1 dates from 1741, 2-7 from 1755-8 and 8 from 1762. Nos 1 and 4-7 are for strings, 3 (and perhaps 2) also have a pair of horns, 8 has horns and flutes. All except no. 1 later received additional wind from the composer, so there is some flexibility in scoring. (I probably shouldn't be referring them as 1-8: the edition only uses these numbers when quoting information from the 1790 catalogue.) As with the other volumes I've seen, this is a handsome publication. There is a concise but not over-compressed introduction. The commentary has to deal with each symphony separately, since they were not collected together like the two published sets. They all, however, survive in reliable sources. There is a thorough critical commentary, but

most of its contents are of minor details – not that I'm complaining, having recently been trying to get sense out of an apparently thorough commentary that fails to answer all the questions I have. I'm not sure if these have quite the originality and excellence of the ten later symphonies. But they certainly should be available and performed, and this volume is most welcome.

* This showed that the cheap price needs to be set against the delivery cost. Total price of the three volumes \$65; cost of post \$70.00. Is Fed Ex the cheapest way? It certainly wasn't very quick, taking over a week (though that did include the bank holiday weekend). And there was no trade discount. So expect to pay as much as three times the catalogue price through a normal shop.

STORACE GLI EQUIVOCI

Stephen Storace *Gli equivoci: opera buffa in two acts* Edited by Richard Platt (*Musica Britannica* 86). Stainer and Bell, 2007 [2008]. li + 402pp, £99.00

There are two works where English opera comes into contact with the mainstream international world of Italian opera: Arne's *Artaxerxes*, a setting of a Metastasio libretto (though sadly the recitatives are no longer extant) and this work by Storace, with a libretto by Da Ponte. The connection with Mozart and Viennese opera of Stephen's sister Nancy is well known: she was the first Susanna in *Le nozze di Figaro*. Before that, Stephen had already written one opera for the Viennese court, *Gli sposi malcontenti*, performed at the Burgtheater to honour an English visitor, the Duke of York, on 1 June 1785 and subsequently in Prague, Leipzig, Dresden, Hanover, Berlin and Paris. He was commissioned to write a work for 1786, receiving the same fee as Mozart for *Figaro*: 450 florins (Nancy received 3247 florins a year). Storace's work had its premiere on 27 December 1786, eight months after *Figaro*. The Storaces then returned to England, where the stage conventions were very different and further full-scale operas were impossible.

My initial awareness of the work came indirectly though Storace's reuse of the Overture in his *The Haunted Tower* in 1789. Back in the early 1960s I'd bought a couple of bound volumes of operas from c.1790 (all now included in the King's Music catalogue) and that stood out as music of a higher sophistication. So I was looking forward to seeing it in full score. Alas, this fat volume (by far the largest single volume in the MB series) is just a vocal score. Would any other reputable national musical series of editions produce merely a vocal score of an important work? The price is reasonable for an academic volume of this size, but enormous for a vocal score. I can't work out why it takes up so much more space than Mozart's Da Ponte operas: the underlaid English text must sometimes affect the number of systems per page. At least the instrumentation is indicated with the sort of thoroughness one finds in, for instance, the Macfarren opera vocal scores that Novello published in the 1860s. Full score and performance material is (or will be) available, properly typeset, not just the MS material from the 1974 performance. But it will only be available on hire.

The story is based on *The Comedy of Errors*, maybe not Shakespeare's most impressive comedy, but one that relates closely to the classical Italian comedic tradition, with its derivation from two plays by Plautus. Da Ponte tightened it a bit, and devised extensive finales for each of the two acts. I'm not going to attempt to evaluate it, but I would recommend it to one of the country-house summer opera companies. A singing translation by Brian Trowell is included – for so rarely performed a work, the existence of two translations is surprising, since there is already one by Arthur Jacobs; these days, it is likely to be given in Italian with surtitles, and what both singers need in the score and audiences on the surtitles is a literal translation preserving as far as possible the Italian word order. The editor has worked on the opera for over thirty years, finding far more source-material than was available in the early 1970s. I hope he is well enough to appreciate its final publication. Trowell concludes his remarks on the translation with the commendation that 'Storaces finest opera – with, after all, a Da Ponte libretto – ought to take its permanent place in the repertory of our national opera houses.'

...AS THEY ARE PLAID IN CHURCHES AND CHAPPELS

Daniel Purcell *The Psalms Set full for the Organ or Harpsicord as they are Plaid in Churches and Chappels in their manner given out; as also with their Interludes of great Variety*. Performers' Facsimiles (PF 264), \$17.50

This offers 11 hymn tunes in two versions: as 'given out' (i.e. as played through before verse 1) and 'with the Interludes' (i.e. with the couple of bars organ fill-in between each line). It is a valuable guide to performance practice; a few examples have been reprinted, but it is good to see the whole set in print. At least three of the tunes are likely to be familiar in most churches that haven't abandoned all except the most popular hymns. The object, of course, is not to play any as written, but to absorb the style and play your own – if congregation and cleric will permit. One thing that puzzles me is the ranges, with tunes in F having an octave compass going up to the top of the stave, in a tessitura higher than what a normal congregation would be comfortable with. No doubt some organists could transpose, but probably not those who needed the specimens here. Whether you want it for practical purposes or not, it's a valuable document for the history of English church music.

MORE PERFORMERS' FACSIMILES

I haven't been commenting on Broude's excellent series for the last few years, so here is a brief run-down on recent issues, mostly for keyboard.

Claudio Merulo's *Toccate d'intavolatura d'organo* were published in Rome in two volumes in 1597 (according to the title page, but the publisher's preface is dated 1598) and 1604. The then-conventional notation on two staves, the upper with five lines, the lower with eight, takes some getting used to, though even if you don't master it and use a modern edition, it's worth checking the layout of the

original. (PF 281-2; each \$20.00). SPES issues the two volumes in one at €19.00 (about \$27.50), with a short preface; the Performers' Facsimiles come, as usual, with no information except the source of the copy reproduced.

Froberger's *Diverse Curiose è Rare Partite Musicali... Prima Continuazione* of 1696 has fewer legibility problems – two staves each with five lines, the upper with soprano clef, the lower with bass. Despite the 30 years since the composer's death, the publisher (Louis Bourgeat of Mainz) seems to have had access to quite reliable sources. What is odd is that two of the five Capriccios that make up its contents were also included in his similarly-titled publication of 1693. (PF 266; \$17.50) It would be useful to have the pieces identified.

Les Airs de Monsieur Lambert... corriger [sic] de nouveau de plusieurs fautes de gravure (1669) (PF 258; \$23.00) are apparently for soprano, bass and continuo, though the bass voice either doubles or paraphrases the continuo line so is hardly essential. The music is clear to read, though some clef-reading skill is needed. The standard combinations are either G2 and F3 or C1 and F4; as these are the top and bottom of the two renaissance ensemble clef configurations, so I wonder whether in the 1660s they still had any implication of transposition.

Galliard's *Sonata a flaute solo e basso continuo op. 1* (in fact, 6 Sonatas) was published by Roger in Amsterdam c.1710, after the composer had settled in England. This uses standard modern clefs, and the figured bass is quite manageable even by beginners – and it's congenial music. (PF 278; \$17.50).

Gottlieb Muffat's *72 Versetl Sammt 12 Toccaten* (1726) have nice clear engraving but a greater variety of clefs. Broude issued a facsimile in 1967 and there are several modern editions. This is functional music for catholic services; its continual accessibility is surprising, except maybe as examples for students to learn improvisation. (PF 262; \$25.00).

Handel was greatly indebted to some of Muffat's keyboard music as material to be reused. His *Six Fugues*, described as 'Troisième Ovarage' by Walsh (c.1735) date from some 20 years earlier. Since opus 3 was used in 1734 for the collection to which it is always applied now, the set of 6 concerti grossi, here it probably means 'third set of keyboard music'. Fugue 2 had already been quarried for op. 3/3, a movement that was there printed extremely carelessly. (PF 272; £20.00)

Finally, two publications of Clementi. Op. 2 comprises *Six Sonatas for the Piano Forte or Harpsichord with an Accompaniment for a German Flute or Violin*, though only nos 1, 3 & 5 have a violin/flute stave. Since the first edition was published in the 1770s, so the edition by J. Dale reproduced here may be a reissue or reprint. (PF 268; \$23). Op 3 is *Three Duets For two Performers on One Piano Forte or Harpsichord and three Sonatas with an Accompaniment for a Flute or Violin*, also published (reprinted?) by Dale in the 1780s (PF 269; \$23.00). A useful item to have round the house, allowing three options for a second player.

CIMAROSA REQUIEM

Cimarosa Requiem for Soli, Chorus and Orchestra...
edited by Reinmar Emans Breitkopf & Härtel (PB 5284),
2008. 144pp, €51.00. Vocal score (EB 8636), 111pp, €22.00.

According to a note Cimarosa wrote at the end of the MS, it was composed on the death of the Duchess Serra Capriola in St Petersburg on 12 December. Strangely, he didn't write the year – when composers date works, they usually do, and it is likely that the sentence only applies to the final movement, *Libera me*. The editor reckons that the MS is a fair copy by the composer, but doesn't hint when it was copied. It seems likely that the Requiem was recopied some years later, and I would guess that Cimarosa could remember the date but not the year.

The existence of so many sources and traces of different versions makes it difficult for an editor to present the variants simply, and I would have welcomed a translation of at least some of the information on sources and performance practice. For a work most likely to be performed in Italy, German isn't the most accessible language. It seems pointless to have footnotes such as *Siehe Kritischer Bericht* / *See Kritischer Bericht* since most English readers can work out what 'siehe' means, and if they can't read German, there's no point in sending them to the German-only *Kritischer Bericht*. The scoring is for SATB soli and chorus, a pair of horns, strings and organ, with pairs of oboes and bassoons added for the *Libera me*. The editor is exercised by the difference between viola and violetta (if any); he adds them above the bass, but one would like to know if the colla parte cues give any clue as to octave. For the first 8 bars, they growl away in unison with the cello, whereas I assume that the bass line is a bit like an organ, with 16', 8' and 4' sounds, and it doesn't matter if the viola occasionally plays above the violins. That seems to work, at least with music from the earlier 18th century. There's plenty for the chorus to sing, and it looks interesting enough for it to be worth performance. The movement that struck me most is for SAB soli and strings, a very original setting of the separation of sheep from goats.

APOLOGY

In my eagerness to point out that Ellen Rosand had listed in the bibliography of her *Monteverdi's Last Operas* Jane Glover's adaptation of my edition of *Il ritorno d'Ulisse*, without mentioning my edition in its own right (or my edition of *Il coronatione di Poppea*), I assumed from its appearance in a bibliography by an expert on the subject that it must have been circulating without permission. But Jane Glover assures me that, subsequently to using my edition as agreed, she had made one of her own, and that is listed separately in the bibliography. So I apologise for any implication of impropriety on her part. The entry on p. 435 of the bibliography for an edition involving both of us refers to one that was never publicly available.

Clifford Bartlett

Handel Chandos Anthems & Concertos

John Stanley Organ Concertos

Concert 1 (30 September)

Peter Wright and the Thomas Sutton Singers

Handel Concerto Grosso Op. 3 No 5 in D Minor

Handel Anthem No 9: O Praise the Lord with One Consent

Handel Organ Concerto HWV 296 in A Major (No 14)

Concert 2 (14 October)

Joe Sentance & the Choir of St Stephen Walbrook

Handel Concerto Grosso Op. 3 No 1 in Bb Major

Handel Anthem No 1: O Be Joyful in the Lord

Stanley Organ Concerto No.4 in C Minor

Concert 3 (28 October)

David Aprahamian Liddle & the Treasury Singers

Handel Concerto Grosso Op. 3 No 2 in Bb Major

Handel Anthem No 7: My Song shall be Always

Stanley Organ Concerto No.3 in Bb Major

Concert 4 (11 November)

James McVinnie & the Rodolfus Choir

Handel Concerto Grosso Op. 3 No 4 in F Major

Handel Anthem No 2: In the Lord I put my Trust

Stanley Organ Concerto No.2 in D Major

Concert 5 (25 November)

Mark Williams & Choir of Guildford Cathedral

Handel Concerto Grosso Op. 3 No 6 in D Major

Handel Anthem No 10: The Lord is my Light

Handel Organ Concerto (Pasticcio Concerto No 1) HWV 296b in A

Concert 6 (9 December)

Greg Morris & Choir of St Mary's Collegiate Church, Warwick

Handel Concerto Grosso Op. 3 No 3 in G Major

Handel Extracts from the Messiah

Stanley Organ Concerto No.6 in C Major

Concert 7 (20 January)

Malcolm Archer and the Choir of Winchester College Chapel

(Oboe soloist: Helen Barker)

Handel Oboe Concerto HWV 301 in Bb (No 1)

Handel Anthem No 3: Have Mercy upon Me

Handel Organ Concerto HWV 295 (No 13) in F Major

Concert 8 (3 February)

Robert Quinney & the Choir of Oundle School

(Violin Solo: Irina Pakkanen)

Handel Violin Concerto HWV 288 in Bb

Handel Anthem No 6: As Pants the Heart

Handel Organ Concerto HWV 305 (No 16) in F Major

Concert 9 (17 February)

Tom Winpenny and the City Chamber Choir

Handel Concerto Grosso HWV 318 in C ("Alexander's Feast")

Handel Anthem No 11: Let God Arise

Stanley Organ Concerto No.5 in A Major

Concert 10 (3 March)

Gavin Roberts and the Choir of St Marylebone Parish Church

(Oboe soloist: Jessica Moggeridge)

Handel Oboe Concerto HWV 302 in Bb (No 2)

Handel Anthem No 4: O Sing Unto the Lord a New Song

Stanley Organ Concerto No.1 in E Major

Concert 11 (17 March)

James O'Donnell & the Guildhall Consort of Voices

(Harp soloist: Anneke Hodnett)

Handel Harp Concerto in Bb

Handel Anthem No 5: I Will Magnify Thee

Handel Organ Concerto HWV 304 in D Minor (No 15)

Concert 12 (31 March)

Thomas Trotter and the Choir of St Bartholomew the Great

(Oboe soloist: Sarah Francis)

Handel Oboe Concerto HWV 287 in G Minor (No 3)

Handel Anthem No 8: O Come Let us Sing unto the Lord

Handel Organ Concerto (Pasticcio Concerto No 2) in C Major

The Handel Collection conducted by Edward Adams

1.00 pm at St Stephen Walbrook's church

(near the Bank of England & Mansion House)

Admission free

REVIEWS OF BOOKS

Clifford Bartlett

AUDREY EKDAHL DAVIDSON

Audrey Ekdahl Davidson *Aspects of Early Music and Performance* New York: AMS Press, 2008. xi + 218pp, \$92.50. ISBN 978 0 404 64601 1

The author's name is familiar in connection with the medieval publications from Kalamazoo in south-west Michigan, home of a series of Medieval conferences. This is a memorial collection of some of her writings. She was born in 1930, Her doctoral dissertation was on Messiaen, with a medieval slant, and was revised for publication in 2001 as *Olivier Messiaen and the Tristan Myth*. There's something nostalgic in the articles included here. I suspect some of the pieces taken from her previous collection *Substance and Manner: Studies in Music and the Other Arts* (Hiawatha Press, 1977) go back some way before then. There's a degree of readability that is appealing, but also a failure to dig deep enough into some of the topics raised. For instance, in her article on the suppression of the musical Passion at Roskilde in 1736, she seems not to have understood the Pietist objection to a dramatised Good Friday passion reading nor, on the other hand, the potential arrogance of the emphasis on a preacher's interpretation of the Passion story rather than an artistic presentation of the Gospel itself. And with comments on earlier liturgical drama, she is less careful than, for instance, Karl Young (in his classic collection of all the texts known in the 1930s) in distinguishing what we call drama with the symbolic and expository actions within and around the liturgy. Similarly, 'George Herbert and the Celestial Harmony' gives all the quotes but wouldn't make it into a serious EngLit journal.

Several items introduce medieval dramas bringing in various academic points while going through the text, which works quite well. She is, of course, right about the fact that there is no need for all singers in Hildegard's *Ordo virtutum* need have a two-octave range, but I couldn't help thinking of the mezzo-soprano contributor to *EMR* who regularly sings a drone an octave below middle C in the *Ordo* – in fact she was going into training for it last time I saw her. Davidson was a singer, and two items are on the subject. 'High, Clear and Sweet: Singing in Early Music' makes some points, but covers far too wide a period. 'Vocal Production and Early Music' concentrates on the physiological aspects of singing, on which I have no knowledge to comment. I wondered, though, whether the knowledge of how singing worked physically, which has developed almost entirely over the last 150 years, has introduced a way of singing that was completely different from what it was before, or did it just give a theoretical backing to the way people always sang? How important is it for singers to know the scientific basis of their technique? Perhaps that will be a topic for a speaker at the

York conference next July. There are also articles on settings of Sidney and on Milton's encomium to Henry Lawes.

Davidson seems to have been a determined lady. Born with brittle bone disease and mostly confined to a wheel chair, she travelled, taught, researched and sang. This little book, edited by Clifford Davidson (whose *Festivals and Plays in Late Medieval Britain* was published last year by Ashgate), has many interesting things to say. But by US standards, it is expensive, and is unlikely to find its way to the shelves of those who buy her editions. Why wasn't it put out by the Kalamazoo Medieval organisation itself.

KASSELL PICTURES

Angelika Horstmann *Illustrationen aus den Musikdrucken der Kasseler Hofkapelle. Band 1 Buchschmuck. Illustrations from the collections of printed music of the Hofkapelle in Kassel. Volume 1 Decorative Elements.* Translation: Betty Bushey. Euroverlag Kassel, 2008. 131pp, €39.00. ISBN 978 3 933617 27 9

This is a sort of appendix to the author's *Katalog der Musikdrucke aus der Zeit der Kasseler Hofkapelle (1550-1650)* – the second date is misprinted 1560 in the reference to it on page 7. The illustrations are arranged by country, town and publisher, beginning logically at Venice and Antonio Gardano, with his lion and bear logo. Numerically, the largest number of examples are initials – no complete alphabets but a plentiful selection of a few of the fonts. There are many publishers' logos, if that's the right word – I don't like this plural, since in the beginning was the word (*λογος*), not a picture. There are some fascinating portraits: Georg Rhaw looks extremely truculent, Music itself only appears because of associated images. Some title pages portray a bewildering amount of music-making, mostly too indiscriminate to tell us anything about what played where (apart from in heaven). Schein's *Israels brünnlein* (1623) has three groups of musicians who look more plausible than most. The side panels have one group of three cornetts and one of three sackbuts, each with a conductor, and in the centre there is an organ with the back view of its player, a lute, cittern and two singers, one conducting. It is hardly relevant for Schein's expressive sacred madrigals (which seems so vocal), but in itself, it looks more convincing than most such pictures. I wonder if the conductors with the cornetts and sackbuts are singing as well: we would then have a more plausible line-up with a high choir (voice on the bottom part) and low choir (voice on the top part) and a central group whose two singers and three continuo could well also be an independent choir. There must be plenty of three-choir pieces that fit. It is interesting that the players have no written parts.

I am a bit disappointed with the pictures: scanned illus-

trations these days have a clarity that these sometimes lack. It's a fascinating book for browsing. All that is missing is an index of names and subjects.

BACH & MARIANE VON ZIEGLER

Mark A Peters *A Woman's Voice in Baroque Music: Mariane von Ziegler and J. S. Bach* Ashgate, 2008. viii 192pp, £55.00. ISBN 978 0 7546 5810 8

The title seems back to front. If I was to arrange the topics from the most to the least interesting, Bach would come first, Ziegler second, the fact that it is about a woman writer third, while the mention of Bach makes 'Baroque Music' superfluous. The feminine aspect looms chiefly in the first chapter on Ziegler as a poet. Despite the academic approach, one gets the feeling that the author finds the sort of domestication of women of the period unusual, whereas the current Western idea of 'equality' is in historical and anthropological terms quite rare. It is odd that the fact that her father was imprisoned for 41 years without trial is mentioned almost in passing.

However, the main subject is fascinating. Ziegler provided a sequence of nine cantatas performed consecutively between 22 April and 27 May 9 (Exaudi to Trinity Sunday) 1725, the final items of Bach's second cycle (BWV 103, 108, 87, 128, 183, 74, 68, 175, 176). No other such concentration of specially-written texts exists among Bach's cantatas, and, as the author argues in convincing details, the unique features in Bach's setting can be attributed in considerable part to the nature of the texts. Most obviously this is in the avoidance of what one thinks of as the standard cantata form: chorus, a couple of recitative + aria pairs and a closing chorale. Beyond that, Peters finds more subtle

influences, what might seem to be accidental being backed up by comparative statistics.

These are not the best-known cantatas, but one movement is popular enough to have a familiar English title, 'My heart ever faithful'. It would be interesting to record them in sequence (or assemble them from one of the existing cantata sets) and test whether the common features – those the author describes and perhaps additional ones – become apparent. The influence is not only in form but in theological substance, and the chapter on her use of the words of Christ brings to our attention not just Ziegler's personal taste but its base in Lutherism. I can't tell myself how good a poet Ziegler was, but her texts seem to have offered distinctive features to which Bach responded.

Earlier writers who have noticed Ziegler's contribution have used the differences between the texts Bach set and the version she published as suggesting that Bach found them unsatisfactory. But Peters plausibly argues that idea predates the establishment of the date of the cantatas in the 1950s and subsequent scholars have retained the assumption although its basis has vanished. The published version came three years after Bach's settings, and Ziegler probably made the changes as part of a literary process of self-criticism and revision.

One oddity. For a book devoted to Ziegler and Bach, it is odd that there is such minimal overlap (apart from its presence in the bibliography) with an article by Katherine R. Goodman in *Bach's Changing World* (ed. Carol K. Baron) published by the University of Rochester in 2006. This hypothesises that Ziegler wrote the last two stanzas of the Coffee Cantata, which surely deserves a mention, if only of disbelief.

The Swiss Orpheus

AN APPRAISAL OF THE LIFE AND MUSIC OF Ludwig Sennfl (1489/91 – 1543)

BY KATHLEEN BERG

This book tells the story of the composer Sennfl. We gain insights into his life and times, together with an overview of the considerable amount of relatively little-known but excellent music he produced. To complete the picture, the book includes new editions of 20 secular songs, 4 Latin odes, 3 German religious songs, 4 large motets, examples of mass propers and vespers, and a magnificat. The book will be launched at the Greenwich Early Music Festival (14th – 16th November 2008) and will be on sale there, price £30. It can also be obtained or ordered via the author on 01522 527530 or by contacting:

kberg@senfl.co.uk

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LADY NEVELL BRINGS BYRD TO ABERDEEN

Richard Turbet

The first time My Ladye Nevells Booke (MLNB) came to Scotland, it was to Aberdeen in 2008. What follows is a short account of the circumstances of the manuscript's residency, and the events which its presence inspired.

The circumstances of the purchase of MLNB for the nation are well documented (e.g. "Byrd on a wire", *EMR* 113 (2006): p. 19) and one of the requirements was that it should be exhibited elsewhere in the United Kingdom besides its home in the British Library. A happy combination of events meant that in October 2007 Chris Banks, who had led the fundraising for MLNB while she was Head of Music Collections at the British Library, was appointed Librarian at the University of Aberdeen, where she became a colleague of myself, already installed in the Library as Special Collections Cataloguer and Music subject specialist, and of David J. Smith, the leading scholar of Peter Philips, a pupil of Byrd; and that in recognition of the revival of the Department of Music, which had been closed in 1990 and then regained departmental status in 2007, the Royal Musical Association (RMA) selected the University of Aberdeen as the venue for its annual conference of 2008. Two strengths of the revitalized and dynamic department are early keyboard music and electroacoustic music so, given the additional presence of Mrs Banks and myself in the University Library, it was decided to make Byrd and his contemporaries, and electroacoustic music, the twin principal themes of the conference, alongside free papers. Almost immediately David and I, as local members of the Programme Committee, enquired whether MLNB might be available for exhibition during the conference. A positive response from the British Library led to Lady Nevell bringing Byrd to Aberdeen.

Byrd's music has been known and heard in Aberdeen since the days of the early music revival in the nineteenth century. Suzanne Cole has found a reference to a performance of *The carman's whistle* by Walter Smith at the Aberdeen Asylum for the Blind, 23 March 1889. (It is listed in the handout accompanying her RMA paper noted below.) Subsequently the choir of St Machar's Cathedral, the mediaeval cathedral now a presbyterian parish church within the Church of Scotland, has had Byrd's music in its repertory, usually motets with texts translated into English; and the male choir of St Andrew's Scottish Episcopal Cathedral also has a spread of his choral compositions in regular use within the Anglican liturgy. Local choirs and ensembles have programmed a variety of his music since the increased interest in historically informed performance gathered momentum in the latter decades of the previous century, while at the University, the presence of myself, David Smith and Roger Williams, the saviour of Music as a taught subject after the attempt to annihilate it altogether during the 1980s, has brought forth a number of

performances, choral and instrumental, both of familiar pieces and of many unlikely to be performed much elsewhere, if at all (*EMR*, *passim*).

It became clear that the University did not possess a suitable venue in which to exhibit MLNB, so we turned to Aberdeen Art Gallery. The staff there could not have been more accommodating and collegiate throughout, and the Gallery itself fulfilled all the requirements respecting environment and insurance necessarily laid down by the British Library, which was always supportive, encouraging and positive. As a result, it was arranged that Dr Nicolas Bell brought up the manuscript on Thursday 8 May, when it was unpacked and, after a press conference the following day, it was unveiled to the public on Saturday 10 May, to be exhibited for three months until Sunday 3 August.

In the meantime, much was to happen before its arrival. David Smith set up an undergraduate course lasting ten weeks devoted to MLNB, and applied successfully for a cultural engagement grant from the University. Aberdeen City Council extended its existing series of weekly lunchbreak concerts, run by Roger Williams, in the Cowdray Hall adjoining the Art Gallery, to accommodate three extra concerts featuring music from MLNB. In the first of these on Thursday 1 May, the Renaissance recorder consort Cantores ad Portam, directed by David Smith, and Frauke Jurgensen (harpsichord and dance, assisted by Ronnie Gibson) performed a programme entitled "Dancing Byrd", consisting of *My Ladye Nevells grownde*, *the barelye breake*, the consort and keyboard versions of *The firste pavian* and *the galliarde* (the consort galliard is of course a modern arrangement) and *A voluntarie* (no. 42), plus items from Arbeau's *Orchesographie*. A week later the series moved to Drum's Aisle in St Nicholas Kirk where, for his concert "Speaking Byrd", Roger Williams played *Ut re mi fa sol la*, *The seventh pavian*, *The carman's whistle* and *A fancie* (no. 41) on its fine chamber organ (all the keyboard pieces played elsewhere in the two series were performed on the harpsichord) interspersed with appropriate readings. In the final concert on May 15 back in Cowdray Hall, David, playing the harpsichord, and Frauke, this time as soprano, again joined forces in "Singing Byrd" to present *A fancie* (no. 41), *Ye sacred muses*, *An aged dame*, *Hugh Ashtons grownde* and *Sellengers rownde*, interspersed with pieces by Caccini, Philips and Dowland. The previous evening, Chris Banks had given an introductory talk in the Art Gallery on MLNB to the Friends of Aberdeen Art Gallery & Museums, which she reprised for The Friends of Aberdeen University Library on Wednesday 25 June and for the staff of Aberdeen University Library a fortnight later.

MLNB had by now been installed in the Murray Room, alongside watercolours by Turner, Palmer and other luminaries, and Aberdeen Art Gallery hosted three lecture-recitals on MLNB as part of its series of weekly lunchtime talks. During the first, "Byrd's instruments", on Wednesday 28 May, Frauke played *The maidens songe*, *The third pavian and galliarde*, *Munsers almaine* and *Lord Willobies welcome home*. A week later in "1591" David included *My Ladye Nevells grownde*, *Qui passe*, *The seconde pavian and galliarde* and *The carmans whistle*. Finally, on June 11, I gave a talk on "Byrd & My Ladye" after which Roger played *The firste pavian and galliard*, *Hugh Ashtons grownde*, *The marche before the battel*, *The bagpipe and the drone* and *The retreat from The battle*, and *The galliarde for the victorie*.

Thanks to the superb publicity provided by Aberdeen Art Gallery, all the events relating to MLNB were well attended. Indeed, the facsimile placed next to the manuscript for public consultation had to be rebound halfway through the residency, because of the amount of use it had enjoyed. The manuscript itself was open at the last page of the Third Pavan and Galliard.

After about a month's hiatus, the focus shifted to the annual conference of the Royal Musical Association (RMA) at the University of Aberdeen, 15-18 July. Six MLVB were fix lectures were devoted to Byrd, along with a round table on MLNB plus two recitals. On July 16, in the session entitled "Aspects of *My Ladye Nevells Booke*", Tihomir Popovic's paper was "By an unknown hand? Corrections and alterations in *My Ladye Nevells Booke*", based on a listing and subsequent scrutiny of the thousand-plus such additions to the musical text; and Philippe Cathe spoke on "William Byrd's music in the light of harmonic vectors"; fears about the accessibility of the seemingly intimidating subject were soon dispelled. In the following session, "Keyboard music in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries", Suzanne Cole continued her work on the revival of Tudor music with "Those charming pieces of antique quaintness: Byrd's keyboard music in the nineteenth century". That evening in Aberdeen Art Gallery, Chris Banks repeated her presentation "An introduction to *My Ladye Nevells Booke*" before a concert by Davitt Moroney. This consisted of all the pieces unique to MLNB – *My Ladye Nevells grownde*, *The barelye breake*, *A galliards gygge*, *The eighte pavian*, *A voluntarie for My Ladye Nevell* and *The second grownde* plus *The seventh pavian* and, as an encore, *The woods so wild*.

The following day, the session "Byrd's Vocal Music" consisted of Philip Taylor's paper on "Music of remembrance: Byrd's elegiac songs in the Paston Collection" and Richard Rastall discussing "Performance issues in William Byrd's settings of Psalm texts", in which, in order to illustrate his suggestion about how Elizabethans might have performed Byrd's settings of Psalms with many verses domestically, he achieved the impossibility of goading the substantial audience into singing recognizable music. After lunch we were treated to two lecture-recitals. Rachelle Taylor recreated on the harpsichord Glenn

Gould's famous LP recording on the piano "A Consort of Musicke" which consisted of pieces by Byrd and Gibbons; Byrd's contribution was *The first pavian and galliard*, *Hugh Ashton's ground*, *The sixth pavian and galliard*, *A voluntary for My Lady Neville* and *Sellingens round*. This was followed by a joint event with our colleagues from the electroacoustic fraternity, in which Joseph Anderson and Christopher Wilson spoke about the progress on a forthcoming composition *MLNB Extracted for the Acousmatic*, and played what had been composed so far. The final Byrdian event of the conference was a roundtable on MLNB, chaired by myself. Set elegantly and inspiringly in motion by Oliver Neighbour, it included presentations by Malcolm Rose, David Smith, Tihomir Popovic, Davitt Moroney and Desmond Hunter, with contributions from the floor, including a moving statement by Rachelle Taylor concerning the physical and, particularly, mental energy she expended in performing her series of recitals comprising the complete keyboard works of Byrd in Montreal during 2003. It remains to be said that the entire conference, the complete proceedings of which will be written up elsewhere, was considered an enjoyable success; the papers on Byrd extended our knowledge and perception of his music, and the contents of those yet unpublished all seem destined for publication either as articles or as part of broader publications: see future "Byrd on a wire" articles each June in *EMR* for details.

On Tuesday 5 August, witnessed by David and myself, the manuscript of MLNB was collected by Nicolas Bell from Aberdeen Art Gallery and returned to the British Library. It is of course a striking and beautiful artefact, well worth seeing, but the striking and beautiful music within it is intended primarily to be heard, and to this end the British Library has sponsored a recording of well-chosen excerpts played on the harpsichord by Terence Charlston (Deux-Elles DXL 1136, £12.50). The selection is excellently interpreted, a legacy of his performance last year of the entire manuscript at the British Library which I mentioned in the subsequent "Byrd on a wire". A box of the discs reached Aberdeen just in time to be placed on sale for the final day of the conference. Elsewhere in the city, over the summer, students at the University were able to immerse themselves in a course on the manuscript, which included seeing it all close at hand while it was being unpacked; and visitors to the city's Art Gallery came in numbers to view it – on the day of its departure the receptionist at the Art Gallery stated without prompting that it had been "very popular" – and to hear talks and recitals based upon it. *My Ladye Nevells Booke* has left Aberdeen, but its legacy endures.

CONCERT MISSED

We had intended to insert a late announcement of Andrew Benson-Wilson's lunch-time recital on 30 September at the Grosvenor Chapel. However, no subscriber will receive this issue by that date, since we are still (on the 29th) sorting out what goes where and what gaps need to be filled.

CLAUDIO MONTEVERDI'S CONTRABASSO DA GAMBA

Part II

Peter McCarthy

In 1613 Monteverdi was unexpectedly appointed as maestro da capella at St. Marks after the untimely death of Giulio Cesare Martinengo who had only been appointed in 1609. In that year the account books show that for one performance 20 instrumentalists were specially hired in addition to the 6 resident players. The choir numbered 25 and two extra organs were bought in from St. Mark's Seminary.¹ It is not known what music these great forces assembled to play, but this scale of performance may well have seen some poor soul directed to elevate a *violone grande contrabasso* to an upright position and play D, G or A at the loudest points. Thomas Coryat attended the patronal celebration at the Confraternity of San Rocco in 1607 and was astonished by 'two violdgambaes of an extraordinary greatness'.² Monteverdi's 1610 publication also specifies a *contrabasso da gamba*. How great are the forces required to satisfy Monteverdi's stipulations?

Annibale Stabile was appointed maestro di capella at S. Maria Maggiore in Rome in 1591. The choir comprised 4 boys, 2 altos, 2 tenors and 2 basses. In that year, 2 sopranos and 2 basses were engaged for the Feast of Our Lady of the Snows, together with a violin, a cornett and a trombone. The following month, as well as 2 extra singers, he also employed a cornett and a trombone for the Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin. The use of an organ may be deduced by the inclusion of the organist in every monthly choir list during Stabile's time at S. Maria Maggiore. In the year 1593, 8 extra musicians (cantori) were engaged for these feast days but no details are given as to their voice or instrument.³ This establishes the use of instrumental musicians in Rome in Marian Feasts, if not at other times. Paolo Fabbri points to other 'sporadic experiments' with using instruments 'not limited to the basso continuo' in psalm settings and Vespers services at this time: Giulio Radini 1607, Arcangelo Crotti 1608, Agostino Agazzari 1609, Giovanni Gabrieli and Giovanni Croce not published until after 1610.⁴

Monteverdi travelled to Rome in the autumn of 1610 with the hope of obtaining a benefice from Pope Paul V for the education of his eldest son, Francesco, presumably with a dedicatory copy of the Vespers. If that was unfruitful, he hoped to use the visit to make his escape from what had become unsatisfactory employment in Mantua; perhaps the publication helped in his appointment as Maestro di Cappella at San Marco, Venice, in 1613.

In the 1610 publication instrumental parts are only given in the Marian Vespers. There are none for the *Missa in Illo*

Tempore with which the partbooks begin, apart from the *basso continuo* (which is sometimes regrettably omitted from editions and performances); this is, however, integral to the second Magnificat that concludes the collection. Indications for organ registration are given in the second Magnificat (a 6) as well as the more familiar first setting. The organ is also referred to directly elsewhere in the Vespers, eg *Laudate Pueri a 8 voci sole nel organo*.

There are 7 part books and a basso continuo. All the vocal parts (up to 10) and instrumental material are contained in the 7 part books: cantus, altus, tenor, bassus, quintus, sextus and septimus. Compasses in the Magnificat sections are given here untransposed and (bracketed) down a fourth to the relative sounding pitch.⁵

An account of the distribution of instrumental parts in the published part books can be seen in appendix A below. No mention is made here of the *Bassus generalis*; there is no hint within it that it was intended for a melodic bass instrument. A brief summary of the instrumentation in the books suggest the following:

Domine ad adiuvandum 6 instrumental parts

- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| 1. cornet and violino da braccio doubling | range g' to a'' |
| 2. cornet and violino da braccio doubling | range a' to a'' |
| 3. viola da braccio | range d' to e'' |
| 4. viola da braccio and trombone doubling | range d to a' |
| 5. trombone and viola da braccio doubling | range d to e' |
| 6. trombone, contrabasso da gamba
and viola da braccio doubling | range G to e |

Dixit Dominus three 6 part ritornelli, instrumentation unspecified

1. range d' to a''
2. range g# to a''
3. range a' to a''
4. range e to e'
5. range e to f'
6. range A to a

Sonata sopra Santa Maria 8 instrumental parts

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. violino da braccio | range d' to a'' |
| 2. violino da braccio | range g to a'' |
| 3. cornetto | range c' to a'' |
| 4. cornetto | range b to a'' |
| 5. viola da braccio | range C to d' |
| 6. trombone | range d to f' |
| 7. trombone/viola da braccio range | B to f' |
| 8. trombone doppio | range C to a' |

1 Denis Arnold *Monteverdi*, J.M. Dent, 1963

2 Coryat *Crudities*, 1611; facsimile Scolar Press 1978, p. 252; Coryat is unlikely to have seen any instrument bigger than a bass viol in D in England.

3 Ruth Lighbourne 'Annibale Stabile' *Early Music* May 2004

4 Paolo Fabbri *Monteverdi* trans. Tim Carter, Cambridge UP, 1994

5 i.e. the pitch notation that would have been used had the music been written out to sound at the same level as the rest of the work. This is unrelated to the absolute pitch level, which is likely to have been A=465.

Hinno Ave maris stella 5 part ritornello repeated 4 times, instrumentation unspecified

1. range f' to a''
2. range d' to a''
3. range a' to a''
4. range d to g'
5. range F to c'

Magnificat à 7

Magnificat 4 instrumental parts

1. cornet and violino da braccio doubling range d'' to f' (a' to c'')
2. violino da braccio partly doubled by cornetto b' to d'' (f' to a')
3. cornetto range a' to b'
4. viola da braccio range Bb to g

Quia respexit 4 instrumental parts repeated to conclude

1. cornet and violino da braccio doubling range a' to c'''
 2. cornet and violino da braccio doubling range f' to a''
 3. cornetto range d' to g''
 4. viola da braccio range A to f'
- 3 intervening sections for 2 instruments
1. fifara range g' to f'
 2. fifara range g' to g''
 1. trombone range f to g'
 2. trombone range G to c'
 1. flauto range g' to a''
 2. flauto range f' to d''

Quia fecit 2 instrumental parts

1. violino da braccio range c' to d'''
2. violino da braccio range a' to d'''

Fecit potentiam 3 instrumental parts

1. violino da braccio range b' flat to d'''
2. violino da braccio range g' to c'''
3. viola da braccio range F to f'

Deposuit 2 instrumental parts

1. cornetto range b' flat to d'''
2. cornetto range b' flat to d'''
1. violino range b' flat to e flat'''
2. violino range b' flat to e flat'''

Esurientes 4 instrumental parts

1. cornetto range b' flat to d'''
2. cornetto range a' to g''
3. cornetto range f' to f'
4. viola da braccio range A to d'

Sicut locutus 6 instrumental parts

1. violino da braccio range a' to d'''
2. violino da braccio range f# to c'''
3. viola da braccio range Bb to d'
4. cornetto range g' to a''
5. cornetto range f' to a''
6. trombone range Bb to d'

Sicut erat 4 instrumental parts

1. cornet and violino da braccio doubling range f' to a''

2. cornet and violino da braccio doubling range f' to a''
3. cornetto range b flat to c''
4. viola da braccio range G to d'

The question is this: are the instrumental doublings Monteverdi suggests absolute or business-like suggestions from a professional composer keen to promote the widest possible use of his music (and therefore the largest sale of his publication)?

It has been rehearsed at length elsewhere that the liturgical structure of the antiphon substitutes in the *Vespers* are not specific to one particular Marian Feast Day. [Stephen Bonta "The Liturgical Problems in Monteverdi's Marian Vespers" *Journal of the American Musicological Society* XX. Richmond, VA 1967 for one]. The correct antiphons for the day can be said by the presiding priest at the appropriate point. This makes the 1610 *Vespers* suitable for all Marian Feasts - approximately 15 in a year plus most Saturdays. This could certainly be good for sales!

Cornetti and violini doubling is uncontroversial except for one problematic movement. Appendix B shows that observing all doublings requires a maximum total of 11 instrumentalists as well as an organist for *Domine ad adiuvandum*). The bottom line is set by the Sonata which has 8 separate instrumental parts.

The Sonata gives a clue. The seventh instrumental part is labelled *trombone overo viola da braccio*. It's the only time the word *overo* is used in the instrumentation. If you use a *viola da braccio*, the 2 violini and 2 cornetti are supported by two string instruments and two trombones. This is contrary to attempts to create two discrete instrumental choirs of string and wind instruments, generally leading to using even more than 11 instrumentalists.

Contrasting antiphonal instrumentation now rests solely with the two pairs of treble instruments, supported by the four part consort beneath. This reduces the total of instrumentalists required to 8 (+ organist), the minimum requirement for a performance of the *Vespers*.

The other movement requiring maximum forces is *Domine ad adiuvandum*. How would this mixed group fit here. The 3rd part is marked only for *viola da braccio*. The 4th, 5th and 6th parts are all marked *viola da braccio* and trombone with the additional mention of *contrabasso da gamba*. It is possible to choose two trombones and a second *da braccio*. If two *viola da braccio* are used one must be able to descend to low C (for the Sonata) and the 2nd B in the bass stave. Banchieri's bass in G would have no trouble with this total range in the frets of G to b'. It would also be possible to choose 3 trombones and 1 *viola da braccio*, or 2 trombones, 1 *viola da braccio* and 1 *contrabasso da gamba* for the lowest string part (since I have shown this is not a 16ft transposing instrument). A wealthy church could employ all thirteen instruments suggested in the *Domine ad adiuvandum* to enjoy the majestic and varied possibilities. A very wealthy foundation, say San Marco, Venice, in 1613, could put on a

performance on a very grand scale. 26 instrumentalists could easily produce full choirs of both wind and strings as well as a magnificently augmented continuo. This is just such a performance where you might expect a very large 16ft bass instrument to appear: the opening bass part of the *Domine ad adiuvandum* would be just about right for it, particularly if only the downbeats were played in the triple sections. The total effect would certainly command the attention of the congregation.

Quia respexit causes the most problems. If the cornetti are also to play *fifara* and *flauto*, the changes of instrument are impossible to negotiate. Similarly for the violins. It is striking that the parts in the *altus* and *tenor* books for *cornetto 1* and *2* also contain the music for *fifara* and *flauto* (and in *cornetto 1*, also the lower trombone part). The 3 *da braccio* parts for *Quia Respexit* do not contain any other material. *Violini* double the cornetti in the opening and closing *ritornelli*. The *fifara* and *flauti* are not cued in the *basso continuo* book which is not a short score for this movement but bass line only.

Venturing into the realm of speculation, if the opening and closing sections are played by three *da brazzi* and the 3rd *cornetto* only, the two other cornetti players can take up *fifara* and *flauti* with plenty of time to change. *Cornetto 3* (*Sextus*) also contains the higher trombone part. The third *cornetto* and *trombone doppio* play the two trombone parts. In total, seven musicians. The 2nd *viola da braccio*/3rd *trombone* (depending on the initial choice) is also available during this movement to lend a hand. The third *cornetto* part only appears when at least one *viola da braccio* and one *trombone* have no music. This kind of speculation may not help organise a modern performance in an age of increased specialisation.⁶

Every musician likes to promote her or his instrument. Here I put mine forward in a typical modern performance situation. You have the minimum forces gathered: ten singers, one organist and eight very talented instrumentalists who do not blanch at picking up *fifara* and *flauti*. It's nothing like the grand scale of the minimum 51 performers at St. Marks in 1713 so a 16ft instrument is historically inappropriate. But your organ is a small portable organ with an 8ft, 4ft and 2ft. It does not have a stack of pipes 8ft long attached so the 8ft principal gives way to stopped flute at tenor f all the way down to C with the consequent loss of sound. Monteverdi obviously expected something larger. For example, *principale, ottava & quintadecima* are marked in the opening of the *Magnificat* and *Quia respexit*; *Fecit potentiam* is marked *principale & registro della zifara o voce humane* and *Sicut erat* is a *organo pieno*. The bass notes of the organ in the choral

⁶ A solution proposed by Peter Holman for a performance in 1976 (Kingston Parish Church conducted by Louis Halsey) was for the opening and closing instrumental sections to be played twice, with the cornetti tacet for the second statement of the first section and the first statement of the last. This would give the cornetti time to change to *Fifara* and back from *Flauti*. The third *cornetto* could play throughout, though it's a bit of a fill-in part and it may be better omitted when the other cornetti are silent. (I was intrigued to notice in the 1976 programme that one of the soloists, Rogers Covey-Crump, was also in a performance I played in 30 years later.) [CB]

sections cry out for reinforcement, not unprecedented in the 17th century. Monteverdi chose a *contrabasso da gamba* to accompany the *cembalo* for *Il Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda*. So...

Appendix

Those worried by the inconsistency of terminology of bass instruments might consider the following list of names associated with music in the bass clef that Stephen Bonta discovered in printed music in Venice and Bologna and from archival records in Bergamo, Bologna and Venice.

bassetto, bassetto di viola, basso da braccio, basso di viola, basso viola da braccio, viola, viola da braccio, violetta, vivola da braccio, violone, violone da braccio, violonzono, violincino, violoncello, contrabasso

Stephen Bonta "Terminology for the Bass-Violin in Seventeenth-Century Italy" *The American Musicological Society* IV. 1979

Claudio Monteverdi's Contrabasso da Gamba - a necessary reply to Peter McCarthy's article in *EMR* 126

Roland Wilson

Peter McCarthy's article contains so much half-information, and a completely illogical conclusion based more on pre-conception than a serious evaluation of the available sources, that I feel obliged to set out the evidence clearly, to enable the reader to draw his own conclusion.

It seems extremely strange that Monteverdi's *Orfeo* is not mentioned by McCarthy. Monteverdi's use of *Contrabasso* in the "Settimo Libro de madrigali" and the other two pieces in the *libro ottavo*, as well as his letters and the relevant information in Virgiliano, seem to be unknown to him. Despite giving a tuning for the *violone* from Zacconi, he does not seem to have seen this either, or perhaps he doesn't read Italian. His knowledge of the basic acoustical principals of *trombones* seems to be non-existent. Even reading the New Grove article on the *trombone* would have helped him in this respect. Is that too much to ask? Obviously, *EMR* offers a platform for information without proper musicological annotation. I welcome this, but I think this article should not have passed the editor. The trouble is, Clifford Bartlett is the editor, and has been proclaiming for years without any evidence in his editions of *Orfeo* and the 1610 *Vespers* that Monteverdi's *Contrabasso* was a G-Violone. All music and other sources mentioned below are readily available – and within an arms-length of my computer.

There are three northern Italian sources, from Monteverdi's lifetime which give information on the tuning of the *viola da gamba* family as well as on other instruments

Aurelio Virgiliano *Il Dolcimelo* MS treatise from beginning of the 17th century located in the *Civico Museo Bibliografico di*

Bologna. Facsimile SPES Firenze 1979
 Adriano Banchieri *Conclusioni* Bologna 1609
 Lodovico Zacconi *Prattica di Musica Venetia* 1596
 (foreword dated 1592)

All the sources seem to agree on the following:-

1. The Tenor/ Alto Viol tuned D G c e a d'

The *viola da gamba* tuned from D upwards (which English players call a bass viol) was always referred to in this period as a tenor-alto instrument. McCarthy writes 'Note that Praetorius calls the tuning D G c e a d' the *tenor viol da gamba*!'.⁷ His exclamation mark would seem to imply that he thinks – or wants the reader to think – that the other sources view this as a bass instrument. This is not the case in any of the sources of this period. Bianchieri describes the instrument with this tuning as 'Viola Mezana da Gamba. Seconda, terza Viola per tenore & alto'; Virgiliano's tablatures show this tuning also to be for alto and tenor; Zacconi just describes it as the middle instrument. Just for the record, although not relevant to this discussion, the tunings given for the soprano *viola da gamba* are G c f a d' g' (Bianchieri) and a tone higher from A in Virgiliano and Zacconi.

2. Monteverdi's Basso da Gamba

The bass *viola da gamba*, also referred to by Banchieri as violone, was tuned from GG (Bianchieri and Zacconi) or AA (Virgiliano) upwards. McCarthy claims Zacconi's tuning is specifically GG C F A d g but I have been unable to find this. Zacconi writes "Il suo Basso se ne vada da D la sol re fino in G sol re ut basso basso", which I understand to mean, the range of the bass viol is from d' (fingered) down to GG. Obviously this instrument played mainly, but not exclusively, in the 8 foot register. Agostino Agazzari (Del Suonare sopra'l basso, Siena 1607) tells us that the *violone* should dwell as much as possible on the lower strings, which would seem to mean playing an octave lower than written. (*Il violone come parte grave procede gravemente, sostenendo con la sua dolce risonanza l'armonia dell'altre parti, trattenendosi più che si può nelle corde grossi toccando spesso i contrabassi.*) I guess, if Agazzari turned up at an English HIP gig, he would immediately get the sack. Given this evidence, there can be no possible doubt that in Monteverdi's time the *basso da gamba*, which was also called *violone* (which means nothing more than big viola), was an instrument tuned from GG (or sometimes AA) but never the instrument the English today call the bass viol tuned from D upwards. I don't know what McCarthy thinks Monteverdi's *basso da gamba* was because he unfortunately doesn't tell us. Perhaps he would like to do so?

3. Monteverdi's Contrabasso da Gamba

If the bass *viola da gamba* was the instrument tuned on GG, the *contrabasso da gamba* was obviously something

even lower to Monteverdi just as it was to Banchieri. The *contrabasso da gamba* is described by Banchieri as being tuned from DD. McCarthy seems to think – for me inexplicably – that the *contrabasso da gamba* is identical with the G Violone as he writes, without giving any evidence or reasoning, 'this (the G-Violone) is the instrument Monteverdi calls the *contrabasso da gamba*'. Why it should be a different instrument for Monteverdi than for Banchieri, McCarthy does not tell us.

That they were not the same instrument is quite clear from *Orfeo*. In the list of instruments we have *Duoi contrabassi de Viola* but also *Tre bassi da gamba*. In the third act Monteverdi writes *Coro di spirti, al suono di un Reg.Org.di legno, cinque Tromb. duoi Bassi di gaba, & un contrabasso de viola*. The *duoi bassi da gamba, & un contrabasso de viola* in *Orfeo* would then be two G-violoni, presumably doubling the two bass trombones at 8' pitch and a DD instrument doubling the continuo at the lower octave, which would still be possible when transposing the *coro de spirti* down a fourth as implied by the clefs AATBar.Bar. (and also confirmed by the short "Pietade oggi" *coro di spirti* written in TTTBB clefs)

Il settimo libro de madrigali contains two works of relevance to this subject.

Con che soavità requires in the *terzo choro* a *Viola da Braccio overo da gamba* (tenor clef, presumably then a D gamba), a *Basso da Braccio overo da gamba* (a G bass gamba = violone) and a part *per il contrabasso*, which we must assume logically is a larger and lower-tuned instrument. The range of this part is for the most part C-d, with a couple of bars doubling the high choir doubling the basso going up to a. All this would present no problem played at pitch on a DD *contrabasso di viola da gamba*.

The published version of *Tirsi e Clori* only requires 5 instruments and voices. The original version, described by Monteverdi in his letter from 21. November 1615, requires 8 *viole da braccio* to double 8 voices, and a *contrabasso*. There would seem to be no reason why this instrument should be at 8 foot pitch and not identical with Banchieri's *contrabasso*.

The eighth Madrigal book has three madrigals specifying *contrabasso*. *Altri cant d'amor* asks for a *Viola contrabasso* in addition to a *Viola da gamba*. The *Viola da gamba*, written in tenor clef is obviously a D instrument and in the instrumental interludes plays as a bassett with the two violins. The *Viola contrabasso* only plays in the full tutti at the end and the preceding section where six strings accompany the bass voice. With the exception of five notes it doubles the bass voice – presumably at the octave. Its role in *Vago auguletto* is similar. When just two violins accompany one singer the *contrabasso* is silent. The third piece is the famous *combattimento* discussed by McCarthy where Monteverdi asks – apart from the four *viole da braccio* – for a *contrabasso da Gamba che continuerà con il Clavicembano*, according to the evidence at 16ft pitch. This would even apply if Monteverdi's *contrabasso* were identical with the G-Violone as McCarthy claims (see

⁷ The exclamation mark is for the benefit of the English reader, since here the instruments of the standard 17th-century viol consort (in D, G, and D) are and were called treble, alto and bass.[CB]

Agazzari, quoted above and note, Agazzari is talking about the *Violone* (according to the sources = G-Violone = *Basso da Gamba*). not the *contrabasso*. The only evidence which McCarthy offers for an 8 foot *contrabasso* is his own pre-conception 'doubling of the bass line at a lower octave would be surprising'. It might be surprising to someone from the 20th century English early music scene, but would it be surprising to somebody from the jazz scene. The jazz continuo group has the keyboard doubled at 16 foot pitch by a bass without an 8 foot bass. This is just a matter of what you are used to hearing. Given the available evidence I rather think that it is McCarthy who is 'standing history on its head'.

I am of course aware that Praetorius equates *groß Viol de Gamba* with *Violono, oder Contrabasso da gamba* but Monteverdi quite clearly does not.

Viole da braccio

As to the identity of the *quattro viole da braccio*, *soprano, Alto tenore et Basso* in *Il Combattimento*, I would like to point out that Zacconi gives tunings for the *da braccio* family starting from a bass tuned from BB flat, a tenor tuned from F and the violin as today from g. I am not sure that McCarthy has actually read Zacconi. To assume Banchieri's G tuning for the *basso da braccio* in *Il Combattimento* would seem unlikely, given the fact that elsewhere Monteverdi requires his *basso da braccio* to play down to low C.

Trombones

McCarthy: 'Praetorius describes a contrabass trombone, one octave below the Bb tenor trombone'. Praetorius had never heard of the 'Bb tenor trombone' and neither had anyone else in the 17th century. All the sources up to the end of the 18th century view the standard trombone as being in A. I realise that all English groups always perform 17th century music at standard British Orchestral pitch a' = 440 and the trombone players play their instruments as in the modern orchestra in b flat, but we are supposed to be talking about historical practice here. {Interestingly, as usual there was no mention by Clifford in his recent reviews of *Vespers* by McCreesh and King, that – aside from *Lauda* and the *Magnificat* they effectively transpose everything down half a tone. I guess the notion of pitch higher than 440 offends the low-key, cucumber-sandwich aesthetic of English Historically Ignorant Performance practitioners.}⁸

McCarthy: "The lowest note on the slide is E' so these must be 'pedal' notes of C and D." Pedal notes are another name for the fundamental tones. As C and D are third harmonics; their fundamentals are FF and GG; there is of course no one and a half harmonic! The modern trombone often has a valve to fill the gap from E to the fundamental BBb. It is, however, possible, both on the

baroque and on the modern trombone to fake the notes in between, although the tone quality leaves something to be desired. It depends very much on the context as to whether you can get away with it. Praetorius calls them *falsest* notes. The first instance of actual notated pedal notes is – as far as I know – in a madrigal by Monteverdi's contemporary Giovanni Valentini (1582-1649), who calls for AA and GG in 'Tocchin le trombe' (*Musiche Concertate* 1619) as an imitation of cannon fire!

What was then Monteverdi's *trombone doppio*? The Italian sources only describe the standard trombone in A, which Virgiliano in his tablatures makes clear is used for alto, tenor and bass parts. The tenor trombone is often to be seen in Italian paintings with a whole-tone crook to put it into G. This makes B flat much easier and also allows the trombone to play down to D, which is low enough for most bass parts, including the parts in *Orfeo* even when they are transposed down a fourth. Zacconi tells us the trombone can go down more or less as low as you want by adding tubing and crooks to reach notes lower than the normal. (*I tromboni descendano poco manco quanto si vuole, perche col slungar le canne & aggiungervi i torti si cavano voci di più del ordinario.*)

The *trombone doppio* part in the 1610 vespers requires a range from C to a, thus requiring, to play it effectively, a true bass trombone, and not just a crooked-down tenor. The only theoretical source to use the term *trombone doppio* is Praetorius, who tells us that there are two sorts. One a true "Octav-Posaun" in AA (at 466 of course) like the Oller instrument in Stockholm, and the other, not so long but with a larger bore and extra crooks. A Quintbaß-Posaune – normally in D – crooked down a tone to C would suit the Sonata sopra Sancta Maria part well, but perhaps for Monteverdi the *trombone doppio* was just a real bass trombone as opposed to a standard trombone playing a bass part. It would theoretically be possible to play the part at pitch on the Oller but there would not seem to be much point. I do not believe the part could be played well an octave lower as it would require DD and CC to be played in a more or less soloistic context. I do have practical experience of the Oller, as we used it on our recording of Praetorius' *Polyhymnia* for Sony Classical in 1996.

I think it is worth pointing out that the modern contrabass trombone is two different instruments in America and Europe. In Europe the instrument now used in orchestras for Wagner etc. and called a contrabass trombone is really a true bass trombone in F with 2 valves for the lowest notes. In American orchestras they use the real double-slide contrabass trombone in BB flat, as originally conceived by Wagner. Two instruments, one name, is probably the case with Praetorius and Monteverdi's *trombone doppio*. However, there is no reason – apart from wishful thinking – to believe that Banchieri and Monteverdi meant two different instruments. As has already been shown, Monteverdi's *contrabasso* was certainly lower and different from the G-Violone.

⁸ I doubt whether I reviewed the McCreesh CD; Brian Clark reviewed the King. In fact, some current UK cornett and trombone ensembles are happy to play at higher pitch; the problem is more likely to be the violins, who often still expect to use instruments normally tuned to 415; they tune them up a semitone with some reluctance, but won't go the further semitone and prefer to play at 415 from transposed parts.. [CB]

Reply by Peter McCarthy

Three apologies to you:—

It is true that Zacconi gives the range of the open strings, a precise tuning: I should have made that clear. But if you infer a tuning other than G' C F A d g or G' C E A d g from this information I would be very interested to know why.

It is true that the octave posauene is pitched in A and I should have spotted that error, especially as Wim Becu and I had been discussing it only a short time before. However, it is true that the low D' and C' that Praetorius mentions a good player can achieve are the fundamental notes of the 1st harmonic above in the D and C slide positions. I played the tenor and bass (in G) trombone at school so speak from some practical experience.

It is true that the exclamation mark after Praetorius tuning for the tenor gamba is misleading. You may not have read my article in *Early Music Review* 122 about Bach's Brandenburg Concertos, where I pointed out that the D-tuned gamba was seen as a tenor instrument in Germany at the time. Encountering it anew in Praetorius I was minded to mark it for regular *EMR* readers.

In that article I demonstrated that the tuning often called the G violone tuning is really the bass viol of 17th-century German speaking countries. In these Monteverdi articles I put forward that tuning in the same way for the early 17th century in Italy. You seem to agree with that.

I readily admit the existence of very large contrabass instruments for use on grand occasions. However, to play so low they must be extremely large, so large as to be unmanageable as any sort of continuo instrument. In modern times such low pitches can be obtained on string lengths around 105 cm but only with strings completely anachronistic for the 17th century.

I'm surprised that any musician should consider such an instrument appropriate for concerted music with small forces. I cannot agree with you that there is any evidence that the contrabasso used in *Il combattimento* is such a large bass playing at 16ft. The analogy of the 'jazz continuo group' does nothing to support an argument for performance practice four centuries ago.

Furthermore, Banchieri alone in Italy gives the very low tuning from D' and he omits it from the 1611 edition for reasons one can only guess at now. Praetorius, working over a 1000 km from Venice, is the only source of such low tunings in the German speaking countries. I would not care to suggest that such instruments were widely disseminated throughout Europe on the basis of such sparse evidence.

Your assumptions about the UK early music scene are also misguided: both Lina Lalandi and Peter Holman put on *Orfeo* in 2007 at A 466, St. James's Baroque has been playing John Blow at Westminster Abbey at A 466 this

year and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment are to perform Cavalli's *La Calisto* at the Royal Opera House at A 466 later this autumn. These are just a few examples. You will also be pleased to hear that Agazzari's advice is not unknown to British violone players.

Addendum from Clifford Bartlett

My assumption on large string instruments, acquired from what I have read and from talking to players, is that the bottom string of a bass tuned from DD was more like rope than string, responded with difficulty, would allow little more than one note to be played per bar with any degree of efficacy, and was too large for fingers to stretch easily up the finger-board. With that in mind, consider the Contrabasso part of *Domine ad adjuvandum*. The sustained and repeated note is d, so even if played at 16' pitch it would only be D, an octave above the DD of a *contrabass gamba*. Shorter notes go down to G and A, which might be playable as GG & AA on the DD instrument. But if the part really was intended to exploit a DD instrument, one would expect the repeated ds to be notated as D. On the principle of a GG instrument bending cadences and long notes down, the part is notated perfectly sensibly, since it would probably play D anyway (as, indeed, I usually do on the organ).

More generally, the 1610 print needs closer bibliographical scrutiny before the details of instrumentation are pushed too hard. We need to find ways of deducing what the Venetian printer was working from. It is evident that in at least some movements, he was using parts that were inconsistent and may have come from different stages of composition or performance. How carefully were they prepared? Did Amadino receive a carefully-checked and consistent set of parts or merely a bundle of parts for each movement, with a variety of instrumental names on the top of them reflecting performances of separate items as well as complete Vespers? Since it is a Mantuan composition dedicated to the Pope in Rome and published in Venice, we need to know whether *contrabasso da gamba* meant the same in each place and where the heading might have been written. (Such details are even more problematic with *Il combattimento*, since revision of the string parts is evident within the 1638 print, and that is 14 years distant from the first performance.)

Information from a few theorists is perhaps as dangerous as just believing one's instinct and musicality: all approaches need to be brought together, with equal weight and suspicion given to the music itself, instruction books, surviving instruments, tradition and gut feeling (and the feel of gut on bow!) Just as there are evidently different traditions of HIP playing in Germany and the UK, so there may have been between Italian states in the early 17th century. The discovery of one unknown treatise can send tumbling down an inverted pyramid of knowledge. Imagine someone 400 years hence trying to sort out what a cornet was c. 2000 from a handful of books and scores and whether the different spellings signified anything, let alone the relationship of the horn in an orchestra and in a jazz band.

CB

LETTER FROM BURGUNDY

The Beaune International Festival of Baroque Opera

Brian Robins

The move noted in the last 'Letter from Burgundy' (*EMR* 125) has made little difference to our visits to the Beaune Festival, the most significant event in the region's musical year. A slightly longer driving distance is more than mitigated by most of it now being on the A6, the notorious 'autoroute du soleil' on which the French used to try so hard to kill themselves (and others) on the occasion of the great lemming-like rush to the Med at the start of every August. I write 'used to', because there seems to have been something of a sea-change in French driving culture in recent years, and today I suspect you're more likely to be killed on the A6 by some barmy Belgian or dastardly Dutchman... But back to Beaune, where the 26th year of the festival took place without one of its greatest attractions – the open-air performances traditionally held in the magical setting of the courtyard of the 15th-century Hospices de Beaune. Restoration work being done to the famous tiled roof dictated that this year all larger-scale events were held in the basilica of Notre-Dame, a resonant acoustic way short of ideal for anyone situated toward the back of the nave.

Notwithstanding such inauspicious auguries, the 2008 festival, held over four weekends in July, was memorable particularly for the best of the reasons for Beaune's existence: the opportunity it offers to hear rarely performed Baroque operas performed to the highest of international standards. This year two Neapolitan works filled that bill, providing incidentally a good illustration of the change in style that occurred during the thirty years that separates them. *Ottavia, restituita al trono* was Domenico Scarlatti's first opera, given its premiere in 1703. For anyone bothered by the immorality of Monteverdi's *Poppea*, *Ottavia* provides the perfect antidote – a direct sequel in which Poppea, improbably touched by a popular Roman uprising against the deposing of Ottavia, relinquishes Nerone. The opera has received little critical attention, being unloved by Kirkpatrick (who anyway had little time for the operas). His verdict that the music is 'rather dry' and 'conventional' was decidedly not borne out by a superlative performance under Antonio Florio, who was also responsible for some necessary restoration work. The inexperienced composer seems to have taken considerable care to tailor his arias, nearly all in brief, simple *da capo* form, to his characters, also providing three fine duets in act 2. This being a transitional opera, comic scenes are still included, here brilliantly handled by the veteran Giuseppe de Vittorio and an exceptionally promising young soprano, Paolo Lopez. Otherwise, the outstanding cast, including the Spanish soprano Yolanda Auyanet's dignified Ottavia and Maria Grazia Schiavo's beguiling Poppea, was vintage Florio.

Pergolesi's *Adriano in Siria* clearly reveals the development of virtuoso 'singers' operas that had taken place by 1734, the year in which it was first staged at the Teatro S Bartolomeo. Out is the succession of brief ternary arias, in are expansive, fully-developed *da capos*, frequently of highly virtuosic character. Out too is any hint of comedy; we are now, after all, in a Metastasian world of political treachery and romantic intrigue, a world where imbroglios are only resolvable by a clement ruler, in this case the eponymous Hadrian, here more concerned with building illicit relationships than walls. Commissioned to celebrate the birthday of Elisabeth Farnese, *Adriano* was lavishly staged and cast, particularly the part of Farnaspe, which was taken by the castrato Caffarelli. Pergolesi obviously took special interest in writing for such a notable singer, providing Caffarelli with several magnificent arias, especially the ravishing 'Lieto così tal volta' (act 2), with its obbligato oboe part. It would be vain to claim that the Ukrainian soprano Olga Pasichnyk met all the formidable demands of the role, but hers was an accomplished and brave effort admirably supported by a strong cast in which only the Osroa of tenor Stefano Ferrari failed to impress. Lucia Cirillo's Emirena, the object of the attentions of both Farnaspe and Adriano, was especially striking, both as to her lustrously rich mezzo and commanding figure, while Schiavo made the transition from Scarlatti to accept gratefully the generous opportunities offered by the role of Adriano's betrothed Sabina. Ottavio Dantone's direction of the splendid Accademia Bizantina, vital and sensitive by turn, deserves only praise, although I found some of his continuo playing (curiously not supported by a string bass) over fussy.

Rather more familiar fare from Purcell and Gluck completed the operatic bill, although performances of *Orphée et Eurydice* (as opposed to *Orfeo ed Eurydice*) are sufficiently unusual to warrant comment. Going for the French revision of 1774 means a number of things – lots more dances, several additional vocal numbers and, of course, a tenor (or more accurately *haut-contre*) Orpheus. Beaune's *Orphée* was Stefano Ferrari, by no stretch of the imagination a *haut-contre*. He was also greatly overstretched by the role, frequently insecure as to pitch and embarrassingly lacking the technique for 'L'espoir renaît', the virtuoso ariette Gluck added at the end of act 1. At least part of the blame for the negative impression made by Ferrari can be laid at the door of young conductor Jérémie Rohrer, who seems to have progressed little since an immature Beaune *Idomeneo* two years ago. Aside from some orchestral excitement in the underworld, Rohrer seemed torn between milking the opera for its Romantic sensitivities and a high-gear superficiality that totally

failed to engage at least this listener. He also needs to improve his platform manner, tearing off the platform at the end of act 2 to leave poor Ferrari to make his own way was hardly courteous behaviour. A decent Eurydice (Maria Riccarda Wesseling) and charming Amour (Magali Léger) hardly compensated for a depressing evening.

A Beaune Festival without Paul McCreesh and his Gabrieli forces would be almost as great a shock as England winning a World Cup (the round ball kind). This year they obliged with a splendid Purcell evening centred round a *Dido and Aeneas* that refused to be thrown off-track by the last minute loss of its Belinda. McCreesh's Dido was the Croatian mezzo Renata Pokupic, a perhaps unexpected choice of a singer who has firmly (and rightly) endeared herself to Beaune audiences in the past few years. This was a superb interpretation, at once regal, authoritative, vulnerable and heroic, and intelligently sung with tonal lustre and excellent English diction (only 'preth' for 'prest' jarred seriously). As her Aeneas, Ronan Collett made the best of an impossible role, while alto Daniel Taylor was a mercifully unaffected, if bedraggled-looking Sorceress. Special praise, too, for the two substitute Belindas and some marvellously incisive orchestral playing from a chamber-sized Gabrieli Players, who sounded as if they were employing 17th century bowing both here and in the immensely satisfying one-per-part performances of three anthems that formed the first part of the programme.

Opera might dominate Beaune's programmes, but the festival is by no means exclusively devoted to it, as programmes devoted to a reconstruction of a Monteverdi Vespers for San Marco (Rinaldo Alessandrini), Bach's motets (Chœur les Éléments/Joël Suhubiette) and a Handel programme with Les Arts Florissants under the direction of Paul Agnew. We took in the last of these non-operatic events, a choice dictated by the fact that it was principally devoted to the Requiem of André Campra, a work that first bowled me over the first time I heard the Eliot Gardiner recording getting on for 30 years ago. The Beaune performance was in the experienced hands of Christophe Rousset, who directed the excellent Chœur les Éléments, Les Talens Lyriques and a fine line-up of soloists in a performance that encompassed the multifaceted character of the work from the sublimely consolatory opening Introit, through the dramatic intensity of the first half of the Offertorium – marvellous work from the bass violins – via the sentimental (in the French sense) Agnus Dei to the almost shocking dance rhythms of the Communio. The concert, which also included a fine performance of Rameau's motet *Quam Dilecta*, was the last event of the festival, a worthy summation of an event that remains a compulsive lure for anyone who loves early opera.

ZELENKA at the FRAUENKIRCHE, DRESDEN 28.7.08

David and Jenny Hansell

There can be few more potent symbols of German post-unification renewal than Dresden's re-built Frauenkirche (Lutheran, despite the name). We saw it as a heap of post-war rubble in the 1980s and a carefully sorted and catalogued rack of large stones in the 1990s, and have just visited the restored glory of the completed building. It is far from ideal as a concert venue (few seats have anything like a clear view of the performers), but people often attend just to be in the building) and it does have a vibrant musical life, not least in its daily worship. The noon *Orgelndacht* contains three substantial organ pieces around the prayers and sermon, Sunday services include cantatas, there are concerts of sacred choral music on many Sunday afternoons and major concerts on Saturday evenings. We heard a programme entitled *Jan Dismas Zelenka und die sächsische Hofkirchenmusik* (JDZ and Sacred Music at the Court of Saxony): ironically all three pieces would have been heard first in one of the splendid buildings just across the square. They were the *Miserere* (ZWV57), *De Profundis* (ZWV50) and the *Requiem* (ZWV48) and the performers the Flemish Radio Choir (17 voices on this occasion) and Il Fondamento (strings, oboes, bassoons, chalumeau, trombones and continuo) under the direction of Paul Dombrecht. They recorded this programme in 2000 (Pas928) and have revived it for a short European tour in 2008. This was its final performance. Thanks to a generous upgrade we heard and saw the concert from what we were told were the best seats in the house.

All three works display Zelenka's great contrapuntal skill, honed by his studies with Fux. In the opening *Miserere* this rather militated against appreciation of either the music or the performance as the rich acoustic offered only a rather confused wash of sound for much of the time. However, the slowly moving suspensions of the opening had great intensity and the ostinato *Miserere* phrase was clear enough. Soprano Miriam Allan had the evening's one opportunity for soloistic display in her aria and took it with relish. *De Profundis* opened with a nobly sung trio for three basses with the support of three trombones and also included sections of plainchant. This was also an intermittent feature of the *Requiem*, perhaps used by Zelenka to help him achieve the conciseness the commission requested. This need also lay behind the use (in the *Dies irae*) of double-texted duets. Though his voice was fine in itself, alto Clint van der Linde never really blended with his colleagues either in duet or quartet. The other gentlemen were effective and combined well. The sectional nature of the lengthy *Sequence* threw great responsibility onto Paul Dombrecht's shoulders and it was a pleasure to see a conductor willing to put himself so obviously at the service of the composer in ensuring that musical flow was maintained, new tempos clearly indicated and crucial leads given. The only disappointment was that the substantial chalumeau obbligato was all but inaudible against anything but the lightest

competition. The few bars of unaccompanied singing – whether plainchant, choral or solo quartet – suggested the kind of music that would sound most effective in what is, to all intents and purposes, a magnificent dome.

Anyone contemplating a journey to south-eastern Germany may like to know that the Bach museum in Leipzig is currently closed for renovation (until Spring 2009) but the guided tour up the Thomaskirche tower is amazing.

Useful websites:

www.frauenkirche-dresden.de, www.thomaskirche.org,
www.bach-leipzig.de

MUSIC FROM THE FRINGES

D. James Ross

In an enterprising departure from their series of early music performances which has become a standard feature of the Edinburgh International Festival, this year's organisers constructed a group of concerts under the heading of Song and Civilisation. This turned out to be a platform for sacred and secular choral music from throughout Europe and its fringes. With the full Turkish Whirling Dervish ceremony featuring elsewhere in the festival, the music of the 17th-century Ottoman composer Itri was the focus of the opening concert of the series in Greyfriars Church. Opening touchingly with a prayer for the soul of the composer, the concert unfolded with the sounds of kanun (a plucked zither)⁹, ney (an end-blown flute), kemence (rebec) and percussion, joined occasionally by two vocalists. The largely liturgical programme was explained by the ensemble's director, ney virtuoso Kudsi Ergüner, but as he seemed rather overawed by the enormous cathedral audience stretching out before him, he talked largely to me in the front row! While this was fine for me and *EMR* readers, it proved rather frustrating for the rest of the audience and other reviewers who were left somewhat at a loss as to what had been going on. I by contrast, was told about the ensemble's commitment to authenticity, their respectful approach to sources and their enormous admiration for Itri, all of which suggested to me a thoroughly admirable and scholarly approach to their chosen repertoire.

It is these same qualities which were somewhat in doubt at the next concert in the series by Sister Marie Keyroux and her Ensemble de la Paix. Using a mixture of modern and traditional instruments, they approached their sources with considerable freedom and admixed a number of new compositions. Ranging from vocal music of the Maronite tradition to Byzantine Melkite chants, Sister Keyroux and her accompanying voices and instruments reached considerable heights of ecstasy in their highly ornate and embellished presentation – Sister Keyroux's soaring vocal improvisations and hand gestures reminded me of the late Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan. If I was left somewhat in doubt

about the authenticity of what I had heard, there was no doubting the commitment of the performers and the extremely enthusiastic response of the audience, who would have got up and followed the Sister on crusade had she so suggested!

More thorough in its scholarship was the next concert, Chant Wars, a concert by the combined forces of Dialogos and Sequentia, two of the very finest proponents of the earliest western repertoires. I had been riveted by Benjamin Bagby's Beowulf at last year's EIF and was prepared to be drawn into the frankly somewhat unpromising territory of the 'Carolingian globalization of medieval chant'. There was indeed some beautiful chanting from a series of lovely voices, but a coherent narrative failed to emerge, particularly as explanatory texts drawn from the period were not performed but were left for us to read during the music. Furthermore a longish programme of unremitting chant degenerated for me into a series of groups of people standing at the front of the church singing. No use was made of the building and no real attempt was made to draw people in. A brief intriguing interlude was supplied by Bagby's declamation of a vernacular gospel to his own accompaniment on the lyre, but if it is possible to have too much chant I think on this occasion we possibly did!

Forced to miss the potentially poignant concert of Georgian music which was to conclude the series, it ended for me with sacred and secular songs from Corsica sung by A Cumpagnia. This attractive improvisatory tradition consists fundamentally of faburden to which the singers add occasional unprepared major triads and a highly decorated overlay of arabic-sounding ornaments and embellishments. Coupled with a very direct chesty and heady delivery, the effect is very powerful and moving, and from the moment the ensemble came in to a harmonised processional the audience were eating out of their hands. This too is an interrupted tradition which has been revived by modern enthusiasts and to which has been added a degree of contemporary composition. Delightfully unaffected by the overnight international success they have enjoyed, A Cumpagnia have remained refreshingly honest in their performances, and a pleasing level of amateurishness in the presentation, such as small consultations as to what comes next and reshuffling of the layout, suggested to me that this was a genuine, living tradition with its roots in improvisatory Renaissance choral techniques.

I am assured that around two and a half thousand people attended the Song and Civilisation series, and certainly on the evenings on which I was present there was an ecstatic reception for the music from capacity audiences. It is good to see these more speculative approaches to music which lie on the fringes of more scholarly activities being recognised and presented to a larger audience, and it is a useful reminder of the intangible spiritual dimension of religious music which clearly also evokes a powerful response in audiences in the early twenty-first century.

⁹ For real authenticity anoraks, I should add that I think the kanun had quarter-tone tuning keys which I understand were an 18th-century addition and therefore not entirely authentic for 17th-century repertoire.

LONDON CONCERTS

Andrew Benson-Wilson

To make up for missing the last concert of the Lufthansa Festival because of a rival Messiaen reviewing engagement, I went to a concert with much the same forces in Westminster Abbey (4 July) with the Abbey Choir and St James Baroque, conducted by the Abbey organist, James O'Donnell. The Bach programme included a couple of lesser-known works, starting with the ebullient Sinfonia that opens the 1725 Cantata 42, a work that Robert Quinney suggests in his programme note might have been written to give the singers a bit of a rest after their Easter exertions. It would have made a good opera overture. The 1745 Cantata *Gloria in excelsis Deo* (191) takes three movements from the 1733 *Missa* (which later formed part of the B minor Mass) and re-sets them as a *Gloria*, the last two movements having different words. The concert also included the motet *Singet dem Herrn* and the Magnificat. The very young boys of the Abbey choir were particularly promising (and I confess to finding boys voices a bit of an acquired taste), as were the soloists, all drawn from the choir. O'Donnell directed with a careful eye for detail.

Pantagrue are a three-strong renaissance group based in Germany but with personnel from Germany, England and Scotland. "Laydie Louthians Lilte – ayres, ballads and dances from 17th century Scotland" (19 July at the church of St John the Divine, Richmond-upon-Thames) was based on a wide range of MSS and publications from north of the border, including the first Scottish published book of secular music – John Forbes' *Cantus Songes and Fancies*, published in 1662 and containing works from the English Dowland era and even earlier Scottish works. Other Scottish publications frequently echo their English counterparts, including Playford – who also included music from Scotland. They compiled these into a series of vignettes of instrumental and vocal works. There was little overtly Scottish in the musical interpretations – indeed, the occasional lilt lent more of an Irish feel to some pieces. But the music was attractive and performed with considerable skill. Pantagrue are a theatrical lot, and they produced some very slick musical and dramatic interplay between the three of them, aided by some all-purpose renaissance costume – something not often seen in England nowadays outside the 'heritage' music scene of Warwick Castle, Hampton Court and the like. Their clothing did lead to something I have never heard in a concert before (nor elsewhere, for that matter) – a detailed description from the female vocalist as to why she appeared not to have a chest. Said chest was, we were told, secreted amongst various bits of padding, some of which she proudly produced, behind a rigidly flattening (rather than flattering) dress. So now we know. For those who want to see more of Pantagrue (chest or otherwise), their website (<http://www.pantagrue.de/>) includes a link to a MySpace video of some of this performance.

One of the elements of the first prize for Musici Infaticabili, the winners of the 2008 (the first) Early Keyboard Ensemble Competition (held in Fenton House and reviewed in the last *EMR*), was a concert there on 14 August.) Marta Gonçalves, baroque flute, Claire Bracher, viola da gamba and Erik Dippenaar, harpsichord (from Portugal, England and South Africa) are an off-shoot from the larger group Amaranthos. Their well-presented programme of French (and French inspired) music included works by Rameau, Marais, Morel and Telemann – two of his delightful little Fantasias for solo flute, which gave Marta Gonçalves the chance to demonstrate her eloquent and expressive playing. In a number of the other works the flute was a bit overpowered by the gamba and harpsichord (Fenton House's massive 1770 Schudi/Broadwood). Michel de la Barre wrote some of the first pieces for the one-keyed flute, and his *Sonate l'Inconnue* from Book 2 of his *Pieces pour la Flûte traversière* opened the concert. The *Chaconne en Trio* by Jacques Morel (a pupil of Marais) was technically one of the most effective works in the programme, with one lovely section for flute and gamba alone.

MOSTLY MOZART FESTIVAL

The Mostly Mozart Festival has become a permanent summer fixture at The Barbican and attracts impressive crowds, perhaps through its promotion by ClassicFM and the programming decisions that this might imply. Although the modern instrument Academy of St Martin in the Fields is more-or-less the resident orchestra, in recent years the period people have begun to infiltrate, notably this year with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment (and the Choir of Clare College, Cambridge) under Edward Gardner with their interpretation of *La Clemenza di Tito* (26 July). The more I hear the often decried *Tito*, the higher it goes in my estimation, and this concert performance certainly helped that process, as did the high-profile cast. Alice Coote's portrayal of Sextus was an emotional and musical tour de force while Toby Spence impressed as Tito, managing to avoid making him appear too wimpish. Hillewi Martinpelto's portrayal of Vitellia as the Scarlett Woman was emotionally impressive, although the singing style was rather too swoopy for my tastes. Sarah Tynan as Servilla, and Fiona Murphy as Annus both impressed, as did Matthew Rose, giving a clear and distinct voice to Publius. As well as making my female companion get rather excited, the far-too youthful and dashing old-Etonian conductor Edward Gardner made quite an impression on the music, directing with drive and determination. The Choir of Clare College kept up their reputation for producing, or nurturing, fine choral singers and the OAE were on the usual impeccable form.

I reviewed Garsington Opera's *Così fan tutte* in its ebulliently staged country house incarnation in the last *EMR*, so

will only briefly mention its Barbican appearance (11 July). Semi-staging can bring more focus onto the music and, on this occasion, the vocal quality of individual singers. Yet again, it was excessive vibrato that got in the way, this time from one of the two lead males (Ferrando). Erica Eloff's Fiordiligi retained its excellent standard, as did Ann Stéphany as Dorabella and Riccardo Novaro as the youthful Don. Teuta Koço produced some fine acting as Despina. The surtitle translations were well-pitched to the audience, with such gems, for example, as Despina's asking whether the two 'Albanians' were "well endowed".

As they form such a key part of the Festival, I thought I would see what the Academy of St Martin in the Fields came up with in terms of musical quality. They have remained staunchly modern-instrument throughout the years of period orchestras, so have not appeared too often in *EMR*. They closed the month-long Festival (2 Aug) with mostly-Mozart's *Requiem*, introduced by the once-popular overture to *Der Schauspieldirektor* (The Impresario), a work which contains a great deal more humour than the Emperor Joseph II, or most present day audiences, could appreciate, including what seems to be a pretty obvious dig at Salieri (who wrote a similar one-act opera, about opera, for the same occasion) in the clod-hopping coda. Making up the rest of the first half was a testing series of Mozart arias sung by the impressive Californian soprano Cyndia Sieden. The programme planners did not have the insight, or respect for singers, that Mozart did, and programmed the Queen of the Night's *Der Hölle Rache* as the last of four arias – Mozart made sure it was sung by a fresh voice. Consequently, although Sieden successfully reached all of her top notes, there was a slight sense of 'only just'. Her singing was clear and well-focused and refreshingly unaffected by all-pervading vibrato, and she demonstrated a nice dramatic sense. She could have done without having to struggle against some insensitively over-blown orchestral accompaniment, directed by Carlo Rizzi.

This heavy-handed style also pervaded the *Requiem*, causing problems for all four soloists, particularly as they had been placed behind and to the left of the orchestra. Cyndia Sieden was joined by mezzo Renata Pokupič, tenor Mark Wilde and bass-baritone Andrew Foster-Williams, all four giving excellent performances under difficult circumstances – they were by far the most musical component in this performance. Both the orchestra and choir (the scratch 'Mostly Mozart Festival Chorus') were allowed full rein to be as bombastic as they liked – a challenge the trombone section, in particular, took up with gusto. Given such direction, it is not really fair to form a view on the performance of the orchestra, other than to say that they made a reasonable effort to reduce the string vibrato. But, whatever the musical quality of performances like this, it certainly attracted a very large crowd – and a rather different one to many other classical concerts. Even though it was the end of the Festival, it did seem slightly surreal to come out of a *Requiem* to be confronted by a massive firework display – but then a sizeable number of the audience started applauding after the *Dies Irae*, so anything goes really.

BBC PROMS – ROYAL ALBERT HALL

Early music got relatively short shrift in this year's BBC Proms, although a couple of the Messiaen anniversary concerts managed to slot in some earlier repertoire. The late night concert by the Tallis Scholars (22 July) was one of the best I have ever heard from them. Despite being faced with one of the biggest spaces they are ever likely to sing in, they produced a gentler, less edgy sound than is often the case, particularly from the sopranos and altos. Their programme focussed on two Mass settings based on the chanson *Malheur me bat*, which was sung to a specially commissioned text by Jacques Darras. Jacob Obrecht (whose 550th anniversary could be this year) places the chanson melody in the upper voice, but divides it into nine portions and spreads it amongst the four-voice sections of the Mass, only giving us the full melody in the final *Agnus Dei*. Being Obrecht, it is a great deal more complicated than that, but that is enough explanation. Particularly effective in performance was the spiritual heart of the Credo, with the quickening of pulse leading towards the Resurrection, and the duo sections of the Sanctus and the second *Agnus Dei*. Josquin des Prez's Mass draws on all three voices of the chanson in his equally complex construction, leading to the final *Agnus Dei* which expands to six voices with a double canon. The chanson itself was beautifully sung between the two Masses by Clare Wilkinson, Nicholas Todd and Christopher Watson, each creating a slightly different sound-world from that of the more austere and cerebral Mass settings. Whether the audience approached the concert as a brain-numbing exercise in mathematical contrapuntalism or merely a pleasant way to wind down after a busy day, they got their money's worth.

An annual Proms event is the transfer of one of the Glyndebourne Festival Opera productions to the Royal Albert Hall – this year's choice was Monteverdi's *Poppea* (31 July). With one exception, the cast was the same as at the Glyndebourne production that I reviewed in the last *EMR*. In its transfer from fully to fully-costumed, but semi-staged, the only real loss was the swathes of red curtains that smothered the Glyndebourne stage and much of the singer's voices. I didn't miss it. Another noticeable difference was that Danielle de Niese was wearing a great deal more underwear than she was at Glyndebourne – or, at least, a longer pair of drawers. The rather silly altercation ("Excuse me, Madam! You are standing in my place") between Fortune and Virtue (the latter dressed as a Nun) was retained, this time from the front of the Prommers, although the staging at the entry of Cupid (where an *alta*-audience sat facing the real audience) was omitted. The small size of the instrumental forces (the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, led by Kati Debretzini) gave the singers rather more stage space than is usual for these transfers. I will not repeat comments from the earlier review, but will praise countertenor Iestyn Davies (who wasn't appearing when I saw the Glyndebourne production), both for excellent singing and impressive acting – I particularly appreciated the seriousness with which he took the cross-dressing scenes. Playing this for laughs, as so often happens, makes a mockery of what the unfortunate Otho has been tasked to

do – murder his lover. The two drag roles (what would be the male equivalent of a ‘trouser role’?) provided all the humour that was required. One of the things I did like about this production was that all the cast looked appropriately youthful, although Seneca lost a bit of his expected gravitas in the process, particularly in his history-teacher costume. Emmanuel Haïm pushed singers and instrumentalists to good affect – and, deservedly, the continuo section of the OAE got the loudest applause.

One of the Messiaen/early music combinations was the Sunday afternoon concert (10 Aug, reviewed off-air) that interspersed Pierre de Manchicourt’s *Pentacostal Missa: Veni Creator Spiritus* with Messiaen’s 1950 *Messe de la Pentecôte*. An intriguing idea, albeit a brave one, not least because of the enormous disparity in the comparative musical languages. But neither work was intended to be heard all in one go, so at least the format was a sensible one. The writer of the on-line programme notes described the Mass as “inward and contemplative”, so he probably got a bit of a shock at the robust interpretation and extraordinarily forthright singing from the BBC Singers directed by principal guest conductor, Andrew Carwood. The high degree of vibrato suggests that the volume was not a quirk of the Radio 3 sound engineers, but the singers really were being pushed to the limit. The exposed upper voices in *Pleni sunt coeli* sounded forced to the point of unpleasantness, with intonation a major casualty. The lower voices suffered similarly in the following Benedictus. Manchicourt’s Mass was written in 6 voices, probably for a ceremonial occasion in the court of Philip II of Spain, so a wimpish *sotto voce* interpretation would have been equally inappropriate – but I am far from the only reviewer to have found this performance too heavy-handed. In the intervening pieces, James O’Donnell coaxed some extraordinary sounds from the Royal Albert Hall organ in the five-movement Messiaen work.

The trouble that can be caused by choosing the wrong crockery at social occasions was brought into focus in the Orchestra and Choir of the Age of Enlightenment’s performance of Handel’s *Belshazzar* (16 Aug), conducted by the impressively sprightly octogenarian (and well-deserved darling of the Prommers) Sir Charles Mackerras. I should confess that I generally don’t find Handel’s oratorios as musically satisfying as his operas, not least because of the comparative lack of harmonic inventiveness and the rather gung-ho nature of some of the text. But this lesser-known example has a great deal to admire, and Mackerras make a compelling exponent. In *Nitocris* (the mother of Belshazzar), Handel creates and develops a character worthy of any of his operas – she is by far the most important protagonist in the plot. Her opening accompanied recitative is a perceptive reflection on the “Vain, fluctuating state of human empire!” as a state evolves from being “small and weak ... stretching out its helpless infant arms” to full (so-called) “maturity” when it “grasps at all within its reach, o’leaps all bounds, robs, ravages and wastes the frightened world” – all rather topical, not least as Russia’s invasion of Georgia was well under way. Rosemary Joshua was excellent in this role – one of the best performances I have ever heard from her. There were two countertenor roles,

with Bejun Mehta and Iestyn Davies appearing as Cyrus and Daniel. My vote went to Iestyn Davies for some exceptionally fine singing and role-portrayal. Bejun Mahta’s voice occasionally veered towards the ‘hooty’ countertenor sound that I do find hard to appreciate and, although he could control his rather theatrical vibrato, that only seemed apparent in the quieter moments. Paul Groves enjoyed himself in the blustering title role, and Robert Gleadow also impressed as Gobrius. The choir seemed to enjoy their more rumbustious moments, not least their drinking song in praise of the “kind donor of the sparkling wine”, although there were far too many sopranos and altos with prominent vibratos to make for effective consort singing. This was by no means a staged performance, but the singers were aware of their roles, staying ‘on stage’, for example, when being addressed by another singer – something I greatly approve of. But this led me to query the final chorus, which adopted the operatic tradition of a soloists choir, regardless of the state of health (or, indeed, life) of the soloists, by bringing back the long-dead Belshazzar for some sort of posthumous conversion. There were a number of cuts (some that will have taken the programme compiler by surprise) that left the programme well short of its estimated finishing time. Although billed as the 1744/5 version, this seemed to be a combination of that and the 1751 version, something that some purists will get upset about. But, despite my personal reservations about the whole genre, this was an inspiring evening.

The Prom’s Bach Day (24 Aug) started with an afternoon recital by Simon Preston on the monumental organ of the Royal Albert Hall, sounding splendid after its massive restoration. Of course, it is far from the ideal Bach organ, as Preston seemed determined to demonstrate in an idiosyncratically flamboyant and extravagant performance of Bach’s (or whoever’s it was) famous Toccata and Fugue in D minor. The following works were played with rather more circumspection. Indeed, they made for a surprisingly intense sequence, with the almost impenetrable counterpoint of the Canonic Variations on *Von Himmel hoch* and the chorale prelude *Vater unser im Himmelreich* – one of the most complex bits of knitting of all Bach’s organ works, both contrapuntally and aurally. *Aus tiefer Noth* brought little relief, and even the little Duetto in F from *Clavierübung III* was given a rather dense registration. The Prelude and Fugue in E flat was given a grand and emphatic reading, using the full resources of the organ. A huge audience showed that Sunday afternoon organ recitals could be a winner for future Proms, although they should probably be of a repertoire that is unlikely to get coverage in *EMR*.

The Bach Day evening concerts were far more authentic, starting with the St John Passion from the Monteverdi Choir and English Baroque Soloists (both on top form) directed by John Eliot Gardiner. The choir and orchestra were pushed tight to the front of the stage, with the Evangelist centre stage behind the orchestra and the other soloists stepping forward from the choir – with the exception of Christus, who stood to one side of the front of the stage throughout. Inevitably, given Mark Padmore’s involvement as the Evangelist, this was a well thought-

out interpretation, not least through the interaction between the protagonists and the intensely personal insights that were revealed through a generally contemplative performance. Although physically drawn from the choir, the soloists were all top-notch soloists of the kind that I much prefer for performances like this – ie. not the latest over-hyped sexy (or hunky) mega-star being pushed onto an otherwise period ensemble by a recording company. Peter Harvey was a very human Christus, isolated from the rest of the forces and addressing the audience directly, as was Mark Padmore's Evangelist – a pairing I have heard many times before and which always works for me. Robin Blaze's sweet-toned and innocent countertenor was exactly right for *Von den Stricken meiner Sünden* and the most moving *Es ist vollbracht!* (the latter with some fine gamba playing from Danny Yeadon). Matthew Brook took us straight to the emotional heart of the final moments in his exquisite *Mein teurer Heiland, lass dich fragen*, and was also an insightfully thoughtful Pilate, addressing Jesus directly across the orchestra. One of the other highpoints was Nicholas Mulroy's *Erwäge, wie sein blutgefärbter Rücken* – another was Katharine Fuge's *Zerfließes, mein Herze* and *Ich folge dir gleichfalls*. I can usually judge the direction that a St John Passion is going to take by the mood of the extraordinary first few bars – there is so much there for a director to reveal. In this case, it started as turbulent and brisk with a strong *tactus*, but the repeat saw a gentler, almost meditative reading – both aspects were explored in this memorably performance. The choir were on terrific, and occasionally terrifying, form.

Bach Day finished with a top performance of the first three of Bach's Cello Suites, played by Jian Wang – an inspiring end to a long day and just the sort of thing I would otherwise have listened to on the way home. An excellent programme note by Helen Wallace explored the history of performance styles of these works since the days of Pablo Casals who, aged 13 (in 1890) famously found a battered copy of the then almost-unknown works in a Barcelona bookshop. Jian Wang played with excellent intonation and a refreshing absence of overdone attack, even in the ebullient concluding Gigue of Suite 3. He opened Suite 1 in an exploratory, lyrical and eloquent style – just the thing to attune the ears and eyes to a lone cellist sitting alone on the vast Royal Albert Hall stage. For those who like to know about such things, the five chords that end the Prelude of Suite 2 were played simply, without the adornments that normally cloud them. I like it like that.

LUNCHTIME PROMS – CADOGAN HALL

Having wandered around various homes over the years, the series of lunchtime Proms seems to have settled at the Cadogan Hall. Three featured early music, starting with a programme of vocal works by Monteverdi from I Fagiolini, with contributions from members of the Norwegian Barokksolistene (28 July). The *hors-d'oeuvre* was *Volgendo il ciel*, a setting of the sort of sycophantic nonsense that Hapsburg Emperors were inclined to attract (in this case Ferdinand). The excellent tenor, Nicholas Mulroy, doffed his metaphorical hat to the Emperor, with support from the chorus and a lovely interlude for lute

and harp from Eligio Quinteiro and Joy Smith. Rather meatier fare came with the *Lamento d'Arianna*, an emotional roller coaster set for five beautifully coordinated and unaccompanied voices. The main course came with *Il ballo delle ingrate*, an appallingly non-PC tale of the specific corner of the fires of hell reserved for those silly ladies who so ungratefully spurn the amorous advances of men (or, as the BBC announcer put it, "Ladies who wouldn't say Yes!"). Clare Wilkinson and Anna Crookes sang Venus and Cupid respectively, with Jonathan Sells making a very imposing Pluto, reaching basement notes that I can only just manage well before breakfast. With I Fagiolini's proclivity for theatrical interpretations, I was surprised that this wasn't staged, although I learnt afterwards that it often is in their performance. Perhaps it wasn't considered good radio.

The lunchtime concert on 18 Aug featured Jordi Savall (making what I was amazed to find was his Proms debut) with Rolf Lislevand (theorbo/guitar) in a programme that was as close to perfection as it is possible to get. There is something about the way that Savall not only plays, but approaches his playing, that seems to get right to the heart of the music. And of course, the sound of the viola da gamba just pulls the listener into the music. Savall seems to do things with his viol that others just don't manage. A sequence of pieces by Ortiz opened the programme, followed by a solo spot from Savall of pieces by Tobias Hume (*A Souldiers March*, *Harke, harke* and *A Souldiers Resolution*), producing some extraordinary sounds from his instrument. Savall and Lislevand combined again for three of Marais' *Pièces de viol*, starting with a reflective *Prélude*. Gaspar Sanz, a Spanish composer from around 1800, provided two guitar solos for Lislevand (the intricate *Jácaras* and a very bouncy *Canarios*) and the concert ended with the inevitable Marais *Couplets des Folies d'Espagne*.

The last of the early music lunchtime Proms was on 25 August, with another Proms debut – Les Talens Lyriques, directed by Christophe Rousset in a programme of Lambert, Marais, Montéclair, Couperin and Rameau that focussed on the French Baroque solo cantata, reflecting the intimacy of chamber-music evenings at the court of Versailles. Rousset was joined by Céline Scheen, soprano, Stéphanie Paulet, violin, and Atsushi Sakaï cello. For a concert that was broadcast live, the extended tuning up on stage must have sent a shiver down the BBC engineers' spines. After a gentle introduction in Lambert's *Air Vos mépris chaque jour*, Céline Scheen came into her own with Montéclair's Cantata *Le dépit généreux*, a tale of vexation tinged with practically every other emotion imaginable. She has a harmonically rich tone and a clearly projected voice, although I could have done without quite so much portamento. She had a noticeable vibrato, but managed to control it reasonably well – it didn't interfere with her clearly articulated ornaments. She finished the concert with Rameau's snapshot of the story of *Orphée*, depicting the moment when he looks back to Euridice. Christophe Rousset gave a rather hesitant portrayal of Couperin's *Le rossignol-en-amour* and the *Double du rossignol*, and Stéphanie Paulet and Atsushi Sakaï gave a delicate and restrained performance of Marais' *Sonate à la marésienne*.

CAVALLI GIASONE Iford, 11 July

Julian Elloway

How fashions change! Some of us are old enough to remember the late 1960s and early 70s 'discovery' of Cavalli's operas on stage, radio or LP, with large five-part string bands and eight assorted plucked continuo instruments decorating the large pit, and the libretti rearranged into the two acts into which the Glyndebourne supper interval could be satisfactorily sandwiched. Forty years later we seem to be in the middle of another Cavalli revival in the UK, but the music is speaking very differently. Opera at Iford this summer included the Early Opera Company's production of *Giasone*, with Christian Curnyn directing from the harpsichord a band small and deserving enough to be named individually: Oliver Webber and Hannah Tibell (violins), Emilia Benjamin (gamba), Richard Sweeney (lute) and Joy Smith (harp). And that was it. But the variety of sounds from the violins and continuo gave the impression of a much bigger ensemble.

The huge advantage of such a small ensemble was a fluidity of pulse as chamber musicians worked together responding to every nuance of the music and of the text. The emotions were punched home, powerful and raw, in a way which fitted Martin Constantine's production. Some found it gimmicky, as the audience was greeted on arrival in the Iford gardens by lager-drinking rabbits and tour guides welcoming us to Colchis and affixing to the male members of the audience badges saying 'I left my wife at Colchis – sun, sea and sex resort' and to the female audience a badge with 'I left my husband at . . .' except that those badges in fact said 'I left my husmand' and I spent a fair part of the evening trying to work out the significance of 'husmand' before deciding that it really was just a misprint.

The audience cannot but be closely involved with anything on stage at Iford. The cloisters (built in 1914) seat 90 people and the cast enters and leaves through the audience and is never more than a few metres away (there are just two rows of seats all round). No member of the cast can ever let slip the commitment necessary to remain dramatically convincing under scrutiny at such close quarters. It was an impressive ensemble performance.

There are two great musical numbers in the opera and the performances of both can only be described with superlatives. Madeleine Shaw was a sexy and all too human Medea, who held the stage with her presence right from her first entry, and incanted and (with splendid noises from the band) invoked the spirits of the underworld to protect Jason in his pursuit of the Golden Fleece. Sinéad Campbell had the task of delivering the great lament where the wronged Hypsipile bids farewell to home, family and friends, tells Jason that she still loves him, and persuades him to return to him. Here every word and every note rang true – the emotions were so intensely felt, and as with every memorable performance of a great work, the audience went home changed by the experience.

ST. COLOMBE EARLY MUSIC COURSE
Grossmürbisch, Austria, 5-13 July 2008

David H. Clark

Someone called it 'the best kept secret in the early music world', and it might not help for it to be too much better known, as this size of course worked well here. 32 participants used to the maximum the available spaces for small group music-making in this tiny village in south-eastern Austria. The spaces were the junior school (thanks to the Headmaster, who participated in the course with his violin), the beautifully kept baroque church, the parish room, and the welcoming Gasthaus run by at least four sisters, where we were more than adequately wined and dined.

We were guided by five tutors, experts in recorders, viols, violin, harpsichord and early music. If you walked down the village main street, you might hear strains of Hassler's *Intradas*, Dowland's *Lachrimae Pavans*, a recorder ensemble complete with 8' bass, and even an orchestral ensemble playing Erlebach *Ouverture II*, this becoming the opening item in the students' concert on the last evening. The groups changed each day, so that everyone has an opportunity to work together with a different tutor and different participants, who may put in requests. I asked to play six-part Ward, and learned at breakfast on the second day that my request had been granted.

There are also periods free for musicians to organise their own ensembles, once they have worked out the talents available on the course. This year a Norwegian couple brought not only viols, but a triple harp, which enabled Lawes' *Pavan* from the Harp Consorts (for violin/treble viol, harp, theorbo and division viol) to be heard as *Tafelmusik*, a short item which participants perform before either lunch or dinner. This couple also introduced me to a marvellous Pavane for 4 viols by Carlo Farino, of whom I had never heard. With one student who played transverse flute well, I found time to play through several of Bach's organ trios which he had arranged for his flute and harpsichord. Obscure composers such as Schieffelhut and Poglietti also had an airing, as well as the core repertoire by Cabezón, Ward, Holborne, Scheidt, Brade, Loeillet, Telemann et al.

This course is the brainchild of Johanna Valencia and has now been running for 12 years. Johanna is a fine viol player, as well as an accomplished recorder player, well-known as a professional early music player. She has gathered around her similarly gifted musicians. Eva Reiter, with a speciality in recorders and viols as well, managed to meld together groups of recorder players to play more in tune than I have ever heard. When she and Johanna played together as they did in a John Jenkins' *Fantasia* for violin and two bass gambas with continuo (theorbo) at the tutor's concert, one could imagine they were the Austrian version of *les jeunes filles de St Colombe*.

Stewart McCoy coaches viols as well as offering lute tuition, in groups as well as individually. It was a special

privilege for me, as an inexperienced tenor violist, to play through all seven of the Dowland Lachrimae Pavans under his guidance ('Keep going!'). Andreas Pilger is an experienced *Konzertmeister* and baroque fiddler, who generously shares his expertise and imparts confidence, especially in ensembles of players of varied experience and ability. The choral and vocal skills of Emanuel Schmelzer-Ziringer, organist at the Anglican Church in Vienna, brought us all together in a fine three-choir setting by Marenzio of *Lamentabatur Jacob*, which we performed with voices and viols at the students' concert. But we also had time to sing some other madrigals by Monteverdi, Vecchi and Gabrieli.

Naturally the location and a good deal of sunshine contribute immensely to the success of the course. We travelled to two nearby village churches for the tutors' and students' concerts. The Gasthaus (a small hotel), in which some participants stay, provides an excellent breakfast, lunch and evening meal. Its open courtyard (with view) offers a pleasant place to sit and enjoy an evening drink and chat. On the evening after the tutors' concert, we gathered at Die Alte Mühle, a facility with a pleasant outdoor space under walnut trees. The organisation depends for its smooth running on Johanna's aunt Susi Jungnikl and Johanna's partner Richard Carter, who also edits some of the music for the course (Oriana Music). Stewart's wife Rosie is also an invaluable help to ensure (for example) that one partially-sighted treble viol participant had enlarged copies of his part. The extraordinary variety of people who attended made for an interesting social mix, and I benefitted from several stimulating conversations. I hope to go again.

NAUTICAL TREATS AT BOSHAM WITH THE CONSORT OF 12

D. A. Bellinger

Having braved the misty drizzle on the last day of August, a fair-sized crowd came to hear a wonderfully programmed works, some with apt nautical links, at the coastal church in Bosham whose finale was to be Telemann's excellent seascape of 1723, the *Hamburger Ebb' und Fluht* suite in C (TWV 55: C3). The first piece to be heard was the mellifluous A major Concerto from the First Production of the commercially successful and beautifully conceived *Musique de Table* 1733; the elegant interplay of flute, violin and cello, with call and echo devices cast a most gallant spell and the penultimate *Grazioso* came like a pastoral vista before the last exuberant *Allegro*, all played with admirable musicality. In complete contrast, we enter Italianate waters and evident rhythmic drive of Vivaldi's turbulent concerto, *La Tempesta di Mare* (RV570), captured with pleasing turbulence and great gusto by the ensemble. Forces were reshuffled for a more intimate chamber work, Telemann's A minor Paris Quartet (TWV 43: a2) with a gracious and fluid dialogue of exchanges between flute, violin and gamba, accented by subtle continuo, at times sounding like light badinage with its musical replies. All was perfectly summed up by the title of the last movement, *Coulant* – smoothly flowing notes.

After the interval for refreshments came some great flourishes of Venetian virtuosity and warmth from one of Vivaldi's dazzling C major Sopranino Recorder Concertos, which earned the soloist ample and justly-deserved applause. After a fascinating little extract from a J. B. Bach suite in G, a modest string *Tempête*, came Telemann's maritime and mythological *tour de force*, his *Wassermusik* suite filled with deft elemental depictions, sea gods, river deities, water nymphs, blustering Aeolus, and jovial sailors; some in the audience were visibly surprised and intrigued by the tonal variety and colours of the woodwind as we sailed through the movements, concluding with the jaunty *Canarie* for the 'jolly sailors'; indeed, it was a good round trip swept along by the Consort's well-honed sound and élan to the shores of enjoyment, via the waves and winds of these impressive baroque soundscapes. We sailed (drove) off home (awash with our musical souvenirs) into the damp night.

Scottish Early Music

available for download at www.scotchsnap.com

Scottish Consort music from The Art of Music [c1579]

A collection of ten charming instrumental consort pieces in two, three and four parts and of moderate difficulty from this valuable but neglected manuscript source of Scottish instrumental music, including hitherto unpublished counters on plainchant, consorts on psalms, and a lively fantasia on L'Homme Armé.

Psalms & Sacred Songs [Late 16th Century]

Elegant settings of the magnificent translations of Psalms 2 and 23 by Scotland's foremost courtly poet Alexander Montgomerie, with an exquisite anonymous sacred song Doune in yone Gardeine and Andro Kemp's setting of Anne Locke's sacred sonnet Have mercy God. [SATB].

Suitable for various combinations of voices and instruments.

Choral Music from The Inverness Fragments [c 1550]

This selection of music from a unique source of provincial Scottish *faburden* based on plainchant includes the processional *Laudate pueri Dominum* [SATB/SAT] and a setting of the dramatic processional sequence for Palm Sunday.

Moderately easy to sing and very effective in performance.

Omnes gentes, attendite [c1550]

A spectacular declamatory motet from *The Wode Part-Books* in celebration of the Virgin Mary, possibly the work of the Renaissance Scottish master Robert Johnson. [SSAT]

The Songs of Selma [c 1788] from The Scots Musical Museum II

Three delightful settings of texts from James Macpherson's *Ossian* to music by the 18th century Scottish composer James Oswald.

Suitable for soprano and alto voices & B.C. [or small accompanied S/A choir] or soprano or tenor voice, with recorder or violin & B.C.

The Mass Conditor from The Art of Music [c1579]

A highly effective anonymous *alternatim* setting of the Mass in four parts, referred to in descriptions of the manuscript as sections of a *faburden* Mass, but probably constituting a complete setting and in decorated polyphony.

Suitable for AATB, ATTB or SATB soloists or choir.

Edited by D James Ross and
Originally published by CMF Music.

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CD REVIEWS

APOLOGIES

Normally we would include at least some of the CDs that arrive around the beginning of the month before the issue date. But we had a disaster with my computer which took our helpful expert a whole week to sort out, and everything took so much longer than usual, despite having a substitute machine. There have also been email problems, with a whole batch of unanswered messages lost without trace. (Yes: everything should have been backed up, but we discovered too late that the storage disc was only set to preserve the last version.) So don't miss the next issue, which should have a bumper crop.

Also, apologies from Diana Maynard (especially to *Capella Romana*) who has had a very busy summer, and is at present 'helping prepare for a multi-lingual conference on the bowed fiddle in Asia, to take place in Provence the week after next. Kyrgyz, Tuvans, Azeris, Afghans, Uzbeks, Tajiks ... and all their papers and biographies being translated into English.' Her free time begins just too late for her to write reviews for the three discs below in time. CB

CHANT

Byzantium in Rome: Medieval Byzantine chant from Grottaferrata Cappella Romana, Ioannis Arvanitis, Alexander Lingas
Cappella Romana CR403 82' 15 (2 CDs)

The Divine Liturgy of Our Father among the Saints: John Chrysostom in English
Cappella Romana 107' 10" (2 CDs)
Cappella Romana CR 404

Paulus: Gregorian Chants to texts by Paul the Apostle
Frauenschole Exsultatio Sion Freiburg, Christoph Hönerlage
Christophorus CHR 77299 58' 03"

MEDIEVAL

Hildegard of Bingen *The Dendermonde Codex*
Dous Mal (Katelijne Van Laethem voice, Bart Coen rec, Liam Fennelly fiddle, lirone) 59' 35"
Et/Cetera KTC 4026

As regular readers will know, my first hearing of many CDs is while driving, the only opportunity I have to spend an uninterrupted hour! I load up the magazine with a batch of discs, then often forget what they are, so can exercise, at least sometimes, an innocent ear (to take the title of an intermittent BBC series some decades ago, when the names of the performers were withheld till the back-

announcement). In this case, there was no doubt about the composer, but I quickly wondered whether there was any point in listening to Hildegard without hearing the words. She was a poet as well as composer: the words matter and, indeed, the music alone is too formulaic to withstand an hour's listening unless it is being used for some sort of meditation (not my style, and probably dangerous while driving!) was exercising my mind about why it was so difficult to catch any of the text. While I wouldn't claim to be orally fluent in Latin, I would expect to pick up enough words to get some idea of what the text was about.* I find that female voices tend to be verbally less clear than male: is that a matter of it being more difficult to enunciate at higher pitch, or do women find it easier to understand the words of women, men of men? Or am I getting deaf? But my thoughts were suddenly interrupted by an instrumental interlude to which words of an old advertising theme emerged from my subconscious: 'Fry's Turkish delight!' It completely destroyed the mood. To make matters worse, a few minutes (miles) later, I started puzzling why the car engine was making a strange noise, then eventually realised that it was a drone from the recording. So I find it difficult to be enthusiastic for a mixture of musical and non-musical reasons. Katelijne Van Laethem has definitely got the feel for the music and the voice to express it, though vibrato sometimes creeps in when using the upper part of her range. Listening back home with the facsimile of the Dendermonde Codex at hand (published by Alamire in 1991), I could follow the words, but too many consonants are understated. It is as well that the booklet has texts in Latin and English. But don't let me put you off: there is some beautiful singing here. CB

* On my way home, I was listening to an anthology of Peter Philips (to be reviewed next month); I didn't get the Italian texts, but there were enough key words audible in the Latin pieces.

O Maria Virgo: Santa Maria la Real de Las Huelgas – 1300 Ensemble Kantika, Kristin Hoefener dir 54' 02"
Intégral Classique KANT 02

The programme is a mass for the nativity of Mary assembled mostly from chant and two-part music surviving from the well-connected nunnery at Las Huelgas. The five singers have a firm sound, often with a surprising but convincing low tessitura. While characterising the various styles of the music, whether chant or

'composed', they make them sound as if they belong to a coherent musical world, whereas so often chant and polyphony produce a clash of styles (not helped by standard modern transcriptions). The booklet says that an edition of the music will be published simultaneously with the music: I have asked for a copy and will return to this disc if one arrives. CB

15th CENTURY

Faugues *The Sound and the Fury* 61' 30"
ORF Alte Musik SACD 3025
Missae Le serviteur, Je suis en la mer

Faugues for a long time just been a name to me. I have a clear memory from the 1960s of a fat but small-format (something like A5 before that size was invented) just held together by two thick staples: such home-made publications were memorably rare then. But I never opened it and have not consciously heard any of his music. My loss! This is a most enjoyable recording. I'm not going to say that his masses outshine those of his contemporary Ockeghem; they are different, less gritty, and here performed in an easy, mellifluous manner – about as far as you can go from the harsh sound of Gothic Voices, but immensely effective in its suavity. The excellent booklet notes are by Rob Wegman (if only more scholars could write so effectively), who sums up all that a review needs say: 'If singers do not manage to make the vocal sonorities sound as vibrant and luminescent as possible, such Masses are bound to come across as boring. But if singers get the sonorities right, one would like them to go on for ever.' These singers get them right. CB

Ockeghem 1 *The Sound and the Fury*
ORF Alte Musik SACD 3024 61' 30"
Missae L'homme armé, Prolationum

As Ockeghem's *Masses L'homme armé* and *Prolationum* are both works which have been relatively frequently recorded, the spotlight of this review falls mainly on the international ensemble who are singing it. The mixture of Austrian and English voices, such as one might encounter at an international music festival, blends rather beautifully, and all the singers are clearly experienced in the performance of this 15th-century repertoire. I went back in vain to the German to try to unravel their mission statement of developing 'an exemplary sound-concept of structural refinement', but if it means they sing polyphony expressively, in tune, together and idiomatically, then they have certainly succeeded. They

manage a very satisfying long-breathed account of Ockeghem's sometimes treacherous and always challenging vocal lines, and the perfection of sound is reminiscent of the Hilliard Ensemble with whom two of the singers have at various times performed. It is good to see the Austrian broadcasting company ORF entering the world of early music recording with a new series of CDs of Renaissance polyphony – surely a golden opportunity for new groups such as The Sound and the Fury founded in 2000 to reach a wider audience. *D. James Ross*

Beatissima Beatrix 1508-2008: works by Tinctoris & Stokem Voces Aequales, Zoltán Mizsei org 75' 19"

Stokem Ave maris stella; Gloria de Beata Virgine; Tinctoris Beatissima Beatrix; Lamentatio Jeremiae, Missa L'homme armée, O virgo Miserere mei, Virgo Dei throna digna

It is always good to see more music by Johannes Tinctoris committed to CD, and indeed most of the pieces on this CD are premiere recordings. Tinctoris was mainly admired as a musical theorist in the first part of the 16th century, and in fact a couple of the shorter pieces on the CD owe their survival to their use as musical examples. As we might expect from this skilled technician, his music is bristling with elaborate stylistic and numerological devices, but still manages to sound musical. The Mass *L'homme Armé*, one of the earliest to use the famous chanson cantus, clearly links the celebrated King Matthias of Hungary with the crusading projects of the Burgundian Duke Charles the Bold and further connects Tinctoris with the seminal set of six anonymous *L'homme armé* settings in the Neapolitan Codex MS VI E 40, a Sanctus from which concludes the CD.

Further virtue attaches to this recording with the presentation of music by Johannes de Stokem (Stockem), who worked for a time at the Buda court of Matthias and Beatrix. Clearly influenced by his colleague Tinctoris, Stokem relies upon a more straightforward melody-driven style of composition. Voces Aequales produce a beautifully integrated and well-tuned sound and do more than justice to their patriotic programme, providing at the same time a rare chance to hear the music of two largely neglected masters. Although the programme note claims that this is Tinctoris' only surviving 'full-scale mass', there are at least three others that Voces Aequales could try their hand at.

D. James Ross

16th CENTURY

Guerrero Missa Sancta et immaculata The Choir of Westminster Cathedral, James O'Donnell 64' 53"
Hyperion Helios CDH55313

+ *Hei mihi Domine. Lauda mater ecclesia,*

Magnificat VII toni, O lux beata Trinitas, Trahe me post te, Vexilla Regis

Noel O'Regan welcomed the first issue of this in *EMR* 35, Nov. 1997. 'Westminster Choir has made the Spanish Renaissance repertory its own and this disc adds further lustre to its reputation. Guerrero's long sinuous lines flow effortlessly from boys and men alike... Definitely a classic recording.' The mass is based on a four-voice motet by Morales; three hymns and the Magnificat have contemporary Spanish mensural alternatim chant supplied by Bruno Turner. *CB*

Guerrero Villanescas III Music Ficta, Ensemble Fontegara, Raul Mallavibarrena dir 62' 15"
Enchiriadis E 2023

I wasn't very enthusiastic about vol. II (see *EMR* 122, Oct 2007). Either the performers have improved in the three yearly sessions in which the series was recorded or I'm feeling more generous. I'm puzzled why so many pieces are for high voices; it's not a matter that can be solved just by observing the *chiavette* convention, since there is often no part with the expected bass clef in either configuration; I'd welcome hearing some low voices. The replacing of single lines by harp and vihuela isn't completely successful: heard live or at a louder volume than I am comfortable with, they might work, but the pluckers would benefit from being more forward. It is good that this collection can be heard complete. The booklet has rather general essays by the director, including speculation why there are 61 pieces in the collection. Tot up the years between Guerrero's birth and its publication and you have the answer. *CB*

Morales Magnificat, Motets, Lamentations The Brabant Ensemble, Stephen Rice Hyperion CDA67694 72' 39"

Beati omnes qui timent, Gaude et laetare Ferrariensis civitas, Regina caeli a6, Sancta Maria succerre miseris, Salve Regina a4, Spem in alium; Magnificat I toni; Coph. Vocavi; Zai. Candidiores; Nun, Vigilavit

This is a very welcome recording by a group which has made mid-16th music its own. The voices (3-5 per part) are beautifully blended and show a unanimity of purpose which comes close to solo singing. Particularly striking is the sense of forward momentum and strong tactus, set quite fast and giving a sense of effortless and inevitable flow by both composer and performers. This helps to integrate the lamentations as wholes, something not always achieved. The pulse gets a bit relentless in *Gaude et laetare, Ferrariensis civitas* which loses some of the intended splendour of this celebratory piece. The three lamentations seem to have been recorded more distantly than the rest which means a jolt

at track no. 4; otherwise recording quality is excellent. There is a group of Flemish-sounding pieces which show a different side of Morales – though Stephen Rice is happy that they are by him – with full sound and lots of false relations. The Magnificat *primi toni* is masterially sung with all verses in polyphony, as it was in the papal chapel, while three Marian pieces and especially the six-voice *Beati omnes* are all stunningly beautiful. Highly recommended. *Noel O'Regan*

Melchior Neusidler Lute Music Paul O'Dette 77' 47"
Harmonia Mundi HMU 907388

Melchior Neusidler (1531-94) was the eldest son of the better known Hans, who published a number of important lute collections in the 1530s and 1540s. Although over 200 of Melchior's pieces survive, modern lutenists tend to ignore them, perhaps not wanting to read German tablature, play music which is technically demanding, or pay for an expensive facsimile of music by an unknown composer.

Presumably influenced by his visit to Italy in 1565-6, his first two lute books, published in 1566, were in Italian tablature. However, he failed to convince German lute players of the advantages of this notation, and the contents were republished in 1573 in German tablature. In his excellent sleeve notes, O'Dette gives some surprising information about his life and compositions. He was the first German lutenist to use a 7th course, he suffered badly from gout, and during a performance of one of his compositions, a fight broke out, in which a wind player was thumped by a large bass shawm.

Paul O'Dette's interpretation is utterly convincing, and gives us an insight into why Melchior Neusidler was so greatly admired, not least by members of the Fugger family in Augsburg. The fantasias are on a par with Dowland, virtuosic, full of variety, and covering the full range of the lute. The *Ricercar secondo*, for example, is a tour de force, which O'Dette executes with suitable panache; Fantasia 21 ends with an extraordinary flourish over the final chord. *Der Dorisanen Dantz* bounces along with graceful oomph, followed by sparkling divisions in its *Hupffauff*. This contrasts with O'Dette's thoughtful and gentle interpretation of Neusidler's intabulation of Hassler's *Cara mia dolce stella*. Those familiar with settings of *Chi passa*, commonly found in English lute sources, will enjoy Neusidler's splendid divisions as they race up and down the fingerboard. It is truly refreshing to hear lute music played in time, and with such a range of expression. *Stewart McCoy*

Not released until 24-11-08.

Wert Vox in Rama: Il Secondo libro de motetti (1581) Collegium Regale, Stephen Cleobury 71' 16"
Signum SIGCD131

Marvellous music, beautifully sung by the choral scholars of King's. This, and the place of recording (St Cyriac's church, Swaffham Prior) removes the characteristic sound of the full choir's recordings, and reveals a fine, more normal ensemble, mellifluous, polished and poised, though I'd prefer it to manage section ends within the tactus. I kept the disc for myself hoping to hear some of the marvellous Wert I'd been involved in (not, alas, singing but providing a spurious organ continuo) a couple of months ago. I was a little disappointed: most of the motets here use counterpoint in a more traditional way. The notable exception is the title piece, and that showed, if not the limitation of the performance, a clear preference for line rather than expression: perhaps at times Esau may be preferred to Jacob. CB

More sweet to hear – Organs and Voices of Tudor England Magnus Williamson, Francesca Massey and Geoffrey Webber, organs, Choir of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, Geoffrey Webber dir (2001 'Wingfield' and 2002 'Wetheringsett' Goetze and Gwynn organs)
OxRecs OXCD-101 76' 45"

One of the problems with the English organ world is the lack of surviving instruments from before the mid-17th century, hence the importance of the discovery of two extremely rare pieces of evidence – the remains of two soundboards from organs of around 1530, found in East Anglia. This physical evidence was aligned with written evidence from well-known organ contracts from 1519 and 1526 and led to the construction of two organs based on the soundboards (the originals are now in the Royal College of Music museum). These two organs have toured the country in a series of residencies, and have been written about a few times in *EMR*.

This CD is a very welcome addition to the exploration of the early English organ repertoire. The programme is divided into three sections – 'Times and Seasons: pre-Reformation organ music' (including the composers Burnett and Preston), 'In chamber and schoolroom: organ music in secular contexts' (Tallis, Blitheman, Shepherd) and 'The Temple purg'd: sounds of Elizabethan Protestantism' (Byrd, Morley, Carleton). The music therefore takes us well beyond the conjectured dates of the two organs, but to no great musical harm. It is hoped that other recordings will focus more on the extensive repertoire that exists from the period closer to the date of the organs.

Usually when I hear these organs, it is because I am playing them – they do sound very different more than a few inches away from the pipes. Both make extremely attractive sounds, the larger Wetheringsett organ producing a pleasant chuff from its principal ranks, the smaller Wingfield organ with a more delicate, flutier sound. The Wetheringsett regal is used in a couple of tracks, notably in the c1540 'trowmppettus'. Although I have my doubts as to whether a church organ would have such a stop in its specification, regals were certainly found in tiny secular domestic organs. Only very occasionally is there any interference from the rather curious tuning of the Wingfield organ (which, as I have written in previous *EMR*s, makes some intervals, critical in English music of this period, appear out-of-tune).

Magnus Williamson's playing is meticulous, with careful attention to articulation. The added ornaments (lots in the opening *Te Deum*, but fewer elsewhere) are a reasonable stab at what might have been used by performers of the time – we just don't know. The earlier tracks are examples of the tradition of alternating organ and vocal verses, and there is a considerable vocal contribution to the rest of the CD, with some pleasantly (if not always authentically Tudor) youthful voices – notably Katy Butler, in Byrd's *Teach me, O Lord*. Francesca Massey's organ accompaniments to the student choir are also impressive. There are very detailed booklet notes, although it is not all that clear which organ is being used for which track. The photo is of one of the organs in the stained-glass windows of the Beauchamp Chapel in Warwick, several decades before these two instruments. Whether or not you have any special interest in music of this period, this is an attractive listen. Andrew Benson-Wilson

Further information at www.earlyorgans.org.uk. The CD costs £12.95 and can be ordered direct from OxRecs Digital at www.oxrecs.com. Until the end of the year, the organs can be heard in London's St Paul's Cathedral – the Wetheringsett organ in the Quire, the smaller Wingfield organ in the Crypt.

17th CENTURY

Biber Vespere della Beata Vergine La Capella Ducale, Musica Fiata, Roland Wilson
Sony 82876709322001 77' 42"

This excellent CD is not based, as I had expected, on the set of Vespers of 1693, but on a far more elaborate affair. Only two of Biber's short settings from that print appear (*Laudate pueri* and *Lauda Jerusalem*), while the remainder is built up from other sources – the wonderful 32-part settings of *Dixit Dominus* and the *Magnificat*, four instrumental sonatas, two beautiful concertato psalms (Nisi

Dominus for violin and bass and *Laetatus sum* for two basses, violin, three violas and continuo), and – after the *Salve regina* for alto and gamba – a Loretine Litany setting for large forces. Roland Wilson's advocacy of high pitch lends the colour of his ensembles a remarkable sparkle, without straining the voices. While listening to these wonderful performances, I was time and again reminded of Antonio Bertali's music; music which Biber knew, but which we unfortunately only get very rare opportunities to hear. This is an exemplary recording of this repertoire – I so hope they go on to explore masses and Vespers sets by Bertali and Schmelzer. Only by hearing their music will we ever truly be able to put Biber into context. BC

Buxtehude 3 – Daytime David Kinsela (2001 Aubertin organ, Saint-Marceau, Orléans, France) 78' 14"
organ.o ORO208

Although this is volume 3 in the series, it is being released before volume 2. As with volume 1 (reviewed in Oct 07), the organ is a modern Aubertin instrument, this time with voicing that owes a bit more to the French classical tradition than the more robust North German sounds that I associate with Buxtehude. That said, it sounds like a fine instrument and there are some attractive sounds that suit the sometimes meditative and introvert approach to registration and performance. As with some of his other CDs, Kinsela uses the music to guide the listener on a spiritual journey – in this case from the utmost contemplation of the opening tracks to the grandeur of the monumental Chaconne that concludes the *Praeludium* in g. His playing is thoughtful and reveals some interesting interpretational choices. He has a fine sense of touch and articulation. The attractive booklet notes say very little about the music on the CD, there is an interesting article about the pedal-clavichord, an instrument that organists of Buxtehude's day may well have used more often than the organ itself. Andrew Benson-Wilson

Castello see Marini

Corelli 'La Folia' and other sonatas The Purcell Quartet (Catherine Mackintosh, Elizabeth Wallfisch vlns, Richard Boothby vlc, gamba, Robert Woolley kbd + Richard Campbell vlc for op. 5/11) 57' 02"
Hyperion Helios CDH55240 ££ (rec 1986)
op. 1/9; op. 2/4 & 12; op. 3/12; op. 4/3; op. 5/3, 11 & 12

I remember it with pleasure from its first issue, and enjoyed re-hearing it. If you don't know much Corelli, this is an ideal introduction, since other recordings don't generally give a mixture of duo and trio

sonatas and the playing here is top rank. Strongly recommended. CB

D'India Arie, Madrigali & Lamenti
Gundula Anders S, Sigrun Richter *Chit*,
Hille Perl *gamba* 70' 11"
Christophorus CHE 0134-2
+ Kapsberger & Piccinini

Gundula Anders is a fine dramatic singer, with an evident love and understanding of d'India's idiomatic writing. Her flexible voice flickers through the demi-semiquavers with ease, sure of its destination and its message. Her singing is a pleasure to listen to, and she tells a story well through song – though her vowels are not quite pure enough for the listener to understand the literal meaning of the words. She relishes the glissandi (*Da l'onde del mio pianto*), but sometimes does not tune the starting-note well enough, and makes too much of a feature of the ornaments rather than incorporating them into the flow of the performance. Her quiet singing is especially engaging, though it can sound more like an echo effect than part of the main narrative.

The principal glory of this disc is the instrumental playing: the surging power of Hille Perl's *gamba* is almost overwhelmingly dramatic. For additional colour she occasionally plucks the viol (*Vaghe faville*) or plays a *lirone*, as in *Lagrimate, occhi miei*, a wonderful madrigal based on Monteverdi's *Lasciate mi morire* refrain. The *lirone* ideally suits the weeping and sighing texture, adding to the intensity of the extraordinary major-seventh leaps in the vocal part. Sigrun Richter plays imaginatively on four well-sounding instruments, sometimes with Perl or alone on guitar or *chitarra*, providing a sparser texture perfect for the improvisatory nature of the *Lettera amorosa*. The booklet provides the texts, in a slightly garbled form, but no translations. This is an attractive recording, with plenty of fire and sparkle, but Maria Cristina Kiehr (Harmonia Mundi, 2003) gets closer to the true melancholy of d'India. Selene Mills

Kusser Festin des Muses: Orchestral Suites Vol. 2 Aura Musicale 59' 11"
Hungaroton Classic HCD 32552

I'm sorry to say that I'm in a quandary with this disc. It is a little short of material (duration-wise, I mean), but the way to fill it out is definitely not to have someone rather pompously announce the titles of the individual movements. As well as this, I must take issue with the overall approach to Kusser's printed music: taking their lead from such titles as "Trio de flutes" (which occurs once in the entire recital), they have imposed conjectural orchestrations onto other movements. As I once wrote in a review

of a similar recording of Muffat's music, suggestive titles are best left exactly as such – the music conveys the sense of the piece without any special effects (yes, these abound here, too...). It could all become tiresome, to be honest, but the excellent performances redeem Aura Musicale's reputation. I sincerely hope they will not take this approach forward – it's as if 19th- and 20th-century interpretations have been removed only for someone to try to re-invent 17th-century ones; to my ears, the music is best left to fight its own corner! BC

Lully Proserpine Salomé Haller *Proserpine*, Bénédicte Tauran *La Paix*, Stéphanie d'Oustrac *Cérès*, Blandine Staskiewicz *Aréthuse*, Cyané, Hjordis Thébault *La Victoire*, Cyril Auvity *Alphée*, François-Nicolas Geslot *Mercur*, Benoit Arnould *Ascalaphe*, Marc Labonnette *Jupiter*, Pierre-Yves Pruvot *La Discorde*, João Fernandes *Pluton* 152' 30" (2 CDs in box)
Glossa GCD 921615

Lully Psyché Carolyn Sampson *Psyché*, Karina Gauvin *Venus*, Boston Early Music Festival Orchestra & Chorus, Paul O'Dette, Stephen Stubbs *dirs* 173' 42" (3 CDs in box)
cpo 777 367-2

David Hansell will review these in the Dec. issue

Biagio Marini - Dario Castello *La Fenice*, Jean Tubery 108' 30" (2 CDs)
Ricercar RIC 261

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

Pachelbel Organ Works vol. II Matthew Owens (1998 Frobenius organ, Canongate Kirk, Edinburgh) 72' 01"
Delphian DCD34031

I was impressed with volume 1 of this series, and am equally impressed with this offering, the only slight quibble for some *EMR* readers might be that the organ chosen is not one that Pachelbel would have recognised. The Edinburgh-based recording company are clearly loyal to their local organs (if not local, or even UK, organ builders) and use another continental import. I don't want to add to the woes of the British organ building fraternity, but I have to say that the Canongate Frobenius is as impressive as Volume 1's Ahrend organ, and it has the advantage of speaking into a far more complimentary acoustic, captured well on this excellent recording. Matthew Owens is a very impressive player – and so he should be, given some of his teachers. He applies a clear articulation to individual notes and has a pleasing sense of pulse and rhetoric, applying a gentle lilt to key notes (avoiding mannered over-stressing of each bar-line). His ornamentation and registration is entirely appropriate to the music. It will also be a revelation (particularly, dare I say, for many UK organists) to hear several Pachelbel works played with full organ and 16' pedal reed – for reasons that are perhaps understandable, given the nature of much of his music, Pachelbel is often delegated to the light and frothy, 8+2' flute, school of organ playing. This CD is just the vehicle to make organists rethink their Pachelbel interpretations. As with Volume 1, the programme is a well chosen medley from Pachelbel's often short pieces, with the extended *Aria Prima* and a set of *Magnificat* verses as more substantial fare. Recommended.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

San Marco in Hamburg: Motets by Hieronymus Praetorius Weser-Renaissance, Manfred Cordes 65' 11"
cpo 777 245-2

For most of us, 'Praetorius' means Michael, the encyclopaedic composer and writer, revived initially for 'his' dances (see *Le Bal* below) and his illustrations of a vast number of instruments, then for his marvellous way with German chorales, with settings ranging from *bicinia* to more than 20 parts. The Hamburg Praetorii were unrelated to Michael, and of these, Hieronymus (Jerome) was the most distinguished. His *Opus musicum* (1599-1625) contains 100 works in five volumes, which are being published in CMM. The ensemble here comprises six singers, seven single-line instruments, a *chitarra* and a positive organ. The absence of larger

organs is surprising. The chamber style of these performances works brilliantly, but would a single small instrument have been thought sufficient then? I don't positively miss them, though, and this disc makes the music sound most appealing. On several occasions recently, I've been impressed with Hieronymus's music, and this CD reinforces my opinion. CB

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

This must be the only *Dido* for which you have to tear off the cellophane and open the box to find out who sings Dido! But at least it's honest in giving the choreographer equal billing with the composer for this DVD of a performance from the Staatsoper Unter den Linden Berlin. The band is the Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin; the presence of two bass violins in the orchestra list is encouraging, but undermined by two violones, surely incompatible beasts? 'Reconstruction' is attributed to Attilio Cremonese. Quite why he has to add bits of pseudo-Purcellian extension to some movements isn't clear, but he does it very stylishly, and more importantly, offers a fascinating performance, freer than we are accustomed to, but keeping within the bounds of plausibility. Singing is of the quality and style that one expects at the more enlightened end of opera-house early music: often stylish, but with vibrato automatic rather than with musical intent. I'd have preferred Deborah York (Belinda) as Dido. It was nice to hear an unwimpish Aeneas (Reuben Willcox).

The problem, though, is what we see. I am so weary of the parasites who can only be creative by attaching themselves onto something old rather than creating a genuine new work. A dead composer isn't around to protest. But if you want to produce a ballet on the Dido story, to get genuine creative and productive tension and interchange, why not find a live composer and collaborate in creative dialogue. There was no point in including the prologue just to send it up. I enjoyed the music far better without the pictures. CB

I'm no ballet expert. So readers who are, please offer an alternative view.

A. Scarlatti *Il Martirio di Santa Cecilia* Nancy Argenta, Marinella Pennicchi, Bernhard Landauer, Marco Beasley *SScTT*, I Barocchisti, Diego Fasolis cpo 777 258-2 108' 49" (2 CDs in box)

This two-disc set of Scarlatti's sacred tragedy (c. 1708) is operatic in style, and consists entirely of recitatives and da capo arias, with just two short instrumental

sinfonias. The orchestration is sparse, the arias for just violins and continuo, the occasional number with oboe obbligato. Trumpets and timpani feature only in the two sinfonias. The four characters are Cecilia (Nancy Argenta), being tried by the judge Almachius (Bernhard Landauer) who is in love with Cecilia, her nurse (Marinella Pennicchi) who vainly tries to save her, and her counsellor (Marco Beasley). The one *accompagnato* recitative occurs at Cecilia's execution. Nancy Argenta is the outstanding member of this team. The period instrumental playing is throughout excellent. The story unfolds slowly and, even towards the end, the expected dramatic impact is lacking in the music. It is good that this rarely heard work has been recorded so well, but it is one for the aficionados of Italian vocal music of the period. Ian Graham-Jones

Lamenti Le Concert d'Astrée, Emmanuelle Haïm 64' 23"

Virgin Classics 5099951904456

Music by Carissimi, Cavalli, Cesti, Landi, Monteverdi, Strozzi

This is an intriguing disc. 11 early 17th-century Italian laments are sung by ten different lamenters (Rolando Villazón is allowed two short items). I'm not sure whether there is any logic in the order, it certainly isn't didactically chronological, but it works, even the two consecutive descending fourth examples – it is a tribute to Barbara Strozzi's ability that her amorous Heraclitus can stand after Monteverdi's lamenting nymph. Performances of the latter work, though, have to stand, in the mind of those who were at the right time and place 40 years ago, against the power of performances in perfectly tempered intonation and without noticeable vibrato from Jantina Noorman and Musica Reservata (all the better, of course, for existing in memory); in some ways, early singing has regressed. (Comments welcome, and come to next July's York conference to talk about it.) Tim Carter's booklet note raises the question of the extent to which some of the laments are ironic. There is a problem in that most consumers of 'high art' tend to take it seriously, and the power of music itself makes us take at face value the vindictive Agrippina's *Ad dio Roma*, for example. In an unfamiliar style, it is difficult to detect irony in music, and the performances themselves here seem absolutely straight and would be spoiled if obviously tongue-in-cheek. I just don't believe the high pitch of Carissimi's lament for Mary Stuart: our edition offers an alternative down a fourth suitable for a mezzo. (One might argue that the treble, rather than usual soprano clef, is telling us something, but the accompaniment is in standard F4 clef.) I probably ought to go through each

lament commenting on individual singers and accompaniments. But names like Natalie Dessay, Veronique Gens and Joyce DiDonato give a fair idea of the quality, and there's a good continuo team, avoiding the excesses of Haïm's recent *Poppea*. The disc is definitely worth hearing, and the booklet has texts in four languages. CB

Le Bal: Social Dances in the Early Baroque I Ciarlatani, Klaus Winkler 73' 11"

Christophorus CHR 77295

Music by Cordier, Mangeant, Nau, Praetorius

Normally I find musical DVDs disappointing, but I really regret that this is sound only: I suspect that a performance with dancers would be even more satisfying. The music lying behind the familiar world of Praetorian dances is here interpreted with rather more choreographic insight than usual, and we can also enjoy a string-based ensemble rather than the panoply of wind that is so often foisted on this repertoire. The performances are attractive and the vocal contributions are welcome. An entertaining recording of the less 'arty' music of the period. CB

Magnificat anima mea Dominum: El càntic de Maria al s. xvii hispànic Enaudi Nos, Juan Grimalt *dir* 42' 35"

Columna Música 1CM0184

Comes a8; Pontac a8; Pujol a8 VIII toni, a4 I toni; Samaniagi a8; Vales a6

Three of these composers I've never even heard of, and the music is fresh. The idea of performing five settings of the same text is somewhat unnatural, in that they would never have been heard thus in the 17th century. Although the liturgical function as the culmination of Vespers is mentioned in the booklet, the biblical origin is emphasised to the extent of numbering the verses 46-55. The music is enjoyable, and the text draws out something special from the composers. The music is stylishly performed (though are we sure that the Spanish *violón* was really an octave below the bass viol?) There is a nice mixture of voices and instruments in a small-scale ensemble of 8 voices and five players, who respond sensitively to the text. Recommended. CB

O felice morire: arie & madrigali, Firenze, 1600 Joel Frederiksen, B, *archlute, dir*, Ensemble Phoenix Munich (Domen Marincic *gamba*, Reinhild Waldek *hp*, Axel Wolf *plucker*) 74' 03"

Harmonia Mundi HMC 901999

Music by della Casa, Caccini, Falconieri, d'India, Kapsberger, Landi, Marini, Monteverdi, Puliaschi

74 minutes of *stilo recitativo* so expressively sung, with such unusual *tessitura* makes for unexpectedly riveting listening.

Joel Frederickson has a remarkable range, with even tone throughout, but a wide range of colour at his disposal. Add to this the agility necessary for the *gorgia* of Caccini, Kapsberger and others, less familiar to me, but who wrote at the same time and for the same kind of voice. Most songs seem to demand DD to d' range, to which he adds a low AA, an occasional e' and at one point a not entirely successful attempt at a high g' – the attempt is heroic, and the effect better than if he had gone into falsetto. It's what the music seems to demand.

The music selected is indeed for the most part recitative, and shows off the remarkable *colorature* of this singer. His mastery of the passage work makes it sound entirely natural and organic, and retains the evenness of his rich sound, very clear, beautifully in tune, always very responsive to the verbal dramas and painting so evident in the music. Of the composers represented, pride of place goes to Caccini, with six songs, and the recording concludes with the magnificent *Io che nell' otio* by Monteverdi, from the 8th book of madrigals. The excellent accompanying team of bass viol (Domen Marincic), harp (Reinhild Waldeck) and lute, theorbo and guitar (Axel Wolf) is joined by the singer who also plays archlute, and accompanies himself in d'India and Caccini, and they give a suitable variety to the otherwise similar sounds, and provides a couple of instrumental tracks. Highly recommended.

Robert Oliver

LATE BAROQUE

Avison Concerti Grossi op. 9 & 10 The Avison Ensemble, Pavlo Beznoziuk 131' 41" Divine Art ddaz1211 (2 CDs)

Avison's Op. 9 and Op. 10 sets of concerti grossi, published between 1766 and 1769, sound remarkably old-fashioned for music written in the decade that saw J. C. Bach's arrival in London and the appearance of his latest symphonies, concertos and operas. The explanation is not that London fashions took many years to reach Newcastle, but that Avison deliberately wrote in a 'post-Handel' or even 'post-Corelli' style typical of some thirty years before. As he himself said in the preface to Op. 9, 'I have also endeavoured to avoid the rapid Style of composition now in Vogue, which seems to me exactly parallel to the Turgid or Bombast in Writing, and to suit very ill with the native Charms of Melody, but still worse with the nobler Powers of Harmony'. The music is very well crafted and certainly worth hearing, if not especially memorable: I am afraid that Avison lacks something of the originality of his teacher Geminiani, or of Giuseppe Sammartini's

inventiveness and ability to develop a large-scale structure. But a few movements stand out, particularly the charming finales of Op. 9 Nos. 3 and 4. The performances, as are to be expected from this group (see my enthusiastic reviews of two previous CDs in the December 2007 *EMR*), are very fine, and the Avison Ensemble do everything possible to make the case for this music. It goes without saying that their period style is impeccable; in particular the size of the band (3/3/2/2/1 plus harpsichord) is well within the limits specified by the composer in the preface to his Op. 3 concertos of 1751. I hope that the ensemble will now extend their range beyond the north-east of England: they may have to, of course, since I doubt if the Northern Rock Foundation will be able to sponsor any more of their CDs. Richard Maunder

Bach *Early Cantatas, Vol. 3 – Weimar II* Emma Kirkby, Michael Chance, Charles Daniels, Peter Harvey SATB, The [augmented] Purcell Quartet 88' 59" (2 CDs) Chaconne CHAN 0752(2) £

I was reminded by this ideal contemporary cast of how different it sounds from my ideal cast of the mid-1960s (Heather Harper, Janet Baker, Robert Tear and John Shirley-Quirk), as heard at the London Bach Society concerts. Admittedly, those voices were then more precise than they became later, but the difference is enormous, and I wonder how dated this CD will sound in forty or so years time. Will fashions change and attempts at 'early' style be abandoned or will our knowledge have increased exponentially? I don't think the artistic world works like that. Anyway, this is the dream team for our time (or is it already a decade out of date and I'm losing touch?) It's worrying that fashion plays such a part in performance practice, but I'm sure it always has. Anyway, it is marvellous to hear a group of singers and players so at ease, such masters of the ways of chamber music. Buy it, and if you don't have the previous volumes, buy them too. CB

Bach *Concerto in dialogo* (Cantatas 32, 49, 57) Salomé Haller, Stephan Macleod SB, François Saint-Yves org, Choeur regional d'Auvergne, Les Folies Françaises, Patrick Cohën-Akenine dir 67' 39" Cypres CYP1652

The three cantatas on this disc are all dialogues between the Soul and Christ. They contain some of Bach's most operatic writing, notably duets where the two allegorical characters lament their separation or rejoice in their union. Bach's writing is highly soloistic, with no choruses apart from the closing chorales in Cantatas 32 and 57. It hence seems

appropriate that Les Folies Françaises perform with single strings, although the Choeur Regional d'Auvergne sings for the two closing chorales. The disc was recorded in the church of Pontamur in Auvergne, which has an organ modelled on that used by Bach at Arnstadt. This instrument gives gravity and presence to the continuo part (often being used simultaneously with the harpsichord), and provides a forceful sound for the obbligato lines in Cantata 49. Both the vocal soloists project their parts well, and the vigour of the instrumental playing is balanced by the sustaining effect of the acoustic. An excellent release. Stephen Rose

Bach: *Sacred Arias & Cantatas* David Daniels cT, The English Concert, Harry Bicket 66' 48" Virgin Classics 50999519037 2 5 BWV 82a/1 & 3; 170/1; 208/9; 232/ Qui sedes, Agnus Dei; 244 Du lieber Heiland... Erbarme dich. Erbarm' es Gott ... Können Tränen; 245 Von dem Stricken, Es ist vollbracht

This album offers a selection of well-known alto solos, including some of Bach's most poignant arias. Daniels's voice has a splendid consistency of tone across his entire register; he uses relatively generous amounts of vibrato on long notes, which some listeners will dislike but others will find expressive. 'Erbarme dich' is taken at such a slow speed that it risks losing momentum, and the same criticism could be levelled at the slow sections of 'Es ist vollbracht' (although here the languorous tempo gives an extreme contrast with the flighty Vivace sections). The other arias, however, receive well-judged performances and The English Concert accompany sensitively. Sometimes I wanted a little more character in the orchestral ritornellos, but the oboe obbligato in Cantata 82 is nicely projected by Katharina Spreckelsen. This disc will undoubtedly appeal to Daniels' fans and might thereby introduce Bach's cantatas to more listeners. Stephen Rose

Bach *Prelude & Fuge BWV 543, 541, 544, 546; Trio Sonata in E flat BWV; Partita in C minor BWV 767 535* Gábor Lehotka org. Hungaroton Classic HCD 32589 74' 28"

This is a compilation from two CDs recorded in 1978 and 1985 on two modern Jehmlich organs, a firm that can trace its roots back to a pupil of Gottfried Silbermann. Much of the programme is an ear-battering of full-volume masterworks, relieved towards the end by a Trio Sonata and what is billed, curiously, as the Partita in C minor but is, in fact, the Partita on *Sei gegrüßet, Jesu gütig*. The playing is a bit old fashioned, even given the recording dates – for example, in the number of manual changes; particularly

unfortunate in the opening B minor Prelude and Fugue, as it is one of the pieces often used as evidence that Bach did not intend manual changes in his large-scale Preludes and Fugues. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

Bach Keyboard Partitas BWV 825-830
Nicholas Parle *hpsc* 163' 23" (3 CDs)
ABC Classics ABC 476 6405 ££

Recording Bach's six partitas is a major undertaking for any keyboard player, since they run the gamut of late baroque styles and make virtuoso technical demands. Nicholas Parle is more than up to the task, providing a set of textbook performances on a Johannes Ruckers copy by William Bright. His rock-steady sense of rhythm helps in the dance movements, particularly in the Gigs; it can, however, be a disadvantage in what could be more improvisational and flexible movements like the Praeludium to the first partita or the allemandes and sarabandes. I sense that Parle is consciously laying down a recorded document and is holding himself back a bit. I wanted him to throw caution to the winds occasionally and not take Bach quite so reverently; I would also have liked some extra ornamentation or register changes on repeats, and more rhythmic give and take in the figuration. He is at his best in Partitas 3 and 4 where there is some fine playing indeed, as there is in some other movements such as the Praeambulum to Partita 5. Nicely recorded and recommended for those who like their Bach straight from the page.

Noel O'Regan

Bach Partitas Pascal Dubreuil *hpsc*
Ramée RAM 0804 159' 31" (2 CDs)

Pascal Dubreuil also brings a formidable technique to the partitas and his too are textbook performances, played on a copy of a Hans Ruckers II (1624) harpsichord by Titus Crijnen. There is more forward drive here, especially in the courantes which are as exciting as the gigs. There are some register changes for repeats but only a minimum of additional ornamentation. Dubreuil has been recorded in a mellow environment which, with subtlety in the playing and use of agogic accent, helps impart a sense of both improvisation and purpose to allemandes and sarabandes. Some of the slower movements can be a touch relentless but, overall, these are very thoughtful performances, energetic when necessary and reflective at other times. I particularly enjoyed Partita 6 where Dubreuil really seems to have got under Bach's skin. Recommended for those who like their Bach largely predictable but with some exhilarating moments. *Noel O'Regan*

Bach Music for Lute-Harpsichord Elizabeth Farr 148' 28" (2 CDs)
Naxos 8.570470-71 £

This is one of the better recordings of Bach's music issued in recent times, partly because its playing is mostly excellent, but also because its chosen instrument, most sensitively built by Keith Hill following the guidance of Sebastian's own friends and contemporaries, has been most successfully caught on disc under the editorial supervision of Wolfgang Rubsam to combine to most victorious effect. A truly bargain price collection to be treasured dearly. *Stephan Daw*

Bach - Handel Arias Kathleen Ferrier, LPO, Adrian Boult, Jacques Orchestra, Reginald Jacques 73' 49" (rec 1949 & 1952)
Naxos Historical 8.111295 £

I didn't get this to review Kathleen Ferrier's singing – for some older readers, she's incomparable though our younger readers may find the description the computer flashes up at each track 'unknown artist' more appropriate – or the quality of the transfer. But it is interesting to hear performances by the leading conductor of the time with a mainstream orchestra and also Reginald Jacques and his more specialist ensemble. Jacques (1894-1969) was conductor of The Bach Choir from 1931 to 1960, when he was succeeded by David Willcocks, followed by David Hill in 1998. Where both Boult and Jacques differ from current baroque bands is that their phrasing is less obvious or, from another viewpoint, more subtle, less in-your-face. Jacques's band is a bit lighter and has more dynamic inflection within the phrase (and none of the terracedynamics that were advocated by some experts then). It is particularly interesting to hear a complete cantata, sung in English, No. 11 enabling one to compare the orchestras Bach's different versions of the Agnus Dei, with Jacques being clearly more in accord with modern taste. It's the choral sound and tempi that most date these recordings. *CB*

Campra Requiem Stephan Van Dyck, Ivan Goossens, Conor Biggs ATB M Haydn Requiem Elke Janssens, Sandra Náze, Philip Defrancq, Arnout Malfliet SmSTB Laudantes Consort, Guy Janssens 76' 53"
Cypres CYP 1651

This CD is labelled 'a history of requiem, part II'. 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 respectively) 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*

Chédeville Les deffis our L'Étude amusante: pieces for hurdy-gurdy and figured bass op. 9, Róbert Mandel hurdy-gurdy, Pál Németh fl, Ensemble Le Berger Fortuné (Piroska Vitárius violin Zoltán Széplaki rec Ottó Nagy cello/gamba Ágnes Várallyay *hpsc* Gábor Tokodi lute, guitar)
Hungaroton HCD 32540 67' 26"

Although this CD is sub-titled 'Pieces for hurdy-gurdy and figured bass' and is part of Hungaroton's Hurdy-Gurdy Series, the instrument only features in a small number of the thirty character pieces which make up Chédeville's opus 9. I'm sorry that it doesn't appear slightly more, though the recorder, violin and flute, used in a variety of combinations with the continuo instruments, certainly seem more suited to the elegance of some of these pieces. Mostly short fast dances with virtuosic sections, they were composed, according to Chédeville's preface, to present pastoral music to the inhabitants of the town. 'Foot-tapping' isn't a description that I normally use to describe recordings of French baroque music, but it seems appropriate here. *Victoria Helby*

Eloquence. Louis-Nicholas Clérambault: his legacy for keyboard David Kinsela (2001 Aubertin organ, Saint-Marceau, Orléans, France) 63' 44"
organ.o ORO108

This CD includes the complete works from Clérambault's *Premier Livre de Pieces de Clavecin* (1704) and the undated *Premier Livre d'Orgue* (probably c 1710/14), both containing two suites of pieces. Sadly, given the titles (and the quality of the music), these 'premiere' volumes turn out

out to be Clérambault's only publications. The organ is the same as for the Buxtehude CD reviewed above. Although it is very much closer to the French sound than North German, it is some way from the classic French organs that Clérambault would have known and doesn't include all the specific tone colours that he and his contemporaries would have assumed. Indeed, one key stop is 'prepared for' and has not yet been installed in the organ. There are many recordings of the Clérambault organ works on historic French organs, and this CD does provide a showcase for Aubertin's impressive modern instruments, rooted in a slightly eclectic past – and it does fit the French repertoire rather better than Buxtehude. The harpsichord is by David Evans (1985) after the Russell Collection's Pascal Taskin (1769). It is tuned in mean-tone, and makes a very grand sound in the generous acoustic of a chapel rather than the more domestic surroundings that this music was probably heard in at the time. Curiously, it is in the organ, rather than the harpsichord, pieces, that Clérambault's more eloquent and delicate timbres are revealed. As ever, David Kinsela's playing is thoughtful and insightful. The CD is attractively produced, and includes detailed notes about Clérambault and the harpsichord used. Incidentally, the title of this CD 'Eloquence' is an apposite word to choose for the French repertoire of this period, but one which might cause problems for stockists as to where to file it. But it will be worth the effort of seeking it out. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

Couperin *Messe des Paroisses, Messe des Couvents* Pierre Bardon (organ of the Basilica of the Royal Convent of Saint-Maximin), Vox Cantoris, Jean-Christophe Candau 108' 38" (2 CDs)
Syrius SYR 14146 (2 CDs) ££

Couperin's splendid collection of organ pieces is as fit for purpose as it ever was – I can't be the only organist who has worn out at least one copy and had to replace it. Few of us get to play most of the music in its true liturgical context, however, and even fewer have the chance to give or even hear a full *alternatim* performance. This pair of discs does at least offer us this, though without the attendant liturgy. The chant is sung from carefully researched sources (Nivers and Dumont) and in a carefully researched, deliberate style, complete with cadential ornaments – rather a shock first time through.

However, even a first listen before reading the small print left me feeling slightly uneasy about the relative acoustic placing and the general respective ambiances of voices and organ. It wasn't a huge surprise subsequently to read that they were recorded in different places and

I never felt entirely comfortable at the many junctions between chant and organ polyphony. The latter is played on the famous St Maximin organ, built about a century later than the music but nonetheless within the Classical French aesthetic. It offers the sonorities so essential to the music and is a consistent joy and often a thrill to the ear, even if some of the fuller textures expose the fragile tuning of the antique pipework, especially the reeds. The playing I found just a little stolid and lacking an element of fantasy, though the instrument itself may impose limitations.

Within the booklet are pictures and a stop list of the organ and two rather florid essays that need a more idiomatic English translation. In the end I couldn't decide whether the pros outweighed the cons of this release but I can say that for iPod purposes I have removed the chant.

David Hansell

Dieupart *Ouvertures from Suites 1, 3 & 4* (1701) *see under Handel*

Dornel *Six Suites en Trio* (1709) Musica Barocca (Lisete da Silva & Maria Martínez voice flutes Mauricio Buraglia theorbo Nicholas Stringfellow gamba Juan Estévez hpscd) 69' 06"
Naxos 8.570826 £

Dornel's *Livre de Symphonies Contenant six suites en trio pour les flutes, violins, hautbois, & c. avec une Sonate en Quatuor* was published in Paris in 1709. The sonata was omitted from this recording for lack of space, but you do get a free download of Marais: Viol Music "Les Voix humaines" included with this budget-priced CD. Musica Barocca have chosen to use voice flutes (recorders in D) for their carefully played performance, which gives due regard to the conventions of French baroque style. Perhaps six suites with the same instrumentation is rather a lot to listen to in one sitting, but there is some enjoyable music here, particularly in the chaconnes. *Victoria Helby*

J. C. Graupner *Partitas for Harpsichord* Naoko Akutagawa 58' 32"
Naxos 8.570459 £
Partitas in A, c, F, Chaconne in f (Winter)

This is an astonishing recording, which I urge everyone to hear. Graupner's Partitas, which I had never come across before, are magnificent pieces, full of invention and virtuosity. They can certainly stand comparison with Handel (whose 1720 suites may have been Graupner's model), and it is hardly an exaggeration to say that on occasion they even approach the grandeur of J. S. Bach's harpsichord Partitas. Akutagawa's brilliant performances are fully equal to the superb quality of the music.

The dance movements are beautifully characterized, with just the right amount of rhythmic flexibility, and the formidable virtuoso passages are dispatched with assurance and aplomb as well as a fine sense of drama. It is a pity that the programme booklet gives no information at all about the splendid harpsichord (after a German model?): it is very well balanced, with a singing treble, a reedy tenor and a sonorous bass. I strongly recommend this CD. *Richard Maunder*

Handel *Messiah* Carolyn Sampson, Catherine Wyn-Rogers, Mark Padmore, Christopher Purves SATB, The Sixteen, Harry Christophers 145' 14" (3 CDs in box) Coro COR16062

Disc 3 (55' 30") contains the Harp Concerto op. 4/6 and excerpts from other Coro discs of Handel; only *Arrival of the Queen of Sheba* is noted on the box.

There is much to enjoy on the Sixteen's new *Messiah*. The soloists are good (especially Purves and Sampson), the orchestra and choir cohesive. If you do not have a recording of *Messiah*, or if you especially like the Sixteen, then this disc can be recommended. But it is like any other recent English performance or recording; it is the 'standard' version, played and sung standardly. The direction is dramatic just where you would expect (viz. the angel sequence in Part I, and the tenor/chorus sequence in Part II), but not where you would hope (Purves, for example, tries to import real awe into 'For behold', and 'I tell you a mystery', but he is let down by the accompaniment; the spaces between the CD tracks are rather too even). Perhaps there is a lack of soul. Clifford Bartlett wrote in the introduction to his edition, 'ironically an accidental advantage of the... text is that a non-believing performer and listener may find it easier to ignore the Christian message'; while not expounding Malcolm Sargent's rather extreme view that only believers should perform *Messiah*, performers should at least be mindful of its Christian essence.

This recording, like others (not just of this work), seems to be more about the performers than the piece, as is suggested by the first of three booklet notes, a fawning eulogy of the Sixteen by Andrew Stewart. One could argue that the use of the theorbo was down to this, too, as Christophers was obviously going for the sound that he wanted rather than following Handel's scoring. And why could the third disc not have been alternative versions of arias and choruses rather than a 'Special Edition Bonus CD of Handel – The Sixteen'? In all, there is nothing bad about this recording, in fact, a lot of good, but there seems little point in it. *Katie Hawks*

Handel Aminta e Fillide (Le Cante Italiane... IV) Maria Grazia Schiavo, Nuria Rial SS, La Risonanza, Fabio Bonizzoni 67' 01"
Glossa GCD 921524
+ Clori, mia bella Clori

These two CDs have made me feel ashamed to have neglected Handel's early cantatas for so long. Those mini-operas (composed in part to fill the gap left by opera being banned in certain months) were largely written for the Arcadian Academy, which met in Count Ruspoli's palace in Rome. 'A preliminary study in the operatic field' is what the BIS sleeve note says; Handel found his dramatic feet in these cantatas, and used both his experience and his music from them in his operas. *Aminta e Fillide* is a case in point: borrowings-spotters will find the source for numerous opera arias in this one, as the informative, if rather disjointed, booklet note points out. Bonizzoni's disc is very enjoyable. His orchestra is slightly bigger than at the original performance, but that does not detract from the intimacy and communication of the ensemble. Schiavo is clearly in command of Amyntas's vocal versatility (if a little full-on sometimes), but is eclipsed by Rial, who is, I think, really splendid as Fillide. Bonizzoni clearly enjoys the cantata's drama and exuberance of musical expression, and the accompanying cantata, *Clori, mia bella Clori*, is well-chosen as both a contrast (a short, solo cantata) and a comparison (the same theme). This is the fourth CD in their series; I think I'll purchase the others – even if they overlap a bit with the next disc under review.

Katie Hawks

Handel in Italy: Solo Cantatas Emma Kirkby, London Baroque 67' 23"
BIS-SACD-1697
HWV 110, 113, 142, 173; Concerto a4 in D

One of Emma Kirkby's happiest unions is with London Baroque. A few years ago they brought out a CD of Italian sacred cantatas, and this is a good partner to it. The programme is full of treasures, and hangs together well – the first two cantatas being about love, and the second two about power, separated by a gorgeous concerto (which might be by Handel, or by Telemann if not). There are some nice touches throughout (e.g. *chiudo e sogno* in the first cantata, or *io godo, rido* – she really does seem to be laughing, or the tasteful ornamentation), and the care and love for this music is clear. This disc is a delight. Katie Hawks

Handel Water Music, Music for the Royal Fireworks L'Arte dell'Arco, Federico Guglielmo 66' 05"
cpo 777 312-2

An interesting *Water Music* by a small period-instrument Italian group (strings 4.3.2.1.1) played in the French style, with an over-dotted overture, some stylistic rhythmic alterations, notably in the delicately played dances, and some imaginative ornamentation, especially from the flautist. (Some might find this a bit 'over-the-top', but I enjoyed it!) There was some alteration of the normal order of movements of the three suites, notably in the 'trumpet' and 'flute' suites, which is the subject of some current research, and which may prove to have some historical validity. This re-arrangement makes for an interesting and enjoyable performance. The *Fireworks Music* is more conventional, again with some French-style *inégalité*, with the timpanist this time taking the dominant ornamenting role in a thoroughly enjoyable recording. I struggled with the booklet essay 'Music and Power' in its English translation, especially when 'cembalo' comes out as 'cymbals'!

Ian Graham-Jones

Handel Organ Concertos Op. 4

Richard Egarr, Academy of Ancient Music (2005 Robin Jennings chamber organ)
Harmonia Mundi HMU807446 71' 35"

Lorenzo Ghielmi, La Divina Armonia (2007 Giovanni Pradella organ, Santuario del Divin Prigioniero, Valle di Colorina, Italy) 71' 40"
Passacaille 944

These two versions of Handel's Op. 4 Organ Concertos, one Italian, one English, make for interesting comparison. Richard Egarr has a prestigious finger technique, and is not afraid to show it in his very individualistic interpretations, which are full of nervous energy and touches of personal humour. He displays a remarkable inventive approach to ornamentation, phrasing and articulation, the latter including a tendency to linger on the first note of the bar which some might feel a little unsettling. The instrumentalists are also forceful in their pulse, articulation and, occasionally, tone-production. The Academy of Ancient Music has been nurturing this rather punchy and expressive style since the days of Andrew Manze, and Richard Egarr is well suited to continuing this distinctive timbre. Such idiosyncratic interpretations might not be for the more purist readers of *EMR*, but are certainly entertaining. The last two concertos feature prominent roles for the guitar and lute respectively, revealing a whole new sound world. On this CD, Concerto VI is an amalgam of two different original incarnations – it was originally written for harp and included in a performance of Alexander's Feast (1736), but was later adapted as an organ concerto for the 1738

Opus IV set. A 1741 revival added an (improvised?) lute part. As far as I am aware, there is no indication that this should (or would) have been performed as a concerto for organ and lute. The organ is described as a 'mid-sized portable organ' in the booklet notes. It is a small continuo chamber organ of the kind often seen on the London stage and, although it is 'portable' in the sense that it has wheels and will fit into a van, it is very far from the usual definition of a 'portative' organ (one that can be carried, whilst playing, by one person – or, in later times in the southern European tradition, one that can be carried in procession, usually on long poles, while it is being played).

The Lorenzo Ghielmi and La Divina Armonia combination produce a full, rich sound, both from the instrumentalists and the organ – a 'proper' church organ, rather than a continuo organ, with 10 sounding manual stops, most divided and an (unused) pedal division. Handel specified his ideal theatre organ as having a chorus from a full-length metal 8' Open Diapason up to Tierce (plus a 4' flute), including the typical English double 8' ranks of Open and Stopped Diapason, traditionally drawn together. Ghielmi respects this sound world, restricting himself to the same stops on the (albeit Italian) organ. In fact the organ sounds remarkably effective – indeed, surprisingly English. Although there are many inventive moments (and the nature of these concertos implies a great deal of improvisation), the playing is more consistent than on the Egarr CD, with a more restrained use of ornamentation and personal mannerisms. A harpsichord is added to the musical mix, and the final concerto is given in its incarnation for lute and harp, rather than organ.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Were playing Handel concertos an Olympic event, the commentator would note what a close-run race this is: only five seconds in it. CB

Handel Suites de Pièces pour le clavecin 1720 & 1733 Michael Borgstede 223' 13
Brilliant Classics 93713 £ (4 CDs in box)

Handel's well known *Suites de Pièces Pour le Clavecin* were published by the composer himself in 1720. He called it *Premier Volume*, but it was left to Walsh to bring out a pirated second set in 1727, which he revised and reissued six years later – probably without any authorization from the composer. Some of the pieces in it are vintage Handel; others may date from his youth; and a few, I dare to suggest, don't sound good enough to be genuine at all.

But it's good to have a complete recording, especially one as magisterial as this. The instruments (after a Ruckers-

plus-valement and a Mietke) are superb, though it might have been interesting to hear something English from the pre-Kirkman/Shudi era such as the Thomas Hitchcock in the V & A, which has the same 'skunk-tail' sharps as can be seen in the well known portrait of Handel reproduced inside the back cover of the programme booklet – not that it sounds all that different from the Mietke. Borgstede's performance, as befits a 'complete works' set, is authoritative, imaginative and expressive. He is not afraid to add some quite extensive (and very stylish) ornamentation on the repeats (some of it, apparently, based on Gottlieb Muffat's manuscript version of the 1720 set). Some might complain that he is taking liberties with the text, but to my ear he brings the music vividly to life in a way that Handel surely did himself. If this isn't what Mainwaring meant by Handel's 'uncommon brilliancy...[joined with] that amazing fullness, force and energy', I don't know what is. What else need one say? – except that, by way of encore, Borgstede gives us William Babel's astonishing transcription of Handel's 'Vo' far guerra' from *Rinaldo*, which despite Burney's sneers is a breathtaking virtuoso solo that must be heard to be believed. *Richard Maunder*

Handel & Dieupart Solos for a German Flute Les Buffardins (Frank Theuns fl, Martin Baier gamba, Siebe Henstra hpscd) Accent ACC 24194 61' 53"
Dieupart Overtures from Suites 1, 3 & 4 (1701); Handel HWV 359b, 363b, 367b

Dieupart's *Six Suites* were published in Amsterdam by Roger around 1701 and quickly became known in London, where the composer had a career in opera orchestras, including eventually Handel's own. The music appeared in two forms, for harpsichord alone and in separate parts for high instrument and continuo. The French-style overtures played here were followed in the publication by dances of the French suite, but here Les Buffardins have chosen to play flute sonatas in the same key by Handel, one of the *Overtures* being transposed to match.

The performances are attractive and stylish and Frank Theuns has a beautiful warm tone on the baroque flute. I loved the imaginative Italian-style ornamentation given to the slow movements of the Handel sonatas, particularly the second adagio of the G major sonata. There are a few surprises. A *Bourée anglaise* from an oboe sonata is inserted into the next movement of that sonata, while the E minor sonata has two additional movements from other sonatas, including the delightful minuet from HWV375 in both harpsichord and flute versions. These changes are fully explained in the comprehensive notes by Thomas Leconte. *Victoria Helby*

Mattheson The Twelve Suites of 1714 Colin Booth hpscd 153' 25 (2 CDs) Soundboard SBCD208

Johann Mattheson, diplomat, author of books on music (which are still read), organist, composer and friend of Handel, published his twelve suites in both Hamburg and London in 1714, under the title *Harmonisches Denckmahl* (*Harmony's Monument*). Handel is said to have been so impressed that he immediately sat down and played the entire set. The music is original, tuneful and inventive; it says much for its quality that each of the twelve suites uses fresh ideas and is clearly differentiated from the others. The influence on Handel's keyboard music is obvious enough, but what is perhaps more surprising is that some of the suites, especially No. 3, hark back to the style of Froberger. The suites should certainly be better known.

Booth is a fine player with an impeccable technique, who gives very satisfying performances – all in a French style, it should be said, but this is probably appropriate for Hamburg if not, perhaps, for the London of 1714. I have to admit that I found the *notes inégales* a bit unrelenting at times: shouldn't there be a little more flexibility about the amount of inequality? But this quibble was not enough to spoil my enjoyment of this highly attractive and influential music. It's played on two harpsichords made by Booth himself: one is based on an instrument by Christian Vater of Hanover (1738), and the other is a copy of the 1681 Vaudry in the V & A. Personally, I prefer the mellow sound of the short-scaled, brass-strung Vater, which is a joy to listen to; the Vaudry is a little more assertive, partly because its 4' rank is voiced more brightly. But both are fine instruments and are a credit to their maker.

Richard Maunder

Platti Sonatas & Trios Epoca Barocca cpo 777 340-2 65' 06"

I have yet to hear a disc of chamber music by Platti that has failed to impress. Here there are solo and trio sonatas for a range of instruments, for each of which Platti seems to have captured the essential strengths of all of the instruments involved. Here the cello is a duetting partner, not a subordinate accompanist – and the combination with oboe works especially well. Epoca Barocca are still not my favourite of the groups recording for cpo (there is something about their overall sound that is not quite to my taste), but this is a thoroughly enjoyable programme of beautifully entertaining music. *BC*

Porpora Or si m'avveggiò, oh Amore: cantatas for soprano Elena Cecchi Fedi S,

Auser Musici, Carlo Ipata cond 55' 20"
Hyperion CDA67621
+ Credimi pur ce t'amo, Già la notte, Or che d'orrido Verno

Readers may be familiar with Porpora's name, but few will have much idea what his music sounds like. While I can't be sure that if I switched on the radio and heard a cantata, I could tell if it was by Porpora rather than any of his contemporaries, after hearing this recording I would certainly be attracted rather than put off by seeing his name in a programme. This is a fine disc, with absolutely convincing singing from Elena Cecchi Fedi and immaculate backing from a string quartet (plus a not-entirely-necessary double bass), theorbo and harpsichord, and the director playing flute obbligato in one cantata. Try it! *CB*

D. Scarlatti Sonatas & improvisations Enrico Pieranunzi 60' 13"
Cam Jazz PRM 7812-2

This arrived in a slimline case, with only a single page of comments: an interview with the composer. Interesting though that is, it doesn't relate very much to what we hear; as the player states, 'I have not jazzified Scarlatti... Doing so would have been an insulting mockery.' Apart from any specific stylistic references, jazz usually produces individual performances transformed in a unified style. But here we have chunks of Scarlatti, played as convincingly as one might expect on a piano, with interludes added that turn the composer's concision into rather loose motivic development. A lesson to draw from this is that the original sonatas are not written out improvisations but carefully and tightly constructed. I think that the improvisations would be more convincing if the originals were alluded to, not quoted. *CB*

D. Scarlatti & Cia Andrés Cea (1756/78 Davila/Bosch organ, Palacio Real, Madrid) Lindoro MPC0717 69' 45"
Scarlatti K 58, 66, 87, 92, 177, 185, 213, 343, 372, 384, 434, 481 + Lidón, Nebra & Ojinaga

Visitors to Madrid Royal Palace may have seen the case of this spectacular organ, but will probably not have had the chance to hear it played. Although Jorge Bosch is credited with the construction of the organ, it is the 1756 work of Leonardo Fernandez Davila that forms the basis for the instrument. Davila died before the work was completed, and handed the project to Bosch on his deathbed. Several delays meant that it wasn't until 1778 that Bosch completed the instrument, with a significant input from his own musical ideas. It is a remarkable organ, visually and aurally. You will need your volume

set high to appreciate the contrast between the 3 manuals – the *Cadereta interior en ecos* will be almost inaudible unless the *Organo mayor* sets your speakers rattling. Helpfully, the first piece opens with a very short dialogue between the three manuals. This CD also reminds us that it was the Spanish that first developed the 'Swell' organ (a lid on top of the *eco* divisions) – it is shown to good effect in Scarlatti's Sonata K87, as is the *Temblo suave* – the Spanish version of the French *Tremblant doux*. At the end of track 9 the *Pajaros* stop (a delightful twittering of birds) is used, and the *Tambor* and *Timbale* stops appear at the end of the fugal Sonata K58. The extraordinary battery of Spanish reeds make frequent appearances – you will not miss them! Andrés Cea has done a lot to put the Spanish organ and its music on the map, not least through his persuasive performances: his playing is outstanding. His interpretations of the 12 Scarlatti Sonatas are imaginative and musical, revealing hidden aspects of both the music and the organ. The works by José Lidón, José de Nebra, Joaquín Ojinaga make for a fascinating contrast. Incidentally, for any readers as pathetically incompetent at Spanish as I am, the CD's title, "Domenico Scarlatti & Cia" means "Domenico Scarlatti & Company" – not, as I first thought, Scarlatti and some hitherto unknown composer named Cia!

Andrew Benson-Wilson

This has an infuriating cover with the titles in white and gold, which is unreadable while still in the reflecting cellophane wrapper. CB

Schaffrath 6 Sonatas for harpsichord, op. 2 Borbála Dobozy 71' 51"
Hungaroton Classic HCD 32566

Schaffrath was one of the musicians at the court of King Frederick the Great in Berlin, along with C. P. E. Bach, Nichelmann and various assorted Grauns and Bendas. He was Bach's deputy as court keyboard player for a few years, before gaining employment with the King's sister Princess Anna Amalia. His six sonatas Op. 2 were published in Nuremberg in about 1754; all have the standard three movements except for No. 6, which includes a fugue as well. The style is what might be called 'sub-C. P. E. Bach', with much striving after novel effects. But Schaffrath lacks Bach's ability to integrate his ideas into a continuous whole, and the result is apt to sound somewhat disjointed.

Dobozy plays the pieces on a harpsichord 'after Blanchet 1733', which strikes me as rather too bright and aggressive, though it's a matter of taste, of course. She has an excellent technique, but I'm not keen on the frequent 'expressive pauses', which make the music even more

disjointed, or on the frequent changes of registration. All seems a bit too contrived, and I can't help wondering if some of these sonatas would be more effective on a clavichord. But this is an interesting recital, and clearly a 'must have' for enthusiasts of the Berlin School.

Richard Maunder

Tartini *The Devil's Trill* Palladians (Rodolfo Richter violin, Susanne Heinrich gamba Silas Standage hpscd William Carter archlute & bar guitar) 61' 23"
Linn CKD 292 SACD
Tartini op. 1/4, 5, 10, 13, Grave in d; Veracini op. 1/7

Palladians is the name taken by members of the Palladian Ensemble in its new more flexible line-up. The first piece on the CD is Tartini's best-known work, the so-called Devil's Trill sonata, Op. 1 No. 4, which begins so deceptively calmly with a *larghetto affettuoso* reminiscent of a Scottish folk song. The story behind the sonata is too well known for me to repeat here, but the excellent notes include Lalande's account of it as told to him by Tartini as well as an amusing diatribe against Italian violinists by Roger North. An even more dramatic programmatic sonata, number 10 of Op. 1, *Didone abbandonata*, portrays Dido's longing, anger and despair at her abandonment by Aeneas. This is followed by Veracini's Sonata in A major, Op. 1 No. 7, included here because of the composer's influence on the young Tartini, who after hearing him play withdrew from performance and reappeared after a period of practice 'with a longer bow, thicker strings and a new and wonderful control of cantabile playing'. The *largo* from Tartini's Op. 1 No. 5 is performed by violin and gamba alone, showing how the composer might have played in his later years with the cello and gamba player Antonio Vandini, with whom he shared a house after the death of his wife. Tartini's Op. 1 No. 13 *Pastorale* with its scordatura violin tuning and imitation of rustic bagpipes is much less serious though far from being light-weight. The programme, full of emotional intensity and beautiful sounds, ends with a Grave in D minor from one of the viol concertos Tartini wrote for Vandini. Victoria Helby

Telemann Wind Concertos Vol. 3 La Stagione Frankfurt, Camerata Köln, Michael Schneider 54' 09"
cpo 777 268-2
TWV 51: c1, D4, D7, F14, G1, G2

This first-class series continues with another volume made up of familiar works and lesser-known pieces. Here the Trumpet Concerto and the C minor Oboe Concerto with its extraordinary opening chord (enough to make one bass gambist

I played it with once burst into laughter: 'That can't be right...') represent the former, while a delightful little piece for recorder, horn and continuo (one of those 'is it really a concerto?' pieces) and a concerto for piccolo (rather than a soprano recorder) are among the latter. Michael Schneider uses two different backing groups: Camerata Köln play one to a part while La Stagione Frankfurt use slightly larger forces. It's an approach that lends some pieces a little more intimacy, which helps to vary the sound world over the course of the disc. Telemanniacs will already have subscribed to the series – others should be encouraged to investigate! BC

Telemann Suites & Concerti Musica Antiqua Provence, Christian Mendozze rec, dir 72' 40"
Integrale Classique INT 221.157
TWV 52: a1 (rec & gamba), Fr (rec & bsn), TWV 55: A2, G2 La Bizarre

This is a lot better than many similar recitals of Telemann's music. You might expect me to jump on my soap box and start complaining about hearing the same old music, but, when the performances are as good as these are, that's not really an option. Not that Musica Antiqua Provence have revealed any previously hidden mysteries in these two concertos and two suites; no, it's just that they are exceedingly well paced and stylishly played. And, to be honest, that's about all Telemann's music needs to be successful.

BC

Vivaldi/Uli Lettereremmann Five Seasons Quintessence Saxophone Quintet 59' 04"
CPO 777 366-2

This is not the sort of CD one would expect to see reviewed in these pages, but I must confess that it's the one I possibly listened to most purely for fun over the last two months. This isn't an arrangement à la Robert Ehrlich but rather a jazz make-over; the essence of Vivaldi is in there somewhere (never too far from the surface, to be fair), but it's cloaked in a density of blues harmonies and counter-melodies that a certain Herr Bach might have appreciated. The fifth season, of course, is entirely modern. The whole is played with utter conviction and dollops of class. Great entertainment. BC

Airs and Graces: Scottish Tunes and London Sonatas Parnassus Avenue (Dan Laurin rec David Tayler archlute Hanneke van Proosdij hpscd Tanya Tomkins and William Skeen cello) 65' 47"

BIS-SACD-1595

Music by Geminiani op. 5/3; Handel Minuetto HWV 375; Sonata in b HWV 376; Roman Sonata X in e BeRl 201; Stanley op. 4/4 + Scottish songs arr. Barsanti

The arrangements of Scottish folk songs on this CD are based on Barsanti's *A Collection of Old Scots Tunes* of 1742, apart from the two for solo harpsichord which come from Robert Bremner's *Harpsichord or Spinnet Miscellany* published in London in 1765. The juxtaposition of these with sonatas by composers active in London during the first half of the eighteenth century is justified by the popularity of traditional Scottish tunes in England at this time, when Geminiani's *Treatise of Good Taste in the Art of Musick* of 1749 even used them as musical examples. The influence of folk music can be heard in some of the sonatas too, particularly in the *Piva* over a drone in the Roman sonata BeRI 210, published in 1727 after he had returned to Sweden.

By the time most of the music on this CD was composed the transverse flute had overtaken the recorder in popularity and all the recorder sonatas included here were originally for flute, including HWV 376 from the Walsh collection of 1730, attributed to but probably not by Handel. I sometimes regret the transfer of flute music to the recorder, but not in this case, though it was Tanya Tomkins's sensitive playing of the Geminiani cello sonata at which made the greatest impression. This is a stylish and elegant collection of music, worthy of an 18th-century drawing room. *Victoria Helby*

Christmas Concertos and Cantatas Susan Gritton S, Collegium Musicum 90, Simon Standage 62' 10" (rec 1988)
Chandos Classics CHAN 0754 X
Corelli op. 6/8, Manfredini op. 3/12, Scarlatti *Cantata pastorale*, Telemann *In dulci jubilo* (with choir), Vivaldi RV270

I enjoyed this re-release (which I somehow missed first time around) very much. The most unexpected piece is a lovely Christmas cantata by Telemann – CM90 have been such champions of Mr T's orchestral output, it's a pity we have not heard more church music from them. Susan Gritton is the first-rate soloist in Alessandro Scarlatti's perfect gem of a cantata for Christmas night – beautifully accompanied, too. Three concertos provide the framework of the disc, Manfredini and Corelli's celebrated works for that night and Vivaldi's *Il riposo*. My only complaint is at the tiny light writing on a dark background of the booklet cover. *BC*

Le Grazie Veneziane: Musica degli Ospedali Vocal Concert Dresden, Dresdner Instrumental-Concert, Peter Koop 72' 46"
Carus 83.264
Galuppi *Dixit Dominus*; Hasse *Laudate pueri*; Porpora *De profundis*

This is my disc of the month. When I first listened to it, I worried about the contrast

between the slightly operatic tone of the soloists and the pure beauty of the choral voices, but over the weeks it came to feel natural. The music selected is wonderful – I've not heard a better advocacy of this repertoire (Porpora, Hasse and Galuppi), and I hope that these forces will tackle more of it. There are three psalm settings (each lasting over 20 minutes). A surprisingly light *De profundis* by Porpora is followed by Hasse's *Laudate pueri* (both scored for SSA soloists, SSAA choir and strings), then comes Galuppi's *Dixit Dominus* (who reduces the soloists to SA, but adds two horns to the mix). I have often wondered why these three composers have seemingly resisted any effort to resurrect their music – on the evidence of this recording, I'm even more baffled! Female choirs around the world should be queueing up for this material. *BC*

CLASSICAL

JC & JCF Bach Keyboard Concertos The Music Collection, Susan Alexander-Max *fp*
Naxos 8.570474 £ 71' 38"
JCB opp. 13/2 & 4; JCFB in A YC91 & Eb YC90

The Music Collection, founded by its fortepianist in 1996, has mainly familiar personnel: the violinists Simon Standage & Nicolette Moonen, violist Trevor Jones and cellist Jennifer Ward Clarke were all established period string experts long before then. Especially interesting here are the attributions of two Concertos to the second youngest of Sebastian Bach's surviving sons, the Bückeburg Bach Johann Christoph Friedrich, only recently recognised as by him rather than as works by his younger brother Johann Christian.* All four of these concertos are very well delivered by all concerned.

Stephen Daw

* Published as JCB in Riga c.1770. The E flat concerto was published by Eulenburg as JC Bach in score and parts. Both are listed on p. 297 of the Terry catalogue, where I've noted that the Concerto in A has also been ascribed to CPEB, though it's not listed in Helm. *CB*

Galuppi La Clemenza di Tito Mónica Gónzales, Zita Várdi, Andrea Méléth, Barnabás Hegyi, Zoltán Megyesi, Tamás Kóbor SS *ms cT TT*, Savaria Baroque Orchestra, Fabio Pirona 133' 01" (2 CDs in box)
Hungaroton Classic HCD 32538-39

Hungaroton have somewhat championed Galuppi's operas. This latest addition to their catalogue is very much to be welcomed – although the drama is strong and the recitatives have a degree of theatrical drive, it's Galuppi's skill in writing for the voice that is the highlight of the work. The arias (although they perhaps lack some of the fire and sparkle of

Handel and even Vivaldi) are graceful and considerably more varied than I had expected (to be honest!) The orchestration is nice (and the Savaria Baroque Orchestra provide exemplary accompaniments), allowing the six excellent Hungarian singers the opportunity to relish Galuppi's melodic gifts (and add a few flourishes of their own). If there was something missing, I must confess that it was a deep manly voice – maybe Galuppi had no good bass singer at his disposal at the time, but it is a pity that the whole work is so treble-dominated; if nothing else, it would have lent some contrast to the proceedings. That said, I enjoyed listening to this recording several times – which is not something I can say about many operas... *BC*

Haydn Concertos Cologne Chamber Orchestra, Helmut Müller-Brühl 72' 52"
Naxos 8.570482 £
Trumpet Concerto in E flat Hob VIIe:1 Jürgen Schuster;
Horn Concerto No. 1 in D, Hob VIIId:3 Dmitri Babanov;
Harpsichord Concerto in D Hob. XVIII:2 Harald Hoeren,
Double Concerto vln & fp Hob. XVIII:6 Ariadne Deskalakis, Harald Hoeren

This looks an attractive programme, but the result is a bit disappointing. The horn concerto is marred by overblown cadenzas, which detract from some good playing. The *Allegro* that opens the harpsichord concerto is qualified *moderato*, but it races away; more successful is the poignant slow movement, unexceptionable the finale. The introductory essay suggests that the double concerto was, like the D-major one preceding it here, probably written with organ in mind for the keyboard part. Balance is surely better with violin and fortepiano, and it works very well as realized by Ariadne Deskalakis and Harald Hoeren. The latter is a spirited player, yet in continuo realization he is anything but subtle. The best comes last, with Jürgen Schuster making light of the difficulties of the trumpet concerto, with tender phrasing in the Andante. Müller-Brühl and his Cologne CO are over-resonantly recorded, but they are perceptive partners for Haydn, as they have often demonstrated. *Peter Branscombe*

J. Haydn Scottish Songs for William Napier I (Folksong arrangements Vol. 5) Lorna Anderson, Jamie MacDougal ST, Haydn Trio Eisenstadt 180' 05
Brilliant Classics 93736 £ (3 CDs in box)
Hob.XXXIa: 1-100

With one more set to come, this series will comprise 18 CDs. Congratulations for the energy of those who rustled up ten sponsors in Austria, Germany and Scotland to support so encyclopaedic a

project, and arrange for it to be issued at bargain price. The problem is what to do with it. Each individual performance is enjoyable, but, however carefully the songs are ordered (Napier's original order isn't retained), 100 songs (or even a third of that number) is rather a lot to take. The performances are fine: at first I preferred Lorna Anderson, but Jamie MacDougall's voice grew on me, and the piano trio plays stylishly. I wondered about the dialects: would the music sound more characterful if the singers' accents were stronger, or is that as naff as imitating Paul Robeson when singing negro spirituals? Perhaps a Viennese accent would avoid the problem! The booklet prints full texts in Scots (with dialect words explained), and German summaries that are redolent of a long-lost age (in England at least): 'An einem schönen Morgen wandert der Sänger durch die Wälder, um den Frühling zu begrüßen' (*When west winds did blow*, Hob. XXXIa.99).^{*} I'm full of admiration for the series, but have doubts how much I will play it rather than, with difficulty, look for individual songs. CB

^{*}Looking for this to check a misprint showed up a big flaw in the booklet: there is no easy way to find a particular song by first line rather than title, since the lists on the slip-case for each disc only have the latter. I hope vol. 6 will have a full index to the series.

info at www.scottishsongs.at Score (Collected Works XXXII.1) Henle Verlag (HN 5892), €72.00

Haydn and the Earl of Abingdon Songs & Chamber Music Café Mozart (Windsor), Derek McCulloch (Proprietor) 68' 09" Naxos 8.570525 £
Haydn Trios Hob. IV: 1, 2, 9 & songs; Willoughby Bertie, 4th Earl of Abingdon Dances & songs

Here is a collection of rarities from the London concert scene of the early 1790s. Songs with fortepiano, flute and recorder are interspersed with chamber music items in a well-conceived programme in which two groups of themed songs ('Church and State' and 'Shakespeare Epilogue') form the outer sandwich. The stylish voices of Sophie Bevan, Rachel Elliot and Roger Covey-Crump are supported by two flutes, recorder, two violins, harpsichord and square piano, guitar and bass viol. Inevitably the Haydn Canzonettas and trios stand out as superior works to those of Willoughby Bertie, but the Earl's more light-weight songs nevertheless make attractive listening. Derek McCulloch, the ensemble's director, has put together some informative notes which throw interesting insight into the music of that time. With careful listening, I was momentarily disconcerted by the pitch changes (as well as occasional key wrenches) between certain items, as the recording alternates

A=415 and A=430, presumably to accommodate the items with various recorders, but otherwise it made for an interesting collection of music. Ian Graham-Jones

M. Haydn *Requiem* see p. xx

M. Haydn *Sacred Music for the Season of Lent* Purcell Choir, Orfeo Orchestra, György Vashegy 51' 21"
Missae quadragesimales MH 512-553 (1794); *Missa S. Crucis* MH 56 (1762), *Graduale per Domenica Palmarum* MH 695

This is excellent, beautiful liturgical music, beautifully sung. Michael Haydn has suffered in the shadow of his illustrious brother, and lived most of his life in Salzburg, shunning, it would seem, the fame and prestige that were thrust upon Joseph. This recording is quite short and, at first listening, somewhat unvaried: no showy instrumental flourishes, no charismatic soprano soloists, but mostly syllabic settings of four Masses written to be sung in the musically austere season of Lent. Closer and repeated listening reveals music of extraordinary intensity and imaginative variety within these fairly severe limits.

It is much more liturgical in its mood than Joseph's wonderfully showy Mass settings, and more responsive to the text. According to the booklet notes much of the melodic material comes from Gregorian chant, and though I didn't recognise any, it is reminiscent of the chant, particularly in the syllabic settings of the Credo, and the one setting of the Gloria represented on this recording. Michael's harmonic invention is particularly rich, responsive to the text, and when he does write melismatically, for example in the Kyrie or the Sanctus settings, he is perfectly capable of producing very lovely imitative counterpoint.

It is a very rewarding CD to listen to just for the quality of the music, but it is also superbly performed. The Purcell Choir of 18 voices produces a lovely vibrant sound, little or no vibrato, and superb diction. The sopranos are bright-toned, the basses reedy, the tenors and altos clear within the texture. The music demands a very flexible dynamic control, and their tone, beautiful throughout, ranges from *ff* to *pp* without lots of vibrato at one end, or loss of vitality at the other. The accompanying team of organ, cello and double bass in all but the *Missa Sanctae Crucis*, which is with organ only, gives a perfectly attuned rhythmic bass to the mostly 4-part texture. This lack of variety is amply made up by the variety of musical invention, dynamics, and expression. Every choirmaster who hears this will be after this man's music, but not many will manage to achieve performances as good as these. Robert Oliver

Linley jr *The Song of Moses, Let God arise* Julia Gooding, Sophie Daneman., Andrew King, Andrew Dale Forbes SATB, Holst Singers (dir Stephen Layton), The Parley of Instruments, Peter Holman cond 66' 31"
Hyperion Helios CDH55302 ££ (rec 1997)

Brian Robins reviewed the original issue (EMR 43, Sept 1998) and was full of praise, both for Linley and for the performance (though not the librettist of *The Song of Moses*). I must have sent this off to Brian without sampling it, so was a bit doubtful about Peter Holman's enthusiasm for Linley. But was completely won over when playing in a whole concert of his music, including the two works on this CD. Both music and the performances have a convincing verve. If you missed it ten years ago, buy it now! CB

Martín y Soler *Una cosa rara: Harmonie-musik* Moonwinds, Joan Enric Lluna
Harmonia Mundi HMC 902010 57' 46"

What could be nicer than to listen *al fresco* or on a winter evening to music like this, freshly recorded and well played by a (partially expatriate) octet of Spanish musicians, supported by a string bass. In addition to a generous selection of numbers from Wendt's transcription of Martín's most famous opera, three divertimenti (all in Bb) are included, some of which refer back to the music of *Una cosa rara*. There is nothing profound here, much that is enjoyable in an unbuttoned way. The recording is forward and lively, and there is a valuable four-language introductory note by Mercedes Conde Pons, with fluent English translation.

Peter Branscombe

Mozart *Epistle Sonatas* The King's Consort, Ian Watson org, Robert King 59' 37"
Hyperion Helios CDH55314 ££ (rec 1989)

I don't particularly associate Robert with Mozart, but this is an appealing reissue, with a fine line-up of performers. I wouldn't want to sit down and listen seriously to all 17 sonatas, but they are pleasant company to have on round the house or running on your computer while doing routine tasks, and some will stop you in your tracks. If you want to sit down with a score and concentrate, you can either listen to a varied programme or play them in chronological order, following Mozart through the 1770s. CB

Mozart 3 *Sonatas K Anh 166: transcriptions for string quartet* by J. André 70' 21"
Quartetto Luigi Tomasini
Hungaroton Classic HCD 32408

Arr. Johann André from Piano Trio K564 & Sonatas for Four Hands K 521 and K497

Transcriptions and arrangements were once all the rage (I remember coming across a contemporary edition of a Meyerbeer opera for solo Flügelhorn). This month I welcome a Martín charmer and, rather less enthusiastically, three versions of works by Mozart that less obviously called for the same treatment. André was the man who bought from Constanze, and then published, numerous Mozart MSS; these quartet arrangements date from rather earlier in the 1790s. They are of course very fine works, but even good playing from the period-instrument Luigi Tomasini Quartet cannot prevent my thinking that André would have been better honoured with a wiser choice of repertoire, and Hungaroton sensible to record with the Tomasini Quartet works actually written for the medium.

Peter Branscombe

Soler Harpsichord Sonatas Vol. 1 Pieter-Jan Belder 132' 40"
Brilliant Classics 93758 £

While there are some great moments among Soler's 150 sonatas I'm not convinced that we need another complete recording so soon after Gilbert Rowland's recently completed one for Naxos. But Belder brings a sense of controlled excitement and colour to these 25 sonatas chosen from across the range, mainly paired according to key. All are single-movement works and represent the Scarlattian-type of binary sonata; many seem directly modelled on the older composer's sonatas. Played on Ruckers and Giusti copies by Cornelis Bom, the CD includes favourites like Rubio nos. 84 and 88, with their guitar-strumming

virtuosity (and abrupt modulations in no. 88), and the Fandango, which is given a driving and stirring performance. My own favourite here is the wonderfully-quirky Sonata 118. Belder catches the mood of each sonata very well and doesn't let the figuration get bogged down. After all, I do think I would like some more!

Noel O'Regan

Wölfl Piano Concertos Nos. 1, 5 & 6, Andante from op 36/4 Yorck Kronenberg, SWR Rundfunkorchester Kaiserslautern, Johannes Moesus 76' 06"
cpo 777 374-2

Joseph Wölfl, three years younger than Beethoven, was around 1800 seriously considered the latter's equal as virtuoso pianist. Wölfl travelled widely, spending his final seven years in London (where he died in 1812), admired as pianist, composer and teacher. The first concerto's opening theme is derived from Figaro's aria that closes Act I of Mozart's opera. Thereafter if there is less call to lift one's hat to old acquaintances, the music of these concertos is never less than attractive and polished in a sub-Mozartian way. Op 43 is headed 'Grand Military Concerto', op 49 'The Cuckoo' (for the obvious reason), and the Andante from op 36, which generously fills out the disc, has the name 'The Calm'. Yorck Kronenberg plays with wit and spirit, without quite the brio for tossing off the most challenging passages. There is some individuality to the music, and cheery melodic material too. The accompaniments, like the quality of the recording, are perfectly acceptable. The booklet contains important information about the man and his music.

Peter Branscombe

PALLADIAN ENSEMBLE REISSUES

An Excess of Pleasure. The Winged Lion 131' 40" (2 CDs)

Bach Trio Sonatas. Bach Sonatas & Chorales 132' 02" (2 CDs)

The Sun King's Paradise. Les Elemens 125' 39" (2 CDs)

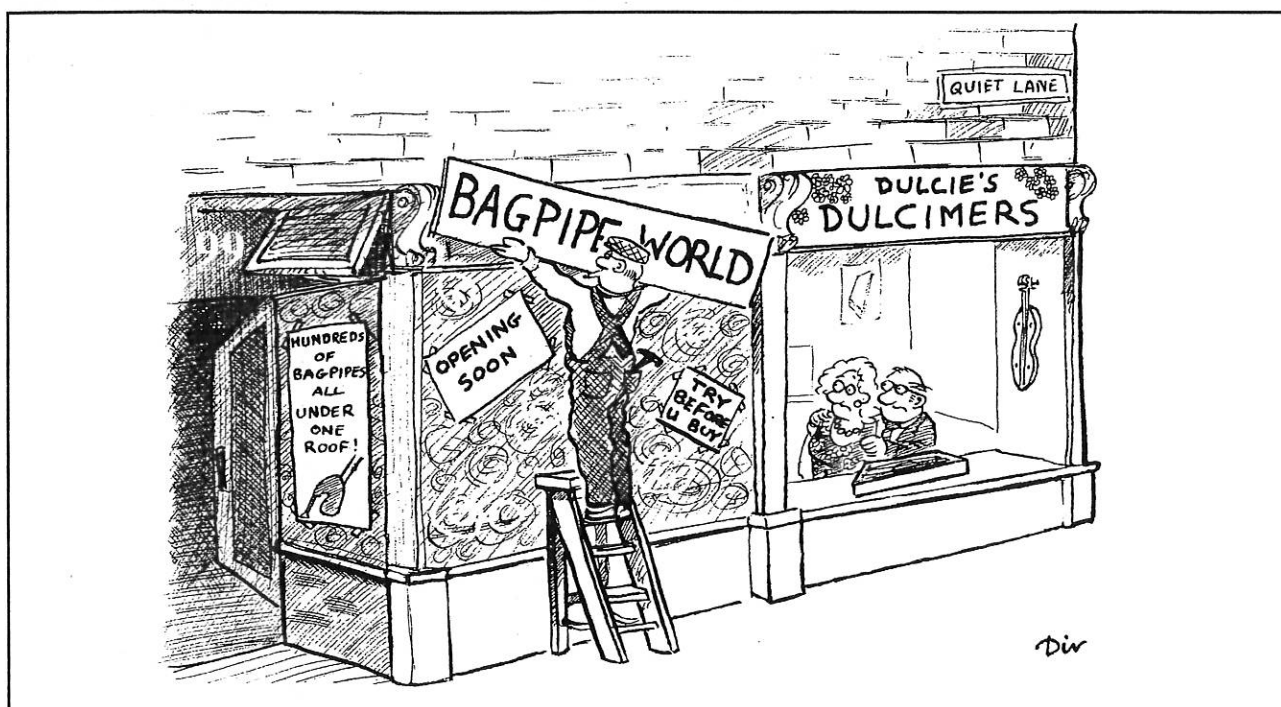
A Choice Collection. Held by the Ears 131' 15" (2 CDs)

Linn CKD 321-4 (rec 1992-2005) ££

Pamela Thorby rec, Rachel Podger vln, Rodolfo Richter vln, Joanna Levine vlc. gamba, Susanne Heinrich gamba, William Carter lutes

These four double CD sets (*The Venice...*, *The Leipzig...*, *The Versailles...* and *The London Collection*) bring together the recordings made by the former Palladian Ensemble between 1992 and 2005. During this period, although two of the players changed, their basic line-up of recorder, violin and continuo was maintained. But now Pamela Thorby has left the group, and it's more flexible successor has been renamed 'Palladians'. So these bargain reissues are particularly welcome as an impressive memorial to the original team. In spite of its position in *The Venice Collection*, the pieces in *An Excess of Pleasure* are actually by English composers such as Locke, Blow and Simpson as well as by Italians such as Matteis and Geminiani who settled in England. Some of these also feature in *The London Collection* which contains an entertaining mix divisions, broken consorts and arrangements of traditional airs. The Ensemble play consistently with verve, style and virtuosity. Full information about them is to be found on the Linn Records website.

Victoria Helby



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