

Early Music

REVIEW

Number 132

November 2009

ISSN 1355-3437

Price £2.50

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Magazine normally published in alternate months
(except that the next issue is December)
International Diary published every month
except January
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We hope that all our Monteverdi enthusiasts (scholars, performers, critics, listeners) will be writing something – articles, comments, observations, problems, anecdotes – for our December *Vespers* issue.

Deadline: 15 November

Contact CB or BC

News that Bryan White had discovered a new piece of evidence for the vexed date of *Dido & Aeneas* has been circulating most of the year, and has now appeared in the August issue of *Early Music*. This comes, intriguingly, from Aleppo, from where a factor, Rowland Sherman, requested on 15 February 1689: 'If Harry has sett to the Harpsechord the Symph[ony] of the mask he made for Preists Ball, I should be very glad of a copie of it.' The possibility that Priest's ball was *Dido & Aeneas* is argued convincingly. Sherman continued: 'There's another Symph[ony] in the same mask I think in C_b, in the 2d p[ar]t is a very neat point th[a]t moves all in quavers. If he's applied th[a]t to the harpsechord, 'twould be very acceptabl[e] too.' The description fits the fugue of the overture nicely; it would not make a very grateful harpsichord piece, which is perhaps why Purcell didn't set it for keyboard. Sherman's departure from England in late July 1688 implies that *Dido* must date from before then, but perhaps not long before.

Music & Letters for the same month has another article by Roger Bowers relating to Monteverdi's *Vespers*. As was shown a few years ago, attempts to find the original location in the Gonzaga palace for the premiere of *Orfeo* led to merely a fragment of a room; similarly vain is seeking where the 1610 *Vespers* might have been performed (if Monteverdi ever did treat it as a performing rather than a printed entity). Roger draws attention to the church of Santa Croce, which still retained its function as the official chapel of the household despite the Santa Barbara project, which had its separate singers. Santa Croce seems to have fallen into disuse a few decades after Monteverdi left Mantua. It was a storeroom in the 18th century and then remodelled as the *Stanze dell'Imperatrice*. Roger stresses that work for the chapel was a vital part of Monteverdi's job as *Maestro da Cappella*, with ten singers and the court's players to call on. More speculatively, Roger tries to identify the purpose of individual *Vespers* items. I think he puts just a little too much weight on regulations that only an organ could substitute for chant: was there any difference in principle if a few well-endowed establishments used other instruments as well? The references could be seen more positively as permission for the use of instrument(s) in terms of the most common one. But read the article!

NEW EDITIONS

Clifford Bartlett

UT ORPHEUS

Alessandro Scarlatti *Opera Omnia per strumento a tastiera Vol. V. Toccate e composizioni varie...* a cura di Andrea Mancinanti e Francesco Tasini Ut Orpheus Edizioni (AS 05), 2009. lxviii + 151pp, €70.00

I asked for a sample of the new A. Scarlatti edition and was sent the latest volume. The contents are a bit of a mixture and somewhat peripheral, so I suspect that most non-specialist players should spend their money on one or all of the previous four volumes. I assumed, from the blurb on the back cover, that this would differ from other editions by moving on from the previous practice (going back to Shedlock¹) of publishing Scarlatti MS by MS. But the volume titles show that same system is followed in this series. The music is, however, edited with due regard to other sources.

This volume contains a group of pieces from Milan Conservatorio Nosedà MS 8802 and various items from other sources. My chief recommendation as a concert piece is probably the Toccata in C minor (p. 32), a set of elaborate variations on a chord sequence in a style called by other composers *perfidia*. The introduction sets its context. The player would be much more likely to notice this if there was some cross-reference between that and the music. Since most of the pieces are called Toccata, it is extraordinary that they are not identified in any other way in their title and are not numbered, nor does the introduction give a page number when discussing individual pieces, identifying them instead by cumbersome details of their source. This is unbelievably clumsy and should surely have been remedied by the publisher. If this is to be the standard edition of the music, the editors should have produced a coherent numbering system so that each piece can be identified on programmes and by scholars – and, indeed, used to refer simply within the edition itself. If the edition fails, it will be largely because of its neglect of the user's convenience.

As well as toccatas (and a few other pieces), this contains the *Regole Per accompagnare il Cembalo o' pure Organo*: the 20 short examples of figured basses are worth playing, perhaps experimenting with different degrees of contrapuntal elaboration. There are stimulating suggestions in Tasini's comments on performance practice, which again would be more useful if the musical excerpts could be related easily to the pieces from which they are extracted. So we're back the infuriating lack of numbers again. A sample page of facsimile of one of the sources showing interesting notational features would have been more

useful than a page of Geminiani. There is, however, a wealth of information in the well-documented introductory material (in Italian and English)² and the musical text is well edited, though I think that retaining original accidentals, however often repeated, should match the preservation of other features such as beaming. The music is easy to read, though there is much more to consider when playing it than the notes Scarlatti provides.

G. B. Bassani *Giona: Oratorio a 5 voci (SSATB, archi e basso continuo (Modena 1689)* Critical edition by Elisabetta Pasquini. (*Tesori Musicali Emiliani*, 1) Ut Orpheus Edizioni (TME 1), 2009. xxvi + 163pp, €160.00

1689 was a good year for oratorio in Modena: 13 are known to have been performed, including two, with different libretti and treatments of the story, on Jonah³. Bassani is not much more than a name to me, though on Peter Holman's recommendation King's Music produced a facsimile of his Trio Sonatas op. 5 (c.1710). He is perhaps best known because Bach performed a *Credo* by him in the late 1740s. His first known job was as organist at Ferrara: (c.1667) the usual birthdate of c.1757 suggests that at least one of the dates is unlikely. He was based there until he moved to Bergamo in 1712, dying four years later. The 1689 commission was famous enough to receive performances elsewhere in the following decade.

I made a careless mistake when looking through the score. The work appears to require 2 violins, 2 violas and continuo. The title page to the volume mentions 'strings', and I did not see the qualification 'Viole à beneplacito' until I read the critical commentary (something that, alas, not all conductors do); subsequently I found it printed on the page that prefaced the score, but surely such information on scoring should be visible on the first page of music? And what the scoring means is also puzzling. One needs to see the commentary to find that the upper 'viola' part was originally in C1 clef, not C3 as printed; that too should have been shown on the page. One expects a five-part string ensemble to have two violas (unless it is French, in which case it would have three). But the part is suspiciously high: of the 25 notes on the first page, 10 are fourth-finger top Es. Does a C1 clef always imply a violin in north Italy at this period? The five voice parts are SSATB. The cast list includes 'CORO di marinari', but these are notated in the same clefs as the soloists and don't need extra singers. I was puzzled by the notation of the bass figures. 'La numerica al basso continuo è trascritta in maniera diplomatica' says the Criteri editoriale. Had the practice generally been prevalent in the 17th

¹ His surprisingly-good century-old edition is the one I know best; my copy is still in the original fascicles, which enables it to open flat on the music stand better than the new editions.

² though the irrelevant sentence in praise of Domenico Scarlatti (p. xix) has the common translator's confusion of settecento & 17th century.
³ One of the oratorios is Bernardo Pasquini's *La sete di Cristo*: surely the editor should publish this work of her namesake...

century of a sharp meaning a major third, a flat a minor third, already become outmoded in Modena by 1689?

It is noticeable how the 'orchestra' hardly ever plays with the voice but in ritornellos and between vocal phrases. The need for singers and band to rehearse together is minimal. The editor points out that in the one aria with instrumental virtuosity – No. 43 with obbligato cello (perhaps written for Domenico Gabrielli) – the voice doesn't compete with the instrument. In fact, despite the availability of top-rank singers, their parts are generally not tricky, which might make the work useful for amateurs or students. The music shows imagination and skill in extending the striking phrases that often begin the arias. I was surprised to find that, in triple time, cadences that looked instrumentally as if they were the expected hemiola pattern had stressed syllables at the beginning of the second bar. So far, Italian baroque oratorio has been rarely published except for Garland's facsimile series: this and the next item are most welcome.

Leonardo Vinci *Oratorio di Maria dolorata per 5 voci, coro e strumenti* (Napoli, ca. 1723) Edizione critica a cura di Gaetano Pitarresi (*Napoli e l'Europe*, 2) Ut Orpheus Edizioni (NAP 2), 2009. xx + 152pp, €160.00

The English introductions to the other Ut Orpheus editions are not always fully idiomatic, and this is no exception (eg 'commotion' and 'purification' in the last line of the first paragraph). By all means have an Italian do a draft translation, but send it to an English-speaking scholar who can make sure it is correct and to question mistakes – I'm sure there are competent post-graduates who would do the job in return for a copy of the score. The introduction is shorter than in the other Ut Orpheus volumes reviewed here, perhaps because the author has written 90 pages on it in a conference proceedings – if really delivered there, it must have taken up its whole three days! There is no early printed libretto, so the one printed here is concocted from the underlay. The series seems to make a point of not numbering movements in the libretto, but it would be much more useful if they were co-ordinated with the music thus.

The oratorio is scored for the Virgin Mary, Mary Magdalene, St John, Joseph of Arimathea and Pilate (SAATB), with some small participation from an SATB chorus, which despite only having one alto part is clearly for soloists, since when Maria Vergine sings in character in the final chorus, the 'chorus' drops to ATB. The strings are in four parts (though with a lot of doubling of violins I & II), with a pair of oboes in no. 7 (with independent parts) & 27 (*Oboè con VV unis*), flauti in 24 (on the same staves as the violins and offering similar problems of how much they play as 'But for his people' in Handel's *Israel in Egypt*) and a trumpet in 16 & 44. The violin writing in the *Sinfonia* suggests that oboes are not expected to play along with the violins as a matter of principle. I was intrigued to note that there are 8 dynamic marks in its violin part (24 if you include triplication in the viola and Bc), of which only one is not editorial. The genuine mark picks out an echo in the closing ritornello, so it seems reasonable to add it at

the opening one as well. If Vinci regularly (or by implication, as Handel does) used *piano* for sections when the strings accompanied the voice, then it would be sensible to include the additional editorial dynamics. But in other arias, neither original nor editorial dynamics are present. Consistency is needed. Unlike Bassani's *Giona*, here the orchestra does often play with the voices. Vinci was a leading 'progressive' composer in the 1720s, and this work was well worth publishing and deserves an idiomatic recording. To make it a real success, though, it would have to be staged and updated in some outrageous way, perhaps exploiting Magdalene's reputation as a prostitute and John's as a homosexual. Are respectable publishers allowed to hire the material for such a distortions?⁴

Jommelli *Demofonte: Drame per musica* (Napoli 1770)... Critical edition by Tarcisio Balbo (*Napoli e l'Europe*, 1) Ut Orpheus Edizioni (NAP 1), 2009. lxxvi + 310pp, €160.00 (Vsc €80.00).

This is the first in a series intended to recover some of the Neapolitan repertoire that was so important to the development of music through the 18th century. The project is aimed at performance, and is supported by the Salzburg and Ravenna Festivals, with Ut Orpheus Edizioni producing the scores (and presumably parts, though the edition does not mention that). The name fronting the venture is Riccardo Muti, who conducted *Demofonte* in Salzburg and Paris this summer. Strangely, there doesn't seem to have been a recording made in conjunction with them – one would assume that with a prestigious scheme like this, it would be part of the plan.

This might be entitled *Demofonte IV*, since Jomelli had set Metastasio's text three times previously. His scores were retained by his former employer, the Duke of Württemberg, when he left Stuttgart in 1769, so he had to start from scratch for a Naples commission of 1770. Burney's comments on the work are noted in the introduction. One can see why he was disappointed by the Overture. It begins with a chordal call to attention (admittedly somewhat feeble), which raises the expectation of an early-symphonic first movement, but is instead unstructured. But the music improves. The trio that ends Act I is impressive, with semiquaver figuration for all three voices together at one point.

An enormous amount of space is devoted to printing a spaciouly-set libretto. Why not follow the example of the Halle Händel-Ausgabe and have a facsimile of the original, reduced in size with four original pages on one: it would still be legible. There are minor differences between the separate text and underlay. More significant is the absence of scene headings and stage directions from the score. One can imagine the stage director working from the libretto and the conductor from the score, exaggerating the all-too-common incompatibility between stage and music. It is odd to number the arias separately for each act: the normal convention is to have one sequence running throughout.

4. Not that I've done so myself, despite some sexy Poppeas (both Monteverdi and Handel).

The English version of the Preface has a classic mistranslation. In the second sentence, 'Alla fine degli anni '60 del secolo XVIII' becomes 'towards the end of the 1860s'. I wondered whether the compliment to Jomelli's writing for the viola (p. xxxi) could be some sort of mistranslation, but the Italian is *viola* as well; most of the time, the violas are merely acting as a 4-foot stop for the bass line.

This edition is most welcome. It is well produced and properly bound – though it is more normal for covers to bear a signature of the composer than a conductor. Of the three voice-and-orchestra scores reviewed here, I think it is the Vinci that I most want to hear.

As well as a vocal score, the publisher has issued a series of voice-piano selections arranged by voice-type for between €25.00 & €28.00

Finally, a couple of smaller *Ut Orpheus* items that I didn't include with those reviewed in our last issue.

Picchi's *Canzoni da Sonar* are perhaps not quite as interesting as the specific scorings make one hope: at least, we've had the set in our catalogue (in an edition by Crispin Lewis) for ten years and sold very few. We split the 19 pieces into six sets, arranged to make the pieces in each group more-or-less playable by the same ensemble. Nicola Sansone has published a more disparate group, the common feature being, not the whole ensemble, but the inclusion of a recorder. There is Sonata IX for 2 violons, *flauto* (recorder) & Bc, Canzon X for 2 flauti, 2 trombones and Bc and Sonata XVI for 2 violins, 2 flauti, trombone, bassoon & Bc: the two different ensembles of IX & X come together in XVI (though why does the title page list them in the order IX, XVI & X when the music is ordered IX, X & XVI?) IX, incidentally, could be added to the small north Italian three-violin repertoire (with Gabrieli, Fontana and Marini). The editor claims to have transcribed the recorder parts at the notated pitch without adding a superscript 8 to the clef, yet there is an 8 above the part in IX. Lewis's edition places the recorder above the strings, which at least reminds the reader of the likely sound, and indicates the compass of each part and the original clefs (C1 for the recorder, G2 for the violins). In the larger pieces, the Lewis score is easier to read because bar-lines are broken between groups of instruments. The basso continuo part is, incidentally, for keyboard or perhaps theorbo, not for another melodic instrument: I suspect some ensembles, seeing a separate part, will assume they need a cello. I noticed an extraordinarily pedantic bit of editorial bass figuring in bar 34 of IX, where a minor chord moves to a major to match a passing treble false relation; in a swift triple time like this, the player may well shorten the chord anyway, and certainly wouldn't make the texture heavier by a chord change on the second minim of a six-minim hemiola. The printer falls into the trap of making the 3/1 notation too spacious and implying a slower tempo than it needs. The edition is in a recorder series (FL8; €28.00), which is misleading: the two recorders are only 25% of the players. There are a couple of linguistic errors. 'Timbre research' feels odd to me; more seriously, the *peculiar* dactylic opening of a

canzona is in fact the typical opening (the Italian word used is actually *tipica*!)

I'm not sure why any viol player would want to spend €13.00 on 11 *Praeludia* from Simpson's *The Division Viol* (HS102) when you can buy the whole publication for £10.00 (which at present is less than €13.00) unless you just can't cope with facsimile.

FINGERING THE VIOL

Gottfried Finger *The Music for Solo Viol* edited by Robert Rawson and Petr Wagner Fretwork, 2nd edition 2009 4 vols. Score: x + 56pp + parts for viol, Bc and supplementary material £3000; score only £13.00.

This set of 12 items comes from a very different world from his London music, which has mostly been the source of our image of Finger. Here, we are taken back to his origins in Olomouc, famous for its wealth of 17th-century music MSS, and even from a glance at the pages of this edition we are reminded of the sonatas by Biber and Schmelzer. So this isn't music for beginners. On top of that, two of the pieces have scordatura tunings: no. 4 to an A major chord, no. 10 to B flat. The notation, however, is very odd. Basically, it follows the practice familiar to violinists from, for instance, the Rosary Sonatas – the editors call it 'grip notation', but it changes occasionally without warning to sounding pitch. The publisher, Bill Hunt, accompanied my copy with hopes that I might have thoughts on the matter. But apart from a few minutes at Dartington in August, I haven't touched a viol for a decade or two, and anyway normally played treble, so have no experience of scordatura. I imagine that the ear can make sense of the apparent oddities, and the player has to be aware of the actual notes he is playing rather than just putting his fingers mechanically where they look as if they should be placed. The score gives sounding pitch as well and the 'Supplementary Material' contains a version in tablature like lute or lyra music.

The edition is clearly a labour of love – and that's not a polite way of prefacing a stream of criticism. Rawson and Wagner have also recorded it (though the details quoted Prague: Arta, 2005 are more like a bibliographical citation than a CD number). The accompanying bass parts have mostly had to be reconstructed. Whether original or editorial, they are left unrealised but figured. Your average consort player is going to find this music very hard work, but I hope students try these pieces, and that they find their way into concert programmes.

CROFT CHAMBER MUSIC

Croft *Complete Chamber Music* edited by H. Diack Johnstone (*Musica Britannica*, 88) Stainer & Bell, 2009. xxxvii + 104pp, £71.50

Like Blow and Purcell, William Croft (1678-1727) was professionally a church composer, working for the Chapel Royal and Westminster Abbey. The instrumental music

published here does not represent the mainstream of his activity, being primarily intended for the domestic, amateur market. Modern publishers have taken advantage of this, with facsimiles and editions of the three violin sonatas that were originally published with three recorder sonatas by (probably) Finger in 1700⁵ and six sonatas for two recorders without bass (1704). What is new here is a group of six further sonatas which the editor discovered in Gerald Coke's library in a MS anthology compiled by John Barker (1705-81) who had sung under Croft in the Chapel Royal and copied other music by Croft as well.⁶ These are more substantial, later and more sophisticated than the two early publications, and give Croft a greater status as an instrumental composer. Four are trio sonatas for two violins with a cello part that is occasionally independent of the continuo. There are also two sonatas for four trebles with virtually identical cello and continuo parts. The Sonata in E is presumably for four violins, treated as equal pairs rather than soli and ripieni. They have sections in keys that are quite adventurous. The Sonata in F has specific scoring: 2 recorders and two violins with cello and organ, with an F minor Adagio, which might cause some tuning problems. This is the only sonata in the group which has the instruments named in the MS, but there is no clue on the music pages of the edition that the other instrument names are editorial: this isn't what one expects from a scholarly or even a practical edition. An even more remote key, B flat minor, appears in the B flat major trio sonata.

I'm not entirely convinced that the music here really justifies a Musica Britannica edition. The recorder duets and violin sonatas are available anyway. The trios and quintets are worth issuing, but need an edition with score and parts (or rather one volume with the trios and each quintet issued separately). MB could have concentrated on some of his more substantial output. A parallel series of major publications in facsimile would be extremely useful, featuring *Musicus apparatus academicus* and *Musica sacra*. But since the volume exists, I hope parts will be produced of the larger pieces, and players will try them. A little thought would have provided better turns for the two-stave pieces. A page of facsimile inserted after page 6, for instance, and tighter setting of the allegro of Violin Sonata 2 could have avoided mid-movement page turns. Sonata 3 would then have started half-way down a verso, preceded by a chunk of facsimile, running on to the recto, with the second movement squashed onto two pages and a closing verso for the last movement. It's not a reviewers job to make such suggestions; but if the edition is to exist, it might as well be made practical for performers: the duos then could be played from the score.

LITTLE PIECES FOR LITTLE ORGANS

Gottlieb Muffat *Toccatinas, Preludes, Caprices for Positive or Organ* (DM 1362). Doblinger, 2009. 19pp, €12.95

5. The paragraph on the source (p. xxvii) states that the incompletely extant edition by John Young was advertised on 3 October 1699 but John Walsh published a rival edition on the 12th. However, the title page reproduced (and also superfluously set out in full in modern typography) is dated 1700.

6. Barker had an entry in New Grove, but was cut from Newer Grove.

Careless of Georg Muffat to give his youngest son his own initial, though Gottlieb's concentration on keyboard music generally avoids confusion. Doblinger has been issuing various works not included in Gottlieb's own publication, the latest being a group of 11 short pieces between 10 and 52 bars long. They come from Vienna: Minoritenkonvent MS 715, pp. 196-221, and the editor suggests that they were used at the end of Mass and Vespers. The three Toccatas and two Preludes include thick chords marked for arpeggiation. The editor quotes as precedents for this in organ Frescobaldi's Toccatas II (dated 1637 in the German text but misprinted 1673 in the English), but that is for *cimbalo et organo* (both the 1627 and 1637 editions).⁷ I'm not sure if the sign of a chord with diagonal lines between the staves means spread (as on a harpsichord) or turn into broken chords (as Vivaldi uses it for violins). But neither is it a necessary assumption that a volume of organ music might not also include some pieces the organist can play at home on a harpsichord or clavichord. The opening of the first Toccatina is quite striking: G major then a seventh on E major, though that exhausts the harmonic interest of the 10-bar piece. The Caprices are more interesting.

BWV ANH II 71 → BWV 1128

Bach *Choralfantasie für Orgel über Wo Gott der Herr nicht bei uns hält* BWV 1128 *Erstausgabe*, herausgegeben von Stephan Blaut und Michael Pacholke, mit einem Vorwort von Hans-Joachim Schulze Ortus Musikverlag, 2009. xiii + 9 pp. €13.50

This arrived just too late for our August issue. The autograph was copied by the Bach scholar Wilhelm Rust in 1877. It was not included in the Bach-Gesellschaft, though could easily have fitted into volumes published after that date. Rust fell out from the BG in 1878, but not beyond co-operation. On 15 March 2008, various MSS from his estate were auctioned and bought by the Halle/Saale Landesbibliothek, where the editors of this publication identified the lost work. The work's existence was known: Schmieder gave it a BWV number: Anh II 71. But until last year, only the incipit was known.

The editors of this edition (who work for the Halle Händel-Ausgabe) identified the music and its authenticity is accepted. Hans-Joachim Schultze contributes an introduction on the provenance of the lost MS and the rediscovered copy. There is a facsimile of two pages, a commentary, and a careful transcription of the music itself – 85 bars for two manuals and pedal on a not-very-well-known chorale. The title of the edition, with the different typography for *über*, isn't that of the MS itself: "*Fantasia sopra il Chorale Wo Gott der Herr nicht bey uns hält pro Organo à 2 Clav. E Pedale dal Sig. J. S. Bach*" (the quotes are part of the title). The printing of *über* in the editorial title implies a spurious accuracy which the modern *Choralfantasie* does not justify.

Anyway, enough bickering: the edition doesn't deserve it. It is excellent that Ortus, based in Beekstow, a small town

7. Does the organ play simple chords while the harpsichord plays the notated broken ones?

about 20 miles SW of Frankfurt/Oder, have this opportunity to reach a wider market. The music is said to be early; dating has to be conjectural, but more mature Bach tends to be a bit more controlled. Serious organists will need it to complete their Bach collection.

BACH FAMILY

I'll defer *Die Art of Fugue* (PF 289; \$30.00), since Sergio Vartolo has offered to send his SPES facsimile for review; so I'll consider them together. It shares with CPEB's *Sei Sonate per Cembalo opera II^{da}* (PF 284; 27.50), an unwieldy oblong size nearly 29cm/15½ inches across; however you shelve it, it's likely to get bent edges, and it won't be too comfortable on modern harpsichord stands. But there's a lot of music squashed on the pages, so the size is probably justified. The Sonatas are the set dedicated to the Duke of Württemberg, Wq 49. From JCB comes the Six Quartettos for a German Flute, Violin, Tenor and Violoncello, op. 8 (PF 283; \$35.00), a legible set of parts of pleasing music; no score, but it's music that you can easily manage without one.

HANDEL & HAYDN

Theodora has had an erratic performance history. Non-Biblical but with a faith-based story, it was a failure at its premiere – according to Handel, the Jews wouldn't attend because it was Christian, the Christians because it was virtuous. Although not intended to be performed thus, it was the second work of Handel that I saw on stage,⁸ and since the Glyndebourne performance with Andreas Scholl and a modern setting, other productions have followed. Watkins Shaw prepared a vocal score for Novello, but until the new HHA volume appeared (HHA I/29, ed Colin Timms), the only full scores were by Chysander and by Timothy Roberts/CB. Bärenreiter has now issued a vocal score based on HHA (BA 4085a; £24.00). There is an excellent short introduction, which ends with a simple guide to navigating round the versions. The work is perhaps a bit subtle for choral societies, with a lack of tub-thumping choruses; but Handel claimed that 'He saw the lovely youth' was superior to the Hallelujah Chorus.⁹ And there are some beautiful arias.

It was *Messiah*, though, that particularly influenced Haydn – what we would call an unauthentic performance with large forces, following the tradition began by the misdated 1784 anniversary. Haydn acquired an English libretto (perhaps written for Handel), had it translated by van Swieten (who had been responsible for the Handel performance for which Mozart touched up the orchestration) and produced the work that kept his reputation among the general public alive for the next century and a half. I wrote about the new Henle edition in the last issue. This is now completed by the Bärenreiter vocal score based on it. There is an excellent introduction on the work's history and the score is clearly set out, with a piano reduction based on the one that Haydn preferred by August Eberhard Müller. It has the German and English

text. Since the English text is matter of controversy, perhaps something more should be said on the topic in the English introduction. (BA 4648a £10.50).

Orlando Paladino was one of Haydn's most popular operas, since in addition to 20 performances at Esterhazy, it was widely performed as a German Singspiel with spoken dialogue. Haydn partially revised a copy of a score with this translation, and that is underlaid as well as the original Italian; the recitative German version is based on contemporary librettos. One practical point. If you are looking for an aria and have no idea where in the opera it is, it is useful if the list of them is on a single opening. If the edition is bilingual, the user is likely to know what language he is looking for, so the two lists can be on separate openings. (BA 4663a; £31.00)

BEETHOVEN ON THE MOUNT OF OLIVES

Christus am Ölberge isn't one of Beethoven's most popular works, and I must confess that I have no positive memories from hearing it several decades ago. The erratic libretto is a handicap: even Beethoven called it *schlecht*. The publisher of the score got another writer to replace chunks of it, without any great success. The new edition in *Beethovens Werke* (VIII, 1) reverts to the original words, though whether that will encourage more performances remains to be seen. It is now available as a study score (Henle HN 9311; £24.50). As a thorough critical text, it is certainly worth having on the shelf of any music library that doesn't take the *Werke*, but keep any older edition: the substitute text is part of the performance history of the work from 1811 to 2008.

MENDELSSOHN VIOLIN SONATAS

Mendelssohn Bartholdy *Sonatas for Violin and Piano-forte* edited by Hiromi Hoshino [&] Takeshi Kiriyaama Bärenreiter BA 9066, 9066. xix + 111pp + part, £28.00

The Sonata in F major was written in 1820; the only source is the autograph, written in an old-fashioned way without phrasing and dynamic marks. The editors 'recommend playing it with subtle articulation and dynamics consistent with the performance practice of Mendelssohn's generation'. I'm not so sure: had the composer wanted that, he would probably have written a more up-to-date piece. He was only eleven, and he and Fanny were probably not yet playing difficult modern music. Opus 4 in F minor (1823) does reflect its period and is a far more serious work. The autograph was, after the composer's death, given to Joachim and doesn't survive, but the first edition (1825) seems to be reliable, unlike the version of the *Gesamtausgabe* from the mid-1870s.

The third sonata, another in F major, was written in 1838, but has a complicated history. Later in the year a violin part was copied and revised, though co-ordination between it and the score was not systematic, and further revisions were made. The first edition (by Yehudi Menuhin in 1953) was a mixture: this is the first attempt at a scholarly one. The original composition is presented as

8. Handel Opera Society, 1958; I'd first seen a proper Handel opera, *Alcina*, with Joan Sutherland the previous year.

9. Both quotations are in the Preface, and in all other writings on the work!

the main text, with some input from the first stage of revision; the revised first movement is also printed, with its second half supplied by the editor whose first name may (to those who have children) recall a Japanese game-show. The critical apparatus (in English only, despite the being a German publication) is complicated. After all that, I haven't had any chance to consider it as music, and have no clear recollection of what I originally wrote in my first version when I had read it through. (That was written nearly two months ago, and was lost by a computer.) But until anyone has another attempt at these sonatas, this is obviously the edition to have.

CZECH KEYBOARD

Even more than Mendelssohn, this is not really our territory, and frustratingly my original reviews of these also vanished from my computer. Smetana's *Album Leaves* (Bärenreiter BA 9525; £16.00) contains 26⁰ short pieces (average length three pages), mostly either entitled or intended as *Album Leaves* with a few other short pieces of the same type. There is considerable variety, with more rhythmic interest than such pieces often have. The edition is based on vol. 4 of the Complete Edition of the Piano Works (1968), with a layer of performance indications from Jan Novotný, which our readers are likely to find superfluous. The opening of the first piece has a right-hand phrase progressing from an octave to a ninth to a tenth then back which is figured 5-4 5-4 5 5 4-5. All very well for those with hands big enough. Those who do will obviously at some stage learn that legato passages of this sort (the phrase is marked *sempre legatissimo*) can be played by changing fingers on the notes; but there are players who can barely stretch an octave (my best piano teacher, for instance), and it doesn't help to emphasize their limitations.

The Janáček volume (*Organ Works*, BA 9524; £16.00) has no such additions. It too is taken from the critical edition. Most of us will know only one organ solo by him: the striking movement from the Glagolitic Mass. He was trained as an organist, and founded an organ school in Brno in 1881, remaining its principal until 1919, so it is a pity that his organ playing seems to have been mostly improvisations rather than notated compositions (one can, in fact, imagine the Mass solo being improvised). There are three pieces here written in 1875 while he was a student at the Prague Organ School and two more original pieces (each an *Adagio*) from 1884. The preface states that they were written on five staves: it would have been nice to have seen at least a sample page. The mood is completely different from the Mass solo, but the music is equally original and striking.

DELAYED FRESCOBALDI

At the request of the editor, Christopher Stenbridge, we have postponed a review of vol. I, 1 of Bärenreiter's new edition of Frescobaldi's keyboard works until vol. I, 2 appears.

ACIS & AGRIPPINA

Clifford Bartlett

I had two Handelian outings in September. The first was eastwards along the A14 and cutting cross-country to Aldeburgh. The occasion was the 80th birthday of Pam Munks. I'd never met her, or knew anything about her, but she uses our music and seemed to be something of a character. Apparently, she had wanted to celebrate her birthday with an opera, but was persuaded that a non-staged *Serenata/Pastoral Opera/Masque* might be more manageable. So on the first Sunday of the month, with the town still full of tourists, her friends (I felt a bit of a usurper) gathered in the Moot Hall, famous for the premier of Britten's music in the earlier days of the Festival. There was one link with those days present: Charles Mackerras had conducted there until, like nearly everyone eventually, he fell out of favour. Now he was back to celebrate his younger friend's birthday (he will be 84 this month), and directed a performance with economical vigour. The performers included some well-known players; Cat Mackintosh shared the leader's desk with Pam, Tony Robson played oboe and recorder, Judy Tarling was among the violins (her latest rhetoric book is reviewed in p. 8), Caroline 'Hanover-Band' Brown was a cellist, Peter Holman and Philip Simms (a Dartington contact from the late 1960s) played harpsichord, along with some familiar names and some I didn't recognise, but all effective players.

I was glad to renew my faith in *Acis and Galatea* after the unsatisfactory Covent Garden performance. It works better without staging, which reinforces how little action there is. It also gains from not being presented too pretentiously. I won't say that the singers (Peter Kirk *Acis*, Elizabeth Weisberg *Galatea*, Matthew Kellett *Polypheme*, Ben Francis *Damon* and Matthew Howard *Coridon*) quite reached the level of their high-powered Covent Garden equivalents, but they they were appropriate for the occasion and, indeed, made an excellent team. I'm not going to write a detailed review: I didn't take notes, am writing eight weeks after the event, and it was a party anyway. But it worked. Any readers who have a significant birthday pending, try to emulate Pam. Incidentally, I was amazed at the energy she still has in her bowing arm: she was playing really energetically for an hour and a half, but still seemed fit enough at the end!

The weeks later, it was the other direction on the A14 for *Agrippina* at the Barber Institute, Birmingham University, conducted by the Handel (and Steffani: see p.29-30) scholar Colin Timms. The publicity emphasised two features: Emily Van Evera in the cast and the singing of the recit in English, the arias in Italian. I have known for decades that in Handel's day such a mixture of Italian and the vernacular occurred in Hamburg, and I wondered why (especially in pre-surtitle days) it hasn't been revived.

continued on p 46

REVIEWS OF BOOKS

Clifford Bartlett

OLD FRIENDS

Liber amicorum: Festschriften for music scholars and nonmusicians 1840-1966 General Editors Zsravko Blažeković, James Cowdery (RILM Retrospective Series, 5) RILM (Répertoire International de Littérature Musicale), 2009. xxxii + 599pp, \$145.00. ISBN 978 1 932765 04 5

In many ways, this might seem like a survey of literature dating from before the regular usage of the term 'musicology', in Britain at least. It is, however, difficult to deduce that easily from the entries in the book, since those producing the abstracts will not have avoided using the word themselves. The publications themselves are listed alphabetically; the absence of a chronological list is to some extent compensated for by the introductions. A future volume will cover books honouring composers and performers with a third for institutions. The man with the most friendly offerings in Vol 1 is Bartok, with 10 volumes, but surely he belongs more to vol. 2.

The separate contents of each Festschrift are listed under the usual RILM classification, and there is a thorough index, including a page (599) devoted to individual compositions that were published in them (with a misprint; *Samuel* Barber). This index does not, however, enable one to solve the puzzle of which unknown composition of Dufay is discussed in item 1384 – a strange omission from the abstract. The cut-off date of 1966 is determined by the creation of RILM in 1967.

Most who browse through this will think of the contents as remote, but for me it is quite nostalgic. I bought some of the later volumes listed, and from several more I have individual contributions photocopied. I was reading only recently Cecil Oldman on Cipriano Potter's edition of Mozart from Otto Erich Deutsch's 80th birthday book. I let the volume fall open by chance on p. 174 and noticed summaries of essays by Perluigi Petrobelli, whom I met several times, and by Nino Pirrotta and Dragan Plamenac, scholars whose works I have often used, and at the foot of the next page, Yvonne Rokseth, through whose edition I first encountered the Montpelier Codex. I was intrigued to find one volume in honour of a first-century saint, Corbinian; but on internal evidence it is a misprint, since the title refers to a 1200th year anniversary in 1924. Wikipedia (probably a safe source for such information) gives c.670-c.730; you may like to commemorate the translation of his relics on 20 November. Either side of him are Cristiforo Columbo and Hernán Cortés; but virtually all the festschriften are devoted to scholars working in the period covered by the title. Some sorts of scholarship become outdated by new discoveries or a general change in attitude; but even from the summaries here, one gets some idea of the value of earlier scholars.

QUINTILIAN SAYS

Judy Tarling with Jane Oakshott *Speaking with Quintilian: Text, Voice, Performance* AuthorHouse, 2009. 1226pp, £9.99. ISBN 978 1 4389 5366 3

Judy has written on rhetoric for musicians: this offers advice for speakers, using the most encyclopedic Roman rhetorician as the basis for common-sense advice for all who need to stand up and address an audience verbally, without aid of instrument or singing voice. Rhetoric is now an omnipresent concept for early-musicians, whether explicitly or not. The topic was pervasive at the York conference on Early Singing, but only theoretically, with few attempts to follow the principles of rhetoric in their own delivery – 'do as I say, even though I've never tried it for myself'. I recommend Judy's book strongly to all who ever address audiences.

We are sceptical of our soundbite culture. But if the soundbite embodies a significant idea, brevity can be the soul of wit (for Shakespeare, wit probably meant wisdom). Judy points out (p. 112) that the Gettysburg Address lasts two minutes: the two-hour speech that preceded it is forgotten. The most memorable sermon I have ever heard had one action and three sentences. When Quintilian lived (1st century AD), time was less carefully measured than now, so for advice on duration, I'll turn to David Lodge on lectures. 'Experiments had demonstrated that the average attention span for receiving continuous speech from one speaker is twenty minutes, and that it diminishes the more closely the discourse resembles written prose'.¹ I'm not sure if displaying your headings on screen alleviates the problem. Many of the things that a speaker can do to deliver his message without boring or exasperating his audience were known more than 2000 years ago (speeches by Demosthenes in Greek survive from the mid-4th-century BC). Classical theory isn't strong on weighing up evidence fairly and coming to a conclusion – it derives from politics and law, where truth isn't the issue. But truth itself doesn't make a good speech (or presentation), and the skills of rhetoric have their uses.

SECOND-MODE TRACTS

Emma Hornby *Medieval Liturgical Chant and Patristic Exegesis: Words and Music in the Second-Mode Tracts* The Boydell Press, 2009. xv + m 327pp, £55.00 ISBN 978 1 84383 471 7

To quote the author (p. 1) 'a tract, broadly speaking, is a solo chant, sung straight through without repeats, which

1. *The Weapons of Rhetoric, a guide for musicians and audiences* (Corda, 2004)

2. *Deaf Sentence* Penguin 2009, p. 28

replaces the alleluia between the readings of the Mass during penitential times of the year, especially Lent. Tracts appear in two melodic families, categorised within the church modes which emerged in the ninth century as eighth-mode tracts and second-mode tracts respectively.³ This is a very small body of material: a core repertoire of four items

<i>Qui habitat</i>	Quadragesima Sunday
<i>Deus deus meus</i>	Passion Sunday
<i>Domine exaudi</i>	Holy-Week Wednesday
<i>Domine exaudi</i>	Good Friday

together with *Qui habitat*'s replacement *Eripe me* and other later examples. In this context, 9th century is late. The music under discussion is transcribed in black blobs,⁴ supported by facsimiles of one of the main sources used for the study, a 10th-century Gradual from Brittany, now Angers Bibliothèque municipale, MS 91. The main Old Roman source is available in fine colour facsimile on the www, with slightly different addresses on p. 5 note 15 and p. 213 note 38).

The bulk of the book, complementary to her study of 8th-mode tracts (published by Ashgate in 2002), is a systematic study of aspects of these pieces in enormous detail. This is not an area on which I have any particular expertise. But I felt that the issue of whether a scribe was influenced by his memory when copying the words and music needed more discussion. When a text from a tract had trivial differences from its use in the psalter, for instance, the familiar might easily replace the exemplar. Or the MS may have been copied to offer the 'official' version but the soloist retained what he had sung for many years. At the period when these tracts were young, did the singer have the chant book in front of him, or was it kept as an archive? Some of the verbal variants tabulated seem so easily generated that comparisons made without checking far more than sample sources of each version is needed before anything significant can be established.

There is a good balance in the footnotes between giving an exhaustive bibliography for every point and leading the reader specifically to the right place. But five successive references to a 1994 study of *The Poems and Psalms of the Hebrew Bible* by Susan E. Gillingham really is excessive for statements of what anyone who has chanted psalms in any language have noticed without scholarly assistance: the pivotal mid-verse break and the balancing relationship between the two halves. The discussion of how phrases are separated and syntax sometimes over-ridden is worth noting, as are the general remarks in chapter 2 on punctuation and the detailed table of texts, divided into phrases, with translation, parsing and indication of the musical phrase.

Intelligent and sensible though all the detailed analysis is, I can't help wondering why it is somehow more respectable to study such a minute repertoire of chant when other areas of music are so neglected. For instance, in alternatim polyphonic pieces with cantus firmus, did the chant tempo remain constant?⁴ Did Charles Wesley have existing tunes in mind when he wrote in unusual meters?

3. The bar lines at the end of each stave are superfluous.

4. Mother Thomas More (Mary Berry)'s Cambridge thesis is on the subject, but we've had a lot more performing experience since then.

BIOGRAPHY OF A SCRIBE

Ian Rumbold with Peter Wright *Hermann Pötzlinger's Music Book: The St Emmeram Codex and its Contents* Boydell Press, 2009. xviii + 348pp, £60.00 ISBN 978 1 84383 463 2

The St Emmeram Codex is a name that is familiar to anyone knowledgeable about German 15th-century music, though until the last 30 years, probably more from citations in critical commentaries than as an entity. Hermann Pötzlinger was its scribe. This rather large MS of 356 pages of nearly 250 compositions (now Munich Bayerische Staatsbibliothek Clm 14274) is unusual in that, far from being an isolated volume, it is part of the library of over 100 MSS owned, and mostly copied, by its scribe. The use of the Regensburg monastery name is a bit misleading, since it was assembled before he settled as teacher there, with some material evidently related to his student days in Vienna. On his retirement, Hermann presented his library to the monastery (perhaps in exchange for house and pension). His books remained identifiable after his death, and early catalogues confirm identifications.

I don't know how much can be told about someone from his library,⁵ but in his case, not enough. The other MSS are not music, but works of theology (including Aquinas's *Summa theologica* in five, presumably fat volumes) and educational works. The book is full enough of surmises in an attempt to flesh out the bare biographical information, but attempts to read behind the catalogue were evidently too risky for a respectable academic study. I suggested that Richard Wistreich's study of Brancaccio could be the basis of a historical novel; Hermann didn't have such an exciting life, but I can imagine him in retirement using his wide range of knowledge to solve a murder.

There's an element of pushing historical knowledge too far, comparable to the TV series 'Who do you think you are?'. Archival information about your relatives (and for Hermann, the authors give similar details about other contacts) rarely leads to any great insight about the ancestors or the subject himself (and in the book, we don't get the concluding tears). All I know about my great-grandfather from hearsay is that he was a signalman at Barnstaple station; checking the 1901 census shows a Bartlett as a retired stationmaster. So what? It is so easy, when information is short, to push it too far. On the whole, Rumbold and Wright are cautious, but most such documentary studies tend towards oversimplification of the claims of nature and nurture, DNA and education, predestination and freewill.

5. I remember being fascinated and intrigued when cataloguing the Royal Academy of Music's library and finding that virtually all the scores of 'modern' 20th-century orchestral music (and much more besides) were stamped as a donation from Jack Beaver. The only person I met who knew anything about him was Lionel Salter at the BBC, whose musical career was less restricted than most classical musicians I knew. He remembered that he worked in films. This is now easily confirmed by googling the name. He was, indeed, a film composer (1900-1963), writing (anonymously) the score for Hitchcock's *The Thirty-Nine Steps* (it's too late to suggest watching it on TV in the small hours of 30 October) among many others. One of his pieces is in the Hyperion catalogue. I hope someone has researched him..

I've been following my more general thoughts about this book. The scholar in me is fascinated by all the detail and to be able to place this MS into a context is valuable. The 13 pieces transcribed here don't proclaim their worth from the page, but may sound more impressive. This is an excellent book, though for completion you need the facsimile,⁶ and there is also a CD (Aeolus AE-10023). A complete transcription is in preparation.

GERMAN SUITES

Michael Robertson *The Courtly Consort Suite in German-speaking Europe, 1650-1706* (Ashgate, 2009. xxi + 275pp, £60.00 ISBN 978 0 7546 6451 2)

This is comparable with Gregory Barnett's *Bolognese Instrumental Music, 1660-1710* (Ashgate, 2008: see *EMR* 130 p. 31), with its thorough study of a music that tends to be considered as predecessor to the more familiar early 18th-century form (concerto-and-suite). Barnett's book has a greater clarity, but I think that may be a consequence of the greater cohesion of his subject rather than the authors' skills. Despite the title, Robertson says quite a lot about the municipal suite too. The use of the term 'Consort Suite' was suggested by Peter Holman; the usual term 'orchestral' is misleading, as implying more than one string to a part, yet its association with slightly earlier English music has the opposite implication. Robertson often mentions when the sources imply doubling, so the reader is aware of the different possibilities.

The German suite doesn't have simple historical development; Germany had no central arbiter of taste in the way France had, and the Lullian conventions were adopted in different ways and times. A flick through the book rapidly shows that the ensembles varied: in terms of clef, there are, for instance, G2 C3 C4 F4 (Ex. 2.1), G1 G1 C1 C2 C3 F4 (Ex 2.2), G2 G2 C1 C2 C3 F4 (Ex 6.3), G2 C1 C3 C3 F4 (Ex 6.8) The author is inconsistent in modernising clefs in his transcriptions. The number and order of dances, and the presence of a French Overture, is variable. The point that selections from an opera have a variety of keys whereas independent suites don't makes one wonder who cared? (I can't count how many instrumental sequences I've put together from *The Fairy Queen* with a variety of keys, yet Purcell's keyboard suites have key unity.) There is mention (p. 172) of a 'Concert' in Hanover in 1697 with eight movements in d, five in F and five in g, closing with another 3 in d: it reminds one of the recently-outmoded three-suite Water Music.

If you are looking for an unknown composer to revive, Schieferdecker seems a likely candidate. Famous chiefly for marrying Buxtehude's daughter (rejected by Handel and Mattheson). His *XII. musikalische Concerte bestehend aus etlichen Ouverturen und Suiten* (Hamburg, 1713) look interesting, with a scoring of 3 oboes and bassoon as well as strings. For this, and other works cited, it would be helpful to know if the continuo part has any figures or clues whether it is for keyboard as well as cello.

I jotted down a few points.

p. 7 Carnival surely ends on Shrove Tuesday, not Ash Wednesday (apart from the hangover)

p. 10 I wonder whether the vocal and instrumental music of the *ballets de cour* were transmitted separately, hence the absence of the vocal music from Philidor's MSS.

p. 25 Useful quote that French dance music is faster than Italian.

p. 27 Advice from Drese on playing binary dances: 'As long as the airs have been played in their simple form once or twice, both strains may be varied; and after every undecorated strain, one violin should play a decorated version while the others carry on more quietly and without decoration.' Ambiguous, but he obviously expects something more than AABB.

p. 165 An elementary error, which I guess is more likely to have been introduced by a proof-reader, since I can't imagine an author 'correcting' the spelling of a bibliographical citation in a footnote. The normal English spelling of Magdalene has a final E (though *The Catholic Encyclopedia* omits it). *The Oxford Manual of Style* (2002) states: 'magdalen, a repentant prostitute, a home for such; but Mary Magdalene'. Magdalen is the name of an Oxford College, but the Babel manuscript quoted is in Cambridge. It is as well that there are no mentions of Queens College with its choice of apostrophe.

p. 176 It would be worth checking if the titles of Drese's Suites might refer to Jesuit oratorios.

p. 211 Schmelzer enthusiasts are warned that the Kroměříž MSS are not exact copies of his Vienna dances.

You have to work very hard to draw any general conclusions from Robertson's book (perhaps that's the point!) But it's worth reading.

VITTORIA COLONNA & MUSIC

Incontri con Vittoria Colonna edited by Franco Cristelli. Protagon Editori, Colle di Val d'Elsa (Siena) 2007. 216pp ISBN 978 88 8021 7 €18

A conference on Vittoria Colonna's poetry, religious thinking, and relationship to other arts was held in Arezzo in 2006 at the high school named after her. Only two articles are concerned with music.

One, by Vincenza Seggi, is on women and music between the Renaissance and the Baroque. Her starting point is the low position of women (their roles limited to witches, daughters, wives, mothers and widows) and the gradual development of their cultural level after the Council of Trent. Aristocratic females were allowed some training in music, and Maddalena Casulana (b. ca. 1540) published madrigals in 1566 in collections together with Lasso, de Rore and Zarlino, and then her own *Primo libro dei madrigali* in 1568, dedicated to Isabella de' Medici Orsina. Player/composers from Lucrezia Tornabuoni (1426-1482) to Anne Boleyn (1507-1536) are mentioned, along with the famous Concerto delle Dame of Ferrara and Caccini's daughters. After a brief reference to female singers in the theatre, musical families producing professional singers, and playing/singing in monasteries, Seggi talks about the

6 Price €258.00, reviewed by David J. Burn in the May *Early Music*

well-known case of Barbara Strozzi and interprets her lovely passacaglia *Che si può dire?* as a personal expression of her frustrating social and artistic status. The transcription appended is poor, with obvious misprints, bad spacing, a useless third staff, hyphens connecting separate words,⁷ and no clarifying punctuation.

More informative is Lucia Navarrini Dell'Atti's longer study on musical settings of poetry by V. Colonna and Michelangelo Hoste da Reggio (1547), G. T. Cimello (1548), Jean de Castro (1570), G. A. Dragoni (1575), M. A. Ingegneri (1579) by F. Anerio (1587). In 1580 Pietro Vinci, a Sicilian composer, based his collection *Quattordeci sonetti spirituali* on texts by the 'divine' Colonna. Their style is serious, and they were praised in a madrigal by Vincenzo Galilei. In 1590, and also in later works, Antonio il Verso, a pupil of Vinci, set other texts by Colonna. Philippe De Monte, active in ecclesiastic circles in Rome, and at court in Vienna and Prague, and conversant with the genre of devotional music and with the poetry of Petrarch which he was already setting in 1554, continued to set texts by Petrarch's emulators (petrarchisti) – Bembo, Sannazaro, Colonna (madrigals from 1583 and 1587), Tasso, and Guarini. The list of early composers includes also Stefano Felis (1583) and Costanza Porta (1586). A curious misattribution to Colonna of a text set by Niccolò Dorati in 1536 may attest to their meeting each other in Lucca. After mentioning a couple of 19th and 20th century settings she turns to the case of Michelangelo, whose texts were set by Arcadelt, Corteccia, Tromboncino, and then much later, from the 19th century up to almost the present. There are musical examples in the text itself, plus an appendix of complete pieces. *Barbara Sachs*

CHRISTIAN GOTTFRIED KRAUSE

Darrell M. Berg *The Correspondence of Christian Gottfried Krause: A Music Lover in the Age of Sensibility* Ashgate, 2009. xxx + 275pp, £65.00 ISBN 978 0 7546 6429 1

As anyone who researches and writes about musical history knows, even the most insignificant detail can be that crucial missing piece that completes a jigsaw; suddenly, armed with a fact you had never expected to encounter, you can make sense of a confusing scenario or something that had previously seemed illogical or unlikely is explained. So although I did not learn anything reading Berg's annotated translation of Krause's correspondence that I expect to be able to put to any future use, I am sure that for others, there is a wealth of background information that will fill gaps in their understanding of mid-18th-century Berlin. Perhaps the most interesting reading is in the footnotes, where we learn much about the people referred to in the letters. The original texts are transcribed on the right-hand pages with the English translation and footnotes on the left. This poses a number of questions, the first of which is my ecological worry at the waste of paper on account of this system – right-hand pages are quite often half blank!* Would it not have been better

simply to publish Berg's texts and (in cooperation with the custodians of the originals) post digital images of the letters? Indeed, might the entire project not have been more useful online: the index is very poorly done, and this would have been unnecessary if users could search the texts. Anyone getting excited because there appear to be four pages regarding C. P. E. Bach, for example, will be disappointed that they refer not to a meeting with the great man, but to Krause's recommendation of a 'Bach keyboard concerto', and the chances of someone re-working it for flute – the letter and its translation spread over two pages each! But there's an example of what I meant in the opening line – someone encouraging the re-working of keyboard concertos for flute: what other written evidence to we have for such ideas? Darrell Berg has done a lot of work on these letters (especially in terms of digging around to find out more about the people involved), and that is to be highly commended, but I fear this book will remain on my shelves unused for a long time. *BC*

* I expect books with bilingual parallel text to have the original printed on the left, the translation on the right: here they are reversed. By an odd coincidence, I happened to have recently read Kate Atkinson's crime novel *When will there be good news?* in which the Loeb Classical Library, the source of my expectation of that page arrangement, is used for an illegal purpose. Berg's books looks very odd with all of the copious footnotes only on the English-language page. This leaves an enormous amount of blank space on the German side. The footnotes could surely have been divided between the two pages, or is that an option that the computer programme could not manage? *CB*

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7. And, judging by her name, she doesn't even have the excuse of not being Italian. [CB]

THE 30th AMBRONAY FESTIVAL

Brian Robins

There are music festivals to admire, festivals to inspire, festivals where one simply gorges on music, but when it comes to festivals to love there can be few candidates to rival Ambronay. For a start, the village of Ambronay, situated some 35 miles northeast of Lyons, lies in glorious countryside at the foot of the thickly wooded high hills of the Haut Bugey. The village itself would be unlikely to attract close attention were it not for the Benedictine abbey, of which the surviving 13-15th century church and surrounding buildings, set in parkland, form a magical focal point for both the festival, and an academy and cultural centre of world-wide importance for Baroque music.

This year the Ambronay Festival, held over five weekends in September and early October, celebrated its thirtieth anniversary. And it did so in some style, with many of the luminaries who have played a major role over the years giving concerts; in addition to the names mentioned in the following report you could have heard Jordi Savall, Fabio Biondi and Europa Galante, Marc Minkowski, and Rinaldo Alessandrini with Concerto Italiano, among others.

The opening event of the festival, however, neither took place at Ambronay nor did it feature famous names. What the production of Monteverdi's *L'incoronazione di Poppea* at the theatre in nearby Bourg-en-Bresse did do was reassert Ambronay's admirable commitment to young artists, the performance directed by Leonardo Garcia Alarcón featuring recent alumni and present members of the early music departments of the conservatoires of Lausanne and Geneva. With its large cast and earthy comic episodes, *Poppea* is a good choice for this kind of production, given a simple setting that basically involved a raised acting area on the larger stage placed in front of a peach-coloured wall with a sliding door. This not only provided entrances and exits from a variety of directions, but also allowed Fortune and Virtue to observe how their client characters fare. In addition, it allowed for space at either extremity of the main stage for continuo players, leaving the main body of instrumentalists in the sunken pit. And thereby lies the rub, for there were far too many of them, whoever produced the edition employed apparently unaware that in *Poppea* a Renaissance band after the manner of *Orfeo* is a stylistic anachronism. This solecism, plus some distinctly quasi-Leppardian harmonies and a few silly production decisions were unfortunate, since they detracted from what was vocally a thoroughly impressive performance. Dominated by the Ottavia of Solenn Lavanant, who delivered 'Disprezzata regina' and 'Addio Roma' with real dramatic flair and rounded, secure tone, the cast also boasted an excellent Poppea in Sonya Yoncheva, the possessor of a strongly projected voice whose future one suspects may lie outside early opera and in Alessandro Giangrande a fine Ottone. Marie-Laure

Coenjaerts' Nerone was fine in lyrical music, but too often overwrought when behaving like a demented teenager. There were no real weak links elsewhere, leaving this a long – the only serious cut was the Nerone/Lucano scenes (Act 2/v-vi) – but unusually satisfying evening.

Virtue, by the end of *Poppea* a forlorn figure sat on one corner of the raised central stage, would have been much happier at Ambronay the following evening, when the qualities she espouses were lauded in the shape of Handel's *Susanna*, or at least some of it. For were there to be an award for villain of this year's festival it would unquestionably go to William Christie for the butchery he inflicted on the score, cutting the B section and *da capo* repeats from no fewer than nine airs, quite unforgivable vandalism. Moreover, the self-indulgent mannerisms that Christie has shown himself all too ready to indulge in over recent years reduced an air such as 'Bending to the throne of glory' to mawkish sentimentality. Again, such flaws detracted from much that was praiseworthy, including both the choir and orchestra of Les Arts Florissants. With the partial exception of Max Emanuel Cencic's pleasingly sung but pallid Joacim, the cast was exceptional, with the radiantly sweet Susanna of Sophie Karthäuser as near perfection as one might dare expect. William Burden and Alan Ewing's strongly projected Elders also provided constant vocal pleasure, although the former put on an embarrassingly camp acting display. High praise, too, for counter-tenor David Dq Lee's splendid Daniel. This is the second time I've heard Lee this year and he seems to me destined for an exceptional career.

As a long-standing admirer of Sigiswald Kuijken, both as man and musician, it gives no pleasure at all to report that his lacklustre account of four of Bach's Trinity cantatas (No's 27, 47, 138 & 96) was overall the most disappointing concert we attended. This was part of Kuijken's ongoing one-per-part-series, but the four modestly capable singers he used on this occasion conveyed little in the way of vocal character or textural awareness. Only wonderful oboe solos from Patrick Beaugiraud and neat, exquisite string playing from La Petite Bande provided much pleasure, although I would question seriously Kuijken's decision to use such miniscule string forces (2-2-1-1). In particular, the use of only a single (8'?) 'basse de violon' and chamber organ resulted in a virtually indistinguishable bass line.

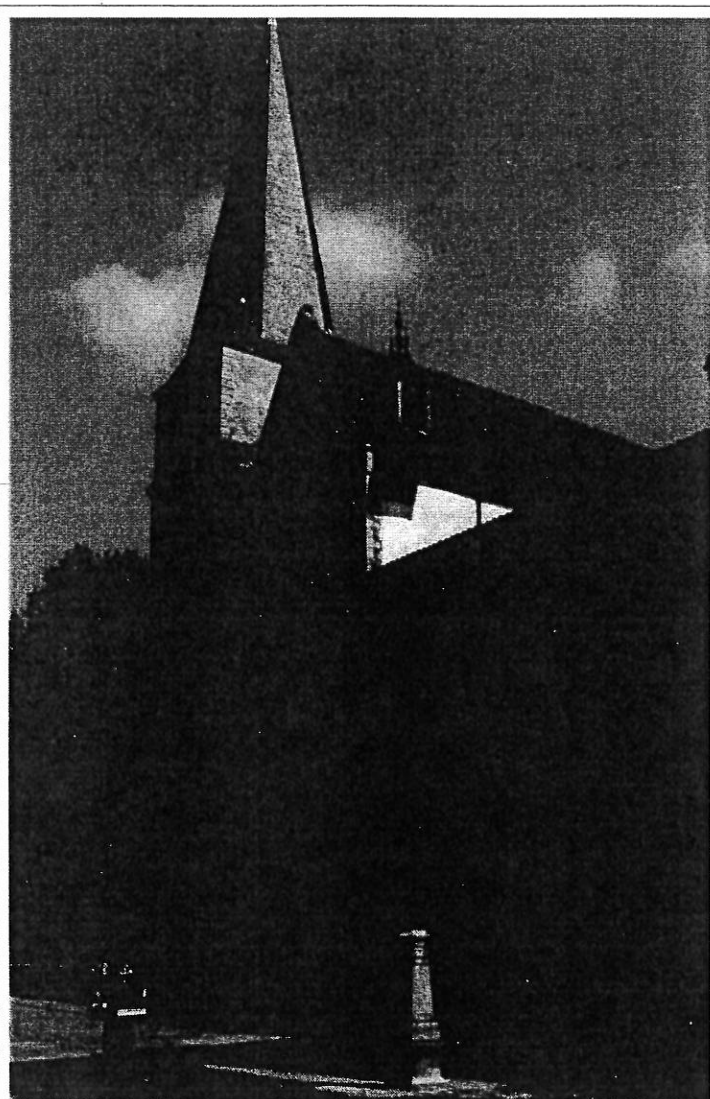
Happily, there are little but plaudits from hereon. Most memorable of all was Concerto Soave's programme of Vespers for the Virgin, made up of chamber settings by Merula, Rigatti and Rovetta, interspersed with antiphons and the occasional instrumental work. There was some splendid music here, perhaps above all in Rigatti's stunning *Nisi Dominus*, a 3vv setting over a ground bass.

Tenor Valerio Contaldo, bass Stephan MacLeod and the instrumental players of Concerto Soave all made excellent contributions to this concert, but it would be idle to pretend other than that it was dominated, albeit inadvertently, by Maria Cristina Kiehr, a dignified presence who exudes an aura of calm repose when not singing and a mesmerising hold on an audience when she is, the years having done nothing to diminish the pure tonal beauty and unforced control Kiehr brings to all she undertakes.

One of the joys of Ambronay is that it is rarely more than a short step from hearing a great mature artist like Kiehr to encountering young artists, frequently those who have at some stage passed through the Baroque academy that forms such an important feature of its work. The mezzo Stéphanie d'Oustrac is one of the most notable of such alumni, a performer who has already established herself as an outstanding dramatic singer. Her Sunday morning recital with fortepianist Aline Zylberajch was devoted to Haydn songs and notable for the strong sense of character d'Oustrac brought to a programme that ranged widely from humorous Lieder through the proto-Romantic sentiments of 'The Spirit's Song' to an *Arianna a Naxos* of overwhelming intensity. The recital was held in the intimacy of the medieval Tour Dauphine, situated in the abbey grounds, as was a concert by a group of young artists at an earlier stage of their career. I Sospiranti is a madrigal ensemble of seven young singers and a theorbist that has worked together at the academy. For what I understand was its first public concert as an ensemble (the members are also pursuing individual careers), they chose a programme drawn from across all eight Monteverdi books. At this stage of the group's development, I felt madrigals involving few singers, duets especially, came off best, but confidence grew noticeably as the concert progressed, the humour of 'Gira il nemico insidioso' (Book 8) projected with infectious spirit. Definitely a group to watch, providing it can get together sufficiently frequently to develop a greater unity of ensemble.

Christophe Rousset has enjoyed a long Ambronay association with both the academy and festival. He remains for me one of the finest directors of Classical repertoire and the largely Haydn concert with his Les Talens Lyriques did nothing to dispel that viewpoint. An imaginatively planned programme framed the G-major Harpsichord Concerto played by Rousset, the great *Scena di Berenice* and Mozart's Horn Concerto No. 2 (K 417) with outstanding performances of two of the 'Paris' symphonies, 83 and 84. 'The Hen' in particular received a magnificent performance, the minor mode energy of the opening Allegro released with huge, but always controlled, power. Elsewhere one could relish the exquisitely lovely playing of the keyboard concerto's Adagio, some stunning horn playing from the phenomenally gifted David Guerrier and the unbounded promise of Eugénie Warnier's singing of the scena.

Opportunities for hearing live performances of the six intermedi for *La pellegrina* that formed part of the 1589 Medici wedding celebrations are rare. Large forces, precisely detailed, are required, so it was a relief to find that Skip Sempé had not compromised significantly, with the exception of the absence of any kind of organ (Malvezzi, one of the seven composers involved, reported the presence of three). The performance by the Capriccio Stravagante Renaissance Orchestra and the choir Pygmalion was highly enjoyable, capturing in equal measure the exuberance and resplendence that pervades the music. It seems invidious to make special mention of any particular performer(s), but that's not going to prevent me naming two quite outstanding lead sopranos: Dorothee Leclair and Céline Scheen. To end on a frivolous note, I must record that it is ages since I saw so many handsome young men and women on a concert platform. They looked to have an average age of around nineteen, although that can probably be attributed to my own great seniority. In sum, Ambronay 2009 will long remain in the memory, not least for the notable achievement of demonstrating just how much exceptional young talent there is in today's early music world.



L'abbatiale d'Ambronay

YORK, VARAŽDIN, LONDON

Andrew Benson-Wilson

York Early Music International Young Artists Competition 2009

The biennial International Young Artists' Competition, formerly promoted by the Early Music Network, has been taken over by the National Centre for Early Music which, through the York Early Music Festival, has hosted the competition for many years. It is a popular part of the festival and always attracts strong support from the lively group of Festival Friends. The latest competition (the 13th) took place at the National Centre for Early Music at St Margaret's, Walmgate, York between 16-18 July (too late to include in the August EMR). From the tapes and supporting information submitted, seven groups were selected for the Final. One feature of this competition is that during the two days preceding the final, each group gives a short informal concert, hosted this year, most effectively, by Evelyn Tubb. This is intended to acclimatise them to the performing space, to introduce them to the audience, to give a chance for interaction between audience and performers, and for the host to offer constructive advice. The competitors also benefit from meeting and hearing each other. The judges were not present at these introductory concerts and these performances did not count towards their marks in the Final.

As in previous years, this was very much an international affair, both in the home base of the groups appearing and in the geographical spread of the individuals within the groups. The overall standard was musically high and professionally extremely competent. Of course, various issues arise from the performances in the preliminary concerts and the finals which it might be useful to share with other performers and *EMR* readers. As in previous years, I will try to avoid being too critical of individual groups, but will gather together comments anonymously.

All the contestants in the final were impressive musicians and all groups deserved to be in the final. One of the biggest differences between them was their experience of performing in public, as demonstrated by their varying professional ease on stage. Some individuals seemed rather diffident and/or nervous, and this affected their performance on the day and their perception by the audience. A related issue is that there were some who were playing the notes (generally very well) but did not seem to be visually fully involved with their music-making. This can be a bit off-putting to audiences who can feel that, if performers are not obviously enjoying themselves, why should the listeners. This was one of the issues that Evelyn Tubb focused on in the preliminary concerts. It was interesting to hear her bring her experience of teaching singers to instrumentalists, particularly with her emphasis on the control of breathing. Her contributions

were supportive and encouraging, and I am sure all the performers learnt a lot from their interaction with her.

One of the points which seems to crop up in every competition is how groups deal with applause. Although contact with the audience is an important issue whilst playing, it is when the audience applauds that performers have the best chance of making direct communication with their audience. A number of groups seemed a bit embarrassed, and, when the applause was between pieces, quickly turned away to sort their music out for their next piece, thereby cutting the applause short. By spending a bit longer acknowledging applause, not only will the audience feel that their enthusiasm has been respected, but groups will probably get rather longer applause.

A related issue is the question of whether, and when, you want the audience to applaud. Performers may not realise how much this is within their control. It is particularly important to make it clear to an audience when you intend to continue without applause and/or when a piece has ended. By and large, groups were good at this, but there were some moments of unease within the audience about whether they were supposed to applaud or not. There are many friendly ways to actually tell an audience to save the applause until the end, and this can make a useful addition to the preliminary chat. As to chat, most groups managed this very well, although not all spoke. The programme notes were generally excellent – brief, informative and with the right balance between information and mood setting, although one didn't actually mention the music being performed.

All the groups were very professional in their appearance and stage management, including making an effort to coordinate their clothing. Black continues to be the 'new black' as the colour of choice for performers, although one group did manage a smattering of very dark purple alongside the black. They also made good use of the awkwardly-shaped performing space, doing well to interact with the audience spread around three sides of the stage area. They all coped with the extraordinary obstacle course of BBC wires and microphone stands, which in some cases partially blocked their entry onto the stage area. This is something that really does need to be considered more carefully in future competitions. A stage to elevate the performers would also help those at the back to hear and see.

The ensembles are described in order of their appearance in the final.

Le Tic Toc Choc (Jesenska Balic Zunic, violin, Lucile Bouglanger, viola da gamba, Paula Zanzu, harpsichord) are based in Paris and focus on the French baroque

repertoire. Their programme was 'A la Moda' dans la France with sonatas by Travenol, Rebel and Mascitti. Being the first group to perform can be a mixed blessing, but it was encouraging to see them visibly and audibly relaxing as their confidence began to grow and it looked increasingly as if they were enjoying themselves. Their performance of Mascitti's Sonata No 3 in g was particularly impressive, with notable contributions from Lucile Bouglanger in the frenetic *Allegro* and Josenka Balic Zunic in the languorous *Largo*. Paula Zanzu was a most effective harpsichord continuo player throughout. One notable feature of their playing was their nicely shaded cadences. In their preliminary concert they played works by Dornel and Rameau, with the latter's *Cinquième concert* from the *Pièces de clavecin en concerts* placing the harpsichord into the musical foreground.

The Marian Consort (Gwendolen Martin and Laura Ashby, sopranos, Rory McCleery, counter-tenor, Oliver Winstone, tenor, Steffan Jones, baritone, Christopher Borrett, bass) were the only English group in the competition – and, lo and behold, they were an Oxbridge *a-cappella* vocal group! With some family links, it was tempting to see them as a Stilo Antico Lite (Stilo Antico being the major success story of the 2005 competition, winning the Friends prize and immediately being signed up for an impressive recording contract). But the sound world of The Marian Consort was a very different one, their six voices being an interesting combination of different voice types ranging from the clear and focussed 'early music' voice to the more vibrant and rich tonal world normally found in later repertoire. Their programme 'Life, Death and Sheep', focussed on works known to have been in the library of Philip II of Spain. They made good contact with each other and with the audience, and used different formations for different pieces, bringing a welcome element of visual interest to the programme.

Concitato Ensemble (Joan Plana, violin, Anna Sampson, cello and Jason May, harpsichord) are a trio from the USA who made their debut in Chicago in November 2008. They presented a programme looking at 'Stylus Phantasticus: the fantastical style of seventeenth-century Italy', with works by Castello, Cima and Fontana. Violinist Joan Plana imparted a sense of nervous energy to his bowing and tone, his facial expressions hinting at the intensity behind his playing. Anna Sampson provided a strong cello line and harpsichordist Jason May gave impressively eloquent continuo support. Their concluding Sonata No 2 in D by Fontana was particularly well played. Their preliminary concert included a delightful Sonata by Johann Paul von Westhoff.

Purcelli Abubu (Georg Fritz, Julia Fritz, Lydia Graber, Philip Wagner) are four recorder players from Austria, their name being a dialect word suggesting 'coming together'. They made an immediate impression by being the only group in the final to play entirely from memory. Their first piece was Baldwin's 'Proportion to the minum', with its complex interplay of rhythms. Their programme *Cantus Infinitatis* reflected the focus on works

based on a melodic theme. In Byrd's two settings of *Christe qui lux*, they reinforced the element of the *cantus* by positioning the player with the melody apart from the rest of the group. The most extended piece was Sweelinck's variations on *Mein junges Leben hat ein End*, a continuation of the theme of their preliminary programme of works originally intended for the organ, given under the neat title of 'Just Fo(u)r Pipes'. They finished with a very impressive performance of an *Estampie* from the Robertsbridge Codex. They made good use of stage positions, and their gently swaying to the music added a degree of visual interest to their performance.

Ensemble Meridiana (Cecilie Valtrova, violin, Karel Valter, flute, Dominique Tinguely, recorder/bassoon, Tore Eketorp, viola da gamba, and Christian Kjos, harpsichord) met while studying at the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis but, like many of the groups, include individuals from many different parts of Europe. Their wide range of solo instruments was used to good effect in their programme, with all players having the chance to shine. Their programme, 'Leipzig Connections' looked at three of the candidates for the post of Thomas Kantor in 1722, with music by Telemann, Fasch and Bach. They had clearly given a lot of thought to the presentation of their programme, and demonstrated an excellent musical fluidity in their playing. Violinist Cecilie Valtrova proved to be a very sensitive player, not least in those works where she was playing in consort with, or acting as a bass to, the much quieter recorder and flute. Karel Valter's flute playing came to the fore in the *Largo* from Bach's Trio Sonata in G, and Dominique Tinguely, as well as her frequent recorder contributions, also excelled on bassoon in the opening extract from a Telemann 'Paris' Quartet. The three soloists were very well supported by Tore Eketorp, viola da gamba, and Christian Kjos, harpsichord.

Grand Désir (Anne-Marieke Evers, mezzo-soprano, Anita Orme Della-Marta, recorder/harp, Tobie Miller, hurdy-gurdy) was formed in 2004 while the three members were students in Basel. Their focus is on late medieval music and their two programmes looked first at music from medieval England and then 'Her Lady's Devotion', a reflection of the role of the female musician in the fifteenth century with pieces from manuscripts from Cologne and the Netherlands of around 1500. Anne-Marieke Evers's clean mezzo voice was an ideal vehicle for this repertoire. Anita Orme Della-Marta is a natural performer, her personal involvement with the music being all too evident not only in her excellent recorder and harp playing but also in her almost dance-like stage manner. Tobie Miller was, of necessity, less dance-like in her role as hurdy-gurdy player, but provided solid and expressive accompaniments and melodic additions to the music.

Metromarina (Christine Mothes, voice, Anna Danilevskia, fiddle, Atsushi Moriya and Tom Beets, recorders, David Catalunya, clavicimbalum) are now based in Belgium, although they met while they were students in Barcelona, their name reflecting the underground station where they used to meet. Their programme *Dulcis Melancholia* looked

at the repertoire of the late fourteenth century Chantilly Codex (Musée Condé 564). Music of this *ars subtilior* style is extraordinarily complex rhythmically, melodically and emotionally, and Metromarina did exceptionally well to produce such a convincing performance. For me, much of their success was down to their singer; Christian Mothes had the ideal vocal and engaging personal style to present this repertoire to the audience, with her beautifully expressive and clear vocal lines and beguiling stage presence. She was well supported by excellent playing from her companions, notably recorder player Atsushi Moriya, who also arranged the music.

In my opinion, several of the groups stood a very good chance of winning, and all had the potential for successful careers as performers. However, the next few years are the most critical. One of the issues of competitions aimed at this age group, who often meet during their post-graduate conservatory studies, is that the ensembles have to work out a way of surviving the critical early years of their professional careers when loyalties to the group will compete with other performing opportunities.

This year's judges were John Bryan, Herman Baeten, Catherine Bott, Catherine Hocking and Phillip Hobbs. In the end, they announced the winners as Ensemble Meridiana. The Friends of the York Early Music Festival also give a prize to the group that 'most appealed' - this went to Grand Désir.

Varaždin Baroque Evenings, Croatia (18-27 September)

Varaždin is a lovely little city in the north of Croatia, close to the Slovenian border. The late baroque rebuilding after a fire in the late 18th century, has survived more-or-less intact, leaving an impressive collection of palaces and churches. Reflecting this baroque heritage, the annual Varaždin Baroque Evenings (Varaždinske Barokne Večeri) festival has been an important part of the city's cultural and social life for the past 39 years. A different country acts as partner for each festival, this year being the turn of the Czech Republic, giving a focus on Czech music and musicians alongside the Croatian and other musicians.

After a delightful rendition of the Croatian National Anthem by the five young people of the Horvat family choir that so entranced me at last year's Festival, the opening concert (in Varaždin Cathedral) saw the Prague group, Ensemble Inégal, perform Zelenka's rarely heard oratorio *Il Serpente di Bronzo* (1730), a work they have also recorded. The bustling introduction, with its instrumental arpeggios and repeated notes and the choir lobbing their voices from left to right as they bemoan their fate, gives a foretaste of the drama to come. A sequence of recitatives and arias follows for the various characters, including Moses, three characters added to the biblical story, and somebody called Bog (who I eventually worked out is Croatian for God) - each a musical delight. Soloists Gabriela Eibenova, Jakob

Huppmann and Kai Wessel were particularly good. The Director Adam Viktora relished the sometimes sumptuous orchestrations, notably with flutes and muted strings, and kept the pacing of the hour-long work keen. This was an impressive performance of a little-known work.

The Knight's Hall of the fairy-tale Trakošćan Castle was the venue for Eduard Egüez's late-morning lute recital of music by Robert de Visée, although a last minute change of programme meant that we only heard one piece by him. Instead, we heard Froberger, Weiss, Biber and Bach, with all but Weiss and de Visée being transcriptions. A number of issues arose, firstly because the distinction between tuning up and starting a piece was not always clear and the gap between movements varied from lengthy to segued. There was also little attempt to engage with the audience, which perhaps accounted for its restlessness. The final work was a transcription of Bach's 3rd Cello Suite, which left me wondering whether the phrasing was chosen for musical reasons or was a result of the particular technical issues of the different instrument.

The early evening concert in the Cathedral was *Messiah*, with the Croatian Baroque Ensemble and the Academic Choir Ivan Goran Kovačić. The 40-strong choir produced a very coherent sound, with a good grasp of English. There were some rather romantic cadenzas from the soprano soloist (who also relied on vibrato, rather than alternating notes, to realize trills), and the tenor soloist had trouble sticking to the pulse of the music, but mezzo Helena Lucić impressed with her focused voice and good use of ornaments and elaborations, and bass Goran Jurić furiously raged to very good effect. There was a mixture of modern and period instruments and bows, and a timpanist who wielded the right sticks but had the wrong timps to hit. Violin intonation was an issue. Conductor Saša Britvić could do with encouraging his players to develop a lighter touch, with more subtlety and fluidity - the repeat of the *Pifa* got close to this. Otherwise, the performance sounded rather dated, with large rallentandos and speeds that sometimes approached the ponderous.

The late-night concert on 19 Sept was given by the Trio Liuto Concertato (pardessus de viole, lute, viola da gamba) in the Franciscan Church. Their programme began with pieces by Ferdinand Ignaz Hinterleithner (b. 1659), a composer I hadn't come across before - the benefit of anniversaries! The treble line was intended for violin but the Trio chose to use the pardessus on the grounds that a woman would have played this in preference to the violin. On this occasion, the pardessus (which mirrored the melodic line of the lute an octave higher, but without any of the ornamentation) was far too shrill and prominent (and surprisingly unresonant), reducing the lute from its intended pivotal role to that of mere accompaniment. The Trio have recorded these works, and the balance is much better on their CD (Musical Miracles). There were a number of other issues, including intonation of the lute and pardessus, several moments of rhythmic uncertainty and a distinct lack of engagement with the audience. However, a highlight was Sainte-Colombe's *Le change* played on the two gambas, which featured some particularly

musical and expressive playing by Susanne Herre, who had been an impressive member of the trio throughout. To be fair, I understand that the Trio gave a very much better performance a few days later outside Varaždin.

Sunday (20th) started in the Baroque Hall of the spectacular ancient Varaždin fortress with the four Croatian musicians that make up Camerata Garestin (soprano, flute/recorder, cello and harpsichord) in a programme of Handel and Böhm. Ivana Kladarin has an expressive voice and made very good use of gesture and facial expression to assist in conveying the text of her three Handel cantatas. In *Nel dolce dell'oblio*, she worked extremely well with the impressive flautist Dani Bošnjak, acknowledging their musical partnership. There were occasional problems with some dominant cello playing, both in volume and the occasional attempts to push the pace.

Monday saw the appearance of the Helsinki Baroque Ensemble (St. Nicholas Church), with countertenor Teppo Lampela and their director, Aapo Häkkinen, and a programme of music from the late 17th century Düben Collection in Uppsala, including works by Förster, Buxtehude, Ritter, Geist, Schmeltzer, Meder and Kirchoff. This was an extremely impressive concert, with excellent playing and singing and a very well thought out and presented programme, helped along by some neat segues between pieces. Teppo Lampela has a very clear and harmonically coherent voice, with none of the edge that can affect the countertenor voice.

The Croatian musicians Laura Vadjon and Krešimir Has (violin and harpsichord) gave a programme of Handel violin sonatas in the little Erdödy Chapel in Varaždin castle (22 Sept). In this small space, the violin playing came over as rather forceful, relentless and intense – it needed a lot more subtlety, lyricism and expression to become truly musical. Although the harpsichord playing was rather more flexible, there were times when the two seemed to be playing in isolation, rather than together. It would also have been nice to have had rather more acknowledgment of the audience, especially in such a small space.

The following evening saw the first complete modern performance of Gabriello Puliti's 1612 *Ghirlanda odorifera cioè mascherate a tre voci* by the Croatian group, Ensemble Responsorium (Franciscan Church, 23 Sept). Although considered a Croatian in Croatia, Puliti was an Italian organist who settled in Istria, and this sequence of rather similar pieces reflected the Italian influence on that part of present-day Croatia in the early 17th century, notably from the *Commedia dell'Arte*. I did wonder whether the items were ever intended to be sung all in one go – after a while they became rather predictable, not helped by all being sung at the same volume. The two sopranos suffered from excessive vibrato and over-emoting/gesturing and showed little sense of working together; this led, amongst other things, to a number of unsteady moments. The continuo group also seemed rather remote from the singers, with poor visual or aural coordination – indeed the chitarrone player sat facing away from them. This otherwise rather lacklustre performance only came to life with the bouncy

encore – if only they had done that earlier!

The organ in Varaždin Cathedral is a large, broadly eclectic instrument with some neo-baroque leanings of the sort that generally fails to respond well to any repertoire. I have heard Bach played on it twice, and it hasn't impressed on either occasions. This was exacerbated by a rather plodding performance by Gerhard Weinberger of the *Art of Fugue*, complete with all the canons. At nearly two hours, this was a rather hard listen, not helped by some thick and muddy registrations, excessive volume and a curious playing style that tended to break the music down into bar-length chunks, articulating according to the beats in the bar rather than the melodic lines, giving an unsettling feel to the flow of the music and losing any sense of contrapuntal line or musical flow. And in the canons, with lighter registrations, the articulation didn't allow the pipes to speak properly.

Vocal ensemble "Amarcord" was founded by former members of the choir of Leipzig's Thomaskirche, and their programme reflected the music of the late Renaissance from the archives of that great church, based around pieces from the *Florilegium selectissimum hymnorum* of 1606 and the 1618 *Florilegium Portense*¹ and Leipzig manuscripts. The group have been influenced by the Hilliard Ensemble and the King's Singers, and this was evident both in the professionalism of their presentation and the excellent vocal cohesion and clean tone of their singing, although they might have brought a little more aural variety into their programme (24 Sept, St Nicholas).

The following evening's concert in the same church was by the Prague group Musica Florea with soprano Susanne Rydén and their programme, 'JS Bach and the musical jewels of Baroque Prague', with music by Brentner, Reichenauer, Zelenka and Bach. Susanne Rydén was a comparatively rare example of a singer who really engaged with the audience, keeping genuine eye contact throughout – rather than the unnerving over-the-head stare that many singers adopt. She allowed herself slightly too much vibrato for my taste, but showed that she could control that when she wanted to. One very attractive work was Brentner's brief but exciting *Plaude exulta cor meum* from his 1716 *Harmonica duodecatometri ecclesiastica*. She was joined in a number of pieces by the very impressive flautist Marek Spelina, who also gave an excellent performance of Reichenauer's Flute concerto in G minor. The flute also dominated in Bach's curious secular cantata, *Non sa che sia dolore*, with its opening Sinfonia being close to a flute concerto. Musica Florea was directed by cellist Marek Štryncl, who also performed Reichenauer's Cello concerto in D minor. On this hearing, both Brentner and Reichenauer are composers worth exploring.

The penultimate day of the Festival opened with a return to the Knight's Hall of Trakošćan Castle, and a concert of Amorous Arias and Duets given by Polish soprano Jolanta Kowalska, English countertenor Paul Esswood and the

1. Publications with double-choir music used for the opening motet in Bach's Leipzig services. CB

Croatian harpsichordist Pavao Mašić. Under the watchful eye of two imposing suits of armour, Paul Esswood gave a brilliant portrayal of an amorous, and just a bit creepy, Lothario, his lingering looks and intimate caresses on his young amour sending shivers down the spines of many in the audience, particularly those with daughters. Jolanta Kowalska (who won the 2009 London Bach Society Singers' prize) teased, parried and mocked him with some delightfully engaging acting (and beautifully focussed singing), concluding with her riotously coquettish rendition of Arne's 'When daisies pied', putting her aging admirer (and several men in the audience) firmly in his place singing:

*The cuckoo then, on every tree,
Mocks married men, for thus sings he,
Cuckoo, Cuckoo, Cuckoo:
O word of fear,
Unpleasing to a married ear!*

Those who were concerned about the age gap between the protagonists might have been relieved that the final piece was an *Addio!* Pavao Mašić, the very effective accompanist, also gave fine solo performances of Handel's Suite in F (one of the most amorous of his Suites) and the massive Chaconne in G.

A neat bit of musical detective work by harpsichordist Ondřej Macek resulted in the rediscovery of a lost Vivaldi opera, *Argippo*, in Regensburg – a search that started with just the printed libretto from the opening night and the knowledge that the Italian musicians who first performed the opera in Prague (in 1730) had later moved to Germany. Only about two-thirds of the music remained, so Macek has reconstructed the work by re-using Vivaldi arias from works of the same period. Its first modern performance was in the Spanish Hall in Prague Castle in 2008; it came to Varaždin in a semi-staged performance (with no set, minimal props, but full costumes) on 26 Sept with Macek's own group, Hofmusici. The work is set in an Indian Court with the usual mix of passion, love and trickery. Persistent and strong vibrato clouded the musical texture of all five singers, and there was a lack of articulation in Vivaldi's often virtuosic melodic writing. The singers used very stylised and static gestures to support the singing, something that began to grate after a while, not least because of its predictability. It was not clear to what extent this was a recreation of a contemporary practice.

The Festival finished with one of the most impressive concerts of the week, given by Collegium Marianum, Prague, with the countertenor, Damien Guillon and their flautist and musical director, Jana Semerádová in a programme of music from Prague Cathedral. This concert included four first performances, of works by Francesco Mancini (his spectacular aria *Nil est in mundo*), Reichenauer, Johann Adolph Hasse and Baldassare Galuppi. Damien Guillon is a rare example of a French countertenor, rather than the *haute contre* voice that is usually associated with French singers. His voice was beautifully pure and focused, with the clarity of a 4' organ stop, and he made excellent use of occasional vibrato to colour the notes. Jana Semerádová gave an inspiring performance of Buffardin's Flute Concerto in E minor.

A Festival jury awards a number of prizes. The Ivan Lukačić Prize for the best performance was given to the Helsinki Baroque Orchestra and to Collegium Marianum. The Jurica Murai Prize for the best interpretation was shared between Jolanta Kowalska and Amacord. The Kantor Prize is for the performance of a work by JS Bach, and was awarded to the ensemble Musica Florea, with flautist Marek Spelina and soprano Susanne Rydén.

The Varaždin festival continues to gain in international stature, not least through its involvement of leading period performers from other countries. This gives Croatian musicians, established and fledgling, the chance to experience the musical work of other European countries and the international standards that they need to strive for. It is also an extremely attractive place to spend a week in, with musical accompaniment.

LONDON CONCERTS

THE PROMS

The 2009 Proms season acknowledged the various anniversary composers, starting with Handel's *Partenope* (Royal Albert Hall, 19 July) in a semi-staged version of the Royal Danish Theatre's Copenhagen production with Concerto Copenhagen. Better known than most Handel operas, not least because of its recent ENO outing, *Partenope* is an entertaining, but over-long, venture into cross-dressing, disguise, sexual and political intrigue and, at least in the original production, some apparently impressive special effects, including a battle that employed a stage army. Of course, a modern-dress semi-staging reduced the effect of much of the plot, although it did allow a greater role for the music itself – not Handel's greatest, perhaps, but a good listen. Of the singers, Inger Dam-Jensen appealed to London's usual opera audience, although I found her vibrato and 'operatic' voice a little too much – at least until her beautifully gentle *Qual farfalletta*, as her 'little moth' fluttered towards whichever of her suitors took her fancy at the time. Christophe Dumaux's clear tone was an ideal vehicle for his Armindo, and Tuva Semmingsen also impressed as Rosmira. But all were overshadowed by the outstanding Andreas Scholl, who was not just the only singer to really get to grips with acting in a semi-staging (something he did superbly well) but also fully delved the emotional intensity of the music (and, initially, the comic sub-text), notably in the heart-wrenching *Ch'io parte? Sì, crudele* and the tormented *Ma quai note di mesti lamenti* with its recorders and plucked bass. Concerto Copenhagen were an impressive group of instrumentalists and, with the singers, did well to keep up with Lars Ulrik Mortensen's frequently alarming speeds (which he curiously contrasted with huge *rallentandos*). The fully-staged Royal Danish Theatre's Copenhagen version of this production is now available on DVD.

For those that missed out on the posh frocks and picnics, Glyndebourne Opera brought a semi-staged version of

their new Jonathan Kent production of *The Fairy Queen* (21 July). Shorn of the extraordinary, and sometime overpowering, spectacle that was the hallmark of the Sussex staging, this gave those lucky enough to have seen both versions the chance to focus on the music and text. A number of the memorable set-pieces were retained, notably the Rude Mechanicals portrayed as jobbing contract cleaners with vacuum cleaners, the escaped bouncing boob, and the spectacular bonking bunnies scene (aka the Dance for the Haymakers) that sent us all off for a walk in the park or dinner on the lawn, depending on which performance you were at. At Glyndebourne, a couple of the bunnies continued to scamper about beyond the ha-ha. This was a rare performance of the complete original, with the extended periods of the pure acting (of the Shakespeare/Betterton text) within which Purcell set his five masques, which used the new Purcell Society edition by Bruce Wood and Andrew Pinnock. It was performed at the low pitch of A405.

The cast had more actors than singers (and one that managed both), with the former notably represented by Desmond Barrit, Helen Bradbury, Sally Dexter and Susannah Wise. Of the singers, Carolyn Sampson stole the show, both at Glyndebourne and The Proms. Others that excelled were Andrew Foster-Williams (including a lovely cameo role as a cords-and-anorak-clad vicar), Lucy Crowe, Ed Lyon (whose vibrato I forgave on this occasion) and Clare Debono. Desmond Barrit thoroughly enjoyed himself, both in the excellently acted Bottom and in the very effectively sung Drunken Poet. The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment were on devastating form, with particularly memorable contributions from Alison Bury, Matthew Truscott, Jonathan Manson, Andrew Watts and Elizabeth Kenny. Having brought French music to France, the affable William Christie now seems intend on introducing the English to Purcell – and a jolly good job he does of it. His musical interpretations were deft and delicate. He demonstrated his usual engaging affinity with his fellow musicians and with the detail of their individual contributions – notably, in ‘Now the night is chas’d away’, bringing the four violas to their feet, jazz-style. This production will be a sure-fire revival at Glyndebourne and is thoroughly recommended.

The Monteverdi Choir, with a continuo group from the English Baroque Soloists and John Eliot Gardiner, marked the anniversary of Bach’s death with a late-night performance of four of his motets (28 July), attracting a huge audience. John Eliot Gardiner was weaned on these works, and his direction revealed a personal involvement with differing moods of the music. The choir were on excellent form, with precise articulation and superb timing of consonants (not least in *Ob es itzt gleich kracht und blitz*). Silas Standage made very effective contributions with the continuo organ, nicely shading the registrations to match the vocal texture. Changes in stage positions, although time-consuming at this late hour, allowed the full aural span of the different works to be appreciated. It is slightly alarming to read that it was nearly 40 years ago that the Monteverdi Choir first performed *Jesu, meine Freude* at the Proms.

The English Concert and Choir (together with The New Company choir) presented Handel’s *Samson* under their Artistic Director Harry Bicket (20 Aug). This lengthy work can be a bit of a struggle to sit through, but Harry Bicket and his forces managed to keep the interest keen throughout with their insightful peek into the complicated character portrayals of the protagonists. Mark Padmore was Samson, his portrayal of the blinded hero downplaying the heroic in favour of the resigned and, in the scene with Dalila, rather bitter. In recent years he has developed a continuous and quite strong vibrato, although he managed to lose it in the quieter moments of his gently melancholic and moving ‘Thus when the sun from’s wat’ry bed’. Neal Davies gave a very sensitive portrayal of Samson’s father. Iestyn Davies’s rich and characterful countertenor voice and clarity of tone proved to be the ideal voice for the vast acoustic of the Royal Albert Hall. Ben Johnson excelled in the secondary male characters, his light and vibrato-free tenor voice projecting beautifully. Christopher Purves revelled in the role of the harrumphing Harapha. The two female characters took part in a clash of the scarlet dresses, the hue of Susan Gritton’s dress rather undermining Handel’s remarkable sensitive portrayal of Dalila. The similarly clad Lucy Crowe took the remaining female roles, opening and closing the proceedings with her portrayal of the Philistine and Israelite women. The chorus featured some surprisingly prominent vibrato in the upper voices – I wonder which of the two conjoined choirs were responsible? Of the instrumentalists, mention should be made of Nadja Zwiener (for her gorgeous violin solo in ‘With plaintive notes and am’rous moan’), Joseph Crouch (cello continuo), Mark Bennet (trumpet) and Benjamin Bayl (organ continuo and, notably, for his Dead March organ solo). Harry Bicket luxuriated in the pathos of ‘Total eclipse’ and allowed himself some moments of pure wallowing, notably in the second part of Manoa’s ‘Thy glorious deeds inspir’d my tongue’, but otherwise kept things moving well.

The contrasting worlds of historic Messiah performances came together in a remarkably successful performance when the ‘period conductor’ Nicholas McGegan brought the modern instrument Northern Sinfonia (resident at The Sage, Gateshead) and a vast contingent (about 350 singers, I gather) of delightfully youthful choirs to the Royal Albert Hall (6 Sept), an occasion that also saw the launch of the BBC/ENO’s ‘Sings Hallelujah’ project. The curiously colour-coded kiddie-choirs, with ages ranging from 9 to around 23, were the CBSO Youth Chorus, Hallé Youth Choir, the National Youth Choirs of Britain and Wales, Quay Voices (also from the Sage, Gateshead), the RSCM Millennium Youth Choir and the Scunthorpe Co-operative Junior Choir. And a magnificent sound they made, with their sparkingly clean and fresh voices, outstanding articulation and decisive entries. Clearly, vibrato was not going to be a problem on this evening – at least from the choir! Sadly, all the soloists, and several of the orchestral players made up for this. Nicholas McGegan didn’t so much conduct as gesture, but did so very effectively, successfully negotiating the contrasting musical styles inherent in the evening, keeping speeds

keen and phrasing light, but allowing himself some big rallentandos and a rather lush Pifa. I suppose it was inevitable that the Royal Albert Hall's own organ would make itself known towards the end – a temptation that other distinguished conductors have also failed to resist. It is time that the Albert Hall hosted a recreation of the massive 19th century performances of works like *Messiah* (whatever the cost) but, in the meantime, this *Crystal Palace Lite* was a magnificent, and very moving, occasion. The countertenor voice of Iestyn Davies and the music of Purcell combined to become the joint focus of the last of the Proms Chamber Music series of concerts at Cadogan Hall (7 Sept), together with tenor Simon Wall and a small group of instrumentalists from the Academy of Ancient Music, directed from the harpsichord by Richard Egarr. The concert opening with a well-planned sequence of segued pieces, the opening solo harpsichord Suite seeming to evolve from the tuning session and, in turn, seamlessly giving way to 'Tis Nature's voice' from *Hail! Bright Cecilia*, the florid lines reflecting the emotional power of music. A possible example of Purcell's continuo harpsichord style followed with 'A New Ground', leading into 'Music for a while', another harpsichord Suite and 'Sweeter than roses' as the power of music gave way to the power of a first dear kiss that "first trembling made me freeze, then shot like fire all o'er" as the writer, Richard Norton, confessed. John Blow's moving tribute to his protegee, his setting of Dryden's 'Ode on the death of Mr Henry Purcell', filled the following 25 minutes, beautifully sung by Iestyn Davies and Simon Wall, their two voices intertwining perfectly, with both deftly moving between registers. The biggest risk of Richard Egarr's opening sequence would have been the impression of haste, something that only came to fruition at the start of the final piece, when the opening of 'An Evening Hymn' started before the applause had died down. Perhaps the on-stage presence of an eager BBC announcer had put the frighteners on.

QUDDUSON

In the past few years, The Clerks have been building a reputation for innovative concert programming, the latest example being 'Qudduson', an enterprising and evocative comparison between, and eventual coming together of, western polyphony and religious music of the Middle East, including the ancient Syriac liturgy of Aleppo (thought to be the oldest Christian chant repertoire in the world), music from the Islamic Sufi tradition, and songs from Coptic Egypt. I heard them in the equally exotic decorative surroundings of Holy Trinity Sloane Street on 23 July. The six voices of The Clerks produced an outstanding blend of pure, unaffected tone (with minimal vibrato – it can be done!), and the initial shock with the interspersed Syriac and Byzantine vocals was the difference in voice-type. Abdul Salam Kheir, a well-known figure on the Arabic music scene, was full-blooded and declamatory, George Qas-Barsoum (a deacon in the Syrian Orthodox Church) was restrained, introverted and soulful, while the Coptic/Egyptian/German singer Merit Ariane Stephanos was plaintive and engaging. Five sequences explored different aspects of the combined musical cultures, concluding with 'A Lament for the Children of Gaza' and a secular group,

which included a song about the consequences of flirting, something the nine musicians had been doing, musically, with each other all evening, until they finally came together in a glorious fusion of vocal, cultural and religious fervour. This is the first in a series ('Raising Voices') being developed as part of The Clerks new residency at St Ethelburga's.

LAURA TIVENDALE

Laura Tivendale beat off some strong opposition to win the 2009 Broadwood Harpsichord Competition, playing three of the historic instruments in the Benton Fletcher Collection at Fenton House. She returned to Fenton House on 13 August to give a most impressive prize-winners concert (the prize also includes concerts at Hatchlands, Finchcocks and the Russell Collection) with a programme of music by Byrd, Frescobaldi, Froberger, Handel, JS and CPE Bach played on the c.1600 Vincentius virginals and the 1770 Shudi/Broadwood harpsichord. She caught the exploratory mood of the opening Froberger Toccata perfectly, allowing time for moments of stillness amid the flourishes. The same sense of improvisatory edge also featured in her performance of Frescobaldi's Toccata decima and Bach's Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue. Her fine sense of rhetoric was also evident in Byrd's *The Bells* and in CPE Bach's wrenching of the old *Folies d'Espagne* form into his *Sturm und Drang* sound world. Although her playing remained musically sensitive throughout, she was also able to impart real power and energy into her playing. This was a very impressive performance by a talented young musician.



"... and if you, or someone you know has been affected by any of the issues concerning re-entrant tuning, call our helpline on 0800..."

[All my past Life is mine no more]

John Blow

1. All my past Life is mine— no more, the fly - ing— Hours are— gone; like
 2. What ev - er is to come— is not, How can— it— then— be mine? The

5 tran - si - to - ry Dreams giv'n o're, whose I - - ma - ges are
 pre - sent Mo - ment's all my lot, And that— as— fast as

8 kept in store, by Me - mo - ry a - lone
 it is got, Phil - lis is whol - - ly thine.

11 3. Then talk not of In - con - stan - cy, False Hearts, and— bro - ken— Vows; If

15 I by Mir - a - - cle can be, This long - - liv'd— Min - ute

18 true to thee, It's all that Heaven al - lows.

[Give me leave to raile at you]

Henry Bowman

Cantus Primus

Cantus Secundus

Bassus

[Bass Continuo]

5

call you false and then to say, you shal not keep my heart a day,

call you false and then to say, you shal not keep my heart a day,

call you false and then to say, you shal not keep my heart [a] day,

but a - las a - gainst my Will, I must be your Cap - tive still.

but a - las a - gainst my Will, I must be your Cap - tive still.

but a - las a - gainst my Will, I must be your Cap - tive still.

13

Ah be kin - der then for I can - not change nor can I dye.

ah be kin - der then for I can - not change nor can I dye.

Ah be kin - der then for I can - not change nor can I dye.

2.

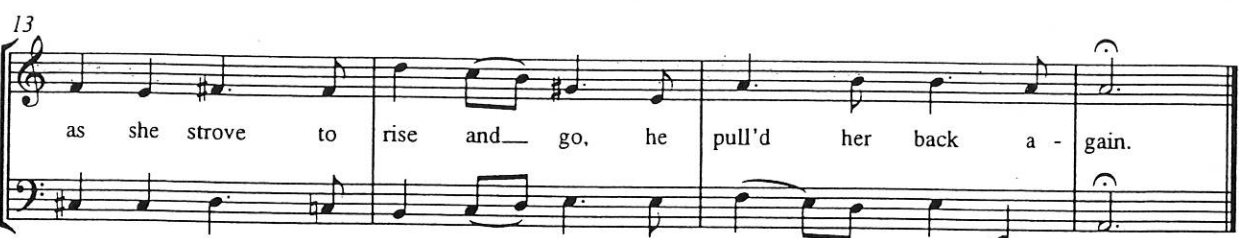
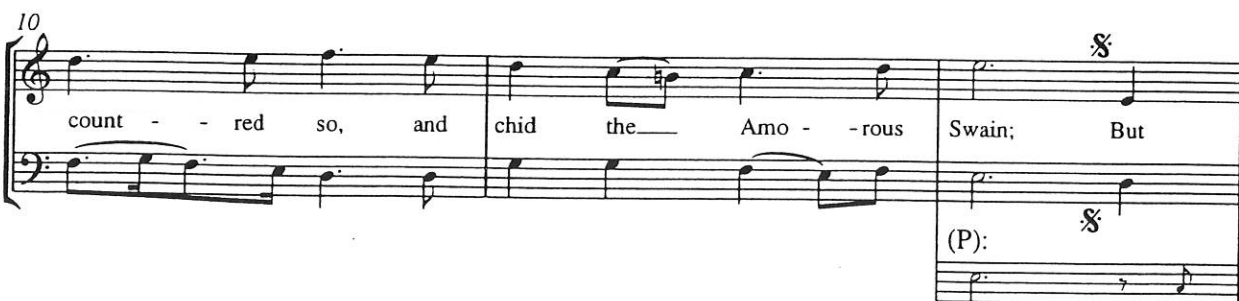
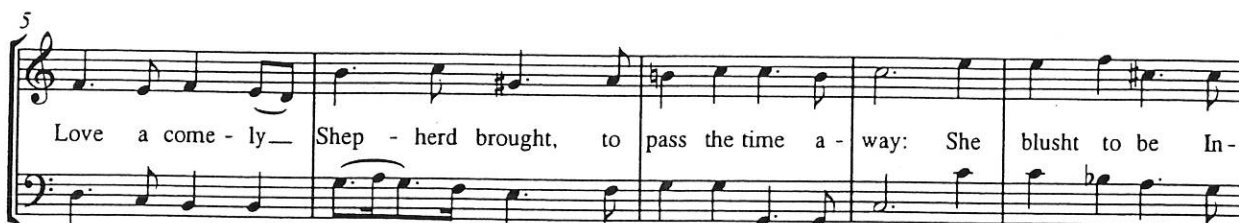
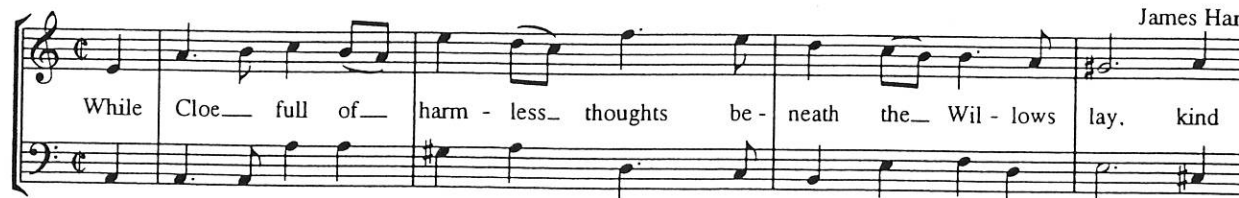
Kindness has resistless Charms,
 All besides but weakly move,
 Fiercest Anger it disarms,
 And clips the Wings of flying Love.
 Beauty do's the Heart invade,
 Kindness only can persuade;
 It gilds the Lover's servile Chain
 And makes the Saint grow pleas'd again.

Source: Henry Bowman, *Songs for i, 2 & 3 Voyces*, 1678, pp. 31-32.

Copy text: BL H.36.

[While Cloe full of harmless thoughts]

James Hart



2.
A sudden passion seiz'd her heart,
In spite of her disdain;
She found a pulse in ev'ry part,
And love in ev'ry Vein:
O Youth she cry'd, what Charms are these,
That Conquer and Surprize;
Ah let me, for unless you please,
I have no pow'r to rise.

3.
She fainting spoke, and trembling lay,
For fear she should Comply:
But Virgins Eyes their Hearts betray,
And give their Tongues the lye.
Thus she who Princes had deny'd,
With all their pompous Train,
Was in the lucky Minute try'd,
And yielded to a Swain.

CD REVIEWS

MEDIEVAL

Hildegard von Bingen *In Festis Beatae Mariae Virginis* Ars Choralis Coeln, Maria Jonas 74'30"
Raumklang RK 2906

A decade after the recording I reviewed in the May edition of *EMR* Raumklang have issued this CD, taking a more subdued approach to their potential audience. The ensemble of female voices and medieval instruments is directed by Maria Jonas, who has collaborated with Benjamin Bagby in *Sequentia* and presented two of her CDs, *Vita St Elisabethae* and *Rose van Jhericho*, on the Raumklang label.

The clear voice of Maria-Jonas, with a touch of mellow oboe-like warmth, is heard solo in several of the tracks in turn with the other ensemble members. A reverberant ambience adds an almost polyphonic depth and texture to the unison singing and the supporting vocal or instrumental drone, above which solo voices rise with ease to the heights. The instruments – recorder, flute, fiddle, harp, portative organ and hurdy-gurdy – are kept discreetly to the background, though the tinkling bell is slightly intrusive.

This calm, restrained music and the text are illuminated by an exegetical letter from Hildegard Maria Gosebrink and a commentary on selected items of the chant, all closely-printed in German, English and French. These explanations give an interesting perspective upon Eve, Mary and women as interpreted symbolically by the Church Fathers and anew by Hildegard von Bingen herself. *Diana Maynard*

I think the demon must have got into my mouse when I wrote the last paragraph of my review of Trecento (KTC 1902) in May. I did not, of course, think the instrument-makers were the actual performers. I intended to say, 'Trecento is a wonderful showpiece for the skill and versatility of Jill Feldman, Kees Boeke and the instrumentalists' workshop sources, Fabio Galgani, Massa Marittima, Fred Morgan, and Fulvio Canevari.' I strongly approve of acknowledging instrument-makers and respect those who preserve instruments or devote themselves to authentic reconstruction. DM

A consequence of the distribution of CDs for review now being done by BC is that it is difficult to give timings. Modern computers show timings for each track rather than a cumulated one. If the booklet gives a total time or the reviewer has a machine that shows the overall duration, we will quote it. But they need not use a stop-watch. CB

De Angelis Enneliina Koskinen 61'04"
Alba ABCD 282

Hildegard, Mesomedes, van Eyck, Obadiah ha Ger, Walther von der Vogelweide & anon

This is a fascinating and beautiful disc which listeners could enjoy exploring. The versatile Finnish musician, Anneliina Koskinen has an amazingly wide vocal range and plays several medieval wind and stringed instruments, including the Celtic harp and a five-stringed Finnish kantele. A photograph in the booklet shows her warmly wrapped in a church, with long golden hair, and her musical equipment standing, hanging and on her lap, like a one-man band. On this CD she covers numerous cultures, from the Mediterranean to the Baltic, with the recurring theme of birds, the heavens, angels and green pastures.

The first ten tracks were unified by compositions of Hildegard von Bingen, selected for their theme of angelic purity and noble viridity. As I followed in my own scores it seemed that Anneliina was true to current readings of the MSS. Particularly to be admired was her rendering of *O vos angeli*, which demands a range of two octaves and a sixth. The words of the Cretan Mesomedes, Mozarabic chant and a Sephardic Jewish setting from the Song of Songs contribute thematically, though the singing style remained Anneliina's own.

With the second series of tracks we began to move into the Baltic world and in due course the Finnish culture in Ingria and Karelia. The folk music certainly deserves to be heard more widely, and in three of the pieces we had a chance to hear the zither-like kantele. The final Karelian weeping song was very moving.

Diana Maynard

The Spirits of England and France Vol. 2 Songs of the Trouvères Gothic Voices, Christopher Page 61'59" (rec 1994)
Hyperion Helios CDH55282

Bastart, Brulé, Adam de la Halle, Kaukesel, Gointier de Soignies, Ernoul le Vielle de Gastinois & anon,

The second volume of this series found Gothic Voices exploring the monophonic song repertoire of 12th- and 13th-century France. I remember attending a Gothic Voices concert featuring this repertoire and was amazed by the performers' almost mystical ability to hold an audience with only the simplest of melodies, from which they drew every nuance possible. It is this uncanny ability which is captured here in the *grands chants* of a range of practically unknown composers which are interspersed by lively instrumental dances. *D. James Ross*

14th CENTURY

Machaut *Flours de Flours Lais & Virelais* Norbert Rodenkirchen 51'32"
Raumklang/marc aurel edition MA 20041
de la Bassée, de la Halle & anon.

I had come across the remarkable flute artistry of Norbert Rodenkirchen in a recording of a performance mediaeval Icelandic material by *Sequentia*, and in the present CD he explores monophonic music of the 13th and 14th-centuries as well as plainchant. I was startled to hear the very familiar strains of a sarum processional we have just performed in a reconstruction of a Mass for St Michael. And here lies the only problem with a disc which is otherwise perfectly engaging – why would you want to perform a lot of this music on a solo flute, and is it possible to hear too much solo flute? Upon your answers to these questions ultimately hangs your response to this CD, which demonstrates exhaustively the potential of the medieval transverse flute but which for some listeners may outlive its welcome. *D. James Ross*

En un jardin Les quatre saisons de l'Ars Nova Capilla Flamenca, Dirk Snellings
Musique en Wallonie MEW 0852 58'02"
Bernard de Cluny, Martinus & Thomas Fabri, Machaut, Pykini, Vallant, Vinderhout?, de Vitry & anon.

This CD finds Dirk Snelling's ensemble pared down to a minimum and in territory much earlier than they are accustomed to, but my goodness, they have taken to the idiom-like ducks to water! Tackling music of the sort presented a cappella by Gothic Voices, Capilla Flamenca blend solo voices and instruments exquisitely and at considerable length, allowing the larger structures to unfold. The singing and playing are uniformly superb and musically utterly convincing. Part of the very well-financed exploration into its rich musical heritage currently being undertaken in Belgium, the CD is presented in a lavish booklet format with extensive notes in four languages and beautiful illustrations. British musicians can only look with envy at the logos acknowledging state sponsorship of this vital cultural research, and reflect that the blossoming of the early music scene in the Low Countries is due in no small measure to this transfusion of financial support. At any rate the very high standard of this CD, cleverly grouping the music into four seasons, is a sound vindication of the concept of throwing money at an issue. *D. James Ross*

O in Italia Ensemble Laude Novella (Ute Goedecke S, rec, gothic harp, perc. Per Mattsson viola da braccio, sinfonia 64'63" ELN Records ELNCD 0701
Jacopo da Bologna, Zacharia da Teramo, Landini & anon

Ensemble Laude Novella is a Swedish group of two versatile musicians, Ute Goedecke and Per Mattsson, who sing and play a range of medieval instruments. Their activities extend beyond Baltic countries and, we learn from the Web, besides appearing in festivals and concerts they devote their energies to educating children from the age of five years old. This information fits well with my first impression of the CD, as pleasurable and not too taxing. Although it repays attentive listening, it is enjoyable both as an introduction to medieval music and as background music for entertaining guests or cheering the household.

The instrumental and vocal music derives from manuscripts in Italy, France and England, including the Robertsbridge codex, though no details are given as to any editorial processes. The instruments blend, sometimes almost indistinguishably. There is an air of delicacy in the sustained, dancing rhythms, for instance in the familiar opening saltarello and trotto, with variations of emphasis in the track 14 saltarello. Ute's virtuoso singing inevitably invites comparison with Jill Feldman, admired in my recent reviews for EMR, though there is a mezzo quality in the Swedish singer's voice and she tends to slide or vibrate a little before focusing on a note. The title track 'O in Italia' (Jacopo da Bologna) is attractively performed by Ute, with what I can only describe as spiky Pythagorean intervals. Landini provides the opportunity for contrast between contemplative and effervescent, and the 'Lucente stella' (from the Rossi Codex) introduces solemn polyphony involving two vocal lines and sinfonia. A modern-sounding 13th-century piece on viola da braccio brings the CD to an abrupt end.

Diana Maynard

The Spirits of England and France Vol. 3: Binchois and his contemporaries Gothic Voices, Christopher Page 66'42" Hyperion Helios CDH55283 (rec 1995)
Binchois, Bittering, Cardot, Dunstable, Fontaine, Legrant, de Lymburgia, Machaut, Power, Velut & anon

As the field becomes more crowded with accounts of the music of the 15th century it is useful to be reminded by the ongoing re-release on Helios of the Gothic Voices back-catalogue just how superlative these recordings were, and still are. Though in many cases these accounts were premiere recordings, they don't sound at all tentative. But of course Gothic Voices under

the direction of Christopher Page were already consummate masters of this repertoire, and the present disc of music from 15th century England and France is magically engaging from start to finish. Performers nowadays may have reverted to blending instruments with the vocal textures, the decision to present the music either purely instrumentally or vocally still stands up very well.

D. James Ross

15th CENTURY

Obrecht *Missa de Sancto Donatiano* Cappella Pratensis
Fineline classical fl72414 (CD + DVD)

This release from the innovative Cappella Pratensis may safely be described as encyclopaedic. The CD recording of Obrecht's mass in a liturgical context with bonus tracks setting out the cantus firmi is simply the starting point. There is also an accompanying DVD with a complete visual re-enactment of the 15th-century first performance of the mass as well as a comprehensive documentary featuring musicologist Professor Jennifer Boxam explaining the reconstruction of the mass and its context. To deal with the standard CD first, the aural performance of the mass presents Obrecht's polyphony in the context of chant Proper sung by members of the Cappella but shorn of the celebrant's contribution. Both chant and polyphony are very beautifully sung in a flowing manner which betrays the fact that the singers are using a facsimile without barlines. This is the Cappella Pratensis at its best, with all the organic shaping of phases of which they are capable but without any of the intonation shortcomings that I have sometimes noted in the past.

Background research has allowed scholars to identify precisely the time, date and venue of the first performance, and it is this occasion complete with clergy and mourning widow which is presented on the DVD. While the choir appear to be miming to their earlier sound recording, the clergy are singing live, and sound a little nervous and slightly rough – most convincing really! All of this may seem a little artificial, but I found myself drawn into the drama by the clever use of camera angles and the lighting. The documentary section filmed throughout Bruges was simply intriguing, with Professor Boxam providing a cogent and enthusiastic explanation of the whole remarkable project. As other performers move away even from providing recordings of masses with liturgical context, the Cappella Pratensis are to be congratulated on this exhaustive and revelatory production.

D. James Ross

Meyster ob Allen Conrad Paumann and the 15th century German keyboard school Tasto Solo, Guillermo Pérez dir 57'05" Passacaille 950

Tasto Solo's exotic combination of clavisimbalum, gothic organ, gothic harp and organetto provides the aural backdrop for this exploration of one of the most important documents in the history of organ music, the *Buxheimer Orgelbuch*. Much of it is probably the work of Conrad Paumann, the mid-15th century master organist and teacher who, arguably, laid the foundations for the entire western tradition of organ composition. By his day, organs had already reached a surprising degree of sophistication. The organs on the CD represent two of the smaller examples – the positive and the portative, both frequently portrayed in contemporary paintings of St Cecilia or of angels. Paumann's own tombstone in Munich shows him playing a portative. The addition of the clavisimbalum and gothic harp not only make for a wider tonal palette, but are also instruments that could have been used to interpret this music at the time. The arrangements of the pieces are imaginative and effective and make for a user-friendly introduction to this exotic repertoire.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

More divine than human: Music from The Eton Choirbook The Choir of Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford, Stephen Darlington
Avie AV2167 78'55"
Browne, Cornysh, Davy, Fawkyner & Lambe

The title of this CD comes from comments made about the King's choristers by a Venetian diplomat, Nicolo Sagudini, in 1515, who goes on to refer to the excellence of the 'counter bass voices', leading to flurries of speculation from musicologists in our own time. What his observations emphasise is that the all-male choirs of the time clearly produced stunning performances of the late-15th-century repertoire embodied in what we now call the Eton Choirbook. How important then to have here probably the first satisfactory performances of Eton repertoire from an all-male choir. Much of the singing is superb, most of it is at least good and even the weakest moments are adequate, which is saying quite something when we are talking about boy choristers tackling some of the most protracted and treacherously virtuosic music ever written for choral voices. Many years ago now, David Wulstan observed that the earlier onset of puberty had probably robbed us of the possibility of ever hearing again what Signor Sagudini witnessed, but the brave and accomplished artistry of the Christ Church Cathedral choristers here gives me hope.

D. James Ross

16th CENTURY

Byrd *Assumpta est Maria* (Byrd Edition Vol. 12) The Cardinal's Musick, Andrew Carwood 70' 38"
Hyperion CDA67675

This contains propers for the Nativity, Anunciation and Assumption of the Virgin, with *Salve Regina* a4, *Salve sola Dei genetrix* and four Marian hymns. The performances are notable for the robust sound of the solo voices, the clarity of the parts and the projection of the text. I did, however, find the disc rather tiring, at least when playing it straight through in one sitting: the relentless shaping of so many of the stressed notes reminded me of the indiscriminate swelling that baroque strings affected in the 1970s: too much of a good thing. CB

I was puzzled by the claim in the director's bio that he was the first non-organist director of music at St Paul's Cathedral since the 12th century. Might there be a linguistic confusion here, with the organist then being a singer of organum?

Guerrero *Battle Mass* The Choir of Westminster Cathedral, His Majesties Sagbutts and Cornetts, James O'Donnell 72' 16"
Hyperion Helios CDH55340
+ *Pange lingua, In exitu Israel, Duo Seraphim, Regina caeli, Magnificat 8 toni, Conditor alme siderum*

The bargain-price re-release of what *EMR* described on its first appearance as 'a very important disc' vindicates the bold decision to present Guerrero's Battle Mass in a performance with large numbers of voices supported by organ, cornets and sackbuts. It is sometimes hard to believe that there are just five independent parts here (expanding to eight in the *Agnus dei*) as the Westminster forces give Guerrero the San Marco treatment. A further highlight of this memorable recording is the choirboys' account of his splendid setting of *Duo Seraphim*, a brilliant piece of musical inflation as the orders of angels pile in after the two seraphim of the title to produce a spectacular nine-part texture, enhanced further here by the addition of the wind instruments. In complete contrast, the CD opens with a very simple account of the hymn *Pange lingua* which perfectly offsets the riches to come. D. James Ross

Phinot *Missa Si bona suscepimus, Lamentations, Motets* The Brabant Ensemble, Stephen Rice 74' 13"
Hyperion CDA67696
+ *Sermisy Si bona suscepimus*

Stephen Rice and his choir have done us another considerable favour in bringing us the music of the shadowy, not to say shady, composer Dominique Phinot. This CD includes much very fine and distinctly individual (perhaps even eccentric) music

as well as two clear masterpieces, a mouth-watering eight-voice setting of *O sacrum convivium* and the haunting eight-part Lamentations. The unsettling and harmonically daring five-part *Pater peccavi* has the sound of a heart-felt cry for help, and is perhaps to be understood in the context of its composer's subsequent execution for gross indecency – we would recall the similarly tortured personality and music of Gombert. At the core of this intriguing and informative CD is a four-part setting of the Mass based on a motet by Claudin de Sermisy. Concisely eloquent in the manner of its model, Phinot's mass also manages to be powerfully expressive and is given a very strong performance here. Yet again, the Brabant Ensemble have valuably put musical flesh on the bones of a composer who to most of us has been up to now a mere name in a footnote, if that. D. James Ross

Victoria Missa *Gaudeamus* Lay Clerks of Westminster Cathedral, Matthew Martin Hyperion CDA67748 73' 20"
+ organ music by Frescobaldi

This magnificent liturgical reconstruction recorded in Westminster Cathedral itself is sung by the adult male voices of the choir, and a splendid sound they produce too, both in the chant and the polyphony. The recording quickly shows the advantages of this mode of presentation, not just in avoiding polyphonic indigestion, but in the subtle interplay between the melodies of the chant Propers and those of the polyphonic Ordinary. Above this, we have the feeling of a genuine working mass, not a scholarly reconstruction of a putative historical event but rather a representation of a religious service celebrated regularly within this building.

Was I completely bowled over? Not quite. Just occasionally the singers get a little carried away and some over-fruity singing blurs the chords at cadences. In addition to the propers and ordinary, we also have a selection of appropriate organ works by Frescobaldi, excellently played by Thomas Wilson, and indeed the CD concludes with Frescobaldi's setting of *Sancta Maria*, the choir picking out the distinctive chant from the elaborate keyboard decorations. Overall, the CD provides a very persuasive argument for the presentation of polyphonic mass settings in the liturgical context their composers expected. D. James Ross

We haven't given price information this issue. If we receive any prices from the record companies, it is usually the wholesale price. What the sellers (whether shops or on-line) charge is up to them. Now that Peter Berg no longer checks prices for us, it is safer not to attempt to do so.

The Art of the Ricercar in 16th Century Italy Liuwe Tamminga (1471 de Prato organ, San Petronio, Bologna) 74' 17"
Accent 10127

The 1471 Lorenzo de Prato organ in the huge Basilica of Bologna's San Petronio is one of the marvels of the musical world. Based on a 24' *Principale contrabasso* stop and a 12' *Principale* stop that contain triple ranks of pipes (and a keyboard that starts from FF) it produces a sound of extraordinary grandeur and gravitas, quite unlike the image of Italian organs as sounding light and frothy. And the magnificent acoustic of San Petronio gives it a perfect space in which to sing. And sing it does. Like most historic Italian organs, its sound is close to the human voice. Liuwe Tamminga is the fortunate organist of the Basilica and has made many outstanding recordings on the two famous instruments there – the 1534 Facchetti organ (facing the 1471 instrument across what us English would call the chancel) is mentioned on the CD cover, but the notes are not clear as to if, or when, it is used. I don't think it is. Although the title of this CD, and its repertoire of Ricercars, might seem a little daunting, I can thoroughly recommend it. Andrew Benson-Wilson

Calvin in de Gouden Eeuw Calvinist music from France and the Netherlands Camerata Trajectina
Globe GLO 6064
Camphuysen, L'Estocart, van Eyck, Goudimel, Le Jeune, van Lodenstein, van Noordt, Sluiter, Speuij, Sweelinck & Vallet

This CD might be better named 'Music in spite of Calvinism', as most of the worthwhile repertoire here is the polyphonic music which would have had no part in the Calvinist service. The very plain four-part settings of the psalms by even such talents as Claude le Jeune are rather tedious, whereas the instrumental variants on psalm tunes and polyphonic treatments intended for domestic use allow their composers sufficient freedom to exercise their musical imaginations. We have an interesting cross-section of composers here, although I am surprised not to see the great discovery of recent years, Jean Servain, represented by some of his idiomatic and often large-scale polyphonic settings of the psalms in translations by the Scottish George Buchanan. Camerata Trajectina's singing is occasionally a little dreary, brought on perhaps by the repertoire, but I think more likely the result of rather routine phrasing – certainly where the music shakes off the Calvinist yoke, the voices brighten up too. Hence my proposal for an alternative title! D. James Ross

La barca d'amore Cornett music of the 16th century William Dongois, Le concert brisé

Accent plus ACC 10400

G Bassano, Bovicelli, dalla Casa, Fontana, Pandolfo-Mealli, Rognoni & anon

In this re-issue, the velvety tones of William Dongois lead us through Italian virtuoso repertoire, alternating his own improvisations on dance standards with written division pieces and sonatas. He uses his astonishing facility to put technique into the background, concentrating instead on changes of colour and transparency so as to offer each piece as a coherent thought. In the Bassano divisions on *Io son ferito* (*perito* on the cover – one can imagine a copyist's careless calligraphy) he achieves a mood of total introspection. The bright shafts of the following Fontana sonata – thus show over a deeper background. The peak of virtuosity is reached in the Pandolfo Mealli, which is simply extraordinary. This disk shows off the maximum possible range of effects and expression in a well constructed trajectory. A must.

Stephen Cassidy

Feliz Navidad: Mediterranean Christmas Music from the Renaissance Cécile Kempenaers S, José Pizarro T, Capella de la Torre, Katharina Bäuml 65' 53"

Coviello Classics COV 20811

Escobar, Guerrero, Mantovano, Tombonino & anon (from Cancionero de Uppsala)

For this CD of festive music from around the Mediterranean (in effect from Spain and Italy), the wind ensemble are joined by soprano Cecile Kempenaers and tenor Jose Pizarro. It is good to hear a Christmas CD which doesn't just recycle the same old warhorses, but rather takes the time to find new and unperformed repertoire and then presents it in exciting and imaginative arrangements. Inevitably the performances recall the work of Jordi Savall, but the Capella de la Torre and their vocal soloists add a distinctive dimension of their own. The repertoire draws on a number of MSS unfamiliar to me and the printed collection that used to be called the *Cancionero de Uppsala*, which preserves the repertoire of the Renaissance court of Valencia. D. James Ross

Lamentations Nordic Voices 68' 30"

Chandos Chaconne CHAN 0763

Gesualdo, Palestrina, Victoria & White

This collection of music associated with the last three days of Holy Week includes settings by Palestrina, Victoria and Robert White of the readings from the offices of Tenebrae, the Lamentations, as well as two responsories set by Gesualdo. The six-voice Norwegian ensemble sings with

purity and expressivity, coping well with Gesualdo's tortured and tortuous harmonic shifts and the long flowing phrases of the Lamentations. If occasionally I felt that this emotionally charged music called for more passion from the singers, I am perhaps simply comparing these readings unfairly with more intense interpretations that I am more familiar with. Or perhaps I was more disturbed than I initially realised by the cherry-picking from several settings rather than a comprehensive presentation of complete sets, or even an attempt at a liturgical reconstruction such as that given by Andrew Parrot (2000) of an entire sequence of readings and responses for Good Friday on Sony SK 62977. D. James Ross

Music for Emperor Charles V Capella de la Torre, Matthias Gerchen
Coviello Classics COV 20701

This CD does very much what it says on the box – these are no-nonsense accounts of wind instrument music which may have graced the court of the depressive Hapsburg Emperor Charles V. There is a pleasing blend of loud outdoor and indoor instruments all supported by some extremely decorative percussion playing and provided with further variety by the occasional intervention of organ and bass voice. The playing of the wind instruments is beautifully focussed and nuanced, captured very vividly in a warm acoustic, making the whole reminiscent of the classic work of David Munrow. There is much to enjoy here in the way of very familiar material as well as several pieces that were new to me. D. James Ross

Mortuus est Philippus Rex: Music for the life and death of the Spanish King The Choir of Westminster Cathedral, James O'Donnell 65' 54" (rec 1998)

Hyperion Helios CDH55248

Cotes, Escobedo, Infantas, Lobo & Vivanco

Another fine recording from Westminster Cathedral Choir's glory days. In the late 1990s they committed a wealth of Spanish music to disc and acquired a real flair for the intense passion and religiosity it required, and this disc of music associated with the death of Philip II of Spain, husband of Mary and deadly adversary of her sister Elizabeth I. It is appropriate that the passing of a man who did nothing by halves should be celebrated by music lavish in the intensity of its mourning and with the feeling of the passing of an era about it. The unhurried approach taken by James O'Donnell tests his singers to the extreme, but milks this stately repertoire for all it is worth. D. James Ross

17th CENTURY

Buxtehude and Bruhns Organ works Vol 5 Ton Koopman (1736 Bielfeldt organ, St Wilhadi, Stade, N Germany) 2 CDs
Challenge CC72249

Ton Koopman completes his series of CDs of the complete organ works of Buxtehude with a double CD set that also includes the complete organ works of Bruhns. As ever, Koopman's playing is an edge-of-the-seat affair, with his helter-skelter approach to speed and his determination to stamp his own mark on the notes that Buxtehude appears to have written. The result is certainly a thrilling explosion of nervous energy, but I find it very hard to imagine that Buxtehude or Bruhns would have played like this, either in concert performances or in the context of the Lutheran liturgy. When Koopman plays 'straight' (which he does in some of the chorale preludes, for example) he is good. But it does pain me to hear, for example, Buxtehude's monumental *Te Deum*, one of the greatest hymns of the Church, transformed into so much froth and bubble. As with previous CDs in the series, the list of works and timings only appears on the card box, not on the CD case itself. Andrew Benson-Wilson

Geist Kirchenkonzerte Mária Zádori, Ágnes Pintér, Péter Bárány, Zoltán Megyesi, László Kálmán, Krisztián Cser SSCTTTB, Chamber Ensemble of the Orfeo Orchestra, György Vashegyi 75' 30"
Hungaroton HCD 32587

I was wondering why BC wasn't reviewing this disc when I noticed who had written the note. It is therefore a particular pleasure to record that this is a model of its kind – concise, yet informative about both the composer's itinerant life and his music, which will surely not be familiar to many listeners. This ensemble has impressed me before (in Charpentier) and the virtues of thorough preparation and sense of style are again apparent. There is sometimes a slightly hard edge to the sound and in *allegro* passages some phrase ends are rather clipped, but there is also a sense of togetherness that sweeps one along. Christian Geist's musical style is reminiscent of the mature Schütz, and, as they say, if you like that, you'll like this.

David Hansell

Lully Ballets & récits italiens Emanuela Galli, Yetzabel Arias Fernández, Stefanie True SSS, La Risonanza, Fabio Bonizzoni
Glossa GCD 921509 72' 03"
Extracts from LWV 8, 9, 11, 21, 40, 43 & 45

It's so easy to forget that Lully was Italian: this anthology of bleeding chunks

from relatively early in this career is a useful reminder. If I am honest, the vocal music did not consistently hold my attention but there is a lot of sprightly and stylish playing in the various dances and *ritornelles*. The informative note is longer than many and the sung texts appear in five languages. David Hansell

Monteverdi *Vespers 1610, Mass of Thanksgiving 1631, Venetian Vesper Music, Madrigali guerrieri et amorosi 1638*. Taverner Consort, Choir and Players, Andrew Parrott 314' 30" (5 CDs in box) (rec 1982-92) Virgin Classics 50999 9 66965 2 1

For some of us, these are the classic recordings. I'm not sure if I can judge them, since they arise out of the world I fully support and was peripherally part of. As far as I am aware, Andrew was the first person to take on board the information available about north-Italian performance practice and bring it to life. Listening especially to the 1610 Vespers, I wonder whether, if performing it now, Andrew would be a little more influenced by the ideas clustering round concepts of rhetoric (though, with apologies to Quintilian and Judy Tarling, I'm not sure if a knowledge of rhetoric is necessary for their application), in particular, a greater degree of hierarchy between stresses and verbal rhythms being just a little more obvious. But these are basic performances for the repertoire, combining research with musical understanding so that each enriches the other. And there are some outstanding singers and players participating, far too many to list. CB

Oranges and Lemons: John Playford's English Dancing Master (1651) The Playfords Coviello Classics COV 20709

The notes of this CD claim that 'the music of The Playfords takes us back to seventeenth-century London', though I was reminded of the oft-repeated jibe that the early music movement tells us more about the present than the past. The present in this case is the work of modern folk groups such as the Chieftans: the CD (by a group from Weimar) offers tunes from Playford's *Dancing Master* performed in elaborate 'orchestrated' versions with recorders, violin, various types of plucked instruments, viols, and all sorts of percussion. The idea is to tickle the ear with ever-changing (and often extremely unlikely) sonorities during the repetitions of the tunes, rather to embellish them with divisions as would have been done at the time – as can be seen in the many dance tunes treated in this way in Playford's *Division Violin* and other sources. I found it all extremely irritating, mainly because there is a

mismatch between the sophistication and polish of the performances and the simplicity and vigour of the tunes; for me it struck as false a note as the 'genteel' versions of folk songs that used to be the bane of song recitals when I was growing up. Note to others attempting similar things: avoid percussion that is over-complex and 'decorative' (i.e. that adds pretty noises rather than a simple beat), don't let the gamba player play pizzicato (it seems to have been a rare special effect at the time), and employ singers who are at home in English. Some of the songs here sound as if they are in 'some forren tongue' – as Playford might have said.

Peter Holman

Johann Praetorius *Organ Works* Friedhelm Flamme (1764 organ at Peter-und-Paul-Kirche Klostergut Holthausen, bei Büren) cpo 777 344-2 65' 08"

Friedhelm Flamme continues his impressive survey of North German organ history with what might be organ works by Johann Praetorius, the son of the founder of the Hamburg school of organ composers, Heironymus Praetorius, and a pupil of Sweelinck in Amsterdam. I say 'might be' because there are no definite surviving organs works, but a German musicologist has assigned, somewhat controversially, what are mostly anonymous works to Johann Praetorius. The style is certainly in keeping with that known to exist in Hamburg at that time and the pieces, whoever they are by, are well worth hearing – and Johann Praetorius was known to be an important organist/composer and deserves recognition even if none of the works are actually his. The organ chosen is not the most obvious, not least because it dates from over 100 years after Praetorius's death, but it seems to include older pipework and speaks with a voice that the Praetorius family may have recognised. It only has seven stops, but two of the Hamburg churches that Praetorius played in also only have small positive organs. All the pieces are variation sets on Chorales and a Psalm, with the exception of the most controversial attribution of a work to Praetorius, *Mein junges Leben hat ein End*, hitherto Sweelinck's most famous work! I have my doubts. Flamme's playing is stylistically appropriate and musical and, most importantly, can withstand repeated listening – something that more flamboyant players can forget in their quest for personal mannerisms. Andrew Benson-Wilson

Purcell *The Complete Fantazias* Fretwork harmonia mundi USA HMU 907502 49' 50"

Everybody should have this one. These extraordinary compositions are without

parallel in their time. Neither Roger North nor Thomas Mace seem to have even known of their existence, and Peter Holman doubts that Purcell could have assembled a complete viol consort to play them – particularly given their technical demands. Fretwork, with only six players named, play them all, bar the incomplete one, in order, unadorned by any extras, relying on the superb performance which they give, and which makes the recording an essential part of any library. There are a few details – one of the treble viols uses more vibrato than the other, but otherwise great tonal variety is achieved by their articulation and dynamics, with exquisite touches of phrasing. Their sound differs from, for example, Phantasm, less upholstered, a little more astringent (although the touches of vibrato move them somewhat in that direction), and more pungent articulation at times, all of which for me more nearly approach the demands of this wonderful music. The 7-part *In Nomine* which concludes the disc, and the set is wonderfully sonorous and stately. Their total time is slightly under 50 minutes, (Phantasm slightly over) but no-one could possibly feel they've been sold short. Robert Oliver

Henry Purcell *Ten Sonatas in Four Parts* Retrospect Trio 73' 16" Linn CKD 332

The *Ten Sonatas in Four Parts* were one of my set works in first year at St Andrews, so you could say I know them quite well. More recently, I had the great opportunity to play some of them with friends in Cambridge, so I had my memory of the intricacies and complexities refreshed. Listening to this new recording by Retrospect, I wondered where such considerations went in the hands of such wonderful musicians – two violinists and a gambist who navigate the contrapuntal spider's web as if it were straightforward (even with time to decorate the lines, if you please!) and a harpsichordist (for once!) who manages not to cloud the texture with links and tirades that so often plague late 17th-century music. I remember hearing Matthew Truscott playing in Dundee once and going back stage afterwards (I was writing a review of the concert and used the pretence of having to get the full name of the encore that had so rightly been demanded of him) and asked when he intended to take up the baroque violin. I'm not claiming to have been the catalyst for such a development, but clearly his decision to do so is bearing fruit. Sophie Gent, Jonathan Manson and Matthew Halls are equally exemplary in their roles – I hope this will be a hugely successful disc for Linn and that they also record the other set. BC

Purcell *The Complete Ayres for the Theatre* The Parley of Instruments, Roy Goodman 208' 36" (3 CDs in box) Hyperion CDS44381

Apart from the music for the 'operas', Purcell penned quite a collection of ouvertures, interludes and dance music for the London stage. The Parley of Instruments' three CD survey of the repertoire is a delight. First issued for the other Purcell celebration in 1995, the small band of strings and continuo (occasionally enhanced by trumpet) led by Roy Goodman is on terrific form throughout and the leader's decorations are (as they always were – how I miss his playing!) both imaginative and perfectly in keeping with Purcell's style. My only experience of playing for a Restoration drama was a student production of *Amphytrion*, or *The Two Sosias*: we never sounded like this! Mind you, I was playing harpsichord continuo at the time, so it's hardly surprising. There have not been many new releases to celebrate this year's Purcell anniversary besides *Retrospect*'s fine trio sonatas disc reviewed above, so treat yourself to this set if you missed it first time around. BC

A. Scarlatti *Intermezzi* Bernadett Wiedemann mS, László Jekl B, Savaria Baroque Orchestra, Ágnes Várallyay Bc, Pál Németh 68' 11" Hungaroton HCD 32563
Pericca e Varrone & Leonzio ed Eurilla

Both these intermezzos come from the final years of Alessandro Scarlatti's long career as an opera composer. *Pericca e Varonne* was first given with his *opera seria Scipione nella Spagna* in Naples in 1714, while the much slighter *Leonzio ed Eurilla* companioned *Marco Attilio Regolo*, his penultimate opera, in Rome five years later. *Pericca* in particular is an unusually engaging example of the genre, with a witty score and an amusing plot concerned with the courtship of a couple who are obviously somewhat past the first flush of youth. *Leonzio* is interesting for the extreme flexibility between aria and recitative. But it is a puzzling piece, with only a single scene and an inconclusive ending, both of which suggest to me either that it is incomplete, or, more likely, consists of a scene originally incorporated in the *opera seria*, with which it does appear to share characters.

The performances are decent as far as they go, which unfortunately is not far enough. According to the biographical notes, both singers are usually more likely to be found in the cast list of a Wagnerian opera and they do indeed bring rich, fruity tones to the present assignment, though not offensively so.

More worrying is Jekl's tonal insecurity, the poor diction of Wiedemann, and the lethargic pacing of music that demands to be projected with a greater sense of colour, verve and character. Brian Robins

Schein *Chamber Music for Brass* Ewald Brass Quintet 73' 12" Hungaroton HCD 32618

The first half of the disc is a long sequence of dance suites, and the second comprises chorales. All faultlessly played, but as a piece of programming governed more by orderliness than performance. Modern brass has some drawbacks for the repertoire (though I'm not saying this from a purist standpoint). Having cylindrical instruments at the top and a conical bass (the opposite configuration from a cornett and sackbut ensemble exaggerates the tonal difference and separation of voices, as opposed to compensating for the natural effect resulting from our ears' innate response to the pitch difference (as cornetts and sackbuts do). This reduces the conversational effect between the parts which is a feature of much of the writing. There is also a tendency for brass ensembles to enter a state of perpetual perkiness which can also be a little tiring. The chorales work better, being much more chord-centric. I suspect that mixing the styles along the way through the disc would have resulted in a more enjoyable listen. Stephen Cassidy

Schütz *Johannes-Passion* Collegium Musicum Plagense (rec. 1988)
Schütz *Lukas-Passion* (Ars Nova Copenhagen)

Because of their sheer austerity, Schütz's Passions can be hard pieces to perform. The singers must hold the attention of the audience or congregation for over half an hour of mainly monophonic chanting; there is no instrumental accompaniment to hide blemishes. The 1988 recording of the *Johannes-Passion* by the Collegium Musicum Plagense takes the recitation at a brisk pace, giving prominence to the melodic formulae of the chant. The singers maintain plenty of momentum, sustaining interest throughout the narrative. The voices are recorded closely in a dry acoustic, and the one-voice-per-part chorus gives a clean account of the turba interjections.

The 2007 rendition of the *Lukas-Passion* by Ars Nova Copenhagen offers a similar purity of voices, this time with a resonant halo added by the acoustic of St Paul's Church, Copenhagen. Unlike the 1988 recording, a bigger chorus is used, although the turba interjections are still well-controlled, with the sprightly imitation evoking the sound of countless

clamouring voices. Its main characteristic is that the Evangelist (Johan Linderoth) and Jesus (Jakob Block Jespersen) greatly vary the pace and shape of their recitation. Witness, for instance, the slow deliberation on 'noch vollendet werden an mir' as Jesus contemplates the task ahead of him; or the despairing contempt with which Jesus spits out the name of Judas as he realises he will be betrayed. The singers also linger over consonance-rich words in the German text, such as 'verspotten' or 'kreuzigen', to bring out their onomatopoeic significance. This Copenhagen account thus gives greater weight to the Biblical text, at times meditative and at times dramatic.

The 1988 recording couples the *Johannes-Passion* with some of the Passion pieces from Schütz's *Cantiones sacrae* (1625); the vivid metaphors and rich harmonic language of these spiritual madrigals make a welcome contrast with the austerity of the unaccompanied Passion. But the performances of the *Cantiones sacrae* are restrained rather than beseeching, with prominent organ continuo; I continue to prefer the 1996 recording by Weser-Renaissance, where the solo singers give greater shape to their lines within the polyphonic texture. Stephen Rose

Schütz/Sebastiani, Ricercar Consort (rec. 1995/1998)
Ricercar RCR280

A warm welcome to this mid-price reissue of two of the Ricercar Consort's pioneering explorations of 17th-century German music. In the last decade there have been several further recordings of Schütz's *Die sieben Worte* and *Historia der Auferstehung*; but the Ricercar Consort's account, with the Evangelist in the *Historia* sung by Paul Agnew, still holds its own, particularly for its dramatic intensity. A welcome bonus is the companion disc containing Johann Sebastiani's *St Matthew Passion* (1672); with its use of string accompaniment and inclusion of numerous chorales, this work deserves to be better known and more frequently performed. Stephen Rose

Steffani *Orlando generoso* Daniel Lager Galafro, Roberta Invernizzi Angelica, Susanne Rydén Bradamante, Kai Wessel Orlando, Franz Vitzthum Ruggiero, Jörg Waschinski Medoro, Wolf Matthias Friedrich Atlante, Musica Alta Ripa, Bernward Lohr 162'54" (3 CDs). MDG 309 1566-2

Historians of 18th century music in England will recall that in 1727 Agostino Steffani, Bishop of Spiga and diplomat, accepted life presidency of the Academy of Vocal (later Ancient) Music. At the

time Steffani's fame was such that it was considered quite a coup for the Academy, but today his star shines less brightly, his name remembered for little more than being a prolific composer of fine vocal chamber duets. Yet in former days he was also a noted opera composer, particularly during the earlier part of the period he spent as Kapellmeister at Hanover. *Orlando generoso* (1691) was the fourth of his Hanover operas, all collaborations with the librettist Ortensio Mauro. As may be guessed from the cast list, the plot is adapted from the Orlando-Angelica-Medoro triangle in Ariosto's *Orlando furioso*, one of the most impressive scenes being the second of two monologues for the deranged Orlando that in concept at least anticipates Handel. Stylistically, the opera is typical of its period, with brief *da capo* arias, generally continuo accompanied with orchestral ritornellos. An unusual feature is the number of duets, but the French influence often noted in Steffani's operas is restricted to the overture and end-of-act dances.

With the notable exception of Invernizzi, the performance is little more than serviceable. Lohr's wooden direction shows few signs of empathy, while his anachronistic use of organ and harp continuo suggest he has little understanding of the style. The cast is mostly adequate, sometimes a little more (Wessel has some nice moments, but lacks dramatic presence), sometimes less. It was especially disappointing to hear Rydén, whom I generally admire, indulging in some vulgar swoops and scoops in her opening scenes. Recommended only to those with a burning desire to hear a Steffani opera. *Brian Robins*

Perhaps if MDG want to record another Steffani opera, they should engage the author of the standard book on him, Colin Timms, who conducted a very impressive Agrippina in Birmingham recently: see p. xx. *CB*

Barbara Strozzi *Virtuosissima compositrice* Cappella Mediterranea, Leonardo Gracia Alarcón 60' 03"
Ambronay AMY020

If 'extreme madrigal performance' were ever to be considered as a potential Olympic sport this disc would make a persuasive case. There is even one piece (from Monteverdi's 4th book – music as text-based as one can imagine) performed without singers. This brew is so intoxicating that it's almost a case of taking one piece at a time so that one set of crunchy dissonances and tortured passions can be fully resolved in the mind of the listener before it is thrown into turmoil once more. There is a colourful continuo section including liron and, of course, the singers are at white heat throughout. The voice of the counter-tenor does not

have the focus of and therefore does not blend well with the others, but overall this is an extraordinary recital. I'm not sure that I approved of it all, but I really enjoyed it. Including pieces by Monteverdi and d'India to provide a context for Barbara Strozzi's amazing music was an inspired decision. *David Hansell*

Ward Consort music for five and six viols
Phantasm 77' 57"

Linn Records CKD339

Fantasies a5 VdGS 1-7, a6 VdGS 1-10, 12-14, In nominees a5 VdGS 14, a6 VdGS 1,2

This is a welcome disc, the first complete recording of Ward's output in 5 and 6 parts, following on from the Rose Consort's recording, now 10 years old, which includes madrigals and four-part fantasies. The booklet notes, by Laurence Dreyfus, make the point that Ward's music is often underestimated today because he was an amateur composer, a view not shared in his own time, when he was greatly admired. Those who hear his music for the first time through this recording will agree. The structure of the fantasies is fairly consistent: imitative polyphony to begin, followed by a homophonic section, perhaps with upper and lower voices in dialogue, and a strong close. However he achieves great variety within this, with beautiful themes, often quite short, handled with assured skill and variety, and striking, madrigalian contrasts between the sections. The playing, like the music, is serene, confident, literal, with a full and very beautiful sound. It's familiar repertoire to viol players, and, as very satisfying listening for nearly 80 minutes, should become so for a far wider audience. *Robert Oliver*

Weichlein-Encaenia Musices, 1695 Ars Antiqua Austria, Gunar Letzbor
Symphonia SY 08230 90' 51" (2 CDs)

I remember writing in these pages about how lucky Sigiswald Kuijken was to be able to re-record Bach's music for unaccompanied violin and similarly Pieter Wispelwey's good fortune with the cello suites. Ars Antiqua Austria have had the opportunity to issue a new set of a much rarer work, Weichlein's *Encaenia Musices* of 1695. I'll be very surprised if more than a handful of readers even recognize the composer's name, let alone the publication – and I'll be even more impressed if ANYONE has a copy of the original recording. That is not to say that the 12 sonatas for strings and trumpets are not quality music – they are very much in the Biber/Schmelzer mould, and there are some truly wonderful moments (there's one of those irresistibly relaxing ground bass movements as the second movement of Sonata 1 for a start – even

the trumpets get a look in). If no-one has heard of Weichlein, that means I have not done my job very well, since I've recently written about two recordings by the same group of his church music, but I have to say that this set stands head and shoulders above the others. The playing is beautiful – the pairs of trumpets, violins and violas in the movement mentioned above are so well balanced and beautifully accompanied by violone, lute and organ. So, Happy Birthday, Ars Antiqua Austria, and thank you, Symphonia, for such a lovely recording! *BC*

The Encaenia Musices 1965 sold by Amazon is the same disc.

The Bad Tempered Consort – Portuguese polyphony from the 17th century A Imagem da Melancolia Recorder Consort
Challenge Classics CC72321 61' 11"

The rather off-putting title of this CD refers to Praetorius's comment that it is difficult for a recorder consort to play in tune if more than three sizes of recorders tuned in fifths are used together. This Portuguese recorder consort uses copies of two sets of 16th century recorders in consorts tuned in fourths and fifths with admirable intonation and ensemble. In a few of the 34 tracks singer Magna Ferreira makes an effective addition to the texture without dominating it. The booklet is rather difficult to navigate, with the information that the music comes from MSS containing early 17th-century organ music well hidden in the rather rambling introductory essay. A search inside the back cover reveals that the music comes from MS 964 of the Biblioteca Pública de Braga, apart from two pieces from MS 242 of the Biblioteca Geral of the Universidade de Coimbra. The scores are said to be downloadable from the group's web site, but my computer couldn't cope with this. Recorder maker Adrian Brown's contribution to the booklet is a useful essay on the renaissance recorder, with particular reference to Praetorius's writing on the subject and the instruments used for the recording. I hope that the rather unhelpful title and booklet won't put people off, because this is very high quality consort playing of some most attractive and satisfying music. *Victoria Helby*

Batalha Iberian Organ Music Ton Koopman org 76' 43"
Challenge CC72320

If there was one repertoire that Ton Koopman's energetic playing style is most suited to, it is the extraordinary Iberian tradition of battle pieces. However, despite the title (and perhaps fortunately for the health of the listener's ears), this CD only contains three such pieces,

alongside some rather more musically intelligent (and quieter) works by 16th to 18th century Iberian composers. Interpretation of the Iberian repertoire is fraught with complications – notes are rarely intended to be played as written and the organ's distinctive registration schemes give much cause for thought. Koopman has clearly done some homework, notably on the sometimes curious articulation practice, although there are one or two questionable performing decisions and the all-too-common misunderstanding about the ubiquitous *trumpet-en-chamade*. Koopman's description of them as 'so loud that any rustling in the church immediately falls silent' only applies to the neo-baroque organs of the late 20th century – original Iberian examples are usually relatively modest in volume, but pack their punch by their tonal focus and harmonic richness. They are also usually an addition to the Iberian organ that post-dates many of the battle pieces. The modern organ (1985 Patrick Collon Spanish organ, St Lambert, Woluwé-Saint-Lambert, Belgium) is interesting – it is described as being 'built in the Spanish style, with Flemish influences, and speaking with a slight Brussels accent'. It makes a fine sound and, very usefully, includes a device to change the bottom octave into the short-octave configuration essential for many Iberian pieces. I know several versions of the anonymous *Batalha Famoza* but none of them match Koopman's version – do I detect one of his flights of fancy? *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

Éclatante amarante: a portrait of the French singer Anne Chabanceau de la Barre (1628-1688) Elisabeth Belgrano, Lucas Harris lutes, Marlene Stober gamba, Jennifer Ellis voice 61' 55"

EB 2004

Available from www.elibelgrano.org

De la Barre, Bartolotti, le Camus, Huygens, Lambert, Lully & Luigi Rossi

This 2003 recording is a very personal undertaking by Elisabeth Belgrano. In the note she tells us that the French singer Anne Chabanceau de la Barre (1628-88) has become her obsession and that this recital is a portrait of her through the music that she sang. This includes *airs/arias* by her brothers and patrons as well as the more predictable Michel Lambert, Lully and Luigi Rossi. Aural variety is provided by two contrapuntal duets and a sprinkling of theorbo solos. (In a month when I have felt the threat of death by overdose of over-colourful continuo, the modest, though involved, support of theorbo and bass viol has been welcome.) The voices are well focused and there is true commitment – not to say devotion – in the singing. The lack of translations of

the French and Italian texts is a drawback, but does not prevent this being an unusual and thought-provoking programme which is recommended for the pensive phase of any evening. *David Hansell*

Flying Horse Music from the ML lutebook Elizabeth Kenny 70' 50"

Hyperion CDA67776

Bachelier, Robert Ballard?, d'Orléans, Dowland, Holborne, Johnson, Perrichon, Sturt & anon

The ML lute book (British Library, Add. MS 38539) used to be known as the Sturt lute book, with no justification other than it including seven pieces by that composer. It was renamed the ML lute book by Robert Spencer, when he edited the Boethius Press facsimile published in 1985. The initials ML appear on the cover and fly-leaf of the manuscript; the "M" probably stands for "Margaret", whose name appears with various spellings on the fly-leaf and f. 56r. Most of the lute music was copied c.1610-25, for a lute requiring up to ten courses.

Elizabeth Kenny plays most of the pieces on a 10-course lute in g', apart from a few masque tunes on a treble lute in d"; both are at A=415. She uses the ML manuscript as her source, but she does not always stick rigidly to what is there. For example, in Dowland's *Battle Galliard*, f. 12v, stave 5, bar 1, she changes the rhythm from two crotchets and a semibreve to three minims. Although she plays many of the ornaments, she misses some of them out, adds in a few which are not present in the manuscript, and is not consistent in the way she interprets them. In *John come kiss me now*, fol. 21v, stave 2, bar 4, the last note is played as a minim instead of a crotchet, and the ornament on g involves an a flat instead of a diatonic a natural. It is easy enough for me to fuss over such details with the facsimile on my lap, but I would rather draw attention to the unhurried slickness of her playing. It is subtly expressive, and a pleasure to listen to. Her ornaments flow effortlessly; they truly grace the music, and are never, to use Thomas Mace's pun, a disgrace. For some pieces she adds her own well-crafted divisions, for example for the repeats of two exquisite pavans by Robert Johnson, and for *Tom of Bedlam*. For French pieces she plays a petite reprise. The lengthy anonymous *Battle* is played with panache, and includes some energetic strumming, though still within the tasteful restraints of the lute. John Dowland's *Gallyard* on a *Gallyard* by Daniel Bachelier, is a tour de force. The only disappointment is her divisions for the repeat of the anonymous *Flying Horse*, which make the lute sound like a flamenco guitar – not what one would have expected to hear from young Margaret L. *Stewart McCoy*

La Force et la Douceur Vittorio Ghielmi gamba, Luca Bianca lute & theorbo 59'

Passacaille musica vera 957

Music by Marin Marais & Jacques Gallot

This is what can happen with a truly imaginative and creative approach to the bass viol. Ghielmi uses a great variety of bow stroke and dynamic – sometimes so soft that his sound is 'hidden' behind that of the lute, as it were, stepping forward as it gets louder. He uses a lot of detached and lifted strokes, imparting unforced vigour and resonance. He takes liberties with the music, adding bowings, for example in the *Boutade* from the D minor suite in Bk 2, glissandi, swells, but always seeming to accept opportunities offered by the music, rather than gilding the lily. The suites are assembled from various books and suites, so the juxtaposition of pieces is arbitrary but pleasing. Ghielmi plays with the sort of insight into the nature of his instrument which is lacking in Ralph Rousseau's playing (see below), as well as great technical assurance and dare-devil virtuosity. The lute playing is equally assured and imaginative; the compositions of Gallot, unfamiliar to me, are beautiful music. Their ensemble is dazzling, never more so than in Marais' marvellous *Allemande L'Asmatique*. Highly recommended. *Robert Oliver*

Fugue: Bach and his forerunners Colin Tilney hpscd 66' 31"

Music & Arts CD-1226

JSB Contrapunctus 1-5, 8, 9 & 11 from *The Art of Fugue* + L. Couperin, Frescobaldi, Froberger & G. Gabrieli

This disc contains not only one of the best selections from *The Art of Fugue* on record, but they are linked to other music in the same tradition, with some of which Sebastian was readily familiar. For Tilney to write that Bach would have loved works by Louis Couperin and Froberger which he had probably never encountered is presuming quite a bit, but then all of Colin Tilney's performances lead us to assume that he has learnt how to cherish his Bach. Generally a highly worthy issue. *Stephen Daw*

Gambomania Ralph Rousseau 54' 53"

Challenge Classics CC72334

K. F. Abel, de Caix d'Hervelois, Hume, Marias & Schenk

Ralph Rousseau is a double bass player who has taken up the viola da gamba, and now specialises in this instrument. This recording, entirely of unaccompanied bass viol music, is essentially to promote himself as a player. The booklet quotes reviews of his playing, and gives some intriguing information about him, including that he has a Ph.D. in physics

along with his diplomas in music. The booklet doesn't tell us who made the instrument he plays, but does list among the credits the person who does his hair and make-up! There is no doubt that he can play, and the later music suits his style better. The Abel sonata in D minor is brilliant, technically secure and exciting in its virtuosity, but he plays into the instrument too much for my taste, forcing the tone. He has a very 'modern' approach, somewhat legato, rushing his chords, which doesn't work in Hume or Marais. The recording is close-miked, so we hear the left hand movements, but it is worth having for the Abel, and for the Schenk sonata in E minor from *L'Echo du Danube*, which is a marvellous piece: his playing is fully up to its considerable demands.

Robert Oliver

Roma Alte Music Köln

Myrios classics MYR 002

Bonporti, Caldara, Colista, Lonati, Lulier, Mannelli, Ravenscroft & Stradella

So often musical history becomes simplified. One centre of novelty and invention gives way to another and it's almost as if music in the former dies. Thus Monteverdi's Venice gives way to Bologna, then to Corelli's Rome, which in turn is itself superseded by Vivaldi's Venice – or so it might seem. Of course it didn't, though: Handel and Caldara presumably went to Rome for good reason (including, one would hope, financial gain). This CD presents music by eight composers who were active in Rome during the latter part of the 17th and early part of the 18th centuries. The music is very high quality throughout, and is slightly surprising in including a sonata for scordatura violin and several pieces where the cello takes the limelight. Eight of the ten tracks are world premiere recordings, and each and every piece is well worth hearing. Alongside better-known names like Bonporti (still not well-enough known, though) and Stradella, there are works by Mannelli and Lulier, John Ravenscroft and Lonati. Alte Musik Köln play one-to-a-part: two violins, gamba or cello, various violone instruments, theorbo and harpsichord. This is the first time I have heard them, but sincerely hope it will not be too long before I get another chance. May I suggest more Bonporti?

BC

All of Bonporti's music, edited by Maxwell Sobel, can be ordered from brian@primalamusic.com

Sacred Garland: Devotional chamber music from the age of Monteverdi The Gonzaga Band (Faye Newton S, Jamie Savan cnt, Richard Sweeney theorbo, Steven Devine kbd) Chandos Chaconne CHAN 0761 63' 24"

Bovicelli, Corradini, Crotti, Donati, Frescobaldi,

Grandi, Kapsberger, Merula, Monteverdi, M. Rossi, Palestrina/Rognoni, Picchi, Piccinini,

The programme includes solo and duet motets, motets for voice and obbligato instrument, and solo instrumental pieces. The voice of Faye Newman and the cornett of Jamie Savan share the same lightness, fluidity and musical approach to a remarkable extent, resulting in a very coherent effect. The duets (one voice provided instrumentally, with historical precedent) thus work particularly well. The instrumental solos and divisions combine the lightness of touch with a sense of direction, establishing another distinct voice to international cornett playing. The singing, too, is remarkably silvery and detailed. My favourite is the lovely vignette *Jesu mi dulcissime* (Grandi), where the sentiments match those vocal qualities. Given that so much of the repertoire rises from the dramatic motivations of the *seconda prattica*, I would have enjoyed hearing the envelope stretched to encompass more of the emotional range that the composers seem to want to explore. A hugely enjoyable disc from an excellent young ensemble. I look forward to much more.

Stephen Cassidy

Theatre Music in 17th-Century England Skálholt Bach Consort, Jaap Schröder SMC 9 (rec. 2002)

This CD was sent to me with the booklet missing, so I'm at a loss to know what the rationale for the recording was, or even what the recording company is. However, it's clear that it's an Icelandic period-instrument group, and an address on the packaging takes one to the Skálholt Summer Concerts Festival (www.sumartonleikar.is), founded in 1975 by Helga Ingólfssdóttir, who plays harpsichord (and, apparently, chamber organ) on the recording. The programme (not all of which is theatre music) consists of four-part English consort music by Robert Johnson (*The Temporiser* and *The Witty Wanton*), Simon Ives (a group of four-part dances), William Lawes (an unidentified fantasia), Matthew Locke (music for *The Tempest*), and Henry Purcell (the Curtain Tune from *Timon of Athens*, two pavans, the Chacony, and the five-part Overture in G minor Z772). It is performed essentially one to a part but with oboe doubling in some of the pieces, and with the bass played by violoncello and harpsichord with 16' violone in places. Clearly, the research of the last few decades has not filtered through to Iceland: the oboe arrived in England long after some of the pieces it is used in were written, and bass parts do not seem to have doubled by 16' bass instruments until the early 18th century. Also, there is too much vibrato, tempi (particularly in the Purcell pavans)

are sometimes too slow, the default dynamic is a dull mezzo forte, and there is too much use of short, unvaried and often heavily accented bow-strokes, particularly in contrapuntal passages that need to be sustained. In places the group achieves the remarkable feat of almost sounding as if it is playing modern instruments. In a wild moment I wondered whether the CD was part of a cutting-edge project to recreate the performing style of early music groups in the 1960s and 70s, but sadly I don't think this is the case.

Peter Holman

For information check bmt@ismennt.is
<http://www.sumartonleikar.is/>

LATE BAROQUE

Sébastien Albero Sonatas for Harpsichord Gilbert Rowland 75' 51"
Lir Classics LIR018

Having finished his complete recording of Soler, Gilbert Rowland has moved on to his little-known Spanish contemporary Albero, who was organist of the Royal Chapel in Madrid while Domenico Scarlatti was working for Queen Maria Barbara. His 30 sonatas are found in the Biblioteca Marciana in Venice, alongside those of Scarlatti with whom some of Albero's have been confused. Rowland plays 16 paired sonatas and two fugues on a Goermans copy by Andrew Wooderson which provides a rich full sound appropriate for these pieces. Scarlattian in structure, inspiration and figuration, they also show a liking for chromatic movement, especially in the first fugue. He is a persuasive advocate and it is good to have a recording of this insufficiently-known but satisfying music. Noel O'Regan

Albinoni Concerti a Cinque, op. 10 Harmonices Mundi, Claudio Astronio
ARTS SACD 47747-8 72' 12"

Recordings of Venice's other star attraction from the beginning of the 18th century are always welcome. It still astonishes me that, despite all Chandos and Collegium Musicum 90's best efforts, it is still the piece that is not even by him that catches the public ear. Yet who has ever heard an oboe concerto by Albinoni and not felt like dancing down the street? His Op. 10 is perhaps the least well known of the orchestral sets, so Harmonices Mundi's new recording on Arts is especially welcome. They play very well, capturing the essence of Albinoni's music and conveying it with energy and bubbling enthusiasm. It's a pity Concertos 3, 6, 10 and 12 have to be omitted and (yet again, readers!) bizarre that the others are not played in the printed sequence. That's a small price to pay, though, for a CD that

will definitely put a spring in your step throughout the cold, windy days of Autumn. BC

Bach *Aus der Tieffen* Katherine Fuge, Carlos Mena, Hans Jörg Mammel, Stephan MacLeod, Ricercar Consort, Philippe Pierlot
Mirare MIR057 68'
BWV 4, 131, 182

The Ricercar Consort's experience in performing 17th-century German music gives them a head-start over many other ensembles when it comes to recording the three early Bach cantatas on this disc. One-voice-per-part performance is taken for granted; the ensemble prefers détaché articulation, highlighting the recurrent motifs in the young Bach's musical vocabulary; and the performers emphasise the contrasts between sections and movements, often by choosing faster or slower tempi than usual. An unusual feature of these performances is the use of dual continuo accompaniment (organ and harpsichord), contrary to the customary perception that Bach had limited performing forces at Mühlhausen and Weimar. A characterful and rewarding disc.

Stephen Rose

Bach *Town Council Election Cantatas*
Soloists, Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra & Choir 62' 37"
Challenge Classics CC72287
BWV 69, 119, 120 7–2003

You have to delve in the small print of the booklet note before you realise that this disc is compiled from Koopman's recording of Bach's complete cantatas. Bringing together three festal pieces, the album offers a wealth of trumpet and timpani playing. It is a shame that the booklet omits the texts of the cantatas.

Stephen Rose

Bach *Purification Mass* La Tempesta
Jakub Burzynski
Arts SACD 477498

This enterprising disc contains the vocal music that might have been performed at Candlemas in Leipzig c.1740, including the *Missa Brevis* in G minor (BWV 235); Cantata 82 *Ich habe genug*; the *Sanctus* formerly attributed to Bach (BWV 240); the *Agnus Dei* from the B minor Mass (BWV 232); a Communion aria (BWV 200); and congregational chorales. The programme is not a full liturgical reconstruction, but it still makes a refreshing change from the discs that solely contain cantatas. The ensemble La Tempesta uses one voice per part and solo strings; it delivers spirited performances, with a good sense of strong and weak beats. Unfortunately some movements are so fast that the

singers sound as if they might lose control, and I would have preferred more restrained vibrato throughout. But it is good to have Bach performed with gusto rather than with politeness, and the imaginative programming on this disc should be taken as a model by other ensembles.

Stephen Rose

Bach *Cantatas*, Vol. 42 Rachel Nicholls, Robin Blaze, Gerd Türk, Peter Kooij
SATB, Bach Collegium Japan, Masaaki Suzuki 75' 24"
BIS BIS-SACD-1711
BWV 13, 16, 32, 72

This latest instalment in Suzuki's series shows the sheer variety of cantatas written by Bach in Leipzig during 1726. It includes Cantata 32, a dialogue between the Soul and Christ that is modelled on the love duets of contemporary opera; Cantata 13, with a highly wrought lament for tenor, recorders and oboe da caccia as its opening movement; and Cantatas 16 and 72, both little-known works yet showing Bach's command of choral writing in styles old and new. The Bach Collegium Japan performs with its customarily polished sound, yet its sonic elegance is accompanied by an awareness of the structure of movements and a sense of how the rhythms of words infuse the instrumental writing. Highly recommended.

Stephen Rose

Bach *Johannes-Passion* Ian Honeyman
Evangelist, Werner Van Mechelen
Christus, Greta De Reyghere, Steve Dugardin,
Stuart Patterson, Dirk Snellings
SATB Il fondamento, Paul Dombrecht (2CDs)
Passacaille 912

To describe any performance as, in all senses, the most revealing yet in nearly all ways is to make a very bold claim indeed! but in so many respects that is the case here. Dombrecht's vision combines so many good qualities that one is almost overcome by this version's restraint, its senses of proportion, its wonderfully sincere relevance in so many ways, that one is left humbled and committed as, surely, Bach must have expected his own public to be. This assuredly is a worthy account: it will be very hard indeed to equal, let alone excel.

Stephen Daw

Orgelmesse + sung chorales Ullrich Böhme,
Thomanerchor Leipzig 2 CDs
Rondeau ROP4017/18

One of the most important musical outcomes of the year 2000 was the installation of the 'Bach' organ in his own Thomaskirche in Leipzig. Positioned in the north gallery, opposite the 'Bach window', the organ's specification is based on that of the 4 manual and 60 stop

organ in Eisenach designed by Bach's uncle, Johann Christoph – an organ that Bach often praised. The Bach organ, built in the central German Thuringian tradition, is a further step towards weaning organists off the very different North German organ sound that generations have come to associate with Bach. It is in 'Chorton' (choir pitch) of 465Hz, with a device that transposes down a tone to chamber pitch for use with instruments. The so-called Organ Mass (published as the Third part of the *Clavierübung*) is an ideal vehicle for demonstrating the rich palette of tonal colours that Bach would have had at his disposal in his organ playing. A welcome addition to the organ pieces is the inclusion of chorales sung by the Thomanerchor, with their own accompaniment of two historic string bass instruments from the Thomaskirche's own collection. Ullrich Böhme's playing is stylistically appropriate and musical, with very effective use of articulation and some lovely registrations – playing that can bear repeated listening, with no intrusive mannerisms. There is one major issue (for me, at least) with the speed of the central section of the concluding 'St Anne' fugue which is too detailed to go into now – and Böhme interprets it in the way that most organists do. Organs of this ilk usually sound best when groups of 8' stops are used together (the complete opposite of the North German school) – it would have been useful to have had the registrations in the CD notes to see exactly what combinations were used.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Bach *Toccatas* Léon Berben *hpscd & org*
153' 15" (2 CDs)

Ramée RAM0903

BWV 532, 538, 540, 564-6 1646/1725 van Hagerbeer
/ Schnitger organ BWV 910-6, Anh. 178 on *hpscd*
after Zell 1728

Although most organists and harpsichordists will already own recordings of their respective keyboard toccatas, this double CD gives a chance to compare the compositional styles of both genres, with one disc devoted to the *pedaliter* and the other to the *manualiter* works. Having played some of the *manualiter* Toccatas on the organ myself, I wonder whether the strict division into organ and harpsichord works is entirely appropriate, but there would be no room on the 2 CDs to include versions on different instruments, and a performance on pedal clavichord would sound out of place. A programme of 14 Toccatas is not the most relaxing listen, but Berben's interpretations are musically effective.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Bach *Goldberg Variations* Gunther Rost (Aubertin organ, église Saint-Louis-en-l'Île, Paris) 44'54"
OEHMS Classics OC636

This is the first time I have heard Gunther Rost's organ playing. Although his CV seems impressive (and he lectures at London's Royal Academy of Music), I find his playing quite alarming. He adopts an extremely mannered style of playing which has the effect of sounding choppy and rhythmically unsteady or, as in the opening section, so hesitant as to be almost like a child sight-reading a piece, searching for each note, with no concept of pulse. Several curious low-frequency thumps on the recording might suggest a very close microphone position that is picking up mechanical noise – or even the noise of the performer's finger hitting the keyboard. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

Bach *Goldberg Variations* Martin Schmeding (1755 Silbermann organ, Dresden Hofkirche) 74'44"
Cybele SACD 030.802

I am relieved that there are two versions of the *Goldberg Variations* played on the organ for me to compare. My faith was restored by listening to Martin Schmeding's interpretation, played on Silbermann's glorious swansong organ in Dresden's Hofkirche. Schmeding does not attempt to retain the colours or texture of a harpsichord performance, and any ideas of this being music to fall asleep to are swiftly dispelled. But, given some reservations about whether this should ever be performed on the organ at all, I found this a very compelling listen. It is worth buying for the glorious sound of the majestic organ alone. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

Bach *Goldberg Variations* Aapo Häkkinen *hpscd* 79'38"
Alba ABCD 283

Aapo Häkkinen was a Helsinki cathedral chorister who began to study both harpsichord and organ at the Sibelius Academy in 1989, then in Amsterdam and Paris with van Asperen, Hantaï and Leonhardt, before returning to Finland to teach, play and conduct: he is an outstanding young musician. His recording of Bach's wonderful variations shows him to have authority, a most tender sensitivity, dignity, and unique perception: a magnificent product to cherish. *Stephen Daw*

J S Bach *Sonatas and Partitas for solo violin* Alina Ibragimova 139'08" (2 CDs)
Hyperion CDA67691/2

I have praised Alina Ibragimova's solo Bach playing in two *EMR* concert reviews,

so have been looking forward to hearing her CD of the Bach solo violin works. The big difference with recordings is that the physical presence of the performer is taken out of the equation, leaving the music to speak alone. Anybody who has seen Alina play will recognise the important contribution that her very compelling stage manner makes to her musicality, so hearing her play without that influence was an important test of my own musical judgement of her playing. But I need not have feared, for this recording is as intensely musical and sensitive as her live playing. Indeed, it would be interesting to know how much editing there was, as the recording has the freshness and vitality of Alina's live performances. One of the key aspects of these is the way that she quietly and unobtrusively draws the audience into her musical world. The same happens with this recording, but by purely aural means, notable her extraordinary ability to play quietly and to explore her violin's range of tone colours. The depth of her interpretation is staggering for one so young. Although much of her playing (and her three previous CDs) have been of 20th century works, she has an exquisite insight into the niceties of Baroque performance, having studied the earlier repertoire with Adrian Butterfield. The violin is a 1738 Pietro Guarneri. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

Bach *Chamber Music from Heimbach* Power Station Ensemble Heimbach, Lars Vogt *dir* 65'52"
Avi-music RWE 8553165
BWV 1018, 1029, 1051 & 1079

This disk seems to be derived from two Concerts recorded on 10.06.2008 and 15.06.2008. All of the soloists are musical but there are a few inconsistencies in style. Vogt himself features on both harpsichord and piano, to accompany a stylish baroque ensemble in Brandenburg Concerto 6 and a far more modern violinist (Christian Tetzlaff) in the last Sonata, between which we hear stylish gambists Rainer and Ghislaine Zipperling, a sensitive flautist Angela Firkins, two further able harpsichordists, stylish string-players, largely sensitive to today's conceptions of period music, producing mostly dependable results. *Stephen Daw*

Bach *Violin Concertos* Catherine Mackintosh, Elizabeth Wallfisch, Paul Goodwin, The King's Consort, Robert King 58'55"
Hyperion Helios CDH55347 (rec 1989)

Listening to this CD was like spending time with an old friend. I listen to the original release of this recording quite a lot and, although there may have been different versions marketed in the 20 years since it appeared, none has really

come close to rivalling, let alone surpassing, this well-paced account of four of Bach's loveliest orchestral works. Don't miss this chance to pick it up at a bargain price. *BC*

Bach *Orchestral Suite for a young prince* Ensemble Sonnerie, Gonzalo X. Ruiz *org*, Monica Huggett *dir* 73'45"
Avie AV2171

In 1996 Joshua Rifkin suggested that Bach's *Orchestral Suite* no.2 in B minor BWV 1067 for flute and strings was an adaptation of an A minor original, scored in all likelihood for solo violin and strings. Rifkin based his argument partly on scribal errors in the performing parts that may have resulted from the act of transposition, and partly on the perception that the string writing seems unidiomatic—in B minor. Rifkin's arguments have been widely debated and Breitkopf have even published Werner Breig's reconstruction of the putative A minor original for strings. But, as Nancy Hadden argues in her review of Breig's edition (see *Early Music* 35 (2008), 132), it is hard to convert the solo line into a violin part without losing much of the interest of the suite. Indeed, Breig resorted in his edition to reducing Bach's five-part writing to four parts.

This recording of the Four *Orchestral Suites* offers another solution, devised by the oboist Gonzalo X. Ruiz: the Suite is played in an A minor version, with the solo part for oboe. The combination of strings and oboe was normal in the French-inspired orchestral suites of such composers as Johann Fischer and Johann Sigismund Kusser. In his booklet notes, Ruiz points out that the range of the solo part in A minor fits the Baroque oboe perfectly. He clinches his case by pointing to the example of Bach's Cantata 82 *Ich habe genug*, written originally in C minor with an oboe obbligato, but later transposed to E minor with a flute obbligato. Bach may have made the adaptation primarily to suit whichever vocal soloist was available, but Ruiz argues that the transposed cantata shows similar parallels to the flute part of BWV 1067 (for instance, often using the instrument's weak lower register).

In performance, the oboe version of Suite no.2 loses the galant character of the flute version, and becomes very similar to the orchestral suites of the German Lullyists. Unlike the flute, the oboe can sound through the texture even if it does not hold the top part, and the adaptation thus solves the problems of balance that sometimes blight performances of the flute version. Particularly successful is the transformation of the *Badinerie* into a series of martial fanfares on the oboe; Ruiz suggests that the

familiar title is a corruption of 'Battinerie'. I was slightly less convinced by the oboe rendition of the Polonaise, because the style and character of this movement seems closely intertwined with the fashion for flute-playing in the mid-eighteenth century.

The recording also offers Suites nos 3 and 4 (BWV 1068 and 1069) in versions without trumpet and drums, drawing on Rifkin's argument that these instruments were added for later performances by J. S. or C. P. E. Bach. Lacking the pomp of the ceremonial instruments, these two suites gain a more intimate character. The players of Ensemble Sonnerie characterise each movement with animated dance rhythms, and there is an elegant poise in many of the minuets. It is likely that the Four Suites were performed in these pared-down versions at the Cöthen court (hence the disc's title, 'Orchestral Suites for a Young Prince'); yet there is a sense that they have been depleted of much of their instrumental colour, reduced to strings and oboe throughout. The homogeneous effect of these rescorings is at odds with Bach's frequent desire to explore every possible instrumental colour, no matter how impractical (as in the Brandenburg Concertos). This disc offers a new take on the Four Orchestral Suites, supported by credible scholarship, but it may also make some listeners newly appreciative of the qualities of the familiar fuller scoring.

Stephen Rose

Bach *The Art of Fugue* Colin Tilney
see *Fugue*, p. 31

Jaume Casellas *Corpus Christi en Toledo, 1751* Sphera AntiQva & Memoria de los Sentidoes, Carlos Martínez Gil 50'
Columna Música 1CM0208
Missa Punge lingua / Sacris Solemnnes + 2 hymns, Villancico al Santísimo Sacramento (1748)

This disc gives the opportunity to hear some rare ceremonial music by the Catalan composer Jaume Casellas (1690-1764). Both the mass setting and the secular villancico are scored for 8-part double choir with violins, oboes, trumpets, timpani and continuo, and the secular work contains a recitative and a tenor aria sandwiched between choruses. Both works are full of pomp and splendour, and the period instrument performances are generally excellent, although the timpanist appears not to use hard sticks, and tends to dominate the texture at times. The excellent booklet describes the celebratory rituals and the setting in much detail. How is it that, whereas JS Bach can write in 24 (no, 25 keys, with E flat and D sharp minors in the '48'), all Spanish church music seems to be in D major? (The Valls *Missa Scala Aretina*

suffers from the same monotony). All 13 tracks on this otherwise interesting CD are in the one key, even the movements without trumpets. Ian Graham-Jones

Clérambault *Le Triomphe d'Iris* (1706)
Hervé Niquet and Le Concert Spirituel
Naxos 8.554455

The original Concert Spirituel was set up in 1725 by Anne Danican Philidor, and gave concerts in the Salle des Cent Suisses in the Tuileries in Paris until 1790, when it became one of the early casualties of the French Revolution. The present Concert Spirituel conducted by Hervé Niquet is a fine orchestra consisting of strings, oboes, flutes, recorders and bassoon, and a continuo section of harpsichord, viola da gamba and two theorboes. The sound is well balanced and their ensemble is excellent, with a pleasing variety of orchestration. The flutes and recorders are inevitably much in evidence to create a pastoral setting, and the theorboes give a warmth and gentleness to the recitatives. Pitch is A=392.

Louis-Nicolas Clérambault (1676-1749) wrote his pastorale, *Le Triomphe d'Iris*, in 1706. In this fantasy world of shepherds and shepherdesses, there are two couples, Tircis and Philis declaring their love, and Daphnis courting a reluctant Silvie. The arrival of Iris and Love brings them all happily together at the end. The plot is simple and idealistic, but no doubt gave escapist pleasure to the well-to-do concertgoers of the Ancien Régime. Clérambault's pastorale proceeds apace. No item lasts longer than a few minutes, suiting listeners with a short attention span. Eleven of the 29 tracks last for less than two minutes. Tircis and Phillis have the longest stint, with just over six minutes to sing sweet nothings to each other. Silvie's 'Heureuse paix' at the start of the Troisième Entrée is a particularly tender moment, as she tries to come to terms with her growing attraction to young Daphnis. The songs – solos, dialogues and choruses – are interspersed with lively bourrées and canaries, restrained sarabandes, graceful minuets, rustic passepieds and sprightly rigaudons. It would have been a fine spectacle. Clérambault may not be as well known today as some of his contemporaries, but his music is first rate, and he deserves wider recognition. Stewart McCoy

Graupner *Per il Flauto* Sabrina Frey rec,
Ars Musica Zürich 67' 59"
Berlin Classics 00 1653 2CC
GWV 216, 219, 313, 447, 707 & 708

This is Sabrina Frey's choice of music to mark the 250th anniversary of Christoph Graupner's death next year. It includes a concerto and an overture for recorder and strings, a solo sonata with bc, a trio

sonata for recorder and violin, another for recorder and obbligato harpsichord (these last three all originally for flute) and a canonic sonata for two recorders and gamba, with Maurice Steger playing the other recorder. After an early career as an opera composer, Graupner became Kapellmeister at the Darmstadt court where he was a prolific composer of cantatas, symphonies, chamber music and concertos. When JS Bach was appointed Kantor of the Thomaskirche in Leipzig in 1723 only after Telemann and Graupner had withdrawn their applications, he was said to be 'as good as Graupner'. This CD certainly demonstrates that Graupner deserves to be better known today. Like Telemann, he blends French and Italian style with occasional hints of Polish influence and what even sounds like a touch of the Irish in the fourth movement of the solo sonata. Graupner's music is full of wit and imaginative ideas and is given a great performance on this CD. Victoria Helby

Handel *Teseo* Franko Fagioli *Teseo*, Helene Schneiderman *Medea*, Jutta Böhnert *Agilea*, Kai Wessel *Egeo*, Matthias Rexroth *Arcane*, Olga Polyakova *Clizia*, Staatsorchester Stuttgart, Konrad Junghänel
Carus 83.437 159' 46" (3 CDs in box)

Teseo is an Italian opera following the French opera format, based on Greek mythology, written by a German in England: surely it deserves EU sponsorship! This live recording is the latest offering from Carus, and although it would no doubt have been a fine evening's entertainment, as a CD it is only moderately successful. The cast is generally strong, although Kai Wessel, as usual, is really more suited to church music, and Matthias Rexroth hoots rather – neither comes anywhere near Fagioli. Helene Schneidermann is a not a bad Medea, but she lacks the passion and rage Medea requires as she becomes more and more unhinged – so well portrayed by Della Jones on the Minkowski recording. This is not really her fault, I feel: Junghänel's direction so follows the homogenous-Handel school that he could be English (see *EMR* *passim*). Medea's music is extraordinary, and should sound so. An example is 'Dal cupo baratro' in Act IV, where she summons the furies to avenge her: she does not wait for the orchestra, which comes in after her. This highly original aria should be a seat-shifting moment for us, but Junghänel makes the orchestra sound disinterested, and insists on an irritating *rit* at the end of the B section. Similarly, Medea's second-act spat with Egeo is not nearly bitter enough. In all, this recording is all right, but I won't be swapping it for the Minkowski, despite Erato's horrid recorded sound.

Katie Hawks

Handel In the Playhouse Mary Bevan S, Greg Tassell T, L'Avventura London, Zak Ozmo 52' 15"
Opella Nova ONCD014

Copyright laws might have made Handel's finances easier, but they would have prevented the delights on this disc. This is a collection, as the title suggests, of Handel's arias and other tunes tea-leafed for various ballad operas. It's a great disc for testing how well you know your Handel, but the booklet does tell you where each air came from. The singers are both good, and the band is excellent. This is about the most interesting anniversary-inspired disc I've reviewed so far, and it's well worth having. *Katie Hawks*

Handel Domestic Opera Hank Knox *hpscd* 75' 55"
Early-music.com EMCCD-7770
Music from *Il Pastor Fido*, *Semele* & *Radamisto* + Babbell's 1st, 2nd & 4th sets

Hot on the heels of my colleague John Kitchen's recording of Handel operatic overtures (see *EMR* August 2009) comes this recording of a similar but barely overlapping repertoire from Canadian Hank Knox. Knox includes two of William Babbell's suites made up from Handel's operas as well as arrangements by Handel and others. He plays instruments by Shudi, Shudi/Broadwood and Kirckman from Fenton House, the variety of instruments making up for some inevitable repetitiveness in the music. Burney was rather damning of Babbell, speaking of 'mere rapidity of finger...without the assistance of taste', which one can understand listening to his extended arrangement of *Vo far guerra* from *Rinaldo* which finishes this CD. But this is in a long tradition of battle pieces and the whole collection is played with stylistic panache and is well recorded.

Noel O'Regan

Handel: A Flauto e Cembalo - Sonatas for Recorder and Harpsichord Heiko ter Schegget *rec*, Zvi Meniker *hpscd* 63' 45"
MDG 905 1564-6

Recorder sonatas HWV 367, 369, 362, 377, 360; 365, *Andante* HWV 409, *Menuet in d*

There are a lot of recordings of Handel's opus 1 sonatas. What makes these different is that two of them are played on a recorder by Peter Bressan dating from about 1715 borrowed from Frans Brüggens's collection. Its pitch is a'=407. The other recorders, copies of the Bressan and of a Stanesby Sr. recorder from the same collection, were made by the player himself. All the recorders sound pretty good, though there are one or two questionable notes made all the more audible by the SACD recording

made, as the booklet points out, without any sound-modifying manipulation in a natural acoustic. The *Andante* HWV 409 is a variant of a movement from the recorder sonata in D minor (HWV 367a). We are not told anything about the *Menuet* which has no HWV number, though the recording company's information claims that it may never have been recorded before.

Victoria Helby

Handel's Harp Maxine Eilander *harp*, Syndia Sieden S, Seattle Baroque Orchestra, Stephen Stubbs

Atma Classique ACD2 2541

Music from *Alexander Balus*, *Alexander's Feast*, *Esther*, *Giulio Cesare*, *Rinaldo* & *Saul* + *Concerto in F*, op. 4 no. 5

This selection of arias, interludes and concertos featuring the harp is rather nice. The playing and the recorded sound are good, and the CD hangs together to show, as Stubbs says in his booklet note, Handel's 'very real attachment to the harp'. Even the soprano plays second fiddle (if that's possible) to her harp accompaniment! Stubbs' version of *Lascia ch'io pianga* works well, and in all this is a recommendable disc for anyone interested in the harp. For hard Handel nuts, this is a compilation disc, so may not satisfy.

Katie Hawks

Janitsch Sonate de Camera Vol. 1 Notturmo, Christopher Palameta *oboe*, dir Atma ACD2 2593 67' 55"

These five quartets (quadros) for three melody instruments and continuo are complex, extended works by this member of Frederick the Great's court orchestra in the 1740s. All feature oboe, oboe d'amore or traverso, three of which on this CD are grouped, unusually, with viola as the third melody instrument. One is, I suspect uniquely, scored for oboe d'amore, two violas and Bc. Aside from the four-movement G Minor sonata, which uses the chorale *O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden* on oboe in its expressive third movement (around which the other instruments weave complex counterpoint), the remaining works are in three movements, the first being slow. These rank highly amongst the plethora of German late baroque chamber music, although, as a bass player, Janitsch could have written some more interesting bass lines, which at times tend to plod along with too many repeated notes. The disk is one that I can highly recommend for its interest and for the clearly committed playing on period instruments. *Ian Graham-Jones*

Leclair Violin Sonatas - Book 1, Nos. 1-4 Adrian Butterfield *vln*, Alison McGillivray *gamba*, Laurence Cummings *hpscd* 64' 15"
Naxos 8.570888

I hope this is the beginning of a complete survey of Leclair's violin sonatas from this line-up; in the past, several fiddlers seem to have set out with such an objective in mind, but have given up after a couple of discs. Here, Adrian Butterfield teams up with Alison McGillivray (*gamba*) and Laurence Cummings for the first four works from Book 1. These are a mix of dance movements and others identified by tempo marking, the *Adagio* with which each begins clearly fulfilling the role of Prelude. Thus Leclair, though much more technically demanding for the performers, asserts the Italian roots of his music, even if there's no denying the Gallic flavour to some movements. I listened to this recital several times, often imagining the trio exchanging smiles as the musical ideas passed from one to the other, thoroughly enjoying this repertoire. This is not yet the mesmerizing Leclair, every bit as showy as Locatelli or Veracini, but Butterfield and Co. are wonderful in crisp, agile faster movements and the richly expressive slow ones. I look forward to more from all concerned!

BC

Le Menu de St. Philbert 6 Cantatilles Mónica González S, Zoltán Megyesi T [anonymous ensemble] 52' 26"
Hungaroton HCD 32564

Christophe Le Menu de St Philbert (c1720-1774) was a composer, music seller and publisher (à la clef d'or) and journal editor. The firm was run by various members of the family from around 1740 to 1790, when presumably it was overwhelmed by political events. These six cantatilles (small cantatas) were published as a set in the early 1740s and re-issued singly on several subsequent occasions. Each piece consists of one or two récitatifs and two airs with continuo and one or two of violin, flute or hurdy-gurdy. The texts inevitably invoke the thoughts of various mythological figures (Ariane etc) to explore the topic of love. Even if the music lacks the intensity of Clérambault's generation it is not without drama in the recitatives and has a graceful melodic charm in the arias. Apart from an uncertain start to the very first track the singers are in control and there is a good sense of corporate style. The English notes do not benefit from the most idiomatic of translations. The texts are given in their original French, with Hungarian and English translations.

David Hansell

Juan de Ledesma Sonatas para violín y bajo Blai Justo, Elisa Juglar, Bernard Zonderman 68' 40"
Ramée RAM 0901

The five sonatas on this disc have survived in a MS of 18th-century violin

sonatas now in a private collection. A large library of such material in one of the Madrid royal palaces was destroyed during the Civil War, so the discovery of these works in 1998 and publication in a modern edition is something of a miracle, especially since the original is not accessible to scholars. Blai Justo plays two sonatas accompanied by cello and early guitar, two with cello and slightly later guitar, and one (in what some think is the "authentic" scoring) with only cello accompaniment. The booklet note is right to say that the guitar does not upset the balance between the bowed stringed instruments in the way that a harpsichord can, and varying the plucked instrument according to the character of the music is also a sensible approach to this attractive collection. I was slightly disappointed that the cellist didn't take up the chance to show off her harmonic abilities by throwing in some chords; but the violin part has some double-stopping, so perhaps the performers agreed that the *bajo* should simply be that – a foundation for his solo part. This is certainly a very interesting release, well played and beautifully recorded. BC

Mattheson *Der liebeiche und geduldige David* Kennedy, Eittinger, Ciolek, Hilz, Spogis SATBB, Chor der Kölner Akademie, Die Kölner Akademie, Michael Alexander Willens 60' 50"
cpo 777 360-2

Best known for his theoretical and biographical publications, Mattheson was in charge of music at Hamburg Cathedral. The present oratorio was written for performance there in 1723. The manuscript was among the many that returned to Hamburg from Yerevan (where it had moved in 1945) in 1998. While perhaps not a masterpiece, it was worthwhile resurrecting, and it is clear that Mattheson at least thought in theatrical terms – witness the heated argument between David and the allegorical character Meditatio at the opening. There are also interesting effects, like a chorus that opens with the voices singing in octaves, and another (based on Ein' feste Burg) that echoes Biber's use of hymn melodies. The orchestra includes flutes, solo oboe, bassoons and strings, with harpsichord or organ and theorbo. The soloists make the most of the material Mattheson gives them, and the choir (which I think, though it is nowhere made explicit, is made up of the eight singers, including the five soloists) sings well, although I think Andrew Benson-Wilson would take issue with the sopranos – though we learn from the booklet notes that Mattheson had no scruples about hiring

the leading sopranos from the opera-house to sing his leading roles. The final chorus, replete with hunting horns, is a rousing *Wie schön leuchtet* parody. One wonders if the clergy were tapping their toes or choking on their sermons! BC

Monza *Harpsichord Music* Terence Charlston 67' 07"

Deux-Elles DXL1117

Suites in C, c, D & E, Prelude & Fugue, with alternative Prelude; Monari: Prelude & Fugue; Pasquini: Toccata con lo Scherzo del Cucco

Carlo Ignazio Monza is best-known as the real composer of some of the fake Pergolesi used by Stravinsky in *Pulcinella*; two of those pieces are included here. Charlston plays four suites plus a Prelude and Fugue by Monza, as well as a Prelude and Fugue by Bartolomeo Monari and Bernardo Pasquini's 'Cuckoo' Toccata. He plays on a copy by David Evans of a Giusti harpsichord in the Smithsonian; it is full-bodied and appropriate to this attractive music, which has much in common with Handel. The Prelude and Fugue in F minor, on the other hand, points to J.S. Bach's Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue. Charlston's impressive technique makes light of the virtuosity of some of this music and he is always alert to its variety of influences; his ornaments are crisp and never get in the way of the music while his musicality persuades us of the liveliness of the Italian keyboard tradition in the early 18th century. A welcome recording indeed.

Noel O'Regan

Porpora *Opera Arias* Karina Gauvin S, Il Complesso Barocco, Alan Curtis 79' 30"

Atma Classique ACD2 2590

Music from *Adelaide*, *Angelica*, *Arianna*, *Ezio*, *Imeneo* & *Polifemo*

For long relegated to little more than a footnote in biographies of Handel (and Haydn), in recent years Nicola Porpora has shown welcome signs of emerging from the shadows, although to date only one of his forty-odd operas, *Arianna in Naxos*, has been recorded complete (I don't count the K617 *Orlando*, a bastardised version of the serenata *Angelica*). By coincidence it is *Arianna*, a London opera first given in 1733 – not, *pace* the notes, 1734 – that receives the lions' share of this generously timed and richly rewarding disc. Canadian soprano Karina Gauvin has an ideal voice for this kind of repertoire, full, even voluptuous, yet with a technique able to encompass the most demanding coloratura (listen, for example, to the marvellous opening track, 'Nobil onda' from *Adelaide* (Rome, 1723), and the natural fast vibrato intelligently used for expressive purposes.

Virtually every track here testifies to

Porpora's ability to write unusually grateful vocal lines, while at the same time never neglecting the drama inherent in the text. Especially impressive are two extracts from *Polifemo* (London, 1735), Galatea's loss of Acis conveyed by Gauvin to moving effect, the repeated cries of 'dove sei?' heartbreaking in their intensity, while the final sequence of aria and *accompagnato* from *Arianna* builds tremendous dramatic impact, even within the context of a recital. The presence of a conductor as experienced as Alan Curtis ensures stylish support, although the theorbo dominates the orchestral texture too much. But that barely detracts from a CD that belongs in the collection of every Baroque opera lover.

Brian Robins

Rameau *Les Indes galantes* Christophe Rousset *hpscd* 63'

Naïve Ambroisie AM152

This recording is as much about the harpsichord (Hemsch 1761) as about the music or the player: together they make a pretty potent cocktail, and the recorded sound is excellent, Rousset is, of course, a master of this repertoire and Rameau's invention seldom flags even a little. In recent years we have become relatively familiar with the original orchestral colours of this music and this (sometimes inelegant) transcription does, at times, sound a little thin. For the final *chaconne* Rousset actually takes matters into his own hands and plays his own more idiomatic version. But despite the oddities, fully noted and explained in the notes, this is a splendid addition to the Rameau discography.

David Hansell

Telemann *Christmas Cantatas* Mária Zadori S, Capella Savaria, Pál Németh

Hungaroton-HCD 32611 66' 45"

+ Telemann *Ouverture à la Pastorale*, Chr. Bernhard *Fürchtet euch nicht*

This is what we might (charitably) call an 'enhanced re-release'. When the Telemann cantatas first appeared on Quintana in 1991, they were alone. Here, Hungaroton has rebranded them and filled out the disc with a Telemann suite (recorded by them in 1988) and a Christmas motet by Christoph Bernhard from 1983. Although the Telemann performances have not dated to any considerable degree, I'm afraid the Bernhard has. The most successful piece on the disc is the orchestral suite, though here, too, today's performers would have breathed a little more life into the dance movements.

BC

Telemann *Harmonischer Gottes-Dienst* Vol. 2 Bergen Barock 55' 27"

Toccata Classics TOCC 0057

TVWV 1: 469, 481, 715, 948, 953 & 1044

Commercially cunning Telemann! Though there were reasons why he would have found cantatas for a small ensemble useful in Hamburg, there can have been relatively few churches in the Germany of his time who could not muster a trio of voice, violin and organ/harpsichord for a weekly cantata. Even a Bach (JS's nephew) remarked in 1758 'there cannot be many Protestant churches where they do not perform Telemann's cantata cycles'. And if they were performed like this, the congregations must have really looked forward to them. Counter-tenor Franz Vitzthum does not have the heroic timbre of a Bowman but neither does he have the vibrato of the modern operatic falsettist and he can certainly get round Telemann's often demanding notes. The violin *obligati* fizz with life and even in swift succession these six cantatas (which cover the Christmas season) make for a really enjoyable listen. Just don't expect timpani to introduce *Jauchzet, frohlocket*. The thorough booklet includes the biblical readings upon which the cantatas reflect. The only downside is the relatively short duration. *David Hansell*

Telemann Duette Dorothee Oberlinger, Lorenzo Cavasanti *recs* 62' 54"
Raumklang/marc aurel edition MA 20040
TWV 40: 104, 105, 118, 120, 124, 131 & 134, 41: B3

Telemann duets are fun to play and a couple of them make a good addition to a concert programme, but when I first listened to it I wasn't totally convinced that a CD totally devoted to them would have a very large audience. I may be wrong, though, as I found that I enjoyed them more on subsequent playings. The music is taken from five publications for treble instruments ranging from Telemann's *Sonates sans basse* published in Hamburg in 1727 to his more adventurous duos published in Paris and Berlin in the 1750s. While most of the music is performed on alto recorders, a welcome lower sound is provided by the bass recorder in the slow movement of one of the two Canonice Sonatas (Paris 1738) and a sonata from *Der getreue Music-Meister* (Hamburg 1728). The players are well matched and make the best of this not very serious music, though one or two of the slow movements could have benefited from being played more slowly. *Victoria Helby*

Torri Le martyre des Maccabées Anne Magouët, François-Nicolas Glesot, Renaud Tripathi, Benoit Porcherot, Alain Buet, Bruno Rostand, Etienne Desbaisieux *ScTeTTBarBB*, Choeur de chambre de Namur, Les agréments, Jean Tubéry 109' 14" (2 CDs in a book + bonus DVD)
Musique en Wallonie MEW 0846-847

I had no idea what to expect when I put this disc into my player. In fact, I did not even start with the CDs, but rather I watched the DVD of the complete performance. That was revelatory, though in ways I'm not sure I appreciated – like the fact that a recorder duet is played by the director and a second player who steps out of the band just for that movement; all a bit much of a distraction. Such minute reservations aside (and you can always just listen to the music on CD instead), this is a wonderfully paced and executed oratorio performance in French. The choir, orchestra and a range of soloists respond intuitively to the coaxings and pained expressions of their conductor, and relish his rather more infrequent radiant smiles. That this work (or, indeed, any other pieces by the composer) is not better known is quite astonishing – it will easily stand shoulder to shoulder with contemporary works (there are plentiful echoes of Charpentier and Lully's finest outpourings). The book in which the discs are stored has the full text in French, Flemish, English and German as well as comprehensive (if not always easily followed) accompanying notes. Highly recommended to Francophiles and lovers of the oratorio alike. *BC*

I wasn't sure whether Pietro Torri (c.1650-1737) belongs in the 17th or 18th century. Since this dates from the 18th, I've put him here. *CB*

Vivaldi in Bohemia Gabriela Eibenová, Hana Blaziková, Marta Fadlevicová, Lester Lardenoye, Tomáš Král *SSSATB*, Ensemble Inégal, Prague Baroque Soloists, Adam Viktora 66' 33"
Nibiru 0150-2211
RV 595, 600, 610b 617

There are four works on this sparkling CD: star soprano performs two of Vivaldi's best known liturgical solo pieces (*Laudate pueri* RV600 and *Salve regina* RV617), while the full forces of Prague Baroque soloists and Ensemble Inégal under Adam Viktora give stirring and uplifting renditions of *Dixit Dominus* RV595 and a version of the G minor *Magnificat* that is unique to a Czech source and not previously recorded. Vivaldi's music was, of course, well known in Prague and elsewhere in the Czech lands during the early 18th century: the published set including *The Four Seasons* is dedicated to a Czech nobleman (to whom the Red Priest also sent many other instrumental works, and they may have met in person during Vivaldi's trip to the north in the late 1720s), and there are at least three surviving sources for this *Magnificat*, and archival records of others, now lost.

Whatever the exciting musicological situation, it is the performances that concern us in these pages, and Viktora

and his forces once again deliver at the very highest levels – instrumentalists, soloists and chorus alike are outstanding. Their star soprano, Gabriela Eibenová, is surely destined for greatness: she has all the warmth and colour one longs for in slower arias, while navigating even Vivaldi's most demanding runs with agility and great accuracy: this is a beautiful voice combined with intelligence and a sense of real style. But if you're looking for excitement, the alto solo into the choral 'Implevit ruinas' is electrifying. This is one group whose every release I look forward to – I hope we won't have to wait long until the next one! *BC*

Vivaldi The French Connection *Concertos from flute, violin, bassoon & strings* Katy Bircher fl, Peter Whelan bsn, La Serenissima, Adrian Chandler 76' 54"
Avie AV2178
RV100, 114, 119, 157, 185, 211, 432, 438, 468 & 488

It has to be said that 'Vivaldi' and 'France' would seldom find themselves juxtaposed in a word-association game. Yet here the Venetian master shows that he can don a beret and produce a spirited *chaconne* as well as anyone. His music was, of course, very popular in France (last year I reviewed Chédeville's outrageous hurdy-gurdy adaptation of *The Seasons*) and he prepared a set of 12 concertos especially for a French patron as well as isolated larger-scale works for other worthies. But the most notable feature of this issue is that it inaugurates an exploration by *La Serenissima* of Vivaldi's solo wind concertos. Katy Bircher (flute) and Peter Whelan (bassoon) are the featured soloists on this issue and one has to hope that they will continue to be so. The latter's virtuosity on an always unlikely solo instrument is almost alarming but at the same compelling. This will be a series to savour. *David Hansell*

Baroque Cello Illuminations: Shedding new light on old favourites Angela East, Ruth Alford *vcl*, Howard Beach *hpscd*
RPR RP005 73' 42"

J. S. Bach, Bonporti, F. Couperin, Eccles, de Fesch, Giuseppe Sammartini/Berteau, Vivaldi

I like the basic premise of this disc: take some of the repertoire which young cellists are encouraged to learn, and record them in stylish and inspirational performances by one of the leading players of the day. There are some lovely pieces – I really liked the Vivaldi and the Bach, which just has to be on everyone with a soul's Desert Island Discs list – and the performances are colourful and imaginative, with some lovely ornamentation. Unfortunately, not many young cellists will be able to recreate the sounds

by virtue of them having to play modern cello with a modern bow, accompanied (more likely than not) by a pianist from a written-out piano part, so the spontaneity of soloist and accompanist alike is hampered. I'm also not sure I'd want to encourage pianists to emulate some of the continuo realisations, which I found just a little too far up the keyboard and, dare I say it, jazzy... I'm not saying we should all be old fuddy-duddies – far from it! These versions should be taken as one way of performing the pieces, as an inspiration to open one's mind to possibilities, and not as something to replicate. BC

Cantate Napolitane del '700 Pino de Vittorio T, Alessandro Ciccolino vln, Tommaso Rossi fl, Ugo di Giovanni archlute, Cappella della Pietà dei Turchini, Antonio Florio 72' 26"
Eloquentia-EL 0919

This opens with a folky piece by Niccolò Grillo, but is otherwise rather refined. The title is misleading. One expects the programme to be predominantly vocal, but there are appealing concertos by Nicola Ugolino (lute & vln), Nicola Fiorenza (vln) and flute (Leo) with arias by Leo and Giuseppe de Majo. Enjoyable and varied, though Leo can write more profound music than this. CB

English 18th-century Keyboard Concertos Paul Nicholson, The Parley of Instruments Hyperion Helios CDH55341 76' 06"
Chilcot, Handel, Hayes, Hook, Nares, Roseingrave

This is re-issue of the 1994 Hyperion recording with a more attractive cover but a booklet that omits details of the performers and instruments, with Peter Holman's notes reprinted in a less legible font. Four of the works, the Handel Chaconne in G and the Thomas Chilcot Concerto op.2 no. 2 for harpsichord and strings, the Roseingrave organ concerto in D, and the Hook Concerto op.1 no.5 for piano with flutes, horns and strings, have been the subject of some reconstruction work; the Nares Concerto in G op.2 and the Hayes (the corpulent Philip, known as "fill-chaise", not his father William) concerto no. 4 in A are from early editions. A filler of the first movement of Handel's op.7 no.4 organ concerto, with its dark scoring of bassoons and cellos is good to have in its original version. This disc has been in my collection for some while. It contains some interesting music and it good to have it still available.

Ian Graham-Jones

German Lute Music of the XVIII Century Vol. 3 Alberto Crugnola 13-course lute Symphonia SY 07226 72' 02"
Bach, Baron, Falckenhagen, Kohaut, Kropffgans & Weiss

For his third CD of German baroque lute music Alberto Crugnola plays a *Ciaccona & Ouverture* by Silvius Leopold Weiss, a *Fuga* in G minor by J. S. Bach, a Sonata by Ernst Gottlieb Baron, two Partitas by Adam Falckenhagen and Johann Kropffgans, and a Sonata by Karl Kohaut. Baron worked at the court of Frederick the Great, and wrote an important treatise on the lute, in which he discusses the fashionable galant style and questions of taste. His suite is in the unusual key of D#, with a soothing Allemande, echoes in the Bourrée, and a gentle Capriccio. Falckenhagen's galant style is more quirky, with ear-catching effects: jerky rhythms and short passages in octaves in his Entrée, a super-quiet ending to the Polonaise, and a collection of playful musical ideas in Drole. Not surprisingly Bach's *Fuga* is in a league of its own, with an extraordinary development of the thematic material, and no need for gimmicks. The music of Kropffgans and Kohaut sounds more classical than baroque. The former's suite has short, attractive movements, ending with a cheerful Polonaise; Kohaut's Allegro is more extensive, with some very high notes, irritating appoggiaturas, and a cadenza before coming to a close.

I enjoyed listening to this CD. There is much variety in the style of these composers and in the way their music is performed here. I imagine Baron would have approved of Crugnola's tasteful and thoughtful interpretation. His performance of the pieces by Bach and Weiss is especially pleasing. Stewart McCoy

Italian music in the Low Countries Claire Lefilliâtre sop, Marnix de Cat alto, Han Warmelinck ten, Currende, Erik Van Nevel 79' 42"
Et cetera Klara-KTC 4031
Mancini Missa Septimus & three works by anon

Pride of place on the packaging of this CD goes to a mass by Francesco Mancini (1672-1737). In reality, the focus is on a collection of music belonging to St Rombout's Cathedral in Mechelen, which is currently under investigation. The booklet makes it clear that its presence there does not always mean that the music was performed there – some of it may have come from elsewhere and been deposited in the cathedral library either for protection or as bequests. The first three works on the CD, which compare more than favourably with the Mancini, are anonymous: two solo soprano pieces and a setting for choir of the psalm Lauda Jerusalem. All three of these works call for two violins and viola, as well as continuo (cello, violone and organ throughout), while the Mass (of which only the Kyrie and Gloria sections have

survived in this source) does not require viola. I wonder if I'm one of the few people already to have heard some of Mancini's fine sacred music – some friends in Hannover participated in an amazing concert around 20 years ago which also included Bigaglia and Clari – so I already had an idea of what to expect, and I was not disappointed. Erik Van Nevel and Currende are excellent in this repertoire; two voices take each vocal line, and they blend beautifully. I hope more of St Rombout's treasures will feature in future releases! BC

Springs of Genius Bach and composers who influenced him Margaret Phillips Regent REGCD300

Bruhns, Kerll, Pachelbel, Froberger, Böhm, Reincken, Buxtehude, Bach

This is a well-conceived programme looking at a few (the Germanic contingent) of the composers that are known to have influenced the young Bach. The programme concludes with Bach's own youthfully exuberant Toccata in E (BWV 566), with its thundering final fugue. Margaret Phillips makes good use of the wide range of tonal colours possible on the 2004 Aubertin instrument at St Louis-en-l'Île, Paris, designed under the general influence of the 1746 organ in the St Wenzel church in Naumburg by Zacharias Hildebrandt and tested by Bach) and reflects the very different types of organ that composers as diverse as Kerll and Bruhns would have known.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

CLASSICAL

J. C Bach *Six Sonatas, Op. 5* Sophie Yates hpscd 67' 48"
Chandos Chaconne CHAN 0762

Johann Christian Bach was the darling of mid-18th century London and these six attractive sonatas show why. We tend to forget the city's importance in forging a new international style and Bach's role in that process. His sonatas are highly inventive within their restricted pre-Classical idiom and are given very convincing performances by Sophie Yates. There is no information on the harpsichord she plays, but her registration works very well, including good use of the buff stop. As she says in her booklet notes, the harpsichord paradoxically shows Bach's innovativeness to greater advantage than the piano. Op. 5 no. 6 in C minor is particularly effective, summing up what this particular Bach was about. Yates always lets the music speak for itself and this recording will do much to promote the composer as well as bringing pleasure to listeners. Noel O'Regan

Virtuoso Harpsichord Music: Sons of J.S. Bach Waldemar Döling 54' 16"
DG Scene DG 605 0100-2

Music by all four of J.S. Bach's creative sons is included here, with the neglected eldest, WF, taking the lion's share. His music has a nervous edge to it but is shown to be very effective in a Fantasia and in his Sonata in D. The Adagio of the Sonata is a fugue, otherwise all the music here is solidly pre-Classical. It works quite well on the harpsichord but the slower sections could do with more depth and might have benefitted from a fortepiano. CPE is represented by his *Folia* variations, playful music with lots of mock heroics, and JCF by his 18 variations on 'Ah vous dirai-je Maman' (Twinkle, twinkle...) which are cleverly done with a good variety of ideas and hint at the Mozart set to come. JC's two-movement Sonata op. 17/5 is virtuosic but perhaps not representative of his best music. Döling is a very accomplished player and makes his Blanchetstyle harpsichord works well with clever use of registration. The collection serves to remind us of how little of their father's style his sons carried with them when they left Leipzig. *Noel O'Regan*

Flute Sonatas by the Bach Sons Barthold Kuijken flute, Ewald Demeyere hpscd
Accent ACC 24216 75' 56"
Bach (?) *Flute Sonata in F min*, JC Bach *Sonata in D maj for fl & obbl.* hpscd op.16/1 W B 10 JC (?)
Bach *Sonata in F maj for fl & obbl.* hpscd H 597,
JCF *Bach Sonata in D min for fl & obbl.* hpscd
HW VIII/3 Nr 1, WF Bach *Flute Sonata in E min*
BR WFB B 17, in F maj BR WFB B 18

Barthold Kuijken is well known for his performances and recordings of music by JS Bach and his sons. This CD of three sonatas for flute and bc and three for flute and-obbligato harpsichord intends to fill in some of the gaps in the repertoire, and the fact that there is doubt about which Bach son wrote two of them doesn't detract from their charm. There are good notes about sources in the booklet. Johann Christoph Friedrich's sonata in D minor, in which the harpsichord takes the leading role, has a strikingly rhetorical second movement *Andante-Recitativo* with dramatic recitatives on the harpsichord alternating with more lyrical flute passages. The two sonatas by Wilhelm Friedemann, relatively recent discoveries though this is not the first recording of them, are full of virtuoso writing for the flute, while the harpsichord again takes the leading role in the later D major sonata by JC Bach which dates from 1779. The partnership of Barthold Kuijken and Ewald Demeyere has produced a very attractive performance of this interesting and varied music. *Victoria Helby*

Eichner Symphonies l'arte del mondo,
Werner Ehrhardt
Capriccio 5021
Op. 5/1, 6/2, 7/4 & 11/4

If, like me, you're unfamiliar with the name of Ernst Eichner (1740-77), you're in for a treat. This CD has four symphonies taken from different published sets, and they are all more than worthy to stand alongside anything by most late 18th-century composer's works – all the more remarkable, when one considers that he died so young. He held various court appointments but the aspect of his style that perhaps sets his music apart is the prominence of the bassoon, which was his chosen instrument. That is not to say that these are little bassoon concertos, rather that the instrument is used to colour melodies and, occasionally, to have little solos and duets. There are two symphonies in major keys and two in minor – there is more than a hint of Sturm und Drang in the latter! *L'arte del mondo* (a new group to me) are wonderful advocates of Eichner's output, making a compelling case for the inclusion of his orchestral works in concerts. I wondered if performing material is available: a quick Google search suggested not. Shame. BC

Haydn Die Feuersbrunst Isa Katharina Gericke, Andreas Karasiak, Ferdinand von Bothmer, Otto Katzameier STTB,
Capella Augustina, Andreas Sperring
cpo 777 213-2 91' 57" (2 CDs)

To the best of my knowledge the only other recording of Haydn's marionette Singspiel *Die Feuersbrunst oder Das abgebrannte Haus* is included in a huge (150-CD!) Haydn edition set on Brilliant Classics. The opera almost certainly dates from 1776-1778, although it is has never been authenticated as Haydn's work with absolute certainty, and the spoken dialogue is now lost. Robbins Landon concluded that the opera is substantially by Haydn, but put forward the plausible suggestion that, like other lost marionette operas, it maybe a pasticcio. Certainly there are arias that one would like to think are not by Haydn. You will learn little of all this from the extensive notes, where it is necessary to dig around to discover that the dialogue employed has been specially produced for the recording. Unlike Haydn's other surviving marionette opera, *Philemon und Baucis*, the characters are all drawn from low life, indeed German derivations from *commedia dell'arte*, including the ever-popular character Hanswurst.

The performance (a live recording from Potsdam, June 2006) is a poor affair, with mediocre (at times worse) singing from all but the soprano, and acting by a separate speaking cast that

may have been amusing live, but grates irritatingly on record. Neither do the actors sound remotely like the singing voices of the characters they double. This slapdash approach has spread to the atrocious English translation and typesetting of the booklet, which at times beggar belief. In sum a shoddy production that falls way short of cpo's usual high standards. *Brian Robins*

Haydn Lo speciale Attila Fülöp Sempronio, István Rozsos Mengone, Magda Kalmár Grilletta, Veronika Kincses Volpino, Liszt Ference Chamber Orchestra, Budapest, Zsuzsa Pertis continuo, György Lehel
Hungaroton HCD 11926 (rec. 1978)

I was perhaps mistaken in ordering this for our magazine. Although in this Haydn anniversary year it is important to survey all releases of his more obscure music, this performance of *The Apothecary* (to give it its English title) is essentially a modern performance. It is, however, well sung (there are some lovely character studies, which I'm sure would be very entertaining in the theatre) and the orchestra accompanies well. There have been precious few revivals of Haydn's stage works. I must admit that I find it difficult not to compare them with Mozart's output, and I'm afraid there's no contest. There are gems throughout his output, but I'm afraid he was to Mozart what Telemann was to Handel when it came to writing for the stage. *BC*

Haydn The Seven Last Words of Christ Hungarian State Orchestra, János Ferencsik (orchestral version; 65' 17"); Tátrai Quartet (string quartet version; 56' 44"); Veronika Kincses S, Klára Takács mS, György Korondi T, József Gregor B, Budapest—Chorus, Hungarian State Orchestra, János Ferencsik (oratorio)
Hungaroton HCD 41009 (3 CDs)

Issuing the three versions of this great work in a single set is an interesting idea, though I'm not sure how successful it will be: people who enjoy string quartets rarely like choral music (or is that a rash over-simplification?) The choral version dates from 1981 and, hence, is more modern than the quartet's account (1978) and the orchestral (1979), but it is, for me, the quartet version that wins on every account. None of the recordings is anything near what we'd call HIP, but somehow the Tátrai Quartet get through the music in the shortest time, yet pack the most emotion – and it's not simply a matter of them playing more quickly (which they tend to do, but not always); I suppose four players can react to one another and their audience more directly than either an orchestra or a choir. *BC*

J. Haydn *Canzonetten* Ruth Ziesak S,
Gerold Huber piano TIME?
Capriccio 5025

This contains all the German and English songs that one would expect to find, the English Canzonettas (many with words by Anne Hunter, whose translation of *The Creation* has not benefited from the Haydn anniversary) being mixed with the songs in German. The vocal sounds between the languages are not as different as one might suspect. I can't comment on the singer's German, but the English suffers from occasional problems with consonants. These are annoying if you are listening closely, but not excessively annoying. On the positive side, the balance with the fortepiano is fine, and the songs come over as much stronger and less pretty than they did when heard with piano: even the mother binding her daughter's hair doesn't seem too sentimental. CB

Haydn *Sonatas* Nicolau de Figueiredo *hp scd*
Passeccaille 959 68'35"
Hob. XVI/20, 23, 32, 37

There can be no doubt that Haydn's keyboard sonatas of the 1770s were written for harpsichord or clavichord, not fortepiano. Figueiredo makes a very good case for the former as the ideal instrument for these four sonatas – even the C minor, XVI/20, whose dynamic markings might suggest that it was conceived for clavichord. His playing is brilliantly virtuosic in the quick movements, and he has that rare gift of making expressive use of subtly controlled rhythmic licence in the slow movements without in any way sacrificing what Leopold Mozart called 'il filo'. The instrument, a copy of a big French two-manual by Goujon, 1749, is hardly what Haydn himself would have played at Eszterháza, but it has an impressive sound, with real 'presence'. Warmly recommended. Richard Maunder

M. Haydn *Responsories for Holy Week*,
MH 276-278 Purcell Choir, Members of
Orfeo Orchestra, György Vashegyi 61'25"
Hungaraton HCD 32596

While Leopold Mozart maliciously made play of Michael Haydn's reputed laziness and drunkenness, it is likely Archbishop Colloredo breathed a sigh of relief when in 1782 he promoted Haydn to the post of Salzburg court organist in the room of the recently disgraced incumbent, one Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. As is made clear in an archiepiscopal letter of the same year, the archbishop wished to simplify liturgical music in Salzburg and he found in Haydn a willing servant rather than a rebel.

These Holy Week Responsories pre-date Colloredo's edict, having been composed in 1778, but they conform closely to what the archbishop must have been seeking: homophonic, largely syllabic settings in which clarity of word setting is paramount. Scored for SATB chorus, the otherwise uninformative notes claim that Haydn left three versions, one *a capella*, one with organ, and one with organ and string bass accompaniment. The latter is favoured for the present disc, the first recording of the complete Responsories. Both music and performances are of outstanding quality, the well-balanced choir (Hungarian not English, despite the name) responding with sensitivity and great tonal beauty to the more pathetic writing, and with considerable fervency to more dramatic, declamatory passages. Strongly recommended. Brian Robins

Leopold Mozart *Complete Horn Concertos*
Concerto Rotterdam Heinz Friesen cond.
MDG 321 0085 48' 51"
Concerto for 2 hrs and str. (E flat), Sinfonia
pastorella for 2 vlms, va, db and shepherd's
horn (G), Sinfonia da camera for hn, vln, 2
vlms, b.c. (D), Sinfonia da caccia for 4 hrs,
shotgun and str (G)

Like the Rosetti CD reviewed below, these works are played on modern instruments, with the orchestral playing somewhat dated with heavy accents and continuous vibrato. The instrumentation is given in full above, as it shows the variety of works recorded. The concerto for two horns is dated 1752 and its writing, particularly in the *caccia* third movement, seems somewhat crude. The *Sinfonia pastorella* is played on a wooden four-note instrument, while the *Sinfonia da camera* is the only chamber work in the collection, and perhaps the most musically interesting. If your liking is for gimmicks rather than for musical value, then this may worth buying. If you want high quality music and don't mind modern instruments, try the Rosetti. Ian Graham-Jones

Mozart *Don Giovanni* arr. string quartet
Quatuor Franz Joseph 129' 13" (2 CDs)
Atma Classique ACD2 2559

I must confess not to have listened to all 28 tracks on these two discs – the arrangement of *Don Giovanni*, recitatives and all, for string quartet published by Simrock in 1798. Having been brought up with Mozart's overture in its full orchestration, a version for string quartet immediately loses its impact, however well played by a period ensemble. It does tend to reinforce the conclusion that string quartet arrangements are for performers to enjoy rather than for listeners to sit through. Best left to sit on library shelves! Ian Graham-Jones

Mozart *Coronation Mass* K317 Mielsds,
Forgeron, Wittmann, Berner, Chor der
vocatella, sinfonieorchester Aachen,
Marcus Bosch 63' 25"
Coviello Classics COV 30607
+ Exsultate Jubilate, Vesperae solennes de
Confessore, Ave Verum

This is possibly not a CD which we would review in these pages, but a quick look at the cast list will reveal the very obvious reason why I requested a copy from the record company: one of my very favourite sopranos, Dorothee Mielsds. To be honest, though, the disc deserves all the plaudits it receives (and there will doubtless be many enthusiastic reviews printed elsewhere): the choir is meticulously accurate, the orchestra has a delightfully light touch, the other three soloists are excellent too, and the conductor takes every single movement slightly faster than you might expect from a 'modern' performance – and doesn't even fall for that old trick of speeding up the fast ones and drawing out the slow ones – with the net result that this all sounds very exciting and new. Ms. Mielsds is, however, a class apart – it's most interesting to hear her in slightly later repertoire than I'm used to hearing her sing and in the company of slightly larger forces; she opens her voice out, allowing tiny amounts of vibrato in, more to increase the volume and carrying power than as an ornament, I think, but to wondrous effect. Speaking of ornaments, her cadenzas in *Exsultate jubilate* are a joy. The same is true of a breathlessly beautiful *Laudate Dominum*. I was recently besotted by a rendition by Dame E. K. on YouTube, but have to say that this recording rivals even that. Thoroughly recommended, even for anti-modern instrument readers! BC

Mozart & Beethoven *Quintets for piano
and wind* Jan Vermeulen (fortepiano), Il
Gardellino, 62'14"
Accent ACC 24201
Mozart: K. 452, Adagio K. 540
Beethoven: Op. 16 [font size wrong]

I have to agree with Mozart that K. 452 is one of his finest chamber works, and this performance does it full justice. The wind players are absolutely first-rate and the tuning and balance are impeccable; my only criticism is that the horn is apt to sound a bit coarse when hand-stopped notes are played fortissimo. Vermeulen (playing a very nice Walter copy by Chris Maene) is, as always, on top form. I particularly enjoyed his clear, precise articulation, and his occasional addition of some stylish but discreet ornamentation. The Beethoven quintet, obviously modelled on Mozart's, is one of his best early works. It is, perhaps, a little lightweight when compared with its proto-

type, but it's very entertaining and is just as delightfully played. As a bonus, we are given the Mozart Adagio in B minor which is also on the Rampe recording. I much prefer Vermeulen's refined performance: the speed is just right, the rhythm is sensitively controlled and it is highly expressive - and all without any added ornamentation. *Richard Maunder*

Mozart Complete Clavier Works Vol. 10
Siegbert Rampe *clavichord, hpscd & fp*
MDG 341 1310-2 73' 35"
K. 11, 15bb, 269b, 279 (189d), 353 (30of), 355 (576b), 460 (454a) & 540

As with the earlier volumes in Rampe's series (some of which I have reviewed in these pages), I applaud the use of a variety of different instruments; but the claim that the music is 'performed on instruments of [Mozart's] time' is rather suspect when the fortepiano is a modern copy of a Johann Schantz made a few years after Mozart's death. This is not mere pedantry: the instrument was evolving very rapidly in the last two decades of the 18th century, and Mozart's own Walter almost certainly did not have what is nowadays called 'Viennese action' when he played it. But the Schantz copy sounds well, and Rampe plays it stylishly - though he takes the B minor Adagio, K. 540, very slowly indeed, with an irritating tendency to give long notes and rests slightly less than their full value. Rampe is a brilliant harpsichord player and does full justice to the 1771 Shudi; but I was disappointed to find that the clavichord with the noisy action, about which I've complained before, has re-surfaced. The knocking noises it produces when Rampe plays it too aggressively are very distracting.

A continuing problem with this series is the extensively 'varied repeats' (to use C. P. E. Bach's phrase). The style is pretty convincing, and I'm sure Mozart did this sort of thing - but he certainly wouldn't have played exactly the same extemporized variations at every performance. I doubt, therefore, if I would want to listen to this CD more than once or twice.

Richard Maunder

Mozart Kirchenonaten arranged for organ solo
Zsigmond Szathmáry 70'05"
Carus 18.067/99

This is an arrangement of the original 17 works that were written for organ with small string support, and is played on a modern instrument by Metzler at St Martin, Staufen im Breisgau. The arrangement needs at least two manuals and pedals. (The original version would almost certainly have been played on a much smaller positive organ - one of the six organs in Salzburg Cathedral.) The version here warrants a brief mention

because the pieces are delightful and the arrangements (by the performer) show a good sense of period style, as does the playing. The Booklet notes give a neat history of the 17 Sonatas. Not exactly authentic, but enjoyable nonetheless.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Pleyel Strings & Winds
Orsolya Kaczander fl, Lajos Lencsés ob, Vilmos Szabadi vn, Péter Bársony va, Péter Szabó vlc 59' 11"
Hungaroton HCD 32572

Pleyel String Quartets op. 11 nos. 1-3
Quartetto Luigi Tomasini (61' 38")
Hungaroton HCD 32593

I must confess to finding listening to a large dose of Pleyel somewhat of a chore, so I must apologise to any Pleyel addicts amongst our readership. The period instrument Quartetto Luigi Tomasini (named after the leader of Haydn's band at Esterhazy) gives neat, spirited performances of these unassuming and somewhat formulaic string quartets. There are, nevertheless, moments of touching beauty, such as the muted slow movement of no. 1.

The chamber music disc with flute, oboe and string trio is in similar vein. B. 252 is scored with flute and oboe; the two oboe quartets B391 and 394 contrast with the flute quartet B. 381. The performances are stylish, enhanced by the tone of the wooden flute. *Ian Graham Jones*

Portugal Matinas do Natal, Rio de Janeiro 1811
Ensemble Turicum, Luiz Alves da Silva & Matthias Weibel 92' 53" (2 CDs)
Paraty 209.108

Marcos Portugal (1762-1830) is known (if known at all) as an operatic composer: Grove barely mentions his church music. He left Lisbon for Rio de Janeiro in January 1811 and composed this substantial setting of the eight responsories of Christmas eve matins at the end of that year for the Chapel Royal. The chapel master, José Garcia, wrote a pastoral mass for the same Christmas, and the informative booklet note points out that there is some thematic relationship between the two works. The music is in the current operatic style, attractive and enjoyable: you'll be hooked from the opening pastorela. Scoring is for clarinets, bassoons, horns, trombone, violas, cellos, d/basses and organ: is there any liturgical reason for the absence of violins? The wind writing sometimes reminds one of Mozartian serenades. The performances are excellent. All that's missing is the text of the nocturnes, but the movement titles give the general idea. Writing three months before the issue date, I don't know whether it will sell at a 2-discs-for-one price: I hope it will. Try something new this Christmas. *CB*

Rosetti Horn Concertos
Sarah Willis, Klaus Wallendorf horns, Kurpfälzisches Kammerorchester, Johannes Moesus cond 53' 25"
cpo 777 288-2

2 horns K.III:49 (F), Concertos for horn K.III:44 (E), K.III:37 (E flat), Andante from Concerto for 2 horns K.III:54 (E flat).

Although played on modern instruments accompanied by a full orchestral sonority, these are interesting and imaginative works. The concerto for two horns has thematic interest, some unusual harmonic turns, and much virtuoso writing for the soloists. The E major work is perhaps the least inspiring of the three concertos, while the E flat major work has some experimental twists of harmony combined with remarkable virtuoso passages exploring the full range of the instrument. The filler, the *Andante* for two horns, is of doubtful authorship, and may be by Michael Haydn. If only we could hear these works on natural horns!

Ian Graham Jones

Wilms Symphonies 1 & 4, Overture in D
NDR Radiophilharmonie, Howard Griffiths
cpo 777 209-2 65' 13"

I requested this CD because I thought it unlikely that we'll ever hear Wilms' music on period instruments. The booklet notes are slightly disparaging about the composer's achievements - Schumann was apparently disappointed that Wilms never really fulfilled the promise he showed as a youngster. It is true that the fluent writing, especially for winds, in the Symphony No. 1, and the hint that he might be pushing Haydn's symphonic style in new directions, is not noticeably different to his moodier fourth symphony of seven years later. Wilms' one trait is an ability to wrong-foot the listener - movements can start seemingly in one rhythm, only for this to turn out to be a trick: Philip Thorby would love him! The NDR Radiophilharmonie under Howard Griffiths do not try to make this music anything it is not. The rasp of slightly more attack on gut strings would really enliven it, I'm sure, but this is a very commendable effort. *BC*

19th CENTURY

Beethoven Musing on the Ocean: Folk Songs
Lynne Dawson S, Alida Schat vln, Bart van Oort fortepiano, Jaap ter Linden vlc
Berlin Classics 0016392 60' 41"

I used to think that Beethoven's folk-song arrangements were utterly unsympathetic, his additions undermining the natural simplicity of the folk-songs. I was told (long ago) by the violinist for a concert in which I included a few of them that her part was very awkward. No sign of that

here, and I was completely convinced by both music and performance (though the violin is under-recorded). Lynne Dawson is the ideal voice; although a member of the international opera-singer circuit, she has retained a warm, appealing sound that enables her to sound as if she is singing in a drawing room (perhaps entertaining a few friends at home: her house must be roughly of the right period). If, like me, you were suspicious of folk Beethoven, try this. As with the Haydn canzonettas I reviewed above, an early piano (well played, as here) is essential; with a modern one, either the pianist drowns everyone or he sounds as if he is holding back. CB

Schubert Works for fortepiano Volume 5
Jan Vermeulen (2 CDs)
EtCetera KTC 1334

D29, 157, 178, 334, 335, 365, 506, 760 & 790

This series continues to be most impressive. Vermeulen must be the ideal Schubert player, and the instrument, a superbly restored Streicher und Sohn of 1826, has an astonishing range of dynamics from a powerful fortissimo to an especially beautiful pianissimo, and it has a wonderful clarity of articulation. What more need I say? Except to repeat the advice I gave in the April EMR: if you haven't already come across these discs, buy the whole set immediately!

Richard Maunder

VARIOUS

A Fantasy through Time: Five centuries of Organ Fantasies on the Richards-Fowkes Organ, Pinnacle Presbyterian Church, Scotsdale, Arizona Kimberly Marshall
Loft LRCD - 1108 58' 35"
Bach 542/1BWV 562, 572; Mozart K.397; Sweelinck *Fantasia chromatica*; Ferrabosco I, Newman (Mullijner Book) + C Franck & J Alain

This CD is intended as a demonstration of a new organ in Arizona, which it does through ten pieces entitled Fantasy, or thereabouts ranging from the mid-16th to the 20th centuries. The organ is eclectic, but with a strong influence from the central German organ of Bach. Any organ that can be used for the performance of music by Sweelinck and César Franck may raise questions in some EMR reader's minds, but this one seems to cope reasonably well with those demands, with Sweelinck coming out the winner.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Leipziger Orgeln um Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy Rudolf Lutz and Martin Schmeding (2000 Bach organ and 1889 Sauer organ, Thomaskirche, Leipzig, 1721 Silbermann organ, St Georgenkirche, Rötha, 1768 Schweinefleish organ, Auferstehungskirche, Leupzig-Möckern)

95' 02" (2 CDs)
Genum Classics GEN 89152
Bach, Mendelssohn Schumann, Gade etc

Although Mendelssohn received no training as an organist, his links to that instrument remained strong throughout his life, both as a performer and composer. This CD explores the world of Mendelssohn the organist, and the organ world of Leipzig, in the widest sense, with transcriptions and improvisations based on the music he might have played himself, together with works by his pupil Gade, Schumann and Mozart (whose link with Mendelssohn and Leipzig appears more tenuous). The improvisations are interesting examples of the sort of contributions that organists in Saxony are bred to make to service playing, and are refreshingly different from Anglican 'playing-the-choir-in' music. But their relevance to the overall programme is limited and, unfortunately, rather gives the impression that this CD is more concerned with demonstrating the improvisational skills of the two organists than exploring the musical world of Mendelssohn. I would have preferred to have heard more of his music, particularly on the Rötha organ that he knew so well.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Carmina Chamber Choir, Arni Heimir Ingolfsson
Smekklýsa SMK 56

My acquaintance with Icelandic early music has been hitherto limited to the largely improvisational work of Sequentialia's exploration of the Edda and Saga material and an annoyingly unscholarly opus 111 disc by Sverrir Gudjonsson (AD Epitaph OPS 30-253.) The present disc shares some material with the latter, suggesting that notwithstanding its imprecision about sources, much of it was after all documented early music. The present recording draws much more transparently on a 1660 manuscript called *Melodia* and containing folksongs, hymns, polyphonic chansons and plainchant.

So how uniquely Icelandic is the music? Well, not particularly. The texts may be, but by 1660 the general influence of Baroque Europe had clearly pervaded Iceland and while many of the songs have a pleasing Nordic/Scandinavian lilt to them most of the repertoire could come from anywhere in Germanic Europe. Having said that, this music is sensitively presented by the Icelandic performers who sing solo, with and without instrumental accompaniment, as well as in a small choral group. D. James Ross

I tried to check whether the disc has a title on the company's web site, but couldn't see it among the pop discs; Smekklýsa is translated 'bad taste'. CB

Motets Croisés Dominique Vellard T, Jean-Pierre Leguay org 63" 54,
Glossa GCD P32303

This contains Monteverdi's *O quam pulchra es* & *Salve Regina*, Schütz's *O Jesu nomen dulce*, two toccatas, two canzonas and a ricercar from Frescobaldi's *Fiori musicali*, and four items by Leguay. The balance of the programme, however, gives greater prominence to Leguay's music, which takes up well over half of the duration, so good though the performances are, this is unlikely to be bought just for Monteverdi, Schütz and Frescobaldi. There is a typically French booklet note, probably best not read in English – not because it is badly translated but because the ideas don't fit our language or modes of thought. I'm not sure what to make of Leguay, but I don't hear what the booklet writer finds. CB

PHOENIX EDITIONS

These re-issues of recordings by the historical important Cappella Colonensis which, after more than 50 years of state support (via the regional radio station, which was responsible for their foundation), is now an independent ensemble, promoting HIP performances under leading conductors of repertoire from early Baroque to the Romantic period. They all seem to have been re-packaged (or are perhaps issued for the first time on CD) so have had brief CD booklets written by the opinionated and frankly rather implausible (to use a variation on one of his vacuous adjectives) Benjamin Ivry. Do you really want to encourage an audience by referring to the repertoire as routine compositions by 18th-century mediocrities? To be realistic, these are in fact best seen as historical documents. There is no denying that Cappella Colonensis was an important group (indeed, the present incarnation IS an influential ensemble), but the only way some of these discs will attract customers is that fact that the music (such as Michael Haydn's concerto for viola, organ and orchestra) is unavailable elsewhere.

Dall'Abaco Concerti for strings Cappella Coloniensis, Günter Wich, Hanns-Martin Schneidt

Phoenix Edition 190 (rec. 1969-78)

Op. 2 nos. 5, 6, 8-10, op. 6. nos 2, 3 & 6

Eight string concerti by Dall'Abaco feature on the earliest disc (190), taken from four recording sessions in the 1970s with four different conductors (though not two pieces from each). No-one will be surprised (or perhaps they will be?) to hear that the performances do not radically differ. Dall'Abaco's music doesn't,

so why should we expect the orchestra's reading of it to? With astonishing Teutonic thoroughness, all but three tracks are described as 'for strings and continuo'; tracks 18-20 have the distinctive scoring of two violins, viola, violoncello and continuo – in other words, exactly the same as the rest! The playing is a little too bow-on-string and robotic trills for me. How impressive, though, that the orchestra were playing Dall'Abaco at all in the 1970s.

Handel *Apollo e Daphne* Helen Donath, Peter Christoph Runge, Cappella Coloniensis, Günter Wich
Phoenix Edition 192 (rec. 1978)
Overture to *Il trionfo del tempo* HWV 46a

The performance of *Apollo e Daphne* (192) is a little heavy-footed for my tastes. The instrumental playing lacks bounce and air, and the singers, though renowned in their day (and possibly with good reason, since they were ground-breakers), simply do not compare to the sort of voices that are around these days. The booklet for this 'opera in all but name' (another of Mr Ivry's nonsenses) has the Italian text and an English translation.

J F Fasch *Overture, sinfonias & concerti* Cappella Coloniensis, Günter Wich, Hanns-Martin Schneidt
Phoenix Edition 191 (rec. 1970-87)
Overture FWV K: e 1; Concertos FWV L: C2, G8; Sinfonie FWV M: G5 & A3

Likewise, much of the Fasch disc (191) is either too fast or too slow. The opening section of the E minor overture that opens the recital is so stodgy and the ensuing dance movements do nothing to lighten the atmosphere. The useless booklet note devotes as much time to Zelenka as it does to Fasch, and less to either than to Zinzenzendorf's take on Pietism and Christ's genitalia – yes, you read correctly. The booklet is also lacking in some detail, such as the identity of whom is the portrait on the inside cover? Not Fasch, for sure.

Michael Haydn *Organ Concerto, 3 symphonies* Cappella Coloniensis, Franz Lehrndorfer, Wilfried Boettcher
Phoenix Edition 193 (rec. 1972-75)
Concerto in C for org, viola, orch; Symphonies in A, B flat and G (Perger 33, 9 & 27)

Ivry thinks it's a good job Michael Haydn was drunk most of the time, otherwise his music would have been as dry and sober as the other 18th-century mediocrities referred to above. The three symphonies and the concerto (193) are among the most successful pieces in the whole sequence of discs (because classical music can take modern instruments more

readily than baroque, I suppose). For those interested in such things, the final track shows that Haydn could write fugues, too. Perhaps that's why he isn't ranked among the mediocre.

Carl Stamitz *Cello Concertos Nos. 1 & 2, Sinfonia concertante* Zoltan Rócz vlc, Ulrich Grehling vn, Ulrich Koch vla, Günter Wich, Marcel Couraud
Phoenix Edition 194 (rec. 1958-75)

Carl Stamitz is damned by faint praise – apparently his music is 'fluent, perfectly skilled [and] somewhat unctuous'. Not so that by a whole list of his contemporaries which Mr Ivry uses to fill much of the incomplete second column of his extensively argued booklet notes. Otherwise we're just told about how obese the average 18th-century employer was. Mr Ivry's 'new musical category: orchestral tafelmusik' is nothing of the kind, since Telemann's publication (and various others of up to 100 years earlier!) were not just a random selection of words – the music was intended as wallpaper for court banquets. And what, may I ask, is wrong with that? The three works and the performances of them are very enjoyable (194). BC

PAN CLASSICS

It was a Czech connection that led me to Pan Classics, a Swiss company whose catalogue is full of rich and varied HIP recordings. They were kind enough to send two dozen for me to review (unfortunately HM Customs decided to charge import duty on them – and I'm still waiting for the refund of that *and* the Parcelforce holding charge, seven weeks later), and here are my findings, in broadly chronological order. All CDs are PAN CLASSICS 10 followed by the three digits given after the titles. The packaging is consistent, too – each release comes in a card wallet (with plastic insets to hold the discs) which has a window framing and revealing the artwork. The discs themselves feature art deco-style ornaments – all in all, a very artsy experience.

Touch me lightly (210, 72' 55") is a solo gamba recital by Rebeka Rusó which includes music by Dowland, Corkine, Hume, Nicholas Hotman, Sieur de Machy, St Colombe & le fils, Dufaut, Bocquet (or Gaultier), CF Abel, Weiss and Telemann, some (clearly) in arrangement. I am glad I persevered after what was (for me) a disappointing start, as the later works are very much more successful (not the least for not being solo arrangements, though those became less of a strangeness with repeated listening),

especially the Abel – I could listen to Rusó play arpeggios for hours! These are not just flowing cascades of notes, they have shape and form, and subtle emphases on individual notes carefully work the turns of the harmony to create melody – truly masterful gamba playing.

Fabellae Sacrae (208, 77' 44", Savadi) features sopranos Ulrike Hofbauer and Kristine Jaunalksne and Marie Bournisien on triple harp in a recital sub-titled "Ancient tales and sacred legends in Italian motets of the 17th century". There are some well-known names among the composers (Carissimi, Barbara Strozzi, Sigismondo d'India and Giovanni Rovetta among them) but very few pieces that will be familiar. I've heard Andrew Benson-Wilson praise this group before and if they are anything like as good in performance as they are hear, I can only echo his sentiments. The voices blend effortlessly, but are quite chameleon like in being able to become more individual as suits the context. Anyone worrying that a single harp might be slightly tedious as accompaniment, think again! A rare treat is in store for anyone who buys this disc.

Cavalli's *L'Ormino* (196, 131' 19", 2 CDs) is performed by Les Paladins, directed by Jérôme Correas. The singing is so fine that I've decided to list all the principals: Sandrine Piau *L'Armonia*, Martin Oro *Ormino*, Howard Crook *Amida*, Dominique Visse *Nerillo*, Magali Léger *Sicle*, Jean-François Lombard *Erice*, Stéphanie Révidat *Erisbe*, Karine Deshayes *Mirinda*, Jacques Bona *Hariadeno*, and Benoît Arbould *Asmano*. The tale is typically convoluted, involved pairs of crossed and star-crossed lovers, the queen's lover turning out to be her husband's long-lost son. The band consists of pairs of violins and gambas with continuo. Although as usual I think *seeing* opera is so important, one gets a very favourable impression of this work, thanks to Les Paladins' passionate advocacy of the music.

Charpentier's *Le Jugement Dernier* gets lead billing in a powerful programme of the composer's darker music by Graham O'Reilly and the Ensemble européen William Byrd (175, 68' 09"). Two sopranos, one mezzo, two altos, three tenors and three "baritones/basses" are joined by continuo in six works including *Trasfige dulcissime Jesu* H. 251 and the wonderful *Salve Regina pour trios Choeurs*. Two violins also feature in two works: *Extremum Dei judicium* H. 401 and *Motet pour les Trépassés* H. 311. Not only is this a marvellous selection of Charpentier's most impressive music, it is one of the most beautifully sung discs of this repertoire I have heard in a long time. If

you think William Christie is in a class of his own, think again!

Lorenz Duftschmid is the centre of attention in François Couperin *Pièces de Viole* (174, 75' 18"). He is joined by Ulrike Becker on Basse de Viole, Bob van Asperen on harpsichord, and (for a very beautiful rendering of *La Sultane*) by violinists Andreas Pilger and Ulrike Fischer. The programme consists of the Première suite in E minor, its successor in A major, the *Plainte* from the 10th Concert Royal, and the 12th and 13th concerts for matching instruments. Listening to this glorious music, it tinges me with sadness that I was not more persistent in bullying one of my university tutors to teach me gamba – at least, I now have this delightful recording to indulge me, I suppose!

Duftschmid's 2 CD set of viol music by Antoine Forqueray (190, 123' 36") dates from two years later. The accompaniment is provided by Christoph Urbanetz, Johannes Hämmerle and Thomas C. Boysen on viol, harpsichord and theorbo/ guitar respectively. Being the work of virtuoso performers on the instrument (which, of course, Couperin was not), this is much more demanding repertoire. Not surprisingly, Duftschmid is equal to the many challenges, and one is never so over-impressed by the technical to the detriment of the attraction of the music. Lucy Robinson's informative note gives some idea of the close-knit nature of music in France in the first half of the 18th century, and identifies many of the personalities behind the otherwise enigmatic titles of some pieces.

Jérôme Correas directs Les Paladins in Domenico Mazzocchi *Madrigali e dialoghi* (188, 67' 40"). Since his name appears in all the standard textbooks about 17th-century music, I'm surprised that so little of Mazzocchi's music seems to be recorded, and that there are so few CDs devoted to his output. Five singers (SSTTB) are joined by a five-strong continuo team and (occasionally) by a pair of violins. The texts are predominantly though not exclusively dark – the sonnet *La Maddalena ricorre alle Lagrime* is packed with emotion, and features some extraordinary chromatic writing. The typically informative booklet gives the texts in German, French and English as well as the original language.

Musicalische Frühlingsfrüchte (200, 79' 51") is subtitled *German chamber music from the 17th century*. The performers, CordArte (here violinists Daniel Deuter, Margret Baumgartl, gambist Heike Johanna Lindner, chitaronne player Andreas Arend

and Markus Märkl on harpsichord) play sonatas by Dietrich Becker (who provides the title), Nikolaus Strungk, Reincken, Buxtehude, Theile, Kaspar Förster, as well as the Ciacona in E minor BUXWV for harpsichord and continuo. Thus the focus is very much on the North German *stilus phantasticus*.

CordArte's focus shifts to Kroměříž for *Sonate, Battaglie & Lamento* (206, 79' 40"). The repertoire consists of works by Kerll, Poglietti, Johann Fischer, Bertali, Schmelzer, Rittler and (of course) anon. I haven't heard much of Poglietti's output (there are five sonatas here), and there are some real gems. Andreas Arend's chitaronne is replaced here by Johanna Seitz's harp, and Matthias Müller joins the group on violone. Another shining example of the harp's continuo capabilities is track 5, an anonymous Aria for gamba and continuo.

The third recital by CordArte sees them joined by one of the finest singers of music from this period, Peter Kooij. *Mein Herz ist bereit* (211, 75' 57") takes its name from Bruhns' cantata (reputedly performed by the composer alone singing, fiddling and playing continuo with his feet), and includes fine pieces (vocal and instrumental) by Buxtehude, Tuner, Schmelzer, Pachelbel, Rosenmüller, Johann Krieger, Johann Philipp J. Krieger, Biber and (you guessed) anon. The ensemble is stripped to its bare bones: Daniel Deuter, Heike Johanna Lindner and Markus Märkl.

Each of these discs is highly recommendable. In whatever configuration, CordArte are now among my favourite groups for 17th-century repertoire. I look forward to the day when they add a couple of violas and tackle a disc of Bertali or Schmelzer. Perhaps another fiddler could be found for a three violin recital? Whatever they turn themselves to, I'm sure it will be successful.

The Czech connection becomes clear with Henrico Albicastro *12 concerti a Quattro op. 7* (124, 108' 2 CDs) is performed by Collegium Marianum/ Collegium 1704, with guest leader Riccardo Masahide Minasi and directed by Václav Luks. The publication contains what we call ripieno concertos, but here the performers follow Muffat's suggestions for enlarging the ensemble, adding additional stringed instruments and – occasionally – a pair of oboes. The music reminded me somewhat of Geminiani (with frequent nods to Corelli – most evidently track 9 of the second disc), and the performances are stylish, well-paced and neatly played. The recorded sound (as with all of these CDs) is impressive.

Bach et le bon gout (223, 69' 35") features performances of François Couperin, Louis Marchand, Jean-Henry d'Anglebert and J. S. Bach by CordArte's Markus Märkl on a copy of a Michael Mietke harpsichord of 1710. Whether or not it is true that Marchand fled the scene of a possibly embarrassing competition with Bach, there is no denying that the latter owed a great deal to French models, and not only in his keyboard music. Märkl has a great ability to draw the listener into his world, and I'm not quite sure how he does that. Perhaps the very finest of delays in striking the next note at pivotal moments is key – some players just push and pull the tempo too heavily, and the flow is lost; not Märkl. A highly enlightening recording – and make sure you listen to the end, or you'll miss a surprise.

Attilio Cremonesi is the soloist in another harpsichord recording, devoted to Azzolino Bernardino Della Ciaja's *Six sonatas for harpsichord op. 4* (114, 76' 28"). I am nowhere near an expert in this repertoire, but I was impressed by just how complex some of the music sounded. Each of the sonatas is in four movements, beginning with a Toccata and Canzone pairing, then two movements designated by tempo. The Canzone range from just under three minutes to over six, which gives some idea of the scale of things. The harpsichord produces a remarkably full tone, without any reverb problems; another example of Pan's wonderful recording technology.

The next three discs feature soprano Monique Zanetti, counter-tenor Pascal Bertin and the group Fons Musicae, directed by plucker, Yasunori Imamura. The earliest (2003) is Antonio Caldara *Cantate e Sonate* (139, 77' 02") includes world premieres of two cantatas (*Quel duolo del mio core* and *Dipartita Amorosa*), as well as the C minor sonata, op. 1 nr. 6 and a B flat Chaconne from a 1699 print. The other instrumentalists are François Fernandez and Sara Kuijken on violins, Rainer Zipperling on cello and harpsichordist Naoki Kitaya. The instrumental music is impressive enough, but it is the two dramatic duet cantatas that here draw attention – why Caldara's music is not better known, I can have no idea.

The same is true of Francesco Gasparini. Violin teacher to Domenico Scarlatti, first employer of Antonio Vivaldi at the Pietà, composition teacher of Quantz... composer of at least 60 operas and over 100 cantatas... From that huge number, Fons Musicae have chosen four (a solo for each singer, and two a2) and a four-movement trio sonata for their *Sonate e Cantate* recording (189, 78' 43").

Stéphanie Pfister is 2nd violin, Roberto Gini cellist, and the harpsichord is now played by Laurent Stewart. Anyone who hears this will wonder like me WHY we don't hear Gasparini's music more often, especially given such enthusiastic and thoughtful performances.

The third CD by this group is devoted to *Cantatas, Duets & Sonatas* by Agostino Steffani (131, 73' 21"). The instrumental pieces are one slightly dubious sonata for violin and continuo, and a trio sonata. The vocal music includes solo cantatas, a duet cantata and two duets. In this year of celebrating Handel, Steffani is a composer whose output we should be hearing regularly on Radio 3, helping to put things into context – instead, they play all of Handel's operas spread over two afternoons (can you imagine that happening to Puccini or Wagner?) Anyhow, this disc is full of material any producer could use as illustration. The performances are wonderful, the same as the Caldara disc, except Sara Kuijken has been replaced by Chislaine Wauter and Stéphanie Erös.

This is possibly the best place for another CordArte disc entitled *Treasures Chamber music from the collection of Earl Rudolf Franz Erwein von Schönborn zu Wiesentheid* (203, 78' 27"). The composers are Albicastro, Schnell, Erlebach, JFC Fischer, JS Bach, Pisendel, Johann Graf and (again) anon. It's the core of the group who are involved – Daniel Deuter, Heike Johanna Lindner and Markus Märkl. On this hearing, I'd be surprised if the C minor sonata BWV 1024 is not by Bach

Another trio of discs follows: the award-winning "wind band" (that is such a horrid translation of the German word Harmonie, but it seems to be the only one going!) the Amphion Wind Octet deserve their impressive reputation. Mozart *Serenades* (179, 74' 12") includes two works with that designation (K375 & K388) as well as the Parthia in B flat K361. Rosetti *À la chasse* (194, 64' 53") has four partitas (nos. B2, B13, B18 and B21 in Murray's catalogue of the composer's output) taken from the Wallerstein collection – only B18 is not a world premiere recording. Franz Krommer *Music for Wind Octet* (142, 55' 25") has three works (opp. 57, 69 and 76). The line-up changes slightly across the discs (the Rosetti adds two flutes, while the Krommer includes a serpent and a contrabassoon), but the quality of performance (as well as music, I must actually add) is consistently very high. I listened to these discs over and over again – it's the clarinet thing again, I confess.

Edoardo Torbianelli features on the last three discs in this selection. Muzio Clementi *Late Works for Pianoforte* (171, 68' 03") includes two of the op. 47 *Capriccios*, a *Prelude alla Kozeluch*, a world premier recording of the *Sonata in E flat* op. 41, five of the 12 *Monferrinas*, op. 49, and finishes off with the *Fantasy on Au clair de la lune*, op. 48. He plays an 1812 Clementi fortepiano.

For *The Romantic Clarinet in Germany* (204, 65' 53") he switches to an 1824 Conrad Graf and is joined by Pierre-André Taillard, who plays a copy of a Gresner nine-key clarinet of c. 1800. They play Mendelssohn's *Sonata in E flat* as well as one in B flat by Franz Danzi, a Duo by Norbert Burgmüller (whom I had always condemned as a second rate piano study composer!) and a Duo brilliant (which it is!) by Carl Gottlieb Reissiger. Although this is not a CD I will play all that often, it is definitely one I can recommend for background music – several visitors asked what music I was listening to, and they've all been enchanted by it. Recommendation indeed.

Possibly heading out of our sphere, Niels Gade *Works for piano* (191, 75' 40") features an 1864 Steinway piano, restored in 2003. In addition to 21 short piano pieces, Tobianelli plays Gade's 30 Scandinavian folksongs (as well as improving introductions to seven of them). I impressed myself recently while listening to the Saturday morning CD show on Radio 3 recognizing a mystery violin sonatas a being by Gade – that was doubtless a very lucky guess, but this CD has confirmed that he was a fine melodist, and clearly a talented pianist. BC

ACIS & AGRIPPINA

continued from p. 7.

I found it perfectly acceptable: one barely noticed the transitions, and my two companions (we all used to be in the same church choir around 1960) didn't find it at all odd. As for Emily, I've no complaints about her singing, but it isn't an opera with one principal singer. The director (following the music, not forcing an idea on it), presented Agrippina (Emily Van Evera) and Poppea (Louise Alder), as women who used their sexuality in very different ways. Agrippina was cool and distant, Poppea was intensely physical. Between them, none of the men had a chance. The voices as well as their stage activity, contrasted marvellously.

The English dialogue encouraged a certain amount of comedic play, but *Agrippina* isn't a tragedy and a bit of fun didn't destroy the atmosphere. The band

was hidden below the floor, but sounded well. All-in-all, a fine performance.

Handel opera at the Barber goes back to 1959: on the strength of this, they should return to their original annual schedule! It's so refreshing to see an opera without imposed gimmicks and hear singers with voices that speak the same language as the orchestra (and, in another sense, the audience, in an auditorium small enough for the words to be heard). Small auditoria and matching voices may not be authentic for Handel operas, but the use of singers with accurate, well-tuned and minimally vibratoed voices is such a relief. Of course, there's a degree of extra excitement from main-stream singers who are at the peak of their career, but with rare exceptions, there are then often opposing forces that spoil the show.

I don't very often drive into Cambridge for a concert: I'm usually too tired by the evening. But for several reasons, it was worth a shorter trip down the A14 to Fitzwilliam College to hear James Bowman, with John Turner on various recorders, Jonathan Price (cello) and Ian Thompson (erstwhile singer playing harpsichord). I can't think when I last attended a concert with three first performances, with the composers present, and two other modern works. Mixed early/modern concerts are more difficult than they used to be before the arrival of authentic instruments. In many respects, the sound in the College Auditorium (capacity, not reached, some 200 or so) was good, except for the effect on the cello: perhaps Jonathan Price should have brought his baroque instrument, since (as he was aware) the acoustics made him far too prominent. But James Bowman sounded as if it was the best place in the world to sing!

To my surprise, the most convincing new piece was by someone who spent his life chiefly on the lighter end of the music spectrum, Peter Hope (b. 1930). Those who regularly watched BBC News in the 1970s will have heard one of his compositions daily. His music sounded righter for the ensemble than the other pieces, with a subtly VW-ish opening movement. The curiosity was the brief *Variations on an Octatonic Scale* for unaccompanied recorder by Bernstein – requested by the daughter of his biographer, Humphrey Burton, but ignored by her because it wasn't like *West Side Story*! John Turner made it playable, and Port Erin (with an ambitious arts centre) heard its premiere. John has probably commissioned more recorder music than anyone else (I await a correction from a Dolmetsch!) It was good to see him at his old College. CB

LETTERS

Dear Clifford

Richard Maunder's reviews of Mozart solo keyboard recordings are wonderfully informative and I have bought a number of very worthwhile discs based on his comments. However, he continues to make what I think is a misguided criticism of one aspect of Siegbert Rampe's series of Mozart recordings – the use of highly ornamented/varied repeats. He does not question the historical accuracy of this practice, but points out that on a recording we are stuck with the same variation each time instead of hearing a different one with every performance. Most recently he suggests, tongue in cheek (but only slightly) listening to the disc once and then giving it away.

This is a bit unfair. There are many recordings of these works where there is little if any ornamentation or other variation, so no serious modern listener should have any excuse for not knowing the "text" from which Rampe is departing. There are very few recordings which pay attention to the (to modern ears) extensive degree of ornamentation which it seems Mozart used, yet this is an important feature of his art that is worth drawing attention to by the release of recordings which illustrate it. The fact that the terms ornamentation and variation can be used almost interchangeably in this context indicates there is a need for Rampe's approach to this music. Furthermore, to my ears at least, his variations are imaginative, not gimmicky.

Of course ornamentation/variation is only one way of varying Mozart's text. Other recordings, like the excellent recording of Linda Nicholson's, reviewed in the most recent *EMR*, use articulation and changes of tempo for expressive purposes. These are merely more subtle ways of varying Mozart's text. Should they also be listened to once only.

So to avoid getting tired of the same variation each time you listen, I have an alternative suggestion: instead of discarding Rampe's discs after one hearing, embrace their enthusiasm and imagination by encouraging other spirited performers to record their own (historically informed) variations, then collect all of them and sample at random. There's room for it in my CD collection.

Charles Gwynn (Sydney)

Dear Clifford

Mudge, Mudge, glorious Mudge

I was delighted to see that the *Six Concertos in Seven Parts* of Richard Mudge have at last been recorded.

The Consort of Twelve, a period band based on the south coast and formed in 1981, has championed these concertos for many years, and has performed all six, some on several occasions. It is a pity that no native baroque ensemble felt able to take the recording on board, for I know of two period groups that considered it at one time. The notice of this recording prompted me to look up our past programmes. Our first performance (of No. 2) was in 1983, and we have subsequently given 8 further performances of the work. No. 3 has had five performances, the first in 1991, the last earlier this year; No. 1 (the trumpet concerto) two, and Nos 4, 5 and 6 one each, all in the 1990s. We also made a private recording of the 'Non Nobis Domine' (SAB and 5-part strings). For our performances we used the King's Music facsimile parts which, interestingly, are stamped 'Chichester Concert 1783'. Mudge, although a curate of a rural parish near Birmingham, was obviously known in our home area, the music being popular with the local amateur orchestra some 34 years after its publication. Capel Bond's six concertos (recorded by The Parley of Instruments in 1990) were almost certainly modelled on the Mudge set, Bond having moved to neighbouring Coventry in the same year as the set was published. In addition, Bond's first concerto is, like that of Mudge, with trumpet, and the sixth is for bassoon, as opposed to Mudge's No. 6 for keyboard.

Such was our interest in promoting these works that we gave a concert in Chichester in 1993, advertising it as 'Mudge, Mudge, Glorious Mudge'. Regrettably, though perhaps not unexpectedly with such an appalling title, it was not well attended.

Ian Graham-Jones

**SIX
CONCERTOS**
IN SEVEN PARTS,
Five for
Four VIOLINS, a TENOR VIOLIN,
and VIOLONCELLO,
with a Thorough Bass for the
HARPSICORD.
and One CONCERTO for the ORGAN
or HARPSICORD, with Instruments.

Compos'd by
M^R. MUDGE.

To which is added, Non Nobis Domine, in 8 Parts.

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Concert.**

1783.

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EIGHT SEVEN. Selected from
Words for a Voice, Hokey,
by Voice or Instruments; H
Seven the various from all
Hawth's Music for the Hay
Hawth's 12 Grand Concertos.

the Song Part with the
the Key, to be Performed either
in 2 parts, or with an Oboe, or the whole
in 4 parts.
parts &c.
the. Halls and Vices. Overtures.

Dear Editor

Would you be kind enough to notify your readers in a forthcoming issue that this Charity expects to have modest funds available to assist in early music research, with a view to publication and performance? Proposals are invited, to me. We have recently been supporting the research costs for the pending 14 volume Croce quatercentenary Religious Music series.

Yours sincerely

K Wallace (chairman)

Further information from Cavalli Charity (*Charity Commission No. 1113402*), The Broadgate Tower, 20 Primrose Street, London EC2A 2RS

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BUSKAID

If you have been following the history of this children's and youth orchestra from Soweto which plays music of all periods with appropriate style and its own panache, check their web site www.buskaid.org.za to order a CD of Timothy Kraemer and William Thorp's takes on modern popular repertoire and for a DVD of the BBC documentary Soweto Strings with footage of their performance at the Cité de la Musique in Paris in 2007.

MHAIRI LAWSON

I completely disagree with Andrew Benson-Wilson's review of the closing concert of the Spitalfields Festival (EMR131, p. 15). I quote from my alternative on-line review.

<http://www.musicalpointers.co.uk/reviews/liveeventsof/EarlyOperaSpitalfields.html>

A sequence of excerpts from 17-century operas by Cavalli, Cesti, Marazzoli & Monteverdi given by Christian Curnyn's Early Opera Company (the two easily confused with one another) made for an exquisite experience.

These were all carefully chosen gems, some of their composers still little known. The singers were all strong – Benjamin Hulett sometimes a little unvariably so; Anna Stéphany concentrating more on line than Italian diction. Mhairi Lawson, recently back at work after a maternity break, was the star of the evening and evinced huge enjoyment which we all shared – superb diction with Scottish-rolled Rs, changing her voice and stage presence, e.g. for Monteverdi's black humour in Nerone's delight at Seneca's suicide!

We were led to expect 'all the richness of a late renaissance orchestra' and, amazing to relate, the unusually exotic seven-piece line up had, in the supportive acoustic of Christ Church and from fairly near the front, a sumptuousness which compared well with Raymond Leppard's pioneering realisations for large orchestra at Glyndebourne which thrilled us in the '60s & '70s.

A CD in the making here?

Peter Grahame Woolf (Editor: Musical Pointers)

EARLY MUSIC ON BBC RADIO FOUR

There were two consecutive programmes on Tuesdays in August on Radio 4 at 1.30 pm following the News, a slot that often has intelligent programmes of musical interest. The Winchester Troper featured on the 11th. I reviewed the facsimile in *EMR*124. Its editor, Susan Rankin, was the main speaker and presumably the editor of the music heard during the programme (I missed the first few minutes, which might have mentioned that). Other contributors included Christopher Page. It was a sensible programme that didn't shy away from technical terms to describe its subject and assumed an intelligent audience. A section of the MS included music for a coronation at Easter, which pinned the music down to the coronation of Edward the Confessor in Winchester in 1043 and gives a rough date for the MS. I'm not sure if the music itself would have seemed quite so powerful to the modern listener as the scholars described it, but the programme ended (like my review of the facsimile) by quoting Cantor Wulstan's comment that music 'makes those rejoicing rejoice more and those grieving grieve more', a useful counterbalance to the technical information given by most early musical treatises.

On 18th August, Emma Kirkby talked to Jakob Lindberg about his 'new' lute, the oldest example in playing order. It needed a vast amount of restoration, done by Michael Lowe, in whose studio it was recorded. Jakob has been using the instrument for some time (as our readers will know); the programme was interesting for the feelings of the speakers about the instrument and the contact with the past they felt it brought them. A few people have played other instruments of the 16th century, but there is something so intimate and personal about a lute that performing with this restored relic seems to give Jakob and Emma a feeling that 400 years or so is a time that can be to some extent bridged by its presence. The down-to-earth voice of Julian Bream, however, stopped the programme sounding too much like a fantasy.

On Tuesday 27 October (too late to comment here: I've only heard the trail – many times!) we have Pete Townshend of The Who on how Henry Purcell influenced him.

Elaine and Clifford wish to thank all those who have offered support in our time of difficulty. King's Music ceased to exist at the end of March. The situation was reported last month in *Classical Music* and *Early Music Today*. We have a new legal team: our thanks to those who helped us to find it. We have been particularly helped by Nick Fisher, both in providing a link with the lawyers and in standing by to fund-raise to ensure that the family can stay together, preferably in our present house. As a gesture to Nick, who among other accomplishments is an expert on the Earl of Rochester, we include in this issue some 17th-century settings of his poems from an edition by Nick and by Steven Devine, available from The Early Music Company at £10.00 (or bound and including facsimiles: £20.00).

CB/EB