

# Early Music

## REVIEW

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- 2 Early Music at Dartington CB  
5 Reviews of books CB & Barbara Sachs  
15 Reviews of music CB  
16 London, Brighton & St Pölten Concerts  
Andrew Benson-Wilson  
23 CD Reviews  
35 *Mouton Nesciens mater* a8

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According to its web site, 'the V&A has one of the most important collections of European musical instruments in the world'. It evidently does not believe its own publicity. We print on p. 22 details of how to petition the Prime Minister about the closing of the Victoria & Albert Museum's musical instrument galleries to make room for more space on fashion. Since fashion is inherently ephemeral, if it is included in a museum, it needs a lot of space. This makes it implausible that a museum in South Kensington is likely to be able to do the subject justice. Each single year (at least for the last century: change may have been slower previously) would need a vast area to capture its essence (especially if fashion were considered broadly, not just what people wore, and not just the tastes of the rich and famous). And it would need a lot of money, which shouldn't be a problem seeing how much the profit the fashion industry must make. Perhaps there might be some building left over from the Olympics.

Musical instruments have been part of the museum's remit since its foundation. It could be argued that the collection might sensibly be integrated with that of the nearby Royal College of Music. The choice of the Horniman Museum is less appropriate: it is further away, and the balance of its collection is different. Does it have the space or the money to enlarge? A collection of musical instruments as far less likely to attract sponsorship than fashion? The publicity I have seen does not state where the items to be stored will be placed and the ease of access. Who is footing that bill? Do the governors have responsibility for the objects in their care? The recent care in selecting appropriate music to enhance those using aural guides suggested that music was thought to have an integral part in the presentation of their galleries. There is, indeed, some point in displaying instruments as furniture in an appropriate setting; but without a coherent department to look after them, they will cease to be regarded for what they are. CB

## EARLY MUSIC AT DARTINGTON

Clifford Bartlett

*My recollections of Dartington past keep on intruding. I tried to reject them, but instead, after the introductory paragraphs, have left them as a parallel stream of footnotes.*

I was pleasantly surprised last year to receive an invitation from Gavin Henderson to visit Dartington and write about the early music aspect of its International Summer School for *EMR*. Gavin wasn't aware of my regular attendance at the summer school long before his 25 years at the helm (in tandem with his position at Trinity College of Music). I attended for two or three weeks every year from 1963 to 1974. Initially, I was an enthusiastic amateur but had never had contact with the professional musical world. One of the excitements was the mixture of all levels of musicians. There was some segregation in accommodation and eating, but the thrice daily walk to and from Foxhole (a school getting on for a mile away from the Hall) gave plenty of opportunities for chat and it had a better night-life: long talks with the trogs (music students who did the donkey work)<sup>1</sup> and nights lying by the swimming pool and watching the meteor showers.<sup>2</sup>

Back in the 1960s, the forerunners to our baroque orchestras were ensembles like the English Chamber Orchestra and the Academy of St-Martin-in-the-Fields, both of whom were regular visitors. The former was on several occasions directed by Raymond Leppard, who may have blotted his HIP copy book in Monteverdi, but was a fine director of 18th-century music – and there are advantages in being able to play Handel and Haydn in a single concert at the same pitch! These brought some of the leading orchestral players, and concerts were exciting. (It was also fun playing table tennis with them.) Leppard was marvelous at middle-period Haydn. Neville Marriner, violinist gradually turning to conducting, was honest about his inexperience at the latter and asked for feed-back.

It was at Dartington that I met some of the leaders of the burgeoning early-music world. David Munrow, for instance, before he became famous; we clicked, and spent much of a week together, establishing a relationship whose tone remained whenever we met subsequently. He returned as conductor, sharing the Summer School choir with George Malcolm. I first met Andrew Parrott and Emma Kirkby while sitting with David auditioning the talent for early music activities. Theresa Caudle came with her parents as a very young cornettist.<sup>3</sup>

But how are things after 35 years? There was one fundamental problem: the weather. I remember (false nostalgia?)

fine days and nights and a life in which times not devoted to music were spent outdoors. But with almost continual rain last summer, the focus for casual meeting and chat – the main courtyard – did not function. This made it more difficult for me to pump people about their early-music experiences. Sadly, this was the third wet year running, and attendance was affected by it.

The specialist early-music activities were concentrated in the first two weeks. I needed to recover from my week at Beauchamp,<sup>4</sup> so we didn't arrive till the last day (Friday) of the first week, after an over-night drive. The first activity was the choir, meeting the first half of every morning except the Friday, when the orchestra joined the choir and the whole morning was set aside to rehearse the evening performance. The choir is made up from anyone who turns up on the Sunday morning, so can be variable. I don't know how it used to sound, since I was always part of it. I suspect, though, that currently the level is much higher. I heard the final rehearsal and concert of the first week, with Andrew Parrott conducting two French pieces, one popular now, Charpentier's *Te Deum*, and the other once regularly used for state funerals but now a rarity, the *Requiem* by Gilles. The French style is always difficult for amateurs. It's not just the *inégalité*, which the singers had picked up very well, but the quick and frequent changes of mood and tempo, especially in the Gilles, which are far more difficult to handle than in contemporary music from Italy, Germany or England. The orchestra made heavy work of this in the final (and probably, for them, only) rehearsal – their own concert was the night before. But most were efficiently sorted out and the performance was really impressive – the odd glitch was skilfully negotiated, demonstrating Andrew's technical skills as an orchestral conductor. The Gilles isn't as demonstrative a work as the Charpentier, but it is well worth performing.

I didn't manage to find out exactly how the orchestra was assembled: some said from students invited by the course directors, other that it was by application – perhaps a mixture of both. I arrived too late for the baroque music and dance show they gave on the Thursday evening, directed by Nicolette Moonen and Jenny Warde Clarke.<sup>5</sup> The following week I attended some of the orchestral rehearsals, directed impressively by Walter Reiter. One of the advantages of summer schools is the ability of anyone to look in at rehearsals, so I was surprised how few other

1. Wikipedia gives them a more exalted status: 'A Trog is also a type of voluntary Artist-Liaison Officer, working at Dartington International Summer School in Devon, England'.

2. One person I remember from the pool is the violinist Iona Brown; I also shared a birthday party there with the composer David Bedford.

3. The Caudles are the only family with four subscriptions to *EMR*.

4. A very different summer school, with under 50 students (many camping beside the music room) and three staff, concentrating on music from a very limited historical period.

5. Jennie was a familiar figure at Dartington forty years ago as a member of Peter Maxwell Davies's group playing his music-theatre pieces. The group of six also included two other early players, Duncan Druce and Alan Hacker. Readers of *Private Eye* may have noticed that both he and I have been suffering from the predations of fraudsters.

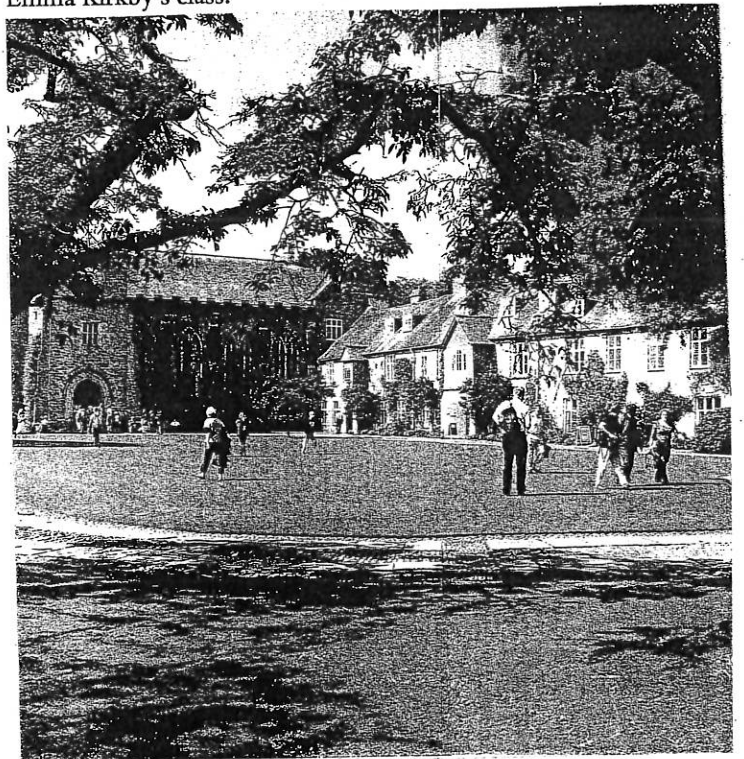
spectators there were.<sup>6</sup> The choir conductor John Hancorn worked with the orchestra as well, though probably less technically than Andrew had the previous week.<sup>7</sup> He is now involved in the Brighton Early Music Festival and a familiar voice on the phone, but I hadn't seen him in action. Obviously primarily a choir conductor, he was getting good results from the orchestra, though Walter did the detailed work, and he was excellent at enticing the choir into stylish singing. There was a lot to get through: amateur choirs would normally expect to spend more than nine hours preparing for a performance of the complete Christmas Oratorio. I didn't hear the result, but progress was promising.

I had never heard of a master class when I first visited Dartington. But I attended all sorts assiduously and learnt so much, especially when the teacher just sat down and played: the contrast between a good pupil and the master was always amazing, with a depth of tone that the pupil rarely had, and the masters were usually more relaxed than when playing in a concert.<sup>8</sup> The masters always emphasised playing the 'original', even if their concept of textual criticism was minimal and their reliance on the intended precision of the notation was exaggerated. I looked in on a class taken by John Lill, but he had too good a player!<sup>9</sup>

Evelyn Tubb's vocal master class was different from any other I have attended. The level of those who sang for her was variable, but she accepted where they came from, and worked marvels on them. She managed to bring all the audience into the process – I'm glad I came up with something sensible when I was asked for a suggestion over how to think dramatically about a particular lute-song. Evelyn treats every song as drama: act it out and the music will come to life. I'm not sure it always works in concerts, but any performance will be more convincing if expression by the whole body and mind has been part of the preparation of the performance. To adapt the remark I made in last February's *EMR* summing up Sarah Connolly's remarks on performing Dido, the performer must have a story beyond what is explicit in the song, but there is no need for the audience to know it (though Evelyn probably would want to express it more overtly). She did it her way in her concert. I must confess that I don't particularly remember the Dowland (I wasn't there to review the concerts), but the second half was a dramatic rendering of Schumann's *Frauenliebe- und Leben*: I'm not sure if I always

want to hear song-cycles thus, but this was certainly a striking and moving experience.<sup>10</sup>

Nick Clapton's class was more conventional. The session I attended was a bit like those that Paul Hamburger used to take, where anyone could turn up and play or sing anything, though Nick only had singers. (Are there now similar classes suitable for amateur players?) Nick was excellent in finding the right level to address his victims, and was considerably helpful. He also had plenty of general comment for the audience. Some serious students might believe that such attention to amateurs is out of place, but they might take the opportunity to learn how to teach. Sadly, I didn't arrive early enough in week one to sample Emma Kirkby's class.



I happened to hear a consort song wafting from an upper room (to the right of the picture) into the courtyard, so followed the sound and went to investigate. The singer was an old friend, so I was made welcome, and in the absence of a tutor, felt impelled to offer a bit of advice. One player left a few minutes early, and I was encouraged to fill the gap: it's a long time since I played a viol, and it was rather embarrassing! There were two or three consorts in adjacent rooms, with members of the Rose Consort around to help. The players seemed happy, though I don't know how they cope for a whole week if there happens to be among the players one who can't count, doesn't listen, and/or is nowhere near as good as he/she thinks.<sup>11</sup>

Stile Antico let various groups of madrigal singers loose on *The Triumphs of Gloriana*. The one I joined for a bit

6. The first time I heard a really detailed professional rehearsal was the Julian Bream Consort in the Great Hall pulling a consort dance apart and putting it together again: I was enthralled. Elaine's first such experience was when we gatecrashed for a day a few days before our wedding in 1975; we caught a Verdi Requiem (with two pianos instead of orchestra – the playing was amazingly effective) and conducted, I think, by Mark Elder. She was amazed by the rehearsal, and we slipped into the back of the gallery for the performance.

7. I knew John from a decade or so ago when I was asked to play for a course on *Poppea* for which he was vocal coach in a run-down and remote Victorian house a few miles from John o'Groats. An experience!

8. I particularly remember Vlado Perlemuter demonstrating a point in the slow movement of the *Waldstein* and continuing, all the more moving for being unexpected (maybe to him as well as us), to the end of the sonata.

9. I was sorry I didn't have a chance to meet him, since I occasionally write programme notes for his concerts, inserting in his biog an anecdote about our very brief meeting in Dartington in 1970 or 1971.

10. My image of the piece is from three performances at Dartington in successive years by Janet Baker, each with a different accompanist: the harpsichordist George Malcolm, a composition student Roger Smalley (a piece of his was done at the Proms, possibly that year), and, I think, Paul Hamburger. The Summer School has no collective memory of this.

11. No, I'm not referring to anyone in particular!

wasn't of the best quality and took some time to sort itself out, and the singer allocated to it was a bit offhand: perhaps it was a novel experience for him. In the 1960s, Philip Simms was doing the same sort of thing, but alone; small ensembles are now given more attention.<sup>12</sup> At the end of the session, the groups came together to show their progress. As with the viol groups, a balance needs to be made between serious coaching and enjoyment, and the tutors must be aware of the preferences of each group in sugaring the pill of instruction. Those who just want to sing through their favourite pieces can find a tree to sing under (if fine), but there is plenty of indoor space as well. My impression was that the singers needed stronger guidance. I wanted to swap notes with a member of *Stile Antico* who was sitting next to me at one of the concerts, but she fled pointedly quickly when it ended.

One advantage of Dartington is the enormous amount of space available, from big studios to practice rooms. When I heard that the College was to move to Falmouth, I feared for the future of the Summer School. But the facilities belong to the Dartington Trust, not the College, so remain. There will be a problem with the conversion of Foxhole to retirement flats, which removes much of the summer-school student accommodation – a variety of exotic tents were on display for comment. But it will remain in use for another two years. Back in the 1960/70s, camping was forbidden on the whole Dartington estate (although in the 1970s, a friend hired a field just beyond the estate and erected a marquee for acquaintances who couldn't afford the accommodation fees). Now there's a camp site, with water-tight tents big enough to take two with a little comfort, but with facilities somewhat distant (at least in the rain). But if there is extensive use of tents, however sophisticated, there will need to be purpose-built and substantial wash and shower rooms, as well as some basic cooking and lounging space for families accompanying performers, teachers and students. I don't think there is much family accommodation, so camping could be useful. If it were taken more seriously, and some children's activities were available, it might also help fill the gap between students and the generally older people who come primarily to listen.

Irrespective of the early-music events, Dartington is a major attraction because of the quality and variety of the concerts. There's much more competition now, and I imagine that in the 1960-70s, when Glock ran BBC music, the Proms and Dartington, he was in a position to get good deals from top players, and those on their way up were happy to treat Dartington as an informal BBC audition. There were certainly top-notch performers. On one occasion, I was moved off a piano because Alfred Brendel needed it to warm up for the Diabelli Variations (an amazing performance: I've never been so aware of Beethoven's sense of humour.) The young Jacqueline du Pré played Beethoven's op. 69, while the previous night

she had been sitting in the audience on a window-ledge immediately behind me.

The concerts on my recent visit were impressive, and I was, to my surprise, absolutely caught up in a programme comprising chiefly virtuoso piano transcriptions by Mikhail Kazakevich. I was, though, disappointed that the concerts were not full: the atmosphere of the Great Hall packed with a musically alert audience led to some of the most memorable concerts I have heard. The benches on the window-ledges used to be particularly prized: now they were mostly unoccupied. Maybe, in a fine summer, it will be full. A hall packed with an informed and reactive audience has a particular atmosphere, which the concerts I attended lacked.

This empty seats may be because the concerts are no longer attended by virtually everyone. During the 12 years I was a Dartington regular, I suspect that I missed only a couple of the main concerts – one I remember, if dimly, was rejected in favour of consuming a considerable quantity of wine in the tiltyard with David Munrow.<sup>13</sup> The change must in part be a result of the far wider types of music available. But I was appalled that the baroque orchestra missed Evelyn Tubb's performance: they could have learnt so much from it had they realised that what lay behind her presentation could inspire instrumentalists as well as singers. The trogs were also absent: they are now worked much harder.

I missed the African drumming, the Tibetan chant and the jazz. Dartington is, even more than it used to be, a place for the open-minded, and the range of experience available is a major attraction. Go for the early music: the performers and coaches are inspiring. But also go for the buildings, the grounds, types of music you don't know and the countryside – have a change of scene and get away from musicians for a few hours to enjoy Dartmoor!<sup>14</sup>

I hope that those attending now will find their musical life transformed as much as mine was and enriched by a wide range of connections. I hope the current students will, in 40 years, feel as nostalgic as I do. I do hope that Dartington will still find a place for the enthusiastic amateur as I was. I wouldn't have believed in 1963 that in 1974 I would be offered a (small) fee for playing organ in Monteverdi's *Orfeo* under Roger Norrington.

*The Summer School this year runs from 24 July to 28 August. Singers, note that there is a particularly rare treat being prepared for the week Robert Hollingworth takes the choir.*

12..I saw Philip playing harpsichord under Charles Mackerras (they will have met at Dartington in 1964 or 1965) in the *Acis & Galatea* I reported in *EMR* 132. One year, Louis Halsey (who had a famous small choir in the 1960s & 1970) assembled a larger madrigal group and gave a concert; I survived as a member by a tactful change from alto to tenor.

13. I think, unless that was another missed concert, we were with an up-and-coming conductor who seems not to have made it, Leonard (not David) Atherton. He certainly had a better idea of how to conduct Haydn than Antal Dorati. During a conducting class, Len had disagreed with the musical/musicological suggestions that Dorati made; in the evening, the ECO and Raymond Leppard played the same piece, and at virtually every point of disagreement, Leppard did what Len had advocated. We could hardly restrain our delight up on our window seat.

14. An amazing coincidence for a final footnote. One year, I went a bit further afield and drove to Tintagel. I gave an American hitch-hiker a lift. He was a bassoonist, and his ambition was to meet the designer of the 'logical bassoon'. I had sat with him a few hours earlier at breakfast!

## BOOKS

Barbara Sachs &amp; Clifford Bartlett

## TIPS FOR VIOLISTS

Alison Crum *The Viol Rules: a notebook* The Author, 2009. 148pp, £16.00 ISBN 13 978 0 9528220 0 4  
Available from Corda Music [www.cordamusic.co.uk](http://www.cordamusic.co.uk)

Alison claims she has taught over a thousand people in private lessons and courses: I can imagine that a large proportion of that thousand will want to buy this! It's a delightful little book, comb-bound in A5 format so that it is easy to place on a music stand, and elegantly produced. It is written for people who can already play, so doesn't follow the process of learning the instrument as a beginner, but has chapters on the main topics – holding the instrument and bow, bowing, fingering, and the music. Each section is clearly divided into subsections, so if you have a problem, you can easily find advice. It's a supplement to tutors that you study with the book on a music stand and viol in hand. Most remarks are not attached to exercises, so you can usefully read it on the train, in bed, standing in a queue or anywhere else. General musical points (relevant to players of anything) are bound up with specific technical suggestions.

The chapter headed 'Music' has some intriguing examples. I'm slightly puzzled that the *In nomine* chant is given with words to help phrasing. I can't imagine that by the 17<sup>th</sup> century players will have known the words (I don't think any sources include them), and phrasing and stress will have been invented without that guide. The excerpt from Tye's *O lux beata* is a delightful example of bowing a common pattern  $\text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩}$  within bars of eight crotchets, the triple rhythms sometimes made to fit by two extra crotchets but sometimes ignoring the barlines (and, of course, clashing with the other four parts, which are not shown). 3+3+2 crops up quite often (eg Byrd Fantasia a6 no. 2), and I was reminded of a book I read some 50 years ago, Curt Sach *Rhythm and Tempo*, which drew attention to that pattern occurring up in a wide range of music. The comments on this and other snippets concentrate on using the bow for musical points but with much less tucking two notes in a bow to get the strong notes on push bows than when I used to play the viol. Each section ends with a 'Little Rule' The final one applies to all sorts of music: 'Don't settle for a "one style fits all music" approach.' CB

## HANDEL ENCYCLOPAEDIA

*The Cambridge Handel Encyclopaedia* Edited by Annette Landgraf and David Vickers Cambridge University Press, 2009. xxii + 836pp, £100.00 ISBN 978 0 521 88192 0

Books like this need to be reviewed after periods of heavy use. Unfortunately, my time of intense involvement with

Handel stopped more or less when this arrived, and I've been recently rather more occupied with Monteverdi (see advert on p. 40). However, whatever criticisms can be made of it, it is a thorough, comprehensive volume that should certainly be in any academic library. But at the price, it is difficult to see it reaching the thousands of Handel lovers who would find it informative and useful. But specialists, both scholars and performers, might find the information not sufficiently detailed. The bibliographies to individual works, for instance, don't refer to reliable available editions (or admit when there isn't one). It is difficult to write about this without self-advertising. I have no complaint about the bibliography for *Messiah*, which includes two editions, mine and Donald Burrows's vocal score – Watkins Shaw and Tobin are mentioned only for their commentaries. But check *La Resurrezione* (for which Chrysander does not provide even a moderately-reliable version) – no reference to an edition, or *Semele*, for which there is mention only of a forthcoming one from Novello, which will no doubt only have a vocal score for sale.<sup>1</sup> For both of these works, my editions are the ones currently in use. Had I been editor of the Encyclopaedia, I'd have insisted that each entry for a Handel work had the HG and HHA volume number after the title and, at the end (separate from the bibliography) reference to a reasonably authentic edition and performance material: it would make financial sense, since some orchestras and opera-houses might then buy the book.

It is also difficult to write about this since I contributed one of the more substantial articles (*Performance practice*). Also, having spent a large part of the day before last driving Annette Landgraf across East Anglia to sing Mouton (see p. 35) and Lassus, and then having a convivial meal with her and her partner, it would be unchivalrous to be critical even if I wanted to be. The articles on the major works are better than most programme notes one comes across. The page happens to be open at the *Song for St Cecilia's Day* – not *Ode*, as the editions from 1771 to 2009 have it. The change of title isn't explained.<sup>2</sup> The description of the work concentrates on the word-painting, but doesn't mention the relaxed, spacious feel of the music. If you are on its wavelength, it's marvellous, but in the wrong mood or with the wrong conductor, one can feel that it is a bit over-drawn-out. And the description of the soprano solo as 'precentor-like' in the last chorus doesn't fit its opening, with the high declamation of the soprano interrupted by trumpet. There are

1. Curiously, for *Semele* the publisher is named, but *Messiah* is identified by place of publication: the former is more useful.

2. While pedantically getting Handel's title right, the body of the text refers to Purcell's setting as an *Ode*. I have been a strong (indeed, pioneering) advocate for avoiding *Ode* for Purcell's settings, since it is a poetic, not a musical form, and the settings were called Songs. The usage changed during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Early editions of Handel's work were called *Songs in the Ode*... not necessarily because *Ode* was wrong but because they only included the solos. The first complete score (1771) is called *Ode*. Handel's autograph is headed *Overture to the Song*...

paragraphs on the relationship to Purcell and Muffat, and a third on Handel's performances and singers. The bibliography is longer than that for *Messiah*, but has no reference to an available score, only to the new Novello one, which is presumably only a vocal score with full score on hire; so the Carus edition should have been listed as well.

One expects academic reference works like this to be snooty about popular items. But there are cross-references under *Largo* and *Silent worship*, but not for *Love in Bath*. Indeed, Beecham doesn't have an entry, despite a memorable, if non-HIP, recording of *Messiah*; I haven't heard his *Solomon*, but with Alexander Young in the cast, it is probably worth hearing. More important, the conductor whom most non-specialists over my age will associate with *Messiah* and other Handel oratorios is Malcolm Sargent, who is also absent. An appendix gives biographies of fifty Handel performers from the last 50 years – a bit of a gimmick, like weekend travel-supplement listings of the 50 best beaches or bars (no doubt omitting the really best ones since the writers don't want to have to mix with their readers). This segregation seems to be an excuse to use a different criterion for admission. Most of the names appear in the discography (very carefully selected, with generally only one recording per work, usually recent and early-instrument), so anyone seeking information on them can find them from conductor's or singer's web-site. But organisations like the AAM and the *Handel Opera Society* should surely be in the main sequence. Instrumentalists are noticeable absent, except for Crispian Steele-Perkins: not a single orchestral leader or continuo cellist!

Just as books tend to relate to other books and not to music editions, so they ignore the world of the internet. In some ways ephemeral (will it collapse from the excess of information that cannot be adequately sorted by the search engines?), there are sites that supplement this book. In particular, the HG scores are accessible (google 'Handel Chrysander' and the title you want), and an appendix to the bibliography might usefully have listed a few key sites or added them to appendix 8.

Letter Z ends at page 680 (Zeno and Zweig). This leaves another hundred pages of appendices and index. First comes a work list, including scoring and first performance dates, but none of the composition dates that Handel usually wrote on his scores. Does one date *Messiah* 1741 or 1742 if only one year is appropriate? Appendix 2 is a chronology, more compact than that in Donald Burrows' *Master Musicians*. There is an extensive family tree, starting from Valentin Händel (b. 1582) but not extended through from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> century, though there are still Handels in Halle and elsewhere. Appendix 4 lists portraits, authentic and dubious. Appendix 5 is a genealogical table of British monarchs from James I to George III. Appendix 6 is a list or recordings, very select (favouring recent, HIP versions) but not too controversial; it's up-to-date enough to favour John Butt for *Messiah* and *Acis*. Then (Appendix 7) there are biogs of 50 performers, mentioned above. Appendix 8 is Handel Websites. There is a short bibliography (supplemented by separate bibliographies for main articles – very up-to-date since there's one published last year listed after

my article which I have not seen. There is a thorough index<sup>3</sup> Why are instruments listed there under London but not as separate entries?

I was puzzling in another context (where he was mis-spelt without the penultimate letter) why Pamphilij is always spelt thus (as I do with the Venetian publisher Raverij). Surely that's just a printing convention, and unless one is adopting other comparable conventions, shouldn't we call him Pamphilii, as Jennens does in the facsimile on p. 486. Was it originally a Latin genitive? The entry for him might have explained it. How was the name pronounced – or did everyone call just him Benny?

This is not a coherent review: it would take much more use of the volume to offer that. I'll end by commending it, hoping that a paper-back version will appear at an affordable price as soon as possible. CB

## HANDEL OPERAS

Winton Dean and John Merrill Knapp *Handel's Operas 1704-1726* Boydell Press, 2009. xx + 771pp, £60.00 ISBN 978 184383 525 7

There's not much to say about this. Much has changed in our understanding of Handel's operas since its first publication in 1987, particularly the greater familiarity with them from so many performances and recordings – the latter mostly of high quality, the former often disfigured by directors who impose ideas rather than extrapolate them from the text AND the music. And much of the detailed information on sources and editions is covered by the more recent HHA volumes – though the price of this book is between a third and a quarter of a single HHA score, so it is still has its uses even for such detail. What matters is that it approaches a subject from so many angles that even if comparable studies were to appear, it is a classic and needs to be available. This reprint of the revised edition (1995) makes both volumes available from Boydell. CB

## The LIFE of AVISON

Roz Southey, Margaret Maddison, David Hughes *The Ingenious Mr Avison: Making Music and Money in Eighteenth-Century Newcastle* Avison Ensemble & Tyne Bridge Publishing, 2009. 148pp, £10.00 ISBN 978 1 857951 29 5

This expands the information on Avison in Roz Southey's excellent *Music Making in North-East England during the Eighteenth Century* (Ashgate 2006) with more local background and many contemporary illustrations. The appearance and style fits the world of local history booklet (Tyne Publications being part of Newcastle Libraries) rather than Ashgate's musicological style. There are so many well-researched publications available in local bookshops now, that we should not be surprised at their excellence. Music

3. But it is odd to include references in the index to the entry titles in the main encyclopaedia but not to Appendix 7. The case of Alan Kitching is odd. The index refers to p. 522, which mentions him in connection with the Unicorn Opera Group. The brief entry for that refers to Appendix 7. But Appendix 7 has no entry under Unicorn but one for Kitching.

tends to be under-represented, so full marks for the issuing of a book on Newcastle's best-known composer, apart from Georgie Ridley, of Blaydon Races fame, and perhaps Sting (see p. 35). In many respects it is a model for studies on local composers elsewhere, with one exception. There is nothing about the music itself. This makes sense in the local-history marketing world: people interested in local history will pay £10 for a book on a local worthy, but if it went up to £15, and there were a couple of chapters that looked incomprehensible with music type, I suspect that sales would be significantly lower.

The authors set Avison in his period without over-labouring the point. Child mortality, dependence on charity in misfortune, the ambiguous social position of a man of some distinction and culture but of lower status than those upon whom he depends – these all impinge on Avison. He seems to have had considerable confidence in his own abilities and taste, not just in his relationship with the nobility and gentry but in his reluctance to adapt his style to newer trends. Outside Newcastle, he is probably better-known now than he ever was, thanks to recordings; the Avison Ensemble is currently recording the complete works.<sup>4</sup>

A few individual comments:–

p. 37. Having mentioned concert durations in the last *EMR*, it is worth noting that subscription concerts were advertised to last three hours, including intervals.

p. 38. A professional musician did not need to see his part before the concert: he should be able to sight-read and cope with last-minute changes.

p. 48. The idea that only soloists in concerti grossi could double-stop is plausible, but Handel's orchestral writing as a whole avoids double stops and probably only virtuosi writing for themselves used them.

p. 56. Am I particularly ignorant in assuming that the rebels in 1746 marched from Edinburgh to Derby via Newcastle? In fact, they went via Carlisle, so the disruption in Newcastle was less than one might have expected.

p. 95. That Avison 'could not bring himself to pen an obituary for his old master [Geminiani] until six years later [than his death]' is one of several attributions of motive of the sort that are so easy to write.

p. 96. Surely the fact that a bilingual libretto was published for Pergolesi's *The Maid, the Mistress* (presumably *La serva padrona*) in 1763 implies that it was performed in Italian.

The autograph page reproduced as Plate 7 is not quite 'ready for the printer', since there is a superfluous tie in bars 2/3 & 6/7; in the third system, later the top part is notated correctly without it, but the second part is wrong in the last bar of the page; perhaps Avison copied the music before he had the English text.

The book includes a list of subscribers, with remarkably few names that I recognise as musicians or musicologists. I suspect that the publishers did not circulate information through musical channels. I hope the absence of academic libraries is from ignorance rather than intent. CB

4. Several years ago, the Ensemble was considering publishing the music, but their web site makes no mention of editions. However, op. 1, 3, 7 & 9 and the orchestral arrangements of Scarlatti harpsichord sonatas are available from the Early Music Company in facsimile.

## CONFERENCES & FESTSCHRIFTS<sup>5</sup>

### HONOURING TIMOTHY J. MCGEE

*The Sounds and Sights of Performance in Early Music: Essays in Honour of Timothy J. McGee* Edited by Maureen Epp and Brian E. Power Ashgate, 2009. xv + 291pp, £55.00 ISBN 978 0 7546 5483 4

Timothy McGee retired in 2002 after thirty years teaching at the University of Toronto, though is still busy writing, and working on the Medici Archive Project. This festschrift includes a bibliography of his writings; I would have welcomed a brief biography as well. He has been particularly concerned with how early (mostly the earlier-period of 'early') music was performed and sounded, and this volumes focusses on that theme. There are a dozen chapters (I'm never quite sure what to call the contributions in such collections) divided into two sections 'Viewing the Evidence' and 'reconsidering contexts': I'd have preferred an approximate chronological order.

In the first chapter, John Haines describes a picture that appears to represent the author/composer Gautier of Coincy playing a *vielle* and reading from notated music. The picture may not be quite so clear in its meaning, since the player seems to be standing in front of the music; the implication may be no more than we are entering the section of the MS that has music, indicated by the presence of an instrument and the notation, or that the songs may also be played on the *vielle*. But I may be imposing my modern knowledge of perspective, and the way the musician's eyes are looking might be to show that he really is looking at the music. If so, it implies that at least one player was musically literate, and Haines points out that the posture (without the music) is a common one. It is, however, confusing to refer to the player 'sight-reading'. On this side of the Atlantic at least, that means 'playing without having seen the music before', whereas the player could just as well have been using it as an aide-memoire, or else the picture is more generally intended to show that musical literacy was one of Gautier's accomplishments, making him a step above the average *viellist* – not what Haines argues.

Andrew Hugeness title 'The Story of O' parodies a title by another Toronto scholar, Bruce Haynes, and gives a tiny example of the problems in editing a work surviving in 146 sources, none of which has any overwhelming authority, and the danger of editing texts from versions that have been corrupted by scribes who have copied the words without noticing the underlay. The topic is the treatment of an 'o' in the magnificent antiphon *Pastor cesus* of from the office for St Thomas a Becket, by a local composer Benedict of Peterborough.

Brian E Power studies the rubrics in Trent MS 93 & 90 (e.g. *duo*, *faburt*, *chorus*) and decides that the main scribe isn't musical or consistent enough. 'As performance practice indicators, they seem by no means representative of rigidly

5. I have decided that *festschrift* (despite the *Oxford Manual of Style*) is now sufficiently anglicised to have a small *f* and an *s* as plural.



## MEMORY AND INVENTION

*Memory and Invention: Medieval and Renaissance Literature, Art and Music: Acts of an International Conference, Florence, Villa I Tatti, May 11, 2006* edited by Anna Maria Busse Berger and Massimiliano Rossi. Florence: Olschki, 2009. xix + 175pp, €28.00 ISBN 978 88 222 5852 6

I defy anyone to read the eight contributions here in a single day, even omitting the footnotes! The editors have encouraged the contributors to 'extend and cultivate their lecture into full and mature texts'. My Italian isn't up to covering everything here, and music is only one of the topics covered. I was intrigued and amused by Stephen Orgel on 'Shakespeare and the Art of Forgetting' and fascinated by Mario Carpo's demonstration that geometry can be more precise than arithmetic, especially when the geometry can be described and does not have to be drawn. Ten lines of prose tell you how to measure out the base of a column. All you need is a pair of compasses. It could be described numerically, but the calculation would (as Carpo demonstrates) be very complex and much less comprehensible. I hadn't realised that Euclidean geometry was transmitted without drawings. (No doubt, many readers are better informed). Only later was all the information turned into diagrams.

Turning to the musical articles, Berger shows that 14th- and 15th-century musicians learnt a large number of basic harmonic progressions (to use modern terminology) which they could use as a basis for elaboration: the art was in the elaboration, not the chordal structure. A century or so later, this was taken further in the diminution instruction manuals, which covered the elaboration by listing every way of getting from A to B with minimal thought. Philippe Canguilhem shows how the musical hand had more sophisticated uses than merely learning sol-fa. The quotation from Zacconi (p. 97) of indicating a counter-melody to a singer by pointing on the hand to the show the notes reminded me of an audition test from a Spanish renaissance choir (as told in lecture by Bruno Turner back in the 1970s): the victim had to direct a four-part choir, sing an improvised fifth part and indicate by hand a sixth part for another singer. I wish I knew the source.

Memory eventually declined, replaced by a greater awareness that general principles could replace rote-learning and by the availability of books and the growth of a print culture. This process has, of course, recently accelerated with the current dependency on computers. Mental manipulation of numbers by shop assistants with a battery of short cuts in their heads as well as the multiplication tables is virtually dead. Something similar happens in keyboard continuo playing, and even a hopeless rote-learner like me can find his fingers remembering what to play in standard sequences, provided that I get the first chord in the right position. The practices described here depended, not just on memory, but on firm foundations of predictability.

CB

## ANCINA &amp; THE LAUDA

*Il Tempio Armonico. Giovanni Giovenale Ancina e le musiche devozionali nel contesto internazionale del suo tempo.* Edited by Carla Bianco (*Le Chevalier Errant, Studi sulla musica degli Antichi Stati Sabaudi del Piemonte*, 5), Libreria Musicale Italiana, 2006. xiv+446pp, with 37 b/w and 15 colour plates. ISBN 88-7096-466-3 €50.00

This hefty, rewarding tome, has been eluding my attention for too long. These are the acts of a Saluzzo conference of October 2004, on devotional music in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, in relation to the ambitious, and only partially realised project of Padre Giovenale Ancina (1545-1604), which was to compile and publish an anthology of *Laudi* by contemporary composers, along with poetic texts, whether musically set or not. Only the volumes for 3 voices (in part books) saw the light, printed in Rome in 1599-1600. Ancina, a follower of S. Filippo Neri, composed only five of the *laudi*, but wrote many of the texts for others in the compilation. Appointed Bishop of Saluzzo in 1603, he was poisoned in 1604 (and beatified in 1890). This celebratory volume contains 17 studies, grouped into three sections. Since they are all in Italian, I am translating their titles in order to better point out their contents.

1) the *Tempio Armonico*

Marco Giuliani *Il Tempio Armonico. History of a colossal, edifying project and of its celebrative formal aspects: sources, collations, and contents.* This introductory study presents transcriptions of the 5 pieces by Ancina (plus a dubious one), and 4 by other composers, and also underlines the importance of the poetic contents, noting that its text alone runs to 22,000 words.

Agostino Ziino "Alta armonia gentile...": *gleanings and digressions on the tradition of the Filippine lauds.* The quote is the first line of G. B. Strozzi the younger's spiritual madrigal which continues "...nel gran Tempio risuona..." and it not only appears at the beginning of the collection, but is found in three more settings in the course of the work. Ziino demonstrates that the complex compositional chain reactions resulting from resettings, the *cantasi come* tradition (whereby new texts were sung to old settings and vice versa), and the *travestimenti spirituali* (new texts on profane music) reinforced the characteristics of a consolidated devotional style in the last decades of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

Elisabetta Crema *The poetry of the Tempio Armonico: imitation, travesty, rewritings.* Given the amount of borrowings and revisions, it is not surprising to learn that not all the poetry towed the same line, and that Ancina himself was often upbraided for his fanciful poetic liberties, respect to the conventional style.

Piero Gargiulo "Usque adeo suaves et amoenos reperias [...] cantus". *The theoretical thinking of Ancina for the "angelico concento".* Two of three MS works attributed to Ancina, though plausibly from the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and one of which, possibly by Palestrina, may have simply had his

name added in the late 1800s after his beatification. "Perhaps by..." appears on their title pages. The third, however, is the young Ancina's philosophical-medical doctoral thesis from 1567, containing five statements about music, including the strange claim that binary time, C, represents salvation whereas hemiola portends death! As a speculative and practical thinker on music he developed his ideas in the *Tempio*, and in the concept of *divino cantico soavissimo* as opposed to *canzoni profane, dishoneste* etc.

Francesco Luisi Giovanni Giovenale Ancina and the bishop Romolo Cesi: a fruitful relationship in the zone of Narni investigates the reasons for the dedication of *Nuove laudi Ariose della Beat.ma Vergine* to Cesi and other clues about their collaboration.

Paola Besutti *Lamentationes Hieremiae Prophetarum: attributions and contexts*, shows, largely thanks to W. Kirkendale's recent work on Cavalieri, how dubious and superficial were the attempts to consider Ancina the author of the texts or the music of these Lamentations, or even the mere copyist of the textual underlay or the music, in the manuscript (I-Rv, ms O.31), despite the persistence of such attributions (Bradshaw, 1990, *Grove VI* (2001)). This leaves only the hypothesis that Ancina might have owned the MS, and that his musical interests went beyond the lauds and the polyphony of Palestrina, Victoria and Lasso.

## 2) the national context

Daniele V. Filippi *Spiritual music in Rome from the Laud to the Teatro Armonico* discusses about thirty collections in print from Palestrina's *madrigali spirituali* of 1580 to the *Rime sacre concertate* of G. F. Anerio of 1620, and the influence of the laud as a model on Anerio's production.

Stefano Lorenzetti *Tempio Armonico / Teatro Armonico: music as a form of sacred eloquence in the liturgical-devotional rituals between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries* uses the frontispieces of the *Tempio Armonico*, Pietro Aaron's *Trattato della natura...* (1525), and Carlo Reggio's *Orator christianus* (1612) to illustrate the persuasive roles of rhetoric and music in Christianizing the world, discussing how the allure of music was to serve this purpose in a new way. Since "harmony" is essentially neutral, Ancina's reasoning is quite interesting: since what is visible is more wordly and what is audible is more abstract, music deriving from profane sources is not recognized as immortal, and thus the profane can be transformed into the sacred.

Daniele Torelli *Ancina in Piedmont: diffusion of the Laud in print between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries*. The discussion is broader than the title indicates, regarding Milan and adjacent areas of Lombardy, Ticino, and Liguria, the impact of the laud repertoire on other music, and the discovery of a *Nuova Raccolta di Lodi Spirituali* printed in Cuneo as late as 1686.

Eleonora Simi Bonini writes on the Spanish composer Cristoforo Montemayor. The newly founded state of Italy suppressed religious corporations and expropriated their property. Music was dispersed, lost, damaged, or

successfully kept hidden, and thus many items still remain in the same libraries, which now belong to the state. In one of these, the Biblioteca Vallicelliana, is found the manuscript (Mus. 135) described here, which the writer considers an autograph made in 1592-93 given to Ancina, containing 62 compositions (*Antifone, Cantici, Inni, Messe, Motetti, Salmi*) for 5-8 voices. Descriptions and texts of six Lauds printed in the *Tempio Armonico* end the article.

Kimberlyn Montford *Gli Affetti amorosi spirituali (Roma, 1617) Devotion in convents in Rome after the Council of Trent*. These madrigals for 1-3 voices were dedicated to Anna Maria Cesi, a nun from a rich and powerful family, and presumably sung by her in the presence of the composer, P. Quagliati, in the convent of S. Lucia in Selci. Such occurrences, and the fact of any convent music being published in the first place, were exceedingly rare. Two of the monodic pieces, on texts by Guarini, are analyzed and appear in full in the appendix.

Francesco Zimei *Vanity of vanities: musical phenomenology of the Visit of the Seven Churches*. In 1562 S. Filippo Neri first led pilgrims on a 16 mile archaeological, artistic and spiritual visit to the "Seven Churches" of Rome, a tradition which already by 1565 attracted a throng of 2,000. The spectators paused to listen to sermons and lauds, but also participated, singing joyfully while they walked. Many of the lauds were spiritual travesties of Carnival songs, in particular the popular Florentine *Vanità di vanità*, which appeared in print (1675) or manuscript (1721) unchanged, and in new versions as late as 1947 (C. Gasbarri). The repertoire which developed for the route became associated with the seven episodes of the Passion. The appendix includes six texts of lauds in the Filippine tradition printed by Barbetti in Florence in 1657, of which 4 include the music for solo voice and continuo.

Cristina Santarelli *Celestial music in devotional paintings of the Counter-reformation* interprets the symbolic intentions of painters of subjects such as St. Francis, St. Jerome, Mary Magdalen, St. Cecilia, St. Theresa, St. Paul in which their meditations, ecstasies, or sufferings are depicted as elicited by or accompanied by music – played by angels, or played by themselves in order to be inspired and to distance themselves from worldly vices. In 1582 Cardinal Gabriele Paleotti, in the last meeting of the Council of Trent, made the contradictory affirmation that art must respect history in treating episodes in such a way that the viewer is given a proper example of conduct. Expanding on this, Santarelli shows how 17<sup>th</sup> century art resembles contemporary melodrama, discussing 16 paintings (15 of the plates are in colour) in the light of these and, incidentally, Ancina's ideas. Because the iconography is so typical and widespread, this admirable article gives keys to understanding Baroque art and its religious metaphors.

## 3) the international context

Francesca Bonastre *The villancico as origin of the development of the earliest oratorios in 17<sup>th</sup> century Spain*. In the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century the increasing use of *música*

de romance in churches provoked a ban by Filippo II in 1596 which, however, was little respected, and indeed Filippo IV explicitly permitted *villancicos* with appropriate texts, and the church itself was openly favourable from the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century until the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup>. Indeed, to become choir-master a candidate had to compose one work in Latin in *stile antico* and one in the vernacular in the modern rhetorical *stile rappresentativo*. The *villancico* exploited the contrast between an expressive *estribillo* which interpreted the text, and a simpler repeating *copla*, and was written for up to 12 voices, in as many as 5 movements, with tempo and dynamic indications in Spanish (e.g. *despacio*, *aprisa*, *voz*, *eco*; after 1700 the Italian terms prevailed). Developments throughout the latter half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century were due to experimentation and to exposure to international models, and the use of *villancico* in secular music. The Congregation of the Oratorio was founded in various cities, starting with Valencia in 1645, and oratorios, often denoted as *villancicos*, were performed, evolving as did the *cantata* in Italy into opera and oratorio.

Annibale Enrico Cetrangolo *Musical patronage of the brotherhoods in the Americas during the colonial period*. This is one of the longest studies, including the results of research by F. C. Lange and G. L. Villena and discussion of the role of African communities in the musical activities of the American colonies. Despite the hostility (or attempted sabotage) of the church, the extreme permissiveness of the colonial society of the counter-reformation took theatrical realism to great lengths – the Jesuits even strewing the stage with exhumed corpses. Cetrangolo briefly refers to the role of Domenico Zipoli and to the papal power and prestige of the Confraternità di S. Cecilia and other brotherhoods which established seats in Brasil, Perù, the Canaries. The adoption of black figures and saints was accompanied by typical deformations of pronunciation which were imitated thereafter, even much later by Villa-Lobos. Similarly “contaminated” musical activities in Cuba, Argentina, Venezuela, and Uruguay are mentioned, along with interesting documents relating to performance practice (keyboard transcriptions, substitution of harp for organ, *harpa continuou*, the conductor singing the bass part). Rebellious political movements (against Spain, Europe, and the Church) were aided by the pro-Inquisition Jesuits, and musical activities of the associations continue to the present day.

Salvatore Maugeri *The devotional musical context in 17<sup>th</sup> century France. Parafrasi di salmi, parodie di airs de cour and cantiques spirituels*. These forms (with dates, works, composers, collections, editions and musical examples) include musical *intermèdes*, sacred theatrical works and Biblical cantatas; Protestant and Catholic uses of religious song in French; and extend from the *Psalmes de David* by Clément Marot (1561) to the *Cantates françaises* by Élisabeth Jacquet De La Guerre (1708).

Alina Żórawska-Witkowska *Christmas songs in 17<sup>th</sup> century Poland*. Before getting to its topic this study describes the geo-political, religious and cultural background of Rzeczpospolita, which in the mid 17<sup>th</sup> century com-

prised Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania, Latvia, Byelorussia, Estonia, and part of Russia, and which was only half Catholic, religiously tolerant (at least until 1658), giving asylum to those persecuted in other countries. The progressive “Polonisation” of the Catholic intellectual elite enabled the Jesuits to pursue an artistic and ideological program, including singing in the churches, beginning with the *kołęda*, still sung today. These are simple melodies, pastoral-rural in theme, in Polish, developed between the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, replacing the more austere modal medieval Latin ones which began to be translated into Polish as early as the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, and which were thematically related to Mary or the infant Jesus and contained musically expressive devices. The article describes the still popular *Sinfonie angeliche* [actually it has a long 17-word Polish title] of 1631 and 1642 by Jan Zabczyk, which is compared to the music collected in *il Tempio Armonico*.

In conclusion I must say that I didn’t expect to find this volume so informative, assuming it was just going to be about lauds throughout. The scholars who contributed have placed the genre in significant perspectives, in such a way that what one learns from these studies applies to the interesting sacred-profane dichotomy in general and the history of the oratorio in particular. Barbara Sachs

#### EXOTICISM AND THE BAROQUE

*Le arti della scena e l'esotismo in età moderna – The Performing Arts and Exoticism in the Modern Age* edited by Francesco Cotticelli and Paologiovanni Maione. Turchini Edizioni, 2006. 722pp. ISBN 88-89491-02-7 €35.00

The Italian/English title is misleading because only one of the 31 studies is in English, four are in Spanish, and although the volume concerns 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century opera, many articles focus on depiction of the Orient in the earlier *Commedia dell'Arte*, in Elizabethan-Jacobean and Spanish theatre, without touching on music or on the European political contexts in which the librettos were written, with religious polemics, paganism, slavery, in the foreground.

Sergio Durante opens with the notion of the exotic in 18<sup>th</sup> century music – the functions served and the limited musical means employed to convey ‘foreignness’.

Silvia Carandini discusses the costumes and scenery of the orient in *Commedia dell'Arte*, drawing on the 15<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> century popular tradition of tournaments, dances, staged battles, inspired by literature (Tasso) and religious movements, motivated by the fear of infidels in 17<sup>th</sup> century Europe, shocked by the spread of the Ottoman empire, but showing increasing fascination. Exotic themes in comic and tragic spectacles, some including music, in the early 1600s at least, were largely in competition with early opera.

The title of Paola Pugliatti’s study translates to “Gypsies” in the English Renaissance: performers, thieves and prophets’ but the semantic nuances are relevant, and

the Italian 'Egizi', means Egyptians. In popular literature and on the Elizabethan and Jacobean stage, in society and in the language, in Shakespeare, Middleton and Rowley (e.g. 'Come then, we'll be Gipsified/And tipsified too.') and Jonson (the masque *The Gipsies Metamorphosed*), we find these persistent stereotypes.

Felipe B. Pedraza Jiménez traces the 'barbarous, monstrous, destructive' view of remote cultures, taking the works of Francisco de Rojas Zorrilla (1607-1648), among which he notes *El villano gran señor y Gran Tamorlán de Persia* treated earlier by Christopher Marlowe and in 18<sup>th</sup> century opera (Vivaldi, Chelleri, Leo, Händel, Porpora et al.). Also in Spanish, Agustín de la Granja presents Church documents on the historical event upon which the comedy *La monja de Portugal* was based. Paolo Mechelli treats the 18<sup>th</sup> century renditions in opera, dance and pantomime of the violent and macabre history-legend of Inês de Castro, driven to madness, executed in 1355 (by sword or by poison, depending on the librettist) under Portuguese tyranny and then exhumed for incoronation *post mortem*, analyzing the two existing scores, Giuseppe Giordani's (1793) and Francesco Bianchi's (1794). Unfortunately, Paisiello's (1799) is lost.

There are no musical implications in Mario Domenichelli's look at Elisabethan exoticism (ideas and rhetoric) in *Anthony and Cleopatra*. Nevertheless, European racism after a century of global conquests, the mores of the court of James I, and the reciprocal influence of Shakespeare himself on the 19<sup>th</sup> century concepts of 'otherness' are worth noting.

Wendy Heller's 'Venezia in Egitto and Exoticism in 17<sup>th</sup> century Venetian Opera' concerns music. Although numerous operas and *balli* portrayed the world of the Orient and ancient Greece and Rome, the representation of ancient Egypt was paradoxically limited to fascination with the unfathomable mysteries behind monuments and hieroglyphics, which lent importance to the subject: reluctance to create Pyramids, tombs and the Nile onstage prevailed. 'Historical' plots are rather complex, and Daniele di Castrovallari's *Cleopatra* (1662) doesn't succeed in killing herself.

Jean-François Lattarico discusses mythological-historical-exotic themes in 17<sup>th</sup> century Venetian opera librettos, where distance and foreignness were seen also as socio-psychological aspects. Nevertheless the trend was basically nominal, stereotypical and produced more a contamination of ideas than a valorization of 'otherness'. Ignacio Arellano looks at Pedro Calderón's theatrical works, and Carlo Mata Induráin at the burlesque comedy of the Golden Age, where the geographically exotic matches the jocosity of Carneval.

Melania Bucciarelli analyzes how operas with oriental themes produced at the Teatro S. Angelo in Venice absorbed the anti-Islam bias of Torquato Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata* of 1580-83. After the Peloponnesian war (1684-99) operas such as *Armida abbandonata* by Silvani and Ruggeri, and *Armida al campo* by Silvani and Boniventi

not only purvey a view of the supremacy of the West over the East, but even of the male hero over the seductive, conjuring or enslaved female.

Musical analysis of the exotic, taking Metastasio's *Didone abbandonata* set by Leonardo Vinci (1726) as an example, is offered by Diana Blichmann. Metastasio vilifies the evil figure of Iarba, who threatens to kill Aeneas if Dido won't marry him. In Vinci's opera his aggressiveness and foreignness are underlined by exotic and pseudo-exotic elements. The former are intrinsic to the dramatic text, sets and costumes. The latter interpret the 'barbarous', evoked by particular rhythms, harmonies, the absence of harmony, monotonous or chromatic melodic motives, that Vinci considered extra-European. The Italian translator makes mistakes in musical terminology, as a result of which the reader has to retranslate 'sequenze' to *progressioni* and 'progressioni' to *successioni* (or *concatenazioni*) and allow for wrong adjectives like 'eccezionali' for *eccedenti*. These mistakes are serious, since sequences, chord progressions and chromatic intervals are quite specifically discussed.

Two studies concern Alvise Giusti's *Montezuma*: Nancy D'Antuono's, on discrepancies between historical facts and their transformation for the Venetian theatre between 1733 and 1789, and Steffen Voss's on the recently found fragmentary setting by Vivaldi, RV 723. He describes the arias we have, and while his conclusion is that even if Montezuma and his wife Mitrena could as well have been 'Greeks, Romans, Persians, Egyptians, Chinese, Longobards, Arcadian shepherds or French knights', the work is very dramatic, with a super-heroic Fernando Cortes and a tragic Mexican ruler. Cesare Fertonani mentions Vivaldi's other exotic operas, reaching similar conclusions, but he then extends the musical meaning of 'exotic', to include Vivaldi's *stile francese*, descriptive, programme music, parodies of the bucolic, or of the odd sounds of popular instruments, and other musical jokes. A rather exotic (far-fetched) interpretation of the 'exotic'.

Other *Montezumas*, on a libretto by Giampietro/Giovanni Pietro Tagliazucchi (drafted by Frederick the Great) set by Graun (1755) and on librettos by V. A. Cigna-Santi (a student of Tagliazucchi's uncle) set by G. F. Francesco de Majo (1765) and G. Insanguine (1780), link Turin with Berlin. The development of these increasingly dramatic and even violent librettos (showing the death of the hero on stage), in keeping with the militarism of the Kingdom of Turin, was part of the wider European Enlightenment's fascination with the New World, reflected in numerous other operas. After Margaret R. Butler's study, this trend (attributed to 'maniacal erudition' and 'morbose' curiosity about customs) is further discussed by Paologiovanni Maione, who traces Montezuma in other Italian librettos (F. Tarducci, 1787) and settings (Giordano, Myslivecek, Galuppi, Paisiello, Sacchini, Anfossi, Zingarelli, Vento, Magnes), many of which are Neapolitans.

The most familiar exotic style is the *alla turca*, albeit generically oriental, extending from N. Africa to China, and full of timbric, melodic and rhythmic stereotypes.

Claudio Toscani's stimulating study presents it as a European idiom. A surprising conclusion is that the Viennese and Parisian *clichés* are different, the former a subset of various 'exotic' styles, more limited to particular sounds, whereas the latter is less exclusive, making almost any sort of irregularity do; whereas in Italy *alla turca alla viennese* had a place mainly in *opera buffa*. Since it is the public that hears something as exotic, Gluck increased the effect by presenting *Paride ed Elena* in Vienna in the French exotic style and *Iphigénie* in Paris 'alla turca', and operas transplanted from Paris to Italy between 1787 and 1795, such as Grétry's *La Caravane du Caire* had to be considerably adapted so that, Italian characters didn't lose their 'exotic' flavour. Deirdre O'Grady and Francesco Bissoli reflect on satire and ridicule in the librettos of *L'italiana in Algeri* (1813) and *Il turco in Italia* (1814), both set by Rossini, and in the Goldoni-inspired opera *Tutti in maschera* (with real and disguised-as Turks) set by Carlo Pedrotti (1856).

Francesca Seller and Antonio Carocchia discuss Janissary sonorities on stage in Naples in the 18<sup>th</sup> century; Francesco Cotticelli shows numerous occasions for exotic themes among a list of about 200 of Cerlone's comedies, published in Naples up to 1829. Anthony Deldonna describes the astounding success of the exotic and violent opera *Debora e Sisara* (music by Guglielmi, libretto by Sernicola), performed often during Lent in Naples between 1788 and 1827, for primarily political reasons, equating the Biblical Deborah to Maria Carolina of Austria [Queen of Naples and Sicily].

The tables are turned in Pierpaolo Polzonetti's entertaining account of armed Quakers in operas such as *L'americana in Olanda* (libretto by N. Porta, lost music by P. Anfossi) or *La quakera spiritosa* (libretto by G. Palomba, music P. Guglielmi) or *L'americano* of Piccinni. It is revolutionary America, the "west", with equality of the sexes, and ethical amorality perceived as exotic respect to the decadence of the "east", the Old World, and its values.

Maria Ines Aliverti writes about the innovative *spectacles optiques* produced in the Salle des Machines delle Tuileries between 1734 and 1758 by the scenographer, architect, and impresario Jean-Nicolas Servandoni (1695-1766), especially his *Conquête du Mogol*. Neither sketches nor music to accompany the pantomime survive, but the new scientific, historical, documentary intent evident in the librettos shows a radical departure from the ethnocentric imaginary exoticism prevailing before the Age of Enlightenment.

The ethical themes of *Les Indes Galantes* (Fuzelier-Rameau 1735) and the anti-Spanish and anti-religious political agenda of *Alzire, ou les Américains* (Voltaire, 1736) and finally her patriotic transformation in the Cammarano-Verdi *Alzira* (1845), are the subject of Elena Di Felice's study. Guido Paduano also compares the tragedy and the opera.

Bruce Alan Brown's article on Gluck's eclectic treatment of the 'most barbarous' Scythians, in *Cythere assiégée* (comic opera of 1748 by Favart, reset by Gluck in 1759,

1775) gives us some musical examples: historically inappropriate Turkish and Croatian marches for the warriors, oddly accented airs for the nymphs, polkas for the troops (removed in 1775), and the East-European-sounding dances of the Kalmykians in the ballet *La Halte des Calmouckes* (1761), all of which earned Gluck criticism for the ethnic mix-up. The implication is that this prejudicial identification of modern Poles with ferocious ancient Scythians, still evident in *Iphigénie en Tauride* (1779), led to partition and loss of statehood for Poland.

Marina Mayrhofer turns her attention to Gluck's pupil, Salieri, who together with Beaumarchais, create *Tarare* (Paris, 1787, revised for Vienna, 1788 as *Axur Re d'Ormus*, and sequelled in *Le Couronnement*, 1790) an *étrange opera* in which character overcomes tyranny. Despite recourse to Turkish *clichés* (by now become metaphorical and even used in the *Scène des Nègres* where Beaumarchais was actually thinking of African melodies heard in N. America), it used the orchestra more than the voices, intent on re-creating ancient Greek drama in a 'new' mixed genre: comic, tragic, exotic.

A quite intriguing study by Lucio Tufano, 'Orfeo in Caledonia' brings the exotic geographically closer to home: Pietro Morandi's opera *Comala* (1780), on Raniero Calzabigi's libretto, based on James Macpherson's 1760-73 editions of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century Celtic *Poems of Ossian* and their contemporary translation into Italian by Melchiorre Cesarotti. Deliberate stylistic primitivism, metrical anarchy, and strategic rewritings by librettist and composer, combined to make the improbable death from joy of the heroine-victim part and parcel of an opera which attracted criticism for breaking all the classical rules. This, according to Tufano, was intended – to make the opera, indeed, 'exotic'. Barbara Sachs

If this book is a study of 'Modern' exoticism, might Die Zauberflöte be classified as post-modern? CB

Yes the terms are relative (and work both ways: in Arezzo there is a Museo di Arte 'Medioevale' which exhibits paintings from 1200-1790, and it is standard here to call the Renaissance 'medieval'). But to the point: the editors assert that the attitude toward the exotic was unchanged from antiquity through the period of exploration of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, whereas especially in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Age of Enlightenment, there was a heightened cultural awareness (revealing fascination, fear, or respect). They also say 'modern' because in the wake of the two traditional exoticisms ('historical-mythological' and 'oriental') which persist, there is also the New World invaded by the Old World, and Europe 'invaded' by revolutionary America. BS

I was more superficially just puzzled by what 'modern' means. If early modern is what we might call late renaissance and modern is 17-18<sup>th</sup> century, what do we call the 19<sup>th</sup> century: post-modern? And how do we rename the 'modern' transformation of the arts in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century? It's much safer to identify music by centuries, though in our CD listing, it's convenient to use a separation that is partly stylistic, Late Baroque and Classical, even though it is inconsistent. CB

## THE ITALIAN CANTATA

*Aspects of the Secular Cantata in Late Baroque Italy*  
 Edited by Michael Talbot Ashgate, 2009. xxvi + 425pp,  
 £65.00 ISBN 978 0 7546 5794 1

A dozen writers focus on important aspects of a genre that is becoming more accessible. In the final chapter Roger-Claude Travers notes in a survey of recordings: 'It is no exaggeration to say that today, after a period of gestation perhaps somewhat longer than one would have expected or wished, the Italian chamber cantata for solo voice has – even in purely quantitative terms – become one of the mainstays of the repertoire of older music.' I reckon that it is an exaggeration, but not a serious one, and in these times when records are often financed by the performers, the cantata is an economical way of self-publicising. The discography appended to the article is substantial, though the number of recordings of a composer relates more to his general fame than the extent of his oeuvre as a cantator (I tried out words, and this seemed better than cantatorist). Hence the prominence of Bach (composer of only two Italian cantatas), who has more recordings than Giovanni Bononcini, who wrote at least 270. Domenico Scarlatti does surprisingly well compared with Alessandro, who was far more famous and prolific as a cantator. Handel is the most recorded cantator, helped, I suspect, by the cheap availability of Urtext if not necessarily entirely accurate editions by Chrysander. Handel, however, barely features in this book outside the discography, though most of his cantatas were written in Italy, so they qualify for admission.

The chapters are not arranged to give a history of the Italian cantata, but focus on particular topics. Composers with chapters devoted to aspects of their music are Stradella (Carolyn Gianturco and Colin Timms), Legrenzi (Hendrik Schulze), Alessandro Scarlatti (Norbert Dubowy), Giovanni Bononcini (Lowell Lindgren), Marcello (Marco Bizzarini) and Vinci (Giulia Veneziano). Reinmar Emans studies cantata publication in Bologna and Venice c.1650-1700 (subsequent distribution is mostly by MS). Michael Talbot provides detailed information for those who need to compose missing recitatives (though that is more likely to be needed in operas, which may circulate as collections of arias). I was interested in Giulia Nuti's chapter on what the harpsichordist should do, encouraging rather more elaboration than most of us adopt, but related to the different functions of the bass.

The unexpected chapter is by Graham Sadler on the pitfalls of believing that what is written or printed is a complete score. We are familiar enough with the idea in French opera: to produce an edition of Rameau one needs the orchestral material, not just the composer's score – it's as well that Handel didn't operate like that! But Graham finds ample evidence that some cantatas, especially ceremonial ones, were published in simple form and need expansion. There's a chance for editors and performers to revive the reviled Victorian phrase of 'additional accompaniments', but with more justification. It is not only French music that survives vertically incomplete. There is a reference on p. 183 to a MS of B. Marcello that is a singer's copy with voice and

bass and omits the upper parts extant in other sources. Have Italian scholars been alert for more such examples? \*

As predictable with a book on Italian cantatas, more attention is paid to the text than would have been that in a study of English vocal music of the period. In relation to my regular comments that *Hor in Hor ch'el ciel* has to retain its redundant H to avoid confusion in indexes and catalogues, I'm glad that Michael Talbot refuses to omit the H from *Havete* (p. xxvi note 7.)

There is plenty to stimulate the performing reader here. I'm not sure if I agree with Hendrik Schulze's theorising about Legrenzi's 'dramatic strategies', but it may lead to reflections that relate to how the singer presents the music. He and Colin Timms (p. 42 n. 41) draw attention to the Aristotelian basis of Italian operatic thought. This book includes a wide range of cultural reference as well as detailed study of how the music works. Some of it is a bit heavy-going (does Bizzarini have to use quite so many Latin words?), but most authors convey their ideas with clarity. The index includes titles of all pieces mentioned even those in Lindgren's list of Bononcini's cantatas period-by-period in long paragraphs: surely they can be omitted from the index but should be set out with a line each rather as long chunks of prose, a regrettable habit set by MGG? CB

\* Brian Clark adds another example of additional instruments.

A "pastorale" by Ferrandini recently appeared on the Dresden library's website. The score shows voices, continuo and a violin line (and is indexed as such within the downloadable PDF file); there is an aria (duet?) for Narcisso and his reflection – predictably enough for Soprano with echo soprano, accompanied by the Violin and echo violin... – written on five staves, so one might think that the violin line was, indeed, all that the composer intended by way of accompaniment. Except there's a duet towards the end of the piece where the violin part and the bass line are obviously part of a contrapuntal scheme, suggesting that there are at least two more parts that are not shown in the score. Dresden have fortunately also digitized the surviving parts for the piece... two copies of each of the five string parts (there are two solo violins) and a pair of oboe parts – strangely, the shelfmark (Mus. 3037-F-7) is different from that for the score (Mus. 3037-F-6); it would normally be Mus. 3037-F-6a.

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Christine Jeanneret *L'Oeuvre en Filigrane: Une étude philologique des manuscrits de musique pour clavier à Rome au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (*Historiae musicae cultores* 116) Florence: Olschki, 2009. xi + 620pp, €57.00 ISBN 978 88 222 5881 6

This thorough study of the sources of the keyboard music by Frescobaldi and his contemporaries will be reviewed, probably in the May issue, by Paul Kenyon.

## EDITIONS OF MUSIC

Clifford Bartlett

There was an unusual shortage of editions arriving for review in the last couple of months. So publishers, please increase the flow! Most musical journals tend to give more space to books and recordings than to printed music. This is sad, since it limits the publicity editions receive and editors/publishers lack the feed-back that authors (maybe reluctantly) benefit from.

## CHORALIS CONSTANTINUS PROJECT 500

The Choralis Constantinus 500 project was set up by the Musica Aeterna Art Foundation in Budapest to commemorate and perform the systematic set of music for the the liturgical year of the Propers of the mass composed by Isaac and completed by Sen(n)fl of the *Choralis Constantinus*, which was commissioned by the Bishop of Constance in 1508. The performance of the music involves 238 concerts over three years. The music was not printed till the 1550s (facsimiles are published by Alamire). Vols I & II were issued in score in original clefs in DTO vols 10 & 32, the latter edited by Webern; vol III was published (in modern clefs but inelegantly) by the University of Michigan University Press in 1950.

The music is mostly alternatim. The relevant source of chant is the *Graduale Pataviense* (for the diocese of Passau) published in Vienna in 1511 and issued in facsimile by Bärenreiter in the series *Das Erbe deutscher Musik*.

To facilitate performance of Isaac's music, Musica Aeterna has issued five volumes of chant, mostly from the Patavian gradual, in modern notation. They include the complete chant for the music of the *Choralis Constantinus*, containing chant used as cantus firmus, not just the chant needed for the alternatim sections. The notation is modern, with five-line staves in treble clef printed in a standard computer font as blobs with a few stems. It is a pity that there are not a few facsimiles so that the user can relate it to the original notation; anyone giving a serious performance from it should at least glance at the reproduction of the 1511 gradual. Apart from vol I, the volumes are arranged in liturgical order, with an alphabetic index and a table giving the function in the Patavian use, the Tridentine rite (as in the *Liber usualis*) and Vatican II (as in the *Graduale triplex*).

Vol. I contains the chant for Isaac's 21 alternatim settings of the Ordinary of the mass. Not that 21 chants settings are given: there is some overlap, and chants are not repeated unnecessarily. Vols. II, III & IV have the chant for Books I, II & III of the *Choralis Constantinus*. (It would have been more convenient to have made these Vols. I-III.) Vol. V has the sequences. The format is A5. I don't have the prices. The series will be useful to anyone preparing performances of Isaac, but also as a source of Proper chant of the period.

I received with the chant books a CD entitled *Choralis Constantinus 500* (see p. 23). It is presented as a mass, though with items from various feasts, and is mostly sung by the excellent Corvina Consort. It wouldn't surprise me if it were primarily a publicity hand-out, but it is well worth acquiring. I also received another disc by the Corvina Consort, *The Wedding of King Matthias & Beatrice, 1476* (HCD 399), which I kept with the chant books and found too late to listen to: we will review in the next issue.

## FOR THREE FLUTES

Michel'Angelo Vella *24 Sonatas for 3 Transverse Flutes without Bass. Vol. 1: Sonatas 1-6* Edited by Richard Divall Lyrebird Press, 2009. Score (51pp) and 3 parts.

I had never heard of Michel'Angelo Vella until the editor mentioned him in an email exchange concerning Michael Festing. My interest was initially in the continuing activity of L'Oiseau-Lyre, founded in 1932 and publisher of some very fine musicological editions. But I was intrigued by the idea of the flute trios, though rather expected them to be a bit tedious. I was pleasantly surprised. Each sonata is in three movements: quick, slow, quick. Four of the finales are headed *Fuga*, and much of the writing elsewhere is contrapuntal, with very little galante homophony. The three instruments are treated equally. The composer definitely has flair and imagination and the sonatas look rewarding to play. I can recommend them. They survive in MS at Dresden. Vol. 1 contains the first six of 24 trios; the rest are listed on the title page and presumably will be available soon. The print of the score is a bit small, but it isn't needed for performance so there's no problem, and the parts are fine. The price is \$AU44 (about £25). Google 'Lyrebird Press' and at present you'll find the trios listed among new publications.

Vella was born to a wealthy family in Malta in 1710. He studied music in Naples and also became a priest there. He returned to Malta in 1738, where he taught a variety of subjects, but most importantly music, his pupils including the next generation of Maltese composers. The best known of these is Nicolò Isouard (1773-1818), whose liturgical music has been edited by Richard Divall. Vella published a set of six sonatas for three violins and bass in Paris in 1768 – if they are as good as the flute trios, they should be made available as well. He died in 1792.

Richard Divall is a wide-ranging Australian musician, who has rediscovered and edited music by Australian as well as Maltese composers. He has conducted 140 operas (more than most of us will have heard in a lifetime!) with the Queensland Opera Company, Victoria State Opera and Opera Australia. I look forward to his work on Festing, for whose music he expressed great enthusiasm.

# LONDON, BRIGHTON & ST PÖLTEN

Andrew Benson-Wilson

## BACHFEST

The London Bach Society's 'Bachfest 09' (13 Nov) included what was billed as the 'Inaugural Meeting' of The Bach Club. I wouldn't normally be attracted to anything under that title, but the Foundling Hospital concert (for it was a concert, rather than a meeting) did attract a healthy number of the target 18-30 age group. The inspiration for the club comes from the weekly meetings of the Leipzig Collegium Musicum, founded by Telemann in 1702, and with Bach as their musical director for most of the period between 1729 and around 1742. The evening concert focussed as much on the music of Handel as Bach, with Telemann and Castello thrown in for good measure. The Steinitz Bach Players opened with Handel's Concerto Grosso Op 6/10 and concluded the evening with Bach's Concert for Oboe and Violin (BWV 1060) with Anthony Robson and Matthew Trustcott as soloists. In between, we had a performance of Bach's 6<sup>th</sup> Cello Suite by Philip Higham, rather surprisingly playing on a modern cello and bow, and a trio of pieces from the young group, Les Mélomanes, recent prizewinners at the Royal Academy of Music. It will be interesting to see how The Bach Club develops – this event didn't seem all that different from a normal concert with few, if any, concessions to a potential youthful audience.

The following week (20 Nov), the London Bach Society piggybacked one of the regular Friday early evening musical events at the National Portrait Gallery for 'Introducing Jola ...', a concert by Polish soprano Jolanta Kowalska, the winner of the 2008 London Bach Society Bach Singers' Prize. I first met Jolanta whilst I was on the jury of the 2009 Varaždin Baroque Festival in Croatia, where she was eventually a joint winner of the Jurica Murai Prize for the best interpretation) and I praised her singing in my subsequent review (*EMR* November 09). Her Portrait Gallery programme of Bach sacred arias ranged from the spiritual innocence of 'Ich folge dir gleichfalls mit freudigen Schritten' from the St John Passion to the spirited exuberance of 'Et exultavit' from the Magnificat in D. She has an attractive texture to her voice, with the warmth and foundation of a mezzo, and with the gentlest of vibratos – for me, an ideal 'early music' voice. She also has a most engaging stage manner, demonstrated on this occasion in a rather more restrained manner than in her very secular performance in Croatia. Jolanta Kowalska is a young singer to watch out for.

## ALDEBURGH at KINGS PLACE

Kings Place hosted a short festival promoting some of the musicians that have benefited from their Aldeburgh Residencies scheme. The period performance interest came in the form of a sandwich, with the fairly limp white

bread of La Nuova Musica surrounding the musical meat of the evening, the outstanding young period instrument Chiaroscuro Quartet. They gave an excellent performance of two of Haydn's quartets (Op 20/4 and 77/1), attracting a very impressive and enthusiastic audience (14 Nov). The four players (Alina Ibragimova, Sara Deborah Struntz, Emilie Hörnlund and Claire Thirion) performed with a sense of real conviction and emotional intensity to bring out the contrasting moods of the two large-scale works.

The two La Nuova Musica concerts were curious affairs. The first featured Purcell and Blow, the second Monteverdi. Despite their Aldeburgh residency, an impression of under-rehearsal dominated in both concerts – for example, for Purcell's harmonic clashes to have any effect, both they and the surrounding texture need to be in tune. With such small-scale forces, I question the need for a conductor, and could certainly have done without this one. He did more harm than good, his aimless wafting about having the feel of being rehearsed in front of the bathroom mirror rather than in front of musicians. Despite all this, there were some impressive performances by individual musicians (who didn't pay much attention to the conductor), not least soprano Anna Dennis for her earthy *Lamento della ninfa* and Jonathan Sells in 'Tu sei morta' (*Orfeo*). Two dancers (Jessica Clare Bridge and Liam Byrne) make a welcome contribution to the Blow/Purcell concert. It was a shame that none of La Nuova Musica's musicians were acknowledged in the programme.

## ARTAXERXES

Set around what seemed like a huge baptismal font (which contained the orchestra), the Royal Opera House, together with Ian Page's Classical Opera Company orchestra, resurrected Arne's *Artaxerxes* (Linbury Studio Theatre, 10 Nov). Arne lived just round the corner, and *Artaxerxes* was a staple at the proto Royal Opera House (the Theatre Royal) and was probably seen by both Haydn and Mozart. But the 1808 theatre fire destroyed the score, leaving only published arias for posterity. Conductor Ian Page and Duncan Druce have reconstructed the recitatives and Finale. Although perhaps lacking the emotional or musical depth of Handel, Arne looks forward to the classical period with a light and frothy take on late baroque opera convention, replacing the lengthy da capo aria with a flurry of jovial numbers. The plot is from baroque central casting, with the unfortunate Artaxerxes managing to be disowned by practically everyone, until his inevitable crowning. The young cast were all excellent, with Elizabeth Watts, Caitlin Hulcup, Rebecca Bottone, Christopher Ainslie (making the best of a less than convincing countertenor role), Andrew Staples and Steven Bell all impressing me. The orchestration was rich

and colourful (this was the first use of clarinets on the English stage). Notable instrumental contributions came from Joseph Crouch, with a continuo cello line that featured many spread chords against minimal harpsichord, James Eastaway, oboe, and Gavin Edwards and Clare Penkey, horns. The starkly coloured set was a brilliant foil for the exuberant and sumptuous costumes and staging. This production deserves to be revived during Arne's anniversary year of 2010.

#### SEMELE

The plots of Handel operas are complicated enough without having an extra layer of plot, particularly one that only becomes apparent by reading the small print in the programme. The Royal Academy of Music's version of *Semele* (16 Nov) was set by a grotto in the grounds of a 'castle' (although the backdrop looked more country house than castle), with Juno apparently sung by the lady of the house, in order to embarrass her philandering husband. A non-singing group of family were on one side of the stage and the 'hired chorus' were on the other – all remaining on stage throughout, apart from the husband who eventually wandered off. We, the audience, were supposed to be guests. Surprisingly, the chorus sang from scores throughout, suggesting either a lack of rehearsal time or a curious unwillingness on the part of the Academy to encourage their singing students to learn their lines. Both choir and soloists suffered from alarmingly wobbly voices – a vocal style totally unsuitable for Handel – and English pronunciation was generally poor. However, Mary Bevan showed a sense of period style, and Roberto Gomez Ortiz (all opera singers should have name like this), Nina Lejderman and Lauryna Bendziunaite also made impressive contribution. It might feel like sticking my tongue out to a much-loved uncle, but Sir Charles Mackerras was not on his usual sparkling form. I came back to hear the last act on a later evening, with a different *Semele*, and with Laurence Cummings conducting. What a difference! All the vitality and oomph that was missing on the opening night was there in abundance. For the sake of Handelian opera, I just hope that the future Sir Laurence Cummings will still love conducting when he's 84.

#### St CECILIA 1683, 1687, 1739

The Solomon Choir and Orchestra's commemoration of St Cecilia's Day came with a concert at the Grosvenor Chapel (21 Nov) of works by Purcell (*Welcome to all the Pleasures*, 1683), Draghi (*A Song for St Cecilia's Day – From harmony, from heavenly harmony* 1687) and Handel (*Ode for St Cecilia's Day*, 1739). The Draghi was particularly interesting. The result of a commission from the Gentleman of the Musical Society and with a text John Dryden, then Poet Laureate, Draghi's work became the benchmark for all future grandiose occasions. Firmly based on the Italian tradition, Draghi makes a valiant attempt at setting Dryden's complex text, making one of the very first uses of the trumpet in an English choral work, and setting his singers

a challenging task in several passages. Countertenor Christopher Lowrey and bass Jonathan Sells were impressive soloists in the Draghi, the latter slightly awkwardly stepping aside from his conductor's desk for the purpose. Whilst it must be hard for a singer-conductor to allow somebody else to sing a role that he no doubts feels fully capable of doing himself, I do wonder at the professionalism of trying to combine both roles. The tenors Julian Forbes and John McMunn also impressed in the Handel, but it was soprano Anna Devin who stole the show. The 14-strong choir produced a cohesive consort sound. Of the instrumentalists, Rob Wallace (trumpet), Marta Gonçalves (flute) and Monserrat Colome Lozano (continuo cello) took the honours.

#### FIVE RECORDERS

Consortium5 are a recorder quintet that I first heard when they were students at the Royal Academy of Music, and then in the Finals of the 2007 Early Music Network International Young Artists Competition in York. They have since gone on to become Junior Fellows at Trinity College and residents with the Park Lane Group Young Artists Series, as well as giving innovative and thoughtfully presented concerts of early and contemporary music. One of their recent outings was a candlelight concert at Mayfair's Grosvenor Chapel (22 Nov), with a programme ranging from some of the earliest examples of the genre to the likes of Sammartini and Boismortier. Their excellent engagement with the audience is helped by the fact that they perform from memory. An excellent evening.

#### SAMPSON & AAM – PURCELL & HANDEL

The Academy of Ancient Music and soprano Carolyn Sampson honoured Purcell and Handel with a look at their works for the theatre in their Wigmore Hall concert (22 Nov). Carolyn Sampson's outstanding singing and acting ability meant she could switch with ease from Purcell's seductive 'Man is for the woman made' to the elegiac 'Music for a while' via his wild and eccentric Mad Scene 'Bess of Bedlam'. Her Handel was equally impressive, concluding with a show-stopping 'Let the bright Seraphim'. The instrumental works were given forcefully driven and punchy performances under the occasionally eccentric Richard Egarr, who also provided some alarming harpsichord cadenzas – one of the more bizarre seemed to be played with his fists! Cellists Catherine Jones and Emily Robinson and Frank de Bruine, oboe, excelled in the Largo of the Op 3/2 Concerto Grosso, as did David Blackadder in his final duet with Carolyn Sampson.

#### GRANDS MOTETS

The love-in between the Barbican and William Christie reached a state of climax during the last of the Les Arts Florissants 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary concert series, with their performance of three *Grands motets* by Desmarest, Campra and Rameau and Lully's *Te Deum* (26 Nov). Although Christie has done his bit to bring Purcell to English audiences, it is for the French repertoire that he is

1. Or perhaps Song: see footnote on p. 5

justly famed, notably in majestic works like these – a musical genre that English performers and audiences generally steer clear of and, perhaps just don't quite get. But once English audiences have forgiven the fact that the music is French (and Catholic), these enormous works can really hit the spot. The three motets were written early in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Rameau surprisingly so (1714), with Lully's monumental *Te Deum* coming a generation earlier, in 1677. It was during a 1686 performance of this work that Lully managed to stab himself in the foot with his conducting staff, dying of the subsequent gangrene three months later; however, as far as I know, Christie is still with us. The soloists were drawn from his commendable stable of youngish singers, with Amel Brahim-Djelloul (a bright and bonny voice), Emmanuelle de Negri (making her ornaments clear despite quite a vibrato), Cyril Auvity (starting with a rather constrained voice before settling in), Toby Spence (committing a curious, and possibly self-aggrandising, breach of the dress code), Marc Mauillon and Alain Buet. The frequent tiny solo spots were made far more prominent than they should be by having soloists wandering on and off – they should really have been incorporated into the 27-strong choir. The orchestra included the rich sound of seven cellos plus viola da gamba and nine viols. Of the instrumentalists, Florence Malgoire, cellist David Simpson, Jonathan Cable, double bass, Anne-Marie Lasla, gamba, Paolo Zanzu, organ, and Marie-Ange Petit, timpani, all impressed.

#### MESSIAH at ENO

I should declare that I do not find the idea of staging works like *Messiah* sacrilegious or in any way perverse. I was moved by Deborah Warner's ENO St John Passion about ten years, so went to her latest offering with a receptive mind (English National Opera, 27 Nov). The setting was contemporary with the focus on everyman, to the extent that the chorus was expanded by a (non-singing) 'community ensemble' of local residents. The opening scene was of little vignettes of people going about their lives, ironing, lounging about, at a PC. Later settings included a school nativity play, a church and a group of born-againers lapping up a charismatic preacher. Recurring images include figures lying down, a little lad who scampered about the set, and a lithe young girl portrayed by an excellent dancer (Laura Caldow). The excellent soloists were Sophie Bevan, Catherine Wyn-Rogers, John Mark Ainsley, Brindley Sherratt and an impressive boy treble. Laurence Cummings allowed himself a great deal more latitude in his tempos than usual, with occasional moments of unashamed wallowing and some enterprising, and not altogether Handelian, harpsichord realisations. Surely, this production will return.

#### INNSBRUCK AT DOWNSHIRE HILL

The Bach Players gave another of their now regular St John's Downshire Hill concert (28 Nov) with works by Bach, Erlebach, Isaac, Hollander and Luetkeman. The half-millennium-old melody 'Innsbruck' was a theme throughout much of the concert, with Isaac's well-known setting interspersed with fantasias on the theme by

Hollander and Luetkeman as well as Bach's use in the concluding cantata *In allen meine Taten*. Appropriately for the time of year, the evening opened with Bach's cantata *Nun komm der Heiden Heiland*, which, like *In allen meine Taten*, opens with a French overture. This was the second theme of the evening, with Erlebach's *Ouverture VI* representing the French influence on instrumental music in Germany. The dream-team of soloists were Rachel Elliot, Sally Bruce-Payne, Nicholas Mulroy and Peter Harvey. I have praised the Bach Players many times before, and will do so again.

#### JAROUSSKY at the BARBICAN

The French countertenor, Philippe Jaroussky, is a recording company marketing team's dream with the dashing boyish good looks (reinforced by seductively pouting publicity shots) and angelic voice that seems to fill concert halls and opera houses with ladies-of-a-certain-age and members of the gay community. His debut Barbican appearance (with arias by Handel and J C Bach, 2 Dec) was no exception. However, I do wonder if it really warranted such enthusiasm – or, indeed, a billing under the Barbican's 'Great Performers' badge. Vocally he is rather more of a male soprano than a countertenor, with a vocal timbre that slots in midway between Andreas Scholl and Robin Blaze, but without the depth and power of the former or the sheer purity of the latter – or, I hesitate to suggest, the musicality of either. Although he has moments of great beauty, his voice can sound rather undeveloped – but at least he doesn't have the wobbly operatic excess of some of his ilk. His avowed attempt to reintegrate J C Bach into the musical mainstream was hindered by contrasting him with some of Handel's finest works, although the 'London Bach' did survive the contrast, not least by having plunged straight into the very different classical idiom just a few years after Handel's death. The opening aria from *Artaserse* was a real test for Jaroussky's vocal skills, with its tricky octave leaps. The sensuous cavatina that concludes *Perfida Cartismandual*, with its Mozartian woodwind accompaniment, was impressive, as was the opening of *Cara, la dolce fiamma* with its *messia di voce* opening perfectly controlled by Jaroussky, although the later melismas made rather too much use of the whole gamut of vowel sounds for my taste. Concerto Köln fielded a surprising number of what looked like modern violins and bows, but impressed nonetheless, particularly Andreas Helm and Diego Nadra, oboes, and Erwin Wieringa and Kathrin Williner as outstanding horn players. Nicolay de Figueiredo gave a thrilling account of J C Bach's Harpsichord Concerto in F minor, with its darkly elegiac central movement and jovial finale.

#### IL TRIONFO...

The four day Kings Place residency by the Classical Opera Company focussed on 'Handel in Italy', concluding (5 Dec) with a study afternoon (with David Vickers and Ian Page) and a performance of *Il trionfo del Tempo e del Disinganno*, the first (1707) version of a work that was to reappear in whole and in sections throughout his career, managing to become both his first and last oratorio in the

process. The creative burst that Italy produced in the young Handel resulted in some of his finest works, but *Il trionfo* is one of the less well known. Commissioned, and set to an absurdly moralising text by Cardinal Benedetto Pamphilij, the work could be seen as the story of a rather grumpy Dad (Thomas Hobbs as Tempo/Time) teaming up with a rather more enlightened Mum (Marie Elliot as Disinganno/An undeceiver, or a disabuser of false notions) to persuade their rather confused daughter (Rebecca Bottone as Bellezza/Beauty) to relax her vow of loyalty to her seductively cajoling amour (Caitlin Hulcup as Piacere/Pleasure). Lacking the dramatic possibilities of *La Resurrezione*, the work relies on the interplay of (supposedly) intellectual and emotional discourse. It ends with the hapless Bellezza being bullied into living a life devoted to God, devoid of desire or passion. I know whose side I was on – evangelicals should study this and squirm! Although there were surtitles, a written text might have helped us to follow the silly arguments more successfully, but would probably have resulted in even more giggles than there already were. With Corelli as the original orchestral leader and Handel himself playing the organ, there were extended solos for both instruments, played to great effect by Matthew Truscott and Steven Devine. Sarah Sextion, violin, and Sarah McMahon, cello also made significant contributions to Handel's inventive orchestration. Ian Page directed with his customary and commendable restraint, leaving the musicians to allow the music unfold as it should.

#### WORCESTER LADYMASS

I reviewed Trio Mediæval's very first London concert about ten years ago and have followed their success ever since. Their most recent London visit was to the Wigmore Hall (13 Dec) with the programme 'Fragments – A Worcester Ladymass'. This was based on a tentative reconstruction of a Mass for the Assumption from the many examples of music from the ancient foundation at Worcester. The 13/14<sup>th</sup> century Worcester Fragments have survived as single leaves of scrap parchment or fragments reused as binding. Aided by some neat-looking modern rectangular bell-like tube thingies with attached rubber clappers (whose name I have, very obviously, completely forgotten), the three female voices moved in perfect cohesion, with outstanding intonation and musical insight. The addition of some pieces not specifically indicated as being for any particular feast, and some related contemporary works by Gavin Bryers, were used in place of readings in the Mass. Audience applause after each item (not, I think, actively sought by the performers, but equally not discouraged) disrupted the sense of flow from which the programme could have benefited; but the applause was certainly well deserved, not least by the excellent interaction that the three singers had with the audience.

#### ALAMIRE

The vocal group Alamire have been around for about four years, but I had not managed to hear them until their St John's, Smith Square concert on 15 December when they gave their much-toured and recorded programme, 'Henry's music: A King's Christmas', part of the 500<sup>th</sup>

anniversary celebrations of the coronation of Henry VIII. The focus of the concert was on the royal choirbook presented to Henry and Catherine of Aragon in 1526 (British Library MS Roy. II.e.xi) – the focus being both aural and visual as there was a presumably full-size copy on display by the stage. This book may have come from the workshop of Petrus Alamire, as did two other choirbooks in Henry's possession. It includes the 'Rose' Canon *Salve radix* (notated in spiral form around a central rose illustration), probably by the German composer known as Sampson, who also provided the *Psallite felices* and *Quam pulchra es* – a sensuous work based on the Song of Solomon. Works in tribute to Henry included Taverner's *O Christe Jesu, pastor bone*, a work that was adapted for Henry from the original version for Cardinal Wolsey and went on to be further adapted for Queen Elizabeth. An example of the grandiose music of Henry's youth, but a genre that he would later cast aside in his Reformation, was Fayrfax's *Lauda vivi alpha et oo*, which apparently caused two singers to come to vocal blows on doctrinal grounds during a rendition in St George's Chapel, Windsor. The respect shown to the young Henry on the continent was demonstrated by *Nil majus superi vident*, possibly written by Verdelot while in Florence. The 11-strong choir, drawn from amongst the usual period vocal suspects, produced a coherent consort sound as well as some excellent exposed solo and small-force sections. Notable contributions came from sopranos Grace Davidson and Kirsty Hopkins and bass Robert Macdonald, with mezzo Clare Wilkinson excelling in solo vocal pieces by Henry himself, accompanied by Andrew Lawrence-King on harps. Director David Skinner contributed erudite introductions to the works, and is to be congratulated on putting together such a fascinating programme.

#### I FAGIOLINI'S CHRISTMAS PARTY

The pre-Christmas season saw a short residency at Kings Place for 'I Fagiolini's Christmas Party', with concerts ranging from Winterreise and Poulenc to Bach, with a stop-off at an Alehouse on the way courtesy of the Norwegian instrumental group, Barokksolistene (18 Dec) together with home-grown singers Thomas Guthrie, Adam Green and Mark Saberto, billed as 'The Merry Companions'. Notionally set within the context of 17<sup>th</sup> century alehouses of Purcell's time, and including several of his naughtier catches, much of the music appeared to be in a slightly jazzed up traditional Norwegian folk tradition – there was no information in the programme note about music played. Perhaps because travel problems had delayed the arrival of the Norwegian contingent, the affable and relaxed interplay between the instrumentalists and singers appeared rather more improvised than prepared, with several awkward moments of uncertainty to show for it. I recall a similar programme given by The Dufay Collective in the Purcell Room many years ago, fully staged in an Alehouse setting, with dancing and costume – I am afraid that the Norwegian version didn't come close to their entertainment value.

Barokksolistene had a chance to demonstrate their more serious side the following evening when they accom-

panied four singers from I Fagiolini (Anna Crookes, Clare Wilkinson, James Oxley and Eamonn Dougan) in 'Intimate Bach', with the *Missa Brevis* in g (BWV 235) contrasted with two cantatas, *Selig ist der Mann* and *Jesus schläft*. Barokksolistene also gave their own distinctive and quirky take on Telemann's *Concerto Polonaise* in G, reinforcing the impression that they strive slightly too much to do things differently. This was also apparent in the opening *Kyrie* of the Mass, when their lead violinist (who was something of a showman) attempted to impart a slow jazz swing, aided by an odd little dance which only stopped when he realised that he was at risk of falling off the stage. Fortunately Anna Crooks sensibly, and almost subtly, took over direction at this point, bringing both rhythm and mood back to a more appropriate level. The strings of Barokksolistene were reinforced by oboists Gail Hennessy and Katharina Spreckelsen, who both made excellent and very musical contributions.

21 December was one of those freezing days, with plunging temperatures disrupting transport and closing the Channel Tunnel, so it was quite an achievement for Gary Cooper and the Flemish group, B'Rock, to even get to the Wigmore Hall. But an enthusiastic audience was glad that they did, and was rewarded by an outstanding concert of Bach that included no fewer than four of Bach's harpsichord concertos. Gary Cooper's spirited and inventive playing was the key to the success of this concert, the expressions on the faces of the other musicians making it clear that Gary was up to tricks that he hadn't tried out in rehearsal or on tour – which is just as it should be. The excellent B'Rock, under concertmaster Meret Lüthi, played with matching enthusiasm and verve – their sense of fun and involvement was self evident. Of the many highlights, I would pick out the richly elaborated *Largo* of BWV 1056, the luxuriant *Siciliano* of BWV 1053 and the extraordinary cadenza, of almost Beethovenian proportions and intensity, of BWV 1052. The recording of this programme will be well worth looking out for when it comes out.

#### BRIGHTON EARLY MUSIC FESTIVAL

This year's Brighton Early Music Festival combined a celebration of the anniversaries of Purcell, Handel and Haydn with considerably more exotic fare, under the title of 'East meets West'. I was at the last (and wildest) of the three weekends (6-8 Nov), starting in the Victorian pile that is St Bartholomew's Church with 'Mantra: musical conversations across the Indian Ocean', presented by The Orlando Consort with Kuljit Bhamra, Jonathan Mayer and Shahid Khan and a local amateur choir – the BREMF Singers. This touring project is based on imagining the cross-cultural music that might have emanated from the Portuguese missionary incursions into Goa during the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and the musical life at the enlightened Mughal Court of the Emperor Akbar at Fatehpur Sikri. Their rehearsal process seems to have been similar to the exploratory and interactive approach of the original missionary musicians, where traditional Indian instruments were welcomed in the churches and local melodies were overlain with Catholic texts. The result was a successful

musical experience, made more exotic by the sight and sound of a nearby firework display viewed through the filigree of the great west window. The linked CD should be out by the time this review is published, and is well worth seeking out.

The focus was on Azerbaijan for the Saturday lunchtime concert of Ashig (a continuing 14<sup>th</sup> century bardic tradition with singer and saz) and Myghan (a singer with an ensemble of percussion, tar and kamancha) music. The rather ramshackle presentation (with a rambling introduction from their minder and audible offstage chatting) didn't seem to dampen the enthusiasm of the audience, which included groupies who whooped and yelled and raised what I guess was the Azerbaijan flag. Even in a weekend that was aimed at exploring the wider reaches of 'early music', this wasn't so much pushing the boundaries as crashing heroically through them. I have no idea what the songs were all about, although most of them sounded rather mournful to my untutored ears, with very high melody lines and distinctive ornamental catches in the voice.

There couldn't have been a better combination of architecture and music for the Saturday evening concert by Le Baroque Nomade of 'Music from the Forbidden City' set in the exuberant chinoiserie of the Music Room of Brighton's Royal Pavilion, overseen by the snakes and dragons crawling along the pelmet. Despite the title, the music was not actually from the Imperial Palace, but was a peek at elements of a Vespers service (as described by Father Buglio in 1676) as it might have been performed by the 'Congregation of Musicians' in churches in 17<sup>th</sup> century Beijing. As with their Purcell Room concert a couple of years ago, the focus was on the music of Matteo Ricci and the powerfully declaimed poems of Wu Li, together with piece by Amiot and Pedrini. The instruments combined the western gamba, harpsichord and flute with the Chinese pipa, dizi and xiao.

Purcell is arguably one of the more jazz-like composers, in harmonic if not rhythmic terms, so Respectable Groove's lunchtime instrumental take on *Dido & Aeneas*, 'Dido's got the Blues' (David Gordon's 2003 Oxford Contemporary Music commission), was an appropriate up-dating, combining traditional (if not always traditionally played) recorder (Evelyn Nallen) and harpsichord (David Gordon) with jazz double bass and percussion. From what we know of Purcell's life outside the confines of his Abbey and Court roles, he would have loved this. During a first half of Rameau and more Purcell, David Gordon gave his contemporary version of a Bach prelude and added some of his own variations to Handel's 'Harmonious Blacksmith'. *Dido*, and other Respectable Groove works, are available on CD. Good fun!

The early music aspect returned in style in the concluding concert of the Festival, with Emma Kirkby spreading her musical magic along with members of the London Handel Players in their programme of 'Purcell, Handel and Haydn at Home'. The premise was the performance of the music of these masters in domestic arrangements, from Walsh's versions of Handel arias for flute and harpsichord (a

recent discovery in the British Library by Rachel Brown) to Salomon's arrangements of Haydn London Symphonies for flute, string quartet and harpsichord. Based on this riveting performance, his version was arguably better than the original. Purcell was represented by excerpts from *The Fairy Queen*, Handel by the gorgeous duet for soprano and flute, 'Sweet Bird' (*L'Allegro*), and more Haydn with a couple of his Scottish and Welsh folk song arrangements, notably setting the 'Men of Harlech' tune to the text 'Dauntless sons of Celtic sires'. A fitting end to an enterprising and interesting weekend of music making.

#### NOX ILLUMINATA FESTIVAL - ST PÖLTEN

The Nox Illuminata festival has been part of Basel's musical scene for the past six years, under a billing of 'an extravaganza of early music with a modern twist' – an appropriate description for their week-long residency in St Pölten, Austria. Directed by the English musician Ann Allen, Nox Illuminata has its roots in the influential early music Schola Cantorum Basiliensis, and mixes early and contemporary music with improvisation, dance, theatre and visual arts. The week-long festival in St Pölten started with Vivaldi Lounge (the first of the regular informal late evening sessions in the Café Publik) with harpsichord and oboe music from Tamar Halparin and Ann Allen and a DJ mixing Turkish music and Drum 'n' Bass with von Karajan's Four Seasons.

The first of the more formal concerts was Minimal Monday at the Choralschola St Pölten, a sequence of four short concerts starting with a combination of the oldest music we were to hear during the week and the most modern instrument, with Gregorian chant (sung by students of the Choralschola) merging with music for the hang, a recently invented melodic percussion instrument developed from the steelpan (technically, it is a 'harmonically tuned steel idiophone'). It was played by Benjamin Brodbeck who then performed a gripping set of his own Reich-inspired compositions for marimba. Harpsichordist Tamar Halparin then gave us some real Reich, with her version of the first part of his 1967 Piano Phase, playing the second keyboard part alongside her own laptop, having recorded the first part earlier in the day. Other works in her recital included pieces by Glass and her own very neat minimalist interpretation of a Bach lute work. The evening finished with Nik Bärtsch (billed as the 'King of minimal grooves') improvising on prepared piano.

The foyer of the St. Pölten Fachhochschule was the setting for 'In Honour of Venice', with Ensemble Savadi (winners of the 2003 York Early Music Network International Young Artists Competition) and the Larynx Chamber Choir. Venetian polychoral works, sometimes sung from high in the balconies overlooking the foyer, were contrasted with erotic *stile recitativo* reflections from the Song of Songs, sung by the excellent sopranos of Savadi, Ulrike Hofbauer and Kristine Jaunalksne. Their harpist Marie Bournisien accompanied and also gave a thoughtful performance of Frescobaldi's *Toccata prima*. The evening finished with a delightful staged updating of Monteverdi's *Ave maris stella*. As with many of the festival

concerts, the setting was relaxed and informal. The erotic imagery of some of the texts was reinforced with lush red carpets and cushions, mood lighting, projected backdrops prepared by students of the Fachhochschule (to varying degrees of success), performers moving around and engaging with the audience – and a plentiful supply of red chocolate hearts. This was an enterprising way to present and perform early music, both to connoisseurs and to potential new audiences. The young girl (c8) sitting on the carpet close to me was completely entranced.

The following evening focussed on the music of women's broken hearts over the past 800 years with *Didos Tränen*, subtitled 'Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned'. The highlight was soprano Ulrike Hofbauer's intensely dramatic realisation of *Ariadne's Lament* by Henry Lawes, in modern dress and ending with her taking an overdose. A similar intensity was apparent in her singing of *Dido's Lament*, with Tamar Halparin's powerful piano accompaniment both complimenting and updating Purcell's original. Other music ranged from a raunchy version of the Rolling Stones' ('I Can't Get No) Satisfaction' sung in the foyer before the audience entered the main performance space), an arrangement by Tamar Halparin of Hoagy Carmichael's 'I get along without you very well' and Schumann's *Nun hast du mir den ersten Schmerz getan*. Sarah-Maria Bürgin gave a dramatised recitation of an extract from Yasushi Inoue's 'Hunting Gun' (the letter from Midori revealing that she knows of her husband's affair and asking for a divorce) and baroque dancer Natalie Bräker performed Anthony L'Abbé's 1697 *Sarabande d'Issé* to a sarabande by Campora. This was followed by an informal late-night 'Barock Jam' session in the Café Publik.

'Burlesque Baroque' was the evocative title of the following evening's Purcellian entertainment, which promised "erotic love songs deconstructed and reconstructed through jazz, improvisation and physical breakouts of all kinds, rocking the house with fluttering fans and fishnet stockings". The house certainly rocked and I spotted the fishnets, but seem to have missed the "physical breakouts" – or perhaps I was looking for the wrong thing. The Latvian soprano Kristine Jaunalksne was the seductively raunchy star of the show, both for her singing and acting. She was aided by jazz-inspired harpsichord playing by Tamar Halparin and three jazz instrumentalists. It was fascinating to hear these Purcell songs as seen through the musical minds of experienced jazz performers – it made me realise that 'Music for a while' is built on one of the best jazz bass riffs ever. *The Complaint* took on a whole new life sung over a double bass and bass guitar continuo. The songs were interspersed with various takes on the Rondo from *Abdelazer*. Burlesque Baroque was not just great fun but, for me, a perfectly valid take on early music, and one that is likely to appeal to a much wider audience than a more traditionally presented concert. The evening dissolved into an informal Café Publik 'Jazz Jam' session.

The group Mediva appear in several incarnations, the 'straightest' being Mediva: pure – on this occasion made up of Ann Allen, shawm and recorder, Tobie Miller, hurdy gurdy and recorder, Michelangelo Rinaldi, shawm and

recorder, Baptiste Romain, medieval fiddle and bagpipes, Benjamin Brodbeck, percussion, and the expressive and communicative vocalist, Ulrike Hofbauer. They gave a concert of English medieval vocal and instrumental music for the annunciation and advent – 'Gabriel's Message'. After so much innovative re-interpretations of early music, it took a while to settle in to hearing it 'straight', but Mediva:plugged's interpretations were similarly inventive and colourful whilst also being reasonably 'authentic'. Lighting and visuals complimented the music and added to the overall effect of the concert which, like many of the other events took place on the stage area of the Festspielhaus. A late-night 'Medieval Jam', with jazz overtones, completed the evening.

Many of the festival events had involved a core of musicians, most based in or near Basel, appearing in a number of different guises. But the week ended with 'Festa Italiana', two concerts in one, featuring Mediva:plugged and the French-based crossover group L'Arpeggiata, directed by theorbo player, Christina Pluhar. The latter have made a successful career out of their engaging combination of gutsy Italian folk singing, sultry jazz-bar clarinet music, relatively straight period instrument performance and improvisations on traditional basses such as Folia, Ciaccona, Bergamasca, Canario and the Tarantella. Folk singer Lucilla Galeazzi can be guaranteed to whip an audience up, notably with her trademark 'dinna-din-din' and 'Ninna, nanna' songs. Galeazzi's earthy singing was contrasted by the extremely impressive young Chilean/Swedish mezzo, Luciana Mancini (who was unfortunately not named in their programme note) – she is already making her name on the period opera circuit, and is evidently a singer to watch out for. As usual, Elisabeth Seitz made her distinctive contribution on psaltery, notably in an improvisation on the Tarantella, accompanied by some appropriately wild and possessed dancing by Anna Dego.

We returned after the interval to find the stage area completely transformed, with banks of loudspeakers, microphones and two contemporary drum kits, in readiness for the appropriately-named Mediva:plugged, bringing together several of the musicians that had been performing during the whole week in an inspiring and exciting fusion of early music and contemporary jazz and improvisation. Particularly notable contributions came from Michelangelo Rinaldi, playing accordion and a Sicilian Friscaletto (one of the smallest recorder-like instruments I have ever seen), Tobie Miller, hurdy gurdy (her long and winding melodic introduction to a Todesca reminding me of Pink Floyd's atmospheric introductions), Baptiste Romain on fiddle and bagpipes, Benjamin Brodbeck, percussion and Ann Allen, shawm and overall mistress of ceremonies – for this concert and the whole festival.

It was fascinating to experience these alternative ways of presenting early music, and to have a glimpse into the 'other lives' of some early musicians. If a festival like this can work so successfully in a relatively conservative little town like St Pölten, then it could easily transfer to any venue or location, including the UK.

## VICTORIA & ALBERT PETITION

*The following, referred to in this month's editorial, is circulating on the www.*

A petition has been approved by the Number 10 web team, and is now available on the Number 10 website at: <http://petitions.number10.gov.uk/VandAchange/>  
The petition reads:

*We the undersigned petition the Prime Minister to ensure that all members of the public have continued, free and open access to the complete historic and valuable musical instrument collection entrusted over generations to the Victoria and Albert Museum, and currently exhibited in Room 40 (Jan 2010).*

*The V & A are intending to place in long-term storage its collection of historic musical instruments, which is unparalleled in the UK. The reason for this destruction, given by a V & A spokesman, is so that "the gallery can be redesigned to show the fashion collections." Musical instruments have been part of the collection since its inception in 1851: the museum has received adverse comment on this plan from curators worldwide. The removal is to take place in Spring 2010, and is a short-term decision which will have long-term negative results for scholars and music lovers alike.*

Please feel free to forward this to any interested colleagues/friends. If you wish you can also join a group called 'Keep the V&A Musical Instrument Gallery Open'; this is on 'Facebook'.

## EBO AUDITION

The audition course to recruit members of EUBO 2010 will take place in Echternach, Luxembourg, from 6 to 9 and 9 to 12 April 2010. More information and the application form can be downloaded from our website: <http://www.eubo.org.uk/auditions.html>

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EUBO is an official ambassador for the EU  
and is orchestra-in-residence in Echternach, Luxembourg

## VESPERS CONFERENCE

Early Music America is organising a conference on Monteverdi's 1610 Vespers at the Berkeley Early Music Festival. Date: 10-12 June. The only information I have so far is that I've been invited to speak. Fuller information will no doubt appear later on the Early Music America website.

On 12 June 12<sup>th</sup>, there is a rival Berkeley attraction, *Chant Camp: Vespers of 1210*, directed by Susan Hellauer, Marsha Genensky and others. As we always joke about Peter and Kathleen Berg's tent at Beauchamp, I hope the Berkeley camp will be 'pavilioned in splendour'.

## CD REVIEWS

## MEDIEVAL

Magister Leoninus Vol. 1. Red Byrd (John Potter, Richard Wistreich) 71' 10" Hyperion Helios CDH55328 ££ (rec 1996)

These accounts of the music of the 12th-century French master Leonin were greeted with rave reviews when they first appeared in 1997. If nowadays these performances by John Potter and Richard Wistreich can sound a little languid, the sense of improvisation and discovery are ever present, and the tone and intonation throughout these lengthy and complex works are always impeccable. As work continues on the traditions of improvised harmonisation of plainchant, the work of Leonin and Perotin appears perhaps less earth-shattering than it once did and more part of a gradual process of musical development, but at the same time it is difficult not to wonder at the sustained, protracted and constantly inventive exploration of such simple source material.

D. James Ross

15<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

Busnois (attrib.) *L'Homme Armé Cantica Symphonia*, Giuseppe Maletto 71' 49" Glossa GCD P31906

In 1990 Paul van Nevel and his Huelgas Ensemble brought out a disc called *La Dissection d'un Homme Armé* (Sony SK 45860) which presented various movements of *L'Homme Armé* masses from the celebrated Naples Ms VI B 40. Almost twenty years have passed and little more can be deduced about this puzzling MS and its complex contents, although the name of Busnois has been tentatively attached to the contents. Here, the Italian ensemble Cantica Symphonia presents very enjoyable performances of a further selection, effectively mixing instruments and voices, so pleasingly complementing the previous recording in performance manner and underlining the urgent need for a complete account of this remarkable material. A particular highlight is the beautiful soprano voice of Laura Fabris, surely a voice perfectly crafted for this repertoire. This CD is prefaced with a performance of a Magnificat also attributed to Busnois. Some excellent and thought-provoking programme notes by Guido Magnano hint at the intriguing nature of the manuscript and its contents – I feel a Dan Brown novel coming on.

D. James Ross

16<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

[Isaac] *Choralis Constantinus 500: Vocal liturgical music in the Habsburg imperial court according to 15th and 16th-century practices* Corvinas Consort etc 63' 48" CC-001 (from [www.mkkiado.hu](http://www.mkkiado.hu))

Music by Isaac + Josquin In te Domine speravi; Kotter Salve Regina; Ockeghem Alma redemptoris mater; Senfl Beati omnes & chant

The title is that of a project to celebrate the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Isaac's setting of the propers of the mass based on the Graduale Pataviense. One name is missing from the front cover: Isaac. All the polyphony is by him apart from the items listed above. This CD relates to the celebrations for the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Isaac's *Choralis Constantinus*, which was commissioned in 1508. Events are continuing for several years. The programme is presented as a mass, but for a variety of feasts. There is no inserted material with the disc, and only a single page of general information which has nothing about this particular disc (apart from listing contents and performers), so it isn't clear whether it is an anthology from the various celebratory events or a single programme. It appears to be live, since there are noises of a congregation/audience, distracting since they aren't substantial enough to give the feel of a real service. But the music and performances are fine, and it is good to hear the music in context, even if an artificial one.

Details at [www.choralisconstantinus.hu](http://www.choralisconstantinus.hu). For more information, see p. 15 for a review of editions of the chant, which are part of the same project. CB

Senfl *Werke für Martin Luther und die Reformation: Missa super Nisi Dominus, Motetten* Ensemble Officium, Wilfried Rombach 59' 29" Christophorus CHE 0147-2

This CD casts a long-overdue spotlight on two intriguing areas of music, the output of Ludwig Senfl in general and more particularly the Latin church music of the Lutheran Reformation. A friend of Luther, the Swiss-born Senfl was composer to the Hofkapelle of the Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian before switching his allegiances to the Bavarian Duke Albrecht IV, writing both church and secular music of a distinctively individual nature. The present Mass is dedicated to Luther and conforms to the latter's requirements for a Protestant mass while the other works, settings of Psalms and other liturgical material, can also be associated either

with the Reformation or with Luther personally. This provides a fascinating window on a repertoire, which the hardening of attitudes in the years following the Reformation has almost completely overshadowed. The compositional style is intentionally transparent – the priority for Senfl is textual clarity; but the music is gently inventive and beautifully crafted. While the singing of the Ensemble Officium is not always of the very high standard we expect of choral ensembles on CD these days, it is consistently adequate, and the unusual nature of the repertoire make this a valuable recording.

D. James Ross

Thomas Tallis's *Secret Garden* Ensemble européen William Byrd, Graham O'Reilly passacaille 963 70' 21" *Audivi vocem, Dum transisset, Gaude gloriosa, Loquebantur, Salve intemerata, Suscipe quae Domine + Lamentations II*

*Ceremony and Devotion: Music for the Tudors* The Sixteen, Harry Christophers Coro COR16077 75' 48" *Byrd Domine praestolamur, Haec dies, Infelix ego, Laudibus in sanctis; Sheppard Media vita, Sacris solemniis; Tallis Iam Christus astra, Jesu salvator saeculi, Misereri nostri*

Comparison between this and the 16's latest CD (foretasting their 2010 Cathedral tour) is interesting, with no easy decision of preference. There are advantages in discs containing a variety of composers: greater contrast, and a well-shaped programme. But Tallis had a long career, so the Byrd Ensemble disc has considerable variety, though one genre at which he excelled is left to The 16, who include two Tallis hymns, whose chords sound thicker than the number of parts would make one expect, and with a characteristic straining of the inner parts against the texture (I'm praising the music, not criticising the singing!) Both discs have a 'big piece'. The Tallis begins with one of the outstanding works in the Tudor repertoire, the Marian antiphon *Gaude gloriosa*. I can't remember when I first heard it, but it immediately (if one can use that word of a work 20 minutes long) gripped me. Brevity may be a virtue, but so is length in a repertoire that is comprised mostly of short pieces. The large piece (24' 31") in The 16's programme, *Media vita*, doesn't work so well for me, despite being shaped by the repeated sections. It could be that I've never sung it (but I didn't sing *Gaude gloriosa* till five years ago); I think also that it is because, other than chant

interruptions, it is continuously of the same texture. This I did find long for the wrong reasons. The two discs are complementary, but if you can only afford one, I'd recommend the Tallis – not because I know Graham better than Harry, but perhaps because I find an element of freshness in his non-English (except for one *EMR* subscriber) singers. CB

**Taverner Sacred Choral Music** The Choir of St Mary's Cathedral, Edinburgh, Duncan Ferguson 58' 10"

Delphian DCD34023

*Dum transisset Sabbatum (I and II), Leroy Kyrie, Missa Corona spinea & O splendor glorie*

This impressive recording has much to recommend it. Any enjoyable performance of Taverner's masterpiece, the *Mass Corona spinea*, should be warmly welcomed, and now that choirs have abandoned the largely discredited practice of upward transposition we can concentrate on the skill of Taverner's partwriting rather than the security of the trebles. In the case of the Edinburgh choir these are a mixture of boys and girls, a very happy blend and a feature of the ensemble since 1978. In fact the girl soloists in the mass seem to cultivate a clear boyish tone which makes them indistinguishable from the single boy soloist. As a working cathedral choir, they negotiate the complex polyphony with admirable confidence, while the plainchant also displays a functional quality. This is particularly intriguing in the eccentric melody and rhythms of the square which provides the chant for the Leroy Kyrie. This is very much a young persons' performance with a real sense of 'going for it', and under the direction of their twenty-eight-year-old Master of Music, Duncan Ferguson, the choir's singing is genuinely exciting without any appreciable loss of accuracy. Personally, I might have wished for a little more finesse at a few points in the mass, notably the famous *gimel* sections, but then I'm no longer young! As usual with this enterprising Edinburgh-based label, the recording quality is crystal clear, capturing perfectly St Mary's wonderfully generous acoustic. D. James Ross

**Adrian Willaert Musica Nova** (*The Petrarca Madrigals*) Singer Pur 121' 37"  
Oehms Classics OC 814

This compelling recording of the first part of Willaert's masterly *Musica Nova* powerfully underlines his seminal role in the development of the secular music of the Renaissance. The story of his compendious collection of madrigals and motets on the twin subjects of sacred and secular love, the sole copy of which at one point resided in the possession of a Venetian courtesan, is in itself fascinating

but this performance, marking the 450<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its eventual publication, reveals its importance as a musical model for later composers. Singer Pur is currently one of the finest small vocal ensembles in the world and performs this extended and demanding score\* with an impressive consistency and expressiveness. It is to be hoped that they will also record the sacred half of the manuscript to allow a full appraisal of Willaert's achievement, but in the meantime we can luxuriate in the emotionally charged and intelligent accounts we have here of these ground-breaking secular settings.

D. James Ross

\* Willaert's singers would, of course, have used partbooks: I wonder if modern performances from musicians used to singing from parts would be distinguishable from those of equal ability and musicality using scores. CB

**Can she excuse? – English Consort Music and Songs** Ensemble Mikado  
Gramola 98850

As a purely musical experience this CD is not unpleasant: cheerful musical singing and tasteful playing of an enjoyable range of Renaissance consort pieces and songs. However, there are a few substantial flies in the ointment, most obviously the rather wild English vowel sounds of the otherwise pleasing vocal soloist Theresa Dlouhy. A number of plain howlers (sowing surely means planting seeds rather than anything to do with female pigs) are only the most obvious elements. I tried listening without the printed texts and failed to follow entire episodes. The incomprehensibility extends to the inadequate booklet note, gobbledygook in English, but in fact little better in the original German! Finally, the failure to mention any sources means that what are in fact an anonymous Scottish Paven entitled in the Wode Partbooks as *Ane uther paven verray gude* and its companion Galliard from the Dublin Virginal Book are passed off without comment as English courtly compositions. I am surprised that a group of young musicians working in Vienna, in many ways the home of the scholarly early music scene, could be so unaware of the reasonable expectations of the modern listener.

D. James Ross

**O gente brunette** Odhecaton, Paolo Da Col 65' 52"

Ramée RAM 0902

Bruhier *Ecce panis angelorum*; Champion *O gente brunette*; Compère *Omnium bonorum plena*, *O genitrix gloriosa*, *Virgo caelesti*; Marle *Missa O gente brunette* Mouton *Ave Maria... virgo serena*; Nesciens *mater*; Sohler *Ave Regina caelorum*. *Salve Regina*

This intriguing disc of sacred polyphony by Renaissance composers associated with

Picardy ranges from works by the under-performed (Jean Mouton and Loyset Compère) the neglected (Antoine Bruhier and Mathieu Sohler) and the downright obscure (Thomas Champion dit Mithou and Nicholas de Marle). A parody Mass by Marle using a saucy madrigal by Mithou provides the CD with its title, and both works prove to be pleasantly capable compositions. Useful as it is to hear the music of the more obscure masters represented here, the music by Mouton and Compère stands head and shoulders above the more modest efforts of the local musicians and Mouton's magnificent canonic eight-part *Nesciens Mater* is an absolute highlight. Considerably experienced in such repertoire, Odhecaton produce a full, warm sound topped off with some lovely airy alto singing.

D. James Ross

## 17th CENTURY

Becker see Flor below

**Buxtehude Opera Omnia XI Vocal Works** 4 Johanette Zomer, Bettina Pahn, Miriam Meyer, Siri Thornhill, Bogna Bartosz, Patrick van Goethem, Jörg Dürmüller, Andreas Karasiak, Klaus Mertens SSSSAA TTB Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra & Choir, Ton Koopman 131' 03" (2 CDs)  
Challenge Classics CC72250

Review deferred till the next issue.

**Buxtehude The Complete Organ Works Vol. 2** Christopher Herricks (organ of Nidaros Cathedral, Trondheim) 76' 21"  
Hyperion CDA67809  
BuxWV 138, 149, 153, 155, 160, 165, 166, 199, 206, 207, 213, 218, 222 & 224

Although Christopher Herrick has used a historic organ for the second of his Buxtehude recordings, he has unfortunately, in my view, chosen the wrong one, travelling all the way to the far reaches of the Norwegian coast to record Buxtehude on an instrument that is normally considered one of the finest organs for Bach interpretation. The 1741 Wagner organ is an isolated (and excellent) example of the Prussian organbuilder's work, and shows the influence of Gottfried Silbermann, with whom he was apprenticed. It is therefore some way removed from the sound world that Buxtehude would have been familiar with. Christopher Herrick plays with a commendable sense of personal conviction, albeit with a highly individual style of articulation and phrasing. This makes itself known in the very first note (of the admittedly complex *Praeludium* in g) where he sets up an off-beat rhythmical pulse in the first bar, and then shifts it in the second bar. It took several listens to work out what was going on.

Ornamentation and textural interpretations (a tricky issue with all Buxtehude's organ music) are also open to debate. However, the use of predominantly 8' pedal registers and his minimal registration changes in the free works, is interesting – the former arguably authentic (and worth hearing), the latter less likely to be so. With so many caveats, and a wealth of recordings on appropriate organs by players wedded to well-researched and historically appropriate performance, I fear this may only appeal to Herrick fans – of which there are many in the English organ fraternity. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

**Buxtehude VII Suonate, Op. 1** The Purcell Quartet 56' 53"  
Chandos Chaconne CHAN 0766

The most amazing thing about reviewing this CD is that I didn't recognize all of the music! I checked every other recording I've had and, true, they are all recitals with selected pieces – this is the first complete Op. 1 that I own. And I will own it for a long time, as this is (as one would expect) playing of the highest order. Catherine Mackintosh plays four sonatas, while Catherine Weiss plays the other three. Sensibly, too, they play the music in the printed order, thereby maintaining the composer's (printer's?) scheme of each sonata being on the next degree of an ascending scale – I must say I didn't find that a disconcerting experience! I don't know if the musicians chose other instruments from their usual, but the tone of the violins in particular sounds different – slightly more astringent, perhaps. I look forward very much to their take on the composer's Op. 2. *BC*

**Cesti Le disgrazie d'Amore** Cristiana Arcari *Allegria*, Maria Grazia Schiavo *Venere*, Furio Zanesi *Vulcano*, Paolo Lopez *Amore*, Enea Sorini *Sterope*, Antonio Abete *Bronte*, Luigi de Donato *Piragmo*, Carlos Natale *Inganno*, Gabriella Martellacci *Adulazione*, Martin Oro *Avaricia*, Elena Cecchi Fedi *Amicizia*, Francesco Ghelardini *Cortigiano*, Anicio Zorzi Giustiniani *Amante*, Auser Musici, Carlo Ipata, 153' 32"  
Hyperion CDA 67771/2 (2 CDs)

Antonio Cesti, long a statistical footnote by dint of having composed what is almost certainly the longest (8 hours!) and most lavishly staged opera in history (*Il pomo d'oro*, Vienna 1668), was brought spectacularly to life by René Jacobs' 1982 recording of *Orontea* (Innsbruck, 1656). *Orontea* revealed Cesti as one of the 17th century's great masters of music drama, a verdict now immeasurably enhanced by this set of the later *Le disgrazie d'amore*. Described as a *dramma giocosomorale*, in 3 acts, it was composed in Vienna in 1667

during the protracted period Cesti was at work on *Il pomo d'oro*, with which it shares the same librettist, Francesco Sbarra. He produced for Cesti a brilliant, razor-sharp book whose witty moralizing shafts centred round gods and allegorical characters still strike home pertinently today. The composer's response was equally acute, his score reflecting the fast-moving plot with unerring skill in its juxtaposition of *recitar cantando*, *arioso* and *aria*, while the orchestral writing in the *sinfonias* and *ritornellos* frequently surprises with its accomplished, richly conceived contrapuntal writing.

The recording does the opera full justice, being ideally paced by Ipata, whose instrumental forces are thankfully restricted to single strings per part in *ritornellos* and a convincingly constituted continuo ensemble. Vocally there is not a weak link, and it is a particular strength that the vocal acting essential in a work like this is the equal of the singing; one can almost visualise Schiavo's fingernails ready for action in her opening row with Vulcan, described in the cast listing as the 'stinking husband of Venus, irritatingly immortal'. In short, this set is not only an artistic triumph in its own right, but also one of the most important additions to the catalogue we're likely to see this year. *Brian Robins*

**Christian Flor & Dietrich Becker Musicalische Frühlings-Früchte** North German dance suites from the 17th century Musica Poetica, Jörn Boysen 61' 13"  
Challenge Classics CC72332

Full marks to Challenge Classics for continuing to record less well-known repertoire like this. Becker and Flor are hardly household names, and having the commitment to record their music (alongside two anonymous string suites that are equally deserving of attention) is astonishing – especially in such tough economic times. I hope they are rewarded by readers of magazines such as this for their brave endeavours. Becker is represented by two suites from his *Musicalische Frühlings-Früchte*, and Flor by two harpsichord suites and an entertaining wedding piece (featuring soprano Helen Thomson) which sets verses of a song within the context of a ballo. All great fun! *Musica Poetica* is made up of pairs of violins and violas, cello and violone with keyboard continuo – I'd love to hear them go on now to recording some Rosenmüller! *BC*

Timings are given when included on the CD documentation, but our computers give only the length of individual tracks, and we have not totted up the total durations.

**Gaultier Apollon Orateur** Anthony Bailes lute

Ramée RAM 0904

The sun god, Apollo, who served as an emblem for Louis XIV, the Sun King, was also the god of music. For Denis Gaultier (1603-72) to be described in *La Rhétorique des Dieux* as Apollo in human form was doubly praiseworthy. In his booklet notes Anthony Bailes refers to Gaultier's sophistication and attention to detail, which set him apart from other 17th-century French lute lutenists. In her lute tutor book (5v), Mary Burwell writes of Denis Gaultier, 'excellent for his composition and his play extremely polished and his touching very delicate'.

The CD includes music from four suites, in G major, A minor, F major, and B minor. The unmeasured preludes may seem aimless meanderings on the page, but Bailes gives them shape and a sense of direction, presaging what is to follow in the other movements. There are three intense and doleful tombeaux – a Pavane for Mr. Raquette, an Allemande for Henri de L'Enclos, and an Allemande Grave for himself (*Tombeau de Gaultier par luy mesme*), which contrast with nimble courantes and gigue. The sarabandes are restrained, albeit with occasional guitar-like strumming. To enhance the repeats of sections, Bailes tastefully adds a few extra notes of his own here and there. The overall mood of this music is sombre – Bailes describes it as 'austere' – where even a sprightly Canarie gives little respite. Not all the music on the CD is by Denis Gaultier. There are two chaconnes by 'Le Vieux Gaultier', Denis's older cousin, Ennemond (1575-1651).

I have long admired Bailes' lute playing, in particular his thoughtful and ever-expressive performance of French baroque music. On this CD he plays an 11-course lute made by Gregori Ferdinand Wenger of Augsburg in 1722. It is a large instrument with a string length of 76 cm, and tuned a minor third below modern pitch. The mellowness of this old German lute, the music of two of the finest French lute composers, and the interpretation of a wise old English lutenist, is indeed a potent combination. This CD is outstandingly good.

*Stewart McCoy*

**Purcell King Arthur** Ana Maria Labin, Chantal Santon-Jeffrey, Mélodie Ruvio, Mathias Vidal, Marc Mauillon, João Fernandes, Choeur et Orchestre du Concert Spirituel, Hervé Niquet 112'  
Glossa DVD GVD 921619

It's your *King Arthur*, Henry, but not as you know it. All your score is there in all its genius (not just the cold one) but

where you left space for Dryden's words there are now a series of sketches of an amusing kind featuring a recalcitrant stage manager with thespian ambitions and a musical director who actually sings (rather well) a song that won't be written for another 200 years or so. Anyone watching it a century later than that with the aid of a machine you simply won't believe may well spot the references to *Monty Python* and fans of your music may be annoyed that audience acclaim renders the marvellous final chaconne inaudible. But I'm afraid this production isn't really about you - the theatricals have had their way. You must see it somehow. You may not want to see it again. David Hansell

**Purcell Chamber Music for up to four parts** Cordarte 75' 49"

Pan Classics PC10227

Pavans for 2 and 3 violins; Sonatas 6 & 7 in 3 parts, 4 & 5 in 4 parts; Fantazias 2 & 3; Three parts on a ground; Chacony. A ground in Gamut, Suite in d (hpscd), Prelude and Ground in c; Suite (for strings) in G

This is an attractive programme of assorted chamber music – four trio sonatas, two fantasias, the *Chacony*, *Three parts upon a ground*, three string pavans and some keyboard pieces. As such it provides very agreeable listening and a very good sampler of the composer's work in these genres. I particularly liked the string sound – direct and clean, though not too 'edgy'. I did wonder, though, why the triple harp was thought necessary, especially by a group that seeks to play the music 'on the instruments for which it was intended'. As a continuo player I've always felt that there's enough going on in *Three parts...* and that the less I do the better but here we have harp as well as harpsichord making contrapuntal additions as well as creating harmonic support. Similarly, it was a shock to have the *Ground in gamut* transformed into a harp/harpsichord duet – all this without a word of comment in the notes. But on a 'too much of the wrong kind of snow' day the recital as a whole was a welcome travelling companion. David Hansell

**Purcell Harpsichord Suites and other works** Olivier Baumont 63' 27"

Warner 2564 68655-6

Like the Handel suites reviewed below, this is a reissue on Warner of a recording originally made for Erato in the mid-1990s. Of particular interest, especially to English readers/listeners, are the instruments – a Kirkman harpsichord (for the suites) and a Robert Hatley virginal (for the other works) from the Benton Fletcher collection in Fenton House. Purcell's keyboard works are not so much the chippings from his workbench as the

sawdust on the floor, but are nonetheless agreeable listening and there's never time to get bored: few tracks last more than 90 seconds. Baumont plays the eight suites in order but disperses the miscellaneous pieces among them. I must say that I wouldn't have started with *A New Ground* but I do like the melancholy of *Sefachi's Farewell* at the end. Over 44 tracks there are inevitably a few tempos and ornaments that are not to one's personal taste but there is a sense of enjoyment and affection in the playing. The liner simply lists the programme, but with clarity and Z numbers. David Hansell

**Purcell's Trumpets: from Shore to Shore** Jean-François Maldeuf, Joël Lahens *tpts*, Ensemble Ariana, Marie-Paule Nounou Arion ARN68804 63' 21"

Music by Clarke, Corelli, Dieupart, Finger, Paisible, D. & H. Purcell, Shore

No trumpet player would thank me for using the word, but here we hear the trumpet definitely mince off the battlefield and join polite company. After the more functional music on the Birkholtz trumpet (see below), the same Jean François Madeuf now plays with a narrower sound and higher register, but with the same grace of articulation and shades of colour, art pieces from the English restoration. Playing a trumpet without the modern compromise finger holes, he creates a very liquid transition between notes, without the harmonic 'click' created by changing fingering. It further imposes a gentler dynamic, adding to the sweetness. He is joined by fellow trumpeter Joël Lahens, and string ensemble. The striking opening track opens with a lone drum, with the very dry sound which characterises percussion of the period, with spaced flams and metrical rolls. The other pieces are by Henry and Daniel Purcell, a particularly interesting sonata of 5 movements by Finger, Dieupart and Topham. The span of time of the compositions follows the careers of the family dynasty of royal trumpeters, the famous Shores, with the poignant Roger North quotation in the notes: 'the stoutest trumpeter with much use disables his lips so that he cannot perform – which appears to have curtailed the career of John, the last in the line and the most famous in his time. Time has not yet dimmed the Ensemble Ariana. Stephen Cassidy

**Salomone Rossi 'The Song of Solomon' and instrumental music** Profeti della Quinta, Ensemble Muscadin 58' 35"

Pan Classics PC 10214

This is a CD of contrasts. The two groups who have combined to perform a selection of Salamone Rossi's (my preferred spelling) come from rather different

backgrounds. The male quintet are Israeli, and their experience ranges from church-choral to Jewish-cantorial. The instrumental sextet (with three continuo players) came together as students at the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis.

The CD alternates settings of Rossi's Hebrew Biblical texts with trio sonatas drawn from his four instrumental collections – ranging from 1607-1622. The contrast in the material lies in the Palestrina-like devotional settings, as against the (then) avant-garde trio-sonata form, many offering variations on a melody or ground bass (represented here by Tordiglione, Aria Francese and Ruggiero).

The first two tracks set up both the virtues and 'problems' of this CD contrast. Both ensembles are impeccable; responsive, tight. The violin and recorder display effortless-sounding virtuosity. The vocal pieces are respectful, measured and never taken too slowly, as can sometimes happen with over-reverent performances. So the contrasts of timbre and pace give a comfortable structure to the programme. If the vocal melismas in the lower voices are sometimes a little muddy, this is not too intrusive.

Fair enough also that the instrumentalists provide treble variety: Track 1 (*Sonata prima detta la Moderna*) combines recorder with violin; a Gagliarda pairs cornetto and violin; we have two recorders, and recorder and cornetto. Similarly, there are some thoughtful continuo decisions. The voices are a cappella, underpinned with positive organ, or harpsichord and gamba – and the final track, the full Kaddish prayer, combines singers and instrumentalists, with even a violone to do heavy duty on the bass. Interpretation was the name of the game then, and it certainly is now.

However, despite the energy and commitment which infuses the CD, there is something odd about the recorder's heavy use of *flattement* from the very beginning, profuse grace notes, and a very French interpretation of this very Italian music. Why not, one might ask? Authenticity can look forward as well as looking back, but there's an aural spinoff: the instrumental music is often just too noisy, with instruments fighting rather than in dialogue. Basic lines are concealed rather than embellished, and too many potentially lyrical moments are sacrificed in the rush. I would hope that this over-exuberance might be tempered another time, to allow the music to come through more clearly. Micheline Wandor

**Zielenski Offertoria et Communiones Totius Anni 1611** Capella Cracoviensis, Emma Kirkby *sop*, Andrzej Białko *org*, Stanisław Galonski *dir* 54' 37"

DUX 0681

It seems odd to me to juxtapose music from two such disparate collections as these on a single disc. Zielenski, for me at least, is far more successful in the grand Gabrielian (occasionally Monteverdian) style than he is as a writer of monodies and I would rather have more of these (perhaps with even more instruments – risking heresy, I suppose, in these pages) and foregone Dame Emma's valiant attempts to make the solos sound better than they actually are. I have to say that I found it bizarre that it sounded to me like the organist was doubling the voice for long periods (albeit – and perhaps all the odder for it in a plainer version). When I listened for the first couple of times, I wondered if some pieces should not have been transposed down because they seemed too high. Then came works where the sopranos seemed to be silent. So was it a case of not understanding *chiavette*?\* But then there were the works where the whole gamut was used – high sopranos and really deep basses, so clearly the composer liked the extremities. In fact, a lot of the music works purely on texture and sonority. It's amazing what an in-tune chord of ten notes can do to you. So nice choral music, but not the world's most inspired solo material – if Emma Kirkby cannot make them sound idiomatic (and there is real virtuosity involved in singing some of Zielenski's lines at all!), no-one can. BC

\* I presume that this is the standard combination of high-and low-clef choirs with the most obvious lay-out of voices on the bottom of: the high choir and the top of the low one. And what better then 'even more instruments': can you ever have too many cornetts and sackbuts? CB

*Airs de differens auteurs donné à une dame.* Ensemble Les Meslanges 58' 32"  
Hortus 062

If you are in the mood for its general restraint and seriousness, this is a lovely recital, structured to reflect the topics of a likely conversation in a late 17<sup>th</sup> century Parisian salon. As well as *airs sérieux* by Sébastien and Charles le Camus, Charpentier, Lully and de Bacilly, there are also instrumental solos by Gaultier and de Visée and short readings. Thomas Van Essen (baritone) captures the somewhat elusive style of this genre perfectly and creates an atmosphere of true intimacy, helped by the decision to restrict his support to just lute and viol. When it comes to continuo sonorities, less is so often more. It is a shame that the general presentation is less than perfect. The programme is listed only at the very back of the booklet and the sung and spoken texts appear just in French with no clear cross-referencing to the track list. More consideration for the listener is needed here. David Hansell

*Auf Wiener Art: Music from the Habsburg Imperial Court Le Jardin Secret* 77' 32"  
CORO COR16074

Music by Cavalli, Draghi, Froberger, Fux, Kerll, Leopold I, Muffat, de Saint Luc, Sartorio, Schenk & Schmelzer

Here is another good theme for a compilation of 17th-century music, helping dredge up more composers from obscurity. Most of the composers on this disc are fairly well-known, such as Muffat, Cavalli, Schmelzer and Draghi, but these are tempered by Saint Luc and the major patron Emperor Leopold I himself. The subject of the vocal music is love (usually disastrous), and it's a nice selection, as is the instrumental music alongside. The playing is good, but the soprano Elizabeth Dobbin sounds slightly tense and too full-on – she does provide nice moments, but her voice seems not yet comfortable with what it's being asked to do. Nonetheless, this ensemble is worth listening out for, as they look, from their website (lejardinsecret.com) to be doing some interesting stuff. Katie Hawks

*The Baroque Trombone* Christian Lindberg, Soloists of the Australian Chamber Orchestra

BIS-CD-1688

Music by Bertali, Biber, Castello, Cesare, Frescobaldi, Speer & anon

Here we have a showcase recording of sackbut pieces from the world's most well-known trombone showman. But far from being a wet T-shirt affair, we have a well considered and sensitive recording of many of the well-known favourites. True, there is a little musculature on show, but in the right places, as it were. In fact having a little tension in the sound here and there seems to me to add the drama which surely must have been one of the many aspects of the sackbut exploited by the musicians of its time. To counter this, Lindberg often fades gently into the continuo as the violins move to the fore. His sound is dry, which many take to be 'authentic', and the colour changes with the mood. The crisp articulation may reveal which repertoire he is more associated with, but this is sensitive playing and a very worthwhile disc, which Lindberg has prepared for over a long period. The string playing (members of the Australian Chamber Orchestra) is very fine – energetic and bouncy, in a very taut ensemble. There is less flex in the pulse than one has grown used to hearing lately, and this creates a different effect, particularly in the Castello pieces. The inclusion of a 16' bass in the continuo is another unfamiliar, and lush, sound. Rendered with skill and integrity, different approaches to interpretation make it worthwhile still to record familiar repertoire. The notes by

Simon Wills are worth a mention. They make serious points on the meaning of authenticity, with a light touch and cocky humour. It all fits. Stephen Cassidy

*Die Birckholtz-Trompete von 1650* Jean-François Madeuf & Ensemble 57' 16"  
Raumklang RK 2805

Albrici, Johann Arnold, Böhm, Buxtehude, Hainlein, Nicolaus Hasse, Jarzebski, Pezel, M. Praetorius, Speer, Thomsen & Vierdanck

Here we hear the trumpet as the signalling device of the battlefield and music to varying degrees derived from this function. The disk starts with a sample original signals played on a reproduction of the Birckholtz trumpet – made, it seems, for this purpose, rather than primarily for music. It is interesting to hear this workhorse function: to transmit with unambiguous clarity one of a limited number of instructions over a wide area. These signals must have been known fairly widely and coloured listeners' response to pieces of music, giving them an emotional power now lost to us. The pieces on the disk venture out from this starting point, through Praetorius, Speer, Pezel etc. Harmonic variety is supplied by, for example, an excellent Concerto a 2 by Jarzebski for fagotto and trombone, and organ solos, before returning at the finish to a Battalia a 5 by Hainlein which including strings. The trumpet playing is varied in colour, dynamic and articulation and very accomplished. A special mention must be made of the organ, the original (1784) of the village church in which the trumpet was preserved, in Belitz. This is used in a powerful piece by Buxtehude, and an absolute gem of piece by Georg Böhm. The sound in this version of *Vater unser* is simply beautiful, played with great integrity, rattly tracker and all.

Stephen Cassidy

*Il Canto d'Orfeo Early 17th-Century music inspired by the Orpheus myth* Claire Lefilliâtre, Jan Van Elsacker ST, Il Trionfo del Tempo

Etcetera KTC4030

Brunelli, Capello, Castello, D'India, Ferrari, Fontana, Gagliano, Landi, Merula, Nanino, Rasi, Luigi Rossi & Uccellini

The underlying theme of Orpheus is a good one for a disc, as not only was the myth (as this makes clear) a real magnet for musical creativity but almost any other music can be fitted in relevantly! This disc is an exploration of Monteverdi's contemporaries and compatriots – some of whom I confess I was ignorant of, but will now explore further. There are extracts, for example, from Rossi's *Orfeo*, Landi's *Morte d'Orfeo*, as well as a cantata by d'India and numerous arias, all on the Orfean themes of love and death;

the instrumental interludes accord well with the rest of the works. The collection is lusciously and lovingly performed; the booklet notes are fairly unintelligible and the printing of the libretti is a little scatty, but this is a gem of a disc. *Katie Hawks*

**A German Bouquet Trio Settecento**  
Cedille CDR 90000 114 78' 30"

J. S. Bach, Buxtehude, Erlebach, J. P. Krieger, Muffat, Pisendel, Schmelzer & Schop

This is a most interesting recital. The playing is of a very high level and the programme full of surprises. Most people interesting in the repertoire for violin and continuo – with and without obbligato gamba – will be familiar with the Buxtehude, Muffat and Erlebach sonatas, which rightly deserve to be well known. But how come sonatas like Johann Philipp Krieger's in D minor op. 2 no. 2 and Pisendel's in D major have fallen between the cracks? Although it is his music that closes the disc, Bach anything but towers head and shoulders above his countrymen. Hats off, too, to performers who use more than one bow or instrument for repertoire covering about 100 years! *BC*

**Masterpieces of Mexican Polyphony** The Choir of Westminster Cathedral, James O'Donnell 65' 12"

Hyperion Helios CDH55317

Capillas Alleluia: Die nobis Maria, Magnificat Quarti Toni; Franco Salve Regina; Padilla Deus in adiutorium, Mirabilia testimonium, Salve regina. Lamentation for Maundy Thursday; Salazar O sacrum convivium.

In the 1990s Westminster Cathedral Choir recorded a wealth of Spanish and Mexican sacred music which is now gradually appearing on Hyperion's budget label Helios. This revelatory disc of Mexican polyphony heralded a more thorough investigation by a number of other ensembles which unearthed several fascinating indigenous composers. It stands up very well, and indeed the sound of the Westminster Cathedral forces has always seemed to me beautifully evocative of the great ecclesiastical choirs of Renaissance Mexico. Within the polyphony represented here there are dramatic contrasts of scale and texture, from the thoughtful exploratory work of Franco and Capillas to the pomp and magnificence of Padilla, enhanced by the judicious use of dulcian, harp (played by Andrew Lawrence-King,) and organ. This fine CD features musical editions prepared by the great champion of Spanish, Portuguese and Mexican polyphony, Bruno Turner, who also provides a highly informative booklet note. *D. James Ross*

**Stylus phantasticus** Bell'Arte Salzburg.  
Annagret Siedel dir  
Berlin Classics 16572

Buxtehude BuxWV 255 & 266 + music by Baltzar, Becker, Förster, Reincken, Schop, Sidon, Strungk, Vierdanck, Weckmann

I thoroughly enjoyed this finely planned recital. The two violinists of Bell'arte Salzburg are perfectly matched in tone and style. The north German repertoire is a rich one, and the musicians have chosen a rich variety of pieces. The relatively straightforward continuo lineup (by today's standards!) confirms what I've always believed – you don't need a constantly changing kaleidoscope of colours; simply varying the texture of the accompaniment is enough to give the illusion. Musically the stars are Vierdanck (his D minor sonata for two violins without bass was a real revelation), Förster (his sonata named after the great fiddler Peter Sidon is excellent), and, of course, Buxtehude, whose trio sonatas still stand head and shoulders above the rest. Congratulations to Bell'arte Salzburg and Berlin Classics alike on a wonderful CD. *BC*

**LATE BAROQUE**

**Bach Cantatas vol. 45** Yukari Nonoshita, Robin Blaze, Peter Kooiy SAB, Bach Collegium Japan, Masaaki Suzuki 65' 42"  
BIS-SACD-1801

Cantatas 39, 129, 187; Sinfonia in D BWV 1045

Suzuki here offers three cantatas from 1726: the large-scale BWV 39 and BWV 187, both structured in two halves, and the chorale cantata BWV 129. The disc is filled out by the Sinfonia in D major, BWV 1045, possibly the introduction to a lost cantata. Suzuki's performers pay attention to local detail, yet always give a sense of a larger structure. Phrases are shaped convincingly, so that the music has a subtle momentum while never rushing. Suzuki gives a particularly powerful rendition of the first chorus of BWV 39, which divides into several separate sections. Here his sense of overall structure and onward momentum gives a powerful inevitability to Bach's writing. Once again, Suzuki shows himself to be one of the most consistent and thoughtful interpreters of Bach's vocal music. *Stephen Rose*

**Bach, Meine Seufzer, meine Tränen: Cantatas vol. 8** Gerlinde Sämman, Petra Noskaiová, Christoph Genz, Jan Van der Crabben SATB, La Petite Bande, Sigiswald Kuijken 65' 38"  
Accent 25308  
Cantatas 13, 73, 81, 144.

Kuijken's current disc features cantatas for the Sundays after Epiphany, including the lament-filled BWV 13 and the operatic BWV 81 (with its evocation of the calm then stormy Sea of Galilee). As on previous

releases, Kuijken offers chamber-size performances with solo voices, a small string orchestra (two violins per part) and no 16' continuo. The disc puts great onus on the solo singers – particularly as it is recorded in such close focus – and generally they rise to the challenge. In particular, Christoph Genz successfully projects the pathos in the winding lines of BWV 13. Throughout the disc, Kuijken's ensemble highlights the rhythmic figures that underlie Bach's lines. These are committed performances that propel the listener straight into the heart of Bach's complex textures. *Stephen Rose*

**Bach arranging and arranged: Every one a chaconne** Rachel Elliott, Clare Wilkinson, Nicholas Mulroy, Matthew Brook SATB, The Bach Players

Hyphen Press Music HMP 02

Bach Cantatas 78, 150; Pergolesi/Bach *Tilge, Höchster, meine Sünden*; Erlebach Overture; Bach/Mozart Fugues from the '48'; Purcell Chacony

These two discs stand out for their imaginative programming. Neither disc is based solely on the works of a single composer; instead, each sheds new light on Bach by following a theme that relates his output to the work of other musicians. *Bach arranging and arranged* presents Bach's arrangement of Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater* alongside fugues from the Well-Tempered Clavier Book II as arranged for string quartet by Mozart and by The Bach Players' violinist, Rudolfo Richter. 'Every one a chaconne' juxtaposes two Bach cantatas with memorable chaconne choruses (BWV 78 and 150) alongside Purcell's *Chacony* and an Erlebach suite with a chaconne finale. The Bach Players use one-to-part strings as well as voices; this gives a transparent texture in which they can bring out the salient features in Bach's contrapuntal writing (such as the famous rising scale on 'Leite' in BWV 150). Unlike many recent one-to-a-part recordings from the continent, The Bach Players do not experiment with continuo instrumentation. The discs are produced by Hyphen Press Music, a publishing firm that here makes its debut as a record label. As one would expect of a publisher, they are presented to a high quality, with neat cardboard slipcase, elegantly set booklet, and informative essays by Hugh Wood and Yo Tomita. Recommended. *Stephen Rose*

**Bach Clavierübung II** Alexander Weimann *hpsc*

Atma Classiques ACD2 2603

Italian Concerto BWV971 & French Overture BWV831

Weimann gives efficient performances of Bach's Italian Concerto and French Overture. There is a appealing energy in

his articulation and, although he avoids large-scale rubato, he uses rhythmic alteration at the level of *notes inégales* (as in the 'Echo' of the *Ouverture* BWV 831). For anyone who likes a straightforward reading of Bach's keyboard works, this will be an enjoyable disc. *Stephen Rose*

**Bach *Six Partitas* Andreas Schiff (2 CDs)  
ECM New Series 2001/2002 476 6991**

I can understand why pianists want to play Bach and I can understand why audiences want to listen. In particular, I can understand why they want to listen to Schiff. There are moments of romantic introspection in some of the slower dances but at all other times he finds a path through this amazing music that respects both its world and his instrument. Unlike other pianists whose playing of Baroque music I have reviewed for *EMR*, Schiff's ornaments sound a natural part of the line, not something imposed upon it, and his articulation and voicing of the counterpoint is amazing. The *partitas* are not played in the usual order, though there is perfect logic to the sequence used and number 6 still comes last. I am usually of the school that will take piano performances of baroque music seriously when someone plays Debussy on the harpsichord (actually, this is quite fun until you run out of notes) but I was utterly beguiled by this. Strongly recommended for this month's off-the-strict-EM-piste listening. *David Hansell*

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

Häkkinen's playing of Bach's variations is really quite distinguished, with a highly enjoyable blend of discipline and freedom of expression on a good, well-recorded modern harpsichord by Katzman and booklet notes by Wanda Landowska are still amazingly authoritative. *Stephen Daw*

**Bach *Suites for unaccompanied cello* BWV 1007-1012 Angela East 149' (2 CDs)  
RP006**

Simply getting these recordings into CD form has been quite a feat, as Angela East relates in the booklet. Bow was first put to string in 2001. Between then and now is a chain of events involving over-running and supplementary sessions, a company takeover, lawyers, the police, and several engineers and editors. But now we have the recordings has it all been worth it? Ms East is, of course, the cellist of Red Priest and if I say that these performances are 'school of Red Priest' that may tell some readers all they need to know, for both good and bad. Certainly, no extreme is left unexplored with

occasionally bizarre, to my ears at any rate, results such as in the D minor *Courante*. The other issue which is regularly raised is the thorny 'when does freedom of approach become distortion?' The D major prelude actually stops in places. Are this and comparable events interpretation, self-indulgence, imagination or mis-judgement? I don't actually know, but I do think that the music is not best served by an approach which seems to micro-manage the *motifs* and phrases at the expense of overall concept. I also find the noisy bow and finger actions regularly captured by the microphones over-intrusive (C major *Allemande* for instance). So this is not a recording from which to get to know this amazing music nor should it be a sole recording in anyone's library. However, I salute Angela East's courage in releasing performances which she must know will provoke strong opinions. They have actually attracted a stream of intemperate vitriol from one reviewer. But then, so did Bach. *David Hansell*

**Handel *Messiah* Julia Doyle, Iestyn Davies,  
Allan Clayton, Andrew Foster-Williams SATB,  
Polyphony, Britten Sinfonia, Stephen  
Layton 134'01" (2 CDs)  
Hyperion CDA67800**

Whatever this may or may not be, it's not 'just another *Messiah*'. These forces are the established purveyors of this iconic work in one of London's major pre-Christmas concert series, Stephen Layton has conducted the work many times and Polyphony are one of the finest choirs around. Furthermore, the Britten Sinfonia is a top-notch (though non-period) orchestra and the soloists are all capable and stylish. On one level, therefore, this is a benchmark recording which won't frighten the horses and gives a fine representation of the work. But when one starts to probe and contemplate details, is it? Does it?

In an interview (Radio 3, CD Review) Stephen Layton did not attempt to hide the fact that he has introduced a number of 'personal touches'. Fair enough, one might think, but it is these that make me feel uneasy. Too often they feel imposed on the music rather than arising naturally from it. However well the orchestra plays (and they are very good indeed) they cannot bring to movements such as *Surely the bitter astringency* of a period instrument ensemble. The allocation of arias is an area where there can be a certain amount of latitude but it's not quite as simple as 'help yourself' and the use of soloists in the *Passiontide* sequence does fly in the face of known Handelian precedent. Two other aspects of the arias also raise eyebrows. In a ternary form aria does the 'B section'

really need a completely different tempo? I've always felt that in *He was despised* the challenge is to find one tempo that can convincingly accommodate Handel's notational contrasts. Even more startling, however, is Layton's use of a solo violin in several arias (such as *But thou did not leave*) which completely changes the composer's concept. Another change to Handel's sonic expectations is to be found in the continuo where the prominence of the organ (it is the primary instrument) becomes rather cloying after a while, when one is used to the harpsichord. There are several other details I could mention but last in this list of niggles will be dynamics. It is imposed *piano* passages and over-precious shadings that irk. To give but one example – the brief *piano* in *Ev'n so in Christ* is pure whimsy.

I absolutely accept that for many these will be small or even irrelevant considerations but the relatively specialist readership of *EMR* will not all think them so. Even the most textually-relaxed Handelian, however, might be startled by the unaccompanied start to the *Amen*. To me this just sounds weird and the initial entries of each part are quite unsteady. But I would like to say that I loved Stephen Layton's approach to the narrative drama of the work. His choice of the short *Pifa* and the surge of Part Two towards the *Hallelujah* both reflect concern for flow and continuity. However, the quest for the perfect *Messiah* goes on. Thank goodness.

*Should I (or even Hyperion) be worried that my Windows Media Player, though happy to ascribe Disc 1 to the 'Unknown Artist', was absolutely convinced that Disc 2 was performed by Harry Christophers and The Sixteen?* *David Hansell*

**Handel *Concerti Grossi* Op. 6 Australian  
Brandenburg Orchestra, Paul Dyer 156' 3"  
ABC Classics 476 3436 (2 CDs)**

It's often thought that Handel's Op. 6 *Concerti grossi* of 1739 (his own title, although they were issued as *Twelve Grand Concertos in Seven Parts*) were written in homage to Corelli, whose own Op. 6 set had been published exactly 25 years before. But it's also possible that Handel felt his position as the leading London composer to be threatened by the recent publication of fine works in the same genre by others known personally to him, such as Michael Festing's *Eight Concertos*, Op. 5, and especially Giuseppe Sammartini's inexplicably neglected *VI Concerti Grossi*, Op. 2, which appeared in 1738. However, there can be no doubting the superiority of Handel's concertos, all of which were composed in the space of just a month [more-or-less the time he normally spent on an opera or oratorio. CB]. They are a landmark in the history of music in another way, too: previously concertos

had been regarded more as chamber music, the few larger-scale works being written mostly for private court occasions and the like. But by including his concertos in his London oratorio performances, Handel at last made it possible for the general public, alerted by advertisements in the daily newspapers, to buy tickets for concerts at which such works were played by sizeable orchestras.

These are very fine performances of Handel's epoch-making works. Despite the use of a band that's probably a bit smaller than Handel's own, the string sound is rich and sonorous, the phrases are beautifully shaped, and there is some very stylish extemporized ornamentation by the concertino. To single out just one delight: the tutti chords in the 'Adagio' section at the end of the first movement of No. 2 can just be played straight, but the lead violinist's recitative-like interpolations convincingly give the whole passage the air of a dramatic *accompanato*. What a brilliant idea!

I shall continue to treasure the excellent 1997 recording by the Academy of Ancient Music under Andrew Manze, but it's this new version by Paul Dyer and the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra to which I shall return again and again, above all for its freshness and vigour.

Richard Maunder

Handel *Harpsichord Suites 1720 & 1733*  
Olivier Baumont 117' 22" (2 CDs)  
Warner 2564 68806-2

Almost everything I wrote about Baumont's Purcell disc (see above) could be repeated here. Again we have an Erato/Warner reissue and an opportunity to hear historic instruments: three harpsichords from Kenneth Gilbert's collection on the first disc and two from Fenton House (Ruckers and Shudi) on the second. Thoughtful programming is also apparent. Each disc begins and ends with a pair of suites with shorter pieces between them, including two of the 'Fugues or Voluntaries' published in 1735 and traditionally, if not entirely convincingly, claimed by organists as theirs. Furthermore, each disc begins with a 'set piece' – the huge G major Chaconne (CD1) and the E major 'Harmonious Blacksmith' suite (CD2). There are rather more challenges to the player's technique in Handel's music than in Purcell's but Baumont does not disappoint and is, at times, quite exhilarating. It's really not too late to add this enjoyable postscript to your anniversary listening.

David Hansell

Krieger, *Ich habe mein Leibgen im Garten gesehen*. Love songs and arias Jan Kobow T, United Contino Ensemble  
cpo 777 433-2 71' 02"

Johann Krieger was organist in the Saxon town of Zittau from 1682 until his death in 1735. Nowadays he is best known for his keyboard music, but this disc showcases his arias, most of which were composed for school plays. The plays were written by the Zittau headmaster, Christian Weise, who was one of the leading German novelists of the late 17th century; accordingly, Krieger sets texts of high literary merit that are often witty or aphoristic in tone. Many of the arias are simple strophic pieces, but the disc also includes more substantial vocal concertos (notably the grand *Wie lieblich und wie schöne sieht Gottes Wohnung auß* for a church dedication festival). The vocal numbers are interspersed with sonatas from Philipp Friedrich Buchner's 1662 *Plectrum musicum*, which follow the early 17th-century Italian tradition of short contrasting movements. The United Continuo Ensemble offer subtle performances, giving shape to individual notes as well as whole phrases, while the tenor Jan Kobow projects Weise's texts effectively. An excellent release.

Stephen Rose

Rameau *Nouvelles Suites (1728), L'Entretien des Muses (1724)* D'Anglebert  
*Chaconne se Phaeton* Assi Karttunen  
ABCD 290 69' 53"

This disc frames Rameau's two suites with the separate movements by him and D'Anglebert. Neither of these is mentioned in the note which, in both this and other ways, could have done with a firmer editorial hand. Nevertheless, this is the first time I have ever been able to say that the information appears in both English and Finnish. In this repertoire Ms Karttunen takes on some formidable opposition, namely every big-name harpsichordist, and can perhaps be excused for treading a rather cautious path through Rameau's various minefields. I am impressed by her playing, especially the feeling of control, but I am not really excited. The rather bland 'German-style' 1998 harpsichord is a factor in this: if ever a programme needed the audible chocolate that is the tone of the late French harpsichord this is it.

David Hansell

Mossi *Sonate a Violino, e Violone, o Cimbalo Opera Prima* Leila Schayegh vln, Ilze Grudule vlc, Jörg Halubek hpscd  
Pan Classics PC 10212 77' 01"

This is a fabulous disc. I listened to another of the Pan Classics offerings before sending it off for review and was taken by Leila Schayegh's violin playing immediately; she seemed to be allowing herself to be influenced by the recorder player on the other disc, though, so it was a double pleasure to hear her being herself. Mossi's sonatas are surprisingly not that well

known. That should change with the arrival of this first class recording of some cracking performances – the music is similar in many ways to Geminiani, influenced by not stifled by Corelli – and the fact that the original print is available as a PDF download (for private purposes only) from the Bavarian State Library's website: [http://daten.digital-sammlungen.de/~db/0001/b500013299/images/](http://daten.digital-sammlungen.de/~db/0001/b500013299/images/~db/0001/b500013299/images/) I sincerely hope the disc will sell well and encourage Pan Classics to have the same excellent team record the six remaining sonatas!

BC

Vivaldi *Cetra ritrovata: L'opera stravagante* Ivano Zanenghi 58' 38"  
Enchiriadis EN2028  
RV 93, 322\*, 419, 438, 523 & 580 (\* world premiere recording)

I was puzzled by this CD. It combines recordings from 1999 and 2008 and, although its title refers to the re-discovery of the manuscript 2nd version of *La cetra* (the booklet note-writer's take on the story being that Vivaldi had gone to Trieste to present it to the emperor in person, ashamed of the terrible printing errors in the op. 9 *La cetra* of the year before – confused? Don't worry.) In fact, however, only the first piece on the disc (RV322) is from that set.\* The Vienna manuscript has no solo violin part, so it has been reconstructed. Now, call me a naive sentimental fool, but if I were asked to do such a job (which I would love – composing "in the style of such and such a composer" was my second favourite exercise at university), I would score up Vivaldi's lower parts and add the solo line above to the best of my abilities. Not so here. Instead, we write some original material, but lift passages from other Vivaldi concertos and manipulate the authentic Vivaldi to accommodate them. That seems utterly perverse. However, the playing is very good throughout the recital and I seriously doubt that anyone listening to that particular concerto would know it was not utterly kosher Vivaldi.

BC

\* The Vienna MS isn't a new discovery, nor is there much relationship between the MS and the printed *La Cetra* (op. 9) or, indeed, *La Stravaganza* (op. 4), so the wordplay of the title is misleading.

CB

Vivaldi *Cello Sonatas* Roel Dieltiens, Ensemble Explorations  
Et'cetera Klara KTC 4035  
Sonatas 1, 3, 5-7

This recording is not for the faint-hearted. "One of the ensemble's motivational forces has been to elude a musical approach determined by force of habit," says the booklet note; having clarified what that meant by reading the passage in one of the three translations, I

would have to agree that this is entirely in keeping with the "exploration" idea and, as such, much of what I heard went beyond what I would have expected these five sonatas to sound like – the opening track opens with a slightly growling (or is it groaning?) 16' violone with solo cello, for example. Not necessarily anything wrong with that, but then other instruments appear and disappear throughout the disc and upon reaching the mid point of RV 44, we are "treated" to a guitar improvisation and a little sing-song – the relevance of which is not mentioned in the booklet notes, which seem more interested in French publishing rights. All-in-all, something of an enigma, as far as I was concerned. Perhaps I should send it to someone else for review: let us know what you think. BC

Vivaldi *Concerti for oboe* Alfredo Bernardini ob, Ensemble Zefiro  
Naïve OP 30478  
RV 447, 450, 451, 4543, 457, 455, 463,

Hands up anyone who would expect the combination of Alfredo Bernardini, Zefiro and Vivaldi to disappoint! Not surprisingly, this recital – which, like many before it in this revelatory series from Naïve, dispels the myth that Vivaldi merely regurgitated the same dozen tunes ad nauseam: it is a total joy. Even accepting the given basics – ritornello structures, never-ending sequences, elegant cantilenas over fairly static bass lines – there is much in Vivaldi's music to beguile: perhaps the truth of the matter is that it was the *followers* of Vivaldi who wrote the same piece over and over, but none of them quite had the sinewy vigour of his ritornelli, or the daringness of his harmony (perhaps not the first thing that comes to mind when someone mentions his name), to pull it off. Recommended listening for all oboists and Vivaldi fans. BC

Vivaldi *Gloria RV 589 & Gloria 588, RV 642* Sara Mingarda, Concerto Italiano, Rinaldo Alessandrini  
Naïve OP 30485

This is volume 6 of the *Musica sacra* strand of the Vivaldi Edition, a 15 year project to record the contents of what was Vivaldi's personal collection of scores. RV 589 (the 'famous' *Gloria*) has an introductory motet in the right key added to it while 588's *introduzione* incorporates the opening clauses of the main text. The works share a finale in the sense that, for both pieces, Vivaldi re-worked the same material by Ruggieri rather than write a fugue of his own. Sara Mingardo's distinctive contralto is the star soloist and very good she is too in all her arias and

the introduction to 588. The other solos are taken by members of the choir, not always with complete control but with a sense of lively pleasure that characterises the interpretations as a whole. Tempi are brisk and the instrumental playing is crisply articulated. Overall, *Concerto Italiano* add yet another excellent release to their ever-growing and distinguished discography. David Hansell

Antonio Vivaldi *Farnace* Furio Zanasi, Sara Mingardo, Adriana Fernandez, Gloria Banditelli, Cinzia Forte, Fulvio Bettini, Le Concert des Nations, Jordi Savall (3 CDs)  
Naïve OP30471

Handel he ain't, but Vivaldi is nonetheless a super opera composer, and, as the booklet note points out, shamefully neglected. Indeed, hats off to Naïve for its ambition to produce as many Vivaldi operas as possible. This recording was made from a couple of performances (despite the disclaimer on sound quality, I couldn't determine what came from which), and thus benefits from the drama of a production. Savall's direction is characteristically charismatic, and the cast calls on some of the best Italian (and Argentinian) baroque singers. The plot is reasonably credible, and really quite exciting: treachery, marital discord, strong women – what more could you want? There are one or two small niggles (Savall tends to rit. at the end of every aria, and the recitative is sometimes not as fluid as it might be), but overall this is a very good performance. If you have an interest in either baroque opera or Vivaldi, this should be on your shelves. Katie Hawks

Zelenka *Il Diamante (Serenata ZWV177)* Roberta Mameli, Marie Fajtová, Gabriela Eibenová, Hana Blazíková, Kai Wessel SSSSA, Ensemble Inegal, Prague Baroque Soloists, Adam Viktora 97' 14" (2 CDs)  
Nibiru 01512232

Zelenka's *Il Diamante* might come as something of a shock to our readers. Anyone familiar with his rather dry Responsories, or his angsty-cum-ecstatic Lamentations, or even the wonderful trio sonatas will perhaps be surprised to learn that in this 1737 serenata, Zelenka turned his hand at a more rococo style of writing, and with great success, I must say. Sure, there are some movements in the nearly 100 minutes of music when his musical signature is unmistakable (the first aria on the second CD is a case in point), but there are others where I deny anyone not to think they are listening to Hasse or Vinci. The final chorus is simply magical. Thanks to dogged dedication of Icelandic Zelenka-fan and CD shop

owner, Jóhannes Ágústsson, who wrote the booklet notes, we now know far more about the performance of the piece, which had hitherto been the subject of speculation. I love the idea that the whole thing was the brainchild of the Saxon Electress, the jewel of the title being the singer Faustina, who turns up after what possibly seemed to the original audience like the final chorus, singing, "Am I, perhaps, forgotten where love is being celebrated?" and then launching into an even more florid and virtuosic aria than any that preceded it. That is not to say that the arias for the four other soloists are anything other than wonderful – and it is a true compliment to all five soloists that I am sure Zelenka would have been delighted by their efforts. To say that Adam Viktora has assembled a most wonderful group around him is an understatement: the orchestra and the chorus are every bit as star quality as the soloists, and they must also be delighted to have such a first rate recording team behind them. Everything they do seems to demand attention: I look forward to their next project with keen anticipation. BC

Amor hai vinto *Concertino Amarilli*  
Gramola 98856  
works by Vivaldi, Steffani, Caldara, Porpora, and Mancini

This is a nice compilation of mainly Venetian and mainly cantatas about the trials of love. *Concertino Amarilli* is a tip-top ensemble, and all the performances are well thought-out and measured. The works themselves are delightful, and well worth devoting a recital disc to. In the November *EMR*, BC remarked on a welcome revival of Mancini's sacred works; his cantata *Quanto dolce* suggests a general revival would be a good thing. If Vivaldi's operas are still somewhat neglected (see *Farnace* review), then so are his cantatas – equally unjustifiably, judging from the eponymous one on this disc. Sadly, there is no translation of the libretti; unless you can rely on your Italian, you'll have to try to make out what's happening from the not-quite-synopses in the booklet note. Still, that is a minor problem, outweighed by the pleasure of the disc. Katie Hawks

## CLASSICAL

C. P. E. Bach *St. Luke Passion [H 792]*  
Soloists, Europa Chor, Akademie Mendelssohn Symphonie, Joshard Daus dir 48' 12"  
GLOR classics GCO 8071

This seems to have been one of Emanuel Bach's latest finished compositions – a 1999 rediscovery from the Kiev library of the former Berlin Sing-Akademie library which had been moved during World War

II. It proves to be a worthy, if not a specially distinguished, piece of church music from towards the very conclusion of the Rococo era. Daus gives a really musical account of the work, with able soloists, chorus and an orchestra which, if barely authentic, is nonetheless very stylish and musical. This is hardly a world-shattering issue, but quite an evocative one of a useful piece of work. *Stephen Daw*

**Clementi *The Complete Piano Sonatas*, vol. 4.** Howard Shelley 136' 25" (2 CDs) Hyperion CDA67738  
Op 25, 26 33 r Op. 41

This is not something we would normally have covered, since Howard Shelley plays on a modern pianoforte. He is, however, something of a supremo in the repertoire, and this, as part of a complete edition, more than merits the attention even of the most devout HIPster, as Shelley really is the master of his art. This two-disc set covers four of Clementi *opera*, including a total of 11 sonatas (recorded over only four days!), and I have enjoyed listening to them all several times, especially driving back and forward to Dundee Public Library. And there was me thinking he only penned nice little Sonatinas that even I can almost play. *BC*

**Haydn & the Art of Variation** Carole Cerasi (fortepiano and clavicord), 72' 52" Metronome MET CD 1085  
Sonatas Hob. XVI/19, 40, 42, 48  
Variations Hob. XVII/6

A fascinating and highly enjoyable recital inspired by Haydn's variation techniques, especially as he used them within sonata movements. Cerasi plays the sonata Hob. XVI/19 of 1767, very appropriately, on a superb copy by Karen Richter of a clavicord by C. G. Hubert of c. 1771: it's one of the best such instruments I've ever heard on record. The rest of the music is played on a fine Johann Schantz of c. 1800 belonging to the Holburne Museum in Bath and beautifully restored by Edwin Beunk. (But I must correct one statement in the otherwise excellent programme booklet: it was Wenzel Schantz from whom Haydn bought a piano in 1788, several years before his younger brother Johann set up as a maker; the two never worked together.)

Cerasi is a sensitive and intelligent player, with a real feeling for Haydn. Her technique is flawless, her articulation is admirably clear, and her stylish and unself-conscious ornamentation on repeats is a model of its kind and would, I'm sure, still sound fresh after repeated hearing – a rare accomplishment! Very strongly recommended. *Richard Maunder*

**Karl Kohaut, *Haydn's Lute Player*** Ars Antiqua Austria, Gunar Letzbor *vln, dir*, Hubert Hoffmann *lute*. Jan Krigovsky *Viennese double bass*  
Challenge Classics CC72323

Violin, lute and Viennese double bass is a curious combination of instruments. The texture is so sparse, and the double bass so much lower in pitch than the other instruments, that one is left wondering at first, if some of the musicians failed to turn up for the recording. Eventually one gets used to the double bass growling along, and the sound is certainly not unpleasant. The CD begins with a Trio in F major by Joseph Haydn (1732-1809) for lute, violin obbligato and bass, which I didn't find particularly inspiring, although everything wakes up with a jolly Allegro at the end.

The rest of the music on the CD was composed by the lutenist, Karl Kohaut, who had the distinction of once being discovered lying on a sofa with a baroness, claiming that he was only trying to tune her lute. He took part in weekly musical gatherings with Baron van Swieten, where they explored 'early' music by Palestrina, J. S. Bach and Handel. When they sang, the Baron sang treble, Mozart sang alto, and Kohaut shared the other voice parts with Mr Starzer.

Kohaut's Divertimento Primo in B flat

minor for lute obbligato, two violins and bass, is in a light-hearted classical vein, and is really quite pleasant. Hubert Hoffmann's lute is naturally quieter than the other instruments, but thanks to some sensitive bass playing from Jan Krigovsky, it is sufficiently audible. The Viennese double bass on this recording has five strings, and covers a wide range of notes. It takes a leading role in Kohaut's Concerto in D major for Contrabasso solo, with two violins and double bass. The Largo is particularly satisfying, with the two 16-foot instruments buzzing away like Brobdingnagian bees. In his booklet notes Gunar Letzbor writes enthusiastically, 'This music hailed us with a laughing cheeriness and innocence very seldom encountered in Austrian baroque music.'

In Kohaut's Concerto in B flat major for lute concertato, two violins and bass, the lute has unaccompanied sections where its deep bass strings can be heard to good effect. Kohaut is not as well known as some of his more illustrious contemporaries, but his music is first-rate. The Sinfonia in F minor for two violins, viola and bass is a fine work, ending with an exciting Furioso, where all the instruments get quite a hammering.

*Stewart McCoy*

**Anonio Soler, *el diablo vestido de fraile*:** harpsichord music Diego Ares 61' 15"



So that's how you tune it!  
Now I'll attend to the taipiece button you mentioned.

Anonio Soler, *el diablo vestido de fraile: harpsichord music* Diego Ares 61' 15"  
Panclassics PC 10201

Diego Ares has the measure of Soler's music and this CD contains an attractive collection of sonatas and preludes, together with the well-known Fandango. He uses plenty of rubato, which helps avoid monotony and gives the music lots of emotional space. The faster movements are played with a fiery intensity reminiscent of the South of Spain. Ares uses a harpsichord by Joel Katzman, after an instrument of 1732 by the Sevillian Francisco Pérez Mirabal, which suits this music very well. The recording is very resonant – it sounds as if some may have been added – and this affects the clarity, especially in faster movements, but overall these are very convincing performances which bring Soler's music to life and give it greater variety than has been achieved in other recordings. *Noel O'Regan*

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

Beethoven *The complete four hand piano works* Wyneke Jordans & Leo van Doeselaar *fp* 79' 22"

Et' cetera KTC 1396

3 Marches op. 45, Sonata op. 6, Variations WoO 67, 74, Symphony No. 4 and Egmont Overture (arr. William Watts)

Actually, more than complete, for in addition to the original four piano duet works we are given early 19th-century four-hand arrangements of the Fourth Symphony and the Egmont Overture by William Watts, viola player and Secretary of the Royal Philharmonic Society of London. And very effective they are, too. If we didn't know better, we'd almost be persuaded that Beethoven first wrote these pieces for piano duet and only afterwards orchestrated them!

Jordans and van Doeselaar play this entertaining music with panache and a fine sense of drama, on an original Viennese fortepiano of 1815 in superb condition. I enjoyed their recital very much indeed. *Richard Maunday*

Hummel *Piano music* Susan Alexander-Max *fp* 67' 11"

Chaconne CHAN 0765

Sonatas op. 13 No. 6, op. 20, *La contemplazione* op. 107/3

Two of Hummel's fine and unjustly neglected piano sonatas and a later piece described as 'Una fantasia piccola', played on a beautiful Viennese fortepiano of 1814 by Brodmann, which has been expertly restored by Christopher Clarke. It is an ideal instrument for this music, being just the sort of piano Hummel said in his tutor of 1828 that he preferred (this

despite his being the first person to perform publicly in Vienna on the quite different 'englisches grand Piano-Forte', as the newspaper advertisement for his recital on 12 March 1794 called it).

Alexander-Max's persuasive playing, and her excellent programme note, make a convincing case for the reappraisal of Hummel's piano music, and leave me wondering at the received wisdom which rates his sonatas so much lower than Beethoven's. They are highly original works whose idiom must certainly be classed as 'early romantic' – there are 'pre-echoes' of Schubert and even Chopin at times – while at the same time they look back to 'classical' sonata form as Hummel must have inherited it from Mozart during his two years as a live-in pupil. This recording should be required listening for anyone with an interest in the piano music of Beethoven and his contemporaries. *Richard Maunday*

Rastlose Liebe Amarcord 74' 13"

Rauimklang RK ap 10108

Subtitled 'a stroll (Spaziergang) through romantic Leipzig', this CD is a little gem of research, performance and presentation. All the German Romantic composers wrote wildly popular music for small unaccompanied male-voice ensembles, music which is nowadays largely neglected and unknown; but in researching and performing it, Amarcord clearly demonstrate what an important part it constitutes of the output of well-known composers such as Mendelssohn and Schumann, while also shining a spotlight on composers such as Heinrich Marschner and Heinrich Mühlhling, who were household names during their lifetimes but who have sunk into obscurity. Designed to open like a 19th-century love-letter, the CD package is exemplary in its scholarship and perfectly supports the contents, performances of exquisite beauty and focus by this very versatile vocal ensemble. It is important to remember just how central this repertoire was to music-making in the Romantic era, and this recording provides an essential but also a highly enjoyable link with the past. *D. James Ross*

Polish Harpsichord Music Urszula Bartkiewicz harpsichord

Vol. I Józef Elsner. 69' 04"

Vol. II various composers 79' 45"

Dux 0630, 0631

This two-volume collection covers music from the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, played on a French harpsichord made by Reinhard von Nagel. The music comes from a monthly music magazine edited by Józef Elsner, published in Warsaw between 1803 and 1805, and is generally in

a Haydnesque Classical style. While the use of harpsichord seems odd at first for what is clearly piano or clavichord music, Bartkiewicz does make it work well with a style of playing resembling that on a fortepiano. There are times, though, when one wishes for the greater subtlety which a piano or clavichord would have provided. Vol. I is dedicated solely to Elsner with three sonatas, seven Polonaises and a couple of Rondos; Vol. II has music by ten other Polish composers with Polonaises again dominating the repertory. These can be rather formulaic and repetitive but there are some attractive variation sets, especially that by Emilia Potocka. Something of a curiosity, perhaps, but these CDs show us what was being played in Polish drawing-rooms in Napoleonic times. *Noel O'Regan*

#### VARIOUS

Belle virginie Musique pour la nouvelle France Le Concert de l'Hostel Dieu, Franck-Emmanuel Comte 50' 54"  
Ambronay AMY021

If the late and still lamented David Munrow and his merry men had ever programmed English folk songs they would have sounded like this – good tunes (French 19th-century traditional songs), a mixture of early and folk instruments, freely added/ improvised accompaniments and a make-it-up-as-you-go attitude to performance practice. Indeed, there are groups around who perform medieval music just like that – some might say that DM did as well. It's good fun and I enjoyed it (apart from some patches of out-of-tune singing), but I'm not sure what it's doing in *EMR*. *David Hansell*

From the vaults of Westminster Cathedral: A procession of chant and polyphony from Advent to Christmas & the Epiphany and presentation of our Lord, The Choir of Westminster Cathedral, Martin Baker Hyperion CDA 67707

The rather ClassicFM wording of the title suggests that it is aimed primarily at the non-specialist listener and the gift shop rather than a specific early music audience. Indeed the focus of the recording is the tradition of the choir itself, and the early repertoire (Victoria, Byrd, Lassus and Monteverdi) appears in this context. The singing is fine if a little plummy at times in the lower voices and a bit wobbly in the treble, and the singers seem to miss the drama entirely in the Monteverdi *Messa a 4 da cappella*. Elsewhere brace yourself for plainchant garlanded by romantic harmonies on the organ, a stylistically isolated Edwardian *Nunc dimittis* by Charles Wood, and some rather aimless-sounding modern compositions. A pleasant surprise is the double-choir setting of *Omnes de*

saba by Lassus; otherwise this curious hotchpotch of a CD seems best suited to creating a vaguely religious ambience in the run-up to Christmas rather than appealing to discerning listeners. *D. James Ross*

**Giants:** *Bach, Gesualdo, Monteverdi*, Margret Köll triple harp, Luca Pianca lute Passacaille 958 57' 33"  
Bach BWV 997, 998; Gesualdo 4 madrigals; Monteverdi extracts from *L'Orfeo*

It was by no means out of the ordinary to hear harp and lute duos in the 15th century – the sound of the two plucked instruments played together is very special – but as far as I know, the combination was unknown in the baroque period. However, it works extremely well on this CD, particularly for music which is polyphonic in character, the melodic lines clarified by the different timbres. The resonant, crystal tones of Margret Köll's triple harp contrast with the more plunky notes of Luca Pianca's single-strung archlute. The overall sound is surprisingly echoey, but very pleasing.

The CD begins with a virtuosic performance of J. S. Bach's Partita in C minor BWV 997. The Preludio and Fuga are played with panache and exciting drive, the Sarabande is nicely poised, and the Gigue with its Double is a rollicking tour de force.

There follows music by Gesualdo, with unusual shifts of harmony in *Beltà, poi che t'assenti*, flashy divisions in *Gagliarda del Principe da Venosa*, extraordinary flourishes in *Canzon del Principe con le fioriture*, and contrasting textures in *Ah, disperata vita*.

The third section is a selection of pieces from Monteverdi's *Orfeo*. The lute is heard to good effect on its own in 'Possente spirito' (track 13). It is eventually joined by the silvery sound of the harp, which conjures up an ethereal world of the supernatural. My only cavil would be to fault the speed of the recurrent Ritornello I (tracks 9, 12, 14, and 16), which is too jaunty for what is essentially a tragic story. The set ends with a suitably triumphant Aria 'Ecco il gentil cantore', with some very fast, crisply executed notes on the harp.

The CD finishes with Bach's Prelude, Fugue and Allegro in E flat major BWV 998. This has long been a favourite of baroque lutenists and classical guitarists, although, according to Luca Pianca's sleeve notes, the piece was originally intended for the Lautenwerk, a keyboard instrument with gut strings. The Prelude is a perhaps a little heavy in the bass, but it generally works well in this arrangement. The Fugue is a delight, and the Allegro romps home with delicately shaped phrases. A lovely CD performed exceptionally well. *Stewart McCoy*

## NAÏVE REISSUES

We've had another batch of re-releases from Naïve. Vol. 23 of the series is *Bach: cantatas with violoncello piccolo* (E 8926, dated 1994/2004 in the booklet, 70' 53"), which features Barbara Schlick, Andreas Scholl (who quite shamelessly is mentioned first on the front cover), Christoph Prégardien and Gotthold Schwarz (not mentioned on the front, despite singing more than Scholl and being credited with directing the Leipziger Concerto Vocale), the ensemble baroque de limoges and Christoph Coin. To be honest, this would not be the first recording I would reach for in any of these works (BWV 49, 115 and 180), but there are moments of magic to be discovered.

Vol. 24 (Marc-Antoine Charpentier: *Trois Histoires Sacrées* (E8927, 2000/2001, 68' 05")) was one of my favourites while listening to it. I had not heard the recording on its first release, and Gérard Lesne and Il Seminario Musicale are wonderful performers in this repertoire. Two of the works (*Sacrificium Abrahæ* and *Dialogus inter angelum et pastores*) were world première recordings; the third (the much larger *Mors Saulis et Jonathæ*) receives a wonderful performance. Recommended.

I was caught out while listening to Vol. 25 (Gesualdo: *O dolorosa gioia*, OPS 30-238, 1999, 68' 23"), wondering why his contemporaries – and modern writers – had made such a fuss of Gesualdo's chromatic writing. When I reached Track 4, however, and then Track 5, I realized something was up, and (checking the booklet) discovered that Tracks 1-3 are actually the work of de Monte, Nenna and Montella! Just in case anyone else falls into the trap, the last three tracks are not by Gesualdo, either – they are Luzzaschi! No matter who the music is by, Concerto Italiano under Alessandrini are more than its match.

Vol. 26 is the fore-runner of the "between heaven and earth" CD Brian Robbins raved about in the last issue (Haendel: *opera seria*, E 8894, 2004, 67' 09"). Like Brian, I take my hat off to Sandrine Piau each and every time I hear her – she is not only a fantastic singer, but she makes one feel that she is the character she is portraying. I do, however, have reservations about what seems to be a cottage industry devoted to what *Masterchef* contestants refer to as deconstruction – taking something apart and re-working its composite parts; here, taking the bare framework of Handel's melody and producing a different one for Da Capo repeats. While the orchestra (here Les talens lyriques) plays more or less what Handel wrote,

Ms. Piau – brilliantly, it must be said – performs like a Waterworld sealion, jumping through hoops and balancing a ball on her nose. All very, very impressive, I agree – but is it what Handel wanted to hear? Discuss!

Monteverdi: *secondo libro de' madrigali* (OP 30-487, 1994, 58' 05") is another of the more successful discs in this series (Vol. 27). Alessandrini and Concerto Italiano have made this repertoire their own – even I have had to relegate the formerly superlative Consort of Musicke discs – and this shows why. It's inevitable that native speakers of the language can take greater liberties with it, but here there is no hint of interference with the natural flow of the beautiful music. Who could fail to be bewitched by it?

The opening of Vol. 28 had me dancing around the kitchen – no wonder the Dresden court loved Vivaldi's music! *Stabat mater* (OP 30488, 1999/2002, originally part of the Opus III Vivaldi Edition, with no timing given) is a wonderful assortment of music associated with the church, though only two are vocal – Sara Mingardo also sings *Claræ stellæ scintillare*. Alessandrini's Concerto Italiano orchestra is wonderful too. (The recorder players were omitted from the cast list, which is a pity.) At bargain price, this should be scooped up by anyone who missed the original release.

By contrast, one of the least worthwhile of the series is a disc entitled *amour & mascarade: Purcell et l'Italie* (AM 187, 1999, 62' 27"). This really should have been left in the archives – Patricia Petibon is a far better singer than the CD suggests and from Héloïse Gaillard's opening bendy note, I knew I was in for a hair-raising ride. Strange that she doesn't employ that "device" on the oboe. Anyone expecting a programme juxtaposing Purcell with "the most fam'd Italian masters" will, like me, be sorely disappointed – you'll get Frescobaldi and Francesco Mancini (a nice, but surely irrelevant, cantata for soprano, oboe and continuo). So, thumbs down for Vol. 29!

I wrote enthusiastically about the final offering this time around (Vol. 30 *vêpres sous Charles VI à Vienne*, AM 188, 2002, 57' 43"). The music is by Fux, Gletle, Reinhardt, Sances and Zächer, in fine performances by Arslys Bourgogne under Pierre Cao and L'Arpeggiata directed by Christine Pluhar. If the music is not better known, that has nothing to do with the quality of it – there are some real gems. Sadly, the repertoire suffers from an unwillingness on the part of performers to stray off the beaten path,

mostly because they feel they will not attract audiences. Perhaps if our national radio station did more to promote such 'obscurities', the situation might change – if Radio 4 can have a series introducing *their* listeners to the secrets of composers' original manuscripts, why can't Radio 3 join in the fun? BC

#### ALIUD REISSUES

*Telemann Overture Suites* II concerto barocco, Andrew Read 58' 48"  
Aliud ACD HNA 009-2

Concerto TWV 43: d2, Suites TWV 55: d6 & a2

*Forgotten Virtuosi* Jonathan Talbot vln

Aliud ACD HN 012-2 68' 07"

Baltzar, attrib. Brade, Castello, Biagio Marini, Nau, Palestrina & Rore arr Rognonio, Schop, Striggio arr. Schop & anon

I think I wrote positively about these discs the first time we saw them. The Telemann is played one to a part and benefits in clarity for that, though it's a pity that there are only three works on a relatively short disc and that they are all pretty well known. The forgotten virtuosi disc is mostly of interest for the use of different playing positions and instruments, though some of the music genuinely does merit re-discovery. BC

#### WINTER SONGS

*If on a winter's night* Sting 50' 53"  
DG 06025 270 1743 gth

I was disappointed by Sting's Dowland, with its irritating mid-line breaths. But we enjoyed the Christmas TV programme about this recording, and are glad we bought it. I was, however, puzzled that the silent theorbo visible behind the shots in Durham Cathedral wasn't evident on the CD either. Sting's vast range was impressive, as was the intonation and diction, except for the infuriating mixture of vowel sounds (not obviously Geordie); these were worse when he trying a more classical style. I didn't understand why *Gabriel's Message* ended on the flattened leading note rather than tonic. The arrangements, which evolved among the musicians, mostly from a folk background, were impressive. The mixture of repertoire was fascinating, about half being modernised 'early' songs (justifying the recording's presence in *EMR*). I was intrigued and impressed. Elaine's favourite track (especially for the fiddling by Kathryn Tickell in the TV version) was 'A soul cake' mixed with 'God rest you merry'. The mood of the disc was well managed, though after the hurdy-gurdy man, ending Schubert's winter journey, an orchestrated and texted Bach cello sarabande felt superfluous to me. CB (& EB)

## JEAN MOUTON

(C.I459-I522)

### Nesciens mater

Nesciens mater, virgo virum peperit sine dolore  
salvatorem saeculorum, ipsum regem angelorum.  
Sola virgo lactabat, ubera de coelo plena.

*Punctuation editorial*

*Not knowing a man, the virgin mother brought forth  
without pain the saviour of the centuries, the very king of  
angels. The virgin alone gave milk, her breasts filled from  
heaven.*

This was one of the pieces we sang at the weather-delayed Eastern Early Music Forum Epiphany Party. Since everyone except the conductor (Philip Thorby) was singing from individual voice-parts, the layout of the score didn't matter. But every score I have seen sets the parts in order of range, whereas I thought it might be better to show the structure of the piece by setting out the four notated parts as one choir and the derived parts as another; it might also be interesting to sing the motet in double-choir layout. This ingenious and beautiful motet has four parts so written that they can be sung by another four voices a fifth higher in canon as eight parts. This tour-de-force was famous and circulated widely for about fifty years.

The edition is based on the Medici Codex, dating from 1518. The scholar responsible for the facsimile, study and edition of the Codex, Edward E. Lowinsky, proposed that Mouton may have edited the MS, but that is now thought unlikely.

The text is an antiphon for the Sunday after Christmas; the chant is paraphrased in the third part of each choir. The canonic treatment may be symbolic: a self-sufficient composition produces another without further creative input.

*Clifford Bartlett, Jan 2001*

This edition is available full-size from  
The Early Music Company, The New House, The Fen, Fenstanton,  
Huntingdon, Cambs, PE28 19JT.  
email or tel Brian Clark (details on p. 1)

Price £2.00

Available either with note values as here or halved.

## 1

[illegible][illegible]

42

So - la vir - go la - cta

So - la vir - go, so -

lo - rum.

So - la vir - go.

So - la vir - go la - cta so - la vir -

vir - go, so - la vir - go.

rum.

So - la vir - go, so - la vir - go.

53

la - cta - bat, la -

la - cta - bat, so - la vir - go

bat, so - la vir -

bat, la - cta - bat, la -

so - la vir - go la - cta - bat u - be -

bat, la -

so - la vir - go la - cta - bat

48

bat, so - la vir - go, so - la vir -

la vir - go, so - la vir - go

So - la vir - go

so - la vir - go, so - la vir - cta -

go, so - la vir - go la - cta -

so - la vir - go la - cta - bat, So - la vir - go la - cta -

so - la vir - go la - cta - bat, so - la vir - go la - cta -

58

la - cta - bat, la - cta - bat u -

la - cta - bat u - be - ra, la - cta - bat

la - cta - bat u -

go la - cta - bat u -

cta - bat u - be - ra de coe -

ra, la - cta - bat u - be - ra, cta - bat

u - be - ra de coe -

20

3

do - lo - re sal - va - to - - - - - rem  
do - lo re  
si - - - - - ne do - lo - re  
pe - - - - - pe - rit si - - - - - ne do - lo - re  
sal - va - to - - - - - rem  
-lo - re  
-lo - - - - - re  
pe - rit si - - - - - ne do - lo re  
sal - va - to - - - - - rem

4

30

rem sae - cu - lo - rum, ip - sum re - gem an - ge - - - - - gem,  
ip - sum re - gem,  
-cu - lo - - - - - rum, ip - sum  
-cu - lo - - - - - rum, ip - - - - - sum  
-lo - rum, ip - sum re - gem an - ge - lo - rum, ip - - - - - ip -  
ip - sum re - gem, ip - sum re - gem  
-rum, ip - sum re - gem  
ip - - - - - sum re - gem,  
ip - - - - - sum re - gem

25

sae - - - - - cu - lo - - - - - rum, sal - va - to - - - - - sae -  
sal - - - - - va - to - - - - - rem  
sal - - - - - va - to - - - - - rem  
-re sal - - - - - va - to - - - - - rem  
-lo - - - - - rum, sal - va - to - - - - - rem sae - cu -  
-to - - - - - rem sae - - - - - cu - lo - - - - - rum  
-to - - - - - rem sae - - - - - cu - lo - - - - - rum  
-to - - - - - rem sae - - - - - cu - lo - - - - - rum  
-to - - - - - rem sae - - - - - cu - lo - - - - - rum

36

-lo - rum, ip - sum re - gem an - ge - lo - rum.  
ip - sum re - gem an - ge - lo - rum.  
re - gem  
re - gem  
ip - - - - - sum re - gem an -  
-sum re - gem an - ge - lo - rum.  
-gem an - ge - lo - rum.  
So - la  
ip - - - - - sum re - gem an - ge - lo - rum.

[illegible][illegible]

67

ple - na, de coe - lo ple - na, de coe - lo, de coe - lo ple - na, de coe - - lo ple - na, - - be - ra - coe - lo ple - na, - lo ple - na, - - ple - na, coe - lo ple - na, - - ple - na, de coe - - be - ra - u - - be - ra - u - - be - ra

[illegible]

# MONTEVERDI

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edited by  
Clifford Bartlett

Revised edition, 2010

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