

Early Music

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I spent this morning's sermon thinking about the difference between music I like and that which is really internalised and becomes part of me. I might define it as music that I wouldn't choose as one of my desert island discs because I can play it in my mind. Indeed, I would probably find a specific performance of, say, Monteverdi *Vespers, Messiah* or Bach's cantata *Christ lag in Todesbanden* frustrating. I wouldn't hear them as performances nor cast them with favourite singers or players. I'm more aware of tempo, and often move my hand gently as if leading a small vocal ensemble), almost feeling the music with my fingers – but not with any action related to hands on an instrument. In fact, I find at concerts that I have consciously to keep my hands still at particularly moving moments. These thoughts followed on from my comments on Gesualdo (see p. 8), written earlier today. I'm sure that his music should feel as powerful as that of Monteverdi (or even d'India's Book VIII), but it doesn't get through to me in the same way.

Generally the 'early' pieces that get me are ones that I've sung or played. With more modern music that I know chiefly from hearing and seeing (I collected miniature scores from my teens), it tends to be sections of works: from Brahms, for instance, moving sections from the slow movements of the Horn Trio and Clarinet Quintet, which come to my mind without a complete context. or Wagner's destruction of his world at the end of *The Ring*.

A consequence of such internalisation is that performances, whether live or recorded, tend not to be as satisfactory as the imagination. My disappointment with L'Arpeggiata's *Hor ch'è tempo* (p. 27) is, however, because I've got a clear image of how it was performed when I first heard it rather than a memory of the whole piece. But I'm much more flexible about Monteverdi's *Laudate Dominum* on the same disc, even though I know it so well from playing it with Jennie Cassidy (including at my mother's funeral): I have no expectation of the accompaniment (though was surprised by the cornett – Stephen Cassidy can join in next time we play it). There are performances from the 1960s from which the music has stayed in my head (a BBC recording by Mackerras of *Saul*, for instance) which had an enormous influence on me but which I suspect I would not now enjoy if I unearthed the reel-to-reel tape I made of it. But how it sounded is not essential to what remains in my mind.

CB 21-3-2010

MUSIC

Clifford Bartlett

EDITION WALHALL

Franz Biersack runs a music shop as well as publishes early music; what might seem an inappropriate name is explained by his address Richard-Wagner-Straße 3, D-39106 Magdeburg, Germany. I wasn't entirely happy with the first batch of music he sent us a few years ago, mostly by an editor of the older generation who wasn't quite attuned to the needs of serious early-musicians, whether amateur or professional. The batch he sent recently, however, is more up-to-date in editorial style and most welcome. One general point: future introductions do need to be checked to make sure that essential information is included. I've treated the volumes series-by-series, but they can be ordered by the EW number. Walhall also handles Edition Güntersberg (see Kühnel reviews) and (for Germany) Green Man Press (see Strozzi). A characteristic that I approve of is the absence of keyboard realisations: little of the music is difficult. But I would recommend that a page is prepared giving basic rules for 17th-century harmony, rather like the one I included when there was a spare page in some of our Monteverdi motets.

Collegium Musicum: Kölner Reihe Alter Musik
This series has no separate numbering

Biber's *Ciacona* in D for violin and Bc was published with other miscellaneous pieces Biber in DTO 151. Unfortunately, the copy supplied to the editor from the (to keep the edition's German name) Kremsier library contained only the first and fifth pages of the work. There was nothing visibly on those pages to indicate that it was incomplete, and it was long enough for suspicions not to have been aroused: an editor may be excused for not assuming that 330 bars were missing after bar 117. Since the last bars of both pages are unaccompanied statements of the four-bar ground, the flow was not interrupted. The work (anonymous but very likely to be Biber's) is now published complete, and a massive piece it is! There is no scordatura and not much double-stopping, and it looks a bit less sophisticated than the *Rosary* or the 1681 solos. The editor, Anton Steck, admits cutting it in his recording (cpo 777 124-2). It is excellent that it is now fully available, even if it is a challenge, not only technically but in the ability of the player to engage with an audience for 126 statements of the bass. (EW 734; €16.50)

Jean/Johann Siegfried Cousser/Kusser (1660-1727) is an important figure for the spread of the French style to the German courts, so it is good that the author of the recent book on the subject (reviewed in *EMR* 132, p. 10) has edited Suite 1 from his *La cicala dell cetra d'Eunomio* 1700. It is scored for 2 oboes and bassoon and strings in G₂, C₁, C₃, C₃ and [F₄] clefs – the brackets are because the string bass part isn't extant, but is identical to the bassoon. The Suite can be played without the wind by omitting 16 bars

rest in the Chaconne. If the Suite is played orchestrally, a second copy of the violin part is useful, but probably less so than a version of the top viola in treble clef. Not many pre-Bach German suites are available, so I hope this is widely played and that more are to follow. (EW 746; €29.80)

J. C. Bach's *Violin Sonata in D* has been rejected by JCB scholarship, on stylistic analysis of its incipit. But a scholar investigating the MS in which it survives (M. Th.260 in the Berlin State Library) noticed it, and realised that it was in JCB's hand. It is edited by Reinhard Goebel, who points out the rarity of such solo sonatas (excluding, of course, JSB's set with obbligato keyboard) among the Bach family. It is surmised that Bach wrote the sonata in Italy, where he worked from 1755-62. There is an 'edited' violin part supplied as well as an Urtext one, and a part for cello; the editor recommends either cello or harpsichord, not both. The slow movement has an embellished version on an upper stave for sections of the slow movement: I would have used the modern convention of a smaller stave above the main one. An interesting discovery. (EW 639; €14.80).

Frutti Musicali comprises music for keyboard solo and solo instrument with keyboard, under the editorship of Jolando Scarpa. There are good introductions in German, English and Italian, but only the Mattheson has a critical commentary – the others presumably do not need one.

No. IV. Nicola Porpora (1686-1768): *Sonate XII di Violino e Basso* (Vienna, 1754), nos. 5-6. These are substantial 'slow quick slow quick' sonatas in g and C, each with a fugue as second movement, that of no. 6 being headed *Diatonico Enarmonico Cromatico*, though much of it isn't as heavy as that might imply. (Sonatas VII to XII are fugueless.) It is by no means beginners' music, but rewarding. The edition provides an unrealised score and two separate parts. It was difficult enough to find sensible page turns for the violin part (two loose sheets are included to help), so playing from score (the normal 18th-century format) wouldn't work. (EW 629; €21.50)

Nos V-VI. Johann Mattheson (1681-1764) *Pieces de Clavecin* (1714). This is an English publication which appeared with ornate title pages in French and German, the latter more pretentious as *Matthesons Harmonisches Denckmahl...*; both are given in facsimile, along with the publisher's English dedication 'To all Lovers of Musick'.

... As the Harpsichord is an Instrument yet capable of Greater Improvement. So the following Pieces claim a Precedence to all others of this Nature; not only that they are Composed by one of the Greatest Masters of the Age, in a Tast altogether Pleasing and Sublime; but as they are Peculiarly Adapted to that Instrument and Engraven with an Exactness which cannot be Equal'd by Any of this Nature yet extant...

Perhaps the praise is a bit excessive, but these are certainly pleasing to play and worth editing. (EW 652 & 658; €19.50 each).

No. VII. Giulio Cesare Arresti (1619-1701), organist at San Petronio, Bologna, for most of his life, was the editor of *Sonate da organo di varii Autori*, published in the closing years of the 17th century; it was pirated in Amsterdam in 1716. He is best known for his controversy with Cazzati in the 1660s. This is a complete edition. It is easier on the eye (and more compact) than the Rossi (see below), thanks to a less pedantic preservation of beamings etc. The 18 sonatas are by north Italian composers, including Ziani (probably PA rather than M'A), CF Pollarolo, GB Bassani, Stiava, Monari, perhaps three items by Pasquini, and Cherli, i.e. Kerll, who studied in Rome. (EW 650; €19.80)

Nos. VIII-IX. Michaelangelo Rossi (1660-1656): *Toccate e Corenti d'Intavolatura d'Organo e Cimbalo* received its first 'modern' edition from Torchi over a century ago, two editions in CEKM, and is available in facsimile from SPES. Although he wrote other music, it is for this collection, published the year after his death, that Rossi is now famous; it would, in fact, be fairer to say that he is famous for one piece, *Toccata settima*, which starts in D minor, begins to flatten the Es, then suddenly arrives in E major; 40 bars later, the final section is built on stretti comprising interlocking chromatic fifths. This particular section needs so many accidentals that the 'modernising' of their notation (ie omitting those superfluous to modern practice) isn't a problem. But, to take a random example, in the last bar of vol II, p. 15, the bass begins with a B flat marked by an accidental, but the eighth semiquaver has a natural in round brackets placed above it. This double indication of dubiety (above the note AND bracketed) is misleading for a note whose naturality is in no doubt. Vol. I has the first six Toccatas, Vol. 2 has the remaining four and ten Correnti. (EW 727 & 728; €16.80 & €19.50)

Hamburger Ratsmusik

Thomas Selle (1599-1663) held from 1641 the position of municipal Director of Music at Hamburg that Telemann and then CPE Bach were to hold a century later. Between 1646 and 1653, he made a complete MS collection of his sacred music, 281 items in all, of which *Jesus Christus unser Heiland* 24 is one. The first verse is for 2 sopranos, gamba and continuo. One soprano sings the usual Easter chorale melody, interspersed with figuration based on a recurring rhythm; the other soprano moves homophonically in the chorale, imitatively elsewhere. A viola da gamba is hyperactive, but doubles the continuo enough for a separate bass to be unnecessary. The gamba dominates the second verse, with single voice (tenor or soprano) singing the chorale. The third verse looks as if it is for four voices (SSBB), but the rubric gives gamba and violone as alternatives for the two bass voices. So perhaps I'm wrong about no instrument other than organ in verse 1 and 2. It's a pity that the editor, Simone Eckert, doesn't say what

is in which partbook. The setting strikes me as being more suitable for concert than church: one needs to see the gamba as well as hear it, so it shouldn't be hidden in a musicians gallery.

Magdeburger Facsimile Offizin

Jean-Féry Rebel *Les Eléments: Symphonie Nouvelle Grand Choeur/Petit Choeur* Herausgegeben von Stefan Fuchs Edition Walhall (EW 210). 2005. x + 60pp, €36.00 Parts (EW 211) €138.00.

This wasn't sent for review: I ordered a set, and thought it worth drawing to people's attention (especially to Lynn Selwood, who went to great length to acquire the music for a recent course when I had wrongly said that the only edition I knew was on hire from Salabert). The parts of this new edition can be bought: you get 28 for your €138.00, about £5.00 per part, though you might not want a string strength of 5.4.6.6 desks (the doubled violas are notated on a single part). You can also buy material for a chamber version (EW 211a: 2 fl, 2 vlms, bass & kbd). This links with the reference on the modern title page to *Grand Choeur/Petit Choeur*, i.e. orchestra or small ensemble. As we know from the Salabert preface, editing this work is not just a matter of transcribing and disentangling the printed score. This edition supplements the edition with a complete facsimile of it – rather more legible than the half-size one published in the 1970s. This is not to present it as the major source but to save producing a commentary on the differences between it and the MS parts used by the editor. A couple of pages of these are also reproduced.

The most famous effect in this choreographic orchestral piece is the opening chord (figured 6b 5 4 3 2 7#). But it isn't just a gimmick: it's a fascinating, imaginative work, and I hope this edition will give it much wider circulation. It's a bit late to be reviewing it, but I thought I ought to look at it to check that I could recommend it to a couple of orchestras, which I did. There are insuperable problems with page-turns for the violins, but don't blame the printer!

Musica Speciosa (Beautiful music), a rather vague title, liable to be mocked if the music turns out to be inappropriate.

Thomas Mancinus (1550-1611/12): *Duum vocum Canticularum*, (edited by Leopold Fendt) was published in Helmstadt in 1597. The edition has 26 bicinia in a variety of clefs (transcribed in treble, octave treble and bass). Curiously, no. 25 is the same as no. 21, but with double note values, no. 24 is no. 23 notated an octave lower and no. 26 is no. 21 an octave lower. I deduced that the 26/21 transposition must be editorial (responding to the rubric *per Diapason infra*) since the original clefs are the same, but the original clefs of 23/24 (G2 C3 and C3 F4) differ. The notation in doubled note values, however, is very odd. The edition itself doesn't halve values (as several facsimiles used to fill blank pages show) so perhaps the 1597 edition really is giving an alternative, an interesting precursor of varying modern editorial treatment of note values. In fact, Howard Mayer Brown's indispensable *Instrumental*

1. It is inconvenient that the edition lacks bar numbers, though they are included in vol. VII of the series.

Music printed before 1600 (item 1597₈) makes clear that there really are 26 pieces in the original. The editor might more usefully have commented on these curiosities (rather than his previous encounters with Mancinius) and not left them to speculation; he might also have checked whether the textless pieces were based on existing music and reported on success or failure in finding concordances. The first ten pieces are texted, and derive from renaissance standards like *Nesce la penna mia* and *Anchor che col partire*. The rest are instrumental. I wonder if the original plan was to publish ten vocal and ten instrumental duos, since it is only in 21-26 that there are oddities. This is a useful addition to the bicinium repertoire. The inclusion of two copies is a bit of a luxury, since two can read from one, and singers should ignore the modern restriction to instruments. (EW 759; €21.80)

Antonio Bertali (1605-1669) *Tausend-Gulden-Sonata in F (à 3)* is edited by Konrad Ruhland, who identifies three compositions with the title. Two are by Bertali and related. The one I have here is a trio sonata from the Codex Rost which omits the violas and 24 of the fuller work's 130 bars – that version is published as EW 789. Another *1000 Gulden* as in D minor exists with rival attributions to Schmelzer and Rittler. The edition has an informative introduction (I suspect the same for all three editions). (EW 782; €12.80)

Wendolin Hueber/Huber (1615-1679) was organist at St. Dorothy in Kremsier; various church pieces by him survive in the court archives, as well as seven sonatas, all except one for 2 violins and four lower strings with continuo. These are edited by Konrad Ruhland in three sets: I-III (EW 773), IV (EW 7756) and V-VII (EW 784). No IV differs in being for 2 violins, 2 cornetti and 2 trombones. It is in my pile of music to try out at the Beauchamp summer school, where there is no need to follow the editorial alternatives of violins, recorders and viols – though the scoring isn't particularly idiomatic. It is lightly imitative, with the cornetti set slightly lower than the violins (top As rather than Cs). The editor points out that in Sonatas V-VII, the third *viola* goes below the normal *viola* bottom string. The part is in tenor clef (if the original clefs are retained), and there is no reason to believe that *viola* in this context should be translated as *viola* or *Bratsche*. It could be a cello or bass viol or even tenor violin. The bass parts are quite low, so even if they don't go below C, they might suite an 8' violone. Or are the pieces really for violins and trombones? Whatever the ensemble, these look worth trying.

Voce Divina

G. B. Riccio is known only from the three volumes of *Divine Lodi* he published in Venice in 1612, 1614 and 1620.² *Il terzo libro delle divine lodi musicali* contains 39 motets for 1, 2, 3 & 4 voices and some instrumental pieces for 1, 2, 3 & 4 parts. The volume has been reproduced by SPES, but quarried by editors and performers primarily for the instrumental pieces, which are a small minority. Vol VII contains the 10 motets for solo voice, vol. IX the eleven for two

voices. The distribution of motets among the voices is fairer than most such collections, making it useful to have around for informal music-making. The editor suggests that it might be intended primarily for the choir to be established at Aquileia Cathedral two years later by the Patriarch Elect, Antonio Grimano, to whom the publication is dedicated. It is not clear whether the choir is known to comprise SATB x2 or if that is guessed from the voices required to sing the publication.

I must confess that the facsimile hadn't tempted me to much interest in the vocal pieces. Compared with the motets Monteverdi was contributing to anthologies around this time, they seem somewhat staid. Monteverdi requires far more skill from the singers with elaborate spasms of decoration, while Riccio provides very little ~~written-out embellishment: if needed, the singer has to~~ supply it himself. The exception is the two motets for contralto that end the first volume, *Confiteor Deo omnipotenti* and *Regina coeli*. But beware of thinking of the modern contralto: they are in alto clef, so in modern terms for tenor voice, with a range of an octave from the F below middle C. Altos should choose from the pieces for soprano! In a way, Riccio is harder than Monteverdi, in that the singers have to think harder to shape the music: it isn't so obvious. It is good that repertoire which doesn't present great technical problems is available in so uncluttered a version. I do, however think it odd to retain black notation at triple cadences but modernise (i.e. omit) 'redundant' original accidentals and translate flat bass figures to natural: I suspect singers might want the music transposed up and that is easier for the player if he only has to think 'sharp = major, flat = minor'. I doubt if Riccio was expecting female choristers. But modern sopranos would be happier to put the pieces labelled with that voice-name up a bit, especially since Venetian church pitch was probably a semitone higher than A=440 anyway. One can, however, imagine these pieces being sung at home as well as in church, in the 21st as well as the 17th century. It is confusing to print editorial accidentals above the notes in Bc parts where they can be confused with bass 'figures'.

Vol. VIII contains a single piece, *Iubilant omnes* for soprano with violin, *flautin*, *fagotto* and Bc, opening like a canzona. The recorder has a narrow range (a ninth from middle C), identical with that of the voice, though the recorder no doubt sounds an octave or two higher. It's a jolly piece, with a text quoting Psalm 150.

Each volume contains the wherewithal for a performance: VII (EW 697; €19.50) presumes that the singer has the main score, which is supplemented by two scores with the voice in smaller printed and labelled Basso – a bit of a luxury, since the music would normally be performed with only an organ accompaniment; the other volumes also have a spare Bc part. Vol. VIII (EW 750; €14.50) has three instrumental parts and two parts for Basso (with the voice part and instrumental cues on a smaller staff), leaving the score for the soprano. But the basso parts do not include the bass figures. Vol IX (EW 699; €27.50). In addition to numbering within the *Voce Divina* series and the EW numbers, there are also roman numbers for the *Gesamt-*

2. The translator of the introduction confuses centuries..

ausgabe of the 1620 print in the order of which I've written about them. There are six more volumes to come. If you like the music and are poor, learn to read the facsimile!

COURT, CITIE, AND COUNTRY HUMOURS

Thomas Ravenscroft *Melismata: Musically phantasies fitting the court, citie, and country humours to 3, 4, and 5. voices...* Edited by Leslie J. Gold. PRB Productions (*Viol Consort Series* 77), 2010. viii + 27 pp + 5 parts, \$28.00 (\$15.00 score only)

Ravenscroft is a strange composer. Despite his career at St Paul's Cathedral, his church music is little known (though those of us who sang *O Domine Jesu* at the York voice conference last summer can testify to its power). Viol players enjoy his four fantasies. But it is his interest in more popular aspects of early 17th-century musical culture that particularly makes him worthy of attention. The four collections (*Pammelia*, *Deuteromelia*, *Melismata* and *A briefe discourse...*) have been available in facsimile for some decades, but have lacked good editions. The three Greek titles suggest that he wanted to retain his reputation as a man of education, and the fourth title belongs to an extremely learned volume of musical theory joined with folk material. On the whole, the pieces there are more successful than those in *Melismata*, but the latter does contain two which have stayed the course: *There were three ravens* and *Remember O thou man*. The collection is a mixture of rounds and what might be called consort songs, though their tone is different from the Byrd variety. The music is variable, but useful for any programme needing a touch of the popular.

The editor comments: 'The tessitura of the pieces is fairly high, characteristic of a boys' ensemble'. This begs the question of what the range of a boys' ensemble was, once one discounts special 'for treble' pieces. Some pieces look as if they are in *chiavette*: *Heigh hoe, away the Mare* (no. 6), for instance, is underlaid throughout the main section and approximates to high clefs (G₂, C₂, C₂, C₄). But most of the parts with G₂ clef are either instrumental or, when underlaid, are not particularly high. Some of the rounds have a very wide range. *And seest thou my Cow* (no. 16) looks like a three-part song with the three parts printed consecutively: perhaps the singers should imitate the vocal production (or their fellow singers) for each section.

It is excellent to have this fine edition by PRB's administrator. The score is compactly but sensibly laid out, with everything in treble or bass clefs. If you get the parts with the score, you have all that is needed for performance, and the middle parts have also C-clef alternatives.

BARBARA STROZZI

Green Man Press's Strozzi series begins with *Sino al morte* (Str 1; £6.90) and *Lagrima mie* (Str 2; £6.00). Both are for soprano and continuo, edited from her *Diparti di Euterpe* op. 7, 1659 by Barbara Sachs. *Sino al morte* is a long lament, starting with a chromatic descending fourth (whose opening statement demands a cello or viol): getting the

right weights for the three crotchets in the first bar should set the mood. Other bass patterns and freer sections follow, the whole lengthy (304-bar) piece being, as one expects from Strozzi, powerfully emotional but with considerable variety. A challenge to the singer. *Lagrima mie* is another lament, but here the expressive opening, which recurs in the middle of the piece and closes it, is not structured by the bass. I wonder if the contrast is enough to make these two laments work in the same concert: they might be too overpowering. Both editions have score with realisation, score without, and a bass part. I think that, if I were a cellist, I'd share a keyboard copy: there are no spaces for page-turns and I'd want to see what the voice was supposed to be singing unless everyone knew the piece very well. Barbara's forewords seem to hit the mark of what is needed and helpful more accurately than Walhall's often do.

KÜHNEL for 2 BASSES

August Kühnel *Sonate ô partite...* edited by George Houle PRB Productions (*Baroque Music Series* 54-55), 2009. Vols. 1 & 2: score & 3 parts. \$26.00 (vol. 1); \$20.00 (vol. 2).

August Kühnel *Sonate ô partite...* edited by Günter & Leonore von Zadow Edition Güntersberg (G161-2), 2009. Vols. 1 & 2: score & 3 parts. (Available from Walhall Editions)

The PRB edition was published in 1998 by the Santa Ynez Press (Stanford, CA). Judging by the www, this seems not to exist now, so it is excellent that PRB has reissued it. Its appearance is very much that of a PRB publication, so I assume that the files have been re-run. We have here the music from Kühnel's 1698 print that are for two gambas and continuo; presumably those for a single gamba and Bc will follow. I haven't heard the music, but it looks impressive: some of it is complicated and difficult, some suitable for 'those who have not played the instrument for a long time' (to quote the composer's preface), though to take advantage of that option, you will have to select sections rather than complete sonatas. The gamba parts are mostly independent of the bass, though when not, it is always the second part that doubles the continuo. It would be nice to know how the 'commas' (indicating trillos) looked in the original: they sometimes give the visual impression of a break before the upbeat note to the cadence: the blank pages at the end of the scores leave room for a page or two of facsimile. There is rather more information on performance practice than usual, with lists of possible Italian and French ornaments. (It should perhaps have been clearer that these are by the editor, not the composer.)

It is a strange coincidence that another edition arrived almost at the same time. I hadn't unpacked the box of Walhall editions when I wrote the paragraph above. The von Zadow prefatory material is more straightforward, and there are a few facsimiles, including the title page (with a picture of two gambas and a harpsichord) and a few lines of each partbook, showing that the 'commas' are printed just below the note, not following it as both editions place it. Despite his slightly smaller page-size,

Houle implies greater continuity between the sections by not making them begin with new pages or lines; I'd normally prefer the von Zadow layout, but Houle has a point that the changes are sections rather than movements. I'm puzzled that both editions produce a separate continuo part for Sonatas I-III; these sonatas are headed à 2 and an extra melodic bass is superfluous. If the idea is to allow for a theorbo as well as a harpsichord, then there should be two copies of the Bc for Sonatas IV-VI (which Houle calls Partitas). The von Zadows also supply for the harpsichordist a separate score with smaller print for the gamba parts and keyboard realisation, looking like a piano trio score. It seems a bit of a luxury to give the harpsichordist the option of score, score with realisation and a separate figured part. PRB assumes that they can manage with the score.

I suspect that European players will buy from Güntersberg/Walhall, American (and probably British and Commonwealth) from PRB. I don't know about Japan. Walhall lists the rest of the 1698 publication as G163-5. Either edition is worth buying by any pair of gamba-players.

CHURCH MUSIC SOCIETY

The CMS, available via Oxford UP, continues to offer updated repertoire and editions to church choirs at reasonable prices. Nos. 114-118 are taken from The Restoration Anthem edited by Keri Dexter & Geoffrey Webber, two volumes that I should have requested earlier and haven't. For most editorial information, it is necessary to consult that publication.

112. Michael Wise *Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis in Eb*, edited by Geoffrey Webber (£2.80). This is a four-part setting for SATB and organ with verse sections that are as simple as the full ones, and I imagine very pleasing to sing and hear. I would have thought specifying 'countertenor' is an unnecessary discouragement to boys and contraltos and not good for business. It is odd for music in F to be called 'in Eb' on the cover.

114. John Blow *God is our hope and strength* (£2.15) is in eight parts with no obvious antiphonal effects. I can't see the point of transposing pieces by a semitone, in this case from D to Eb: church choirs are not standardised that much, though they may still be brainwashed by Fellowes and Co to expect old church music to have three or four flats. I'm not sure if the problems of compas require such measures. The solo Alto II's bottom E in bar 19 can be solved by giving the phrase to Tenor II. More important, the last note of the same part's marvellous 'shall she not be removed' (bars 55-6) needs to be audible, and the original pitch gives both Basses bottom Ds in the same phrase (bars 55 & 61). But this isn't a piece for inadequate choirs, and basses with bottom Ds are not all that rare (except perhaps in the still-developing voices that are likely in Cambridge college chapels). It's an impressive piece, and well worth a concert performance.

115. Michael Wise *The ways of Zion do mourn* (£2.15) is for SB soli and 11 bars chorus (sung twice). Again we have a semitone upward transposition, this time from E to F

minor, presumably to avoid the Bass bottom Es. It is an expressive piece. I wonder about the footnote to bars 11-16: '2nd time through should be softer in all cases', especially the last three words. Quiet repeats can be a cliché, and here one wants the music to be more expressive, whereas soft singing is likely to offer only softness! But perhaps it represents something in one of the sources.

116. Matthew Locke *How doth the city sit solitary* (£2.15) is also primarily for soli (SSATB) with short SSATB choruses and also has a text from Lamentations. I was slightly disappointed by it, perhaps because I expected more from Locke.

117. Jeremiah Clarke *Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem* (£1.85) is a full anthem for SATB. I wonder if the musical source(s) ~~have the comma in the opening phrase: I certainly would not want to hear a gap. And the mention of Kings and Queens being nursing fathers and mothers comes too~~ early in the text for it to be ignored – I've always found it odd in Purcell and Handel. Perhaps I should have looked at this piece before the others: after them, it seems a bit anodyne.

118. William Turner *My soul truly waiteth still upon God* (£2.80) is for SSAATB soli and chorus. It opens awkwardly. The cross-beat stress of 'My soul truly waiteth' (3' + 2 + 2 beats in four-beat bars) raises interest, but 'still upon God' lacks shape. The word-painting of 'so that I shall not greatly fall' that dominates the first verse section is a bit naïve. This seems to be the weakest anthem of the batch.

119. S. S. Wesley *O God, whose nature and property* (£2.15). I wasn't going to mention this, but it is interesting that I started thinking of the opening rhythm, then noticed the metronome mark and realised that I was thinking of it in semibreves at a speed that must have been nearly twice that of Wesley's minim = 80. My only excuse is that speed was that of the 1870 revision, and he might have expected a faster speed in 1831. But it made me wonder how wrong our idea of tempo could be!

HENLE MOZART

Mozart *Hornquintett Eb major K 407 (386c)* Herausgegeben von Henrik Wiese, Norbert Müllemann. Henle (HN 9826), 2010. vi + 25pp, €8.00

A study score with critical commentary (German and English) is useful for this piece, since the autograph had been lost by 1800 and there is no authoritative source. Large score with parts also available (HN 826; €16.00), and the critical commentary is also accessible online.

What really interested me in the Henle Spring 2010 catalogue was the study score of a new edition of the complete Schumann's piano music for €98.00, but I can hardly ask for it for *EMR*!

I ran out of time, so have deferred Telemann Arias and Recorder Concerto in G minor (Walhall) and Handel's gamba sonata in G minor and Pachelbel Geistliches Konzert with strings (Güntersberg).

BOOKS

Clifford Bartlett

THE FIRST THOUSAND YEARS

Christopher Page *The Christian West and its Singers: the first thousand years*. Yale University Press, 2010. xxiv + 692pp, £30.00. ISBN 978 0 300 11257 3

Unusually, my wife opened the packet this arrived in, and had glanced at it before she flicked through the pages to show the wealth of colour illustrations and asked how much I thought it cost. My instinct was to guess well over £100, but I caught sight of the name of the publisher and tried £50.00. Quite how this can be economically viable at £30.00 I don't know. But this is a beautiful book that, unlike most musicology, reaches out to all sorts of readers, and is written by a distinguished scholar who can present his arguments in convincing and readable prose.

The opening chapters recalled the interest I had in early church history more than fifty years ago. I'd tried to absorb what I could find from the fragments quoted in the then-current anthology of early Christian sources (whose author(s) and title I forget), M. R. James's *The Apocryphal New Testament*³ and early Christian authors in the Loeb series of texts/translations. Even one illustration stood out as nostalgic: the Christian mosaic at Lullingstone (p. 201), where I had done a bit of digging (or rather scrap-ing) in the 1950s, finding nothing. The picture of the early church here, however, is rather different. I assumed that most early Christians were from the poorer classes, but they were more likely to have been linked to Mediterranean commerce (though the maps on pp. 18-19 may oversimplify). Historians of Roman liturgy tend to describe features hinted at in early accounts of Christian worship in terms of the Mass, or hypothetical reconstructions of synagogue services are drawn upon. I don't think that dating of the gospels has changed all that much, but the idea that the concept of 'the four gospels' didn't emerge till around 200 AD didn't impinge in my youth. I don't know to what extent the account here is accepted by the theological world in general, but the idea that Christian gatherings were quite informal and were not as different from other religious groups as we have assumed explains how the faith could grow without continual persecution.⁴

I'll write further in the May issue. We've a week in Cornwall over Easter, which should provide more reading time, though I'm a bit worried about the weight of the book – 2.230kg. My arm still hasn't recovered from carrying Ashgate's rather lighter *Music in Medieval Europe* while minding Clare and John on holiday last year!

3. Irrespective of their authenticity as Gospels, these give information about early Christian behaviour and attitudes.

4. I checked a few ideas with a prospective Methodist Minister studying at Cambridge (one of his teachers is an old friend who moved from Anglican to Orthodox), and he confirmed my quick summary of Page's outline of the early church.

AUSTRALIAN MUSICOLOGY

Identity and Locality in Early European Music, 1028-1740
Edited by Jason Stoessel Ashgate, 2009. xxii + 249pp, £55.00. ISBN 978 0 7546 6487 1

I must confess that the philosophy behind this volume is a discouragement to read it than otherwise. I was taught at school always to use concrete rather than abstract nouns when possible, so I suppose that *identity* and *locality* might, at least in some of its uses here, be replaced by *people* and *places* – in a musical context, by musicians and where they made music. The contributions do indeed consider that subject, but so do many other music books. Skip the editor's introduction and you'll find a varied collection of ten papers (called chapters) with perhaps a little more geographical consideration than such a collection might otherwise have. They derive from the 29th National Conference of the Musicological Society of Australia.

For me the highlight is, as is fitting, the contribution from the distinguished visitor, Reinhard Strohm's 'Late-Medieval Sacred Songs'. More specifically, its topic is the nature of what most of us probably know as the type of 'carol' repertoire that comes through later sources like *Piae Cantiones* and Praetorius's Christmas settings. There are a large number of MSS showing melodies (rather more than the texts) enjoying various types of transformation. Strohm touches briefly on questions of composition and evolution, orality and notation. The pattern is slightly different from (to stay with Christmas) the transmission of English folk carols. I'm not sure that the oppositions are primarily 'history of origins' and 'reception history' unless the latter means 'usage'. But apart from drawing non-specialists' attention to the late-Latin *cantiones*, which have long interested me (even before involvement in the *New Oxford Book of Carols*), this is a fine example of how a leading musicologist can take a subject that he cannot expect many of his audience to know much about and present a paper that is nevertheless comprehensible, interesting and raises general issues. A model!

That was Chapter 7. Chapter 8 ('Pervasive Imitation in Senfl's *Ave Maria* ... *Virgo* imitation *Serena*...') by Miranda Stanyon goes beyond Senfl's imitation of Josquin by turning a four-voice motet into a six-voice one by relating it to humanist ideas of imitation, taking at least one cue from Senfl's known interest in Latin verse from his settings in Latin verse rhythms. I wish I had been able to go to the Midlands Early Music Forum day devoted to the work. As a combination of the most-sung motet by one composer transformed into the most-sung motet by another, this chapter deserves reading by singers and directors.⁵

5. There's an edition in Kathleen Berg's *The Swiss Orpheus* Peacock Press, 2008.

Chapter 9, by one of our long-standing subscribers, Rosalind Halton, discusses three sources of Alessandro Scarlatti's *Venere, Adone et Amore* (1696)⁶ and raises detailed points on surmising the relationship of MSS, linking to the Conference theme by two being Roman, one Neapolitan. Having spent some years working in a music library which employed copyists, I welcome her praise of the profession. One of the copyists in question also wrote the only complete score of Handel's *La resurrezione*; when I edited it I assumed the copying of the *da capos* in full to be an oddity, but the Scarlatti scores are also copied thus. I suppose Rosalind's guess that it was to avoid quick page-turns for keyboard players may be true, but it wasn't a practice Handel adopted normally for his performing scores and other keyboard players will have had bass parts with vocal cues.

In chapter 10, Jane Stockigt deals in great detail with the churching ceremonies (do younger readers know the term? the purification of young mothers after the defilement of childbirth) of Maria Josepha, wife of August III of Poland. She had 15 children between 1721 and 1740. Information is listed and described in detail, and two descriptions are quoted in full. The services had a big mass with trumpets and drums, mostly by Heinichen and Zelenka. I'm doubtful whether a liturgical reconstruction of the Churching of Maria Josepha after the birth of Franz Xaver Albert August Ludwig Benno in 1730 based round Zelenka's *Missa Gratias agimus tibi* is likely to be a hot seller, but the chapter does draw attention to an occasion for musical celebration that few of us will have thought of.

The earlier part of the book begins with an account by James Grier of how Adémar bent the liturgy of the Abbey of St Marial at Limoges to increase its status and three studies of over half-a-millennium of Iberian chant which illustrate regional differences. Particularly interesting is the detail considered by Greta J. Olson of what actually happened when external changes were made. Were new chant books always available? One wonders how readily musicians who had memorised the chant since childhood were able to substitute minor changes.

GESUALDO RECEPTION HISTORY

Glenn Watkins *The Gesualdo Hex: music, myth, and memory* W. W. Norton, 2010. xvi + 384pp, £28.00. ISBN 978 0 393 07102 3

Two other names should also be in the title: Schoenberg and Stravinsky, with Robert Craft in a lesser role and the idea of 'late works' as an element of the subtitle. This is a very personal book: another title could have been *GESUALDO, Stravinsky and me*. As regular readers will know, by example I try to undermine the supposed impersonality of scholarship and of myself as reviewer (eg the autobiographical elements in the comments on Christopher Page's book above); there's a deliberate intent to combine the style of magazine and blog. So I thoroughly approve

of the personal approach of the latter part of this book. I must confess that I have a problem with Gesualdo. I've heard lots of his music and am impressed by it. I bought the Collected Works at a sale in the early 1970s and it has not sat idly on a shelf. But I am not drawn to the music. In fact, I could say the same about the other topics of the book, late Schoenberg and late Stravinsky: I've listened to a lot of it, but none of it is internalised in the way of music I know and love. But that isn't to say that I don't find the book fascinating.

Watkins wrote the standard life-and-works of Gesualdo in 1973.⁷ The first section expands the discussion there of some of Gesualdo's odder behaviour.⁸ I wonder whether, were he writing the book now, he might refer to Michael Jackson, a contemporary musician with unique and outstanding musical and dance skills but severe personality problems. The rest of the book deals with the way that Gesualdo was praised by, and sometimes influenced, 20th-century composers. The link with Schoenberg is tenuous, though as early as 1916 one of his pupils, Egon Wellesz wondered

whether the paths which Schönberg treads are destined to become the highways of music of the future, or whether they are just the last spurs of the old romantic music... The age which succeeded Gesualdo was interested in other problems and did not follow the path pointed out by him... The same fate may be in store for Schönberg.

Watkins pursues briefly how twelve-tonery failed to become the future of music, but is chiefly interested in the composer's late style, which has strong retrospective elements.

'Late style' is also part of the Stravinsky theme, but that is much more directly involved with Gesualdo and with the author, who as the Gesualdo expert had a direct relationship with the aged composer.

The book touches on many issues. Despite the occasional mentioning of Monteverdi, Marenzio etc, Gesualdo comes over without much context, and that seems to be how most 20th-century composing enthusiasts saw him. Nadia Boulanger had a different perspective, since she knew and understood Monteverdi so well, as the recordings testify. She didn't record Gesualdo, though she had his music studied and sung in her classes; Watkins himself studied with her. Craft directed single-voice recordings of the madrigals in the 1950s. Hindemith assembled a group including Marilyn Horne, Christa Ludwig and Walter Berry to sing Gesualdo for a 1957 Festival in Vienna. Horne wrote; 'Can't you just hear all our vibrati swinging against each other when we should be singing a heavenly well-tuned Gesualdo chord?'

7. *Gesualdo. The Man and His Music*, 1973, rev. 1991. It must have been around then that I met him at a BBC recording session of selections from his edition of D'India's impressive Book VIII.

8. Exploiting his scandalous life to sell concerts is exemplified in the concert diary circulating with this issue: see entries on p. 39.

9. I like her response to Hindemith's surprise that she knew such music and had recorded 60 or 70 of the madrigals in Los Angeles. Her comment to him on Monteverdi was: 'Maestro, there's a lot more in Hollywood than just making films!' (p. 211)

6. It will be published by A-R Editions, and her recording is on ABC Classics 2997 (reviewed in EMR 124)

There are lots of comments I made while reading this which I could follow up here. But I've probably written enough to give the flavour of the book. There are a lot of ideas touched on, but it feels too long and is somewhat repetitive: a ruthless publisher would have sent it back for tightening. Only a third is particularly relevant to Gesualdo himself, but I found the section on Stravinsky most readable, partly because the author was part of the story.

BOESSET & PECHON

Peter Bennett *Sacred Repertories in Paris under Louis XIII: Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS V^{ma} rés. 571 (RMA Research Monographs 17)*. Ashgate, 2009, xviii + 213pp, £55.00 ISBN 978 0 7546 6821 3

Rés-571 is a massive MS of 239 landscape-folios containing about 300 liturgical and semi-liturgical works. Most are anonymous. A few are ascribed to Bouzignac, but Bennett argues that they are foreign to the basic repertoire of the source – alas, since his music, to the extent to which I know it, is rather more interesting than the examples quoted here by Antoine Boesset.¹⁰ A curiosity of the source is that it was copied in separate chunks over 40 years apart. This might suggest that the earlier section contains music by Antoine Boesset (1586-1643), best known for his *airs de cour*, while the later pieces were by his son Jean-Baptiste (1614-1685). But Bennett shows pretty conclusively that Boesset père was the composer of all the music ascribed or attributed to 'Boesset'. The scribe was André Pechon, who had been *maître des enfants* at Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois (near the Louvre) at the end of the 1630s and had probably been at the church throughout most of the decade. He then became *maître de musique* at Meux Cathedral, and at the end of his life resumed copying. He preserved the distinctive music from the abbey at Montmartre, like Saint-Germain an establishment with royal connections.

This fine example of musical detective work makes sense of a major source of church music of the period. I am, though, a bit disappointed with the music itself, as far as I can tell from the examples quoted. An interesting feature is the amount that is for high voices, often with parallel versions for fuller ranges. The first example in chapter 3, for instance, has a setting of *Ave Maria* in G2 C2 C3 C4 F3 clefs and a rewriting for G2 G2 C2 and F3. The F3 clefs makes one wonder whether the *chiavette* imply transposition; example 3.5 has a *Quam pulchra es* in G2 C2 C3 C4 F4 and an alternative for G2 G2 C1 F3, with the comparable bass bent to avoid bottom F. Patterns don't seem consistent enough to make transposition of *chiavette* a plausible line of performing practice. The list of contents commendably gives the clefs of each work as well as source of text and concordances. I wonder whether the smaller versions were for trebles accompanied by the choirmaster, as occurred sometimes in Germany. Incidentally, since the Bc line shares a stave with the bass in the MS, why does it need a separate stave in the examples? The author's network of conjectures make a plausible scenario.

10. However, Bennett points out on p. 3 that MS 168 at Tours, many of whose anonymous pieces have been attributed to Bouzignac, probably did not originate there, which undermines the attributions.

THE VIOL IN ITALIAN

Bettina Hoffmann *La viola da gamba* Editioni L'Epos, 2010 512pp (130 illustrations), €48.30. ISBN 978 8302 408 5

I haven't requested a review copy, but readers with fluent Italian might like to check details at www.lepos.it/home/php/schede/scheda_libro.php?id_lepos_libro=1130

AWAITING REVIEW

John Birchensha *Writings on Music* Edited by Christopher D. S. Field and Benjamin Wardhaugh Ashgate, 2010. x + 337pp, £65.00 ISBN 978 0 7546 6213 6

Kathryn Lowerre *Music and Musicians on the London Stage, 1695-1705*. Ashgate 2009. xvi + 412pp, £60.00. ISBN 978 0 7546 6614 1

VOX PATRIS CAELESTIS

I made little sense of William Mundy's massive six-voice antiphon when it appeared in *Early English Church Music* vol.2 in 1963, and it was many years later before I heard a performance and realised what a marvellous work it was. Sadly, I have never sung it. There is an extensive article in *Music and Letters* vol. 91/1 (Feb. 2010) by John Milsom, who argues strongly that it was written for the coronation of Queen Mary. His conclusion is cautious: it 'must in the end rejoin the ranks of those myriad works from Tudor England for which no context is definitely known. Nonetheless, a relationship between this magnificent work and the coronation celebrations for Mary Tudor in 1553 remains a tantalizing possibility.' I suspect that next time anyone records it, 'Coronation Mass' will appear in the title. Be that as it may, the article is informative both about the text (by William Forrest, one of the two people after whom the Forrest-Heyther partbooks are named), Forrest, Mundy and the music itself.



THE WORLD ENCOMPASSED

Richard Boothby

On Saturday 19th June this year, Fretwork will play the world premier of a new piece by Orlando Gough, *The World Encompassed*, at Kings Place, London. It takes as its structure Sir Francis Drake's circumnavigation of the globe; and it uses the knowledge that he took viol players with him, and that they played to, and were played to by, native musicians in the various lands Drake visited, as the starting point for an attempt to recreate the sense of musical wonder that such encounters must have made.

~~It's difficult — no, it's impossible for us now, in 2010, to~~ imagine how shocking such a clash of cultures was for musicians who had spent their entire lives playing and hearing just one style of music. The variety of music that could be heard in England in the 16th was small indeed, especially compared to our ability to pick and chose from a smorgasbord of musics, from all over the world, and from any era. But the beginnings of such musical curiosity start here in 1577-80, when viol players who had been playing Parsons, Tallis, Tye & Byrd all their lives are suddenly confronted with a Javanese gamelan. And *vice versa*: can we imagine what the Javanese gamelan players thought of the stark, severe Protestant hymns and psalms that the viols played with Drake?

This project has considerable personal significance for me. My father was the captain of a ship, the *Duquessa*, which, at the time when I remember traveling on it, was the largest refrigerated meat-carrying ship in the world. He mostly sailed between London and Buenos Aires, where he met my mother, and where I went with him several times in the 1960s. There was a time when it was thought that I would 'go to sea', as my grand-father had done and as my brother did. My father's ship, with me on it, even took more or less the same route that Drake's did as far as the River Plate, visiting the same places: the Cape Verde Islands and Rio Gande do Sul. So here I am involved in a project which brings together two sides of my life.

When Francis Drake set sail from Plymouth on 15th November 1577 in the *Pelican*, together with the *Elizabeth*, the *Marigold*, the *Swan* and the *Benedict*, probably only he knew exactly what was going to be attempted. Though it was termed 'a voyage of discovery', the principal reason for it was piracy, and to create as many difficulties for England's Catholic adversary, Spain, as possible. Many people, including the Queen herself, Dudley, Hatton & Walsingham had invested in the journey and were to be handsomely rewarded: they received £47 for every pound they put in. It is even possible that Drake himself had no notion to round the globe, but that his brilliant mind saw that the Spanish would be completely defenceless on the west coast of the Americas; once there, the quickest and easiest way back was to carry on across the Pacific.

That he took with him four musicians has long been known. We even know their names: Simon Wood, Thomas Meckes, Richard Clarke & "George a Musician". And we know that they played string instruments, probably viols, from a number of English & Spanish sources: Don Francisco Zarate, for example, was a Spanish nobleman who had been captured by Drake, and he later wrote that Drake dined to the music of 'vigolones'. Nuño da Silva was the Portuguese merchant and pilot that Drake had captured in the Cape Verde Islands on 30th January 1578, and who had led the little fleet across the Atlantic, through the Magellan straights and up the coast of South America. When he was put ashore in what is now Mexico, he was closely questioned by the authorities and the Inquisition to ascertain his involvement in the Protestant services Drake conducted on board ship. Da Silva revealed that 'they brought four viols, and made lamentations and sang together'. Edward Cliffe, an eyewitness, described the natives of South America being 'exceeding delighted with the sound of the trumpets and vialles'.

So viols they were. It is difficult to imagine how they played on this tiny ship – if the reproduction sitting in the little harbour on the South Bank in London is anything like correct, then it's surprising that there was room in Drake's state room for four viols and him. But we can get a very good idea of what they played, given the accounts of Drake's singing and praying with the viols. Sternold & Hopkins had published in 1562 the first complete edition of the psalm book, together with nine hymns. The title page runs:

The whole booke of Psalmes, collected into Englysh metre by T. Starnhold, I. Hopkins, & others: conferred with the Ebrue, with apt notes to synge them with al, faithfully perused and allowed according to thordre appointed in the Quenes maiesties iniunctions. Very mete to be vsed of all sortes of people priuately for their solace & comfort: laying apart all vngodly songes and ballades, which tende only to the norishing of vyce, and corrupting of youth... Imprinted at London by John Day, dwelling ouer Aldersgate, Cum gratia & privilegio Regiae Maiestatis perscpteunium [recte per septennium]. An. 1562.

These are regarded as the first hymns of the English Protestant Church. Two were German tunes and the rest English. Tallis may have been the author of some of the tunes. This first publication offered just a single line; a year later appeared a four-part psalter, in four part-books, also immaculately printed by John Day (the copy I saw in the British Library could have been printed yesterday). In it we see the same tunes harmonised SATB, with sometimes the tune in the soprano, and sometimes in the tenor – this latter is what we can imagine Drake singing with the four viols – indeed, Day makes the point that the music is apt for voices and instruments.

Other than this, we have to imagine what music was available to viol players of the time. In Nomines would seem a good place to start, and Robert Parsons, who drowned in the river Trent in 1572, was one of the most popular composers of instrumental music of the time. Taverner's original In Nomine seems a likely candidate; and the Tye In Nomines would seem to fit.

Drake's journey took him first to Morocco, then the Cape Verde Islands, across the Atlantic to Brazil, then down the coast of South America to Patagonia and Port St Julian, where Drake encountered his first major crisis. Thomas Doughty was a personal friend, yet here he was accused of treachery and incitement to mutiny. Drake convened a trial and Doughty was found guilty; he was offered three choices: to be executed, to be put ashore and left, or to return to England for a retrial. He chose execution, and was beheaded the following day. This clearly shook the crew of the fleet and about a month later Drake preached a sermon in place of the vicar, in which he declared that common sailors and 'gentlemen' were to work together, and be 'equal before the mast'. Then, in the midst of winter, having burned two of the smaller ships as being inadequate, the three larger vessels sailed on to traverse the Straights of Magellan, one of the most treacherous of sea passages. It took them 16 days before they emerged into the Pacific – the first Englishmen to be there. However, they also emerged into violent storms, which were to last 50 days, and during which the *Marigold* was lost with all hands, and the *Elizabeth* turned back for England, arriving 2nd June 1579. Drake was blown south, and the ships were dispersed, so that, when the storms eventually abated, Drake had no idea of the fate of the other two ships. The *Pelican* was renamed *The Golden Hind* in honour of their principal backer, Sir Christopher Hatton, whose coat of arms includes a golden hind. He sailed up the coast hoping to meet his fellow sailors again.

Having reached the other side of the Americas, Drake's real purpose became the highest priority. He was able to plunder the Spanish territories without hinderance, and he did so with ruthless efficiency. Valparaiso was ransacked, and he heard in Lima that a heavily laden treasure ship, *Nuestra Señora de la Concepción*, more popularly known as the *Cacñuego*, had sailed 12 days earlier for Panama. Drake set off in pursuit and captured the vessel, which was his richest plunder.

From there, Drake sailed up the west coast of California. He may have reached Vancouver Island before returning to San Francisco, where he stayed for a month preparing for the crossing of the Pacific. Here he performed what is thought to be the first Protestant religious ceremony on North American soil and had friendly relations with the Miwok native Americans. The *Golden Hind* left on 23rd July 1579, and sighted land in the Philippines on 16th October. They visited Ternate, bought a cargo of cloves; then they struck a reef and had to throw much of their valuable cargo overboard before floating free the next day. They next visited Java, and it was here that the most significant musical encounter took place. Here is *The World Encompassed*, the journal published by Drake's nephew in 1628:

March 13th 1580

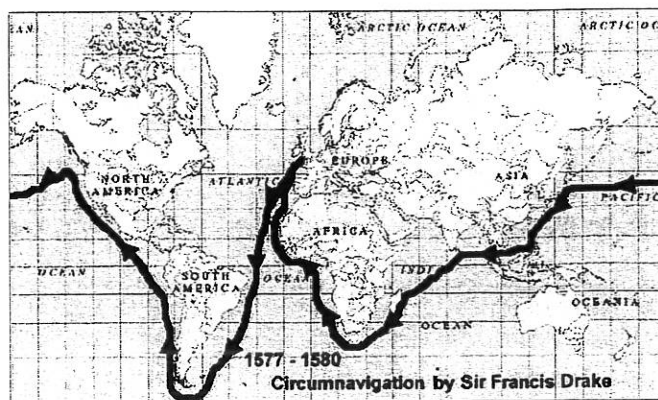
The 13. March our general himself with many of his gentlemen, and others went ashore, and presented the king (of whom he was joyfully and lovingly received) with his musicke, and shewed him the manner of our use of armes, by training his men with their pikes & other weapons, which they had before him: for the present we were entertained as we desired, and at last dismissed with the promise of more victuals to be shortly sent us.

In this Island there is one chiefe, but many under governors, or petty kings, whom they call Raias, who live in great familiaritie and friendship one with another. The 14 day we received victuals from two of them, and the day after that, to wit, the 15. three of these kings in their owne persons came aboard to see our Generall, and to view our ship and warlike munition. They were well pleased with what they saw, and with the entertainment which we gave them. And after these had been with us and on their returne had as it seemes related what they found, Raia Donan the chiefe king of the whole land bringing victuals with him for our reliefe: he also the next day after came aboard us. Few were the days that one or more of these kings did misse to visit us, insomuch that we grew acquainted with the names of many of them, as of Raia Patraidra, Raia Canbocapala, Raia Mangbáago, Raia Bocabarra, Raia Timbánton: whom our Generall always entertained with the best cheere that we could make, and shewed all the commodities of our ship, with our ordnance and other armes and weapons, and the severall furnitures belonging to each, and the uses for which they served. His musicke also and all things else whereby he might do them pleasure, wherein they tooke exceeding great delight with admiration.

March 21

One day amongst the rest, viz. March 21. Raia Donan coming aboard us, in requital of our musick which was made to him, presented our generall with his country musick, which though it were of a very strange kind, yet the sound was pleasant and delightful:

Drake set sail for home soon after, rounded the Cape of Good Hope without landing – this was hostile Portuguese territory – stopping rather in Sierra Leone before arriving back to Plymouth on 26th September 1580, almost three years after leaving. Drake's treasure was such that the Queen's share was able to repay the entire foreign debt of the nation and also to recapitalise the Levant Company. On 4th April 1581, the *Golden Hind* was brought to Deptford, where the Queen had Drake knighted – though she didn't perform the act herself, still wary of provoking Philip of Spain.



LONDON MUSIC

Andrew Benson-Wilson

PARADISE at KING'S CROSS

The highlight of the Swingle Singers' Kings Place London A Cappella Festival was the concert by the young super-group, Stile Antico, a consort of singers who walk on musical water as far as I am concerned (14 Jan). Their programme, built around their latest CD of works by John Sheppard, was "In Paradisum – Swansongs and memorials by the Renaissance masters" and set Sheppard's extraordinary *Media vita* in the context of works by Byrd, Dufay, Gombert, des Prez, Lobo, Schütz and Lassus. This was a very testing acoustic for music that usually demands large spaces, but the 13 singers coped extremely well, retaining their usual outstandingly coherent sound and musical texture. But am I alone in noticing a distinct echo in the Kings Place flagship Hall One – and some background mechanical noise? My only criticism of the structuring of the programme was that they allowed the audience time to applaud between pieces – perhaps inevitably, given the stage moves (and, dare I say, a less-than-totally-sophisticated audience), but nonetheless distracting to the flow of the music. The highlight was Sheppard's antiphon *Media vita*, at about 25 minutes, one of the most extended works of the whole period. Incorporating the *Nunc dimittis*, the underlying pulse is half the 'normal' speed, creating an almost hypnotic sense of the slowly unfolding texture. I can thoroughly recommend this concert as it tours and the associated CD, *Media vita*.

EARLY CROATIAN SUMMER

The Aestas Musica International Summer School of Baroque Music and Dance has been running for about 15 years in the Varaždin Music School in northern Croatia, generally staffed by teachers from the UK. A selection of the musicians that have benefited came together in the Duke's Hall of the Royal Academy of Music (17 Jan) to give a benefit concert of Bach, Vivaldi, Handel plus a second half Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*. The first half demonstrated the solo talents of some of the tutors, starting with a brilliant performance of Vivaldi's Concerto for Cello (RV420) by Joseph Crouch, his outstandingly expressive use of rhetoric being just one highlight. Adrian Butterfield joined Croatian violinist, Laura Vadjon, for Bach's Double Violin Concerto before Andreas Helm gave us the almost entirely syncopated Vivaldi Oboe Concerto (RV236). A sequence of danced pieces completed the first half. One of the finest talents to have emerged from Croatia in recent years has been the mezzo soprano, Renata Pokupic. I praised her first London appearance and have watched her developing career with interest – as I write, she is making her debut at Covent Garden. She completely stole the show as Dido, as much for her acting ability as her outstanding singing. Almost as impressive were Mary Bevan (Belinda) and Ana-Maria Rincon (Second Woman).

OAE BEETHOVEN

I was rather surprised to realise that the first time that the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment did a complete Beethoven series was just 10 years ago. Returning to these monumental works after a decade would be a time for reflection on the extent to which music interpretation has moved on in the intervening period – and, in the event, demonstrated just how much period performance has come of age. Vladimir Jurowski was an inspired choice of conductor for the opening concert (Queen Elizabeth Hall, 28 Jan), as was choosing Symphony 4 as the first work – although it was interesting to hear Jurowski suggest that he would have paired the 2nd and 4th Symphony, thereby giving more focus on the hidden merits of the 4th. As it was, the 4th was given a heroic reading, the expansive opening *Adagio* setting the mood for the evening in terms of Jurowski's approach to Beethoven interpretation. Generally setting moderate speeds, Jurowski revealed details of the musical texture that can so easily slip by the ear. And when he let rip, as in the following *Allegro Vivace*, he encouraged the raw energy of the period instruments to shine through – so much so that, in the finale of the 4th, the earthy wooden noise of bows hitting strings was delightfully prominent. In both symphonies, it was the transition passages where the most evocative sounds and moods were produced. An impressive start to what will no doubt turn out to be a memorable series.

ANOTHER TRIUMPH

Like London buses, you can wait ages for a performance of Handel's *Il trionfo del Tempo e del Disinganno*, and then two come along at once. After the Classical Opera Company Kings Place version in December, it was the turn of the Early Opera Company to give a very different interpretation of the work (29 Jan, Wigmore Hall). For a start, *Piacere* was sung by a woman rather than a man, thereby removing one of the more engaging aspects of the Classical Opera Company's version of the work. With Pleasure now seen as some sort of alter ego, rather than a persuasive boy-friend, the approach took on a meta-physical rather than personal aspect, aided by a lack of interaction between the four protagonists – and it lost something in the process. Another surprising aspect was to reduce dramatically the role of the solo organ, cutting back the volume in the famous Sonata so much that the organ became an equal partner with the surrounding instruments (indeed, it was only just audible) rather than the flamboyant solo role that Handel surely intended. All four singers excelled (Lucy Crowe, Anna Stéphany, Hilary Summers, Andrew Staples), as did Catherine Martin (taking Corelli's original role as leader), Oliver Webber, Alison McGillivray, cello, Katharina Spreckelsen, oboe,

and Mark Williams, organ. Notwithstanding the interpretation concerns already mentioned, Christian Curnyn directed with aplomb. The performance was recorded for release on the Wigmore Live series.

IMAGE IS ALL

Jonathan Miller's 1995 Royal Opera House production of *Così fan tutte* is deservedly becoming a mainstay of their repertoire. His contemporary take, updated for each of the frequent revivals, not least in mobile ring-tones (the continuo included the Nokia tone) and technology, always managed to draw the audience in to the minutiae of human interaction. And this was the finest cast ever (2 Feb), with stunning performances from the youthful singers, notably from Sally Matthews as a delightful Fiordiligi—a soprano I remember reviewing in a bit part when she was a student. Vocally outstanding, the real clincher was her extremely compelling portrayal of this complex woman. She and Nino Surguladze (Dorabella) made an ideal pairing as the bright young things about town, and they were well matched by Charles Castronova and Troy Cook as Ferrando and Guglielmo. Their personalities were such that image is all, a characteristic reinforced by the presence throughout of a large mirror, centre stage, which they all interacted with, from Fiordiligi's opening 'does my bum look big in this' pose to the outright posturing of the two men in their alter ego appearances as cowboy hippy and death metal-head. The Don was more urbane, and therefore rather more sinister, than he is usually portrayed, with some excellent singing and acting from William Shimell. Helene Schneiderman is a regular as Despina, and took on her various guises with gusto. Making her debut at the ROH was conductor Julia Jones. She did her best to lift the ROH house band from their romantic torpor, without entirely succeeding.

ORGAN OBBLIGATO

Matthew Halls, the director of Retrospect Ensemble, put himself in the spotlight for their Wigmore Hall concert (10 Feb) of Bach works, with the organ taking centre stage in all the works. It may have been the result of a lack of musicians of the right calibre that led Bach to produce two superb cantatas (170 & 35) for solo alto with obbligato organ parts, although both have the usual full compliment of other instruments who could have had solo roles. The more familiar is the sensuous *Vergnügte Ruh, beliebte Seelenlust*, but *Geist und Seele wird verwirret* is also well worth getting to know. Curiously, I thought I didn't know it myself when I heard it at this concert, only realising later that I had several recordings of it! As this suggests, it is a complex work, without the immediate harmonic or melodic appeal of *Vergnügte Ruh*. The second aria has the organ part entirely in the bass clef, with a sparse trio texture, devoid of any infilling, at least in this performance which did not have a continuo harpsichord. I have praised Robin Blaze's singing consistently over the years, so it is with some embarrassment to reveal that he was not on his best form this evening. Issues of intonation, portamento and timbre were all too evident – perhaps demonstrating just how amazing it is that most

singers sing so well so often. Even with these riders, his clear and focused voice was an ideal vehicle for these works. Matthew Halls seems to have rather more fingers than I do, judging by the plethora of notes that he managed to produce. Added to the two cantatas was his own reconstruction of a possible Bach organ concerto – basically the harpsichord concerto (1053) transposed down a tone.

LOVE AND CHOCOLATE

This was the enticing title of a Valentine's Eve concert by the 23-strong Renaissance Singers under their new director, David Allinson (St George's Bloomsbury, 13 February). The link with chocolate was slightly tenuous (breasts featured in the texts more often than the sweet delight), although the opening processional, *Hanacpachap cussicuinin* did remind us of where chocolate came from, as did the following sequence of motets by Guerrero, a key part of the repertoire in the Spanish Americas. Padilla was a Spanish composer who ended up working in the New World. His *Salve regina* was a particularly impressive double choir work, with a delightful rocking section at *Ad te clamamus*. Manchicourt's *Osculetur me* formed a bridge from the Spanish to the Flemish schools, the focus for the concluding double choir *Missa Osculetur me* of Lassus. Possibly written shortly after Lassus had been a teacher of Andrea Gabrieli, some of the influences on Gabrieli were evident, not least in the final cadences, with a restless inner part making itself felt. This was a challenging programme for an amateur choir, and they proved to be very much up to the task, singing with an impressive sense of consort. I wouldn't want to focus on any one voice part, but I was particularly impressed with the sopranos and tenors – often the trickiest sections in such choirs. Only very occasionally did a slight lack of confidence become apparent, most notably in Guerrero's *Virgin Santa* with its very exposed vocal lines. David Allinson directed with evident (and justifiable) pride and enjoyment.

FRIENDS FOR LIFE

The International Baroque Players are a talented group of 'smart and stylish twenty-somethings' that formed themselves out of one of the EUBO incarnations and Aldeburgh. Although they have a recognised director in violinist Johannes Pramsohler, they give the strong impression of working as a cooperative – and gain musically as a result. Their concert at St Giles in the Fields (18 Feb) had the title of 'Friends for Life – Handel & Telemann', a reflection both on the two composers and, it seems, on the nature of the group itself. They particularly impressed in Telemann's three Concertos for Four Solo Violins – not only extraordinary works in their own right, but a real test of the depth of musical talent within the orchestra, as every one of the violinists had the chance to have their solo spot. And it was clear that there were very obviously no 'back-desk' players – all excelled. The evening opened with Handel's Overture to *Orlando*, a taste of the high musical standard to come. Even for the most experienced of players, the first few bars of a concert can be fraught, but these talented young players demonstrated perfect blend and cohesion from the start. Telemann's well-named

Sinfonia Spirituosa in D was a rousing opening to the second half, as was the following Handel *Sonata a 5* (HWV 288), giving Johannes Pramsohler a prominent solo role. They also played a couple of Handel *Concerti Grossi*. This was an excellent concert by some very talented and enterprising players.

LONDON HANDEL FESTIVAL

The 33rd London Handel Festival got off to a rousing start with *Belshazzar*, on Handel's birthday, 23 Feb, at his own church of St George's Hanover Square. For some reason I was given seats in a remote corner of the church, just behind the timpanist and double bass, and therefore got a very unbalanced (and rather bass-heavy) aural perspective of the performance, making it hard to review fairly. But it was fascinating to watch the double bass player, who allowed himself the luxury of a personal assistant who tuned his instrument, turned pages, arranged his music, found his mislaid glasses and generally pandered to his every whim. But I digress. I did manage to hear that Andrew Kennedy, in the title role, was on thumping good form, relishing the generally 'Hail fellow, well met' dramatic possibilities of his role. Also impressive were the two countertenors, David Allsopp and Gary Critchlow and bass-baritone Lisandro Abadie. Nitocris disappointed, not least for the edgy tone to her voice that resulted from her rapid vibrato. Laurence Cummings conducted with his usual ebullient panache, bringing out the contrast between the music for the goodies and baddies, notably at the first appearance of Daniel with his gently flowing vocal lines.

I was out of the country for the Final of the Handel Singing Competition, but did manage to get to the Semi-final (24 Feb). From a large entry, 16 singers survived: eight sopranos, four mezzos, one countertenor, one tenor and two baritones. As always seems to be the case, vibrato and non-Handelian, overly operatic voices and vocal styles (including excessive portamento, slithery runs and an inability to trill), were an issue with a few of the semi-finalists. However, there were several singers that demonstrated real talent in the specific vocal techniques needed for Handel singing. Those that impressed me were mezzo Katie Bray, with her excellent stage presentation, clear enunciation and nicely focussed voice; soprano Abbi Temple, her clear tone enhanced by an attractively gentle vibrato and with a nicely controlled upper register; soprano Sarah Power, with her confident stage presence and very clean runs and melodic leaps; soprano Sophie Junker, making excellent contact with the audience and demonstrating a fine acting ability; mezzo Kate Symonds-Joy, with her powerful and richly timbered voice and dramatic presentation; and Francesca Lombardi Mazzulli, with her slightly operatic, but nicely dramatic voice and a well-acted version of 'Endless Pleasure'. Kate Symonds-Joy and Abbi Temple were the only two of these who I think were very unfortunate not to make it to the Final. Eventually the winner turned out to be Sophie Junker, with countertenor Christopher Lowrey winning the 2nd prize, Katie Bray the audience prize and Francesca Lombardi Mazzulli, Sarah Power and soprano Elinor Rolfe Johnson being the remaining finalists.

400 YEARS OF VESPERS

June 10-12

Early Music America is presenting at the Berkeley Early Music Festival a three day event for scholars and performers. Mornings are for lectures, afternoons for a variety of workshops for singers and players. The first day focuses on 400 years before 1610, with Susan Hellauer and Rebecca Baltzar discussing chant and Notre-Dame polyphony, and a 'chant camp' on Vespers of 1210. Members of Cappella Romana also offer a partly participatory performance of Byzantine Vespers.

The second day is about Renaissance Vespers, with Alejandro Planchart on Dufay at Cambrai, Bill Mahrt on Morales/Victoria and Bob Wiemken & Joan Kimball on Portuguese Advent Vespers. (The evening Festival concert is Magnificat performing Cozzolani.)

The third day, on Monteverdi (1610), has two lectures (Clifford Bartlett and Herb Myers) and a general discussion involving those already mentioned plus three performers – Gwen Toth, Warren Stewart and Jeffrey Thomas.

There are also the surrounding Berkeley Early Music Festival events (details not yet on the www), including first-rate concerts and an exhibition.

Information from Early Music America
www.earlymusic.org/

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Francesco Soriano: Lettanie a sei voci Sancta Maria / Ave, Maris Stella

Canto (C1) San-cta Ma - ri - a, San - cte Io-an -

Canto Secondo (C1) o - ra pro no - bis;

Alto (C3)

Tenore (C4)

[Cantus firmus] (C4) A - ve, Ma - ris.

Basso (F4)

8 nes, San - cte Lau - ren - ti,

o - ra pro no - bis; o - ra pro no - bis;

Stel - - - - - la, De -

15



San - cte Sil - ve - ster,
o - ra pro no - bis;
i Ma - ter al -

This musical system contains six staves. The first staff is a vocal line with lyrics. The second staff is a vocal line with lyrics. The third staff is a lute line with a treble clef and a sharp sign. The fourth staff is a lute line with a treble clef. The fifth staff is a lute line with a treble clef and a sharp sign. The sixth staff is a lute line with a bass clef.

22



San - cte Gre - go - ri, San - cte Am - bro - si,
o - ra pro no - bis; o - ra pro
ma, At - que sem -

This musical system contains six staves. The first staff is a vocal line with lyrics. The second staff is a vocal line with lyrics. The third staff is a lute line with a treble clef. The fourth staff is a lute line with a treble clef. The fifth staff is a lute line with a treble clef. The sixth staff is a lute line with a bass clef.

29

San - cte An - to - ni, San - cte Ber - nar - de,
no - bis; o - ra pro no - bis; o -
per Vir - go

36

San - cte Fran - ci - sce,
ra pro no - bis; o - ra pro no - bis.
Fe - lix Cae - li Por - ta.

TACTUS

Brian Clark

We were recently contacted by Gian Enzo Rossi, who has just succeeded his late father Serafino as director of the enterprising Tactus label from Italy. We ceased to receive review copies a few years ago when their UK distributor failed, so it is with pleasure that we renew our contact with them, and mention here a few of the most recent issues, listed chronologically by composer. We look forward to their regular return to our pages.

Giovanni Legrenzi's *Il Cuor umano all'incanto* of 1673 is performed by the eponymous ensemble (TC 621201, 2003, 63' 10"), ~~which here consists of four singers (SATB) and continuo.~~ Divided into two parts, each beginning with a *sinfonia* and ending with a 'madrigal', the work dates from around 1673 and the several reprints of the libretto would suggest that it was very popular. The singing is pleasant and there is plenty of variety among the 36 movements (which are predominantly more aria-like than declamatory), though I feel that Legrenzi's true nature is really only revealed in the ensemble movements.

There are six works by Ippolito Ghezzi on the next disc (TC 653201, 2008, 63' 09"): the Cappella Musicale di San Giacomo Maggiore di Bologna, directed by Roberto Cascio, perform his oratorio *L'Adamo*, two sacred dialogues (the first between the Virgin Mary and A Spirit, the second between St Michael the Archangel and the Devil), and three lessons for Holy Week. Only the two dialogues involve independent instrumental contributions - the first has a pair of violins (not always entirely synchronized) and the second two recorders (again, not a great degree of care was taken on tuning and simultaneous tonguing). These minor faults apart, however, all credit to Tactus for recording an entire disc devoted to an obscure musician from 17th-century Siena!

We were sent two discs of music by Albergati (of several in the Tactus catalogue): Fortuna Ensemble perform an oratorio *La Beata Caterina da Bologna tentata di solitudine*, two other shorter such works (one devoted to St Bridget, the other to St Christophanes) and a Magnificat (TC 660101, 2004, 72' 55), while Ensemble La Flora alternate extracts from Albergati's *Corona dei pregi di Maria* with antiphons and motets by Victoria (TC 660103, 2009, 76' 14"). Both discs are enjoyable. Albergati was a Bolognese nobleman, and music was possibly little more than a hobby for him, yet he is quite clearly a gifted amateur. While I do not quite understand the rationale behind the juxtaposing of his music with Victoria's, the programme as a whole certainly does work - somehow the essence of each style is thrown into greater relief by being contrasted with the other.

Antonio Caldara's *Missa Dolorosa* is the centrepiece of a disc devoted to his sacred music (TC 670303, 2005, 61' 31"). It is preceded by the *sinfonia* from one of the composer's

sepulcro oratorios, and followed by eight motets for solo voices and continuo from his sole vocal publication (dedicated to Ottoboni). The soloists, Coro "Schola Cantorum S. Stefano" and baroque orchestra "Il Cimento degli Affetti" give strong accounts of all the works in the recital, and confirm Caldara's status as one of the most over-looked composers of the early 18th century.

Francesco Bartolomeo Conti is another. Rossana Bertini and Anna Simboli are the soprano soloists in four cantatas (they sing two each) on a very fine disc, on which they are accompanied by Ensemble "La Signoria". Each of the works counts *châlumeaux* amongst its line-up, and Conti's ear for colour is further demonstrated by his use of muted strings and lute (which was his own instrument). Quantz tells us that Conti was given priority over the great Weiss when the Vienna and Dresden court orchestras combined for the 1723 wedding festivities in Prague; that may have had more to do with politics than ability, but there is no denying Conti's definite gift for beautiful melody and subtle word-painting. This marvellous disc of four out of eight cantatas in a Viennese manuscript (TC 680301, 2000, 66' 02") confirms his status.

The final disc in my selection is a very enjoyable recital of quartet sonatas by the little-known Arcangelo Califano (TC 700301, 2003, 59' 18). The combination of two oboes, obbligato bassoon and continuo is well known thanks to similar works by Zelenka and Fasch, and four of the six sonatas performed here by Ensemble Barocco "Sans Souci" exploit this line-up, while the others are for two oboes and continuo. Theorbo, *contrabbasso* and harpsichord are the three instruments of choice here. Though the only documentary evidence for Califano's existence is among the court records of Dresden (where he played cello), the music is found in two other German libraries. Tuneful and contrapuntally interesting, it was very worthy of restoration, and I can happily recommend this recording to all our readers.

Recordings may be ordered direct from www.tactus.it.

The web site is prefixed by an explanation of how the discs are numbered:-

The first two digits refer to the date of birth of the composer, taking the century as the first number and the second the decade. [6 = 1600s, not 16th century]

The two central figures indicate the first letter of surname of the composer. [010 = A, 12 = L, but 32 for Ghezzi is puzzling].

The last two digits indicate the sequence number of the recordings issued by Tactus by the same composer.

CD REVIEWS

MEDIEVAL

Hildegard von Bingen *Composer and mystic* Ensemble für frühe Musik Augsburg
Christophorus CHR 77314 65' 02"

This CD presents the music of Hildegard in the context of other music of her time by Peter Abelard and anonymous polyphony from 12th-century MSS from the Abbey of St Martial in Limoges. In this sense the title inside the CD, *Hildegard von Bingen and her Time*, is more accurate than that on the cover. Drones and other appropriate improvised harmonisations enrich the sung monody, while beautiful instrumental renditions further extend the variety of this delightful CD. The two lengthy works by Abelard, *Planctus David* and the hymn *O quanta qualia*, are beautifully dramatised, while the Aquitanian polyphony is also evocatively realised by a variety of voices and period instruments. The four highly versatile members of the Augsburg Ensemble for Early Music, one of a number of such ensembles in Germany who are the worthy heirs of the famous Munich Studio der frühen Musik, all sing and play a variety of period instruments to a very high standard and clearly have a profound understanding of the music they are presenting. *D. James Ross*

Estel de mar: Llibre Vermell de Montserrat
Ensemble Kantika, Kristin Hoefener
Christophorus CHR 77312 75' 27"

This is beautifully sung, but I had difficulty in giving it a context. The booklet concentrates on the religious, liturgical connection of the music, though the emphasis varies a bit according to the translations: 'Alle Gesänge' doesn't mean quite the same as 'All chants' or 'Les chants'. The holy sound and association with the liturgy is undermined by the use of female voices (the only male, Malcolm Bothwell, sings on just one track). An alternative context would give an earthier sound of pilgrims singing and playing, but the image here is primarily refined and professional. Hearing it after Theresia Bothe (see the Dowland review below) emphasised this: she has enough edge for her simple quasi-naïve singing to work in either context. I also felt a lack of feel for sound and weight of the words: the Latin sounds like a dead language, which it wasn't then. I'm not trying to be negative. Some tracks are convincing (eg *Los set gotxs*) and the music itself is pleasingly performed. But at times there's a lack of impetus, particularly notable at the laid-

back opening of the last track: the words are not 'Let's go for a stroll' but 'Let's hurry to death' (*Ad mortem festinamus*). *CB*

15th CENTURY

Fantasiast: Music for Ausiàs March Pilar Esteban, José Hernández-Pastor ScT, Capella de Ministrers, Carles Maganer 65' 04"
Comes CDM0927 (Hardback book)
Music by Brudieu, Cornago, Enrique de Paris, Galeota, Nichola, Tinctoris, Voisard & Anon

This production is basically a lavishly illustrated hardback book in four languages about the 15th-century poet and adventurer Ausiàs March with a CD of musical settings of his verse and other music associated with the Neapolitan Court of Alfonso the Magnanimous. Cornago and Tinctoris are the familiar names, while the powerful poetry of March appears in settings by Joan Brudieu. The performances by the Capella de Ministrers are uniformly superb, from large-scale brass music to intimate songs for solo voice and lute, and just about everything in between, played and sung with flair and character and considerable virtuosity. The only fly in the ointment is the appalling English translation, which is routinely clumsy and occasionally laughable – 'He disseminates loves and children, despite any lawsuits against him'. If you don't mind wading through strings of similar infelicities March's life story and the picture we are given of the Renaissance court of Naples are intriguing. *D. James Ross*

The Seven Sins of Hieronymus Bosch
Camerata Trajectina, La Caccia 62' 11"
Globe GLO 6065

This is yet another CD of the show – a recording made of a theatrical production presented by Camerata Trajectina using as a springboard Hieronymus Bosch's famous circular panel depicting the seven deadly sins, of which a mini-poster is included in the package. The music they have gathered around this is mainly from Bosch's lifetime and features a complete mass by Antoine de Fevin and Jean Mouton's iconic *Nesciens Mater* (edition in our last issue). Interwoven amongst the sacred music there are pertinent Renaissance dances and what appear to be contemporary secular songs relating to the seven deadly sins, but sadly all is not as it seems. The booklet note contains the bombshell: 'The theme of the Seven Deadly sins is rare or rarely useful for our purposes in Dutch songs from Bosch's time, so we asked Gerrit Komrij, the

Netherlands' leading living poet, to write fitting texts to melodies that were sung in the Netherlands in Bosch's day'. I'm afraid I find it difficult to believe that there are no appropriate contemporary texts which could have been used: William Dunbar's *Dance of the Sevin* Deidly Synnis must surely have Dutch equivalents which could have been set to period music. The authentic music is idiomatically performed, but the fact that about half the material is modern pastiche is a serious weakness. *D. James Ross*

O florens rosa: the rose in the music of the Renaissance La Rossignol 49' 02"
III Millennio CDA0195

At the heart of this collection of recordings by small consort with and without solo voices are a number of settings of *O Rosa Bella* – the famous ones by Ciconia and Dunstable as well as a couple of anonymous settings. The recording is made live in a pleasantly roomy church acoustic and the spontaneity of the live performance is captured rather well. However, the intonation is not always entirely satisfactory, with a few pieces ending on a rather sour chord. This is a pity, as the performers have unearthed a wealth of unfamiliar material to suit their chosen theme, although frustratingly their booklet notes are inadequate when it comes to the sources for many of these charming but obscure pieces. Taken as a record of a varied and engaging concert programme employing a bewildering variety of period instruments, the present CD serves its purpose well, and is enjoyable on those terms. *D. James Ross*

Pinxit: Affresco Musicale del Rinascimento a Bologna Cappella Musicale San Giacomo Maggiore, Cascio 56' 45"
Tactus TC 450002
Ambrosio, Borrono, Cara, Dalza, Demophon, Festa, Fogliano, Pesenti, Pifaro, Rossino da Mantova, Tromboncino & anon

Whimsy is the central tenet of this CD of quirky, raunchy and downright bizarre songs from Renaissance Bologna, and your response to it will depend on how much whimsy you can take end to end. The playing is excellent and notwithstanding the many mannerisms which find their way into the singing, this too is good if a little naïve. I have to say that I found comic number after comic number a little wearing, and it can hardly be a fair reflection of the general musical scene in Bologna. The lack of English translations of the song texts meant that a lot of the

verbal double entendres fell a bit flat for me: was this another show which worked better live? Perhaps you had to be there!

D. James Ross

The Wedding of King Matthias & Beatrice, 1476 Corvina Consort
HCD 399

Music from the *Mellon Chansonnier* by Binchois, Busnois, Hayne, Frye Morton, Ockeghem, Tinctoris

I suspect that our readers would have known what to expect from this disc had it been entitled *The Mellon Chansonnier* (accessible in a combined volume of facsimile and facing transcription; there is also a facsimile on the www). I was a bit disappointed that the purely vocal performance of the first track was followed by mixtures of voices and instruments (the group picture shows six singers), but not enough to object very strongly. This is music that is beautiful and refined, but not in any way precious. The texts are in the original (mostly French) and Hungarian but the notes have an English translation: they explain the connection between Tinctoris, Naples and the wedding. This is a delightful recording. CB

16th CENTURY

Fuenllana Mårten Falk & El Escorial: The Spanish Renaissance World of Miguel de Fuenllana Mårten Falk vihuela, Anna Petrini rec, Louise Agnani viol, Ingrid Falk S
dB Productions dBCD132 50' 50"
Distribution www.naxosdirect.se

Fuenllana's *Orphénica Lyra* (Valladolid, 1554) is one of seven collections of music for the vihuela printed in 16th-century Spain. There are solos for the vihuela, songs both secular and sacred, and even some pieces for 5-course vihuela, and for 4-course guitar. There are 182 items altogether; some are by Fuenllana, and others are his intabulations of other composers' works. Mårten Falk (6-course vihuela in a' at A=440) and his group give a glimpse of the treasures in Fuenllana's book. I enjoyed hearing some of Fuenllana's lesser known *tientos* and *fantasías*, in particular *Tiento no 4*, with its excursion into some quite extraordinary keys. Falk's solo playing is careful, neat and accurate, but restrained, with a constant introspective melancholy; there are too many rolled chords for my taste, and some notes are so quiet, they are almost lost. Other instruments are introduced for a wider palette of tone colours. A nice piece of two-part counterpoint called *Duo* is played first as a vihuela solo, and then again with viol and recorder doubling the two melodic lines. There are also four well-known *recercadas* by Diego Ortiz, including a well-paced

Recercada primera adeptly played by Louise Agnani on viola da gamba; I just wish I could hear more of Falk's imaginative noodling in the background. Anna Petrini's chirpy recorders add a welcome touch of sparkle throughout, in particular in Ortiz's *Recercada Segunda*. All four musicians perk up for a spirited rendition of *Oyme, oyme*. The songs are ably sung by Ingrid Falk, although she could have done with one more take for "Puse mis amores" - the high entry after 53 seconds is not good.

The solos sound fine on a vihuela in a', but I think the songs would have benefited from being accompanied on a larger instrument at a lower pitch. Unfortunately, the musicians have been let down badly by the sound engineers. I had to keep turning the volume right up for the vihuela solos, then right back down again for Ingrid Falk, who all but drowns out the vihuela when she sings. The high recorder, though less obtrusive than the voice, is also comparatively too loud. With the balance so topsy-turvy, the different sounds of the instruments do not blend so well together, which is a shame, because their ensemble is good.

Stewart McCoy

Palestrina Missa Papae Marcelli Ensemble Officium, Wilfried Rombach 64' 55"

Christophorus CHR 77313

motets for Ascension: *Beati omnes, Caro meo, Coenantes illis, Jesu nostra redemptio, Omnes gentes & Viri Galilea*

As I picked up this CD the weary thought crossed my mind: Why record this Palestrina mass yet again unless you have something really profound to say about it? The *Missa Papae Marcelli* is probably the most familiar and frequently recorded Mass by the most familiar and most frequently performed Italian Renaissance composer. But as it turns out, the present performers do have something profound to say about it. As Wilfried Rombach argues in his introduction, Roman performances of these works would have involved a downward transposition of a fourth,* and he claims the present recording as the first to feature both Mass and motets at this lower pitch. The implications are certainly considerable, with the top line accessible to adult male voices and the alto line to high tenor voices - the former is not the case here, whereas the latter is. The large-scale motets such as *Omnes gentes* a 8 and *Beati omnes* a 12 seem invested with additional power as a result of their lower tessitura. The choir certainly produces a beautifully resonant performance of both Mass and motets, and there is some truly lovely plainchant singing from the soprano section.

D. James Ross

* What that means in terms of the prevailing Roman pitch is another matter, but why do other specialist

choirs still ignore the overwhelming argument for the transposition of high-clef music? CB

Palestrina Missa Tu es Petrus Choir of Westminster Cathedral, Martin Baker
Hyperion CDA67785 77' 49"

Victoria Te Deum laudamus; Palestrina Missa Te Deum laudamus, Tu es Petrus a6, Missa Tu es Petrus

The full sound of this large English choir singing two six-part Mass settings by Palestrina is very distinctive, and Martin Baker's reading is intelligent and varied. The Masses *Te Deum laudamus* and *Tu es Petrus* each both preceded by their models, motets by Victoria and Palestrina. I may have reservations about the sound of the twenty boys' voices occupying the top line, when we can be fairly sure that a couple of adult male voices singing down a fourth was actually what the composer had in mind; but the Westminster Cathedral Choir sound has become so established in the public mind, not least in association with Palestrina, that it presents a perfectly viable alternative if not entirely authentic sound-world. Palestrina's complete mastery of material in both these settings is striking, and makes it clear why many still regard him as the apogee of Renaissance polyphonic composition. D. James Ross

Ars Magica La Rossignol 59' 36"
III Millennio CDA0222

The present CD seems to be an investigation of the representations of magic in the music of the Middle Ages and Renaissance, although the fact that the programme booklet is entirely in Italian left me a little baffled as to precisely what was going on. A narrator seems to be incanting various spells associated with alchemy, magic and early medicine while the consort plays appropriate instrumental music from sources as diverse as *Danserye*, *Orchesographie*, morris dance, Sephardic music and the *Libre Vermell*. The programme booklet is not really adequate for an international audience, and much of the linkage between text and music was lost on me. Photographs within the booklet suggest that the programme was originally presented with dancers, and I can imagine it working rather well in this context, but if this CD is to be more than a record of an entertaining evening the supporting materials need to be accessible. D. James Ross

Dulcis Melancholia: Margaret of Austria Capilla Flamenca, Dirk Snellings 63' 48"
Musique en Wallonie MEW 0525

This CD promised to be another wallow in the depressing life of Margaret of Austria, the Hapsburg who had everything except happiness. Fortunately, the

performers have selected some of the more life-enhancing music from the lavish MSS which surrounded Charles V's Regent in the Netherlands. As always with this excellent ensemble the performances are lively and beautifully characterised, with enough cheery songs and dances to allow the more melancholy material to shine effectively. To listen to this CD, with the emphasis thoroughly on the *Dulcis* rather than the *Melancholia* is to feel better about a woman whose life surely can't have been all miserable! D. James Ross

Piae Cantiones Anno 1582 Ensemble Laude Novella 110' 39" (2 CDs)
LEN Records ELNCD0901

The material for these two CDs is taken from *Piae Cantiones ecclesiasticae et scholasticae veterum Episcoporum* printed in the Renaissance Swedish empire in 1582 and constituting a collection of 74 Latin songs for performance by young scholars. Various sections provide mainly solo voice music for the church year and dealing with the life of the scholar. The performers wisely keep their versions simple and direct, suggesting the way in which Scandinavian schoolboys might have approached the collection. This is a fascinating source, quarried for carols since the 1850s, and illustrates vividly how schoolboys throughout Europe might have whiled away their idle hours. So this recording casts a spotlight on a genuinely popular yet neglected branch of music-making. D. James Ross

Recorders Greate and Smale – Music for the English Court Recorder Consort
Mezzaluna 66'09"
Ramée RAM 0907

At his death in 1547, Henry VIII's instrument collection included 76 'recorders greate and smale'. But although the names of the members of the court recorder consort from about 1540 onwards are known, no record of the music they played has survived. Peter Van Heyghen, one of the founders of the group, describes in an informative essay the process of reconstructing a hypothetical repertoire, based on the nationality of the known players and the varying musical influences at the Tudor court during the 16th century. Perhaps surprisingly, the result is a programme of mainly continental vocal music rather than English instrumental music.

From the beginning of Henry's reign, there are pieces from Henry VIII's MS which dates from around 1520. The arrival at the court of the Flemish lute player, Philip van Wilder, at around the same time is marked by three of his 5-part chansons. Flemish influence was soon challenged by Italian, with the employ-

ment of a number of Italian musicians at court during the 1530s, represented here by some Italian dances published by Attaignant in Paris. The arrival of the Bassano family of recorder players in 1540 is likely to have been accompanied by repertoire published in Venice, so we have madrigals by Arcadelt, Verdelot and Willaert and a motet by Lassus. English consort music finally appears in a Fantasia, Pavan and Galliard by William Byrd.

The booklet contains a complete list of sources and an essay by Adrian Brown about reconstructing the court recorders and renaissance performance practice. The very high quality of the booklet accompanying this CD is matched by the quality of Mezzaluna's consort playing on recorders by Adrian Brown, one set copied from instruments in the Vienna Kunsthistorisches Museum and a second set attributed to the Bassano family. Victoria Helby

17th CENTURY

Music for viol appears separately at the end of this section.

Buxtehude Opera Omnia XI Vocal Works 4
Johanne 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

This is the fourth issue of the vocal series of Ton Koopman's Complete Buxtehude. Each of the two discs includes eight genuine works by the composer (Disc 1 also has an anonymous work which has been placed in the appendix of the thematic index, the BuxWV), of which five are for solo voice. It took me a little while to get used to the idea of hearing a woman singing *Jesu, meine Freud und Lust*, such is the popularity of the piece on recital discs by countertenors, but I was won over (though not entirely convinced, I must add – is there any evidence Buxtehude used female altos?) by the way every phrase of the work is so carefully shaped and nurtured. That, of course, is Koopman's approach; I have heard his Bach criticised for appearing to treat a choir and an orchestra as an extension of his organ-playing style, yet time and time again in Buxtehude that spontaneous approach to the ever-changing patchwork design of many pieces lends itself perfectly to such a strategy, and I rate these performances very highly indeed. BC

Dowland & Croton Remembrance of things past Theresia Bothe + Derek Lee Ragin voices, Peter Croton lute 62' 34"
Guild GMCD 7341

An intriguing disc. Theresia Bothe's voice reminds us of the young Emma Kirkby, with its absolute clarity, accuracy and fine diction and a slightly raw but refreshing quality. She presents the texts in a slightly detached way, and one expects a little more shaping of the line and perhaps a little more expression. But strophic songs (like hymns) can arguably be presented as narratives that should be allowed to speak for themselves. We were impressed. We wondered where she comes from, both musically and geographically; the style gave little away, but her biog suggests a variety of word-based repertoires. The mixed accent isn't surprising for someone with an Irish mother and German father born in Canada and brought up in Mexico, then moving to German-speaking Europe. She studied at the Basel Schola Cantorum, as did her accompanist, Peter Croton, an impressive lutenist, who contributes some freer versions of the songs as lute solos. He also features as a composer. We didn't relate to the solo vocal pieces, but the duets (which is where Derek Lee Ragin appears) impressed us rather more. It's worth sampling her on You-Tube. Her voice might not be to everyone's taste, but we strongly recommend this disc. EB & CB

Frescobaldi Recercari, et Canzoni Francese fatte sopra diversi obblighi in partitura
Francesco Tasini (1580 Baldassare Malamin organ, San Procolo, Bologna) 65' 30"
Tactus TC 580608

A CD consisting of 11 Recercars (*Recercar Primo* is repeated with intabulations) and five Canzonas might be considered hard going by even the most dedicated and contrapuntally-minded EMR reader but, when the composer is Frescobaldi, exceptions need to be made. The organ has recently been restored – I have not played it, but on this recording it sounds slightly more brittle than the Italian organ of this period normally does. Perhaps a close recording position has mislaid some of the acoustic bloom that normally softens the singing tone of the Italian organ. One aspect that began to grate with me was Tasini's occasional habit of not aligning notes accurately, harpsichord style – this technique really does not work on the organ. That said, this is a worthy addition to the many recordings of Italian organ music of this period. Andrew Benson-Wilson

Monteverdi Sacred Vocal Music Emma Kirkby, David Thomas, The Parley of Instruments, Roy Goodman & Peter Holman 43' 11"
Hyperion Helios CDH55345 (rec 1981)

This disc is one of the earliest I can remember that sparked my interest both

in HIP performance and in early music in general. I think it's fair to say that the performances are still exemplary – Emma Kirkby was arguably at her most agile here, and David Thomas's massive bass range (so wonderfully exploited in Monteverdi) remains impressive, to say the least. The string sound is slightly astringent. Over the years this has mellowed and sometimes it's a job to say on random radio broadcasts what is and what isn't a period violin these days, but I like it, especially when Roy Goodman is involved; how the early music scene misses him! Every reader of this magazine should own this disc. BC

Rosenmüller *Deutsche geistliche Konzerte*
Johann Rosenmüller Ensemble 72' 07"
Christophorus CHR 77319 (rec 2000)

*Ach Herr strafe mich nicht, Daran ist erschienen.
Entsetze dich Natur, Ich weiß daß mein Erlöser
lebt, O Jesu süß, Siehe an die Werke Gottes, Sonata
a2, Vater ich habe gesündigt, Was stehet ihr hie*

This re-release is most welcome. The nine works on the programme include two pieces that definitely pre-date his Venetian period (although the remainder were possibly also written in Germany before he went into exile). The only purely instrumental work is a sonata for violin, fagotto and continuo from the 1682 printed set. They range from the lovely *O Jesu süß* for Tenor, two violins and continuo, to *Siehe an die Werke Gottes*, here performed with the five ripieno voices Rosenmüller suggests. Three of the works last a little over five minutes, while *Entsetze dich Natur* (a setting of 14 verses of an anonymous poem for Christmas) lasts over 19 minutes. The one-to-a-part performances breath real life into this marvellous music, and are highly recommended. BC

A. Scarlatti *Opera omnia per tastiera*
Vol. III Francesco Tasini org 78' 17"
Tactus TC 661913

Coming between Frescobaldi and J. S. Bach, Alessandro Scarlatti's keyboard music tends to fall between two stools for the modern audience. Lacking the lightning quick inspiration of Frescobaldi or the structured contrasts of Bach, Scarlatti's undoubted flashes of genius can struggle to shine through the music's over-extended sequences and circles of fifths. This generous third volume in Tasini's series uses a fine 1845 organ by Sangalli (Italian organs changed very little from the 17th to the 19th centuries). The fugal movements work best on the organ, with a gravity that gives them stature. In the figurative toccata sections we are sometimes closer to the fairground organ, missing the lightness of touch and flexibility that a harpsichord could provide.

There is too much in C major: six out of eleven tracks, including three in a row. Some of the pieces are quite extended and multi-sectional; Tasini registers well in these, providing good contrast where he can, and he is cleanly and brightly recorded. Worth having as part of the complete set but perhaps not the best introduction to Alessandro Scarlatti as a composer. Noel O'Regan

A. Scarlatti & F. Durante *Umnana e Inumana* Isabelle Poulenard, Guillemette Laurens, Fuoco e Cenere, Jay Bernfeld
Arion ARN68812

The reader of the booklet will, I suspect, spend more time sorting out which item is by which composer than listening to this record! The contiguous placing of movements of the same text setting by the two composers seems somewhat strange, and the booklet (at least in translation) does little to clarify the logic of the order of the tracks. The two singers – stylish and suitably expressive and dramatic in the right places – are accompanied by archlute and harpsichord. The use of viola da gamba on the bass line, however, rather than the Italianate violoncello or violone seems a little inappropriate, and the inclusion of just two movements from a Scarlatti suite for treble recorder and continuo, with its at times occasional suspect tuning, a little bizarre, even though the same combination occurs as a solo instrumental item later in one of the cantatas. Ian Graham-Jones

Schütz *Psalm David's* Dresdner Kreuzchor, Capella Fidicinia, Martin Fläming
76' 09" (rec. 1974/1976)
Berlin Classics reference 0014082BC
SWV 22, 26, 27, 30, 32, 37-39, 45-47

This is a re-release of a 1974 recording, and it shows, not least with the excessive vibrato from the recorders and strings. There is something distinctive about the raw sound of massed boys' voices in the repertoire, although I think you would need to love the sound of boys voices very much to cope with repeated listening. Try track 4, for example, for a particularly inventive example of intonation. Andrew Benson-Wilson

Weckmann *Wie liegt die Stadt so wüste*
Cantus Cölln, Konrad Junghänel 77' 56"
harmonia mundi HMC 902034
*Canzon II, IX; Der Tod ist verschlungen, Gegrüßet
seist du, Kommet her zu mir alle, Weine nicht,
Wenn der Herr die Gefangenen, Wie liegt die Stadt
so wüste, Zion spricht*

It surprises me that Weckmann is not much better known. As is typical of Junghänel, this is a quality programme. The range of the composer's output is

amply demonstrated (from two of the canzonas for violin, cornett, trombone and continuo to motets for ATB, three violins, three gambas and continuo), and his wonderful ability for mood-setting, as well as individual word-setting is explored to the full. The version of the title track (which also features on the *Harmoniae Sacrae* disc reviewed below) is far more passionate – you can feel the despair. In contrast, the soprano and tenor duet with pairs of violins and recorders *Gegrüßet seist du* (Luke's account of the angel appearing to Mary) is wonderfully lively. There is no denying an underlying melancholy, and I have no doubt that his congregation must regularly have been in floods of tears, but that very ability to move is what sets Weckmann above many of his contemporaries. This is one of my favourite recordings this month. BC

Christoph Genz: *Berlin Classics portrait*
60' 30" (rec. 2000)
Berlin Classics 0184772BC
Dowland, Franck, Bach, Haydn, Morley, Mozart, Nauwach, Purcell & Voigtländer

There can't be many singers who have sung in both the Thomanerchor and the choir of King's College, Cambridge. Christoph Genz is one of this select band. At its best his voice is relaxed and flexible and that is what we hear in the lute songs and the Classical pieces on this disc. I am less convinced by the Bach. The heavy (modern) orchestral style does not help, but I am not convinced that this is the voice for BWV54, usually alto territory, although Genz can get the notes. The tenor cantata, 55, is better. As with the Kowalski Bach-Handel disc (see p; 27), the 'design' of the booklet is ridiculous.

David Hansell

Harmoniae Sacrae Hana Blaziková
Peter Kooij SB. L'Armonia Sonora,
Miekeke van der Velden 62' 59"
Ramée RAM 0905
Bernhard, Biber, Buns, Meder, Tunder & Weckmann

This recital contains pieces by composers one would expect on a disc thus titled, but also a couple of surprises. Alongside fairly well-known pieces by Tunder and Weckmann come others by Meder, Bernhard and Buns (which takes the definition of German a little off the beaten track), and an odd choice of chamber music (a sonata by Biber). The performances are excellent – the solo voices have regularly been praised in these pages. Blaziková colours her voice a little more than usual, though always within the bounds of good taste. The instrumental group (whose director also plays on the fabulous Weckmann disc reviewed above) create a gloriously homo-

genous sound. I'd love to hear them do an all Rosenmüller programme. BC

Préludes & Fantaisies de Chorales Pierre Bardon (1773 Isnard organ Saint-Maximin, Provence, France) 79' 54"

Syrus 141427

Bruhns, Buxtehude, Lübeck, Reincken & Scheidemann

Although Pierre Bardon presides over a fine historic French organ, he seems determined to avoid recording French music on it. His latest venture, into the North German repertoire of the 17th century, may show the versatility of his own organ but really does not do any favours to the chosen repertoire. With so many recordings of this repertoire available performed on appropriate instruments, I fear this may only be of interest to Mr Bardon's friends and family

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Via Crucis Nuria Rial, Philippe Jaroussky S cT, Barbara Furtuna (Corsican Choir), L'Arpeggiata, Christina Pluhar 70' 35"

Virgin Classics ICPN 509960710703

(deluxe version: CD + bonus DVD)

5099969457708 (Jewel Box)

50999694577654 (Download)

Music by Allegri, Biber, Ferrari, Cazzati, Gagnanillo, Legrenzi, Merula, Monteverdi, Rossi, Sances

I expect that some people hate Pluhar's programmes of indeterminate mixtures of grounds and improvisations with minimal connection to whatever notated original they are based on. L'Arpeggiata is by no means the first group to try their hand at it, Tragicomedia and The Harp Consort, for instance. But L'Arpeggiata goes just that bit further, risks more, and when it works (as it usually does) produces performances that are intensely moving. One track did disappoint, Merula's *Hor ch'è tempo*, perhaps because I know it from several other performances and have an image of it as a private lullaby, without an ensemble to join in, though it seemed wrong even before that happened: I don't think it was an accident that the score has the ground and the voice line so close together. But the rest is a delight, with a touch of a folk style that is not completely out of touch with the ethos of Monteverdi's solo *Laudate Dominum* (the one with the *ciaccona*) – the accompaniment here couldn't contrast more with the plain organ manner I adopt! A disc mostly of grounds needs variety, and this it has, with marvellous singing and the quietest ground still being intensely rhythmical. Buy it! CB

The copy received was of the non-deluxe version, with no accompanying booklet. I'd like to know who was playing and whether the *Via Crucis* theme was traced by the texts. See also p. 1.

MUSIC FOR VIOLA DA GAMBA

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

Passacaille musica vera 957

Music by Marin Marais & Jacques Gallot

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

Gambomania Ralph Rousseau 54' 53"

Challenge Classics CC72334

Abel, de Caix d'Hervelois, Hume, Marias & Schenk

Ralph Rousseau is a double bass player who has taken up the viola da gamba, and now specialises in this instrument. This recording, entirely of unaccompanied bass viol music, is essentially to promote himself as a player. The booklet quotes reviews of his playing, and gives some intriguing information about him, including that he has a Ph.D. in physics along with his diplomas in music. The booklet doesn't tell us who made the instrument he plays, but does list among the credits the person who does his hair and make-up! There is no doubt that he can play, and the later music suits his style better. The Abel sonata in D minor is brilliant, technically secure and exciting in its virtuosity, but he plays into the instrument too much for my taste, forcing the tone. He has a very 'modern' approach, somewhat legato, rushing his chords, which doesn't work in Hume or Marais. The recording is close-miked, so we hear the left hand movements, but it is worth having for the Abel, and for the Schenk sonata in E minor from *L'Echo du Danube*, which is a marvellous piece and his playing is fully up to its considerable demands. Robert Oliver

Hume Passion & Division Susanne Heinrich viol 70' 44"

Hyperion CDA67811

The First Part of Ayres - Captain Humes Musical Humors (1605)

I looked forward to listening to this having very much enjoyed and admired her last solo viol disc, the music of Abel, to which I gave a rave review several issues ago. I was not disappointed. Her playing is full of insight and, most important, deep affection for this most idiosyncratic composer, beloved by all bass viol players. She searches for, and finds the coherence in his music, and one feels she has been on a pilgrimage which she invites us to join. There are quite a few things to point out however. In the big pieces, she is fairly literal, but she extends many of the small pieces with improvisations, albeit very sympathetic, even rearranging the order of sections, and extending repeats with her own divisions. I was completely convinced by much of what she did, but not all. For example, she changes *Loves Farewell* quite radically, and although what she plays is basically Hume (the chords, the runs) with some very well-chosen divisions of her own, she does change the order of sections completely. She gives all the details necessary for anyone to follow the music, and viol players will instantly spot what is going on, but there is no mention of this in her booklet notes. This apart, I unhesitatingly applaud this recording.

She uses three viols, two basses and a tenor, strung throughout in uncovered gut. She plays a couple of the *lyra* pieces ('leero' as Hume calls them) one of which she changes considerably and the other, the much longer 'I am Melancholy', she plays quite literally, and what a beautiful piece it is! Her playing is flexible, with much variation of rhythm and dynamic within pieces, and superbly controlled throughout. Some solo recordings of Hume I have found overly-mannered but not this one. One may disagree with some details of her approach, but one cannot fail to be stimulated, either as a listener, or as a player constantly returning to these pieces. The sound is often sumptuous, sometimes the brilliance of the tenor (tuned in F) in the 'Soldiers Resolution' or 'Tickell tickell', sometimes plucked, sometimes deep and mysterious in the *lyra* tuning for her opening improvisations which lead to 'Loves pastime', and the playing has all the authority of long study of this puzzling, fascinating and beautiful music.

Robert Oliver

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.

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

Everyone should have this one. These extraordinary compositions are without parallel in their time. Neither Roger North nor Thomas Mace seem to have even known of their existence, and Peter Holman doubts that Purcell could have assembled a complete viol consort to play them – particularly given their technical demands. Fretwork, with only six players named, play them all, bar the incomplete one, in order, unadorned by any extras, relying on their superb performance.

Which they give, and which makes the recording an essential part of any library. There are a few details – one of the treble viols uses more vibrato than the other, but otherwise great tonal variety is achieved by their articulation and dynamics, with exquisite touches of phrasing. Their sound differs from, for example, Phantasm, less upholstered, a little more astringent (although the touches of vibrato move them somewhat in that direction), and more pungent articulation at times, all of which for me more nearly approach the demands of this wonderful music. The 7-part *In Nomine* which concludes the recording and the set is wonderfully sonorous and stately. Their total time is slightly under 50 minutes, Phantasm slightly over; but no-one could possibly feel they've been sold short. Robert Oliver

This was written last autumn, but somehow was overlooked.

Purcell *Fantasias* Les Voix humaines 53'
ATMA Classique ACD2 2591
Fantasias I-XIII + Z.745, 747, two movements
from *The Fairy Queen* & *Dido's Lament*

This is a very different approach, and one that many will find extreme, but there is no doubt of its accomplishment. Like Fretwork's new recording and Phantasm's from over ten years ago, all the Fantasias are recorded in order. To this they add a completion of the incomplete 4-part (no. 13), and fill out the disc with some dances from *The Fairy Queen*, concluding with a version for viols of Dido's lament. This takes the total time out to all of 53 minutes, and reveals that their times are brisker than those of either Fretwork or Phantasm, despite their additional music adding about 10 minutes. However the difference is not merely in their choice of tempi. Their articulation and bow-strokes are radically different, their rubato, and variation of speeds far freer. Their choice of instruments is significant: the so-called "Hart House Viols" – two pardessus by Guerson and Bertrand, two anonymous trebles and an alto, a bass attributed to Tielke, and Susie Napper plays her Barak

Norman bass. The sound this creates is very 18th-century French, as is their approach: inégale quavers, ornaments in the style of Marais, embellished and filled-in intervals, tremblements liés: it's 'An Englishman at King Louis' Court', 'It's Purcell, Jim, but not as we know it'. It's also extremely well-done: their ensemble, given their freedom of tempo and quicksilver changes, is astonishing, and their dexterity throughout is superb. Whether or not you like it will depend on whether you feel the music is served by this sort of romanticisation, by the constant swelling attack, the cadential embellishments, the often very brisk speeds (the 7-part *In Nomine* takes 2':18" as opposed to Fretwork's and Phantasm's about 4'). It's not to my taste, but fans of this approach will probably love it, and the completion of the 13th Fantasia by Matthias Maute is true to Purcell's idiom yet very modern, and should become part of the repertoire as a marvellous piece in its own right.

Robert Oliver

LATE BAROQUE

Bach *Die Motetten* BWV 225-230 Chorus sine nomine, Johannes Hiemetsberger Gramola 98875 64' 35"

This recording has some very stiff opposition on the market, not least from the recent Bach Collegium Japan issue. The Chorus sine nomine (even as a non-Latin speaker I wonder at the wisdom of choosing that particular name) number more than 50 and eschew instrumental participation in this repertoire. Their CV lists prizes in international competitions and a wide range of music (from Monteverdi to Steve Reich, and contemporary Austrian composers). They do a very fine job in these six demanding works, which seem to encapsulate all that is good about motet writing in German up to that point. It seems slightly odd, though, when big choirs 'sing down' in early repertoire – is it not more sensible to use a smaller ensemble or simply just to avoid scheduling such pieces? There is much to commend here in terms of sonorities and clarity of lines in fugal movements, but this will not be my first choice when I next feel like listening to Bach's motets. Sorry. BC

Bach *Orgelwerken* Wim Winters (2007 Thomas organ, l'Eglise Réformée de Boudier, Strasbourg) 70' 17"
Paraty 309.109
BWV 530, 540/1+2, 544, 596, 608, 620, 632, 659, 684

This modern organ was built in the style of the early 18th century Thuringian instruments that Bach would have been familiar with, including his recommen-

dations for his own Mülhausen organ, with its focus on expression and gravitas. The mixed programme demonstrates the organ, rather than developing any specific theme of its own. One programming oddity is that the Fugue that usually goes with the opening Toccata is separated out and inserted in a group of chorale preludes. The organ makes an impressive sound, with just the right amount of ambient acoustic. Wim Winters has an impressive list of teachers behind him, and plays with musical conviction, energy and integrity with a fine sense of articulation. His registration choices are thoughtful and interesting – for example, the left hand line of *Christ unser Herr zum Jordan kam* played on a 16' reed and the solo of *Nun komm der heiden Heiland* played on that distinctive central German sound of a Quintadena, Salicional and Vox Humana combined. Recommended.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Bach *Great chorales from Clavierübung III* Jean-Patrice Brosse (1535 Bachelier organ, St Bertrand-de-Comminges, France) Arion PV710021

This is a very curious organ, wrapped round the corner of the cathedral nave, with the console hidden underneath the organ at the angle. You need to play with headphones to get any idea of what noise you are making. This is a reissue of a 1990 recording. The notes are minimal, and the website where the original booklet apparently lurks was unobtainable when I tried. The playing is a bit rushed for my taste and some of the registrations are a bit weird, even accounting for the use of a classical French organ for playing Bach.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Bach at Amorbach Nicolas Kynaston (1782/1981 Stumm/Steinmeyer/Klais organ, Amorbach, Bavaria)
LCS Hi-Res LCSCD006
BWV 537, 552, 582, 596, 639, 727, 731 & 903 (transc. Reger) + *Nun freut euch, lieben Christen g'mein* without BWV

This is a re-release of a 1994 recording, although there is nothing on the CD cover to even give a hint of that fact. The organ is a curious combination of two remote historic periods, with the late-18th century organ combined with elements of its own later romantic additions. In a way, that suits Kynaston's playing, which itself incorporates elements of the romantic and classical, the former style particularly noticeable in the chorale preludes. Although best known for his performances of the great romantic organ warhorses and transcriptions (and, to reinforce the point, this CD concludes with Max Reger's transcription of Bach's Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue), Kynaston

was a compelling Bach interpreter. His articulation and phrasing might not win prizes for 'authenticity', but he plays with personal conviction. And it is refreshing to hear an organ performer who is willing to play at a speed that allows the organ pipes to speak. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

Bach Goldberg Variations, Sarabanda con Partite, Aria Variata 130' 30" (2 CDs)
Matthew Halls, harpsichord
Linn CKD 356

Beautifully recorded on an Ian Tucker harpsichord after Ruckers/Hemsch, these two CDs give us three sets of variations with consecutive BWV numbers (988-990). While much less well-known than the Goldberg, the other two sets provide a context for it. The *Sarabanda con Partite* is a competent work, without the real inspiration which might clinch its having been composed by Bach. It nevertheless provides a good foil for the Goldberg, also based on a Sarabande aria. It has eleven variations followed by four suite movements on the same theme, as in Froberger's *Majerin partite*. The *Aria Variata* is a different matter, having a development of material and a quirkiness which marks it out as definitely by Bach. Halls' playing is impeccable throughout, responding to every nuance. This is a reflective Goldberg performance, in which the virtuosity is lightly worn, but none the less present. The booklet includes Hall's own guided tour to the Goldberg which, as well as showing how carefully he has thought about each variation, succinctly draws our attention to key features. It's a slight pity to have to change CD in the middle of the Goldberg but this is a small price to pay for having all three sets and the recording is highly recommended.

Noel O'Regan

Bach Goldberg Variations Silke Strauf & Claas Harders gambas 71' 31"
Raumklang 2807

Well, the Goldbergs on two viols is possible but I'm not convinced that it's a good idea. This certainly isn't a disc for getting to know the piece, though once my general disbelief went into suspension, I did find a lot to enjoy and admire in the playing and in the skill of the arrangement. There is nothing musically controversial here – indeed there is much good taste – but the music is surely too inextricably shot through with the rhetoric of the harpsichord to be fully convincing in this version. *David Hansell*

Bach Complete Sonatas for Viola da Gamba and Harpsichord Daniel Yeadon gamba, Neal Peres da Costa hpscd 42' 48"
ABC Classics 476 3394

A welcome addition to the numerous recordings of these marvellous pieces. The approach of the two players is literal, and there are no extra pieces to fill out the disc. The result is less than 45 minutes playing time, but listeners should not feel short changed. The players have clearly played these pieces many times, and their combined understanding and love of the music are always evident, and their ensemble is superb. Daniel Yeadon plays a Bertrand copy, dated 2002. It sounds like a powerful instrument, with resonant middle register and slightly astringent top strings, which will blend better as the instrument ages. He has the instincts of a cellist, but in these pieces that is not a disadvantage, and one can enjoy his absolutely secure left hand, and lovely musical phrasing. Neal Peres da Costa plays beautifully throughout. He plays a Taskin copy with a lovely glowing sound, and the two instruments complement each other very well. There is a compelling urgency in the fast movements, particularly in the D Major and G Minor final allegros. The booklet notes are interesting in that they assume some who listen will have not experienced harpsichords or bass viols before. They succinctly prepare any such listener for what they will hear, without in any way talking down to them. This is a welcome approach, particularly for these pieces, which are very well known to aficionados, who will already know about these pieces anyway.

Robert Oliver

Johann, I'm only dancing: Masterworks by J. S. Bach Red Priest 69' 04"
Red Priest Recordings RP007

I have no problem with the concept of arrangement, though I don't think that all the pieces here sensibly adapt for these forces, and I admire RP's virtuosity and imagination – but I just don't like the results. The recorder articulation is very fierce (emphasised by the close recording) and the musical gestures are so extreme that they lose all meaning. Live, this is probably a great show, but as a recording it does nothing for me. *David Hansell*

Handel Apollo e Dafne Myrsini Margariti, Nikolay Borchev, Händelfestspielorchester Halle, Bernhard Forck
Avi 8553200

Having impressed Italy, Handel arrived in London, where he quickly made a splash with, amongst other things, a libretto that he had picked up in Italy about a nymph who would rather turn into a tree than be Apollo's lover. Handel not only brilliantly characterised the protagonists but planted a bed of tunes he would pick again and again for later creations. This perfor-

mance is excellent. Apollo's entry could perhaps be a little more arrogant, but Borchev is a capable singer who brings pathos to the god, especially at the end. Margariti as Dafne makes it no surprise that Apollo was immediately attracted to her by her voice. The direction and playing are generally spot-on, with few nits to pick (I find the final aria does not sob enough, and is too fast and smooth, but it still manages to be pathetic). The one oddity of the disc is that the cantata is interspersed with a suite that Handel wrote for, and which is all that survives of, an earlier Apollo and Dafne. The music is again lovely, but inserting it into a drama which was composed without it is somewhat eccentric. Still, with modern music systems, the suite can be programmed out and listened to on its own. This is an enjoyable disc and worthy of a place on your shelves. *Katie Hawks*

Handel Giulio Cesare Kristina Hammars-tröm, Emanuela Galli, Mary-Ellen Nesi, Irini Karainni et al., Orchestra of Patras, George Petrou 251' 53" (3 CDs)
MDG Scene MDG 609 1604-2

Giulio Cesare is one of Handel's more recorded operas, but there is still, to my mind, not a particularly satisfactory version. This one has lots to recommend it, and, being less mannered, it is more enjoyable on repeated listening than either Jacobs' Harmonia Mundi version or Minkowski's on Archiv. However, Petrou has not quite mastered the ingredients and recipe, and consequently tends to over-egg the pudding. The overture is alternately too fast and too slow; the opening triumphal chorus is too brisk to be triumphal. Cleopatra's grand musical seduction is not as lush as it could be, and suffers from some odd rits here and there. Petrou inexplicably turns Cornelia's tragic *Nel tuo seno* into an aria of anger. Nonetheless, there are also some really fine moments, such as the duet ending Act I which is sensitively rendered, and Sesto's *La giustizia*, which can be superfluous, really contributes to his growth from boy into man. I would certainly recommend this disc above the two mentioned above, and no doubt the Orchestra of Patras will be heard of again soon. *Katie Hawks*

Handel Brockes Passion, Markus Brutscher Evangelist, Markus Flaig Jesus, et al., Kölner Kammerchor, Collegium Cartunianum, Peter Neumann 153' 23"
Carus 83.428 (2 CDs)

Handel wrote the Brockes Passion while moving from Hannover to London, and, like the German Arias also by Brockes, it reveals Handel's spirituality. It received

several performances in Germany, and was in the 1740s copied by that other great Passion composer, Bach. This recording is based on Bach's copy of Handel's score (Handel's own does not exist), and is thus slightly different from other recordings of the work. Putting aside its unique desirability, this recording is anyway worth consideration, for it is a pleasurable rendition: Neumann shows his usual sensitivity, despite sometimes lacking a little gravitas, as in the opening chorus. However, moments such as the death of Jesus make up for this. His line-up of soloists is good, although Brutscher bleats somewhat. If you do not already have a Brookes Passion on your shelves, this would be a good one to buy. *Katie Hawks*

Handel Dettingen Te Deum (arr. Mendelssohn) Dominique Labelle, Thomas Cooley, Colin Ainsworth, William Berger STTB, NDR Chor, Festspeil Orchester Göttingen, Nicholas McGegan 63' 52" Carus 83.358
Cherubini *Chant sur la mort de Joseph Haydn*; Haydn *The Storm*

I was lucky enough to go to the performance of Mendelssohn's version of *Acis and Galatea* last summer, and found it hugely enjoyable. Mendelssohn's re-scoring bore witness to his reverence for Handel and gives us another take on a fabulous work. McGegan, who conducted that, is pursuing the theme with Mendelssohn's re-scoring of the *Dettingen Te Deum*. This disc is a must for any Handel enthusiast as well as Mendelssohnians, and not just for curiosity value. It's in German and has additional wind parts to suit the 19th century's tastes for richer food, but like *Acis*, very sympathetically done. McGegan's performance is good, and the work is coupled with two other curios, Haydn's madrigal *The Storm* [no trombones audible: they are not in the Doblinger score, which follows the autograph score too literally: as so often, the autograph had no spare staves so they were written elsewhere CB] and Cherubini's lament on Hadyn's death. These are the sort of things which should be appearing on CD, rather than yet another *Messiah*.

Katie Hawks

Handel Mezzo-Soprano Opera Arias Max Emanuel Cencic, I Barocchisti, Diego Fasolis Virgin 5099969457456 64' 03"
Arias from *Agrippina*, *Amadigi di Gaula*, *Arianna in Creta*, *Floridante*, *Imeneo*, *Orlando*, *Parnasso in festa*, *Radamisto*, *Serse*, *Tamerlano*

Cencic is undoubtedly one of the finest dramatic countertenors around and this is a nice choice of arias, although somewhat random. I found the whole disc difficult to digest in one sitting, as Cencic is rather full-on. Fasolis is a bit hit-and-miss with tempi and articulation – for example, he

fails to get across the rich tragedy of *Pena tiranna*, and Nero's *Come nube* is not quite exciting enough. Cencic fans will buy this disc, but there are more satisfying countertenor recital discs. *Katie Hawks*

Handel Duets Rosemary Joshua, Sarah Connolly, The English Consort, Harry Bicket 62' 42"

Chandos Chaconne CHAN0767
from *Agrippina*, *Ariodante*, *Belshazzar*, *Giulio Cesare*, *Ottone*, *Radamisto*, *Rodelinda*, *Solomon*, *Sosarme*, *Tamerlano* & *Theodora*

The duets Handel introduced into his operas and oratorios, generally sufficiently sparingly to offer teasing expectation, belong mostly to a long tradition exploiting the innate sensual appeal of intertwining high voices. This selection of a dozen duets tellingly illustrates the surprisingly wide range of emotional contexts into which they fall: the untrammelled joy of love ('Caro! Bella!', *Giulio Cesare*); the erotic ('No, no, ch'io non apprezzo', *Agrippina*); the prayerful ('Streams of pleasure', *Theodora*) and so forth. Fans of Rosemary Joshua and Sarah Connolly, both of course much lauded Handelians, are likely to need little urging to invest in the present CD, where they will find both ladies in fine form and working together sympathetically. Where I do part company is with the direction of Harry Bicket, which is either ploddingly soporific and at times doyingly sentimental (is interminable and, to my ears, insufferable 'Streams of pleasure'), or what could be described as all-purpose jaunty. Chandos' presentation is not up to the company's usual standard; my booklet was not properly stapled and there is surely little point on a recital record of printing the text of introductory recitative when it is not performed. *Brian Robins*

I received this review a few minutes after reading an interview with Sarah in Classical Music describing how she was spending her mornings at Glyndebourne rehearsing Tristan, then travelling to London for two sessions to record this programme. She stressed the need for all singers to learn to sing Handel and Mozart at college. I hope the Head of Singing at the RCM, who claimed that singing Handel idiomatically was irrelevant for opera singers, has read it. CB

Kellner & Weiss Works for lute Karl Nyhlin 56' 25"
dB Productions dBCD131

This rather nice CD contrasts the styles of two 18th-century composers who wrote for the lute. In the opening Chaconne, David Kellner shows a how a 7-bar phrase played 27 times can be developed in an abundance of ways on the lute. There is a section of triplets, another with very fast scales, and the last with doleful chromatic

notes. The harmony of the Rondeau may lack dissonance and originality, but it is pleasant stuff, reminiscent of the *Aria del Gran Duca*; the Giga bounces along nicely, and the Phantasia in D minor is in a more serious vein with interesting turns, fast roulades, and a well-worked fugue.

There follows a suite in G minor by Silvius Leopold Weiss, which is quite different in character. The opening Prelude sets the tone by leading us unpredictably through a maze of extraordinary broken chords. The slow Allemande has a variety of textures, now two-part writing high up the neck, now rich chords supported by deep diapasons in the bass. A graceful Courante and an unhurried Bourrée explore a wide range of harmonic territory with extended melodic sequences. A well-poised Sarabande punctuated with unexpected dissonances, is followed by a lengthy pair of Menuets. The mood is sombre throughout. The Weiss pieces are rounded off with a Capriccio, which adds a touch of optimism in D major.

The last group consists of more pieces by David Kellner – a gentle Courante, a nice-but-not-great-music Giga, two Phantasies (the first exploiting repeated right-hand arpeggio patterns rather like 19th-century guitar music, the second incorporating a gigue followed by a slower passage with striking chromatic notes), a Pastorel with much repetition of a descending passage, and a slightly ponderous Passetto to finish.

Karl Nyhlin's playing is clean and expressive with sensitively shaped phrases. He is a pleasure to listen to. *Stewart McCoy*

Platti Ricercate & Sonate Chamber Music with Violoncello Neumeyer Consort
Christophorus CHR 77310 63' 57"
Ricercate I-IV, Sonatas Terza and Quarta (1725)

Having only known some of Platti's keyboard sonatas op. 1 and thought them of no great worth, I was pleasantly impressed by a recent recording of some of his chamber music for wind. This latest offering confirms that Platti's music deserves some attention. Regarded as a transitional composer who bridges the baroque and pre-classical styles, Giovanni Platti here sits fairly firmly on the baroque side of the fence, with only an occasional peek over the other side. His four 4-movement baroque slow-fast-slow-fast binary form 'ricercate' for unaccompanied violin and cello are pure contrapuntal duets, with the cello being on equal terms with its partner, rather than acting as a bass line. The two cello sonatas are impressive works, with their dark colouring, enhanced in this recording by the use of both organ and harpsichord continuo throughout. With their rhythmic and harmonic twists, the two sonatas are an interesting addition to the solo

cello sonata repertoire. The playing throughout is stylish and free of all but the occasional, tasteful touch of vibrato.

Ian Graham-Jones

Rameau *Nouvelles Suites de Pièces de Clavecin, La Dauphine* Joël Pontet 68' 58" Saphir LVC 1110

Clean playing and crisp ornaments characterise this recording of some of Rameau's best-known harpsichord pieces making up the two *Nouvelles Suites*, as well as the late piece *La Dauphine* which spins its figuration out a bit, but shows how tastes had changed by the mid-18th century. Pontet is at home in this music and brings out the character of the individual pieces very well, perhaps occasionally sacrificing forward drive to clarity in executing the ornaments. He plays on a Taskin copy by Marc Ducornet. The close recording lacks a little in room resonance, especially noticeable at the ends of phrases, but it does give a clarity which allows us to hear all the details of Rameau's music.

Noel O'Regan

Giuseppe Sammartini & Handel *Sonatas for a German Flute* Les Buffardins (Frank Theuns and Marc Hantaï *traverso* Rainer Zipperling cello Siebe Henstra *hpscd*) 62' 26" Accent ACC 24191

Handel: Sonatas HWV 357 and 366, trio sonata HWV 405. G. Sammartini: Sonatas op13/4, op2/10, op1pt2/4, trio sonata no 6 in D min.

The two Handel solo sonatas, originally for oboe, and the trio sonata, originally for recorders, all transposed here to keys more suitable for the transverse flute, were probably composed during the five or so years before Handel settled in London in 1712. The Italian oboe player and composer Giuseppe Sammartini also settled in London, in 1728, and these four sonatas were published between 1730 and 1760, ten years after his death. Sammartini's compositions were described by Burney as 'full of science, originality, and fire', and his sonatas on this CD are obviously later in style than the Handel works. They are sensitively played by Frank Theuns on the transverse flute, the instrument for which they were intended, with just the occasional over-emphasised last note slightly marring an otherwise delightful and stylish performance.

Victoria Helby

Telemann *Les Gitans Baroques Ensemble Caprice*, Matthias Maute 68' 53" Analekta AN 2 9919

Grillensymphonie, Concerto in E minor, extracts from chamber music + Gypsy pieces

This CD has been getting a lot of airtime on Radio 3 – and causing huge confusion

among the listening public at large, as the tracks have not been clearly identified. So gypsy music (albeit from a kosher 18th century manuscript) has been thought to be by Telemann and vice versa. At least some of the blame must be placed at Matthias Maute's door, since the labelling of this cross-over experiment is pretty relaxed in the detail – only inside the case does one discover that the *Sonata à la gitane* (where did this name come from?) is TWV 42: d10; I have no problem with the performers interspersing the movements with different material – or, indeed, with all the pseudo-gypsy impro that goes on throughout the disc. But why are only the two fast sections recorded? (Did the slow ones not fit the gypsy theme?) The performances are very good, and I'm sure their rendition of the *Grillensymphonie* (nothing to do with crickets, apparently) will surely have toes tapping in the aisle. This is not de-construction à la Red Priest (see above), but it runs pretty near the mark for purists – cross-over is all well and good, but the public at large should be warned somewhere on the wrapping. BC

Telemann *La Bourse* Il Fondamento, Paul Dombrecht 72' 36" Pssacaille 910

This is a re-release of an excellent sequence of some of Telemann's numerous orchestral suites. Alongside the popular *La Bourse* are two other works for two oboes, bassoon, strings and continuo (TWV 55: g3 and C4). Paul Dombrecht is recognised around the world as a leading interpreter of Telemann's works and these lively performances confirm the ensemble's reputation. If you missed this first time around, do not repeat your mistake. BC

Telemann *O woe! O woe! My canary is dead! Secular cantatas & Overtures* Dorothee Miels, Bach Concentus, Ewald Demeyere 79' 10"

Accent ACC 24199

TWV 20: 37, 49; TWV 55: C2, C5, B8

Two witty cantatas are framed by three characterful orchestral suites on this enterprising disc from Ewald Demeyere and Bach Concentus. The unnamed players produce a mellifluous sound throughout. The C major overture with solo oboe (TWV 55: C2) does not seem to have been recorded before and is most welcome to the catalogue; the other two reveal Telemann the wit, especially in the last work on the disc (TWV 55: B8) with its many harmonic and rhythmic surprises. Dorothee Miels does her best with the vocal works, but they struck me as rather insubstantial, perhaps because the instrumental music was so very convincing? In any case, Telemanniacs will not want to be without this recording. BC

Vivaldi in *Bohemia* Gabriela Eibennová, Hana Blazíková, Marta Fadlevicová, Lester Lardenoye, Tomás Král SSSATB, Ensemble Inégal, Prague Baroque Soloists, Adam Viktora (66' 33")

Nibiru 0150-2211

RV 595, 600, 610b (premiere recording) & 617

This is a wonderful recording of some of the Red Priest's most popular early church pieces. It is a matter of record that his music was well known throughout that region, his op. 8 set (including the ubiquitous *Four Seasons*) were dedicated to Count Morzin in Prague, and he almost certainly visited that city with his father in the late 1720s. For this recital, they have selected *Dixit Dominus* (RV595), *Laudate Pueri Dominum* (RV600), *Magnificat* (RV610b – Czech version) and *Salve Regina* (RV617). Adam Viktora and his fine ensembles impressed recently in their recording of Zelenka's *Missa Purificationis Beatae Virginis Mariae*, and this will surely enhance the reputation of all concerned. Star status (at least a front cover mention!) is given to soprano Gabriela Eibenová. While she does indeed possess an agile yet warm voice, she certainly does not outshine either of the other sopranos soloists (Hana Blazíková and Marta Fadlevicová), and the men are equally impressive (Lester Lardenoye, Jaroslav Brezina and Tomas Král). The booklet notes give lots of information about the sources that have been used for the recording (as well as listing some of those known to have been lost over the years), but is slightly lacking in not mentioning the oboists or (if my ears don't deceive me) the second trumpeter. With playing of this standard, everyone deserves credit! I don't know what Viktora and Co. have up their sleeves for their next CD, but I will be looking out for it, as it is guaranteed to be both a revelation and a pleasure! Buy this recording just for the ravishing sounds of *Tecum principium* from the *Dixit Dominus* (two sopranos duetting above two cellos). BC

Bach, Handel etc Jochen Kowalski A, Kammerorchester Berlin, Max Pommer; Kammerorchester Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, Hartmut Haenchen; Orchester der Komischen Oper, Rolf Reuter 59' 10" Berlin Classics 0814762BC

These recordings from 1988, '90, and '93 reveal Kowalski as a class act needing only a period instrument orchestra to deliver the music to the best effect. Yes, there is vibrato, but it is not *sempre* and it colours a far stronger and more centred 'core tone' than is the case with Michael Maniaci, whose Mozart CD is reviewed below. The arias from mid-18th century Berlin (Telemann, Graun, Agricola and

Hasse) are a particular pleasure. Of the three solo vocal recitals I have reviewed for this issue this is the best by several country miles. As with the Christoph Genz disc, the 'design' of the booklet is ridiculous.

David Hansell

Baroque in Poland – church and court music ensemble alla polacca 67' 54"
Ars Produktion ARS 38 065

This recital is fairly evenly divided between instrumental works and vocal (mostly totally unknown, including, I confess, some of the composers). Iwona Lesniowska-Lubowicz has quite a large soprano voice, which she controls beautifully, only slightly letting her hair down in the final (and latest) offering on the disc, a cantata by Luparini (employed by the Krakow Jesuits). In fact, the two violinists and gamba player are guests here, 'ensemble alla polacca' usually consisting only of soprano, keyboard and theorbo. I defy anyone to realise that while listening to the CD, though, as these could be performances by a group that has played together for many years. Voice and instruments balance well, and the recorded sound is excellent. All-in-all, a highly enjoyable experience.

BC

L'Inspiration Poétique Sophie Ardiét *Hotteterre flute*, James Holland *theorbo* PIS 001
Boismortier, Hotteterre, Hurel, Lambert, Lully & de Visée

The one-keyed baroque flute emerged in France in the latter part of the 17th century, and is often associated with the Hotteterre family of instrument makers. It was made in three sections (by 1720 sometimes four), had a conical bore which increased the volume particularly with low notes, and had a single key which made it fully chromatic. It was ideally suited for French music with its multiplicity of ornaments and emphasis on expression. The first printed collection of solo music for this instrument is recorded as having been published in 1702; the music was by Michel de la Barre, who favoured the theorbo as an accompanying instrument.

The music on the CD includes suites by Hotteterre, Boismortier, and De Visée, together with other pieces by Lully, and Lambert. Sophie Ardiét's interpretation is spot on, with extra notes stylishly added here and there for repeats, and fluid ornaments including some nice flatterments (finger vibrato for long notes) as described by Jacques Hotteterre in his *Principes de la Flûte Traversière* (1707). James Holland gives a tender rendition of Charles Hurel's Suite in D for solo theorbo, in which the highly ornamented melodies float along effortlessly, under-

pinned by the solid deep notes of the long strings.

Sophie Ardiét plays a copy by J. J. Melzer of an early flute marked 'Hotteterre' now at the Landesmuseum Joanneum in Graz. Its pitch is A=392, and it has a warm, slightly breathy tone. James Holland's theorbo was made by Klaus Jacobsen, and at low pitch it produces some wonderfully rich sounds. The line-up of flute and theorbo is fine – the two instruments complement each other extremely well, and the performers' ensemble is excellent. However, the low tuning of the theorbo – its highest open string is the b just below middle c' – and its re-entrant tuning (first two courses down an octave) limit the range of notes available for realising a figured bass, so the texture is often thinner than it would be, say, on a harpsichord. My preference is to use a theorbo, but to have a viola da gamba reinforcing and sustaining what is usually quite a melodic bass line.

My only disappointment is the placing of the microphones. French baroque music has a certain grandeur, which is compromised by having the microphones too close to the instruments. This loses the effect of space, of final notes dying away, and although Ardiét has to breathe, I don't really want to hear her amplified gasps between each phrase.

Stewart McCoy

Salve Regina Sacred Music from Naples Mary-Ellen Nesi *ms*, Catherine Jones, cello, Il Complesso Barocco, Alan Curtis 67' 42"
Deutsche Harmonia Mundi 88697 53944 2
Leo *Stabat Mater* in C minor, in F. Cello Concerto in D minor. A. Scarlatti *Stabat Mater* in C minor. Pergolesi *Stabat Mater* in C minor, in A minor

If five Neapolitan settings of *Salve Regina* on one disc might sound like an excess of pleas to the Virgin, it doesn't work out quite like that. Both the quality and surprising diversity of the settings are in part responsible, but so too are the richly expressive performances of the Greek mezzo Mary-Ellen Nesi, performances that not only glow with ardour, but are also lovingly controlled and shaped. If Leo's C minor *Salve* reminds us that its composer was an accomplished contrapuntist, the one in F equally serves to recall his merits as a composer of *opera buffa*, even down to the breathless syncopations of 'Ad te suspiramus', which surely served as a model for Pergolesi's setting of the same words in his better known C-minor *Salve*. Equally as impressive is the Alessandro Scarlatti, here receiving a first recording, a work that combines moments of sheer drama (the outburst at 'Ad te clamamus') with examples of the composer's 'learned' style ('Eia ergo') and an affectingly sympathetic 'Et Jesum'.

A fine performance of one of Leo's

splendid cello concertos, and idiomatically sympathetic support from Il Complesso Barocco round off a thoroughly appealing and satisfying issue.

Brian Robins

CLASSICAL

C.P.E. Bach *Organ Works* Thomas Trotter (1773/1973 Mitterreither/Flentrop organ, Eton College School Hall)
Regent REG CD314

To understand just how far Bach's sons had moved away from the musical world of their father, it is worth listening to the organ works of CPE Bach. Written for his pupil, Princess Amalia of Prussia, these jovial and colourful works are firmly in the Rococo style. Although the organ for which they were originally intended still exists in Berlin, Thomas Trotter has chosen the 1773 Mitterreither organ in the Eton College School Hall – an important (and rarely heard) historic instrument that does justice to the sound world of CPE Bach's Berlin. Trotter plays with a fine sense of musical line, bringing out the contrasting moods that are an integral part of Bach's compositional style. If you want to sample the CD, miss the first, untypical, track and try the Sonata in F. Very CPEB! Andrew Benson-Wilson

J. C. F. Bach *Concerti*. Freiburger Barockorchester, Christine Schornsheim *fp* Gottfried von der Goltz, 77' 35"
Carus 83.306
Wf 1/15 & 20, 11/5

Though it is always interesting to hear music by the least well known of J. S. Bach's composer-sons, it has to be admitted that JCF's level of inspiration is not as consistently high as that of his brothers. The keyboard concerto on this disc is said to have been composed in the 1790s, yet – apart from the oboes and horns – it sounds like the sort of thing the followers of CPE were writing thirty years before. Could it, I wonder, be a re-hash of an earlier work? The two symphonies (also dating from the 1790s) are substantial four-movement works complete with slow introductions, but the one in G, though well constructed and colourfully scored, is not especially memorable, and the pervasive repeated-quaver bass gives it, too, a rather old-fashioned air. However, the Bb symphony is on an altogether different plane. The style is much more up-to-date, there are plenty of original ideas, and there is some very nice scoring for an orchestra including clarinets as well as flute, bassoon and horns: I particularly liked the beautiful wind solos in the slow movement.

The performances by the Freiburger Barockorchester and Christine Schorns-

heim are, as always, first-rate, with excellent ensemble and plenty of spirit and vigour. It's definitely worth buying this CD, if only for their performance of the B flat symphony. *Richard Maunder*

Boccherini Quartets Op. 8 Artaria String Quartet 93' 03" (2 CDs)
Columna música 1CM0221

Here is another string quartet that comes across (at least to me) as being played 'on period instruments' rather than 'in period style' (cf the review of the three Haydn quartets below). The playing of the American Artaria String Quartet is more elegant and refined than the more driven, dynamic playing the Schuppanzigh Quartet in the Haydn. Which you prefer is a matter of preference, but perhaps Boccherini's music of 1780 is more suited to the gentler, cultivated connoisseur than that of Haydn, where we have learnt to expect the unexpected! I certainly found the Schuppanzighs more exciting and technically assured, when listening to them side by side. *Ian Graham-Jones*

Druschetzky Music for Wind Instruments
Amphion Wind Octet, Collegium Vocale 1704 61' 45"
Accent ACC24208

For those not knowing much about the military bandmaster Georg Druschetzky, his *hármoniemusik* dates not from 1704, as may be incorrectly assumed from the vocal ensemble that participate in some of the numbers on this disc, but virtually a century later. As a prolific composer of some 150 odd partitas for wind, he is represented here by four contrasting four-movement Parthias (one of which adds a flute to the standard octet ensemble), an interesting two-movement instrumental Motet, a lightweight theme and variations, a fine Offertorium *Veritas mea* for wind and voices, and three part-songs accompanied by wind band. The period instrument Amphions have chosen an interesting selection of his music, which ably shows off the virtuosity and skills of the players available in his band at that time. The partitas are well contrasted, with the A minor work which opens the disc being particularly fine. The two sacred offerings are also interesting pieces: one, an instrumental work for church performance, exploiting solos for pairs of instruments, and the Offertorium, with its extended Alleluias, reminiscent of Haydn's late masses both in style and in the dominance and virtuosity of the instrumental writing. This is a disc well worth exploring for its musical worth as well as for its curiosity factor. *Ian Graham-Jones*

Haydn Divertimenti a quattro Piccolo Concerto Wien 66' 04"
Symphonia SY 07227
Hob.III.3 & 7, Divertimento in D Hob.deest

These three Divertimenti are selected from Haydn's earliest 'string quartets' op. 1 and op. 2. It was the op. 9 set – which are likewise called 'Divertimenti' – that the composer regarded as being his first true string quartets (see next review). The five-movement works, with two minuets and trios, specify the use of 'violone' rather than 'violoncello', and this gifted period ensemble uses such an instrument at 16' pitch. It could be that Haydn had in mind one at 8' pitch, but the use of the lower instrument in this recording gives an unexpected and unusually rich sonority to these well crafted entertainment pieces.

Ian Graham-Jones

Haydn String Quartets, Anthology Vol. 2
Schuppanzigh Quartet 63' 14"
Accent ACC 24220
Op. 9/4, 64/5 & 77/1

Although this is recorded on period instruments, apart from the clean playing and 'gustsy' sound there appears to be little difference in style from a 'modern' string quartet, unlike the Divertimenti reviewed above, which can truly claim to be in period style. The playing, nevertheless, is excellent, with exciting tempi, highly contrasted dynamics and thoughtful attention to detail. This is the second of a set of three releases devoted to a selection of Haydn string quartets by this ensemble. It offers three contrasting works, ranging from two well-known mature quartets of the 1790s that open the disc to the earliest of the op. 9 set and his first in a minor key. The title 'divertimento' given by Haydn is misleading, for it is a work for serious listening rather than for idle entertainment. This fine, dramatic piece, claiming to be Haydn's first true string quartet, deserves to be better known.

Ian Graham-Jones

Homilius Erwachet, ihr Christen Friedrich Kreis org & hpscd, Barbara Christina Steude S, Andreas Lorentz ob, Sächsisches Vocalensemble, Virtuosi Saxoniae, Ludwig Güttler tpt, hn & dir. 78' 28"
Carus 83.236
HoWV II.172, X.1, 2, 3, 8, 17-22, 26, X.Anh. 10, XI.1

Homilius was born in Dresden and studied law in Leipzig where he became part of the Bach circle (and, possibly, a pupil). He returned to Dresden in 1742 to become the first organist of the new Frauenkirche, the baroque masterpiece that lay in ruins as a memorial after the Second World War until its recent reconstruction. This CD was recorded in the church, using its grand new organ.

Like his contemporary Krebs, he left vast amounts of relatively slight organ music, in a loose post-Bach style. These include chorale-based works for organ and other solo instruments, as demonstrated by the 12 examples on this CD, each introduced by the sung chorale. These slightly predictable works are relieved by two cantatas and a Sonata for oboe. The singing throughout is rather too operatic for my tastes, with occasional lapses of intonation. Modern instruments and playing techniques are used for the cantata accompaniments.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Mozart Arias for Male Soprano Michael Maniaci, Boston Baroque, Martin Pearlman Telarc TEL 31827-02 61' 01"
~~Overture & Arias from Idomeneo & La Clemenza di Tito, Exsultate jubilate~~

Michael Maniaci has received rave reviews, including some for this disc, but overall I found his singing hard to enjoy. The vibrato is at odds with the orchestral timbre, articulation is often imprecise and diction unclear. From time to time there are also truly beautiful phrases, hinting at what might have been but too seldom actually is. This may be the repertoire of the late 18th century castrati, but it does not thrill this 21st century listener as they did their contemporaries. *David Hansell*

F. X. Richter Messa pastorale, Sinfonia in D, Magnificat Marzena Lubaszka, Piotr Lykowski, Maciej Gocman, Bogdan Makal SATB, Wrocław Baroque Orchestra, Wrocław Philharmonic Choir, Andrzej Kosendiak 51' 11"
Cypres CYP1659

Franz Xaver Richter was born in Moravia and worked for about 20 years with Johann Stamitz as he transformed the Mannheim court orchestra. He was Kappelmeister at Strasbourg Cathedral from 1769 until his death in 1789, where he led a sizeable orchestra and choir with a considerable musical budget. His *Messa Pastorale*, is an imposing work, written around 1780, with its opening trumpet fanfare reflecting the grandeur of the cathedral and the powerful French monarchy that supported it. The Magnificat is in a similar grandiose and exuberant mood. Richter is better known for his many Mannheim Sinfonias, like the lively D major example included on this CD. The Wrocław choir and orchestra were formed in 2006 and make a very impressive sound under their director, Andrzej Kosendiak. It is clear that Alsace recognises its musical heritage – the recording was supported by the *Alsace Terre de Culture* organisation after the score was discovered in the cathedral archives, and it was performed in a collaboration with Wrocław's cultural

and arts centre. Andrew Benson-Wilson

An interesting collaboration between formerly German towns now in France and Poland. CB

19th CENTURY

Beethoven Complete Violin Sonatas Vol. 2
Hiro Kurosaki vln, Linda Nicholson fp
Accent ACC 24212
Opp. 23 & 24, WoO 40 & 42

The second release in this series continues where the first left off. Kurosaki and Nicholson give sparkling performances of two sonatas, the broody A minor with its accented off-beat diminished sevenths and *moto perpetuo* feel, and its dreamy alter ego, the well-known *Spring* sonata. The programme is completed by the variations on Figaro's *Se vuol ballare* and the Six German Dances. Already the themes of the sonatas are far more expansive than anything Mozart had written, and one has a sense of Beethoven pushing the medium in a new direction. There are remnants of the older sonata 'with violin accompaniment' in op. 24, where Kurosaki's arpeggios underpin the fortepiano melody, but elsewhere the instruments are more or less equal. Performance-wise, too, there are signs of things to come – in the first movement of op. 23 we hear portamenti from the violinist, entirely appropriate for the broad melody that emerges from the frenzy of fast quavers. I hope the remainder of the series is as much of a revelation. BC

Brahms Symphony No. 3 Choral works
Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique,
The Monteverdi Choir, John Eliot
Gardiner 70' 16"
SDG 704

+Ich schwing mein Horn ins Jammertal, Es tönt
ein voller Harfenklang, Nachtwache I, Einförmig
ist der Liebe Gram, Nanie

We managed to miss the first two offerings in this typically mind-opening Brahms series. Like his saturation approach to Schumann a few years ago (he recorded the complete orchestral works and an anthology of major choral pieces in two epic boxed sets), each of Brahms's symphonies is given an appropriate context, within a selection of works for various choruses (male voices, female voices, with and without instruments), the essence of all of which is clearly coursing through Eliot Gardiner's veins. Love him or hate him (and I know the jury is out on that), I find these readings of Brahms immensely fulfilling and reveal a conductor who really does engage with the music. The symphony – my favourite of the four – gave up a few secrets of texture (the syncopated violas

in the first movement, for example) that had been hidden in many a modern orchestral recording, and made me wonder where these performers might go once the fourth is in the bag: Tchaikovsky? Dvorak? The booklet note is in the form of a conversation between the conductor and Hugh Wood. I wonder what the Building A Library choice on Radio 3 would be for this symphony now. BC

Dvorak Symphonies Nos. 7 & 8, Symphonic Variations, Vanda Overture, Prague Waltzes, Polka op. 53 Musica Florea, Marek Stryndl 114' 11" (2 CDs)
Arta F10180

An unusual request for review in *EMR*, but HIP has extended to 1884, as Stryndl explains in his excellent note in the booklet. I played excerpts from the symphonies to two non-HIP, non-baroque musicians without mentioning the use of period instruments, gut strings, and 19th century performance practice. Apart from commenting that the sound seemed clean, neither mentioned the possibility of period instrument performance. It is good to hear the sonority of the winds – limpid flutes and clarinets, and penetrating horns – as well as the clarity of timpani and virtually vibrato-less string playing, though the strings clearly enjoy their occasional portamenti! The dances, the fillers on the second disc, are noticeable for their variations in tempi and for the exaggerated up-beats of the period Viennese waltz. I hope we can look forward to many more discs like this. Ian Graham-Jones

Gade Violinsonaten Thomas Albertus Irnberger vln, Edoardo Torbianelli fp 62' 57"
Gramola 98867
Opp. 6, 21 & 59; Schumann Nordisches Lied

Gade has never quite made it into the mainstream. These three violin sonatas show that he most certainly deserves wider recognition. The first is dedicated to Clara Schumann (she gave the first performance with the composer, who was a celebrated virtuoso violinist), the second to Robert Schumann, and the third to Madame Neruda. The fourth piece on the disc is a song by Robert Schumann that uses the letters of Gade's name as the opening melodic – the modal harmonies inspired by this phrase evoke the same northern feeling that pervades Gade's music. Irnberger and Torbianelli are a perfectly matched duo (they need to be, as the music makes demands on both), and these performances are a wonderful showcase for Gade's chamber music. Hopefully others will now take up the cause. BC

Mendelssohn-Hensel Piano Sonatas in C and G minor Heather Schmidt pf 67' 25"
Naxos 8.570825

+Allegro molto in C minor, Notturmo in G minor, Lied in E flat, Adagio in E flat, Andante con moto in E, Sonata o Capriccio, Allegro molto agitato in D minor, Schluss

A year after her brother's centenary celebrations, Fanny Mendelssohn-Hensel is enjoying something of a renaissance. This CD of her piano music is played on a modern instrument (so would normally be excluded from these pages), but I'm glad I asked for a review copy. Quite apart from the excellent playing and the bright, crisp recording, there is a wealth of wonderful music here spanning the composer's lifetime, from the brooding *Allegro molto* that opens the recital, via the dreamy eloquence of the opening of the Lied in E flat, to the out-and-out bravura displays of the two sonatas. Heather Schmidt's survey of this unfairly neglected composer's work concludes with one of the earliest pieces, simply entitled *Schluss*. We lament Mendelssohn's early passing, but his sister suffered an equally unfair fate let's hear more of her wonderful music! BC

By an odd coincidence, when I inserted this review into its place I was wearing my Fanny Hensel T-shirt (with a sample of her music) which Breitkopf produced for her anniversary in 1997: perhaps more composers should be thus honoured. CB

Mendelssohn The Piano Trios (op. 49 & 66) The Benvenue Fortepiano Trio 59' 43"
Avic AV2187

Last year's Mendelssohn anniversary has moved his profile up a notch or two, and this CD of his two Piano Trios adds to that momentum. Played on period instruments by Eric Zivian fortepiano, Monica Hugget violin and Tanya Tomkins cello, the key focus of this recording is the sense of balance between the three instruments – at no time does the violin dominate, for example. The trio also tread the fine line between taking Mendelssohn too seriously – or, indeed, too light-heartedly. The chorale melody in the last movement of the C minor Trio can sound irredeemably slushy, but the deftness of the accompanying instruments avoids this. Although Mendelssohn might be pushing the boundaries for some *EMR* readers, I can recommend this thoroughly musical interpretation.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Fanny & Felix Mendelssohn Abschied vom Walde Vocal Concert Dresden, Peter Kopp 55' 50"
Berlin Classics 00 1652

This is one of my very favourite discs this issue – if not in a long time. What seems

like a zillion years ago, a group I sang in and directed did a concert of part-songs by Mendelssohn. It must have been reasonable, as we were invited to repeat it at Dundee University Botanic Gardens Open Day, and that performance seemed equally popular. Such music gets little attention from musicologists and seems unfashionable with choirs in the UK. But I hope this wonderful recital by the Vocal Concert Dresden under Peter Kopp means that Mendelssohn and his sister remain staple fare for German choirs. Once again, Fanny emerges as a most accomplished musician – sometimes she even surpasses his brother in lending her part-songs more emotional depth. The recording is exemplary in every imaginable way – the voices of this fine ensemble are perfectly balanced, and I won't be surprised if this recording garners accolades from around the globe. BC

Marcos Portugal *Matinas do Natal (Rio de Janeiro 1811)* Ensemble Turicum 92' 53" Paraty 209.108 (2CDs)

This is charming – and that should not be read as damning with faint praise. Portugal's style is, like his dates (1762–1830), somewhere between Mozart and Rossini and I enjoyed the music more every time I listened. At a time of year when I am becoming immersed in Victoria's Holy Week *Tenebrae* Responses it was a shock to be confronted by the equivalent Christmas texts at all, let alone in large scale settings from early 19th century Brazil. These make use of arias and choruses, as well as much alternation of soli and choir within a movement. Members of the small choir take the solos always serviceably, though they are not all comfortable with the coloratura writing. The unusual constitution of the orchestra (no violins, oboes or flutes) means that the upper melodic lines are shared by a pair of cheerfully chirruping clarinets and the organ, and there are also significant bravura moments for cellos and bassoons. The performances are not immaculate but they have a freshness that carries one along. I'm afraid I have to add yet another to the list of over-pedantic and unidiomatic booklet translations, but the essay is comprehensible and very informative. There are no translations of the sung texts but these are probably on www.Preces-latinae.org (I haven't checked). Buy now for December. David Hansell

We no longer give price information. Any price information we receive from the record companies is a for dealers. What they (whether shops or on-line) charge is up to them.

Schubert *Mass in A flat* Andrea Lauren Brown, Ruth Sandhoff, Andreas Karasiak, Tobias Berndt SATB, Stuttgarter Kantorei, Stiftsphilharmonie Stuttgart, Kay Johannsen 45' 19" Carus 83.436

Schubert's A-flat Mass was written during his most productive and musical intense years, and took some time to complete and revise. It was clearly intended for a grand occasion. The Stuttgarter Kantorei and Stiftsphilharmonie Stuttgart are based at the Stiftskirche Stuttgart, where Kay Johannsen is organist and director of music. The players can apparently play on period and modern instruments, but they seem to have chosen modern for this performance, although they are directed with a sense of period style. The CD is rather short – why no filler?

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Sor *Early works* William Carter guitar. Linn Records CKD 343. Music from opp. 3, 5, 6, 9, 11, 14 & 24

Fernando Sor (1778–1839) will need no introduction to guitarists, whose music has long been their staple diet. Fétis described him as 'le Beethoven de la guitare'. Sor wrote in a classical style, but with a care to detail in his part-writing worthy of any 16th-century polyphonist. He composed songs, operas, and ballet music as well as music for the guitar. With a greater use of the thumb, his right-hand technique was closer to that of lutenists from early times, than guitarists from his own time and later.

Unlike other guitarists who have recorded Sor's music – notably Andrés Segovia and Julian Bream – William Carter plays (as Sor did) with the flesh of his fingertips, not with his nails. Nails are useful for a strong attack and projection in a large room, whereas flesh gives a softer, more intimate sound, capable of subtle expression.

By the end of the 18th century the old baroque guitar, with its five courses strung in pairs and its range limited by re-entrant tuning, had been superseded by the single-strung 6-course instrument, the earliest form of the modern classical guitar. Carter plays a guitar based on 19th-century instruments by Tony Johnson, one which has a clear tone, is well balanced across its range, and allows the music to sing. With the delicate touch of a lutenist, the overall effect is charming.

Sor's music ranges from simple, lyrical melodies (e.g. *Andante Largo*) to virtuosic passages racing up and down the fingerboard (e.g. the well-known variations on a theme by Mozart from the *Magic Flute*). These variations form part of one of the longest tracks on the CD, *O cara armonica*

(op.9). There are eight minuets (five from Op. 7), and studies for the Spanish guitar (five from Op. 6), including the evergreen no. 8 in strict 3-part counterpoint (no. 1 in Segovia's anthology of Sor studies).

After an extended Grand Solo, Carter rounds off the CD with an unpretentious Menuet in G, which ends with delicate harmonics and a gentle perfect cadence. Lovely music with a worthy interpretation. Stewart McCoy

Spohr *Concertos for Two Violins, Nos. 1 and 2* Henning Kraggerud and Ø Bjorå, Oslo Camerata and Barratt Due Chamber Orchestra, Stephan Barratt-Due 57' 02" Naxos 8.570840

Concertante No. 1 in A, op. 48, & No. 2 in b, op. 88; Violin Duet in G major, Op. 3, No. 3

Asking for a review copy of this CD was sheer indulgence on my part. I have along been a fan of Spohr's music and I thought it unlikely that much of it will appear on disc in HIP performances. If the solo violin concertos remain not that well known, the two works for a pair of soloists are even more obscure. Henning Kraggerud and Oyvind Bjora are the wonderful stars of these compelling performances – they are equally virtuosic, though distinct in tone (their octave entry in the A major concerto – reminiscent, of course, of Mozart's *Sinfonia Concertante* – is beautifully handled), and they are undaunted by anything Spohr throws their way. Although it's easily overcome by programming the player, it seems odd to order the tracks with the Violin Duet at the end of the disc, rather than separating the concertos. I commend this CD to anyone; Spohr's music is not perhaps the most profound ever written, but it is a lot of fun, and will lighten anyone's mood. An ideal Spring cleaner! BC

BERNARD COUTAZ

We were sorry to hear of the death of Bernard Coutaz, the founder of harmonia mundi, on 26 February at the age of 87. The company started in 1958, and there has been a UK office since 1981, though my closest contact has been with the USA team. I edited most of the music for: John Holloway, Andrew Manze and Stanley Ritchie's three-violin programme and McGegan's disc of Humfrey's anthems.

Bernard's musical background was hardly conventional: he claimed not to have heard of Mozart until he was 16, but had a thorough grounding in plainsong. His adoption of the Deller Consort led to recordings with early instruments long before it was fashionable, and his output probably included a larger proportion of early music than any other company. His wife Eva carries on his work. CB

Letter

Dear Clifford,

I am responding belatedly to Hugh Keyte's review of Madelka's Penitential Psalms which appeared in the May 2009 issue of *EMR*. Intrigued by his review, my fellow *EMR* subscriber Edward Seymour and I, together with a few other people, have been singing two of the items contained in it – Psalm 38 and the penitential motet *Quomodo confitebor tibi*.

On the whole I would endorse Hugh's impressions. The texture is interestingly varied, the music is lively and engaging, and the editing remarkably slipshod. Part of Psalm 38's sense of structure arises from the fact that in the earlier stages verses tend to come to an end simultaneously in all voices, permitting a rest to be inserted if desired, but increasingly as the work goes on the verses interlock, compelling continuous performance – constant breaks would eventually become tedious in such a long psalm. I might add that the editor has done nothing to help singers appreciate where the verses – i.e. the sentences – begin and end, as he includes no punctuation and no capital letters: this necessitates research in other sources. As Hugh observes, there is also considerable uncertainty about what the correct notes are in places.

You mention in a footnote that the 1992 recording by Gutta Musicae Choir appears to be unavailable. No doubt it is, but a friend of mine has just lent me a copy. 12 singers and between 7 and 9 players are used, one of whom, intriguingly, appears to be the editor of the Bärenreiter Prague edition, Miloslav Klement, who is also credited as artistic leader of the instrumental ensemble. Which instrument he plays is not revealed.

The performances are not quite as energetic as I expected, and the intonation is occasionally a touch dodgy, but they are otherwise creditable, with plenty of expression and dynamics. It is interesting to compare some of the notes and accidentals with what appears in the score. For example, the passage 'Quoniam in te', the score of which Hugh quotes in the review, where something has manifestly gone wrong with the *secundus discantus* (three successive F sharps appear to be shown): it seems to me that what works best is what Hugh suggests, i.e. F sharp, F natural, E. The recording has two F sharps followed by E, which is less interesting, but also seems to indicate that, as all are agreed that the third note should indeed be E, something went wrong with the type-setting and proof-reading of the Bärenreiter score after the recording had been made. No doubt there are other instances of wrong notes lurking there. Incidentally, the bold move from an A major chord to one of C minor in the passage quoted by Hugh works wonderfully well, only requiring the singers of the top voice to imagine a D between the C sharp and the E flat in order to place the latter.

To my mind the principle that accidentals should only apply to one note again needs to be adhered to, among other places, in Psalm 38, bar 147, top voice, where the F sharp on *-tus* should be followed by an F natural on *me*. The performers sing two F sharps followed by a downward leap of an augmented fourth, which fails to convince. The top voice part in bars 183/3-184/1 cries out for the same treatment: C sharp on *-bant* followed by two C naturals. Again, the recording has sharps all the way, followed by a downward leap of an augmented 4th; again, I don't believe the performers have hit on the right solution.

One curiosity in Hugh's review. On p. 11, towards the end of the third paragraph, he mentions a place in the penitential motet where modern singers require an editorial natural to avoid an augmented chord. But in my copy of the score the editorial natural is in fact there! It is impossible to verify what Klement's performers would have done, because the seven psalms take up so much space on the CD that they evidently weren't able to include the motet as well.

I realise that there are numerous points in the review that I haven't even touched on, and indeed several that I don't feel at all qualified to comment on anyway. But I have probably rambled on for long enough in any case.

Mick Swithinbank (Luxembourg)

Our comment on the recording is that the strange inflections are so under-emphasised that they are barely noticeable. CB/HK

SORIANO

Sancta Maria/Ave Maris Stella
(edition on pp. 15-17)

Soriano is chiefly remembered for his double-choir expansion of Palestrina's *Missa Papae Marcelli*; he was maestro at the Capella Giuliana from 1603-20, overseeing the music for the long-awaited consecration of St Peter's. In 1610 he published *Canoni, et obblighi di cento, et dieci sorte, sopra l'Ave Maris Stella*. An *obbligo* is 'a 17th-century term indicating a compositional problem or task which the composer chooses to treat throughout a piece'. The collection as a whole is a series of *obbligo* on the Marian office hymn *Ave Maris Stella*, though it is only notated for a couple of the more complex pieces; otherwise, the singer has to add it without notation. The example edited combines it with nine petitions from Litany of the Blessed Virgin, the melody coinciding with that in Monteverdi's rather more elaborate *obbligo*, *Sonata sopra Santa Maria*, published the same year.

Soriano give no clues on the expected manner of performance. In a couple of places where the Hymn was manipulated so that it was printed, the text is added, so it seems likely that it was sung, and the varying texts in the Litany would be pointless if not articulated. The other parts could be played or sung, perhaps to solmisation syllables. HK/CB

1. One must be the note in the bottom voice in bar 189/1 of Psalm 38: I would be astonished if the G were not in fact intended to be a high C

2. adopting the modern spelling with a double B; the G requires an H before I.

3. Grove Music on Line *Obbligo*