

# Early Music REVIEW

Number 136

June 2010

ISSN 1355-3437

Price £2.50

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Early Music Review is normally published in  
alternate months

The International Diary is published every  
month except January

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Annual subscription UK: £22.50 Europe: £27.50  
Rest of World: £40.00 (air) £27.50 (surface)  
(foreign rates £5 cheaper without Diary)  
Sterling cheques payable to  
The Early Music Company Ltd

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When I joined the BBC Music Library, I learned that orchestras always wanted bowed sets of parts. It didn't matter where the bowings came from, but the set had to be consistent. Even if a conductor or leader wanted to make changes, it was better to start from a bowed set. When baroque orchestras began, I assumed that things would be different. Players were learning the principles of bowing, as players of the time did. Early parts were entirely free of added bowings, so why did modern 'early' players need them. The BBC didn't have house baroque bands, and most of my playing was of earlier music, so I didn't think about the subject until I was involved in *Alcina* for Richard Hickox in 1985. Simon Standage was leading, and the three of us had a day in which Simon played through the work and I noted his bowings on my score and then went home and added them to the parts. They seemed rather more elaborate than I expected, and I wondered if their origin was from sources more concerned with training soloists than orchestra players.

Skipping 25 years, I tried out in Cambridge a lecture I was preparing for a Vespers conference in Berkeley in June and at one stage got onto the subject of how Monteverdi's 1610 singers shaped the music they were singing without smothering their parts with hairpins, dynamics etc. Hugh Keyte writes on page 9 on a day of lectures and practical study at Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge on 27 March, and Jill Mitchell reports in verse with amazing accuracy Philip's style and a few of his words of wisdom at a weekend course on the same work in Birmingham on 16-18 April. (The following Saturday in Waltham Abbey he used the same approach with about 80 people singing Tallis's *Gaude gloriosa*.) Philip was particularly concerned at getting singers to realise from the words and music themselves how they should be shaped. Stylish performances on minimal rehearsal could only have occurred if there was a consensus on how the music should be shaped. Over a curry afterwards, this matter cropped up in conversation with Maggie Faultless, who is working on a Baroque Orchestra in Cambridge. A firm rule there is: no pencils. She wants players to learn how to play the music by understanding it. Every player is responsible for shaping his and the total sound. (cf p. 32) CB

# MUSIC

Clifford Bartlett

## FACE-LIFT FOR THE FAIRY QUEEN

Purcell *The Fairy Queen*. Music edited by Bruce Wood. Text edited by Andrew Pinnock. (*The Works of Purcell* vol. 12) Stainer & Bell, 2009. xcvi + 272pp, £95.00

This is the Purcell Society's third *Fairy Queen*. The main source (called by Wood & Pinnock<sup>1</sup> the 'theatre score') had vanished by 1701 and the work was virtually unknown until John Shedlock published its first edition in 1903 thanks to the rediscovery of the score at the Royal Academy of Music two years earlier.<sup>2</sup> The 1968 revision by Anthony Lewis, then Principal of the Academy, was a corrected reprint of that edition. Imogen Holst and Benjamin Britten produced a performing edition for Faber in 1969. My King's Music edition appeared in 1994.

WP has a thorough introduction. There is a plausible attempt at charting the history of the work from the 1691-2 preparation through the 1692 performances to 1693 revival. The theatre score is still the major source, but others are taken into consideration. Until the Purcell Society's revised *Indian Queen*, the play text was omitted from editions of semi-operas.<sup>3</sup> Here it is printed in a critical edition in full, though not in sequence with the music. It is a shame that relevant stage directions are not printed with the music as well as in the complete libretto. As a scholarly edition, it will be essential for study. But I suspect that at least some performers will prefer a reasonably accurate edition that has orchestral material available to buy. The choices are US reprints of the 1903 parts or CB.<sup>4</sup>

Comparing editions for readers without WP at hand is awkward because there is no standard movement numbering. I'll quote CB & WP's numbers. Not everyone wants to buy a new vocal score, so CB deliberately followed Lewis (though reversed 57 & 58 so that the Chinese Chaconne precedes rather than interrupts the final trio and chorus).

The part of the introduction that interested me most is section VI, which lists stage by stage the compositional

1. I'll subsequently refer to their edition as WP and mine as CB.

2. It doesn't surprise me that the Academy was so unaware of what its library contained. When I began to catalogue it in 1966, the management had only recently taken it seriously and appointed a proper librarian over someone who had, I believe, been promoted from the general office staff. He was still there, but rather out of his depth: his answer to a request for the best edition of the '48' was Czerny! I remember the embarrassment of his attempt to describe the *Fairy Queen* MS to the Queen Mother: she gracefully beamed at him.

3. Though I could supply a facsimile of the 1692 libretto if required; I think that the first ('only') Purcell semi-opera to be published with the full text in sequence with the music was *King Arthur* edited by CB, Peter Holman & Maxwell Sobel for the Boston Early Music Festival in 1995.

4. I was amused that the acknowledgments (p. xlvi) mentioned the use of the new material in the 2009 Glyndebourne performances by the OAE, yet a couple of days before the review copy arrived, the OAE librarian ordered a set of parts of my edition..

history. Section (9) deals with the drunken poet scene, added to provide a substantial musical insert in Act I. This does not affect the contents of an edition or performance, but (11), the changes in the Act V Masque, does. In the theatre score, the dance for 6 monkeys (CB 49, WP 41) occurs earlier in the Masque than in the libretto, where it is placed before *Hark how all things* (CB 50, WP 46). This seems not to have worked, and in 1693 a new piece was inserted, *The Plaint*. WP prints that in an appendix, which strikes me as a clear case of logic over-riding common sense and convenience. The work is more often performed in concert than on stage, so precise attention to changes for stage effect are hardly likely to outweigh the musical merits of individual items, and this is not a song anyone would want to cut. It would have been better included in sequence, noting what might be played or omitted – it's much easier to cut an item than insert one from an appendix.

The edition of that piece draws attention to a small but significant musicological lapse in the indication of instrumentation at the beginning of each movement. It is now widely recognised that the solo instrument here is more likely to be an oboe than a violin. However, the only source (*Orpheus Britannicus*) states *Violin*, and surely an editorial change like that should be indicated as such on the page. The problem is a general one. Much of the orchestral music is in four parts, headed by WP *Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, Instrumental Bass*. The proper pedantry of the preliminary stave on page 1 begins only after the editorial (though unbracketed or italicised) instrument names. CB uses the same terminology, except for omitting *Instrumental* before *Bass*. WP looks cumbersome: would anyone really believe that *Bass* alone would imply a double bass?<sup>5</sup>

This blanket repetition of scoring implies a certainty that the basic four parts imply only strings. One has to read the critical commentary extremely carefully indeed to spot that there are only instrumental indications in the theatre score when there are specific reasons for it. When a system is headed by a pair of trumpets, the scribe writes *Trumpets* between the two trumpet staves and *violins* between the two treble-clef staves below (e.g. in the *Overture*). In non-orchestral sections, the *Flutes* of *One charming night* are replaced by *viollins* at *Hush no more*, and there the information probably is literal, since there is no viola part.<sup>6</sup> Information on the scoring possibilities should be left to the introduction: e.g. whether an oboe quartet might be added<sup>7</sup>,

5. I decided by the time I edited *Dido & Aeneas* a few months after *The Fairy Queen* that there was absolutely no need to keep listing the four instruments, so they appear only once, in square brackets, at the beginning of the *Overture*.

6. There is a likelihood that sections for two violins without viola may be for two solo violins. The recorders and solo violins might well be on ground level or on the stage if the rest of the band was above the stage.

7. I would suggest that the heading *violins* in places like the *Overture* indicates the main four-part ensemble and does not exclude oboes.

what instrument(s) should play the bass (probably bass violin with the orchestra, but perhaps bass viol accompanying the voices, with a theorbo), whether the band played in a room above the stage, and if so was it without chordal support because the continuo was at ground level. Opinions on such matters change, and are best not fixed in the score. But specific scoring details should be clear. In WP 24a, for instance (the Prelude to Coridon & Mopsa's duet), the edition heads the upper instrument parts *Violin or Oboe 1* (& 2); in the absence of any indication in the score that the options are plausible, the commentary really should state specifically that the theatre score (the only source) has no instrumental designation.

The hope that the Purcell Society would abandon some of its old-fashioned habits with the change of publisher was vain. Mensuration signs<sup>8</sup> are still modernised, simple repeats with minor 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> time differences are printed twice (1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> time bars should at least be counted as a single bar in the bar numbering), space is wasted on a keyboard realisation. Unnecessary updatings are made: e.g. in no. 10, Purcell's *loud, soft, softer* are left as such by CB but changed by WP to *f p pp*. These dynamics are then added to the lower parts as editorial marks, though it's obvious from the theatre score that they apply to all parts.<sup>9</sup> (WP allocates the violin parts parts to *Recorder*, plausibly but not distinguished as editorial: violins can imitate birds as well!)

WP is of enormous value for its introduction, for its commentary, for its edition of the play and for the thorough survey of the sources. Personally, I'd put up with a few errors in CB to have the music set out with as many sections as possible neatly taking up one or two pages. The conscientious conductor can study the work by placing the CB score and the the WP critical commentary side by side, which is actually easier than comparing music and commentary in WP itself!

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#### YORK MASSES

*Fifteenth-Century Liturgical Music VII: The York Masses*  
Transcribed and edited by Theodor Dumitrescu (Early English Church Music, 52) British Academy/Stainer & Bell, 2010. xliv +, 135pp, £55.00 ISBN 978 0 85249 901 6

This contains 4 Kyries, (one, *O rex clemens*, by Horwood), 3 Gloria-Credo pairs, 2 Sanctuses and the *Missa Veni dilectus meus* by Johannes Cuk. This isn't a volume for performers to take off the shelf to sing, since most of the music is fragmentary. That being so, the worry about publishing in a way that most singers will find difficult to read is less of an issue: indeed, modernisations such as the use of only treble and bass clefs seem unnecessary. Perhaps a rawer diplomatic transcription would have served better, along with a more

8. The editors do believe in proportional relationships, so the signs should not be added as extras: if modern equivalents are required, it is they that should be in small print.

9. This is a general problem for editors: in homophonic music, composers are unlikely to mark dynamic changes in each part: is it unnecessarily pedantic and cluttering to bracket added dynamics in lower parts?

user-friendly transcription of performable items as appendix, or maybe via the EECM website. In conjunction with the facsimiles available at [www.diamm.ac.uk](http://www.diamm.ac.uk), this could then function entirely as an academic and historical study of the music without gestures to the non-specialist. That might be an excuse for omitting the alternatim chant, but I would argue that it is part of the context of the music, even if it is unperformable. We are told that the music is in a slightly larger typeface so that when reduced to A4 for the circulation (for a fee) of downloadable off-prints, they will be more legible. Why didn't someone think of that when the EECM size was enlarged from what used to be the standard octavo page size to the current larger one? A4 has been the normal photocopy size in most places (except USA and Canada) since the mid 1970s. But the font is spacious enough anyway, and a more compact layout would approach closer to the advantage of the original parts in being able to see phrases at a glance.

In one way, this is quite an old-fashioned publication, with a vast preface giving extensive information about the source and the music. I welcome having all the current information and ideas in one place. It is an odd publication to review from a performer's viewpoint. Even what look like complete pieces depend on some degree of editorial addition, which isn't necessarily obvious in long bracketed passages. Smaller type would be better for additions of more than a few notes: the bigger the gap, the less chance that editorial supposition will be supported if another source emerges. But this is a magnificent piece of work. The amount of music extant from this period (the MSS are from the last quarter of the 15<sup>th</sup> century) is not so extensive that fragments can be ignored.

#### PACHELBEL for TENOR

*Pachelbel Verzag doch nicht, du armer Sünder...* edited by Johannes Weiss. Edition Gütersberg (G148), 2009. Score & parts (from Edition Walhall) £23.50.

This is scored for tenor solo with a moderate compass (from the C below middle C up to an occasional top F), with violin and four *viole*. It's a compelling piece that deserves publishing and performing. My only grouse is that the Preface is too much of a programme note and doesn't give basic information. Did the the upper three *viole* originally have C<sub>2</sub>, C<sub>3</sub> & C<sub>4</sub> clefs? (If so, the top *viola* is not meant to be a violin, despite the single top F, which a viola-played would reach by playing the preceding E flat with the third finger that he would use for a D sharp.) Is there a source for the text? (For what it's worth, Google didn't find anything.) If the singer needs the introduction in English, surely he needs even more a translation of an archaic German poem? (There is, incidentally, doubt over the first word: *Vergeh* or *Verzag*, the latter being used more often.) The musical quotation of *Wo soll ich fliehen hin* is unlikely to mean much to anyone who doesn't know Bach's Cantata 5. A plus is the inclusion of a copy for the singer with his part and the continuo, which is figured so could be used by the organist if the tenor is leading the performance; there is a separate figured bass, whose existence might encourage the use of an additional melodic instrument, which I don't think the

work needs. The only reason for an organist not to prefer the copy that includes the voice part is the page turns.

#### MAGDEBURGER TELEMANN EDITION

Two items from Edition Walhall were passed over in the last issue – I ran out of time. A Concerto in G minor for recorder, strings & bc is named Harrach-Concert after the Austrian family in whose library it has survived. The MS, however, seems to have come from further north, since Brian Clark recognised the scribe as one who is known from Fasch sources in Uppsala. The editor, Reinhard Goebel, makes a fuss about errors in thematic catalogues – of course they happen, and the value of ascriptions on stylistic ground are notoriously fallible. This seems not to have been given a TWV number<sup>10</sup>: whether that is significant or not I don't know. Grounds of suspicion would be its Italianate style, but Telemann was chameleon enough for that in itself to be no objection to the ascription. The violin I & II parts are mostly identical except for the slow movement, and much of the accompaniment is for unison upper strings. A welcome extension to the treble/alto repertoire. (Score EW 743 €17.50; parts EW 744 €29.50; solo/kbd EW 785 €14.50).

The other Telemann is an anthology of 12 *Opernarien für Alt und Countertenor* (EW 416; €18.50). One dates from 1704, from *Germanicus*, written in Leipzig – TWV seems less able to provide new TWV numbers than the custodians of the Bach and Handel catalogues. The rest are from Hamburg (1724-29). The ranges are quite modest, though the compass is that of the modern operatic countertenor with Es and the occasional F. Singers after new repertoire will find a variety of tempting items here. There is a very brief summary of each opera, but not enough to give the singer a context. It is also a pity that the instrumentation is not stated, apart from an obbligato cello in no. 7, and there is no suggestion that score and parts are available for performance. Continuo realisation isn't distinguishable by small print – the singer needs to know when the accompaniment might be different from what is printed. The layout also looks a bit amateurish: a very bad example is No. 8, bar 2, which threw me when I was reading through the piece: the crotchet on beat 2 has about as much space as the following demisemiquavers. Whatever the computer programme produces, the editorial hand should be able to over-ride it. And in No. 2, it would be easier to read the demisemiquavers if one beam was omitted every four notes. But these are quibbles. I hope singers will explore this selection.

#### St. MARK PASSION

Bach *St Mark Passion* BWV 247 Vocal Score Peters (EP 11233) £12.95

The recording of BWV247 that I have reviewed elsewhere in this issue is of arguably the least interventionist of the performing versions available. There might be a case for regarding this new completion (first performed 2007, preface dated 2009) as the opposite extreme. Alexander

10. New discoveries need to find a home in the numbering system, if only in the Anhang so that there is a peg on which to hang doubts.

Ferdinand Grychtolik uses the usual movements from the *Trauerode*, *Christmas Oratorio* and BWV54, with BWV135/1 as the finale to Part 1, but it is for the crowd choruses that he has made the biggest leap, adapting textually similar sections from Bach's completed passions to fill the gaps. Similarly, the recitatives are part adapted from and part newly composed though based on comparable passages in the *St Matthew Passion*. All the borrowings and adaptations are carefully noted in a detailed appendix. The result is no less diffuse than the *St John* can feel and does produce a work in which all the music, to all intents and purposes, is by Bach. I should make it clear that the reconstructor does not claim that this is the *St Mark* as Bach wrote it. His intention, which I think he has achieved, has been to create 'a stylistically unified work in the service of today's church music'. I will certainly consider it very seriously as an option when I next perform a passion setting. The vocal score has been sent for review and orchestral material is available on hire. As is so often the case, the piano reduction is hopelessly and unnecessarily over-elaborate and the font in the choral sections a bit too small for gloomy churches. Will the edition nonetheless make the *St Mark Passion* more than a rare curiosity in our concert halls? With a major publisher behind it, it just might, but there is competition!

David Hansell

#### HANDEL GAMBA SONATA

Handel *Sonata in G minor for viola da gamba or viola and basso continuo* HWV 364b... Edited by Günter & Leonore von Zadow. Edition Gütersberg (G149), 2009. Score & parts, € 14.80.

No problem with the introduction here. This is by Peter Holman, who packs a vast amount of information into a single page that is nevertheless readable! The work is generally known as op. 1 no. 6 and circulates with three instrumentations. The autograph is headed *Violino solo*, with a bar written out with the solo part an octave lower in alto clef headed *per la viola da gamba*. Walsh, however, published it for oboe, despite compass problems. Handel seems not to have had any particular interest in the gamba. As Peter Holman's forthcoming book will show, the cello replaced the gamba as a bass instrument, but those who still enjoyed their viol turned to playing violin sonatas down an octave, reading them in the treble clef, which isn't an option offered here, though there several good editions for violin. The edition offers parts for gamba and for viola (with a few adaptations) as well as a parts labelled *Continuo-Cembalo* (with a realisation) and *Basso Continuo* (just the bass stave – rather pointless, since sonatas for solo and bass were not usually published in parts and the page-turns in the unrealised main score have no mid-movement page turns.) But better too much than too little!

#### BOCCHERINI OP. 5

Ut Orpheus Edizioni has now issued practical editions of the violin/piano sonatas op. 5 from vol. XXX of the *Opera Omnia* (see *EMR* 131, p. 5). They are in two volumes, 1-3 & 4-7 (PEB 23 & 24), each costing €28.00. A violin part is included, but not the 148 pages of introductory material.

The publisher's web-site describes them as 'for Violin and Piano', which is fine if the later version from the 1790s is used, though like the 1768 edition.

S. S. WESLEY

**Samuel Sebastian Wesley Anthems: III** Edited by Peter Horton (*Musica Britannica* 89) Stainer & Bell, 2009. xlv + 223pp, £85.50. ISBN 978 0 95249 913 9

This completes the chronological collection of SS Wesley's 40 anthems; the fact that it begins at no. 16 shows that his later output was less extended. His best-known anthem is here – *Thou wilt keep him*; the *senza Ped* markings imply stretches of a tenth for both hands, but Horton suggests that Wesley meant 'without pedal stops' – a way out rather than the solution. It seems perverse to begin the 'Notes on Performance' for a volume of anthems with the organ. Wesley was not happy with the change from instruments with manuals only going down to C rather than a fourth or fifth lower. He preferred to accompany the bass in octaves, like a pianist. In theory, it seems more sensible to use the pedal with 16' & 8' stops; but Wesley presumably wanted a homogeneous texture that use of the pedals would not give. The other problem is the alto; modern singers aiming for the solo market tend to have a higher tessitura than those Wesley expected. Unlike the EECM edition reviewed above, this edition does not give vocal compasses, but the altos seem to go up to A with an occasional B. The editor sometimes prints a phrase an octave higher, marking it *8ve lower*; surely it would be better in a scholarly edition like this to give the original as the basic version, easily done by putting the awkward phrase at sounding pitch in octave-treble clef. But if altos can't sing it at pitch, surely they can remain silent in unison passages? There's an unanswered question at the opening of the first anthem here, *Cast me not away*. The facsimile of the original draft gives a cut C signature (for 4 minims a bar) while the score has 4/2, which reeks of the practice of the MB/EECM /Purcell Society conspiracy; the commentary doesn't comment.

The larger anthems are for special occasions. *Give the King thy judgments* celebrated the marriage of the Prince of Wales in 1863 and has an elaborate organ part. One wonders what the marking *alla recitativo* for a tutti phrase at the beginning implies about Wesley's idea of recitative.

The existence of this volume is excellent for Wesley's status and enabling scholars to see his whole output, but in practical terms, the octavo format of the early EECM volumes or A4 would be more helpful for making cheap offprints available for choirs.

VIOLA DA GAMBA SOCIETY

I must have subscribed to what used to be called the society's Supplementary Publications since about 1965 and now have a wide collection of viol consort music that I haven't played for a decade or two. The core repertoire (Byrd, Gibbons, Coprario, Lupo, Jenkins, Lawes, Locke, Purcell, etc) is mostly available now in editions that are not too expensive, the publications of individual fantasies

having mostly been overtaken by substantial volumes of 'The Complete Fantasias a5' and so on, which some players find overpowering as well as requiring a substantial lump sum, even if the price per piece works out cheap. If you subscribe to the series, you get discount and for the current batch you pay £21.05 (to [stephen.pegler@ntlworld.com](mailto:stephen.pegler@ntlworld.com)).

Taking the new items in roughly chronological order, we start with 4 *Fantasias à 4* by William Byrd (Music Edition 230; £3.90). Only No. 1 survives complete, with an authoritative source in Byrd's 1611 *Psalmes, Songs and Sonnets*. No 2 lacks the bottom two parts, but there is a lute version to help fill the gaps. Nos. 3 & 4 each lack the treble part and survive in only one source. The reconstructions were originally made for recorders by Paul Clark. No 2 is likely to be by Byrd, nos 3-4 may well not be. Irrespective of that, this is a useful group of four pieces for TrTTB. No 3 is not the piece numbered thus in older editions and the original VdG list, which allocated that number to the viol antecedent of *In manus tuas*.

I remember the opening theme of Wilbye's Fantasia a6 well, and must have played it in my youth (or perhaps middle-age) (ME 227; £1.90). Virginia Brookes, the editor, seems a little cool about it; her assumption that it is early may be because it isn't like the madrigals, but to me it seems well designed as a purely instrumental piece. It is for TrTrTTB, with original clefs of g2 g2 c2 c3 f3 f3, which in another context would imply transposing down a fourth and might anyway make sense with a consort of G violone, bass and tenor, though that isn't on offer.

Andrew Ashbee's almost single-handed labours in editing Jenkins prolific output offer here a continuation of ME 222 with a further 10 (in fact 11) airs for two trebles and a bass VdG 93-10. I must confess that, if I came across them outside a viol context, I'd assume they were for two violins, bass and continuo. Formally these may look straightforward, but the detail and invention makes them far from predictable. (ME 229; £4.90). Andrew has also edited two anonymous sets of Divisions for treble and bass from Ob Mus Sch 80, nos 18 & 19 (ME 228; £3.00). This isn't music for beginners. The treble is quite lively, the bass virtuosic with a four-octave range.

The most substantial item is a set of 20 ayres for two trebles and two basses by Christopher Simpson (ME 226; £11.80). These are not so tricky as the anon/Jenkins, though the bass ranges are as wide. The 20 ayres divide into 5 suites. Unlike some other publications in the series, this has a whole 12 pages, in the format of a separate part, of editorial information by Alex Parker, perhaps overkill for an edition aimed at players, but welcome nevertheless. These are dances that take polyphony seriously.

Finally, and chronologically perhaps stepping back a bit, come 3 Fantasias (numbered 4-6) & a Pavan à4 from Dm.3.4.7-12 nos (VdGS 1340-3). The Fantasias are for Tr Tr T B, the Pavan for TrTTB (g2 c2 c3 f4). These and the Byrd would make a nice evening's playing, and players experienced in the repertoire could add a little spice by trying to think of composers who might have written them.

## BOOKS

Clifford Bartlett

## CALDWELL AT 70

*Essays on the History of English Music in Honour of John Caldwell: Source, Style, Performance, Historiography* Edited by Emma Hornby and David Maw The Boydell Press, 2010. xv 348pp, £50.00 ISBN 978 18483 535 6

A thorough deserved Festschrift, and one that I'm sure the author will enjoy. John's most useful work – a masterpiece – is *The Oxford History of English Music*, a single-author pair of substantial volumes that manage to discuss matters in some detail without losing the wood for the trees. His predecessors are discussed here by Bennet Zon, who points to John's work as being in a line of historians whose individuality is their musical armour (p. 324). Christopher Page point out that 'the early pages of volume 1 stand almost alone, among musicological writings, for showing that the landscape of England before 1066 contains much more than the Winchester Troper'. His contribution shows that St. Dunstan was aware of the carol form and offers a plausible text by Sedulius in elegaic couplets with a refrain in the typical ABACAD[A] pattern. As someone living midway between Cambridge and Peterborough, I was interested that Magdalene College (where I first encountered a musicologist, though I don't think he called himself that) owned a 14th-century antiphoner, which David Hiley shows to have offices that place it in Peterborough Cathedral, providing the aural counterpart of memorials still visible there. I suspect that trying to mention each of the 18 contributions will stretch our readers' patience. There is a strong medieval contribution, but other topics are music in English catholic houses as seen by a Spaniard in 1605, Purcell's 1694 *Te Deum & Jubilate*, an unknown English keyboard MS of that period, women violinists on London around 1900, Cobbett's *Phantasies*, and music in Oxford 1945-60, the termination being the year of John's graduation. This is an enjoyable mixture of essays, which I would have preferred to have been arranged in a single chronological order of subjects rather grouped by theme.

## LONDON STAGE 1695-1705

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

This covers two-thirds of the vacuum in most musicians' awareness of the period between the death of Purcell and the arrival of Handel. Purcell isn't entirely absent: he contributed *The Indian Queen* and other music in the year of his death, and musical style did not develop at an enormous pace for the next decade. The composer who seems to feature most in this account is John Eccles, though that might be in part because of his *A Collection of Songs* (1704)<sup>1</sup>.

1. The King's Music facsimile has been available for at least 20 years,

His best-known work, *Semele* (to more-or-less the same libretto as Handel later used), falls within the five years gap.<sup>2</sup> Stage music changed so much during that period, that (apart from the length of the book), it is as well that 1705 is its termination. It begins with fairly general chapters on comedy and on tragedies and dramatik operas. Then there are detailed discussions of the repertoire piece by piece, in four chapters: Imitation (1695-1697), Competition (1697-1700), Power Shift (1700-1703) and Realignment (1703-1705). Each chapter is preceded by comments on Context, Musical Assets (actor-singers, singers, dancers, composers, librettists). The structure works well, though it is quite heavy going. It suffers from the comparison with Curtis Price's *Henry Purcell and the London Stage*, which gets to grips more closely with the music and drama – though to be fair, it must have been easier to write a book on a single composer and more limited number of works. I like the idea of using facsimiles for music examples: most of the songs are on single sheets, and are legible despite their reduction in size. The list of abbreviations includes another work by the author, *Music in the Productions at London's Lincoln Fields Theater 1695-1705*, which I imagine might be a companion volume of music, but I can't find any reference to it on the www.

## PAGE AFTER PAGE

I'm still reading Christopher Page's *The Christian West and its Singers*. I reported on the first 200 pages in the last issue, but have only managed a further 140 since then. I was warned by someone who had read further than I had that I might get bogged down among the Visigoths and Franks, and I suspect my ignorance of their history made my progress slower. But I'm still fascinated by the book. The focus, for lack of any notated music to survive, is on the known church singers. There's one intriguing story (which, his serious labours over, Page might like to turn into a short story, if not a novel) of Simeon, number two in the Roman *schola cantorum*, sent in the 660s by Pope Paul I to Rouen at the request of Pippin's half-brother to teach the Frankish singers Roman chant. He imagines the linguistic mix: Simeon is an Eastern name, so he may well have spoken Greek, perhaps originally Aramaic. Page suggests that they had to operate in four varieties of Latin: the sung liturgical Latins of Rome and of Rouen, the spoken Latin of Rome (perhaps with an Eastern accent) and the rather different Latin of North France. There was almost certainly no musical notation, but Page has a fascinating account of how the mind might reproduce the music with a mixture of memory and picking up clues from the text (like modern musicians learning how to shape or bow without marking scores: see editorial). Read this fascinating section, especially pp. 312-314. I'll report further in the next issue. See also p. 32

but the author mentions only the original edition...

2. The editor is preparing a Collected Works of Eccles for A-R; but do we need another edition of *Semele*?

## Thorby Monteverdi Day

Hugh Keyte

*Eastern Early Music Forum Lecture/study day on Monteverdi Vespers at Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge, 27 March 2010.*

There is always a slight feeling of disbelief when people we know branch out in some radical new direction. How dare they reinvent themselves behind one's back? The late Deryck Cooke (my first boss at Radio 3) would affect a kind of pained perplexity whenever Diana Poulton's name came up: 'But is that *really* the same Diana Poulton who used to hand out scores in the music library?' I had the same problem myself with Nic McGegan, having known him as an admirable but personally unassertive baroque flautist: could he really have morphed into an internationally famous early-music conductor? That, of course, was before I heard him in action. (Last year, I was so bowled over by his Handel-arr-Mendelssohn *Acis and Galatea* CD that I listened to it an unprecedented five times in succession – though this may partly have been to wash away the memory of the grotesque Covent Garden misstaging of the original that I had recently endured.)

Philip Thorby is another example. I remember him from the '70s and '80s as a gifted player of viol and recorder. Decades later, attending his Eastern Early Music Forum study day on Monteverdi's 1610 *Vespers*, I knew pretty well what to expect of his new incarnation, having heard his praises sung by all and sundry in the interim. But the musician's life is full of disappointments: so many lauded executants turn out to be less than one had hoped. Could Philip really live up to the hype?

Well, some idols have feet of flesh and blood. From my schooldays on I have been lucky enough to sing under a succession of inspirational choral conductors, but this was something quite else. A high point was his demonstration of how much of *Laetatus sum* is based on a stretched-out Romanesca bass (news to me). Simultaneously singing a leading part, conducting the notated time signature, and stamping out the contrary Romanesca rhythm, he radiated such delight in Monteverdi's temporal complexities that the least cerebral of participants would have surrendered to the fascination.

Even more impressive was the exposition of the *Sonata Sopra Santa Maria*. Many a scholar has stubbed his musical toe trying to unravel the tempo relationships between the many short sections, with their kaleidoscopically shifting time signatures. Philip struck an admirable balance between pure theory and common sense. (Will Monteverdi have expected conformity to the scholastic tempo implications of his successive time signatures? Or had actual performance practice begun to disassemble the theoretical complexities – and if so by how much?) Every argument was processed via that essential filter, the gut instinct of an experienced, thinking performer. Was

his preferred solution right? I don't know: but it made musical sense; it made us think; and for me at least it suggested fresh approaches to a problem that I had been chewing over not long before. Nor did he operate as a one-man band. To an most unusual extent Philip was open to – often invited – queries, countersuggestions and even corrections from such recidivist know-all as CB and myself.

I was fascinated, too, by the amateur participants. The two cornettists, for example, could have stood alongside the best pros that were available when I began producing in 1975. And I was struck by the amount of hard academic knowledge that the keen amateur can nowadays be assumed to possess. Philip chooses to devote a major proportion of his time to working with amateurs. A waste of talent? I think not. For one thing, specialist early-music singers do not always follow the conventional route of conservatory training, and it would be interesting to know how many careers have been underpinned by the experience of choral singing under directors of his ilk. Emma Kirkby is a case in point. She acknowledges the invaluable technical help that she received from her teacher, Jessie Cash (a very different kind of singer), when she eventually decided to turn professional. But she remains profoundly grateful that she approached her solo career via choral singing in the Schola Cantorum of Oxford under another inspiring communicator-conductor John Byrt. Jenny Cassidy (who organised the EEMF event) is a comparable crossover. Now an established professional soprano, she acknowledges the value of what she learned from Philip Thorby's direction in a multitude of Eastern Early Music Forum events and his local choir.

It would be good to be able to add that many future singers may be following the same kind of career path through the kind of amateur study days that Early Music Forums and their like provide. Alas, despite efforts to the contrary, their market is chiefly the retired. I've nothing against that – I'm also a pensioner. But it is a shame that younger musicians don't take advantage of the opportunity of singing and playing a wide repertoire under the direction of Philip and other leading early-music performers.

I came away wishing that Philip could be captured on video taking this kind of course. It could be the basis of a riveting television production.

*For a variety of day and weekend courses and summer schools taken by Philip and others, see our concert diary, especially the sections at beginning and end listing Early Music for a events.*

## 400 YEARS ON – IN SOLIHULL

Jill Mitchell

*Whatever might a more potent draw be  
Than Monteverdi with Philip Thorby?*

"These Vespers – what a monumental piece! Such headlong creativity outpoured, Such stunning virtuosity displayed, Is quite unsettling, almost frightening. Amazing, see, the way the man combines The *stile concertato* with the chant. Chiaroscuro (Caravaggio!) sound That utters shafts of dazzling light that arc Across the sombre, dark solemnity. How wittily he echoes the motifs Of earlier genres, rhythmic shapes and forms And sets off one convention with another.

Now, singers, that's a Homer Simpson timbre; Present me voices grounded, resonant. Cast off, reject those louche Earl Greyish vowels, Do not adulterate the Latin sound. Eschew those twee and wetly English 't's, Obtrusive consonants that block the flow. Decline to be the framework; be The main event! These long notes must have shape, Direction, drive, then 'tripled' Alleluias burst (Ensure this!) like Prosecco from the bottle. Must I negotiate each single bar?— The Muppets (disconcerting!) spring to mind...

Ah, Strings, 'the French Baroque' may not apply: We're only on the cusp. What's more, I should Explain to you a dotted crotchet makes Three quavers in this psalm, so please oblige. It's very ragged; more precision here, Precision – mind – and accent aren't the same. Be more sophisticated, suave. Just think Of me. Continuo: that passage lacked A certain *Je ne sais quoi...* From the top! But now it smacks of Walter Gabriel And lurches with a quaint bucolic clump. I need you to amaze me at this point: A Major's luminosity should stun!"

*Although we often slipshod and raw be,  
What pleasure it is (ywis) with Thorby!*

"Then *Sede* calls for full and sensuous tone, Expansive and almost erotic here. *Emitte*, Ladies, has a single 'm'; You well-nigh treble it, and sound as if With utmost scorn you're slapping down the crude Advances of a Tenor. Try again. Now *Dominare* thunders through *in medio* With uncompromising power, until The ultimate in creamy sounds unfolds In *genui*, where Father woos the Son.

But *Judicabit* thrills with menace, swords Unsheathed and brandished. Armageddon comes

At *Conquassabit* – yet the tranquil chant Continues with unruffled, mystic calm. He sometimes turns counter-intuitive, But how electric in *Laetatus sum* Wherein on *illuc*, such a humble word, An adverb merely, Monteverdi sets The various coupled voices to compete In mimicry and wild parabola Like two muezzins, vying each with each, Across the rooftops. (*There* the tribes go up...) Again, on *propter fratres*, comes the swirl Of virtuosic, imitative note –

A preposition only, but it tells And points up kinship and community. A minute later, in that very phrase Repeated, there the crotchetts 2 and 4 Must be metallic, pinging through and laid Across the strong, sustained G Minor chord."

*On one-to-twenty, the 'score' must the score be  
To sing these Vespers with Philip Thorby.*

"What brilliant picture next of wasted effort For, nisi Dominus..., all is in vain. Unfocused, flailing energy misfires And *vanum est* and *frustra* urge the point... Sopranos, why the implication here That eating bread of sorrow is delight? Your winsome charm is totally misplaced For Nymphs and Shepherds are quite out of gear When *manducatis* resonates with grief. *Ecce hereditas* is too 'disturbed' As if you had been shaken in a jar; *Sagittae*, though, must loose those arrows off With tingling drama and with deadly aim.

*Magnificat*—summation!—says it all... *Misericordia* requires each Bass To be a Chaliapin; but it sounds Like bleary chucking-out time. Focus it! Be purposeful, committed, powerful... Why so depressed, Sopranos, to describe The rich despatched with emptiness away? (To me, I own, a quite appealing thought!) I have a problem, Tenors: in bar 2 Do you sing *Gloria* or *gladioli*? Which it is I simply can't decide, While *Cantus Firmus* meditates aloft With radiant insistence. *Sicut* is Portentous and majestic and serene, Its solemn import almost chills the spine, And then, in bar 14, we melt in warmth Of kindling sunshine, with the certainty Of *nunc et semper et in saecula*. Be gentle, sensitive. Do not apply A red-hot poker to this music, please.

That final crotchet in the next-last bar Will be as long or short as I decide So take a risk (eyes out of scores this once!) And shape that note to grow to where you sense I'll place that crowning chord to seal Amen."

*Had we missed such riches, we'd clearly  
more poor be;  
As 'tis, this work will for evermore be  
Lit by the spirit of Philip Thorby!*

*Gems from the Monteverdi Vespers week-end (April 16-18) in the new music department at Solihull School arranged by the Midlands Early Music Forum and directed by Philip Thorby. Jill manages to shape his ipsissima verba into verse (as she has done so successfully with other conductors). Apologies for duplicating what readers of the May MEMF Newsletter will already have seen. Similarly the unprocessed quotes assembled by Derek Taylor from the same source.*

Please look up so I can see the blood-shot pinks of your eyes after yesterday. Is that a smile or a rictus grin? Don't put a red-hot poker up the music. The first thing a soprano looks for is the organ's registration. A slinky number dressing in its semi-briefs. It is a twelve-bar blues.

I never thought I would say this, but you appear to be enjoying yourselves. We like the A major chord at the beginning and the A minor chord at the end... Could they please be different?

The hair on my head was not standing up but my bile was rising.

I mean this in the most helpful and constructive way.

What you have remembred is only exceeded by your ability to conceal what you have forgotten.

It should make no difference at all apart from the visual.

When it doubt, do as it says.

Once more with the added refinement of the right notes, band!

*The MEMF chairman commented* It remains a pleasing mystery to me how Philip can turn a more or less constant stream of abuse into something so positive and inspiring. A partial answer is humour, and the absence of 'abuse' directed ad hominem. CB

## ROMAN KEYBOARD MUSIC

Paul Kenyon

C. Jeanneret. *L'oeuvre en filigrane, une étude philologique des manuscrits de musique pour clavier à Rome au XVIIe siècle*. Firenze: Olschki, 2009.

What happened to Roman keyboard music after the death of Frescobaldi in 1643? Not even twenty-five when appointed to the Cappella Giulia, he was the most prolific of publishers. Long before his death the fame of the 'Mostro degli organisti' had spread beyond the Alps – and not only thanks to the advocacy of his most brilliant pupil, the melancholy Froberger – for Frescobaldi is well-represented in the Turin tablature, an enormous anthology extending to sixteen volumes, assembled between 1637 and 1640 at the instigation of the Fuggers and containing some 1770 pieces. Volume 6, dated 25th Sept. 1637, contains several ricercares from the *Fiori Musicali*, published a mere two years earlier.

Yet there are only two Roman publications for keyboard (Michelangelo Rossi's *Toccate e Corrente*, probably dating from 1644, and Fabrizio Fontana's *Ricercari* of 1677) that separate Frescobaldi's posthumous *Canzoni francesc* of 1645 and the first publications of Bernardo Pasquini towards the end of the century. This dearth of keyboard publications is, however, matched by a simultaneous rise in the number of instrumental publications. The change of taste was certainly not limited to Italy, for even Froberger's keyboard music remained unpublished in his lifetime, apart from the *Fantasia sopra Ut re mi fa sol la*, which Athanasius Kircher included in *Musurgia Universalis* (1650). The prospects offered by Rome to keyboardists had always been favourable – uniquely so, for Rome was not controlled by a single court. That they remained favourable for the rest of the century and beyond is clear from the number of names that regularly appear in the account books of the various basilicas, churches, confraternities and other institutions. These books record the receipt not just of monthly salaries but also of countless payments made for performances on feast days. Here we see the names of Frescobaldi's associates and successors, such as Nicolo Borboni (1591-1641), Francesco Muzi (active 1623-1644), Leonardo Castellani (1610-1667), Giovanni Battista Ferrini (c. 1600-1674), and Fabrizio Fontana (c. 1610-1695).

Despite the virtual lack of publications these men have not altogether perished without trace. A musician might earn his living mainly as an improviser and yet still keep a manuscript book. Typically the book would contain the owner's own compositions or his own personal anthology of works by others. It might equally contain material for his pupils. It can provide us with evidence of a type not always to be obtained from prints or presentation anthologies. It can tell of work in progress, abandoned projects, even of compositional process and reception. But it is merely a scrap-book. It is not likely to find its way

into a court library. It remains with the player and his family. More than ordinary luck is required for its survival. Fortunately, amongst the survivors are a number of manuscripts that appear to tell us a good deal about Frescobaldi and many others. Not surprisingly these manuscripts have attracted scholarly attention. They have been doing so for the last half century.

In 1962 Willi Apel published an article in which he discussed a number of manuscripts which contain a quantity of keyboard music not known elsewhere but attributed in these manuscripts (rightly or wrongly) to Frescobaldi. In 1968 three volumes of Frescobaldi attributions found in various manuscripts, not all of which had been noted by Apel, appeared under the editorship of W. R. Shindle. The same year saw the publication of the anonymous pieces in the Chigi archive of the Vatican library – these under the editorship of H. B. Lincoln. In 1980 Alexander Silbiger published his doctoral thesis under the title *Italian Manuscript Sources of 17th-Century Keyboard Music*: He was later (1987-1989) to publish an indispensable series of facsimiles in 28 volumes: *17th-Century Keyboard Music: Sources Central to the Keyboard Art of the Baroque*. Not only did he study a greater range of manuscripts than had been done previously, but he brought a new rigour to the investigation of issues such as provenance, handwriting, watermarks, clef formation. Amongst much else he was able to show that the number of lines on a stave was heavily conditioned by local custom and that the *Fioretti del Frescoballdi* (contained in London Add. 40080 and whose Frescobaldian paternity had been doubted) are not only in the hand of Nicolo Borboni (Frescobaldi's pupil, lodger and engraver) but constitute a keyboard intabulation of a now lost open score. The music is written on two staves, each with five lines – a unique ruling for a Roman keyboard manuscript. Thus we appear to have a substantial addition to the Frescobaldian canon. Meanwhile, in a paper published in 1985 Claudio Annibaldi had identified Borboni as the main copyist of Chigi Q. 1V. 25, and Frescobaldi as the most prominent of the seven hands that can be discerned in Chigi Q. 1V. 29. In a paper published the following year he was to identify Borboni as the copyist and (more controversially) as a possible composer of two double choir masses where the organ part book is intriguingly marked *G.F.di*

*L'oeuvre en filigrane* is a thesis submitted to the University of Geneva in 2005. Not surprisingly it earned its authoress her doctorate 'avec mention très honorable à l'unanimité'. With meticulous care she has erected an intricate superstructure on the foundations laid by Annibaldi, Silbiger and others.

It is not easy to translate her title into English. Whilst 'filigrane' means watermark, 'en filigrane' can by exten-

sion refer to what is implied, or between the lines, even to what is under the surface. Perhaps it is this last sense that best encapsulates Dr. Jeanneret's meaning when she writes of 'l'oeuvre [qui se] dessine en filigrane'. She is not wholly or even mainly concerned with watermarks in the literal sense. She readily admits that, considered on their own, they are of limited use in determining dates and provenances. What interests her is the story that a manuscript often tells. Such a story will typically be about the composer or the copyist. But it can also be about others into whose hands the manuscript eventually comes. More than a glance at the manuscript is required to reveal these stories, for they lie beneath its surface. She brings to the study of the music manuscript the methodology adopted by Carlo Ginsburg in his *Enquête sur Piero della Francesca*. She herself is a brilliant graphologist and her graphological findings enable her to offer conclusions concerning the working methods of seventeenth century composers generally – in particular Frescobaldi and the later but much less widely known G. B. Ferrini.

Of the book's six hundred pages four hundred form the core (third) chapter. Here she describes and comments on about ninety manuscripts, some of which have come to light only recently. Amongst these is a manuscript from Solothurn (Switzerland) that contains *inter alia* a number of pieces by Tarquinio Merula that are not known elsewhere. Even more interesting are two manuscripts (now in Brindisi) but discovered by Cosimo Prontera in a second-hand bookshop in Lecce. In one of these is an otherwise unknown Corrente that is plausibly ascribed to Frescobaldi and a set of Ruggiero variations that Dr Jeanneret thinks could be his as well. A detailed discussion of all these manuscripts would not be possible in a short review (even if I had the competence, for I have not seen many of them) but consideration of a few of Dr Jeanneret's more significant conclusions will hopefully give an idea of her approach.

This is well illustrated by her discussion of the *Fioretti*. Here she builds on Silbiger's study. She identifies the hand of Frescobaldi in a list of names (evidently intended as an aide-mémoire) scribbled at the end – thus showing that the manuscript must have passed through the composer's hands. She argues forcefully that the large number of apparently pointless clef changes were written to avoid ledger lines and thus to facilitate the printing of the original (open score) version. This she plausibly considers to have been intended as a sequel to the 1628 instrumental canzonas – a project abandoned in favour of a keyboard collection. In the event this collection was to be published posthumously in 1645. An emblem on the front is that of an English family – the Aldithleys, whose origins went back to an Irish judge, James Aldithley (1220-1272). So the presence in England of the manuscript is plausibly explained.

Frescobaldi, it appears, had more than one style of handwriting. Exercises written for his pupils such as the great-nephews of Pope Urban VIII are neatly written. These exercises appear in ms. Chigi 205-6 whose agenda is clearly didactic. On the other hand initial drafts of planned compositions are typically so hastily scribbled as to be

almost illegible. We find this type of writing in ms. Paris 64. In the course of her detailed discussion of this manuscript (on which she had previously published an article) Dr. Jeanneret is able to identify handwriting changes even amongst the scribble. Evidently, therefore, this manuscript was a *vade mecum* that remained in the composer's possession for some considerable time. Such a manuscript occupies the grey area between the improvised and the published.

Dr. Jeanneret provides what is surely the only possible answer to a strange puzzle. Ms. Paris 64 contains a piece apparently entitled *Aria detta la Frescobanna*. More than one exotic hypothesis has been put forward to explain this oddity. She suggests that the title was *La Frescobalda* but that for the upper parts of the letters l and d the ink failed to reach the nib. Impressions made on the paper by the dry nib provide complete confirmation of her prosaic hypothesis.

Publication, of course, was always the best means of disseminating music. But unpublished music could sometimes travel. Just how far and fast is clear from ms. Oxford 1113. The first 55 pieces in this manuscript are of Roman origin. The copyist, however, is obviously English. Annotations are in English and Frescobaldi is spelt 'Frisco Baldy'. The rest of the book is given over almost wholly to English composers. The Roman section includes a copy of Frescobaldi's first book of toccatas, evidently based (even if indirectly) on the 1616/1628 edition. For some reason the ordering of the pieces has been changed. The rest of the Roman section is much more remarkable. Here all the music is unpublished. The section includes one of Ferrini's variations on *L'aria di Fiorenze*. These variations are also found in ms. Chigi 26 and the Ancona tablature. The Oxford manuscript also includes three pieces found in ms. Doria 250.

Dr. Jeanneret is simply concerned to note the presence in an English manuscript of unpublished Roman repertoire. She does not offer a detailed discussion of the manuscript. It would not have been germane to her purpose to have done so. It is unfortunate that we do not know how or when the copyist made his Italian contacts. Even his identity is unclear. Some have dated the manuscript to ca.1620, but if the Ferrini ascription is sound, a later date is required. Dr. Jeanneret suggests a date c.1650. So too does Candace Bailey. The manuscript is bound in green. The cover is stamped with the initials 'W.E'. A nineteenth century note identifies the copyist as William Ellis, organist of St. John's College Oxford and Eton. But this note is suspect, for the scribal characteristics of the manuscript are quite unlike those of other manuscripts evidently in Ellis' hand. In his notes on the Christ Church manuscripts (available online) Dr John Milsom suggests that the copyist might have been a member of the Ellis family with the same initials and that the manuscript came into Ellis's possession at some later stage.

Only occasionally do I find Dr. Jeanneret a little hard to follow. Silbiger considered that ms. Trent FP 236 originated in North-Central Italy. Somewhat enigmatically, Dr Jeanneret suggests: 'Provenance: Italie du Nord et Rome.'

But are either of them right? The manuscript has been ruled with a double rastrum in 6/8 format – a ruling which is admittedly ambiguous, for it is consistent both with a Florentine and a Neapolitan provenance. Internal evidence seems to resolve the ambiguity in favour of Naples. Prior to Ercole Pasquini and Frescobaldi the variation canzona was almost unknown as a keyboard genre outside Naples. Yet no less than four anonymous examples are to be found in this manuscript. It also contains a number of anonymous Intrada-Ricercare pairs. The ricercares have titles that describe the contrapuntal procedures deployed – again an almost exclusively Neapolitan phenomenon. It is highly significant that the word 'Intrada' is not found outside Neapolitan sources.

The presence in the manuscript of a toccata by Giovanni Gabrieli does not suggest a Northern provenance. This toccata was not published by him but by Girolamo Diruta in his manual *Il Transilvano*. Diruta's little book was widely available and certainly known in Naples by 1600. Ms. Naples 48 contains a toccata of Merulo – again, known to us only through "Il Transilvano". The Trent manuscript is indeed the largest and (apart from Naples 48 which contains but a single attribution to him) the only contemporaneous source for the keyboard music of Ercole Pasquini. Yet even here there seems to be no argument for a Northern provenance. In the second half of the manuscript (which consists almost entirely of the Pasquini attributions) the bottom left hand line has been methodically crossed out. Thus the stave becomes a seven line stave, presumably to facilitate copying from a 6/7 (i.e. Roman) source onto 6/8 paper. As far as we know, Pasquini never visited Naples. He worked first in Ferrara and later in Rome as organist of the Capella Giulia. Even so, a Neapolitan provenance for the earliest sources of his keyboard music is not surprising. He had protracted contact with Gesualdo and other Neapolitans during Gesualdo's sojourn in Ferrara from 1594-1596, even writing a *Favolla Boscareccia* for Gesualdo's wedding to Eleonora d'Este. To my mind this manuscript seems to reveal a group of composers interested in contrapuntal challenges and especially in expanding the concept of variation. These men may well have been predominantly Neapolitans, but Pasquini emerges as the most distinguished member of the group and the crucial link between the Neapolitans and Frescobaldi.

Dr Jeanneret makes important contributions to the study of the highly enigmatic manuscript Ravenna 545 (better known as the *Libro d'organo di fra Gioseffo da Ravenna*). Silbiger showed quite clearly that the book had initially been organised in genres (toccatas, ricercares, capriccios, canzonas, dances, variations and airs) but that at some later stage(s) extra pieces were added. These later additions are characterised by the use of a clearer ink, differently formed C clefs (four strokes of the pen as opposed to six) and most notably by the fact that they appear out of sequence, evidently written on whatever sheets happened to be spare. He also proposed the identification of Fra Gioseffo with Don Giuseppe Rasino, a Benedictine from Ravenna and apparently a music collector. With all this Dr. Jeanneret agrees. However,

Silbiger also considered that the book was not bound until after the extra pieces had been inserted. On this point she is right, I think, to propose instead that the binding must have occurred (and the title page added) before the later insertions – otherwise they would have been written on additional folios and placed in sequence. She is also right, I think, to see the carefully written title page and the far less carefully written music as the work of the same hand.

From the foregoing it seems to follow that the initial compilation and binding must have been completed before 17 Sept. 1634, when Fra Gioseffo was ordained. After that he would have called himself 'Dom'. There is no knowing quite when the later pieces were added but, as Dr Jeanneret notes, amongst them is a dance called *Cappellina*. This piece is based on E, and D# occurs as a leading note – evidently the work of somebody familiar with Frescobaldi's *Aggiunta* and, accordingly, added after 1637. Likewise a *Barriera*. She does not note this piece but it quotes directly from Frescobaldi's *Battaglia*. However, she considers that a canzona attributed to Tarquinio Merula and other pieces that are plainly influenced by him (even if not written by him) are even later. It is not clear to me why this should be so. These pieces are all in the main body of the manuscript and Merula was an active publisher from 1615. It is true that these pieces are heavily dependent on straightforward sequences and in the idiom of later composers such as J.C. Kerll. But, as Silbiger noted in the preface to his facsimile edition of the manuscript, 'Little Italian keyboard music survives from the 1630s and 1640s, and some of these "modern" features may have been introduced earlier than can be determined'. If one accepts the Rasino hypothesis and, therefore, 17th Sept 1634 as the *terminus post quem non* for the initial compilation, then Ravenna 545 would appear to record the first stirrings of stylistic change.

Was Dom Rasino his own copyist or did he employ a professional? Like Silbiger, Dr Jeanneret favours the latter hypothesis. Probably the question remains open. However, if the manuscript is all in one hand, and if there was a gap of three years or more between binding (1634) and completion (after 1637), contact between owner and copyist must have been unusually prolonged.

The evidence is slippery in the extreme. It raises difficult issues but Dr. Jeanneret handles it with conspicuous care and ability. She has undoubtedly set the agenda for years to come. It is so much more the pity that Olschki have not looked after her as well as she deserved. True, they have not (unlike so many publishers) relegated footnotes to the end of the book but have printed them at the bottom of the relevant pages. On this they must be congratulated. However, references to manuscripts in the index are systematically out by two pages. So, for example, "Paris 64, pp.209-234" should be read as "Paris 64, pp.211-236", and so on.

My most grateful thanks go to Professor Robert Pascall, Dr. Robert Judd and Dr. Alan Brown for their helpful comments on a draft of this review; to Ms Janet McMullin who drew my attention to Dr Milsom's notes on the Ellis manuscript; to Geoffrey Taylor who helped me with the translation of the title; and to Dr. Diana Bowder who kindly checked my typescript.

## CHRISTOPH GRAUPNER

### A Weekend of Celebrations, Discoveries & Delights

Brian Clark

2010 marks the 250th anniversary of the death of Christoph Graupner, who served as Kapellmeister at Hessen-Darmstadt. Effectively head-hunted by Landgrave Ernst-Ludwig, who heard Graupner's operas in Hamburg, Graupner is only known to most Baroque music lovers as a footnote in J. S. Bach's biography, as – like Telemann – Graupner "received a better offer" (in his case, a strongly worded edict from Ernst Ludwig).

The relatively young Christoph-Graupner-Gesellschaft e. V. decided to celebrate the anniversary with a weekend devoted to a symposium built around the development of Darmstadt as a centre for the arts, and (of course) an exploration of Graupner's music – more specifically his operas and his sinfonias, with some papers (including my own) providing some sort of context by discussing music by his contemporaries. The symposium was very neatly combined with three concerts that touched upon subjects to be discussed, so there was a recital of extracts from two operas, and a concert of symphonies (and concertos). The first concert was given by one of the most devoted Graupner performers of modern times, Canadian harpsichordist Geneviève Soly. After a civic reception, at which the Ober-Bürgermeister welcomed not only the conference delegates, but also a representative of the Ministry which joined the City in its financial support of the weekend (as well as the daughter of Friedrich Noack, who first brought Graupner's music to wider note), the second evening entertainment saw Florian Heyerick direct Elisabeth Scholl (soprano), Reinoud Van Mechelen (tenor), Stefan Geyer (baritone) and his Ensemble EX TEMPORE in a concert of extracts from Graupner's operas *Dido*, *Königin von Carthago* and *Antiochus und Stratonica*. Michael Schneider and La Stagione (Frankfurt) gave the final concert (sinfonias by J. G. Graun, Carl Stamitz – both of which were copied by Graupner – concerti by Telemann and Fasch, and an ouverture and sinfonia by Graupner, some of the latter consisting of re-worked versions of two movements of the former).

In addition, Silvia Uhlemann and her team at the Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Darmstadt's Music and Manuscript Department mounted a wonderful exhibition. This was especially neatly done, with one cabinet devoted to the topic of each paper – and, because the delegates were given a guided tour after the second day's discussions, the documents on show (ranging from MSS of various composers' work to a viola d'amore thought once to have belonged to Graupner) brought things to life in a way no paper ever can.

The first day was mostly devoted to discussions of Darmstadt. Ernst Ludwig was an absolute ruler, and he

had ambitions of Louis XIV proportions. Peter Engels and Rouven Pons gave beautifully illustrated talks about the building works and the general development of the court (including the many hunting lodges to cater for Ernst Ludwig's other passion – there was even a slide showing his boar-rearing pens), while Rainer Maaß focussed on the ruler himself, especially on his frequent (unexplained, but costly) absences from court in his early years. (One of the exhibits was a letter from his mother, listing his personality defects!) Michael Maul's paper (timetabled to allow him to participate in events around a concert at the Göttinger Händelfestspielen the next day) about Georg Christian Lehms (who worked all too briefly – he died of tuberculosis in 1717 – as librettist) showed that his links with Graupner (who, like J. S. Bach, set Lehms' texts *Widerstehe doch der Sünde*, *Mein Herz schwimmt in Blut* and *Vergnügte Ruh*) dated to their Leipzig days.

The second day was broadly dedicated to opera. The President of the Graupner Society, Ursula Kramer, opened proceedings with a paper about the musical topography of Graupner's Darmstadt. Among many other interesting observations on the locations in which music could be heard, her description of a *Lust-Haus* built in the grounds of the castle, complete with a basement, linked via a tunnel, that allowed unseen musicians to play "Musak" while the noble family and their guests enjoyed a summer lunch – her suggestion that suitable repertoire for this setting might have included Graupner's trio for chaulumeaux (without the necessity of a basso continuo) was enhanced by hearing some of Graupner's suite for that very combination in the slightly echoey *Karölinensaal* in the Staatsarchiv, where the conference took place. The former head of the Music Library, Oswald Bill, offered an insight into Graupner's every day life. Extracts from letter, official court papers and even sermons from the Darmstadt clerics helped to recreate the atmosphere within which the Kapellmeister worked. Hansjörg Drauschke described some of Graupner's Hamburg operas. For me, the most interesting thing that emerged was the extraordinarily colourful orchestrations, which actually became a thread that pervaded the papers devoted to Graupner. As someone who has possibly edited (or been involved with the editing of) more music by Graupner than anyone at the conference, I have to confess that Graupner's music does not always come over too well in synthesized sound: once actual musicians are involved, and can shape the notes and phrases, it really comes alive. Apparently, though, even they have to work at getting into the music – one play through just is not enough to discover the effects that Graupner was after. My own opinion of his music has changed drastically as a result of the performances I heard this weekend. Amongst many

other sources, Rashid S. Pegah gleaned information about theatrical productions in Darmstadt from a 19th-century magazine which published references to music there "in earlier" times, and sought out original archival material to supplement those writings. A stimulating paper on "Dramatisation" in Graupner's cantatas was given by Guido Erdmann (There are two words in the German title, but I think they are both covered by the English word – the first means how the libretti were built in the form of dialogues, and how – in the early cantatas – the overall structures changed, while the second was more concerned with Graupner's interpretation of the texts in his music). One of the best conference talks I have ever experienced was Sigrid T'Hooft's presentation of the source materials available and the current state of development in the sphere of gesture on the Baroque stage. "This is not a paper," she said, "but more an illustrated talk." Utterly liberated from the discipline of reading, she was animated, enthusiastic and knowledgeable. She now teaches a formal course (apparently the only one of its kind) at the Musikhochschule in Leipzig, and the first fruits will soon be on show when her students perform Heinichen's *Talestris* in June.

Symposium participants were treated to a glimpse of what she does during the evening's concert. Each half was devoted to extracts from a different opera. Before the formal performances, one of T'Hooft's students, Marnie Zschöckner, gave a gesture-enabled interpretation of the key arias. For me, the results were two-fold: not only was it visually more interesting, but also musically – having memorized the music, she was far more engaged with the orchestra. T'Hooft told me over breakfast the next day in the marvellous Welcome Hotel (one of the major sponsors of the weekend) that her student felt she had learnt more from the weekend's experience than she did in all the baroque singing lessons she'd had in the previous few weeks. If anyone happens to be in Darmstadt on 29th October, I whole-heartedly recommend making their way to the Orangerie in the evening, as T'Hooft has been invited by the Graupner Society "to choreograph" (she would hate me for using that word, I'm sure) *Berenice und Lucilla*, Graupner's opera written for the Darmstadt court: I'm sure it will be an event that should not be missed.

The conference's third day was devoted to the sinfonias. After a general introduction to the re-discovery of Graupner's music and previous celebrations in Darmstadt, Peter Cahn gave an interesting introduction to the sinfonias, again highlighting the composer's original approach to instrumental colour. Then it was my turn... the paper was about Fasch's sinfonias, and specifically about self-borrowing both within the sinfonia genre, and (more interestingly) between ouvertures, suites, and sinfonias. Tobias Bonz, who has recorded six of the seven sinfonias by Johann Gottlieb Janitsch that survive in Graupner's handwriting at Darmstadt (as if it weren't enough to have written 1400 church cantatas, a handful of operas and an extraordinary amount of instrumental music, he was a prodigious copyist of other composers' music). After a biography of the composer, Bonz tried to get into the composer's mind, exploring what it was that drove Janitsch to write sinfonias, sometimes in a somewhat structure-free

way. The final formal paper was given by Graupner expert Christoph Grosspietsch. Rather satisfactorily for me, he had discovered instances of self-borrowing in Graupner's sinfonias too. His hypothesis that Graupner was re-cycling (a new German word for me – like the oft-spotted slogan "Kaffee to go") old music into new (the out-moded ouverture suite ceding to the new-fangled sinfonia, as it were) does not fit well with my Fasch research, thought I think he is right in Graupner's case.

There followed a presentation by Florian Heyerick, another Belgian musician very much involved with Graupner's music. His doctorate will be awarded on the basis of work in various disciplines (which I find very enlightened). Besides musicology – his online database at [graupner2010.org](http://graupner2010.org) lists all of the composer's known works, and a suite of software applications allows a mind-blowing range of analytical tools that will doubtless fuel other doctorates galore for years to come – he must give presentations and concerts, and arrange publications (including DVDs).

The weekend ended with an informal meal in the convivial surroundings of an Italian restaurant. Participants were joined by members of the Graupner Society, a Japanese student who is devoting her doctorate to Graupner's cantatas for the 16th Sunday after Trinity, and some "fans". Although I had met none of those people three days before, I already felt among friends.

As I said in the email in which I accepted my invitation to give a paper, I think almost certainly that I learned more about the background to my subject (since Fasch had travelled to Darmstadt and spent 14 weeks there, studying with Graupner) than the other participants were able to glean from me. Although I put on my poshest accent and spoke as slowly as I could, the questions people asked afterwards (in private, thank goodness) would suggest that they had misunderstood a lot of what I had said. At least they will be able to read it in the forthcoming conference book.

If any of our readers would like to find out more, [www.christoph-graupner-gesellschaft.de](http://www.christoph-graupner-gesellschaft.de) is an excellent place to start. The more international support the society can attract, the stronger will be their case for funding similar events in the future, and I for one think this a very worthy cause.

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#### GRAUPNER SUITE in C MINOR

The Allemande is the second movement of a Suite in C minor, GWV 131. It is preceded by an Ouverture and followed by Courante, Sarabande and Menuet. The *Prima la musica!* number is GRA301. Dennis Collins is the editor, and is currently working on a pretty much complete edition of Graupner's keyboard works. The "corrected" facsimiles from Fuzeau are unreliable – acknowledged privately as such by the director of the company in an email to Dennis – with notes removed and perfectly legible passages made unreadable by using black and white originals from film rather than the full colour scans.

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## Allemande

Allemande



## LONDON CONCERTS

Andrew Benson-Wilson

### DIDO & DIOCLESIAN

An elegantly converted barn in Surrey took the place of Josias Priest's girls school for a fascinating production of *Dido and Aeneas* (14 March, Bury Court, Bentley) directed by Kirsty Lothian and featuring an all-female cast. Uniformly clad in grey smocks, the various roles only gradually became apparent when they stepped out of the chorus. Imaginatively staged on a series of deep steps, with the small band and a remote chorus sited behind and above the singers, the lack of props and individual costumes allowed us, refreshingly, to focus on the individuals portrayed and the music itself. Along with many such country opera events, this provided a posh night out for the dressing-up faction of Surrey and Hampshire as well as, far more importantly, giving the chance for some excellent young musicians to gain performing experience. The mezzo Lilly Papaioannou was Aeneas, her beautifully shaped and shaded voice and fine acting showing real promise. Other fine performances came from Caroline MacPhie, Rosanne Havel, Erica Eloff (Belinda), Nadine Mortimer-Smith (Dido) and the gitar player, Arngair Hauksson. Simon Over directed from the harpsichord.

Purcell's *Dioclesian* is not an easy work to present, but I expected very much better from the Royal College of Music Baroque Orchestra and Chamber Choir (12 March). There was little evidence that the student singers had been given an understanding of consort singing, let alone Purcellian consort singing. The choir produced far too much operatic singing in solo and choir incarnations – and the voices that were not operatic were generally undeveloped. The performers looked rather unprofessional, with a very casual dress code. The staging was awkward, with soloists having to walk into the large empty space left for the occasional dances. The players struggled to follow the conducting of the RCM's Head of Historical Performance, who did not so much conduct as merely struggle to keep things together. There was no sense of the imparting of shading or subtlety of articulation or pulse or, indeed, any noticeable musical direction. His programme notes included extensive extracts from Wikipedia (to which he added his own copyright) as well as lengthy screeds about himself and his own group, but not a word about any of the students. And, to cap it all, there was a lengthy stage pause before the second half could start while RCM staff sauntered back into the gallery from their interval drinks. I am not going to criticise any of the student (or ex-student) performers – there is certainly a lot of talent there; but they deserved very much better support from the RCM. The 'jolly crew' certainly enjoyed themselves and Kitty Whately gave an attractive rendering of 'Still I'm wishing'. I also liked the Chaconne (2 in 1) from the three recorder players and theorbo. Peter Holman gave an intelligent and informative talk, setting the work in context.

### BARBICAN B-MINOR MASS

Harry Christophers and The Sixteen brought their take on the B minor Mass to the Barbican (10 Mar), producing a lush, warm sound, with a broad view of phrasing, extended cadences and a general glossing over of some of the finer points of detail. Exceptions to the latter included some fine flute and cello playing from Christine Garratt and Joseph Crouch in the *Benedictus*, a beautifully delicate violin solo from Walter Reiter in *Laudamus te*, and an excellent contribution from Anneke Scott, horn. The soloists were Gillian Keith, Sarah Connolly, Robert Murray and Dietrich Henschel.

### TAMBURLAINE AND THE BLUE ELEPHANT

If they had known that Plácido Domingo would have cried off, I wonder if the Royal Opera House's would have bothered with this *Tamerlano*, first staged by Graham Vick in Florence in 2001 and reprised in Madrid in 2008. In the event, the performance (15 Mar) drifted aimlessly into what became one of the longest evenings of my life – four and a half hours of barely relieved tedium. Firstly the good points. Ivor Bolton and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment gave their all. The Croatian mezzo, Renata Pokupić (a singer who I have admired since her very first appearance in England) excelled in her Royal Opera House debut, singing the role of Irene with absolute surety, supported by some excellent acting, including an appearance atop a massive blue roller-skating elephant. Kurt Streit, the Domingo stand-in as Bajazet, brought dignity and strength to the role, while Sara Mingardo was impressive as Andronico. Sadly Christianne Stotijn and Christine Schäfer were both miscast and woefully out of form. So where did it go wrong. Firstly the staging. The blue elephant was just one of the oddities. For much of the time the stage was dominated by a giant football, capped by a huge foot. The placing of singers on the stage made projection difficult at times, not aided by some light voices. The direction failed to grasp the inner dialogue of the text, and merely skimmed the surface. And Handel must also take some responsibility – this is not his finest work, with issues around the endless succession of show arias, sheer length, and some confusion of the translation of the potentially fascinating plot (centred on the relationship between the Tartar Emperor Tamburlaine and the deposed Ottoman Sultan, Bajazet) into entertainment. Nonetheless, at least I stayed to the end, which is more than some reviewers and a sizeable chunk of the audience did.

*Andrew really must see a good production some time: this is one of his most powerful operas, which needs no elephants but does require an outstanding dramatic tenor. To quote Terence Best, 'The opera is one of Handel's greatest... with powerful characterisation and music of the highest quality throughout.'* CB

## SOUTH BANK BACH WEEKEND

The Purcell Room and Queen Elizabeth Hall hosted a series of concerts under the banner of the 'Bach Weekend: 2010' (19-21 Mar). Following an informative talk by Richard Campbell, five singers from I Fagiolini (the seasonal plagues creating a very different line-up from that advertised) joined the Feinstein Ensemble for the St John Passion, directed with commendable restraint from behind the continuo organ at the back of the stage by Steven Devine. The players were on very good form, as was Nicholas Mulroy as a very communicative Evangelist tenor soloist and the bass Eamonn Dougan. But the other singers were not up to scratch, perhaps partly because of lack of rehearsal or preparation. For a group that prides itself on a theatrical approach to music, the same reason might be behind some awkward moments, notably in a lack of coordination between the singers as to where to look, or to whom to sing. Rodolfo Richter was beautifully expressive in his violin solo in *Ach, mein Sinn*, as were the two flautists, Georgia Brown and Eva Caballero.

The series of Sunday concerts opened with an excellent late-morning performance of the Goldberg Variations by Steven Devine, his sense of timing, rhetoric, lyricism and sheer wit being to the fore. Segueing several of the variations together and retaining a sense of the underlying tactus throughout, Devine gripped the attention of the audience from the start, after his personable spoken introduction to the work. This was certainly a performance that went better with morning coffee and sherry than with camomile tea. Coffee was the theme of the teatime concert with Faye Newton's delightful singing of the Coffee Cantata, *Schweigt stille, plaudert nicht*, with Ben Davies giving a lovely impression of the gruff Dad. It followed the surprisingly jovial little piece (considering the plot), *Non sa che sia dolore*, (cantata 209). Faye Newton is a comparative rarity in that she had managed to maintain her 'early music' voice, retaining perfect intonation and excellent clarity with barely a hint of vibrato. Curiously, the weekend finished with a concert with only one Bach piece in it, his 2<sup>nd</sup> Orchestral Suite, followed by Handel's Water Music Suite No 3 and Telemann's Suite in A minor. The opening Bach work suffered from a lack of detail, with only the *Bandinerie* lifting the mood from bland and predictable. The Telemann was a much livelier affair, with a great deal more expression.

## MOJCA ERDMANN

Yet again the curse of the Barbican hit, with an advertised soloist pulling out, leaving Mojca Erdmann to replace the promised Christine Schäfer alongside baritone Matthias Goerne in the concert of arias and orchestral movements by JS and CPE Bach given by the Munich Chamber Orchestra (23 Mar). As is often the case with the Barbican 'Great Performers', this concert was part of a CD promotional tour. And, as is also often the case, it was the stand-in singer that excelled, with Mojca Erdmann demonstrating a well-integrated voice and a fine sense of baroque line. The baritone, however, lacked all sense of definition and displayed some frankly eccentric body

movements and gestures. Most of the arias only needed continuo backing (which hardly need a conductor, least of all one of the 'wandering-about' school), so the (modern instrument) orchestra spent a lot of the time just listening, although they did show promise in two CPE Bach Sinfonias. Another feature, linked to the CD promotion, was the addition of Hilary Hahn playing the obligato violin role in most of the arias. I should have been warned by the Barbican's publicity, clearly not aimed at the early music brigade, which quoted a New York Times review that 'Hahn's generous use of vibrato enhances her rich, sweet sound'. I am afraid that, for me, her alarmingly persistent and strong vibrato was frankly irritating and, along with her long romantic bowing and phrasing and frequent portamento, showed a lack of stylistic integrity. A curiosity was a solo flautist in a dog collar – many musicians have day jobs, but do not necessarily advertise the fact so prominently. Or perhaps, as most of the arias yearned for death, it was intended as some sort of comfort.

## THE POWER OF MUSIC

The latter part of the London Handel Festival included the all-Handel concert, 'The Power of Music', by La Nuova Musica, with soprano Lucy Crowe and baritone William Berger (St George's, Hanover Square, 17 Mar). The indisposition of a third singer led to some last minute rearrangement, which all coped with well. Lucy Crowe is a consummate Handelian singer, her wide range allowing her to move between registers with ease – and it is lovely to hear a singer who can produce proper trills, rather than just adding a bit more wobble. Her 'soft complaining flute' was a delight, as was Marta Gonçalves's playing on one. Joseph McHardy was an excellent continuo player, with some imaginative organ elaborations in 'But oh! What art can teach' – something that is rarely attempted. Other important instrumental contributions came from Cecilia Bernardini, violin/leader, Paul Sharp, trumpet, and Maria Ferré Perez, theorbo. Baritone William Berger brought an almost manic bluff and bluster to 'I rage, I melt, I burn' from *Acis and Galatea*. After a rather fragmented first half (even before the last minute rearrangements), the meat of the programme came with *Apollo e Dafne*. Crowe and Berger reflected well the differing ambitions of the two protagonists, although it was a shame the singers were not placed closer together to enhance their interaction. David Bates is beginning to gain experience and confidence as a conductor and musical interpreter.

## IL PASTOR FIDO

The London Handel Festival continued its imaginative annual fully-staged opera productions with the Autumn 1734 version of *Il Pastor Fido* (Britten Theatre, 24 Mar). This combination was one of Handel's many attempts at shaking off competition from the Opera of the Nobility, with their star singers Farinelli, Senesine and Cuzzoni. He took advantage of the troupe of French dancers, headed by Marie Sallé, then resident at the new Covent Garden, by adding dances to the ends of the three Acts, and opening with the new 'Dramatic Entertainment call'd *Terpsicore*'. True authenticity is bypassed on a number of

points in this edition, including restoring the role of Eurilla to the soprano of the first version. A curious aspect of the opening of this *Terpsicore* was that it was both dressed and danced in such a clumpy and overbearing manner, despite the knowledge that Marie Sallé 'dared to appear... without pannier, skirt or bodice and with her hair down: she did not wear a single ornament on her head... she wore only a simple dress of muslin draped about her in the manner of a Greek statue'. There was a dual cast of young singers, the one I saw being dominated by the impressive and confident singing and acting of countertenor Christopher Lowrey (Mirtillo), a singer with the potential for a great future. I also liked Eleanor Dennis (Amarilli), John McMunn (Silvio) and Susan Shakespeare (Erato). John Ramster's direction was predictably overdone, revealing the usual opera director's fear of the singer just standing and singing. His more bizarre antics included a flock of jobsworths dressed, rather scarily, as sheep, to no apparent purpose. Laurence Cummings directed with his trademark bounce and panache – he is an inspiration for singers and players. This is not Handel at his best. He allows few moments of repose with the rumbustuous pace, but the shortish and tuneful arias and daft plot kept the attention from flagging. Suzana Orgajenšek, the advisor to Peter Jones' new edition, gave a fascinating and very well-delivered pre-performance talk.

#### VENICE HANOVER LONDON

In what I think was their first venture into the Wigmore Hall (28 Mar), the London Handel Orchestra looked at music related to Handel's moves between Venice, Hanover and London in the year 1710, with music by Steffani, Venturini and Haym complimenting Handel's own pieces. The soloist was soprano Ruby Hughes, the very worthy winner of both the first and audience prizes at the 2009 Handel Singing Competition. She has an expressive, rich and warmly textured voice and a keen understanding of how to portray and project complex emotions – notably in the intense *Pensieri, voi mi tormentate* from *Agrippina*. A sequence of arias from Steffani's 1693 *La Livertà Conenta* (the melody of the first becoming one of Handel's many borrowings), including two highlights – the gentle *Piante, fiori, ombre, che dite?*, to Emma Murphy and Joel Raymond's recorder accompaniment, and the long, low opening note of *Notte, amica al cieco dio*, where Ruby allowed her voice to emerge gently from the surrounding string tone. Of the instrumental pieces, Venturini's Sonata in A was a real find – the energetic and frenzied opening Allegro giving way to an Adagio which dissolved into the final Menuet via an intriguing harmonic detour. Adrian Butterfield led this interesting programme.

#### OUR CRITIC GIGGLES

The English Baroque Choir are an enthusiastic and very powerful amateur choir, as I found out at the cost of some personal embarrassment at the start of their St John's, Smith Square performance of the St John Passion (27 Mar). Sitting a few rows from the front, quietly perusing the programme while the orchestral introduction mur-

mured away, their opening cry of 'Herr' nearly made me leap out of my seat. Once I had recovered from the subsequent fit of the giggles, I managed to appreciate their contribution, particularly in the crowd scenes. Of course, events like this allow young soloists to show their mettle, and this performance featured some fine singing, notably from the soprano, Katie Tretheway, a singer I have not heard before. Ivan Sharpe, Edward Grint, Richard Wilberforce and David Stout also impressed. Liam Byrne was a sensitive viola da gamba player in an otherwise modern instrument Brandenburg Sinfonia.

#### TENEBRAE

Chapelle de Roi's Holy Week St John's, Smith Square concert (31 Mar) focussed on music from the service of *Tenebrae*, a combination of the normal early morning services of Matins and Lauds that, during Holy Week, was moved to the previous evening, thus reversing the usual progression of Matins and Lauds from darkness to light to one of light to dark. Although candles were in evidence, there was no attempt at recreating the gradual extinguishing of the candles that would have taken place in a *Tenebrae* service. Another omission, perhaps fortunate, was the various noises that seem to have occurred at the end of such services, including throwing 30 pieces of silver on the floor, making a 'noise and clatter' or dropping the lectern bible onto the floor for reasons explained in the programme. The music was based around the Matins lessons and their responds, with Lamentation settings by Palestrina, Victoria and Lobo, responds by Victoria, and five motets on related themes by Guerrero, Tallis and others. The concert opened with Victoria's *Ave Maria* and ended with his votive antiphon *Ave Regina coelorum*, appropriately, the setting for the Wednesday of Holy Week, and giving a hint of the rejoicing to come. Alongside the well-known Palestrina and Victoria settings we heard Lobo's Holy Saturday Lamentations, with his highly developed treatment of the initial Hebrew letters (notably the second *Jod*). Chapelle de Roi has a flexible pool of singers, and this was one of their best line-ups ever. The eight young singers produced a superbly integrated consort sound, their keen awareness of each other's entries being just one of the clues as to their success. Alistair Dixon conducted with sensitivity and a fine sense of the large-scale structure of the music.

#### OAE NINTH

The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment's Beethoven series continued with the 9th Symphony (Royal Festival Hall, 9 April), joined by the Philharmonia Chorus. The concert was preceded by a fascinating talk by Claire Holden on the changes in violin technique that occurred around Beethoven's time. This had been announced as the last time that Sir Charles Mackerras would conduct the 9th, but he was unwell and was replaced by Ilan Volkov. I am not sure how much notice Volkov was given, or the extent to which he was conducted a performance prepared by Mackerras – it was difficult to place either personality on the end result. There was a lack of balance between pulse and power and I did wonder if the speeds had been set

before Volkov arrived. But despite a lack of emotional depth to the performance there was some fine playing, notably from Antony Pay, clarinet. It is rare that I get the chance to even hear a contrabassoon let alone comment on one, but the magnificent fart that David Chatterton let rip from his rather scary looking instrument during the Finale will remain in my memory for a long time.

#### SWIFT SHADOW – SHORT DREAM

The Rare Theatricall is an enterprising young group that, as their name suggests, combines music with the other arts. In the case of their performance at the Crypt on the Green (underneath St James', Clerkenwell, 13 April) dance, film and shadow puppetry were the chosen partners, together with the visual additions of piles of books. Their show 'Swift as a Shadow, Short as any Dream' centred around Blow's *Venus and Adonis*, with dance from Jessica Clare Bridge and Liam Byrne, Purcell's *The Fairy Queen*, with Tereza Stehlíková's film, 'Palpable Play', and Matthew Locke's *The Tempest*, to Amy Hazeldine's shadow puppetry. It was inevitable that the focus would be on the visuals, overlooking the musicians sitting out of direct gaze to one side. But those who didn't give the musicians due attention missed a treat, because their playing was excellent, notably from the two violinists, Bojan Cicic and Katarina Bengston, and the harpsichord/director Christopher Bucknall. This was something of an experiment for the group, portraying three different and imaginative ways of presenting music. Each of the three separate strands would make a good stand-alone concert.

#### RETROSPECT'S FAIRY QUEEN

The first of the 'Icelandic Ash Cloud' concerts was on 15 April at the Wigmore Hall when the Retrospect Ensemble's director was stranded in Germany and could not make their performance of Purcell's *Fairy Queen*, given in association with the Israeli Barrocade Ensemble and Retrospect's Young Artists Programme. Fortunately, Barrocade Ensemble included what was to have been the second harpsichord player, Yizhar Karshon, who ended up thrust into the directing role at short notice. His direction was the more effective for being unobtrusive – trusting the other musicians to just get on with it is a lesson than the many experienced of directors often choose to forget. The two Israeli sopranos were Yeela Avital, who gave a lovely rendition of *The Plaint*, and Claire Maghnagi, clearly the most experienced of all the young singers. The four UK young artists included three with a Cambridge background, three from English cathedrals, two from the Royal Academy of Music and two from the Royal College. Countertenor Ben Williamson has reached that awkward stage when a fairly strong vibrato has developed, but he is not yet had sufficient vocal experience to always know how to control it. Greg Tassell has an attractively lyrical tenor voice, but with slight strain towards the top end. James Oldfield's rich and solid bass-baritone voice was used to very good effect as the Scurvy Poet, avoiding the temptation of over acting. Soprano Amy Carson has an attractive and slightly steely voice, but seemed a bit unsure on her runs and let her intonation wander on

occasions. Hannah McLaughlin and Frances Norbury made excellent contributions on oboe and recorders, as did Jonathan Manson as continuo cello. The first violin featured a surprising amount of vibrato and was also too loud on occasions, notably in *The Plaint*. With the absence of the intended director, this must have been difficult to rehearse and perform so all involved must be congratulation on making sure the show went on, particularly Yizhar Karshon.

#### OSWALD SCHOLL

If anybody wanted evidence that it is often the name of the performer rather than the composer that attracts audiences, then Andreas Scholl's sell-out appearance at the Barbican (19 Apr) would be a good start. The composer was Oswald von Wolkenstein, an itinerant Tyrolean one-eyed, 'earthy, lusty, sometimes violent knight-entertainer', who revelled his way round Eastern Europe and Asia around 1490. His story is revealed in the extended song *Es fügt sich*, much of which rants about his long-suffering wife and children – its stanzas were spread throughout the evenings entertainment. For entertainment it was, with staging, video backdrop, lighting, a narration from an actor and an element of dressing up. Well supported by The Shield of Harmony, with Kathleen Dineen portraying the unfortunate Frau Wolkenstein (little wonder she sang to the Virgin) and Margit Übellacker on dulcimelos, Marc Lewon, quinterne, and Crawford Young, lute. Sensibly using slight amplification, Scholl managed to re-create an intimate mood within the large Barbican space. Of course, Andreas Scholl is far too nice to portray such an unpleasant character, but he nonetheless relished the randy old goat's philandering. In *Durch Bararei, Arabia*, the 'dagger-sharp' anger of his wife sends him off again on his travels, with Scholl slipping into an impressive baritone register – and also slipping in a reference to Iceland following his 14-hour journey to get to the Barbican. Scholl is a natural communicator, and his superb vocal abilities made him the ideal vehicle to bring to life, and to a new audience, music of this vintage. More please.

#### THE SEASONS at ST MARTIN-IN-THE-FIELDS

Bearing in mind the sort of concerts that St Martin-in-the-Fields normally churns out for tourists, there might have been many in the audience who expected Vivaldi rather than Haydn when they turned up for a performance of *The Seasons* by the amateur Esterhazy Singers and the youthful young professionals of the Little Baroque Company (20 April). On this occasion the latter were neither little nor baroque, but 30-strong and brandishing that wonderfully phallic instrument, the contra-bassoon. When I last heard them they were two violins and continuo, but here they looked like the massed offspring of the most of the choir members. Of course, amateur choir events like this give great opportunities for young professionals, including the impressive soloists, Mary Bevan, Greg Tassell and Marcus Farnsworth. Although I do not think the Icelandic volcano had affected the performers, Haydn gave a nice nod to current events as 'the firm and deep foundations of earth itself' were moved and 'flashes of livid flame' darted through the air.

## BACH'S BORROWINGS

The distinguished oboist Alfredo Bernardini led the English Concert in a delightful Wigmore Hall concert with the sub-text of Bach's arrangements and borrowings (22 Apr). The programme included Rebel's ebullient *Potpourri*, *Les caractères de la danse*, Vivaldi's Concerto Grosso op 3/9, the Marcello Oboe Concerto that Bach arranged for unspecified keyboard, Bach's Concerto in C minor for oboe and violin (BWV 1060), concluding with his Suite No.1 (1066). Bernardini is an excellent communicator, both to his fellow musicians and the audience, and this had a telling effect on the projection of the music.

## KOOPMAN'S OFFERING

Ton Koopman is enjoying a residency at the Wigmore Hall, his latest contribution being a concert based on *The Musical Offering* (25 April), with his own Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra. After the opening *Ricercar a3*, with Koopman's wild ornamentation confusing the opening theme, the canons were given a variety of instrumental colour. The Sonata was beautifully played by Catherine Manson, violin, and Jan de Winne, flute, but they were totally dominated by the relentless battering of the harpsichord. The *Ricercar a6* closed the first half with six players and opened the second half on two harpsichords with Tini Mathot, Koopman's former student, joining as a husband and wife affair. The evening finished with the Concert in C for two harpsichord (BWV 1061). Although I have admired Koopman's work as a director, I do have serious concerns about his keyboard playing, which this concert did little to allay. When Bach played, it is said that you could hardly notice his fingers moving; but with Koopman, everything moves as he punches out the first beat of each bar with his head and lifts his fingers well above the level of the top of the harpsichord to attack the notes. The result was percussive, aggressive and often scrappy.

## HOWARTH'S VESPERS

The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment brought their version of the Monteverdi Vespers to the Queen Elizabeth Hall (27 Apr), directed by Robert Howarth. After an opening organ intonation, the work followed the usual format, with plainchant antiphons, until the *Magnificat*, where *Exultent caeli* acted as the antiphon and Giovanni Fontana's *Sonata Seconda* as a post-antiphon. The pitch was A466, reflecting cornett and organ pitch of the time, with *Lauda Jerusalem* and *Magnificat* down a fourth. There was no instrumental doubling, so the small orchestra spent much of the time back-stage. The use of a 20-strong choir, all but three acting as soloists, made sense given the size of the space, as did Howarth's approach to speeds. Of the soloists, Grace Davidson, Simon Wall, Nicholas Mulroy and Eamonn Dougan made significant contributions. I was not quite sure why Simon Wall sang his *Nigra Sum* from the side of the central aisle of the auditorium (there were no other attempts at recreating any possible architectural spacing), but it sounded fine from my seat. There will be many Vespers performances this year, some in more visually appropriate surroundings, but this will take some beating.

## MONTEVERDI &amp; CASTELLO

As one of their contributions to this year's Monteverdi Fest, the Academy of Ancient Music gave a programme (*In Stil Moderno – The 17th-Century Italian Avant Garde*) focussing on the instrumental music of Castello and vocal works by Monteverdi (Wigmore Hall, 28 Apr). Castello's occasionally anarchic flights of fancy were explored by the six instrumentalists, with notably contributions from William Lyons on the dulcian and Pavlo Beznosiuk and Rudolph Richter, violins. Monteverdi's vocal works were sung by the Polish soprano Aleksandra Anisimowicz in her Wigmore Hall debut. She is a very exciting addition to the early music vocal world, with her sparkingly fresh voice (almost completely devoid of vibrato), a warm lower register (tested in Penelope's *Di misera regina*), a clean and clear upper range, excellent use of articulation and ornament and an impressive clarity in melismatic passages. She excelled, both in the extended opening *Prologo* from *L'Orfeo* and the *Lamento d'Arianna* but also in the shorter sacred works, notably *Laudate Dominum*. Her portrayal of the love-lost young man in *Se I languidi miei sguardi* was immensely touching – as Richard Egarr suggested in his pre-concert talk, the piece was probably reflecting the anguish of an 18-ish year old youth whose voice had not yet broken.

Readers may be interested in the following email that my spam-checker fortunately let through.

From Jim Stockigt [jrs@netspace.net.au](mailto:jrs@netspace.net.au)  
Subject Arias with obbligato bassoon

This is to let you know that the website on arias with obbligato bassoon has been updated and is now easier to operate. Until now it has been difficult to use some of the links and to print music from the site, depending on the server and browser that are used. I hope that these problems are now fixed.

More links to CD and U-tube recordings have been added so that it is possible to listen to the start of many works, and to order particular tracks on-line.

The site is accessible through three links:

<http://jimstockigtinfo.com/>  
<http://www.obbligatoafagotto.org>  
<http://web.me.com/jimstockigt/Site/Home.html>

Let me have your comments about the site, especially about any unsolved problems that remain. Please make this site known to others who would be interested in this wonderful little-known repertoire. The site now lists almost 300 arias with more to be added.

Jim Stockigt

2 Grant Street, Brighton East 3187, Victoria, Australia

## CD REVIEWS

We regret that rather more discs than usual have been deferred until the next issue. Our apologies to the performers, the record companies and our readers.

## MEDIEVAL

*Canto novello, Maria! Virgin, Beloved, Mother, and Queen of Heaven – Laude from late-medieval Italy* Ars Choralis Coeln & Oni Wytars 78' 02" Raumklang RK 2809

A glance at either of the two sources (Cortona Codex 91 & Florence Magliabechiano BR 18) will not prepare you for the sounds on this disc. I'm not very convinced that their scribes would recognise these performers as representing their conceptions of the music; but never mind. Cut off any concern for authenticity and enjoy this disc as a creation of our musical desires and expectation, not those of medieval Italians. If there is any overlap in performance styles of them and now, that's an extra, but we can't tell if there is any. They are not singing to the Lord in an entirely 'new song', but the sound-world is quite a long way along the ancient-and-modern scale. The performances have vitality and variety – at times raucous, at times beautifully gentle. Take it for what it is. CB

*Sturlunba – Battle of Iceland* Voces Thules VTO02 (from [www.vocesthules.is](http://www.vocesthules.is)) 54' 45"

One might expect this to be as ambiguously 'early' as the disc reviewed above. There is, indeed, very little music surviving from the period of the Icelandic sagas, though some chant, and this disc is framed by a sequence for Saint Hallvard, the 11th-century patron saint of Oslo, who was revered in Iceland. The texts are genuine, extracted from *Sturlunga Saga*, an account of a disastrous battle on 21 August 1238 in which the family was comprehensively beaten. The Saga acquired a series of interpolated dreams and premonitions, and these form the textual basis of this anthology. Some scraps of music survive, more is based on folksong published a century ago. Thanks to the Icelandic respect for tradition, this is perhaps less implausible an idea than elsewhere. Less plausible is the extensive use of instruments. The harp is mentioned in the sagas, but seems not to be associated with the performance of their text, so I'm puzzled why so much effort has been devoted to this minor aspect of likely performance practice, with four makers credited (none with Icelandic

names). I find that the extraneous backing gets in the way of the character of the tunes, though I suppose something is needed to replace the presence of a narrative context. The hard-bound booklet is informative, with the original text and translations in English, German and French; the sources are noted. The black on orange pages are legible, but orange on black needs good light. An interesting and well-performed disk: try it. CB

15<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

*Ockeghem Requiem, Missa Mi-mi, Missa prolationum, motets* The Hilliard Ensemble 130' 48" (1984 & 1988) Virgin veritas x2 50999 6 28492 27

This bargain re-release of vintage recordings provide ethereal readings by the Hilliard Ensemble of three key masses by Johannes Ockeghem. The contrast with later readings is striking. The Hilliard's perfect intonation, tone and blend contribute to an utterly secure interpretation in which the music is allowed to speak for itself, as Ockeghem's distinctively extended vocal lines seem to float insubstantial and weightless. To some these readings may sound bloodless, but not to me. I feel that they contain the full impact of Ockeghem's writing, and that their very austerity is part of their winning charm. The second CD, recorded in Boxgrove Priory rather than Temple Church, has a slightly warmer and more intimate tone.

D. James Ross

*Danse et Chanson Grand Désir* (Anne-Marieke Evers, Anita Orme Della-Marta) Aliud ACD HJ 043-2 51' 08" Binchois, Dufay, Lewon, Nasopoulou, Ockeghem, Paumann & anon

This selection of dances, primarily basse-dances, alternates with chansons by Binchois and Dufay in a charming cross-section of courtly music from the 15th century. The singing of Anne-Marieke Evers is beautifully complemented by elegant and virtuosic playing from the consort on harp, lute, recorder and viol, and there is an accomplished level of ornamentation in the instrumental diminutions that provide a vital part of the basse-dances. This enterprising CD exploring the links between danse and song, and more precisely the tenors of specific songs and basse-dances based on research by Frederic Crane, is both entertaining and revelatory. D. James Ross

*Herz, prich! Medieval German music* Oliphant 54' 27" Alba ABCD 292

Music by Sachs, von Meißen (Frauenlob), von Reuental, von Rügen, von Salzburg, von der Vogelweide, & von Wolkenstein

We are on stronger ground concerning the relationship of what we hear with what survives than with the two disks I have reviewed above. I would feel happier if the general information in the booklet were in part replaced by specific information on what I was listening to. Normally, I could easily check, but at present I'm in the same position as the uninformed listener. I'm not opposed in principle to accompanied monophony (though it did seem rather fussy for Hans Sachs's *Wacht auf*). With Wolkenstein, it's interesting to know where he has borrowed the music from. The performances themselves are excellent: the marvellous soprano Uli Kontu-Korhonen is accompanied by three instruments. The original words are given, with translations in English and Finnish. CB

*Tous les regrets: Musik vom Hof der Margarete von Österreich* Ulrike Hofbauer S, the Modena Consort 60' 12" Cornetto COR 10027

Agricola, Brumel, Capirola, Ghiselin, Isaac, Josquin, Ockeghem, la Rue, Spinacino, Weerbeecke

Doomed it seems forever to be associated with regrets, Margaret of Austria has been the focus of an extraordinary number of recordings recently. This is scarcely surprising as her haunting image survives in many portraits, her life-story is compelling and moving, and her various surviving music books record a wealth of the finest music of the period. Thus it is that the Modena Consort can compile a visually and aurally pleasing collection, giving it their own unique slant by performing on a consort of transverse flutes. There is no particular reason why these instruments should sound more feminine than, say, recorders, but the fact is that they do, and the resulting readings of consort music by some of the big names in Europe Ghislin, Ockeghem, Brumel, Josquin, Isaac, as well as some more obscure masters such as Weerbeecke and Spinacino, the latter so obscure that his name can appear in two different spellings in the booklet notes! The flute consort pieces alternate with beautifully sung consort and lute songs. I sought in vain for the effect of dummystereo/Kunstkopfverfahren boasted of in the booklet, but the recorded sound is certainly very good. D. James Ross

## 16th CENTURY

Marco dall'Aquila *Pieces for Lute* Paul O'Dette (lute).  
Harmonia Mundi HMU 907548.

Marco dall'Aquila (c.1480-1544) was a contemporary of Francesco da Milano, and was regarded as one of the greatest lutenists of his age. A small number of his pieces were published by Casteliono and others, but the bulk of his extant output survives in Munich MS 266, now available for free download at [www.digitalesammlungen.de/~db/0003/bsb00031681/images/](http://www.digitalesammlungen.de/~db/0003/bsb00031681/images/).

Like Francesco, Marco dall'Aquila wrote ricercars and fantasias, and made song intabulations, but he also arranged popular dances on grounds such as *La Traditora* and *La Cara Cosa*. The ricercars vary in character, and often have surprising shifts of harmony, including a remarkably blue note towards the end of track 4. Paul O'Dette's playing is spectacular, ranging from reflective ricercars such as tracks 8 and 22, to exciting, foot-tapping rhythms and extraordinarily fast divisions in the dance pieces. His technique is phenomenal, and although one listens on the edge of one's seat, never slumped back in an armchair, there are some more tender moments such as the ricercar at track 35, and Marco's intabulation of Josquin's evergreen *In te Domine speravi*, which brings the CD to an introspective end. Slightly more than half the pieces are played on a lute in G made by Paul Thompson, and the rest on a small lute in A by Grant Tomlinson.

Unfortunately, in spite of all Paul O'Dette's frantic virtuosity, the CD is a huge disappointment. The recording had been planned to take place in the town of L'Aquila in Italy, but on 6th April 2009 there was a massive earthquake which destroyed much of the city. The recording was moved to a mediaeval church about 30 miles away, but that had suffered structural damage too. At the last minute the recording was made at the Castello Piccolomini in Capestrano, but the acoustics there are utterly hopeless. There is so much echo, that all the notes merge into each other, and the effect of the music is ruined. In the booklet notes O'Dette confesses that, 'the acoustics of the Castello are perhaps more reverberant than one is accustomed to hearing', but then to speculate lamely that Marco dall'Aquila may have visited the place, so no justification.

Stewart McCoy.

Aston *Three Marian Antiphons* Blue Heron, Scott Metcalfe 63' 48"  
Blue Heron BHCD 1002  
*Ave Maria ancilla trinitatis, Ave Maria dive matris Anne, Gaude virgo mater + Robert Jones Magnificat, John Mason Quales sumus o miseri*

(Music from the Peterhouse Partbooks, I)  
[www.blueheronchoir.org](http://www.blueheronchoir.org)

Notwithstanding reconstruction work and research by Nick Sandon, the Peterhouse Partbooks remain under-performed and under-recorded, a state of affairs evidently being addressed at last by the American ensemble Blue Heron. On the evidence of these recordings they have a fine sense of the idiom of this distinctive music, and their performances are rich, muscular and expressive. If I feel they lack the final gloss of some English ensembles, this may be a recording issue, and the singing and interpretations are impeccable. Hearing Aston's swirling vocal lines, one is powerfully reminded of the significance of this neglected English master, who deserves to stand beside the really big names of the early Renaissance, and whose reputation has hitherto been suppressed by the random and tragic loss of a single tenor partbook. D. James Ross

*Courtly Airs and Dances of the Renaissance* La Rossignol 49' 01"  
III Millennio CDA 0169

This is a collection of mainstream courtly music played on a varied consort of Renaissance instruments such as was popular in the 1980s, but sounds a little dated now, particularly as the full consort sounds a little metallic and electronically processed. Having said that, the playing is very good, the interpretations energetic and dynamic and the range of music varied and entertaining. Reading the booklet notes, I was reminded that La Rossignol are a combined ensemble of musicians and dancers, and I can imagine that the 'complete show' would be thoroughly engaging. As it is, this is a fine way to revisit the familiar strains of Susato, Attaignant, Phalese, Arbeau and Negri.

D. James Ross

*Madrigali per Laura Peperara* Silvia Frigato, Miho Kamiya SS, Silvia Rambaldi hpscd  
Tactus 530001 61' 24"  
Agostini, Frescobaldi, Luzzaschi, Virchi, Wert

This could not be more of a contrast with the fantastic Contarini CD reviewed below. Take two wobbly aspiring sopranos and a plonky harpsichordist, stick them in a room with an unfavourable acoustic and let them screech away... it is the kind of thing one might expect of students on first discovering early music. The singers show little affinity with or understanding of the music, and use far too much vibrato but virtually none of the other *affetti* displayed so admirably by Marta Infante; the tuning is suspect in many places. The words are not well projected, and convey little sense. Silvia Frigato has some skill in Caccinian ornamentation

(*Ch'io non t'ami cor mio*), but that alone is not enough to save the CD from awfulness. The harpsichordist Silvia Rambaldi seems to want to play as many notes as possible at a time, and has little sense of line or pulse. Some research has gone into making the CD, and it probably made an attractive local concert; but for a CD these days far more effort at varied presentation and sympathetic accompaniment is needed. Stay away! Selene Mills

*O muse, comt ny voort: Dutch songs of love and freedom 1550-1750* Duo Seraphim (Margot Kalse mS, Elly Van Munster lute) 64' 42"

Aliud ACD HJ 040-2  
Bredero, Camphuysen, Coornhert, van Froeckenbroch, Hooft, van Hout, de Lange, vander [sic] Noot, Starter, Valerius, Vallet, van den Vondel, Weyerman & anon

This CD is a treasury of lute songs, or rather contrafacta, by a succession of largely unknown Dutch masters very presentably sung by the Duo Seraphim, and if its minimal shortcomings seem to loom large in this review it is because I think inevitably the charms of music of a very similar style and largely the same texture begin to wear a bit thin after an hour. The shortcomings are precisely the lack of variety, a slight lack of polish to mezzo-soprano Margot Kalse's voice, and a pervading buzzing sound on an actual tuned note, which to be fair is practically inaudible during the singing but which re-emerges between verses and dominates the start and finish of each take. Why on earth did nobody notice this during recording or editing? D. James Ross

*The Spirit of Venice Music by Gabrieli, Willaert, Vivaldi and others* Brisk Recorder Quartet, Amsterdam (Marjan Banis, Saskia Coolen, Alide Verheij, Bert Honig), 61'33"  
Globe GLO 5235

+Bendusi, Courtois, Erbach, Janequin, Mainero, Merulo, Da Rore, Sandrin, anon & modern

The Brisk Recorder Quartet play with excellent ensemble and a lovely sound on both high and low consorts of recorders. All the music on this CD has a connection with Venice and Saskia Coolen writes in her notes that pieces from different centuries are arranged like precious stones in a mosaic. At first sight, two long chunks of 16th century music surrounding arrangements of two Vivaldi concertos and a modern piece don't look as if they will make a very convincing programme, but the result is surprisingly attractive. The renaissance music includes madrigals, dances and canzone either with original diminutions (Bassano's version of Rore's *Ancor che col partire* and two organ intavolature by Andrea Gabrieli) or with

diminutions by the quartet based on sixteenth century indications. The short and chromatic Vivaldi concerto in D minor RV129 'Madrigalesco' looks back towards the 16th century, as its name suggests. At the centre of the recording is a nine-minute undoubtedly modern composition by Renske Vrolijk, *Ghost Wall*, based on the idea, originally an April fool joke, that the sounds of the past can be locked into old walls. The vocal lines of madrigals by Willaert and Tromboncino sung by soprano Johannette Zomer are electronically transformed, the composer explains, to sound as if she is singing to us from the distant past. The haunting combination of recorders and electronic effects needs to be listened to with well-placed stereo speakers or headphones. I liked it, but if you don't, you can always programme your player to leave the track out. *Victoria Helby*

#### 17th CENTURY

**Biber** *Mensa Sonora, Battalia* Baroque Band, Garry Clarke 56' 50" Cedille Records CDR 90000 116

Garry Clarke is an English violinist working in Chicago. His work with Baroque Band involves exploring repertoire which other ensembles play one-to-a-part with a larger ensemble. To be fair, courts did employ as many string players as he uses here, so there is no real argument against the basic premise. While initially not too taken by the fuller sound, I found myself enjoying the recital more as it went on. This is, of course, music to be heard during a banquet, so we must assume that there was talking, laughter and the clinking of cutlery to compete with, so a little extra volume would not have gone amiss. While *Mensa sonora* is a fairly sedate set of suites for four-part strings, the final piece on the programme, Biber's *Battalia* is an altogether different prospect – one wonders what the original audience made of it! BC

**Buxtehude** Masaaki Suzuki (1649/1730 Fritzsche/Klapmeyer organ, Altenbruch, 1598/1682 & Wilde/Schnitger organ Lüdingworth) 68' 48" BIS SACD-1809 BuxWV 148, 153, 155-6, 160, 196, 203, 207, 218, 220-1

Masaaki Suzuki is better known for his direction of the Bach Collegium Japan but, like many conductors, his principal musical training was as an organist and harpsichordist. His playing can appear rather frenetic for my tastes, giving an uncomfortable edge-of-the-seat feeling and, frankly, not doing Buxtehude many favours. However, the organs are recorded closely, so loss of clarity is not as much an

issue at it would be in the church acoustic. Speed and lack of gravitas is most noticeable in Buxtehude's extraordinary *Te Deum*, a 12 minute composition that seems to sum up the entire North German organ style, and a piece that would surely have avoided the rather light and frothy interpretation given here. The programme is well balanced, with the last three pieces played on the meantone organ in Lüdingworth. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

**Buxtehude** *Membra Jesu Nostri* The Sixteen 61' 23" COR 16082

This is the latest re-release on The Sixteen's own CORO label of a recording they made 10 years ago for Linn. If you include director Harry Christophers there are actually 16 performers, though only five of them are singers, all now well known in their own right (Sampson, Crabtree, Blaze, Gilchrist and Birchall). Like the full choir they really sing, often to thrilling effect, in both ensembles and the solo sections. The work itself needs no recommendation of course and, having been praised first time round, neither does the performance. *David Hansell*

**Charpentier** *Messe pour les trépassés, Trabart Requiem* Ensemble La Fenice, Jean Tubéry 130' 45" Virgin veritas x2 50999 6 28503 2 2 +L. Couperin, de Grigny, Raison & Roberday

This is a repackaged re-issue of discs from 1999 and 2001 respectively and if they are not already on your shelves I recommend you add them to your French Baroque collection immediately. Although the works by Charpentier are among his earliest, there is nothing immature about them and one can take his mastery for granted. Pierre Tabart was a provincial musician whose music was a welcome discovery for me. It is full of contrapuntal interest and given a committed performance, though the soprano soloist is not always comfortable with the tessitura. Organists will absolutely love the blast of Raison that opens this disc. *David Hansell*

**Robert Jones** *The Second Booke of Songs and Ayres* (1601) Cantar alla viola Nadine Balbeisi, Fernando Marín 72' 49" la mà de guido LMG 2090

Robert Jones may be less well-known than his illustrious contemporaries, John Dowland and Thomas Campion, yet his songs are entertaining, and would grace any lute song recital. Those in *The Second Booke* have particularly long verses, with dramatic arguments dealing with multifarious facets of love: "Fie, fie", "I'll tell, I'll tell", and so on. *The Second Booke* is unusual, since it supplies not only

music for the singer, lute tablature, and a texted bass line for a viol or voice, but also tablature for a lyra-viol tuned bandora way (fefhf, or e' b g d G D).

Nadine Balbeisi (soprano) and Fernando Marin (lyra viol) have combined forces under the name Cantar alla Viola, to explore music for their unfamiliar line-up, and despite a few misgivings, the result is most satisfying. Jones' songs have a high tessitura for the singer (up to top a''), while the lyra accompaniment goes no higher than g', producing a wide gap in pitch between the two. A bow necessitates chords involving notes on adjacent strings, resulting in a closely-spaced mostly 2- or 3-part texture; wide spacing can only be achieved by playing notes separately like "um-ching". The lute, on the other hand, can sustain a more melodic treble line, and at a higher pitch. Jones' lute accompaniment is better suited to a soprano, and the lyra viol to an A- to A tenor. The songs are generally sung from a man's point of view, e.g. "She made mee leave all other".

Nadine Balbeisi has a good, clear voice with excellent diction, and successfully captures the contrasting mood of each piece. She sings all 21 songs, occasionally omitting verses for the sake of a balanced programme. Fernando Marin's viol playing is first rate, and provides a convincing foil for the singer. Occasionally he plays pizzicato, which might have appealed to Jones' contemporary, Tobias Hume. This is a fascinating collection of songs, and I hope that their CD will encourage others to explore this rewarding repertoire.

*Stewart McCoy*

**Legrenzi** *Concerti musicali per uso di Chiesa Op. 1 Messa & Vespro* Oficina Musicum, Riccardo Favero 102' (2 CDs) Dynamic CDS 653

I thoroughly enjoyed this wonderful recording. I have long been a fan of Legrenzi's music, and these two discs reminded me why: he writes fabulous melodies, and neat counterpoint, and harmonic progressions that are predictable without being uninteresting. The psalms, sonatas and other concerted music are all beautifully performed by a well-balanced ensemble of voices and strings, and I was especially impressed by the plainsong interludes. I used to dislike singing plainchant, as I always felt there was a communal reserve among the singers, waiting for someone to lead; here, there is one voice that "leads" the others but it is not dominant, and together the singers make a marvellous sound. I do have two musical reservations: the cornetto seemed to shift between being a substitute violin and doubling the soprano line; I would have no problem with either approach, but I

don't think it can be justified within a single work. I'm also not entirely convinced by harp continuo. Yes, I know it is documented in some repertoire. The continuo realization just seemed to be pitched too high sometimes, and the difference in speaking of notes between the harp and the violins, say, was just a little uneasy on occasion. That said, I may find that unfamiliarity was the problem since, as I say, I definitely recommend this recording.

BC

*The Mystery of Sign. Mouton: 10 Concerti à 5 Ars Antiqua Austria, Gunar Letzbor 59' 40"*  
Challenge Classics CC72336

The manuscript of the ten-5-part-concerti recorded on this disc are attributed to a Sign. Mouton. Gunar Letzbor's booklet notes (which take almost a dozen pages to get to a discussion of the music) suggest this might be Charles Mouton (1626-99), a pupil of Denis Gaultier known to have worked in Naples and Paris. His surviving output consists of two volumes of lute tablature. We are also invited to decide for ourselves whether or not the works are actually by him – and I would have to say that I doubt it. Of course, it is well known that Corelli's concertos circulated widely before publication, so the present works – which seem sometimes more modern than Mouton's dates would suggest – may be older than they sound. Certainly, the five-part scoring and the predominantly five-movement structure tends to look backwards. The performances are lively and impressive, and the recorded sound bright and clean. Perhaps the disc could have been padded out by some of M. Mouton's lute music – that would have given listeners a point of reference when considering the possible identity of the composer.

BC

*Purcell Love Songs* Dorothee Mields, Lautten Compagney Berlin, Wolfgang Katschner 76' 12"  
Carus 83.435

I feel a bit sorry for the singer. She has obviously worked very hard at a set of difficult texts in a tricky foreign language only to find herself surrounded by some of the most irritating instrumentation and interpretations I have heard for a long time. It may well be that this is purely a matter of taste and if yours embraces a disc of Purcell that begins with a Jew's harp solo, and also includes *Sweeter than roses* with a fully composed string accompaniment and the *Ground* from *Dioclesian* on two theorbos with pizzicato double bass and percussion then you'll enjoy this. All this I found a shame because there is some marvellous and too little-known music here, some of which

does survive more or less intact, and it is a relief to encounter a disc of Purcell that gives the sources of all the music. But by the end I was in full grumpy old man mode.

David Hansell

*Salamone Rossi The Song of Solomon and instrumental music Profeti Della Quinta, Ensemble Muscadin 58' 35"*  
Pan Classics NEWP 10214

Through recent recordings and concerts, Salamone Rossi is slowly gaining the reputation he deserves amidst the wealth of musical talent that characterised early 17<sup>th</sup> century Mantua (including Wert, Monteverdi and Viadana). This recording, bringing together two extremely talented young groups, is a major contribution towards an understanding, both of this sometimes enigmatic composer and of the rich musical heritage of the Jewish people. It contrasts his spirited instrumental works from his four books (published in Venice between 1607-1622) with extracts from his more conservative 1623 collection 'The Song of Solomon' (*Hashirim Ashér Lish'lomó*). Adding a recorder and cornet to the solo violin specified in Rossi's title pages, and harpsichord, organ and viola da gamba to the specified continuo chitarrone,

Ensemble Muscadin (a group of players formed in 2002 from students at the Schola Cantorum Basileensis) brings an enlightened and elegant insight into the lively instrumental works, reflecting their important contribution to the development of the Sonata. There are musically imaginative melodic embellishments and continuo realisations from Corina Marti, recorder, Josué Meléndez Peláez, cornett, Leila Schayegh, violin, and the continuo group of Tore Eketorp, gamba, Michal Gondko, theorbo and Alena Hönigová, organ, harpsichord and direction. The Hebrew settings are sung by Profeti della Quinta (Doron Schleifer and David Feldman AA, Eitan Drori and David Nortman TT, Elam Totem, B and direction), founded in Galilee in 2003, and produce a superb consort sound, with light, flexible, perfectly tuned and highly musical voices. This is a CD I will return to again and again. One interesting insight from the CD notes was how Rossi solved the problem of combining music, read from left to right, with Hebrew text, read from right to left.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

*A. Scarlatti Cantatas & Chamber Music*  
Clara Rottolk S, Tempesta di Mare  
Chandos Chaconne CHAN 0768 67'41"  
*Bella dama di nome Santa. Bella, s'io t'amo. Quella pace gradita. Cantata pastorale. Concerto in a.*

Given that Clara Rottolk's soprano is bright and clear and the instrumental playing capable and stylish, casual listening to this

disc provokes an agreeable impression. Yet the more searching approach I believe Alessandro Scarlatti's cantatas deserve reveals troubling aspects, summed up by the conclusion that for too much of the time these performances sound excessively tentative, as if the singer and players are feeling their way through music they have yet to get under their skin. This suspicion is compounded by Rottolk's poor diction, small lapses of intonation and some decidedly uneventful instrumental playing; it is further enhanced by a markedly greater sense of conviction in the well-known *Cantata pastorale*. On a textual point, I would query the use of archlute continuo at the expense of a harpsichord. This will raise no hackles, but neither is it likely to send the blood coursing through your veins.

Brian Robins

*Uccellini Works for Violin* Hélène Schmitt vn, Markus Märkl hpscd & org, Karl-Ernst Schröder theorbo/guitar, Arno Jochem vlc/violone 76' 19"  
Christophorus CHR 77315

I have only recently become aware of Hélène Schmitt, which is quite strange as I'm pretty sure I would have been sent this disc for review when it first became available in 1999. Everything that I have written about her playing in the last few years also applies here – she is a wonderful violinist, and this *stylo phantastico* music really suits her. Uccellini must have been a very impressive virtuoso in his day, but it is not simply in the faster sections that Schmitt shines. Longer notes allow her to apply vibrato and trills – in fact, I can even forgive her the occasional note-bending!

BC

*Bach and the North German Tradition*  
Böhm Buxtehude Vol. 1 (Martin Neu Ahrend Organ, St Otto, Herzogenallbach) 72' 02"  
Audite 92.547 SACD  
Böhm Chorale partita Ach wie richtig, Capriccio in D, Chorale Partita Freu dich sehr; Buxtehude BuxWV 140, 161 & 164; Bach BWV532, 627 & 635

This CD of works by Böhm, Buxtehude and Bach demonstrates the new 26-stop, two-manual North German style organ at St Otto, Herzogenallbach, Germany built by the well known firm of Ahrend, in this case built by Hendrick Ahrend, the son of the firm's founder Jürgen, who has contributed so much to the organ world. Overcoming apparent technical difficulties in fitting the organ into the available space, the result gives a directness of sound, tempered by an accommodating acoustic. The playing is accomplished and explores the colours of the organ well, notably through the two sets of variations by Böhm.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

*Cantate Contarini* Marta Infante, Ars Atlantica, Manuel Vilas 61' 45"  
Enchiridion EN 2027

This is a truly outstanding recording, perhaps all the more so for presenting an entire CD of anonymous works – fabulous, hitherto unknown baroque cantatas which have been painstakingly revived from sloppy MSS collected by the Venetian lawyer Marco Contarini (1632–89). Inevitably, the cantatas by named composers – Scarlatti, Pasquini, Stradella and Gasparini – in Contarini's library were better known, and these MSS appear to have been overlooked until now. Who better to revive them than this consummate team of musicians, who understand and perform this music as near perfectly as I can imagine. As well as being virtuosic performers, they sympathise wonderfully with the affects of both words and music, creating masterpieces of passionate rhetoric from each piece. All the cantatas are composed for alto voice and continuo, and Marta Infante's warm-toned and highly flexible mezzo-soprano voice can express not only every extreme of emotion, but every subtle hue as well, so that repeated notes and phrases are not just louder but more intense, more heartfelt each time. The continuo realisations are fascinatingly imaginative as well as being entirely true to the style of the music. The *Lamento di Cintia* opens with a harp introduction *alla chitarra*, and is then taken over by a lamento solo viol, which morphs into *lira* style, obviating the need for a chordal instrument. The pacing is very dramatic – and in my opinion, perfectly judged, with very slow passages, long gaps and very fast passages strung together to make a convincing whole which conveys the meaning of the text and music with great passion, astonishing technical skill and beauty. The translations are only in Spanish, and the booklet is full of careless slips, but don't let this prevent you from rushing out to buy this: the perfect CD of florid monody.

Selene Mills

*Concord of Sweet Sounds Music on the spinet and virginal at Westwood Manor*  
Sophie Yates 79' 27"

WEST 001

Blow, Croft, Jones, Purcell Suite in g, Purcell; English, French & Italian dances

Available from Westwood Manor, Bradford-on-Avon BA15 2AF, [emily@azis.co.uk](mailto:emily@azis.co.uk) at £15 + £1.50 p&p.

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

A chance drop-in to the National Trust property of Westwood Manor on the way back from Bath was my introduction to this CD and two important keyboard instruments – a particularly important 1537 Stephanus Muinensis ottavino (a pentagonal octave virginal – one of the oldest surviving of its kind) and a 1711 Stephen Keene spinet, both recently restored to playing condition. The provenance of both instruments is unclear – they were left to the National Trust in 1956, along with the house and other contents, by Edgar Lister, the last private owner of Westwood Manor. In recent years, many visitors had shared my own frustration at so many National Trust properties where musical instruments are treated as mere items of furniture, with little or no interest shown in their musical importance. As the booklet notes say, 'For such rare musical instruments to remain silent is a kind of imprisonment'. With active support from the National Trust and donations from supporters, this led the current tenants to set up the recording project that resulted in the restoration of the two instruments (by Miles Hellon, virginals, and Andrew Garlick, spinet) and this CD. It also happened that a local resident was the distinguished harpsichordist, Sophie Yates, who was keen to record the two instruments. She turns in an excellent performance on both of them – her sensitivity of touch and attractive musical fluidity are particularly impressive. The recording, by Gary Coles of Regent Records, is excellent, the two instrument being well balanced and the domestic acoustic neatly caught. The notes give a full technical description of the instruments, with photographs. All concerned with this important project are to be congratulated.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

*Musique Francaise de XVII<sup>e</sup> & XVIII<sup>e</sup> Siècles* Thomas van Essen T, Julien Léonard vln, Marie Rouquié gamba Benjamin Alard (organ Saint-Ouen de Pont-Audemer) 51' 47"

Hortus 076

Boynin, Charpentier, F. Couperin, Lallouette, Leclair & Titelouze

Although there are records of organs in Saint-Ouen from at least 1663, the age and provenance of the present organ seems obscure. After the usual historic upheavals over the years, it was restored in 2000 to a pre-Revolution condition by Michel Giroud. It is rather small, by French standards, with 18 stops, but include the basic sounds of the French classical organ. After an organ hymn by Titelouze and a Suite by Bovyn, the CD continues with an organ transcription of Couperin's *Sonade en quator: La sultane*, the tenor *Salve Regina des Jésuits* by Charpentier, a gorgeous *Sonata à trois* by Leclair and two tenor

motets by Lallouette. It is good to hear a classical French organ in the role of accompanying a solo voice and instruments.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

*War & Peace* The Oboe Band

Boismortier, Finger, Handel, Krieger, Lully, Pez, Purcell (from *The Fairy Queen* & *King Arthur*) Available via <http://theoboeband.com>.

One of the nicest aspects of this reviewing lark is watching and, if possible, encouraging young musicians as they make their first steps into the complex world of professional music making – and then following them as their careers develop. I often first hear them in student concerts in cold churches or dusty basements, or in competitions like the former Early Music Network International Young Artists' Competition (now run by National Centre for Early Music in York). So it is always a thrill when I hear of their successes or, as in the case of the Oboe Band, they send me their first CD. The Oboe Band (who are exactly what they say on the tin) were formed in 2005, were finalists in the 2007 competition, and were Ensemble in Residence at the Royal College of Music from 2006–8. War & Peace is an appropriate title for their CD, as the early history of the oboe covered both eventualities. The attractively presented programme reflects the history of the instrument and its music during the 17th and early 18th centuries. The inevitable transcriptions work well, particularly the two Purcell suites. The playing is excellent throughout, with some impressive use of articulation and dynamics in their insightful interpretations. I can assure any readers who might think that an entire CD of oboes is the sort of thing designed to annoy the neighbours that this is far more likely to delight.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

#### LATE BAROQUE

*Bach Missae* Collegium Vocale, Ghent, Philippe Herreweghe 119' 50"  
Virgin Veritas 50999 6 28481 2 1

This reissue of recordings from 1990/91 brings together four of Bach's five surviving *Missa* settings, omitting the first part of what became the B minor Mass. All are late 1730's parody reworkings of mid-1720s cantatas. Also included is the *Sanctus* (BWV238 – not the one from the B minor Mass), with its obbligato *violini unisoni* part and cornet vocal doubling. The soloists are Agnès Mellon, Gérard Lesne, Christoph Prégardien and Peter Kooy. Philippe Herreweghe's sensitive interpretations helped to bring these, then little-known pieces, to public attention. They have stood the test of time better than many other twenty-year-

old recordings. The Masses are also available as a boxed set, together with 2 CDs of cantatas. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

**Bach St Mark Passion** Dominique Horwitz, Amarcord, Kölner Akademie, Michael Alexander Willens 73' 15" Carus 83.244

This live performance from Dresden's gloriously restored Frauenkirche is of a work which itself requires major restoration. The version used here is the least interventionist of those available in that the only music included is the opening and concluding choruses and three arias adapted from the Trauerode, one aria from BWV54 and a number of chorales. Several of these come from a relatively little-known source and even by the normal standards of these things, are stunningly inventive. Most of the text (the narration and all the individual and crowd 'speeches') is read by Dominique Horwitz – clearly but with no great sense of involvement. The music is all very beautiful and performed with love (not least by the increasingly and rightly ubiquitous Clare Wilkinson) but overall this is a rather odd and frustrating listening experience. *David Hansell*

**Bach Organ Works Vol V** Margaret Phillips (1743 Hinsz organ, Bovenkirk, Kampen, 1696 Schnitger organ, Noordbroek). Regent REGCD301 155' 52" (2 CDs)

This double CD comprises two attractively self-contained recital programmes, each including a number of lesser-known pieces enclosed within major works – in the case of the first CD, the Toccata in d minor and the other (Dorian) one. The lesser-known works include, on CD1, the delightful little flurry that is *Liebster Jesu, wir sind hier* (BWV754), a sharp contrast to the two more reflective versions, *O Herr Gott, dein göttlichs Wort* (757), the *Partite diverse sopra Christ, der du bist der helle Tag* (766) and the bouncy little *Pedal-Exercitium* (598). CD2 offers the *Partite diverse sopra Ach, was soll ich Sünder machen* (770), *Wie schön leuchet der Morgenstern* (763) and a curious, and lengthy, version of the German *Te Deum – Herr Gott, dich loben wir* (725), possibly intended as a accompaniment to congregational singing. The two organs are a good contrast (the Kampen organ is massive, the Noordbroek is smaller) and the choice of registrations are appropriate to the works and the instruments. Margaret Phillips is becoming increasingly impressive as a Bach interpreter. Her playing is musically insightful but also somewhat methodical, the benefit of the latter being that this encourages repeated listening without the interruption of irritating mannerisms. Recommended. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

**Bach Intégrale orgue Vol 3** Helga Schauerte (1717 Trost organ, Walpurgiskirche, Großengottern)

**Syrius SYR 141428**

BWV 536, 566, 569, 700, 702, 706, 719, 724, 737, 739, 766, 1090-1092, 1096, 1098, 1099, 1102, 1109, 1110, 1116, 1121

For some reason Volume 3 of this series appears to have been issued well after Volumes 4 and 6. It includes early works, dating from before 1708, including selections from the Neumeister and Kirnberger collections. This is the third of Helga Schauerte's Bach recordings that I have reviewed, and I do find them rather difficult to appreciate. As I said in an earlier review, there is a feeling of rhythmic unsteadiness, with speed changes, occasional articulation awkwardness and chords not being played in sync – and the playing is very far from note perfect. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

**Bach Ouvrees pour orgue** Wim Winters

Paraty 309.19 70' 17"

BWV 530, 540, 544, 596, 608, 620, 632, 659, 684

The 2007 Dominique Thomas organ at the Reformed church of the Bouelier in Strasbourg is a new one, based on the Thuringian organs that Bach would have known. It makes a very impressive sound under the fingers and feet of the Belgian organist Wim Winters, a player with an impeccable musical background, having been a student of Jacques van Oortmerssen, along with Hans van Nieuwkoop, Hans Davidsson and Harald Vogel. He plays with an attractive musical fluidity and sense of phrasing. This music is presented as a well-balanced recital programme, with a concerto, a trio sonata, two major free works and some chorale preludes. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

**Bach Leipzig Chorales and Canonic Variations** Craig F. Humber (1735 Silbermann organ, St Petri Freiburg) 105' 31"

MDG 906 1619-6

The link between Bach and his contemporary, the renowned organ builder Gottfried Silbermann, is unclear, but the musical link between Bach's music and Silbermann's organs is undoubtedly. Silbermann's most famous instrument was one of his earliest, in Freiburg Cathedral, started when he was 28. Silbermann had set up home a few metres away, just behind the church of St Petri. When St Petri was destroyed by fire, Silbermann's house and workshop, with three complete organs within it, was spared. In thanksgiving, he built and donated a new organ for the rebuilt church, completing it in 1735. Although smaller than the cathedral organ, its recent restoration has given it back its original voice and it

stands as one of Silbermann's finest instruments. The Canadian organist, Craig F Hunter (now based in Vienna) clearly has an affinity with this organ and Bach's music. He has an excellent grasp of the subtleties of articulation and the attention to small motifs that baroque instrumentalists would take for granted, but organists often ignore. His use of the wide range of tone colours of the St Petri organ is exemplary, as is his sense of the musical structure of the pieces. Thoroughly recommended. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

**Bach Goldberg Variations & Von Himmel hoch** Pieter Dirksen, harpsichord and organ (1996 Nuñez, after Ruckers 1638, 1733 Hinsz organ, Petruskerk, Leens) Etcetera KTC 1400 (2 CDs)

The Goldberg Variations seem to be the recording project of choice for many harpsichord players at the moment, and this example from the Dutch player, Pieter Dirksen is a particularly impressive offering. Dirksen's playing is musically alert and sensitive, with a fine sense of touch. He bases his choice of speeds on Bach's own choice of meters, thereby avoiding the over-wide range of speeds that has crept into Goldberg performances over the years, and adding to the sense of unity of the work. He doesn't spread the chords as much as some harpsichord players do, something that took me a while to get used to, but that I eventually liked. The filler of the Canonic Variations on *Von Himmel hoch* is a good choice. Both harpsichord and organ are well chosen for their respective pieces, with well-balanced 8' stops on the former. The link between the end of the Goldbergs and the rather larger organ is well-handled, as are the restrained organ registrations. A nice touch in the CD notes is that the harpsichord registrations are given, as well as the organ ones.

*Andrew Benson-Wilson*

**Bach L'Art de la Fugue** Régis Allard org Hortus 939 85' 19" (2 CDs)

Organists have some justification in claiming the *Art of Fugue* for their own instrument, and Régis Allard makes a pretty convincing argument in favour. The organ is the interesting Aubertin instrument in Saint-Louise en l'Isle, Paris, an organ inspired by the organs of Hildebrandt, an organ builder that Bach is known to have admired. Allard's interpretations make full use of the resources of the organ, with 16' pedal lines used in most of the fugues, giving a rather dark texture to some and, of course, an occasional prominence to the lowest voice, as well as an octave transposition, that might upset the counterpoint commissars. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

**Bach The Art of Fugue** Christian Rieger, harpsichord.  
Avi-music 8553185

Rieger uses a harpsichord by David Sutherland (1990) after Christian Zell (1728) for his expressive take on the *Art of Fugue*. He plays with a sense of conviction and vigour, bringing out the wide range of emotions underlying these contrapuntal and musical masterpieces – these are definitely not dry and academic readings. Incidentally, for an insight into the scary world of solo recording, the centre-fold picture shows the player, alone in a vast studio, surrounded by at least 10 microphones. The booklet consists mostly of quotations from sources ranging from *Corinthians* to Umberto Eco, via Schumann's rather nice comment on *Contrapunctus XI* – 'It rips your ears apart', a comment that Christian Rieger might have had in mind during this performance. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

**Bach on the Italian Lute** Peter Croton  
Guild GMCD 7321 61' 57"  
BWV 995, 997, 999, 1007 + Stölzel Bist du bei mir

Bach's lute music was not written for the lute, but almost certainly for the Lautenwerk, a keyboard instrument with gut strings built to sound like a lute without the hassle of actually having to learn to play one. The problem lutenists have is adapting Bach's music to be playable on a 13-course baroque lute, the standard lute for solo music in 18th-century Germany, because it simply doesn't fit. Although accepting that the music was indeed intended for the Lautenwerk, Peter Croton has found his own solution: play the music on a 14-course *liuto attiorbato* (archlute), and very little adaptation is needed. His instrument was made by Matteo Sellas in Venice in 1640, and was restored by Johannes Georg Houcken in 1994. Strictly speaking the short strings should be tuned in pairs, but Croton opts for single courses throughout, he says to imitate the sound of the single-strung Lautenwerk. I think this is a mistake, because, although the sound of each note is very clear, the long bass strings are noticeably louder than the shorter treble strings, producing an imbalance between the two. The tuning of the *liuto attiorbato* is the same as for the renaissance lute – *veil ton* – albeit with extra long bass strings. Croton's experience evidently concurs with my own: when trying to play Bach's over-popular Bourrée in E minor on the classical guitar years ago, I found that retuning the third string down a semitone for renaissance lute tuning made the piece eminently more playable. Who knows, maybe Bach was in contact

with Italian lutenists travelling in Germany.

The CD begins with the well known *Praeludium* in C minor (BWV 999), followed by the *Suite* in C minor (BWV 997). Croton opts for a steady tempo, giving a feeling of unhurried gravitas, and the lyrical *Sarabande* is particularly satisfying. There follows the *Lute Suite* in G minor (BWV 995), whose six movements including a ponderous *Prelude* and a lively *Gavotte en Rondeau*. Next is *Cello Suite No. 1*, which Croton has arranged in C minor. His intabulation works well, although there are one or two surprisingly deep notes in the bass. The CD ends peacefully with the mellow tones of Heinrich Stölzel's *Bist du bei mir*, arranged by Croton from the *Clavier-Büchlein für Anna-Magdalena-Bach*. *Stewart McCoy*

**Durante Vespro breve, Miserere mei Dei**  
Mariangela Binetti, Milena Mosconi, Maria Luisa Sánchez Carbone, Vittorio Bari, Gianpiero Mutinati SSATB Sagittario, Il Dodicino, Giovanni Acciai 60' 07"  
Tactus TC 680403

Unusually for an 18th-century Neapolitan composer, Francesco Durante (1684-1755) ignored the stage, concentrating rather on the production of a substantial body of sacred music. Notwithstanding the high esteem in which his contemporaries held his works, few have attracted much present-day attention, although the *Vespro breve* has been previously recorded (Diego Fasolis/Arts). Here the vespers psalms and Magnificat, scored mostly for 4 voices and strings, are indeed *breve*, none lasting much more than around four minutes, a concision that determines the largely homophonic writing and syllabic word setting. Conductor Acciai misleadingly suggests the hymn *Pange lingua* is part of the Vespers, rather than an insertion whose greater expansiveness in any event sounds out of place among the Vespers psalms. Finest of all here is the superbly crafted setting of *Miserere* for 5 voices and continuo, a late work that while again largely homophonic creates and maintains continual harmonic tension through its exploitation of dissonance and chromaticism. It is certainly a work that demands exploration, although I fear that anyone doing so through the present performance will require considerable tolerance in the face of much wayward intonation and ill-disciplined choral singing, which are also features of the performance of the Vespers. *Brian Robins*

**Feo Passio secundum Joannem** Doron Schleifer Evangelist, Krystian Adam Jesus, Mirko Guadagnini Pilate, Barbara Schmidt-Gaden mS Coro da Camera di Varese, la Divina Armonia, Lorenzo Ghelmi 61' 05"  
Passacaille 964

Francesco Feo (1691-1761) was a Neapolitan contemporary of Durante (see above), whom he succeeded as *primo maestro* at the *Poveri di Gesù Cristo conservatoire*. Unlike Durante, Feo first came to notice as an opera composer, but he also wrote a considerable number of sacred works. His *St John Passion* dates from 1744. It is clearly modelled on Alessandro Scarlatti's setting of c.1680, employing the Latin text and including central parts only for the Evangelist and Jesus. As such it is in many ways stylistically an old-fashioned work that owes more to the fluidity of 17th c. opera than the division between recitative and aria. Yet it is written in a highly expressive style that owes much to later developments, while the introduction to the passage where the text speaks of the women at the foot of the Cross pays unmistakable homage to the *Stabat Mater* of Feo's late friend Pergolesi. This first recording of what is a deeply moving and profoundly rewarding work fortunately does it full justice. Both the Evangelist (counter-tenor) and Jesus (tenor) are outstanding, as is the work of the accompanying string quintet and continuo group. And the production is the most sumptuous I've seen for a while, with a hardback cover enclosing an 84-page booklet incorporating illustrations of relevant sculptures and paintings from the chapels situated on the *Sacro Monte di Varese* in northern Italy. Unquestionably the most exceptional new discovery I've made in some while. *Brian Robins*

We received two copies of this, two people have independently reviewed it.

The first minute of this remarkable CD hooked me, first with the sensuous instrumental introduction and then with the hauntingly beautiful voice of counter-tenor Doron Schleifer, who sings the prominent role of the Evangelist. I confess that Francesco Feo was not known to me until I was sent this CD. He was born in Naples in 1691 and, despite tempting offers from Madrid and Prague, remained there until his death in 1761, devoting the last 20 years of his life to sacred music. His first major success was the opera *Siface, re di Numidia*, using the young Metastasio's first libretto. His *Passio secundum Joannem* dates from 1744 and survives in the Naples archives. The narrative recitative harks back to the early baroque, dipping into arioso and occasional florid melismas – notably at *gallus cantavit*. The choir contributions are generally brief, but extraordinarily effective. Although there are fine contributions from the eight soloists, it is Doron Schleifer's voice that dominates – clear, focussed and intensely musical, with a well-judged transition through his breaks. Unfortunately the

sumptuous CD book gives no information about any of the performers, but an internet search reveals that Doron is the son of an Israeli cantor and studies (or studied) with Andreas Scholl and Evelyn Tubb at the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis. He also features on the Solomon Rossi *The Song of Solomon* CD reviewed above.

Andrew Benson-Wilson  
BC was equally enthusiastic about *Feo* in *EMR* 131.

Carl Heinrich Graun *Große Passion*  
Winter, Andersen, Schäfer, Abele,  
Rheinische Kantorei, Das Kleine Konzert,  
Hermann Max 122' 28"  
cpo 777 452-2

I got very excited when I discovered that this recording had filtered through the distribution system – there seems to be a slight delay between epo's releases in mainland Europe and the UK – but in the event, it has proved mildly disappointing. The music seemed to promise so much: when else would one hear arias with three flutes, or three oboes, or even three bassoons? In the end, though – and I say this as someone who strongly believes that Bach's passion settings are given a disproportionate amount of air-time at the expense of other 18th-century composers – Graun's sequence of recitatives, arias and ensembles are of themselves skilfully written but essentially lack any sense of drama, which is all the more surprising given the composer's success as both an opera singer and a composer for the stage. Hermann Max draws typically wonderful performances from his forces, but the solo tenor part especially seems not to have suited the chosen soloist – like much music of the time, it lies rather high in the voice so sometimes there is more than a hint of discomfort. Essentially then, this is a valuable addition to the catalogue in that it helps to contextualise other works of the period, although there are still far too few good recordings of Telemann's passion settings for this really to be true! BC

Handel *Acis and Galatea* Danielle de Niese, Charles Workman, Lauren Cuthbertson, Edward Watson, The Royal Opera, The Royal Ballet, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Christopher Hogwood 99' + 11' extras  
Opus Arte OA 1025 D (DVD)  
OA BD7056 D (Blu-Ray)

This is the Handel half of the ROH Purcell/Handel anniversary double bill from last year, and if you are suitably equipped you can view and hear it in HD and surround sound. Even on more modest equipment the visual and sound quality are excellent. In the booklet one aria is mis-assigned and there is a very

good essay by Andrew V. Jones. The DVD extras aren't really worth having although the illustrated synopsis may be useful for some.

The original performance was reviewed and discussed less formally in *EMR* 130 (April 2009) and I find myself broadly in agreement with the comments there. The orchestra (OAE) are truly outstanding – fantastic ensemble at high speed (with close-ups of the oboes in action in the overture) and always eloquent phrasing. However, I found almost all other aspects of the production underwhelming. There is no way of telling whether the singers were playing safe, knowing that the cameras were running for this performance, but they never really let go and thrill us. I think one now has to accept that most modern opera productions will look silly at some point and this one does not disappoint – I'm afraid I was giggling at the life-size animals by the end. Readers will probably know that the production paired singers with dancers. I admired the athleticism of the Royal Ballet, though their actual movements did not always seem relevant to or expressive of the music/drama. Where I did think it helpful was in Polyphemus's *alter ego*, whom one could see as representing the person he would like to be. So overall a mixed package and in the final analysis I do not feel that the visual elements added significantly to the enduring charm of Handel's music.

David Hansell

Handel *Israel in Egypt* Rosemary Joshua, Gerhild Romberger, Kobie van Rensburg, Simon Pauly, Chor des Bayerischen Rundfunks, Concerto Köln, Peter Dijkstra  
BR-Klassik 900501

The recorded sound quality and playing are excellent on these discs, but the performance is a little disappointing. The tempi vary between being too brisk and too boring. The soloists have a bit too much vibrato for my liking, and the choir can sound a little turgid. This is particularly apparent in various colourful choruses, such as 'Their bodies are buried in peace' (the mournful first part was fine, but the second really did not make the most of Handel's 17th-century syncopations\*) and 'He spake the word' (the flies flew in the violins, but the chorus lacked lightness). A couple of choruses have been omitted, in addition. I was not inspired by this disc.

BC

\*or perhaps group of 10/4 bars. The canny reader will deduce that the recording includes the Funeral Anthem for Queen Caroline (The Ways of Zion shall Mourn) as Part I.

As Rameau was a regular arranger of his own music from orchestra to keyboard and vice versa, his ghost can hardly complain that others have felt a similar desire. These very pieces can be found in a relatively clumsy anonymous version for strings of 1768 (called *Concerts en sextuor* and recorded several times) but for this project Hugo Reyne has made his own version for a small orchestra of the size and instrumentation maintained by Rameau's chief patron. Naturally he takes some ideas from the composer's own orchestral versions where these exist but for the most part has worked with a careful consistency and awareness of Rameau's colourful scores, within the self-imposed constraints of the ensemble. The actual performances are characterised by a great sense of enjoyment and real finesse in the playing, which, for once is supported by the booklet. Yes, there are a few misprints and mistranslations, but each piece has a short commentary with, in most cases, a complementary illustration. I am less convinced by the concluding arrangement of the famous *Gavotte et doubles*, though the performance standard remains high. One quirk of the disc which I enjoyed once the shock had passed is the announcing of each track by a member of the ensemble in a way that prepares for the mood of the music. The sound engineer should get a special award for her contribution to this aspect!

David Hansell

Telemann *Dolce e staccato: Ouvertures & Concertos* Capriccio barockorchester  
Tudor 7177 73' 49  
Ouvertures TWV 55: g4, B5, Concerti TWV 51:E1, TWV 53: F1, Sonata TWV 44:32

This is the third disc I've had to review by this ensemble, and it'll be third in a row for a positive response. From the very first bar – and the shape that is built into it – you know you're in for a real treat: there's a real body to the sound Capriccio produces that many baroque orchestras lack. Their programme forms an arch: a central sonata a5 is framed by two concerti, and those are in turn framed by overtures. Anyone who still thinks that Telemann is a repetitive composer lacking true imagination should go straight to Track 23 *Les Muscovites* – prepare to be amazed. Whatever capriccio turn their hand to next, I shall be waiting to hear it! BC

Telemann *La Barca* Leyden, Raymond Honing 56' 25"  
Aliud ACD HH 045-2  
Fantasies 2, 7, 8 & 11; Trio Sonata in E; Suite in G; *Ein Jammerthon*

I was not quite sure what to make of this CD. There is nothing "wrong" with it, of course – it is an enjoyable recital of not

Rameau *Concerts mis en symphonie* La Simphonie du Marais 71' 32"  
Musiques à la habottorie Vendée 605006

terribly well-known pieces by Telemann (which can only be a good thing). That said, it is a little short, considering that four of the seven works on the disc are solo Fantasias for flute – surely another couple could have been played to help pad it out a little. Or there must be more trio sonatas for flute, violin and continuo, or even cantatas for soprano and that instrumental line-up? In any case, pleasant as they are, the performances didn't exactly grab me by the scruff of the neck and say, "Isn't this just the best music you've ever heard?" If you are going to stray from the beaten track in this business, you really do have to choose the very best repertoire and play your socks off. BC

Vivaldi *Concerti per fagotti, archi e continuo* – Vol. II Roberto Giacaglia, Ensemble Respighi 69' 05" Tactus TC 672251 RV 472, 484-5, 488, 495, 497-8

This is the second volume of Giacaglia's survey of Vivaldi's ground-breaking concerti for bassoon. He seems to have been the only major composer of the period who devoted so much time and energy to writing for the instrument – Fasch and Graupner's efforts fade into numerical insignificance! There can be no doubt, though, that Vivaldi was also writing for outstanding performers – the technical demands are astonishing. Not that one would discern as much from hearing Giacaglia play. There is energy, lyricism, and enjoyment a-plenty. For modern instrument performances, these are very stylish. The booklet notes even discuss what type of instrument the composer might have had in mind – although they do perpetuate the now disproved myth that the Count Morzin to whom Vivaldi dedicated a bassoon concerto (amongst other things) was Haydn's employer later in the century. BC

Concert Parisien Beauséjour, Quintana, Plouffe, Jeay 62' 47" Analekta AN 2 9926 Blavet, Antoine Forqueray, Leclair, Rameau & Telemann

In these days when recordings incline towards the complete this or that it is a real joy to encounter a programme that is just that – a well-chosen sequence of fine works in performances to match. I have previously been enthusiastic about Luc Beauséjour's harpsichord playing. That enthusiasm remains but with it I now couple congratulations on his choice of colleagues/friends and their collective approach to this brilliant music. I have had this CD on repeat play and still have to tire of it. My only complaint is that

they could have fitted another of Telemann's quartets on the disc.

David Hansell

*Concerti d'amore bell'arte salzburg* 57' 20" Berlin Classics oo 1671 2BC Graupner GWV 343, 450; Telemann TWV 53: E1; Vivaldi RV397

Having just returned from a conference on Graupner's music, it's nice to be able to write a favourable review of some of it. Annegret Siedel plays viola d'amore on this recording and directs a one-to-a-part *bell' arte salzburg*. The Telemann that opens the recital is perhaps one of the best-known works for that instrument, though fewer people will know that Graupner also explored the unusual scoring. For variety, however, two of his works that also employ one of his favourite instruments, the chalumeau are offered. I think it's a pity that a Vivaldi concerto was squeezed into programme (possibly from purely commercial reasons, as his name will undoubtedly sell better than Graupner's!) although Siedel's performance is typically first rate. I hope people will buy this CD, though, and help broaden awareness of Graupner's quirky but imaginative style. BC

*Lobt Gott ihr Christen allzugleich: Baroque Bass Cantatas* Klaus Mertens, Accademia Daniel, Shalev Ad-El 75' 42" cpo 777 298-2 J.G.Donati, Hoffmann, Kegel, Roemhildt, Telemann & Wolff

This is not the first such CD that cpo have produced. The seven composers represented on it are the possible exception of Roemhildt beyond "obscure". (I omit Telemann from the list, as the cantata bearing his name is only loosely attributed to him in the church in Mügeln, where the originals of these works are held). They are all scored for bass soloist and a variety of ensembles (interestingly, frequently combining a woodwind instrument with a pair of violins and continuo). Klaus Mertens regularly receives plaudits in these pages, and his crystal clear diction, unfailing sense of line and effortless ability to negotiate tricky coloratura combine to ensure that even these miniatures come over in the best light possible. Accademia Daniel are similarly stylish, and their polished playing adds another dimension. Highly recommended, especially the two cantatas by Roemhildt. BC

*Neapolitan Flute Concertos* Carlo Ipata fl Auser Musici 58'49" Hyperion CDA67784 Jommelli *Concerto in D*, De Majo *Concerto in G* Palella *Concerto No 2 in G*, Prota *Concerto in C*, Rava *Concerto in B minor*

Of the five composers on this disc, only Niccolò Jommelli (1714-1774) is relatively well known. Giuseppe de Majo (1697-1771) studied in Naples and seems to have spent his working life there, composing some operas but mainly employed at the court chapel. Gennaro Rava (d. 1779) was a professional oboe player at the Teatro San Carlo in Naples. Antonio Palella (1692-1761), harpsichordist at the same theatre, is otherwise only known from his compositions, mainly opera, but is described as *maestro di cappella napoletano* in his libretti. Tommaso Prota (?1727-after 1768) was a member of a Naples family of musicians and composed opera, chamber music and for the church. All the concerti are in three movements with lively fast and expressive slow movements. Apart from the one by de Majo which also has viola, the instrumentation is flute, two violins and continuo. Unfortunately no information about music sources is given in the notes but the concerti are mid-18th century in style, tuneful, elegant and mostly rather happy. This is music which deserves to have been rescued from obscurity and it is given an enjoyable and stylish performance on a disc with excellent balance between soloist, strings and continuo.

Victoria Helby

## CLASSICAL

Arnold *Polly* Laura Albino *Polly*, Eve Rachel McLeod *Mrs Ducat*, Gillian Grossman *Damaris*, Marion Newman *Jenny Diver*, Bud Roach *Cawwawkee*, Matthew Grosfield *Morano*, Andrew Mahon *Vanderbluff*, Aradia Ensemble, Kevin Mallon 78' 37" Naxos 8.660241

Planned as a sequel to *The Beggar's Opera*, John Gay's *Polly* (1729) achieved undeserved notoriety by becoming one of the few stage works to be banned by the Lord Chamberlain. That the injunction was motivated more by political malevolence than any subversive content, is evident from a libretto that reunites Polly Peachum and Macheath (here disguised as Morano) in an exotic setting in the West Indies. Nearly 50 years later Samuel Arnold and the elder George Colman embarked on what would prove to be a long-term collaboration at the Haymarket Little Theatre, one of its first products being a reworked version of *Polly* (1777) embracing fashionable Enlightenment concepts of 'the noble savage'. Arnold provided a substantial amount of new music, including two attractive sets of dances, and it is this that proves to be the main point of interest, the work as drama lacking the satirical element that provides the rapier-like edge of *The Beggar's Opera*. The performance,

which omits dialogue, is capable, without achieving any special distinction. The Polly, Jenny Diver, and Morano are the pick of a large cast that is near universally guilty of failing to project the words, a major sin in this kind of piece. Nonetheless, anyone with an interest in English theatre music of the 18th c. will want to hear this.

Brian Robins

**Haydn *Applausus*** Anna Palimina *Temperantia*, Marina de Liso *Prudentia*, Donát Havár *Justitia*, Johannes Weisser *Fortitudo*, Andreas Wolf *Theologia*, Capella Augustina, Andreas Spering 99' 48" (2 CDs) Capriccio 5036

I'm old enough to recall the modern revival of Haydn's congratulatory cantata *Applausus*, an event inspired by the late H. C. Robbins-Landon and broadcast by the BBC in 1958. The relay was my first experience of a large-scale Haydn work and, in those days of innocent ears avid for new musical experiences, I still recall being excited by music I've rarely heard since. *Applausus* dates from 1768, the result of a commission by the abbey of Zwettl as part of the celebrations mounted for the 50th anniversary of the abbott's taking of his vows. In keeping with the spirit of such occasional pieces, it has an arcane allegorical Latin text that here, possibly for once fortuitously, is not translated into English. The arias are all full *da capo* pieces that require virtuoso singing, particularly the two for *Justitia* (tenor), which also include elaborate concertante parts for, respectively, harpsichord and violin. Donát Havár makes a commendable if not entirely accurate shot at them, while as a whole the live performance makes a thoroughly agreeable impression. Credit for that goes largely to Andreas Spering, whose idiomatic direction of a work for which few today are likely to make extravagant claims is both fervent and sympathetic.

Brian Robins

**Haydn *Stabat mater*** Trinity Choir, Rebel Baroque Orchestra, J. Owen Burdick Naxos 8.572121 57' 21"

**Haydn *Missa Cellensis in honorem BVM***, Hob. XXII:5 Trinity Choir, Rebel Baroque Orchestra, J. Owen Burdick 65' 16 Naxos 8.572122

These two discs are part of an 8-CD set devoted to the complete Haydn Masses. Apparently released last autumn, it seems to have attracted little attention outside the USA, where it received some glowing reviews. The choir is a professional body attached to Trinity Church in Lower Manhattan; photos suggest it numbers four to a part, while the soloists on the present discs are drawn from within its

ranks. So let's be clear from the outset that what we have here is an outstanding choir bearing comparison with the very best specialist UK choirs. The internal balance is superb, with contrapuntal passages exuding not only real confidence, but also taking on a rare clarity. As just one example try 'Dona nobis pacem' at the end of the *Missa Cellensis*. That confidence extends to the splendid group of soloists allotted to the *Stabat Mater*, among whom Ann Hoyt, a soprano demonstrating both lovely vocal quality and a fine technique, and bass Richard Lippold marginally pip alto Luthien Brackett and Stephen Sands (tenor) to top honours. All four are also heard in the *Missa Cellensis*, but here the solo parts are for some unexplained reason doubled, which may be taking extravagance or democracy a step too far.

The real hero of this undertaking, however, is conductor Burdick, whose direction not only inspires the chorus, but also some magnificent orchestral playing from Rebel encompassing both exquisite sensitivity – for example, 'Vidit suum' (*Stabat Mater*) – and huge verve and drive, as at the thrilling peroration of *Credo*. Throughout Burdick hits on near ideal tempos, those of the *Stabat Mater* the better for being in general brisker than Pinnock's (Archiv). In sum, these performances have blown me away, as our American cousins might well put it, and I will certainly do all I can to encounter the remaining CDs in the series.

Brian Robins

**Joseph Haydn, *Arianna a Naxos, Lieder & Canzonettas***, Stéphanie d'Oustrac (mezzo), Aline Zylberajch (piano) Ambronay AMY023

This disc is a nice collection of Haydn's songs, varied between, at the one end, the dramatic cantata *Arianna a Naxos* and, at the other, the parlour songs of Britain. The piano accompaniment is thoughtful, dexterous and sensitive, but I found the singer not to my taste. She clearly wanted to show (as the back cover says) 'a palette of sharp, intense emotions foreshadowing Schubert', but she overstates and sounds far too mature and knowing to be, for example, the smitten teenagers in the folksongish *My mother bids me bind my hair* or *Der erste Kuss*. And it is not as if these songs are in any way discoveries – there are already a few good recordings by the likes of Elly Ameling and Judith Nelson. This disc is cake where bread would be more appropriate.

BC

**William Hayes *The Passions (An Ode for Music, Oxford 1750)*** Chor der Schola Cantorum Basiliensis, La Cetra Barockorchester Basel, Anthony Rooley 75' 43" Glossa GCD 922501

William Hayes is one of many English 18<sup>th</sup> century composers who have been hidden by Handel's vast shadow – he is probably only known today to a few organists since his *Organ Concerto* was published some years ago. But in his time, he was an important part of the musical scene, notably in Oxford where he was instrumental in the construction of the Holywell Music Room as well as being organist of Magdeline College and the University Church and Professor of Music. Anthony Rooley dredged up the score of the Hayes' 1750 Ode from the depths of the British Library and has since directed it three times, in Bogata, Zurich and Basel. His recording, using an excellent cast of musicians connected with the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis, is a much-needed contribution to the English musical heritage.

The Ode is in two balanced parts, each with an instrumental introduction and closing chorus. The setting is ancient Greece, with Musica gathering the Passions (Fear, Anger, Despair, Hope, Revenge, Jealousy, Melancholy, Cheerfulness, Joy and Reason) around her 'magic cell'. Their responses to her charms are expressed in ten Songs, sung here by five impressive young singers, interspersed with recitatives from a narrator (Evelyn Tubb). As can be imagined, this gives Hayes full rein to musical expression, using some exquisite instrumental colours and breaking structural convention on several occasions. There are several magical moments, one being the singing of Ulrike Hofbauer in Hope's 'Still it whispered promised pleasure' with its imaginative harp accompaniment by Marie Bourneisien. David Munderloh, Lisandro Abadie and Sumihito Uesugi are the other soloists – all impressive. Is it too much to ask for a performance of this in the Holywell Music Room one day?

Andrew Benson-Wilson

**Mozart Early sonatas with violin accompaniment** Masumi Nagasawa single-action harp, Ryo Terakado vn Et'cetera KTC 1404 K26-31, 671a; + Petrini sonatas op. 3/3 & 6

While there is ample evidence that harpists did appropriate sonatas that were originally intended for a keyboard instrument accompanied by a violin, and while in the hands of these two wonderful musicians there is much to admire in their performances of them, I'm afraid I found the harp just a little too slow to speak and reluctant to stop resonating for comfort. When played alone, such considerations would not matter, but juxtaposing such an ethereal sound with the inevitably more focussed tone of an early violin throws them into sharper relief. Others (most likely those who have not played the music themselves)

may not find that a problem, of course, but I remain to be convinced. The two sonatas by Petrini are well worth hearing. BC

**Schaffrath Six Sonatas Epoca Barocca**  
cpo 777 440-2 77' 18"

The music on this disc has been in the can for quite a time: one piece was recorded in 2003, two more in 2004 and the last three in 2007. The booklet made me laugh out loud with its translation of obbligato - "obliged Harpsichord" just isn't right, thank you very much. Schaffrath is one of those 18th-century composers whose music is "nice" - perfectly pleasing, but without much substance. To be fair, he was writing for the taste of his time, and although there is counterpoint in the music, it never overpowers the all-important melody. The six sonatas here are all cast in the slow-fast-faster framework. That he had deeper moments is exemplified by his sonata for violin and grateful harpsichord in B flat minor. Epoca Barocca are remarkably consistent over the five years - indeed, there is no reason to imagine that these have not all come from the same session. Excellent dinner party music. BC

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

**Beethoven Complete Violin Sonatas Vol. 3**  
Hiro Kurosaki *vn*, Linda Nicholson *fp*  
Accent ACC 24213 61' 12"

This series continues apace. Kurosaki and Nicholson here tackle the three op. 12 sonatas (which are more demanding than their low opus number might suggest) and a G major Rondo (WoO41). In such an unforgiving recorded sound world, it is all the more remarkable that both performers really "go for it" - these are edge of the seat performances and the absolute security in their own vision of the works in hand is a major part of the success of these gripping accounts. The virtuosity of both is no less impressive - these really are not light pieces of chamber music! I would never have expected myself to have fallen under the charm of any Beethoven cycle, but I am finding these recordings and absolute revelation. BC

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

**Mendelssohn & Bach Magnificats in D**  
Yale Schola Cantorum, Yale Voxtet, Yale  
Collegium Players, Simon Carrington  
Naxos 8.572161

The Yale Schola Cantorum is a 24-voice chamber choir that concentrates on music from before 1750 and after 1900. It was set up 7 years ago by Simon Carrington, one of the founders of the King's Singers, (and an enthusiastic subscriber to *EMR*). Taking a brief detour away from their intended repertoire, this CD contrasts Bach's *Magnificat* with Mendelssohn's early venture - composed, remarkably, when he was just 13. It was his first major work for full orchestra and singers. With a detailed knowledge of JS and CPE Bach's examples, and with the background of the Viennese classicists, Mendelssohn created a glorious synthesis of baroque and classical style which the Yale contingent relish in this strong performance. A movement from an early string symphony links this to the Bach work, given an expansive and measured reading. Mendelssohn's later direction is reflected in the concluding *Ave Maria*.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

**Schumann romanzen und Balladen für Chor**  
SWR Vokalensemble Stuttgart,  
Rupert Huber 76' 04"  
Hänssler Classic CD 93.256

Just as with the CDs of part-songs by Fanny and Felix Mendelssohn in the last issue, this is not a disc we would normally review, but the anniversary year means that many of the backwaters of Schumann's output will be explored and we really owe it to our readers to take advantage of this opportunity, and get a fuller impression of the man and his still largely neglected music. There are no fewer than 32 items on this re-released 1997/1998 recording and they show just how imaginative the composer was in writing for choir - there is an intensity to some of the works that is entirely lacking in Mendelssohn, and yet there is also a lightness of touch in others that is equally attractive. As one would expect from a professional German radio choir, the

singing is exemplary. I enjoyed listening to this, and will doubtless do so again. BC

#### PIANO MUSIC

**Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Czerny**

Specialists will forgive us (I hope) when they see that a non-specialist has written the following reviews. Long series can be a real challenge to single reviewers, and I have to say I sympathized with Richard Maunder when he returned the first three of these to me. We must send him some baroque concertos or reconstructed Mozart as variety! There have been rather a lot of 'complete keyboard works' of late! If anyone would like to volunteer to write for us (and not just on keyboard music), please get in touch!

Vol. 11 of Siegbert Rampe's *Mozart Complete Clavier Works* (MDG Gold MDG 341 1311-2, 81' 40") features a wide range of music (K 10, 15q, 15w, 15x, 115aa, 15cc, 15ee, 15gg, 15hh, 103 (61d), 180 (173c), 284a, 312 (590d), 398 (416e), 545) played on two harpsichords, a clavichord (which I must say I did not particularly enjoy) and a fortepiano. I don't think it is a disc I could listen to very often, I concede, but if a series is to be *complete*...

Trudelies Leonhardt's Vol. 2 of her *Beethoven Piano Works* (Globe GLO 5237) features the Sonata in D op. 10 no. 3, Sonatinas in F & G K-H Anh 5, Preludium in F minor WoO55, Rondo in B flat Anh 6, Klavierstück in G minor WoO61a, Variations in F WoO76 and G WoO77) and Vol. 6 of her *Schubert Piano Works* (Globe GLO 5236), including D. 679, 681, 780, 946 & 961. Both discs are broadly shaped in the same way - substantial works open and close proceedings, with shorter, less challenging fare in between. I am not really qualified to discuss the suitability of the instruments used, but I enjoyed the performances. Both series are interesting in not limiting themselves to sonatas, though (in the Beethoven especially) this is where the most interesting music can be heard.

The last of this batch is a disc of Czerny Nocturnes played on a modern piano by Isabelle Oehmichen (76' 19", Hortus 074). I was impressed by the wide variety of character Czerny worked into the 17 works recorded (all but one for the first time ever), and equally by Oehmichen's wide range of colours. Given that the vast majority of Czerny's many hundreds of printed works were intended as material for students, it's not entirely surprising that these are premieres. I hope this venture will encourage period players to re-appraise his output - just as I have argued that many of the classic violin studies work as art, I am convinced that there is an undiscovered depth to Czerny. BC

## Letter

### Passiontide blues - vertical or horizontal hold?

At Eastertide we don't really need a Passion or three to tell us we're smothered in sin – surely, one of the seven deadly sins will ensnare us in gluttonous rapacity as we devour piles of hot crossed buns and chocolate eggs. Like these sweet confectioneries, many automatic musical associations come our way to mark the season's biblical significance. The special ubiquity of Bach's Passions crush us into submissive penitence, gazing vertically at the cross. One online reviewer (Johan van Veen) called Telemann's Passions works offering the "enlightened" souls a more "horizontal" aspect with moralistic implorings and often clear hints at redemption; this is especially true of those works along the galant/empfindsam divide. Yet with the growing repertoire of impressive Easter works, rarely does one hear a triumphant note of Easter victory, the obvious conclusion to those biblical tableaux. Of course, Handel's *Messiah* is conceived in a clever universality, radiant understanding of faith, and multi-functional seasonal application. Also, when one considers these famous passages in German, numerous salient cantata titles appear: "Ich weiß, daß mein Erlöser lebt" (which he would certainly have known). That well-known fugal chorus "And he shall purify" is actually from a kernel of a musical idea in a Telemann chamber cantata, "Deine Toten werden leben" (TVWV 1:546). To conclude, much more special emphasis on a lot more Eastertide music needs to be unlocked, explored with a balanced focus on *Die Auferstehung...* and *Himmelfahrt...* with obvious triumphant, redemptive qualities after the concentrated pathos and drama of Eastertide. In hallowed halls, concert halls and homes, the festive resonance of victory ought to counter some of the stark brutality of the crucifixion. *Der Tod ist verschlungen in den Sieg!*

David Bellinger

The one Bach work that encompasses both sides of the Pasion/Easter story is Christ lag in Todesbanden, one of my favourites, with the economic and practical advantage of needing only ten performers (unless you use the later scoring with added cornett and sackbuts) and lasting less than half an hour! CB

### Books awaiting review

Stuart Lyons *Music in the Odes of Horace*. Aris & Phillips, 2010. [xii] + 204pp, £40.00 ISBN 978 0 85668 844 7

Mark Ellis *A Chord in Time: The Evolution of the Augmented Sixth from Monteverdi to Mahler*. Ashgate, 2010. xviii + 249 pp, £60.00 ISBN 978 0 7546 6385 0

John Cunningham *The Consort Music of William Lawes 1602-1645*. The Boydell Press, 2010. xxiv + 350pp, £55.00. ISBN 978 0 85468 097 8

John Birchensha *Writings on Music* Edited by Christopher D. S. Field [&] Benjamin Wardhaugh. Ashgate, 2010. [x] + 331pp, £65.00 ISBN 978 07546 6213 6

*New Perspectives on Marc-Antoine Charpentier* Edited by Shirley Thompson. Ashgate, 2010. xxviii + 385pp, £65.00. ISBN 978 0 7546 6579 3

### HENLE EDITIONS

There isn't much to say about parts for preexisting scores from such a reliable publisher as Henle, so I'll just welcome in passing new sets of Mozart's Horn Quintet in E flat, K 407 (HN 826) and Beethoven's Sextet for 2 horns and string quartet op. 81B (HN 955). I'm more likely to use Beethoven's piano duet version of his *Grosse Fuge* op. 134 (HN 954): it's certainly more legible than the edition from my youth, and has thorough editorial information.



According to his donor card, he's allergic to pencilings...