

# Early Music REVIEW

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If you buy a score of a Haydn string quartet, the parts are likely to be headed *Violino I*, *Violino II*, *Viola* and *Violoncello*. We know that only one of each instrument is required. But look at a score of *The Creation*, and the instruments are named the same, in the singular; only an awareness of the normal performance practice tells us that each part is played by several instruments. If we go back earlier in the century and look at the choruses in *Messiah* and the *Mass in B minor*, again we see the names in the singular, no differently from the way the arias are headed. We can guess that the arias are for soloists (though I've heard at least once Bach's *Christ lag in Todesbanden* with the solos and duets sung chorally – the opposite of the performance reviewed on p.16). So the same heading means different things in different contexts. It is obvious that Haydn needed more than one string per part in *The Creation*: they would be drowned by the wind. But what is obvious about Bach and Handel's 'choral' forces? To a modern non-specialist, common-sense says that they must be for choirs. But that it to assume that modern conventions applied. If we look further, we find evidence that the parts of *Messiah* bequeathed in Handel's will comprised a solo copy for each part, which included the choruses as well, plus two additional chorus copies. So *Messiah* definitely had a chorus, even though small by modern standards. But virtually all Bach's works with 'chorus' survive with only one copy per part, even when there are two each of the violin parts in the same set. So the assumptions are different. Going further back, there is even less information, but Monteverdi probably had only 10 singers in 1610.

The matter of deciding whether music was for choirs or solo ensembles, orchestra or single strings, is a tricky one. Sometimes study of the number of people available will offer an answer, sometimes there are clues in the music itself. Not all music is explicitly or implicitly for one rather than the other: renaissance church music can be sung in cathedrals by choirs and in small chapels by single-voice ensembles. For music pre-1700, if there isn't any information at hand, my assumption would be to favour soloists unless there is reason otherwise, which is exactly the opposite of what most choir conductors do (though they are now more likely to assume single strings). But there is no reason why choirs shouldn't sing Bach and Monteverdi, provided that they are aware that what they are doing is a compromise. CB

## The ETON CHOIRBOOK

Clifford Bartlett

*The Eton Choirbook: Facsimile and introductory study by Magnus Williamson* DIAMM Facsimiles 1. Oxford 2010. iv + 85 pp + 128 ff + xv pp, £180.00 (buckram), £250 (leather). ISBN 978 3 907647 00 0

I return to this to expand my fairly trivial remarks in the last issue. First, I must apologise for giving the author of the introduction the wrong Christian name: I'd been reading a review of a CD of the almost forgotten former Master of the Queen's Music Malcolm Williamson, and his name came into my head by mistake.<sup>1</sup> I have solved the problem of reading the introduction by placing two kitchen bar stools next to each other and lying the volume across them – the new spectacles also helped. Such positioning will not, however, enable the volume to be used for singing, and a proper church lectern is needed: the modern one we bought for a couple of pounds a few years ago isn't big enough. The book's dimensions (measuring the cover, not the pages) are 43 x 31 x 4 cm, with a weight of 4.3 kg. The pages themselves are A3. I spent some time trying to find the original size, and eventually came across it in the table of other pre-restoration choir books on p. 22: at 60 x 43 cm, it is a fairly average size, the largest being 74 x 52 cm (at Caius College, Cambridge). More precise measurements are in Chapter 10 (p. 72-76).

The facsimile itself occupies 260 pages. The introduction that precedes it is thorough and provides a valuable background to this outstanding MS. Earlier datings were between 1490 and 1510: Williamson pins that down to 1500-1504. Robert Wylkinson was instructor of the choir (*informatorem choristarum*) from 1500 and contributed nine pieces to the MS, including the final item E93, the canon *Ihesus autem transiens/Credo*, which was possibly copied by the composer (as another work of his that is also full of symbolism, *Salve regina E15*).<sup>2</sup> A canon is a useful device for fitting a piece on a final page; one was, for instance, chosen for the single page at the end of a Venetian publication of the same year, 1504: Petrucci's *Canti C*. Common sense, not influence.<sup>3</sup>

The first chapter sets the institutional background at Eton, founded by the young Henry VI in 1440 in imitation of William Wykeham's Winchester College, created some sixty years previously; Henry also established a Cambridge college, King's, linked to Eton as Winchester was to New

1. There was a similar slip in the review of *The Dow Parbooks*, where in the text John Milsom is misnamed *Manson*: my apologies. (Malcolm Williamson, incidentally, followed Elizabeth Poston in the house fictionally called Howard's End.)

2. I have followed Williamson's convention for showing the number in the MS; the original indexes enable lost pieces to be included in the sequence.

3. I was reminded of this by David Fallows' article reprinted in the volume reviewed on p.12.

College, Oxford. The establishment was well equipped with musicians, with 16 choristers (boys) singing the *Salve* nearly every day. By the time of the Choirbook, men joined in as well. At least one of the four gentleman clerks was to be an organist (and permitted to marry – does that say anything about organists?) I don't remember hearing an organ on any Eton Choirbook recordings. Has anyone investigated the topic? I imagine that it played *alternatim* sections in chant, sometimes embellished. The chapter follows the ups and downs of the establishment until the Reformation, by when the music would have been out of date irrespective of theological considerations. The MS seems then to have been bound and perhaps kept somewhere unofficial – not in the library, but not entirely inaccessible, since a few musicians copied items from it over the years. It was first catalogued by M. R. James (still famous for his ghost stories) in 1895.

Further chapters gives thorough information on the structure of the MS, the indexes, the illuminated initials with a thorough list of them, and the likely cost of producing the MS (and who might have footed the bill: it seems not to have been paid for out of College funds.) Two scenarios are offered for the binding: either 1554, when catholic music was suddenly required, or around 1570, when someone thought it should be bound and preserved as an interesting curiosity. Considerable sections of the MS had disappeared by this time: only 43 of the 93 pieces remain complete. There seems to have been no evidence on how the MS was originally bound, but it can't have stood firm on a lectern unaided.

In the 1440s, it seems that the 16 choristers processed two-by-two at Vespers (*ad vesperam*), bowed before the image of the cross, and said (*dixerunt*, so presumably chanted) the *Pater noster*, then, before the image of the Virgin, they sang *Salve Regina* with its versicles during Lent, and outside Lent another antiphon to the Virgin 'in the best way they know'.<sup>4</sup> The relationship between Vespers and the *Salve* isn't clear. The information given here only makes sense if the *Salve* preceded Vespers. Both services took place in the nave (shared with the parish). By the time of the Choirbook, with its 24 settings of *Magnificat*, the choir must have been involved in Vespers, and both services took place in the same location – which saved moving the choirbook around, though it was presumably kept locked up when not in use (intro. p. 13). By the time of the Choirbook, there were usually only 10 or 11 choirboys, with the numbers made up to the statutory 16 by other singers: lay clerks, scholars with

4. Introduction, p. 5, paraphrased and abridged. Hugh Keyte and I (at proof-reading stage, 26 Nov) have concluded from the information given that the *Salve* preceded Vespers, but other evidence is likely to contradict it. NB the usual seasonal allocation of the Marian antiphons seems irrelevant here.

broken voices, etc. It seems that the number 16 was important. So if 10 boys were available (singing one or two parts), there were six other singers for up to seven parts. In the larger settings, the red text may not indicate one voice rather than two but have the function of solo/tutti marking in some 17th-century Italian vesper prints: a warning to the singer that he is exposed by a barer texture. The recordings of the modern Sixteen probably have fewer trebles (high and medium) and more lower voices.

In writing even the short comments above, I have been hindered by the absence of an easily-found alphabetic index of composers and titles. The indexes of pieces in the MS itself are as thorough as one might expect, with text incipit, number of voices, composer and quire + opening (as near as it can get to a page number), with a less usual piece of information: the overall compass of the work, going up to 23 notes (three octaves). This shows at a glance whether trebles are needed. The detailed scorings are listed in the Catalogue of Compositions (chapter 8), but it would have been useful to have had a simple table of clefs such as G2 C2 C3 C4 C4 F4 F4 (the first piece) to see at a glance the voices required. A further subtlety might be underlining clefs for parts which have sections with red text; but the information on partial signatures in the Catalogue isn't necessary for such a purpose.

I've said virtually nothing about the most important feature: the facsimiles. The full colour reproductions are brilliant in ways I don't have the technical vocabulary to describe. I'm told that it is possible for ensembles to sing direct from the MS (i.e. it is possible to read the music, not that the Eton Choral Courses sing from it). But the facsimile is not so big, which is not just a matter of size but of the notes appearing rather horizontally squashed. I'd be worried about putting it on a colour photocopier, since the back would probably break. The publication doesn't give a guide to the version of mensural notation that is used: you have to learn that elsewhere. Owners are alerted to the need to keep it flat, not vertically on a shelf – not that many people will have one tall enough. I'll put it with *Spem in alium*, Gabrieli's *Magnificat a33*, the Striggio 40-part motet and mass, Biber's Salzbur Mass and a few 20th-century pieces. I know it's expensive, but if you are wealthy enough, it's a beautiful object, and with only a modest understanding of the notation (at first), it would be fun to read along part by part with a recording.

For more information on the Digital Image Archive of Medieval Music, see the website [diamm.ac.uk](http://diamm.ac.uk).

The introduction includes a chronological list of recordings. I am grateful to the Rev Jerome F. Weber for the following. It includes a few items not listed in the facsimile – surprisingly, a couple of items by Eton College's choir and the director of music, Ralph Allwood.

## Eton Choirbook Recordings

Jerome F. Weber

*E numbers are those of the order in the MS, as used in the introduction to the facsimile*

*Ave Maria, Mater Dei (Cornish) E5*

Denis Stevens, Ambrosian Singers (rec. 1965.05.27-28)

LP: H.M.V. CLP/CSD 3504 – Gr. 2/66

CD: LaserLight

Grayston Burgess, Purcell Consort, Choristers of All Saints, Margaret Street (name abbreviated hereafter)

LP: Argo ZRG 557 (rec. 1967.07.24-27)

James Tyler, London Early Music Group (issued. 1978)

LP: RCA. RL 25159 – Gr. 9/78

The Scholars (rec. 1978)

LP: Arion ARN 31939

LP: MHS 4441

Harry Christophers, The Sixteen (rec. 1980.10)

LP: Meridian E 77039

LP: MHS 7228

Peter Phillips, Tallis Scholars (issued 1988)

CD: Gimell CDGIM 014

Harry Christophers, The Sixteen (rec. 1992.05)

CD: Collins 13422

CD: Coro 16022

Andrew Carwood, The Cardinall's Musick

CD: ASV Gaudeamus CDGAU 164 (rec. 1996)

*Gaude flore virginali (Horwood) E36*

Opus Anglicanum (1999)

CD: Herald AVPCD212

*Gaude flore virginali (Kellyk) E2*

Harry Christophers, The Sixteen (rec. 1993.05)

CD: Collins 13952

CD: Coro 16018

*Gaude rosa sine spina (Fawkyner) E50*

Grayston Burgess, Purcell Choir, All Saints Choristers

LP: Argo ZRG 557 (rec. 1967.07.24-27)

Stephen Darlington, Christ Church Cathedral choir

CD: Avie AV 2167 (rec. 2009.03.16-18)

*Gaude virgo, mater Christi (Cornish) E66*

Harry Christophers, The Sixteen (rec. 1982.01)

LP: Meridian E 77062

LP: MHS 7410

CD: Meridian CDE 84175

Peter Phillips, Tallis Scholars (issued 1988)

CD: Gimell CDGIM 014

Andrew Carwood, The Cardinall's Musick

CD: ASV Gaudeamus CDGAU 164 (rec. 1996)

**In honore summae matris (Davy) E34**  
 Harry Christophers, The Sixteen (rec. 1995.01)  
 CD: Collins 14622, Coro 16002

**Stephen Darlington, Christ Church Cathedral choir**  
 CD: Avie AV 2167 (rec. 2009.03.16-18)

**Jesus autem transiens/Credo in Deum (Wylkynson) E93**  
 Harry Christophers, The Sixteen (rec. 1992.05)  
 CD: Collins 13422  
 CD: Coro 16022

**Magnificat regale (Fayrfax) E75**  
 Harry Christophers, The Sixteen (rec. 1990.05)  
 CD: Collins 13142  
 CD: Coro 16026

**Magnificat (Harwood) E71**  
 Cardinals Music, Andrew Carwood (rec. 1996)  
 CD: ASV Gaudeamus GAU 164

**Magnificat (Lambe) E73**  
 The Scholars (rec. 1978)  
 LP: Arion ARN 31939  
 LP: MHS 4441

**Stephen Darlington, Christ Church Cathedral choir**  
 CD: Avie AV 2167 (rec. 2009.03.16-18)

**Magnificat (Nesbett) E70**  
 Grayston Burgess, Purcell Choir, All Saints Choristers  
 LP: Argo ZRG 557 (rec. 1967.07.24-27)

**Ralph Allwood, Eton College choir (rec. 1991)**  
 CD: Chatsworth FCM 1004

**Harry Christophers, The Sixteen (rec. 1993.05)**  
 CD: Collins 13952  
 CD: Coro 16018

**Magnificat (William, monk of Stratford) E91**  
 Harry Christophers, The Sixteen (rec. 1995.01)  
 CD: Collins 14622  
 CD: Coro 16002

**Nesciens mater (Lambe) (E52)**  
 Grayston Burgess, Purcell Choir, All Saints Choristers  
 LP: Argo ZRG 557 (rec. 1967.07.24-27)

**Harry Christophers, The Sixteen (rec. 1980.10)**  
 LP: Meridian E 77039  
 LP: MHS 7228

**Harry Christophers, The Sixteen (rec. 1987.05.07,09)**  
 LP: Hyperion A 66263  
 CD: Hyperion CDA 66263

**Ralph Allwood, Eton College choir (rec. 1994)**  
 CD: Chatsworth FCM 1004

**O Domine caeli terraeque creator (Davy) (E30)**  
 Harry Christophers, The Sixteen (rec. 1992.05)  
 CD: Collins 13422  
 CD: Coro 16022

**O Maria, Salvatoris mater (Browne) (E1)**  
 Andrew Parrott, Taverner Choir (rec. 1986.11 & 1987.09)  
 CD: EMI CDC 7 49661 2

**Harry Christophers, The Sixteen (rec. 1993.05)**  
 CD: Collins 13952  
 CD: Coro 16018

**Peter Phillips, Tallis Scholars (issued 2005)**  
 CD: Gimell CDGIM 036

**O mater venerabilis (E55)**  
 Prague Madrigal Singers, Miroslav Venhoda  
 LP: Supraphon SUA 10714

**O regina mundi clara (Browne) E9**  
 Peter Phillips, Tallis Scholars (issued 2005)  
 CD: Gimell CDGIM 036

**Passion According to St. Matthew (Davy) 92**  
 Grayston Burgess, Purcell Choir, All Saints Choristers  
 LP: Argo ZRG 558 (rec. 1967.07.24-27)  
 LP: MHS 7094

**Ralph Allwood, Eton College choir (rec. 1994)**  
 CD: Chatsworth FCM 1004

**Salve regina (Browne) 20**  
 Harry Christophers, The Sixteen (rec. 1980.10)  
 LP: Meridian E 77039  
 LP: MHS 7228

**Harry Christophers, The Sixteen (rec. 1993.05)**  
 CD: Collins 13952  
 CD: Coro 16018

**Peter Phillips, Tallis Scholars (issued 2005)**  
 CD: Gimell CDGIM 036

**Salve regina (Cornish) 19**  
 Peter Phillips, Tallis Scholars (issued 1988)  
 CD: Gimell CDGIM 014

**Harry Christophers, The Sixteen (rec. 1990.05)**  
 CD: Collins 13142  
 CD: Coro 16026

**Andrew Carwood, The Cardinall's Musick (rec. 1996)**  
 CD: ASV Gaudeamus CDGAU 164

**Stephen Darlington, Christ Church Cathedral choir (2009)**  
 CD: Avie AV 2167

**Salve regina (Davy) 18**  
 Harry Christophers, The Sixteen (rec. 1995.01)  
 CD: Collins 14622  
 CD: Coro 16002

**Salve regina (Hygones) 27**  
 Harry Christophers, The Sixteen (rec. 1990.05)  
 CD: Collins 13142  
 CD: Coro 16026

**Salve regina (Lambe) 21**  
 John Poole, BBC Singers (rec. 1975.01)  
 MC: Coimbra CCo44

Harry Christophers, The Sixteen (rec. 1995.01)  
 CD: Collins 14622  
 CD: Coro 16002

**Salve regina (Wylkynson) 15**  
 Grayston Burgess, Purcell Choir, All Saints Choristers  
 LP: Argo ZRG 557 (rec. 1967.07.24-27)

John Poole, BBC Singers (rec. 1975.01)  
 MC: Coimbra CCo44

Peter Phillips, Tallis Scholars  
 LP: Fanfare FR 2197 - 1977  
 LP: United Artists UACL 10005 - Gr. 12/78  
 LP: Everest 3421

Harry Christophers, The Sixteen (rec. 1980.10)  
 LP: Meridian E 77039  
 LP: MHS 7228

Harry Christophers, The Sixteen (rec. 1992.05)  
 CD: Collins 13422  
 CD: Coro 16022

**Stabat juxta Christi crucem (Browne) E8**  
 John Poole, BBC Singers (rec. 1975.01)  
 MC: Coimbra CCo44

Harry Christophers, The Sixteen (rec. 1982.01)  
 LP: Meridian E 77062  
 LP: MHS 7410  
 CD: Meridian CDE 84175

Harry Christophers, The Sixteen (rec. 1990.05)  
 CD: Collins 13142  
 CD: Coro 16026

Peter Phillips, Tallis Scholars (issued 2005)  
 CD: Gimell CDGIM 036

**Stabat mater (Browne) E5**  
 Grayston Burgess, Purcell Choir, All Saints Choristers  
 LP: Argo ZRG 557 (rec. 1967.07.24-27)

Harry Christophers, The Sixteen (rec. 1982.01)  
 LP: Meridian E 77062  
 LP: MHS 7410  
 CD: Meridian CDE 84175

Andrew Parrott, Taverner Choir (rec. 1986.11 & 1987.09)  
 CD: EMI CDC 7 49661 2

Harry Christophers, The Sixteen (rec. 1991.03)  
 CD: Collins 13162  
 CD: Coro 16012

Peter Phillips, Tallis Scholars (issued 2005)  
 CD: Gimell CDGIM 036

Stephen Darlington, Christ Church Cathedral choir  
 CD: Avie AV 2167 (rec 2009)

**Stabat mater (Cornish) E48**  
 Peter Phillips, Tallis Scholars (issued 1988)  
 CD: Gimell CDGIM 014

Harry Christophers, The Sixteen (rec. 1991.03)  
 CD: Collins 13162  
 CD: Coro 16012

Stabat mater (Davy) 32  
 Harry Christophers, The Sixteen (rec. 1982.01)  
 LP: Meridian E 77062  
 LP: MHS 7410  
 CD: Meridian CDE 84175

Harry Christophers, The Sixteen (rec. 1991.03)  
 CD: Collins 13162  
 CD: Coro 16012

Bill Ives, Magdalen College choir (rec. 2002.07.01-03)  
 CD: Signum SIGCD 038

**Stella caeli (Lambe) 61**  
 Harry Christophers, The Sixteen (rec. 1980.10)  
 LP: Meridian E 77039  
 LP: MHS 7228

Harry Christophers, The Sixteen (rec. 1992.05)  
 CD: Collins 13422  
 CD: Coro 16022

Orlando Consort (rec. 2001.10.31 - 11.03)  
 CD: Harmonia Mundi HMU 907297

According to the discography that ends the introduction to the facsimile (p. 85), there are also recordings of ten 'unrecorded pieces from Eton College MS 178' made last year under the direction of Magnus Williamson at [www.ncl.ac.uk/music](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/music). I tried the address; it automatically added `/sacs` before `/music` but I couldn't find anything relevant. Googling the title added `/research/projects` to the heading, and showed the title on screen, but it didn't take me anywhere.

PS. I forgot that I had promised to mention that, since the pages were reproduced from photographs of the bound MS, rather than of loose sheets during binding, the volume also includes separate photographs taken from an angle that show the inner margins more fully and clearly – more satisfactory than merely describing unclear fragments in the commentary. The original endpapers are also included: pages from an 11th-century bible containing parts of I & II Corinthians and Galatians.



The Half-Eaten Choirbook.

## NEW FROM BREPOLIS

Clifford Bartlett

## PANCIATICHI 27

*Florence, BNC Panciatichi 27: text and Context* Edited by Gioia Filocamo. (Monumenta Musica europea, IIL Renaissance, 1.) Brepols, 2010. xx + 988pp, €150.00. ISBN 978 2 503 31518 2

Brepols is a famous name in the world of cultural publishing, established in 1796 and based in Turnhout, Belgium. I was disappointed that they didn't send me David Fallows' *Josquin*, despite David's help.<sup>5</sup> But the firm has responded to a recent email circular and sent these two items. I'm afraid that the space I put aside for them has proved inadequate.

This is a monumental volume. I suspect that the warning received with the *Eton Choir Book* not to stand it upright is appropriate here as well: the pages will sag. I like the way that the editor's acknowledgements give a personal description of how her research proceeded and the way she thinks of 'my' Panciatichi which also becomes 'his', her husband's. The academic convention of separating work completely from life can be overdone.

I love editions of anthologies, such as those in Edward Lowinsky's series *Monuments of Renaissance Music*, where a wide range of scholarship is brought together for the study of a series of individual pieces – and the involvement of Bonnie Blackburn as help and translator in this project makes that reference particularly appropriate. Sadly, the intrinsic quality of the music in Panciatichi 27 does not match that of the volumes in that series, but it is a fascinating document for the various repertoires that it embraces. Much of it is very simple – and anonymous. Back in the days when I had more leisure and tried to keep in touch with what for me started as the hinterland to *Odhecaton* I jotted down references to modern editions against some of the MSS listed in Bianca Becherini's catalogue of musical MS in the Florence National Library and updated any attributions I noticed. But unlike some other MSS, I had no concept of what sort of MS it was: who used it, why it was compiled, and why the music was so mixed. The type of repertoire is sketched out at the beginning of chapter 4, in descending order of quantity. First come liturgical and paraliturgical Latin pieces, then pieces with Italian secular texts or incipits, then laude, then French texts, then Latin texts (5), textless (3) and Flemish (1 – Obrecht's *Meiskin es u.*).

The extent to which the texts were sung is another matter. It is easy to assume that a simple homophonic piece in score with one part texted can be read by singers of other

parts. The obvious response is that the parts were written separately, so that is impossible. But many texts are simple, metrical and rhymed: they can easily be memorised, or can even stick in the mind with no conscious effort. (I'm useless at learning by heart, but in my teens, I could sing a vast number of hymns from memory!) The MS is in choirbook format, so a singer can glance at the texted part anyway. I'm not arguing that you *have* to sing such pieces, but leave the options open. This is unlike *Odhecaton*, where most of the pieces would have foreign words if underlaid. I suspect that the scribe underlaid what was in his source without considering convenience of performance.

The introduction occupies 143 pages: the rest is devoted to editions of every piece, preceded by texts and full information on sources, editions, references and remarks. This edition differs from comparable earlier studies by a much more thorough investigation of the sources of the texts. The editor deduces that the MS probably had a connection of some sort with a confraternity and was mostly copied in 1505-6, coincidentally begun the year after the very different *Eton Choirbook* was completed. The editor has produced a brilliant piece of work: many congratulations. Libraries that habitually throw dust-jackets away should paste the Titian on the front somewhere inside the volume, to preseve the memory of that fine scholar Albert Dunning.

## FARINA

*Aurelio Bianco «Nach englischer und franzosischer Art» Vie et oeuvre de Carlo Farina [avec édition des cinq recueils de Dresde]* Brepols, 2010. 299pp + CD, €60.00. ISBN 978 2 503 53365 0

Farina is very much a one-piece composer, his *Capriccio stravagante*, with its onomatopoeic effects, of which we publish an edition based only on a secondary source. This is a thorough study of an Italian composer who worked in Germany and published five collections of four-part string music between 1626 & 1628. As the title suggests, he moved away from the style of his youth and absorbed French and particularly English influences. Until now, it has not been extensively published. One great merit of the book (and a model that I hope others will follow) is the inclusion of a CD with all five books in good modern scorers (though no parts – facsimiles would have sufficed). Bianco discusses the influences and also follows the course of illustrative music through to Schmelzer's *Fechtschule*, Vierdanck's *Capriccio auff Quolibetische Art* and J. J. Walther's *Serenata* imitating organ tremulant, guitar, trumpet, etc. (all transcribed in the appendix). I hope our baroque players will add more of his music to their repertoire.

5. The recent collection of articles by him is reviewed on p.12.

## REVIEWS OF MUSIC

Clifford Bartlett

## PUER NATUS IN BETHLEHEM

Michael Praetorius *Puer natus in Bethlehem: Weihnachts-sätze für Vokal- und Instrumentalensemble...* edited by Günter und Leonore von Zadow. Edition Güntersberg (G184-7), 2010. Score & parts, vols. 184-6 each €16.80, vol. 187 €18.50. Available from Edition Wallhall.

At first I thought that this series of Christmas music by Michael Praetorius contained settings of the carol named on the cover, but in fact it's a general title, and it is inconvenient that the contents are not indicated on the front. I haven't seen the first eight books: the four that I have received are listed below with the original volume from which the items are taken: *MS = Musae Sioniae*.

9. SATB SATB settings of *Gelobet seist du Jesu Christ* and *In dulci jubilo* from *MS II*.
10. SATB SATB settings of *Nun komm der Heiden Heiland* and *Puer natus* from *MS II*.
11. *Vom Himmel hoch*: three verses for SSAT SATB from *MS II*.
12. *Ein Kind geborn* (*Puer natus...*): settings for SS, SSA, ATTB, SATTB & SSATTB from *MS V*  
*In natali Domini*: settings for SATTB, SSB, SSAT, SA, SSB & SSATB from *Eulogia Sioniae*  
*Wachet auf*: three verses for TT, SST, SATB *MS IX*  
*Wie schön leuchtet*: 4 verses for SS, TTB, SATB, SATTB from *MS IX*

Each volume comprises a score and parts, all with tenor parts in octave-treble clef, which would upset English violas, tenor viols and trombones. Occasionally, parts in the same clef and of equal range are notated at different octaves and there is some inconsistency in the allocation of C<sub>3</sub> clefs to sopranos or altos. All parts are underlaid, useful if singers are willing to use parts. The variety of settings allows for contrast between verses of the chorales in vol. 12. I'm more interested in the double-choir volumes (9-11). Praetorius tends to abandon imitative polyphony fairly early in each piece, but he is brilliant at polychoral effects and these items are most welcome. The print of the scores, however, is rather small: I can't work out why the 24 staves seem much more difficult to read than the 22 staves I get on my Monteverdi *Nisi Dominus a10* edition, especially the 2010 reprint. An interesting series. It would be useful if extra parts were available separately.

It is good to see an occasional facsimile on blank bits of pages. Those interested in Praetorius might like to know that Books I-IV are accessible in facsimile:

[http://www.kb.dk/en/nb/samling/ma/digmus/pre1700\\_indices/prae1700.html](http://www.kb.dk/en/nb/samling/ma/digmus/pre1700_indices/prae1700.html)

## JENKINS FANTASIA-SUITES continued

Jenkins *Fantasia-Suites: II* Transcribed and edited by Andrew Ashbee (*Musica Britannica*, 90). Stainer & Bell, 2010. xxxii+ 159pp, £82.00.

Andrew Ashbee has been editing and writing about Jenkins for as long as I've known the viol. Jenkins is a composer who is beloved of players but has made less impact on the listening public, which is perhaps healthier than the other way round. A prolific composer, he wrote nearly 80 fantasia suites, which have been divided into eight groups. Most have been published by Andrew in *Musica Britannica* (vols 26, 78, 90 and a further volume to come – though not listed in the forthcoming ten volumes). Peter Holman will take care of the suites with three trebles for another MB volume, and the rest of the genre is covered by Andrew with PRB and Fretwork. (Full references are on p. xxii of this MB volume.) The nine Suites contained here are for treble, two basses and organ. They survive in one late source, which makes placing them into the composer's long lifespan difficult. They are works that require players of considerable skill, simple openings often moving after a few bars into rapid figuration for all parts. This is, however, based on a solid musical, not merely decorative foundation. *Musica Britannica* is more forward in providing parts than used to be the case, and a note on the back of the title page states that they are available.

The volume concludes with a tantalising appendix: a single bass part only of 29 Divisions, mostly grouped into suites) for the same combination. I await a reconstruction with interest!

\*\*\*\*\*

Bill Hunt reminded me a few weeks ago that I had intended to write more about the Fretwork edition of Jenkins' five-part consorts (see *EMR* 137, p. 5). I was hoping to have a chance to play the organ parts with some violists, but that hasn't happened yet, and meanwhile I've lent some of the music to the Podger family. I expected that the replacement to the Faber edition, so welcome to the viol world when published in 1971, would offer a more logical basis for variant readings. It doesn't. But it isn't a serious defect, and David Pinto's judgments are, in the cases I've considered, sound. Consort music is far more manageable than the Fantasia Suites, though somewhat denser and needing detailed care to sound as well as it demands. Newcomers might do better to start with the pavans before trying the fantasias. Most players manage without the organ parts, which add no new notes but affect the texture. Any regular viol group without the Faber set should certainly buy a copy.

## MUSIQUE DE TABLE

Telemann *Musique de Table [Facsimile]...* Herausgegeben von Reinhard Goebel Edition Walhall (EW 726), 2010. *Textbuch & 7 partbooks in slip case, €118.00*

It is surprising that we have had to wait so long for this. As Goebel points out in the first paragraph of his introduction, Telemann's publication can be grouped with the Brandenburg Concertos and Handel's op. 6 as the crowning trio (the translation preserves *Trias* from the German text) of later-baroque German instrumental music. I'm not sure if stressing the German aspect is very relevant: Bach and Telemann were both open to international styles, Handel even more so. It might be better to add two Italians and think of a quintet with Corelli opus 6 and Vivaldi opus 3. (There seems to be no obvious French publication with such classical status.) The introduction (in German and English) makes some interesting points – the change from multi-skilled players to specialists in specific instruments, for instance.<sup>6</sup> The *Textbuch* (misleadingly translated as 'textbook') also contains the title page and lengthy subscription list, which includes Handel but not Bach.

This is the least known of the Famous Five. One reason may be the fact that you can buy cheap scores of the other four: that is probably why I didn't get to know the music at the same time as the other four. Another is that the instrumentation is so varied, though not as varied as the Brandenburgs. I've been using the music as 'musique de bureau' rather than 'table', playing the Concentus Musicus recording as background for several days, pricking up my ears when the music engaged me, which is probably how it was originally heard. I have been reminded of how good it is, and when this issue has been sent out, I'll try to find time to sit down and listen to it through.

I've two comments on the facsimile itself. The reproductions are in half-tone (or some modern equivalent thereof), which produces a rather dark grey background, which doesn't help legibility. When I started producing facsimiles 25 years ago, I found that photocopies (simple black on white) were more effective than working from microfilms: most paper imperfections were not picked up and there was good contrast between notes and paper. I suspect that players will have problems if the light isn't good: beware of 'Telemann by Candlelight' concerts! Finding the right partbook would be quicker if the contents were listed on the back cover. But any baroque ensemble should buy a set. Whether the Ouvertures and Concerts are intended to be one-a-part or orchestral may be debated. But each of the three *productions* has a quartet and a trio. So it is useful for small groups as well as larger ones.

6. I've probably mentioned previously the Sonata for a member of the town band in Köthen for violin, oboe, trumpet and cornett: one of the members of the ensemble recording the Brandenburgs there when we were shown it had at least the vestigial ability to play all those instruments. Her recording on two of them is reviewed in this issue.

## EDITION WALHALL

I received a box-load of music from Walhall just too late for the October issue. I've singled out the Telemann for individual treatment above: here are shorter comments on the rest of the batch.

Mayr *Cantiones Sacrae a3* (1596)

This collection of tricinia is explicitly educational: *Cantiones sacrae trium vocum, in usum studij Musici tyronum, elaborata a Ioanne Mayr Frisingensi...* The edition by Konrad Ruhland is thorough, and seems to avoid the weaknesses of some of the previous ones of his published by Walhall. It is nicely adorned by woodcuts, with a dedicatory Latin poem in elegaic couplets (translated into German but not, alas, English) and a complete facsimile of one of the 15 pieces. These are on familiar and useful texts. Unlike the Riccio described below, what looks like an extra copy to facilitate domestic singing is in fact items IX-XV – 88 pages is too long to be saddle-stitched. A weakness is the failure to indicate (beyond showing the original clefs) that some pieces are in chiavette. Or put another way, if you want to sing the pieces as notated, some are for higher voices than others. The table of ranges on p. 39 is revealing. The music would be fun to play as well as sing. (EW 807; €19.80)

Riccio *Libro III* (1620)

Jolando Scarpa is working through G.B. Riccio's *Il terzo Libro delle divine lode musicali* (1620). I wrote at some lengths about Parts VII-IX in our April Issue (EMR 135 p. 4) so will be brief this time. Vol. V (EW 701 €28.50) contains seven motets a3: 2 for ATB, 2 for SSB and single pieces for ATB, SS/TTB (perhaps the most interesting), and STB. Vol. VI (EW 703; €24.50) has three motets for SATB, and one for ATTB which tests the organist by beginning with 36 bars doubling a solo voice with no clues what to play with the right hand: use it as a sight-reading audition piece for budding continuo players! The size of the print reminds me of the second book I had when starting to play the piano, called something like 'The Elephant Big Note Book': at least three people can read from each score. In fact, for your money you get extra scores without covers. I've omitted yet another identification number: XI and XII in the series *Voce Divina*.

## Frutti Musicali X &amp; XI

Quagliati's *Ricercate, et canzone per sonare, et cantare* (Rome 1601), 19 pieces in all, were published in partbooks and look, from the version here, to be well worth playing. What is published here, though, is a keyboard reduction designed, not to show the part-movement and to function as a score, but a more idiomatic version for players with the music for the right hand on the upper stave and for the left on the lower following the conventions of early 17th-century Italian intabulation. This is, indeed, helpful to the novice player, but the advantage of showing the music clearly must, for normal purposes, outweigh the slight inconvenience of working over when to change hands and

fudge wide reaches. The main problem is when parts cross extensively: I can't tell from the edition if that would be one here. The reference to 'Urtextausgabe' is misleading. The exercise would be interesting if the original version were readily available in score and parts or the music was better known – eg the 1608 Raverij print. Be that as it may, it's worth playing. (EW 655; €19.50)

Donato Cimino's *Toccate per Organo di varj Autori* of 1675 is a retrospective MS anthology reaching back to the beginning of the century. This is the first of four volumes, edited, like the Quagliati, by Jolando Scarpa; all the music here is anonymous. The retention of archaic triple notation works in the one piece in which it is required makes sense here in a way it doesn't in the Horn reviewed below. The music is generally less dense than the Quagliati and perhaps easier for the listener, especially the closing Christmas piece. (EW 767; €18.50)

#### F.T. Richter *Clavierwerke*

Before I opened the score to see the composer's dates (1651-1711) I assumed this must be the symphonist, one of the best of the pioneers of the form. But no! Ferdinand Tobias was a distinguished organist in Vienna for most of his life, though he spent a while with Pasquini in Rome.<sup>7</sup> The extant output is small: six Partitas (all in one source, but only the first four placed consecutively), a capriccio, a toccata, a set of 10 versetti in the first tone preceded by a short toccata, and two versetti in the third tone. Partita II is odd: it is headed *pro archiducissa Joseph I* but comprises merely a nine-bar Toccata and a short Allemande. It's music worth playing. Partita III needs an instrument with a bottom note that can be tuned to F. (EW 805; €21.50)

#### Henry Eccles *Recorder Sonata in G minor*

This doesn't really belong in *EMR*. It does have a facsimile of Eccles' *Sonata Undecimo* in G minor: a complete issue would be welcome. But the work has become famous as a double bass solo – how, is not explained. It is edited here with a realisation for harpsichord, with very low bottom Fs and Gs and an enormous gap between the bass and the right hand, breaking a normal principle of continuo playing – but it's probably essential. (EW 787; €15.50).

#### Telemann *Recorder Sonata in C minor*

This is one of a group of works in the Austrian State Library in Vienna (Harrach MS 259). They are in a folder with an ascription (a century or two later) to Telemann. Some of the pieces bear his name: a concerto for recorder and strings in G minor (published as EW 743) and four recorder sonatas. Only two of these have ascriptions to Telemann, one of which is by Pepusch. This is one of the unattributed pair. It is given the title «Harrach-Sonate Nr. 1». Those who wish to check the accuracy of the edition (by BC) can compare it with the facsimile that is included – parts rather than the score format that is normal for

7. The editor gives Pasquini a longer life (1637-1741), than the usual reference works.

published solos. Proof-reading Brian's type-setting is, however, usually as eventful as watching paint dry. It's a fine piece. Walhall's typesetter has turned apostrophes into i. (EW 809; €12.80).

**Pepusch Sonata à 3 in G for recorder, violin & bassoon**  
This is an isolated work, not part of a set: indeed, the editor, Jeran-Pierre Boullet has found only one other baroque work for the combination, which he identifies with an outmoded P number – for the last few decades it has been known as RV 92. There is no suggestion that there should be a keyboard continuo: the music seems self-sufficient and there is not a bass figure in sight. The editor doesn't mention whether the source (Dresden SLUB but no pressmark) is a score or a set of parts: if the latter, a figured bass part might have been lost. As usual, Pepusch writes attractive music, and if I played any of the three instruments, I'd take a copy to the next Summer School I attended. (EW 802 €12.80).

#### Rebel *Les Caractères de la Dance*

Rebel is chiefly remembered for *Les Éléments* and *Les Caractères de la Dance*. Walhall did the former proud, with score, facsimile and two alternative sets of parts. Now we have *Les Caractères...* following the same pattern. There is a five-stave score (vln I with wind, vln II, 2 violas and bass), with a separate stave or two for wind in some dances. This is followed by a facsimile of a full score by Pisendel and a three-stave printed version from 1715. The last of these is, as far as it goes, presumably authoritative, but Pisendel has sorted out the ambiguities and supplied the viola parts that are essential for orchestral performance. Presumably, as with *Les Éléments*, instrumental parts will be available for the full and the smaller scoring. It is excellent that an edition like this has appeared. (EW 217; €32.00 for the score.)

#### THESAURUS MUSICUS

This is a new series emanating from Edinburgh but apparently accessible via [www.thesaurusmusicus.co.uk](http://www.thesaurusmusicus.co.uk) only. I found an introductory page there, but it offers no tabs and it doesn't make clear whether it is a web publication series or can be bought in hard copy. It can, since Andrew Woolley has sent me four examples with prices. They emanate from Edinburgh, but with no address. There is a standard price of £4.00. Someone should have told the publisher that odd numbered pages are conventionally on the right, even ones on the left.

**William Turner *Sonata in D major for Violin and Continuo*** edited by Andrew Woolley (ThM) has three short movements ([Ground], Air and Round O), the first having the tempo mark *Pritty brisk*. It's a nice piece in trumpety style, perhaps dating from around 1700. Four pounds is quite a lot for four pages of music and text that would fit on one page: it might look better value with a second copy of the music only on a folded A3 sheet so that the accompanist has something to play from. It's a nice

piece, but it's not likely to make much money so might have been better as a free download loss-leader. All in the series are A4 with white card covers and comb bindings.

**Henry Purcell Suite from Bonduca (1695)** Edited by Andrew Woolley (ThM 002) is a more substantial publication of 13 pages, based on a wide knowledge of keyboard sources from around 1700. The Overture is an anonymous arrangement, followed by an arrangement by Philip Hart based on the 1697 four-part *Ayres for the Theatre*. An appendix has related versions by Draghi and Robert King. This is certainly worth playing, and is a guide to how to play other Purcell string music on the keyboard.

**Marc-Antoine Charpentier Laudate Dominum (H. 223)** Edited by John Cunningham with an Introduction by Peter Holman (ThM 003) is a double choir work, with two identical scorings. The instrumental choirs each originally had a G1 part for recorders and violins, split into two for solo sections, a C1 and C2 clef for Haute-contre and Tailles de violins (ie violas), and bass in F4. The top parts are printed here in G2 clefs; the upper viola part is in treble clef, the lower in alto, though the latter could at a pinch also be played by violin, since I've noticed only one note below G. The vocal scoring is for double SATB chorus and soloists; the eight soloists, however, are not particularly virtuosic and can be members of the choir, with a minimum of two singers per part. It's a good piece, and worth performing. The edition makes no mention of the availability of parts. The standard £4 pricing policy offers a bargain here. 'English Translation of the Text and Textual Commentary' is odd: did the editor really write his commentary in French?

**Johann Caspar Horn Four consort partien or suites (a5) from Parergon Musicum; oder, Musikalisches Neben-Werck (1663) for two violins, two violas, violone/basso continuo** Edited by Michael Robertson (ThM 004)

It's good to see that some of the music described so invitingly in its editor's *The courtly consort suite...* last year (See *EMR* 132, p. 10) is now available. This edition contains the first four of the 15 Suites in the first (1663) of Horn's six *Parerga Musica*. The movements are not explicitly grouped under a name, but each group shares a key, facing pages, and the same four movement titles: Allemande, Courante, Ballo & Sarabande. The editor suggests that the instrumentation can be more flexible than stated. It seems a bit pedantic to preserve coloration<sup>8</sup> literally (round black blobs) in the Courantes. The continuo (sic) parts have the usual square brackets indicating the cadence rhythms anyway. A feature that may be specific to Horn is the instruction not to repeat the whole section if there is an indication of a petite reprise. The music is of high quality, and if parts are available, is well worth playing.

8. The editor omits the u, but the 2002 *Oxford Manual of Style* prefers what we might think of as an American spelling...

## RAMEAU & BRÉVAL

Rameau's *Les Surprises de l'amour* was a somewhat flexible series of *actes de ballet* that had various incarnations from 1748 for the next decade. The version here for two gambas was adapted by Ludwig Christian Hesse. The extent of music for gamba at the court of Frederick the Great is discussed at length in Michael O'Loughlin's *Frederick the Great and his Musicians* (see *EMR* 129, Feb 2009, p. 20). This edition comprises two volumes: *L'Enlèvement d'Adonis* and *La Lyre enchantée* (G168 & 169) from Edition Güntersberg (€19.80 and €22.50), available from Walhall. The basic edition is by Jonathan Dunford, with a keyboard part by Dankwart von Zadow. The cover gives the instrumentation as 'zwei Violen da Gamba [und Cembalo]', though the autograph parts are labelled *Viole* and *Basse/Violoncelle*. The cover title might imply a pair of equal instruments, but the score is clearly for an upper and a lower instrument since the upper part is written in the treble clef. A part in alto clef is also supplied. A harpsichord part has been added in a separate score and functions not just as continuo but includes aspects of Rameau's score that Hesse had to omit; it also allows awkward bits for the solo viol like runs in thirds to be simplified by giving the lower part to the keyboard. Fun for players or in small doses in programmes with titles like 'The Gamba in Berlin', but as a listener I'd rather hear Rameau's original.

The other pair of Güntersberg editions is of a set of pieces known only to cellists and their accompanists: Jean-Baptiste Bréval's *Six Sonates non difficiles pour le Violoncelle, avec Accompagnement d'une Basse*. I encountered them (or at least, no. 1) in my teens, when my music teacher decided to take up the cello: I'm not sure whether his ambition was to play string quartets with his sister-in-law, his son and me, but we didn't really reach an adequate level. What I didn't realise then was that the accompaniment was for a cello, not a keyboard: a pity, since I would have enjoyed teaching myself to play from the bass with his guidance rather than waiting a decade or so. The edition is fine, but supplies score and two parts – a luxury which probably makes it financially uncompetitive at €16.80 per volume (G172-3 from Walhall). I imagine that the original two-stave format brought pupil and teacher closer together.

## HAYDN & MOZART from HENLE

**Haydn Die Sieben letzten Worte unseres Erlösers am Kreuze. Bearbeitung für Klavier...** Edited by Ullrich Scheideler... Fingering by Klaus Schilde Henle (967), 2010. vi + 42pp, €18.00.

It was normal for music of Haydn's time to appear in various arrangements, but *The Seven Last Words* is unusual for the status of the versions. Written initially for orchestra, to be played during Good Friday devotions in Cadiz in 1786, it is most widely known in Haydn's version

for string quartet, which was published at the same time as the orchestral parts in Vienna the following year. There is also a choral version, originally by Joseph Friebert but modified by Haydn and van Zwieten for performance in 1796; this has retained a foothold in the repertoire. The original orchestral version was virtually unknown until it appeared in the Collected Works. The version for *Cembalo o Forte Piano* published by Artaria in 1787 isn't by Haydn, but was commended by him: 'I am delighted with the piano score, which is very good and has been prepared with special care'. In fact, it is well worth playing – maybe not as a concert piece, but for oneself at home. I can't, however, imagine it being played by students who need help with the fingering.

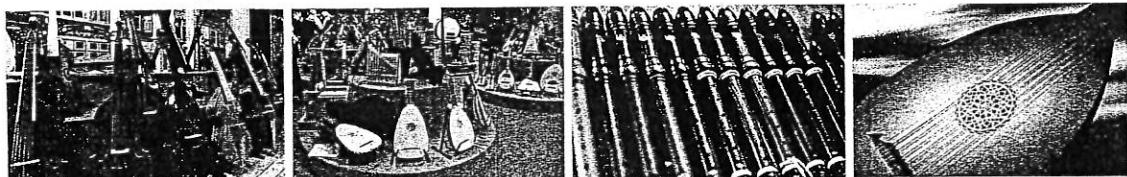
Mozart *Divertimento "Eine kleine Nachtmusik"* für zwei Violinen, Viola, Violoncello und Kontrabass KV 525 herausgegeben von Wolf-Dieter Seiffert Henle (HN7005), 2010. viii + 166pp, €8.00 [Study score]. Parts HN 1005, €16.00.

There are no significant editorial problems in this popular work. There is one source, not accessible, but reproduced

in a fine facsimile by Bärenreiter in 1955. Were my copy not stored away, I'd try a few spot checks on the edition, but don't anticipate finding any differences, or noticing anything that Mozart scholars have missed. One might say that the editor has gone a fraction beyond the evidence in stating explicitly on his title page the need for cello and double bass, though the logic of Mozart's thematic catalogue entry is clear: '2 Violini, Viola e Bassi': *Viola* is singular, *Bassi* plural. However, I would question the editor's suggestion that two instruments are needed on the bottom line if the other parts are played solo – and perhaps a double bass might be used without cello if played outdoors. If one was pedantic, the statement printed at the head of the score (and each part) 'Komponiert am 10. August 1787 in Wien' might suggest that it was written in one day: not impossible, but not stated. The introduction gives the necessary information, and proposes a function for the piece – the birthday on 11 August of the father of Mozart's friend Joseph von Jacquin and pupil Franziska. I don't think it's necessary to replace your existing edition with this, but I've no hesitation in recommending it.

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## REVIEWS OF BOOKS

Clifford Bartlett etc

15<sup>th</sup> CENTURY SONG

David Fallows *Composers and their Songs 1400-1521*  
 Ashgate Variorum, 2010 xii + 334pp, £70.00 ISBN 978 1 4094  
 07661 7

I mentioned in conversation that one of the 21 articles reprinted here was a model for any academic paper; a friend responded that it was the best musicological article he had ever read. I refer to 'Who composed *Mille regretz*?' Apart from being absolutely lucid, packed with scholarly information, and carrying the reader throughout, it leads us along the path towards proof that the chanson isn't by Josquin, and then having caught us, persuades us that the traditional though scant attribution could well be right. He concludes: 'Whether *Mille regretz* was one of them [Josquin's peerless late masterpieces] we shall probably never know; but I am now inclined to think that the *cancion del emperador* was one of Josquin's last works and written for Charles V.' That David appends a reference to Joshua Rifkin's 'most energetic riposte' does not undermine the mastery of the article.

There are so many significant (and readable) articles here that it is difficult to know which should be singled out. The account of editing *El grillo* is a model for potential editors: don't just look at the source, understand the music, but find logical reasons for any changes. 'Petrucci's *Canti* volumes: scope and repertory' is a brilliant survey, and I'm intrigued by his adducing the age of pieces performed in a Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival about ten years ago as comparable to the sources of the items in the three Petrucci prints. The end of his article on Henry VIII has some relevance to the volume reviewed below: 'His [Henry's] reputation has been muddled by the preservation of those childhood exercises... Their survival offers a fascinating glimpse of a precocious child's early musical studies.' Crumhorn players should read 'Alamire as a composer', in which he asserts that Alamire composed a *T'Andernaken*, though one of the five parts is spurious, while Josquin's *La Spagna* also has crumhorn ranges for all five parts and may perhaps also be by Alamire.

The book has articles on Ciconia, Wolkenstein, Binchois, Dufay, Ockeghem, Regis (I don't think the CD label is named after the composer), Busnoys and Frye as well as Josquin. If you are like me and absorb more from specific studies than general histories, do get hold of a copy of this and read it.<sup>1</sup>

1. David and I first met at a viol session at Michael Morrow's, around 1970, with Cat Mackintosh (from a different league altogether) also playing. But we don't see much of each other, so I don't think my

## MUSIC EDUCATION

*Music Education in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*  
 Edited by Russell E. Murray Jr, Susan Forscher Weiss and  
 Cynthia J. Cyrus. Indiana UP, 2010, xviii + 406pp, \$49.95.  
 ISBN 978 0 253 35486 0

This is a less successful volume than the one reviewed above, for various reasons. I found it difficult to get to the end of several contributions, some of which lacked a clear focus and most of which are content to accumulate information rather than consider how what pupils were taught affected their understanding of music and their ability to perform it (using 'perform' in its widest meaning). I was also concerned that the contributors were musicologists, with their biogs showing little evidence of expertise in the history and theories of education. Several slightly different Guidonian hands are reproduced: surely someone could have explained the differences?<sup>2</sup>

The book is based on a three-day conference at the Peabody Institute (year not stated). The introduction is entitled 'Reading and Writing the Pedagogy of the Past'. The problem is that so much teaching, even now, is oral and by demonstration. A survey of how modern baroque violinists have learnt the technique and how to play as musically as they do would show that the surviving written sources don't cover the ground very thoroughly. I doubt if a beginner would realise the value of the opening pages of Geminiani's *The Art of Playing on the Violin* without instruction. The further back we go, the less information is written down, and what is written is based on ancient theories and sources which have to be bent to relate to current practices and may not have been bent enough. Pedagogues tend to be conservative anyway.

If you read nothing else here, sample Chapter 1, James Haar's 'Some introductory remarks on musical pedagogy'. He focusses particularly on Ludovico Zacconi, whose *Prattica di musica* (1592 & 1622) obviously needs a translation – Forni publishes a facimile. The practical comments on singing that Haar quotes make one want more. For instance, the *maestro* should give his singers 'the final and principle notes of the mode before starting, since a good beginning is vital and one does not want there to be a need to go back to the beginning and start again.<sup>3</sup> When starting

enthusiasm comes from friendship. He is also mentioned on p. xx.

2. I read in passing recently that there was a similar knuckle system for Roman numbers: if so, I wonder if they were related. Googling *Daktylometry* is suggestive, but a quick search revealed nothing precise enough.

3. That reminds me of the first performance of a choral piece by John Taverner, which is all based on one chord, but the basses failed to find the bottom E flat till well into the piece.

a new piece (in, say, the same mode as the one just finished), raise or lower the pitch so as to make a fresh start. Do not let the singers shout when they are performing in church.' (p. 19)

This is followed by 16 essays on a wide range of topics. Dolores Pesce gives a much fuller understand of what *Ut queant laxis* is about than I realised; even before one goes into theological interpretations, the addition of *Alma rector* as an exercise in practising intervals is a valuable aid for modern singers in relating intervals to mode patterns (and hence singing in tune). It is interesting that, despite the Calvinist reformation which removed the need for church singers, song schools survived. John Griffiths, in his chapter on Bermudo, raises the point that there is no theoretical advice on the structure of compositions. 'It seems as though his pedagogy is one of imitation by absorption. [Bermudo] gives no direct, concrete guidance on how to proceed from intabulation to fantasia: whether it is by direct imitation, by analogy, by osmosis, or simply by drinking from the fountain of knowledge.' We're back either to verbal instruction or to imitation (like Elgar rewriting a Schumann symphony with different notes – or is that an exaggeration?)

There are intriguing, stimulating, exciting and surprising pieces of information throughout the book. But it is a bit hit-and-miss. Conversation in the bar was probably more revealing than the formal conference papers. The book is thoroughly indexed: even the Zucconi passage quoted can be found if you look up 'singing', but not 'shouting'.

#### MENDELSSOHN AND THE ORGAN

Wm. A. Little *Mendelssohn and the Organ* Oxford UP, 2010. xvi + 496 pp., £37.50. ISBN13: 978-0-19-539438-2

To complement his 1980s Novello editions of Mendelssohn's complete organ works, Little has now produced this comprehensive book. In over 343 pages, and a further 153 pages of Appendices, he explores the historical context of Mendelssohn's organ playing and composing and then lists and analyses his organ works in chronological order, with four chapters devoted to his influential Six Sonatas for Organ, written, at least superficially, for the English market. Drawing on a wide range of sources, his fascinating insights will not only be of interest to organists, but also to a wider readership interested in all aspects of Mendelssohn's life. It is not widely known, for instance, that he actually played very few of Bach's organ works, and struggled with those that he did manage to learn, having particular difficulty with the pedal parts. Knowing his technical prowess as a pianist and the technical issues in some of his organ works, this came as a surprise to me. Rockstro recalled in 1884 that once when Mendelssohn was playing the organ in London's Christ Church, Newgate Street, during an improvisation on a theme by Haydn, he tricked his listeners into thinking that the organ had ciphered by playing at "prodigious length" below a long-

held treble A. But Little dismisses the oft-quoted story that the Fugue of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sonata was based on the sound of Thomas Attwood's gate bell.

I spotted one or two tiny errors (eg, p.217, the 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph reference to time signatures), and there are signs that Little is not as familiar with the English organ as he might have been, for example the reference on p. 33 to G or F pedalboards (rather than keyboards) being standard in England "from time immemorial" and his suggestion that a registration of Great Open and Stopped Diapasons would produce a *forte*. Those familiar with the his Mid-summer Night's Dream *Wedding March* played on the organ might be interested to know that he actually wrote one for organ for his sister's wedding. Although this had disappeared, he reconstructed part of it from memory for the opening of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Organ Sonatas where (to my amusement) he follows it with a fugue built on the choral: *Aus tiefer Not* (Out of the depths I cry to thee), which was normally associated with funerals.

Books like this always raise further questions: for example how did the Organ Sonatas sound on English organs, which were probably in meantone tuning, and why Mendelssohn included such comprehensive pedal parts despite knowing the limited range and availability of pedal divisions in English organs.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

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## LETTER FROM BURGUNDY

Brian Robins

## OF ENCORES AND OPERA PRODUCTION...

'I hate encores', muttered the young friend sitting with us as the audience settled down to one at the opening concert of this year's Souvigny Festival. 'They should be occasional and the mark of a special performance', she continued. What made her observation remarkable was not the fact that she is herself a talented musician, but that she is French. Because French audiences love encores. My word, how they love them, believing they have an almost divine right to one after every concert, even the Monteverdi Vespers or a two and a half hour Vivaldi Vespers, both given at this year's Ambronay Festival. So the 2010 Robins Award for Artistic Sensitivity goes without contest to Alice Piérot, 1st violin of the Trio AnPaPié, who with the addition of violinist Enrico Parizzi had just given an unforgettable, lacerating Souvigny performance of the string quartet version of Haydn's Seven Last Words. Turning to a clamorous, rhythmically hand-clapping audience, Piérot announced there would be no encore, since it would be 'inappropriate after that music'. Amen to that.

Amen, too, to Clifford's editorial in *EMR* 137. Yet another wretchedly impotent production (of *Tamerlano*) at the Göttingen Handel Festival brought an unneeded reminder that the vexed question of early (or any) opera production remains a running sore, a subject that I was pleased to note was also brought up at the York REMA conference by the veteran French musicologist Philippe Beaussant. Thanks to the tyranny of the opera producer it is a truly depressing fact that we now have a whole generation of opera-goers who have seen little other than *Giulio Cesare* set in a Helsinki lap-dancing club or *Cosi* enacted in a Bolivian silver mine (no, please guys, I was only joking). Sadly, *pace* Clifford, there is little evidence that conductors, singers, or critics are prepared to mount any kind of counter attack. The last named are especially culpable, since far too many enter the opera house to witness only the emperor's new clothes. Perhaps one way of combating the fatuous antics on our opera stages might be to ridicule systematically and relentlessly the absurdity of tearing operas from their time and place. Unless, for example, *Figaro* is staged within its own time, the exchange between Susanna and Figaro on the Count's abolition of *droit du seigneur* (1/i) becomes nonsense. And when did you last go to a party where the speakers were blasting out minuets, contradances, and German dances (*Don Giovanni*, 1/xx)?

## LE FESTIVAL D'AMBRONAY 2010

I wrote of the many and varied pleasures attending our first season at the Ambronay Festival in *EMR* 132, making

this year's festival an eagerly awaited event. Slightly less ambitious in scale than last year's 30th anniversary edition, there was still enough to pack four long early autumn weekends with some 25 events grouped under the theme 'Méditerranées'. It is typical of Ambronay's eclectic approach to programming that the festival featured not only Western early music associated with Mediterranean culture, but also what is today termed 'world music' from North Africa and the Middle East.

We managed five concerts this year, a (non-musical) family visit to us, and the intervention of the Souvigny Festival conspiring to leave mouth-watering prospects such as La Risonanza and Fabio Bonizzoni, Sebastián Durón's *La Guerra de los Gigantes* under Gabriel Garrido (with the wonderful María Cristina Kiehr), and recitals by lutenists Paul O'Dette and Hopkinson Smith as – well, just that. The concentration on southern culture(s) was mirrored by the substantial number of Italian and Spanish (for which include Latin American) artists invited, both much involved in the two large-scale Vespers that framed our visits. The opening concert on 10 September in the abbey church was devoted to a large-scale Monteverdi Vespers (22 singers, 17 instrumentalists) given by Cantar Lontano under Marco Mencoboni, in an edition heavily touted as a 'new' version receiving its premiere in France. Wise people tend to leave expert comment on editions of this work to Clifford, but the major difference here appeared to be Mencoboni's conviction, based on his own research, that the triple-time sections of the work should be taken at a far slower tempo than is customary. The results are to my ears utterly unconvincing, making little musical sense, especially in, say, the concluding pages of *Audi coelum*, where Mencoboni used the sleepy tempo as an excuse to milk the music mercilessly. Indeed, the major problem overall stemmed from a conductor who seemed to be primarily interested in imposing eccentric tempos and anachronistic phrasing on the music. While there were some good individual performances – the two sopranos were ravishingly lovely in *Pulchra es* – there was also much that was untidy in larger-scale pieces like *Nisi Dominus*. It hardly needs adding that there were no downward fourth transpositions in *Lauda Jerusalem* or *Magnificat*.<sup>1</sup>

The following weekend took us twice to Ambronay, initially to one of the few concerts without a direct Mediterranean link. It has taken me some while to come round to Ton Koopman's view of Bach's cantatas, having found his interpretations too often lacking a true spiritual element. While this remains broadly true, and although I'm convinced Koopman's continued insistence on a chamber

<sup>1</sup> See comment at end of this article.

choir is incorrect practice, I can now more readily admire his performances of these inexhaustible works on their own terms. The three cantatas he gave at Ambronay (127, 140 and 147) made for an unusually rewarding evening, distinguished by superb playing from the Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra and unfailingly sympathetic soloists. It would be difficult to imagine more uplifting moments than the familiar opening choruses of BWV 140 and BWV 147, that of *Wachet auf* given an infectious spring in its step, the latter with a beautifully judged tempo, joyous spirit, and poised rhythm that spoke of long years of loving familiarity with the music. Among a fine group of soloists, soprano Johannette Zomer deserves special mention for a heart-achingly lovely 'Die Seele ruht' (BWV 127/iii) and her equally melting singing of 'Bereite dir' (BWV 147/v).

One of the highlights of the 2009 festival was unquestionably the Haydn song recital given by Stéphanie d'Oustrac, so it is hardly surprising to find that the subsequently issued CD has been picking up awards. In a relatively short space of time, d'Oustrac's lustrous mezzo and vivid dramatic sense have propelled her to the forefront of French singers and she unquestionably has a big future ahead of her, not necessarily all in early music (her first Carmen is due as I write). This year her recital was devoted to earlier repertoire, a cleverly devised programme (also recorded for commercial release) about two very different forms of love, that of the Virgin for her Son and Dido's tragic love for Aeneas. Long narrative pieces such as Monteverdi's *Pianto della Madonna* and Cavalli's lament from *Didone* suit d'Oustrac's dramatic gifts and ability to produce a wide variety of nuance to a tee, but the ecstatic lyricism of Barbara Strozzi's *O Maria* also left a profound impression. Ensemble Amarillis under the direction of Héloïse Gaillard provided first-rate support both for the singer and in the aptly interwoven instrumental pieces.

More outstanding 17th century instrumental playing was to be heard the following weekend from The Rare Fruits Council led by founder Manfredo Kraemer. As with the Ensemble Amarillis, 'outstanding' should be qualified to 'outstanding on its own terms', for it remains a slightly depressing fact that so far as I'm aware period string players on the Continent are still without exception playing music by 17th-century composers in what I term all-purpose Baroque style, rather than attempting to adopt earlier baroque stringing and bowing. Notwithstanding, this was a memorable concert, near-flawlessly played and featuring some marvellous music by Legrenzi, Stradella and, especially, Rosenmüller, the last named – to my mind one of the great 17th c. composers.

It was back to Vespers for our final concert, a speculative reconstruction of settings by Vivaldi for the Feast of St Mark. The works employed covered a wide range of period and purpose, so I ought to point out that the chances of, for example, the large-scale *Pietà Beatus vir*, RV

795 and the magnificently opulent Dresden *Dixit Dominus*, RV 807 ever having appeared in the same Vespers service are remote in the extreme because of their length, apart from anything else. But such pedantry is out of place, because this was from the start to the finish of a long evening a joyous occasion. Perhaps most striking to an Anglo-Saxon listener was the vital panache and fiery Latin passion brought to the music by Leonardo García Alarcón, by no means to be gainsaid, since while most of his soloists could certainly boast southern heritage, his vibrantly responsive chorus was the Namur Chamber Choir and his orchestra, Ensemble Les Agrémens, French. There were also moments of repose to savour, none more affecting than the alto trio 'In memoria aeterna' (*Beatus vir*). Indeed the large team of soloists employed by Alarcón, some drawn from the ranks of the Namur chorus, deserved every moment of the fervent reception given the performance by the capacity audience. Watch out for the live recording due to be released on Ambronay's own label during 2011.

#### AND FINALLY...

Sometimes it is the smaller events in life that leave us with indelible memories. One such took place on a beautiful summer afternoon at the home of French friends who annually host a private recital. This year they invited one of the finest musicians resident in Burgundy, the keyboard player Marcia Hadjimarkos, who for the first time in public played her recently acquired Thomas Steiner clavichord in a programme of works by D. Scarlatti, Bach and Handel. We're happy to count Marcia as a friend, so it would be inappropriate to comment in detail on her playing, but that's not going to stop me noting that for poetic expressiveness her exquisite playing of the Bach Partita BWV 825 would be hard to excel.

*The use of a slow triple-relationship has been advocated most powerfully by Roger Bowers, and the issue is now more open than has been the practice of the last few decades. I listened to a couple of U-tube chunks of Mencoboni: the opening Response and Laudate pueri, both with slow tripla, which worked – the word-painting is still there without gabbling 'Suscitans a terra'. But the proportional system was in decline by 1610, and the old assumptions need to be justified, not merely assumed. Judging by the page-turns, I reckon that Mencoboni's singers were using my edition. Other conductors who have successfully used slow tripla are Philip Thorby and Paul McCreesh.* CB

The 1610 celebrations are ending: Gwen Toth is rounding them off in New York with a come-and-sing Vespers on Jan 1<sup>st</sup>. I was toying with the idea of something similar in the period between Christmas and New Year, but couldn't face organising it. There are two choirs who have booked hire copies for next year, and if our experience of Purcell is anything to go by (*The Fairy Queen* and *King Arthur* are still in demand), the Vespers won't be neglected. CB

## FAREWELL TO THE KING OF HEARTS

Clifford Bartlett

Twenty years ago, Aude Gotto acquired a 125-year lease to a Tudor merchant's house in Fye Bridge Street, Norwich. Its original owner was Edmund Wood, who became Mayor of Norwich in 1548. By the 1980s, the shops into which it had been divided had fallen into decay; it was restored between 1986 and 1990 by the Norwich Preservation Trust supported by English Heritage. Now called 'The King of Hearts', it has an art gallery, a café and a concert hall seating about 100. Aude has run concerts there regularly, 2010 is her last year (though she is still promoting independent events, including further concerts by The Bach Players). The lease has been passed on to The Anteros Arts Foundation, whose purpose is to enable people to acquire specific skills in fine arts and crafts (see [www.teros.co.uk](http://www.teros.co.uk)). The Café will be closed from Christmas until mid-February and there will still be exhibitions, and the building will still remain available for hire, so concerts can still take place there. It will revert to its original name, Wood House. There's a closing-down sale from 8-16 January.

I managed to attend two concerts of their last season, the second at the nearby United Reform Church in Princes Street. The first was on Saturday 30 October. 'The London Handel Players' is hardly a distinctive name, but the status of Rachel Brown *fl*, Adrian Butterfield and Oliver Webber *vlns*, Katherine Sharman *vlc* and Laurence Cummings *hpscd* was, to say the least, promising, and the result matched, perhaps surpassed expectations. The programme itself was interesting. All the music was in some way relevant to the title 'Beg, Borrow or Steal'. Leclair had the most remote link, with reference to the obsequiousness of the preface to his second book of violin sonatas (they played Nol 11). The Telemann pieces related to the use of previous works, and it was he who dominated the concert with three fine pieces – a quartet for flute, 2 *vlns* & *bc* in G, the third of the first set of Paris Quartets, and a Concerto *a4* for recorder, 2 violins (originally violin and oboe) in A minor.<sup>1</sup> I tend to leave Telemann to BC; this concert reminded me how good his music can be. Two passages didn't convince: the opening of the Paris quartet, for which I think I blame Telemann, not the players, and the surprising violin cadenza in the Concerto, which seemed a surprise to the player. Bach was present with BWV 1038: a bass by Bach which was used (probably as exercises by pupils) as the basis of a solo violin sonata and this trio. Chedeville's *Il Pastor Fido* represented fraud rather than theft: published under the name of Vivaldi,

only a few movements have any connection with him. Of the four movements of No. 6, which was performed, one derives from Alberti, one from Vivaldi. The Handelian contribution was two arias from *Select Aires*, anthologies of opera and oratorio arias arranged for two trebles and bass instruments. 'Myself I shall adore' was extremely entertaining, the wit of the players exaggerating but not falsifying the music. And the encore was a version of 'Verdi prati', announced in a way that made it appropriate to the ambiguity of feelings at end of 20 years of the concert series. The hall was (apart from the tight seating) absolutely ideal for the music: one could feel it as chamber music. The players did not have to over-project, and every nuance had its effect. They were completely at home in the music, and we could imagine ourselves overhearing them playing for their own entertainment.

Five days later, I again drove the 80 miles to Norwich for The Bach Players. I'd enjoyed their CDs, and looked forward to this event, especially since the programme included the settings of *Christ lag in Todesbanden* by Pachelbel and Bach. Pairing them wasn't quite so original an idea as the publicity suggested: the two cantatas were paired in a Prom on 11 September 1978, with the BBC Singers conducted by John Poole and with Peter Holman's Ars Nova. I can't say that I remember much about that concert, except from writing the programme notes. But it is a significant pairing. Bach evidently knew his predecessor's setting, which is in itself very impressive – though performing it after the Bach would be a disaster! Each composer set all seven verses of Luther's Easter hymn, whose melody recalls the medieval sequence *Victimae paschali laudes*. Some verses incorporate a movement from darkness to light, all concluding with *Alleluia*. Bach makes each verse of the strophic text so different, but with the melody clearly present, and the power of the setting puts this on a par with the Tallis Fantasia (see the last issue) as one of those works for which I feel I know every note.<sup>2</sup> It is a work on which I have strong opinions; I expect performances to disappoint me. So it is very high praise to say that this didn't: it was, indeed, by far the best I have heard. One merit was the use of only four voices, with no conductor or obvious director. (The group dynamics of the rehearsal process is another matter.) To take one obvious point, the doubling of tempo during the Alleluia of verse 1 was precise and brilliant. (A repeat of it made a fine encore.) I was delighted to hear again the bass whom I enjoyed so much in John Butt's B-minor Mass, Matthew Brooke: the almost throw-away treatment he gave to the last five notes of his solo verse was a sign of absolute

1. Stating the TWV numbers in the programme might have helped anyone who was inspired to want to play them to find copies: the programme gave the BWV number for Bach and even the spurious Vivaldi opus number for *Il Pastor Fido*.

2. It also happens to be one of the few works that I've conducted – back in the mid-1960s with an amateur group.

confidence. Rachel Elliott (S) and Samuel Biden (T) duetted as a perfect pair, though I wouldn't have noticed the marvellous descending tenor line at the end of Verse 4 had I not been listening out for it. Sally Bruce-Payne deserves particular mention for her brilliant performance of Cantata 54 'Wiederstehe doch der Sünde' – the one with the memorable opening chord (not quite as discordant as Rebel's *Les Éléments*, but more meaningful). She didn't take the option counter-tenors generally prefer of transposing it up a tone to F major, but it fitted her voice perfectly, and was sung to perfection. Her attempt to add gestures to the recitative was interesting: it wouldn't have worked in Bach's organ gallery, but makes some sense when the audience can see the singer. The use of only four singers as 'chorus' was not a restriction but a liberation.

There were three Pachelbel works. The opening one was predictable, though curiously without its Gigue. 'Mein Fleisch ist die rechte Speise' is an interesting piece comprising a Sonata for scordatura violin (CGCF) and two movements with a soprano. 'Christ lag...' has three (rather than Bach's two) violas, which were held up by the players to show their different sizes. I was a bit disappointed by the string playing: it seemed a bit stolid, apart from the cello. Sadly, the Bach has knocked any recollection of it out of my mind, and me score isn't accessible. I look forward to the CD.

The Bach novelty was a performance of the canons added to one copy of the Goldberg Variations. These were arranged into a sequence by the keyboard player, Silas Wollston, to great affect, turning what would have been tedious if played as 14 isolated pieces into an affecting piece of music. The closing quodlibet was also included, and sounded wonderful on strings.

Congratulations to Nicolette Moonen for selecting and directing so fascinating a programme.

*We have had Hugh Keyte staying with us quite a bit lately, as is evident from his contributions to this issue (not least, the proof-reading). He was Radio 3's early-music producer for a decade from the mid-1970s, at a time when early music was moving from a fringe activity to acceptability and popularity, and some readers will know his name from The New Oxford Book of Carols. He went with me to the concert reviewed above, and was so taken by it that he went again to the London performance two days later and wrote the following.*

I have waited some three and a half decades to hear Pachelbel's *Christ lag in Todesbanden*, having, like the group's director-violinist, Nicolette Moonen, chanced upon the work and longed to hear it in tandem with Bach's setting of the same chorale text, which was so obviously inspired by it. And having heard it once, I couldn't miss taking a friend and hearing it again. Sally Bruce-Payne's ravishing account of the solo-alto cantata *Wiederstehe doch der Sunde* included an object-lesson in how to put over the

rapid twists and turns of Bach recitative, her modest but expressive gestures enhancing the effect. (Emma Kirkby wages a relentless pro-gesture campaign with young singers at summer schools, believing that it is an aid to tone production as well as communication.) Then there was Silas Wollston's masterly stitching together of the 14 additional canons to the Goldberg variations, only discovered in 1974. This made a convincing musical unity of what looked on paper like a succession of intellectual exercises. Already known was the canon that Bach proudly displays in the oil portrait that marked his admission to Leipzig's counterpart of the Italian academies, the Mizler Society. The three parts work against themselves in inversion, but produce a mere scrap of music in performance. This Silas cleverly segued into his strings-and-continuo arrangement of the Goldberg quodlibet – to my ear much wittier than on keyboard. This is a real piece of creative musicianship which could find a place in many a chamber concert, and should surely be published.

Bach's *Christ lag* (at once a young man's tribute to the older master and a demonstration of his own effortless mastery) was simply the best rendering I have heard, soloists ideally matched, and constituting a full and sufficient demonstration of the rightness of one-voice-per-part. Never for a moment did one feel the need for more volume; there was never that weird disparity of scale between solo and choral numbers which can make conventional performances so subtly unsatisfying; and the most gifted conductor with the most virtuosic choir could never have elicited the variety and quick-fire interaction that these quartets of intelligent singers brought to bear. Early experiments with single-voice Bach were not uniformly effective, but collective experience is paying off.

A great surprise was the difference that the two very different acoustics made. It could almost have been two different groups. In the crystal-clear but coldly clinical Norwich chapel the voices were greatly advantaged, but the single strings often sounded heavy, even forced in tone. It took me some time to realise that these were in fact baroque instruments! In St John's, Downshire Hill, there could be no doubt about this, and even tended to the over-bright, with voices having to work much harder. But the overall effect was stunning, a vast improvement. In the Pachelbel, for instance, the upper strings sounded, properly, like additional extra parts above the soprano lines rather than like a slightly incidental halo. I suspect that The Bach Players' future Norwich concerts will be more effective in the Octagon Chapel, a venue that they have previously used. How will the CD sound?

Hugh Keyte

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## LONDON CONCERTS

Andrew Benson-Wilson

## THE POPE v MEDEA

Managing to survive some strong competition from the pope in nearby Hyde Park, Ensemble Serse gave a brave (and enormously long) concert performance of Leonardo Vinci's little known opera *Il Medo* (Grosvenor Chapel, 18 Sept).<sup>1</sup> A comprehensive 24-page programme gave plenty of reading matter, including very detailed information about each of the characters, lengthy CVs of all the original 1728 singers, rather shorter CVs of the present-day singers, a series of little essays about the composer and various other issues connected with the work, a synopsis and summary of each scene – and there was also a separate full libretto. The opera is an annex to the Medea story, with her son, Medo, being the focus of the convoluted plot which involves both Medo and Medea (and Jason/Giasone/Climaco, Medea's hubby) being in disguise for most of the time (or they would have been if this were a staged performance). There were a number of impressive young singers, notably, to my ears, the attractive and clean soprano of Catrine Kirkman (Asteria), the assured countertenor of Daniel Keating-Roberts (Medo), Katherine Cooper's Artace and the maturing tenor of Julian Forbes (who had memorised his part of Perse, and also attempted a degree of acting). The only vocal weakness came from male soprano Calvin Wells, whose forced projection, shrill upper notes, self indulgent cadenzas and huge vibrato made for frankly uncomfortable listening. In his own programme notes, Wells attempted a justification for the use of vibrato, suggesting that all the evening's singers would be using it – but it turned out that he was the only one to display it noticeably. To be brutally frank, if he wants to continue singing this repertoire, I would prefer him to spend more time learning to control his vibrato, rather than attempting to justify it. Another of Calvin Well's programme essays was on "Cadenzas and ornamentation". The former were extravagant to a degree, with Well's own attempts sounding more like vocal excercises. There were also several vocal cadenzas that included carefully worked out instrumental contributions – is there any evidence that cadenzas were perfomed in this fashion? Unfortunately, none of the singers attempted the interaction with other characters that was so essential in many of the arias and recits – even in concert performances, it really does help the audience if the person being addressed remains on the stage rather than slope off to their seat. Amongst the instrumentalists, Oliver Webber, violin, and Leo Duarte, oboe, excelled. Rui Penheiro conducted.

<sup>1</sup> Written for the wedding of the Duke of Parma in 1728, along with an equestrian ballet.

## NEW COLLEGE, NEW LABEL

New College, Oxford, allowed themselves an evening of self-congratuation with their 'Gala Concert' of Mozart's *Requiem* and the last three sections of Monteverdi's *Vespers* performed by their choir and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment (St John's, Smith Square, 6 Oct). The occasion was the launch of New College Choir's own record label (Novum), and the recognition of several impressive donations towards the choir's activities and to secure the post of college organist for the future. The boys of the choir produced a beautifully pure sound without the edginess of many boys' choirs, although it was interesting that one of them (a soloist in the *Requiem*'s introit) had already developed a noticeable vibrato.

## HIERONYMOUS AT 450

The 'Choral at Cadogan' series is growing in strength, with eight concerts lined up for this season, opening with the Tallis Scholars and their programme Hieronymous Praetorius, Hans Leo Hassler, Schütz, Byrd and Bach (12 Oct, Cadogan Hall). First, a comment on the Tallis Scholars themselves, whose sound has caused me some problems in the past. Perhaps this was a one-off, but here they presented a rounder and smoother consort sound without the edginess or their former rather forthright and sometimes brittle tone. No one voice dominated, and although the vocal production was far from vibrato free, this was never intrusive. The four sopranos in particular produced a beautifully homogeneous sound, and the top notes were not over-prominent. The male alto, whose tone I have been rather tough on in the past, also produced a particularly pleasant sound, well matched to his colleagues. And Peter Phillips' conducting, although still having moments when sheer jagged nervous energy seems to take over, was also a much smoother affair. If this really is a new sound, it certainly worked for me. I think I must be one of the few organists who actually plays the music of Hieronymous Praetorius, so it was lovely to hear some of his dramatic multi-choir vocal works, which can often be more Venetian than the Venetians. He relishes the vocal possibilities of singers, with some delightful ping-pong moments, for example, in *Cantate Domino*, with the four sopranos sounding like bells. There were stunning individual moments in the opening *Magnificat II* including *dispersit superbos*, the phrases of *Sicut locutus* bouncing back and forth, the broadly accented *Abraham*, and the gently flowing *et nunc, et semper* before breaking into the triple time conclusion. After this 450<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, it is another 19 years before HP has another anniversary – I hope his music continues to be heard in the intervening years.

## VESPERS at 400

The 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Monteverdi Vespers has produced many performances, but the one I have found the most enjoyable so far, was from the Birmingham Ex Cathedra (16 Oct, Cadogan Hall). Jeffrey Skidmore has a gift for finding fine singers and bringing out the best in all his performers, on this occasion aided by His Majestys Sagbutts & Cornetts, one of a number of such consorts who must be having a good year. With four sopranos and pairs of the other three voices, the vocal highlights were the singing of Grace Davidson and Natalie Clifton-Griffith, notably in *Pulchra es*. Tenors Jeremy Budd and Mark Dobell also excelled in *Audi coelum*, the latter singing from backstage – seemingly from behind a door to the ex-organ loft. In fact, all the 'echo' sections of the Vespers were well judged, with the echo singer, violin and cornett playing from off-stage. Just turning round (as is often done) really makes very little difference to the sound. For those interested in such things, the pitch was A466, *Lauda Jerusalem* was down a tone and the *Magnificat* down a minor third – based on analysis by Roger Bowers.<sup>2</sup> In his programme notes, Skidmore quotes a reviewer from 1953 who wrote that a performance was "vivacious, exciting, teeming with conviction, and above all constantly dancing", noting that he would be happy for the same to be thought of his own performance: I am happy to concur with the 1953 thought.

## YOUNG ARTISTS?

Although the concert was advertised as featuring soloists from their Young Artists Programme, for some reason the printed programme for the Retrospect Ensemble's concert of Purcell and Blow at the Wigmore Hall (20 Oct) made no mention of the Programme or who, if any, of the singers might be the Young Artists it was supporting. I am guessing that Julie Cooper wasn't, that Ben Davies probably wasn't, leaving Alison Hill, Ian Aitkenhead and Richard Rowntree as possibles. Of the second group, it was the very attractive and unforced soprano of Alison Hill that struck me as being by far the most promising, as long as she avoids ever getting dragged into the operatic repertoire that so frequently ruins voices like this. It was encouraging to hear a singer who knew how to trill without merely relying on vibrato – and she can also bring clarity to melismas, as in her solo 'Thus Virgil's Genius' from Purcell's Court Ode, *Celestial Music did the Gods inspire*. Countertenor Ian Aitkenhead showed much promise as a consort singer (in 'Mortals below, Cupids above' from Blow's *Venus and Adonis*) although his solo voice revealed a slightly forced tone that added a probably unintended

2. Much as I admire Roger Bowers's researches, he doesn't allow for the possibility that the modality which demands the use of high clefs makes them often come out lower than 'normal' clefs (we can use that term now Philip Brett is no longer with us). There are explicit references to high clefs implying transposition down a fourth or fifth in several Venetian psalm prints, albeit later than Monteverdi. CB

nervous edge to his voice. Equally promising was the tenor Richard Rowntree, although he had a tendency to apply hairpin dynamics to individual notes, making both their start and finish indistinct. He also suffered from rather more vibrato than I am comfortable with. The continuo group (Andrew Skidmore, bass violin, Linda Sayce, theorbo, and Matthew Halls, harpsichord) were particularly effective, but the lead violinist let the side down by playing far too loudly, especially in the fugal section of the opening Purcell overture, where all three upper string voices should have been equal.

## YOUNG AUDIENCE

Although the concert above prevented me from getting to the Queen Elizabeth Hall for the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment's main concert, 'A Grand Tour of Italy', I did manage to get to their slightly less grand Night Shift event at 10pm, with extracts from the earlier concert (Corelli, Handel, Vivaldi) repeated for an enormous audience of predominately young people, many of whom had apparently never attended a classical music concert before. These OAE events really seem to have taken off – and they are, encouragingly, the only classical music event that makes me feel just a bit old. I retain my doubts over their rather patronising 'TV personality' compere, so for me the greatest thrill was when the OAE's leader for the evening, Kati Debretzeni (introduced by Mr Personality as "the wonderful Kati"), stepped forward to give one of the most erudite introductions to a piece of music that I have ever heard, with not a hint of condescension. She then gave a dazzling display, not only of sheer virtuosity, but of stunning musicianship. She is the only performer I have ever heard who has made sense (to me, at least) of the enormous violin solos in the final *Allegro* of Vivaldi's *Il Grosso Mogul* (or in Bach's organ version), having displayed exquisite delicacy of tone in the preceding *Grave*. Despite the OAE's encouragement for people to wander in and out of the concert to buy drinks, the entire audience sat spell-bound, listening with intense enjoyment. Rosemary Joshua (or "Rosy" as Mr TV called her) followed with an engaging performance of *Nulla in Mundo Pax Sincera*. The hour-long concert had been preceded by foyer music and was followed by a DJ until midnight. For me, Kati's approach is the way to attract young people – treat them as adults, give them great music, and perform it with conviction.

## SECRET DESIRES

Under the enticing title of "Journey of Discovery: Bach's most secret desire..." the International Baroque Players (19 players from 12 countries) explored the music of Dresden during Bach's time, his (rather less than) secret desire being to become the Dresden Hofkapellmeister in practice as well as in name (29 Oct, St John's, Smith Square). Starting with Zelenka's quirky *Hipocrondrie*, the programme included works by Heinechen, who held the job that Bach coveted, and Pisendel, the leader of the Dresden orchestra,

the latter's *Imitation des Caractères de la danse* featuring a continuous stream of snippets of dances both courtly and bucolic. Fasch's Concerto for violin, flutes, oboes and strings completed the Dresden representatives, and the subsequent music by Handel, WF and JS Bach knocked the socks off the local lads. WF Bach's *Adagio and Fugue* in *D minor* was given a magical performance, with muted violins below a haunting sustained flute note. JS Bach's Concerto for oboe and violin gave Joel Raymond and leader Johannes Pramsohler a well-taken chance to shine. Flautists Eva Caballero and Yu-Wei Hu were also exceptional performers. It is great to see and hear the self-evident verve and enthusiasm of this ambitious group of young players.

#### PORTUGUESE FIGARO

Bampton Opera continue to delve into the darker corners of 18<sup>th</sup> century opera depositories, most recently bringing Marcos Portugal's 1799 *La pazza giornata; o sia, Il matrimonio di Figaro* to the surface (St John's, Smith Square, 7 Oct, after a 'country house opera' performance in Bampton and Westonbirt School). In essence, this is a Figaro Lite, Portugal's take on Rossi's libretto of Beaumarchais's tale avoiding Mozart's emotional insights and harmonic adventures in favour of a lighter and more frivolous touch, an aspect made more obvious by the neat English translation (which generally avoided the 'too-clever-by-half' translations favoured by some opera directors). Bampton Opera rather bravely committed themselves to this staging before they saw the score, which was being edited by a group from the New University in Lisbon. Making use of the new stage entrance at St John's, Smith Square (one result of some major juggling around of their basement accommodation), and with the, orchestra peeping out from behind some vaguely Moorish screens behind the stage and singers, the performers made good use of the space. The cast of young singers included Joana Seara as an outstanding Cherubino, Robert Gildon (in a very non-PC portrayal of Gusmano as a stuttering simpleton) Nicholas Merryweather as an impressive Figaro, John-Colyn Gyeantey (Almaviva), Edmound Connolly (Antonio) and Robert Winslade Anderson (Basilio). Sadly, as is often the case with Bampton Opera, a modern-instrument orchestra were hired (on this occasion, the London Mozart Players) which, together with a dreadful electronic harpsichord, seemed very much at odds with what they seem to be attempting to do in their revivals of early operas. Although they may get away with this in their more usual opera-for-the-county-set occasions, they need to address the issue if they are to hold their own in the more elevated professional surroundings of London's concert halls.

#### ARNE'S ALFRED

Bampton Opera could learn a thing or two about the quality of London opera performance from The Classical

Opera Company, whose latest venture was a concert performance of the 1753 version of Thomas Arne's *Alfred* (9 Oct, King's Place). The work had a chequered history since its first performance at Cliveden in 1740, which contained just six vocal contributions and a vast amount of spoken text (a curious 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday present for the Prince of Wales' daughter). A full-length version was licensed, but not performed, in 1741, and three performances were given in Dublin in 1744 before the 1753 version, when Arne took advantage of the lack of an Italian Opera season in London to attract the leading singers of the day by a series of Act II *da capo* arias. There were several later versions before the work slumped into obscurity – apart, of course, from the concluding 'Rule Britannia'. There are no surviving recits from the 1753 incarnation, so the vocal numbers were interspersed with a spoken narrative text. First honours must go to the orchestra, notably the leader, Sophie Gent, flautist Katy Bircher, continuo cellist Joseph Crouch and harpsichordist Jan Waterfield. Vocally, of the young singers, it was Mary Bevan who stole the show as Emma, with Thomas Hobbs, Andrew Radley, Anthony Gregory and Emma Morwood very close behind in the admiration stakes. The two other singers suffered from excessive vibrato. I know I keep banging on about this in my reviews, but it really does not do this repertoire any favours, not least because of the havoc it wreaks on ornaments. Ian Page conducted with his usual commendable restraint and musical insight.

#### ENO's RADAMISTO

English National Opera's latest stab at Handel was his 1720 *Radamisto*, in a new co-production with Santa Fe Opera (13 Oct). The first act set made the singers look like midgets who had stumbled into a giant swatch of wallpaper samples for Indian restaurants. Costumes generally veered between Mogul and Mikado apart from the unfortunate Farasmane, who was clad as a cross between Moses and the Burghers of Calais. Prince Tigrane (a Billy Bunterish padding-out of Ailish Tynan) seemed to have wandered on-stage from another opera altogether, his anachronistic shabby suit and fez being starkly at odds with the dress of the other characters as well as being a shabby portrayal of non-westerners that I thought had died out with Tommy Cooper. The effervescent Laurence Cummings contrasted his usual light-as-a-feather helter-skelter approach with some remarkable relaxed arias, and coaxed some sympathetic playing out of the ENO house band, on modern instruments, with fine contributions from oboes and bassoons. The plot was the usual mixture of confusing histrionics, with its fair share of opera's usual dramatic oddities, for example, Queen Polissena's outburst of "I will leave you", only to hang around for ages to sing another aria. David Alden's direction had its inevitable mixture of insight and sheer daftness – I sometimes wonder whether opera directors actually like music, the lengths to which they go to provide distractions to it. Anyway, I prefer to listen, so most of the (I am sure)

clever allusions in the direction just passed me by. The youngish cast was excellent, with exemplary singing from Lawrence Zazzo (Radamisto) Christine Rice (Zeonobia) and Sophie Bevan (Polissena) and excellent support from Ryan McKinnay and Henry Waddington. Only Ailish Tynan disappointed with tendency to drag, swoop up to notes, use vibrato instead of trills, and let her tuning wander.

#### HAYDN'S DESERT ISLAND

Haydn's operas have been slowly but surely working their way onto the London stage in recent years, the latest offering being his 1779 *L'isola disabitata* (to a Metastasio libretto) given by the four members of the Royal Opera House's Young Artists Programme at their Lindbury Studio Theatre (28 Oct). In a nice change from Handelian opera, there are only four characters, and a plot that is relatively simple to digest. All recitatives have full orchestral accompaniment, and the overture is a dramatic example of Haydn in *Sturm und Drang* mode. Set on one of the bleakest stage settings I can recall (the original island transformed into a post-apocalyptic shambles), the two female protagonists (who had been on the island for the past 13 years) were already on stage and in role as the audience entered, and all four stayed on stage during the interval (which started, rather awkwardly, by the music just stopping, leaving the audience bemused until they saw the orchestra, but not the singers, leaving). The grumpy and crippled Constanza (Elisabeth Meister), believing herself to have been abandoned, hates men; the gawky skipping adolescent Silvia (the beguiling Anna Devin), having been marooned since babyhood, doesn't even know what a man is, and has some rather cringe-Seworthy fumbling exploration of one when the two males turn up (Steven Ebel and Daniel Grice, clad in scary protective suits). All four singers showed great promise, with Anne Devin probably having the hardest acting role of the four. Unfortunately the orchestra, the enterprising young professionals from the Southbank Sinfonia, made their use of modern instruments rather too obvious – they have a period-instrument incarnation so I am puzzled why this wasn't used on this occasion. The conductor (Volker Kraft, setting appropriate speeds) and production staff were on the same Young Artist Programme, the director and designer perhaps putting a lifetime's effort and ideas into what could have been a rather simpler affair – some of the staging and acting antics were rather overdone, albeit impressively.

#### BAROQUE IN BRECON

Although I have known about its existence since it started, this is the first time that I have managed to get to the mini Baroque Festival in Brecon (the 5th). This is focussed around local resident Rachel Podger and took place over the weekend of 22-25 October. The Festival started on the Friday evening with the inevitable Monteverdi *Vespers*, given in a packed Brecon Cathedral by Rachel's own

group, Brecon Baroque, her brother's choir, Trinity Baroque, the Quintessential Sackbutt & Cornett Ensemble and the Brecon Cathedral Lay Clerks. Before the *Vespers* started, we heard a lengthy, but very well played, organ *Toccata* by A Gabrieli, a G Gabrieli *Canzona* for wind and strings and the chanted *Salve Regina*, followed by the glorious voice of Charles Daniels intoning the *Deus in adiutorium meum*. Plainchant antiphons from the Marian feast of the Assumption were used, and Clemens non Papa's *Ave Maria* and Cima's *Sonata a 3*, were performed from the rear of the cathedral at the start of the second half. An excellent line up of singers and instrumentalists included three mezzo sopranos (Clare Wilkinson, Kate Hamilton and Catherine King) who brought an attractive luminosity to the upper lines. Rachel Podger and Bojan Cicic were the violin soloists, David Miller played theorbo and Terence Charlston was the impressive organ continuo and solo player. I have heard many performances of the *Vespers* this year, with more to come, but this will take some beating. I was seated right at the front, just inside the (architecturally stunning) chancel, so the immediacy of the sound was a key part of my own enjoyment.

The next concert was on the Sunday, leaving a musically free Saturday, the evening of which featured the rather bizarre Baroque Ball, clearly something of a tradition in these parts, but slightly beyond my normal reviewing remit. I felt like the policeman in the film *The Wicker Man* as he first witnessed the strange pagan rituals of the islanders, so was glad to be rescued and made to feel at home by the Podger/Cronin and Thorby families – although when I am at home, I don't normally dance quite so often.

The Sunday morning Eucharist in the Cathedral included more Monteverdi from the Cathedral Consort and the Baroque String Ensemble of the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama before the evening concert (in the Theatr Brycheiniog) of works by Telemann and Bach given by Brecon Baroque. This was an inspiring event, with the real feeling that we were eavesdropping on a group of friends getting together to make music. Their mutual enjoyment was evident. As well as impressive solo contributions from Pamela Thorby (recorder) and Katy Bircher (flute) in the Telemann Concerto in E minor and Brandenburgs 4 and 5 (the latter with Christopher Bucknall as harpsichord soloist), we also had an exciting collaboration between Rachel Podger and the dancer and choreographer, Katy Sinnadurai (a fellow Brecon resident who got to know Rachel on the school run). Katy's work was entitled 'Zwellinge', a reference both to twins and Gemini – the sign under which both Rachel and Katy (and myself, for that matter) were born. Telemann's four-movement Fantasia for solo violin (No 6 in E minor) was used as a vehicle for an enticing dialogue between player and dancer, the often skittish games between the two highlighting the link between the two performers (another example of friends having fun) and between music and dance itself. I expect that for many in the audience, this

would just have been their children's local violin and dance teacher putting on a show, but collaborations like this have a much wider importance for the presentation of early music.

Two more of the Brandenburgs (1 and 3) were performed in the final (Monday evening) concert in the Festival where some of the players from Brecon Baroque joined with students from the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama and local musicians ("quite a few Welsh people") under the banner of the Brecon Baroque Festival Orchestra (including several teenagers who had tuned their instruments down). Rachel Podger was, as ever, an inspiring director, encouraging a spirited and committed performance, despite taking no prisoners in the lively speeds that she set the assorted players, notably in the final *Allegro* of Brandenburg 3. Countertenor Stephen Wallace sang Ferrandini's cantata *Il pianto di Maria*: "Guinta l'ora fatal" – a nod to the composer's anniversary, but probably better known under its earlier attribution to Handel (as HWV234). Wallace brought his considerable vocal power and operatic delivery to highlight the dramatic nature of the work (although he did rather cloud most of his ornaments with vibrato). The youngsters of the South Powys Youth Orchestra Strings also gave us music by Corelli and Telemann. As with the previous concerts, a brace of little Podgerettes were the cute flower presenters.

#### BRIGHTON RITUALS

The rather quirky Brighton Early Music Festival (BREMF) continues to grow, its latest sequence of events focussing on the topic of 'Ritual', covering musical instruments from 36,000 years ago to a work only just completed. They are very good at ticking the right funding boxes, resulting in a number of enterprises supporting community singing and younger musicians. I experienced examples of both over the two days that I attended, starting with the second of two 'Young Artists Showcase' concerts (Unitarian Church, 30 Oct), under the title of 'Rites of Pleasure', with the five excellent players of Ensemble Amaranthos, together with soprano Erica Eloff, musicians that I have reviewed on a number of occasions since their appearances at the 2007 Early Music Network International Young Artists' Competition and 2008 Handel Singing Competition respectively (Erica won the latter). In a nicely planned programme, the 'pleasures' on offer ranged from the first kiss ('Sweeter than Roses') via dance (Rebel *Les caractères de la danse*), coffee (Bach), tobacco (Hume) to all-consuming sex (Semele's 'Endless pleasure'), with Erica Eloff ranging in character from a stroppy teenage girl to a seductress. Marta Gonçalves was the excellent soloist in the flute sonata by Michael Cannabich – a nod towards another tobacco-related 'pleasure'? Just gathering a talented group of performers together does not of itself make for a fine group – these musicians demonstrated that inner spark and musical integrity that lifts fine playing into fine performance.

The combination of the various Brighton musical communities resulted in one of the oddest performances of the Monteverdi *Vespers* that I have heard this year. On the one hand, we had a fine group of professional singers (with sopranos Faye Newton and Katharine Hawnt and tenor Charles Daniels most noteworthy), His Majestys Sagbutts and Cornetts and the BREMF Players, a collection of similarly professional performers. On the other hand, there was the massed forces of The BREMF Singers and Community Choir who shuffled back and forth on the stage between numbers, scraping their chairs in the process but, even at full blast, never managing to beat the *mezzo forte* of one of the solo sopranos, despite fielding over 50 singers. And what volume they did produce was churned about in the voluminous acoustics of St Bartholomew's before it oozed its way muddily towards the audience. But the local fans filled the church and seemed to love the performance. One curious effect of the acoustics was that, despite sending the cornet player and tenor into a dark recess behind the altar for the 'echo' passages, their volume was just the same as their colleagues front-stage.

Saturday was Brighton & Hove's 'White Night', a time when Brightonians are encouraged to "do something different in the middle of the night". Alongside such attractions as Miss High Leg Kick, Queen Ping King Pong and something called Divine Passage (all very Brighton), the BREMF contribution was 'The Brighton Intermedii' at St Bartholomew's, with six young ensembles drawn from the London music conservatories performing from various corners of the church in short bursts between 11 pm and 2 am. The groups were The Musicians of London Wall (playing Telemann, Pierre Prowo and Handel on recorder, violin, viola, harpsichord, cello), Sisters of Rose (two female singers with various mediaeval and folk instruments), Il Nuovo Chiaroscuro (Marini, Josquin and Gabrieli on four sackbuts), Galán (Hildegard, Mazzochi, Rossi, Grandi and Monterverdi from three sopranos, theorbo, harpsichord), Cantum Barbum (Byrd, Rameau and Morley from three male singers) and Les Melomanes (playing Marini, Marais and Merula on recorder, violin, cello, harpsichord). All showed talent, but the four that stood out were the two recorder/violin consorts, The Musicians of London Wall and Les Melomanes, the three sopranos of Galán and the three entertaining young men of Cantum Barbum. The evening finished with a rather ramshackle and under-rehearsed attempt at Striggio's 40-part *Ecce beatum lucem* by all the groups and assorted friends. The audience was a fascinating one combining some very obvious early music types with some of Brighton's more colourful characters – and some non-colourful ones, in that several were clad and painted entirely in white. I had got the impression that there were no more than a very commendable 3/400 people there at any one time, but the official door count was 981 which, if true, suggests that far more people than I thought must have just popped in and out again.

I reviewed the flute/recorder, violin and continuo group Passacaglia with enthusiasm several times around ten years ago, but they then seemed, at least to me, to disappear from the London concert scene. But they have been as busy as ever in the meantime, with several recordings to their name. A recent one ('A Cheerful Collection') was the basis for their concert at St George's Church (31 Oct), together with soprano Julia Gooding, where they demonstrated that they have lost none of the musicality or imaginative programming. Their concert was based on the 'Delights from the Pleasure Gardens' (or, at least, those delights that could be presented in a public mid-afternoon concert) with a focus on the music of Arne, the principal composer at the Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens.<sup>3</sup> As well as Julia Gooding, Annabel Knight (flute and recorders) and Oliver Webber (violin) made particularly good contributions. The class structure that dominated 18<sup>th</sup> century life was evident at this concert, with some people (several, I think, in fancy dress, although it might just have been everyday Brighton attire) sitting on comfortable seats around tables with trays of cakes and cups of tea being passed round at the 'stalls level' with the rest of us (including this reviewer, who was presumably assumed to be 'trade') shoved upstairs to rigid pews, a limited view of the performers, and a ban on even taking a cup of tea up with us. Similarly 'trade' was the BBC producer, dressed in jeans and a T shirt, who gave us all our instructions before leaving by the tradesman's entrance to his van outside.

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#### ... AND CROATIA

#### VARAŽDIN BAROQUE EVENINGS

The Varždinske Barokne Večeri (Varaždin Baroque Evenings) festival celebrated its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary in September in the delightful little city, of architectural and historic importance, tucked away at the northern edge of Croatia, about 80km north of Zagreb, and close to the Slovenian and Hungarian borders. Architecturally and culturally, inland Croatia is Hapsburg influenced, in contrast to the more Italianate coast – indeed, visiting Zagreb and then Varaždin is like experiencing successively smaller versions of 18<sup>th</sup> century Vienna. Although the festival has always been an important part of the tourist activities of the city and region, in recent years there have been some moves to shift the musical focus closer to the many other European specialist early music festivals, not least in the awareness of the importance of using period instruments and period style in performance.

The distance that Varaždin has to go before it can compare with European competition was highlighted in the two opening concerts in Varaždin Cathedral, both by German orchestras. Hofkapelle München bill themselves

as 'amongst the most sought baroque orchestras' in Bavaria, but were playing entirely on modern instruments, apart from one seemingly baroque cello played with a modern-style bow and the lead violinist, who had a baroque bow. The sins of the Detmold Barock Akademie were even worse. Their promotional introduction states specifically: 'baroque instruments have been acquired as well as baroque bows' but, with the exception of one viola da gamba, they chose not to bring any of them over the border to Croatia. I don't know how they got booked for a festival like this but, if Croatia has a Trades Description Act, they would have a very good case for investigation.

Of course, many modern-instrument orchestras are managing to make a pretty good job of performing the earlier repertoire through an understanding of period style. Hofkapelle München were the better of the two rogue orchestras on this count (in the opening concert on 24 Sept), largely through the spirited conducting of Handel's *Dixit Dominus* by the organist of Varaždin Cathedral, Ančelko Igrec, director of the very impressive Chorus Angelicus, the choir of the Cathedral. He set a very good pace for the work, but one that the four Croatian soloists were clearly not used to. Soprano Ana Lice took the soloist honours for her clarity of tone, the other soprano losing points for her habit of conducting herself and an inability to trill. The concert opened with two instrumental works, directed by the leader of Hofkapelle. The bustling Rococo prettiness of CPE Bach's Hamburg Symphony no 3, showed just how far he had moved from his father's musical world – this was definitely not Baroque! Vivaldi's Concerto RV 443 followed, with recorder soloist Stefan Temmingh. He has developed a mannered, twinkly-eyed, Pied Piper, look-at-me stage persona that might appeal to children, but gave several in the audience a look of sheer bemusement and, frankly, made me cringe. Musically his style was totally romantic (with very occasional snippets of neo-baroque) in terms of phrasing, articulation and dynamics. Notwithstanding my comments above, he got whoops of applause from the audience. The intrusive presence of live TV and other cameras is a regular problem in this festival; the instructions given through the cameramen's headphones were clearly audible above the the music, alongside the noise of still cameras clicking away and TV lights being shone on to the faces of the audience, who seemed to be the focus of much of the camera action.

In their performance of Bach's *Johannes Passion* (Cathedral, 25 Sept), the Detmold Barock Akademie not only used modern instruments (played at A440 with a continuo organ tuned to equal temperament), but Gerhard Weinberger directed them with some very old-fashioned concepts of style, articulation, pulse and dynamics with long legato phrases and huge rallentandos. Countertenor Benno Schachtner impressed, as might have tenor Tilman Lichdi were it not for his almost embarrassingly evangelistic fervour, the emotional intensity affecting his voice.

3. His anniversary (born 1710) has been sadly under-celebrated, apart from Alfred (see p. 20).

Between these two concerts came a much smaller-scale late morning event from the three-strong German-based group Pantagruel, specialising in 16<sup>th</sup> century music performed in full period costume, complete with the striking of poses, heaving bosoms and period bows (rhyming with 'cows', not 'hose'). Their programme, in the imposing setting of the Baron's Hall of Trakošćan Castle, was 'Eliza is the Fairest Queen', made up of a series of nicely segued groups of instrumental pieces and ballads focussing of varying aspects of pre-Baroque English life. The two players presented themselves as a carefully choreographed comedy duo, but the musical highlight was the singing (and acting) of the promising young Danish soprano, Anna Maria Antonius Wierød. I would have liked to have heard her in a more Baroque repertoire.

For the sake of completeness, I ought to mention that the following concert, 'Sounds Positive' (26 Sept), found me playing a delightful little chamber organ dating from 1668 and now housed in the Baroque Hall of the imposing mediaeval fortress, Stari Grad. The music ranged from Hugh Aston and Hans Kotter to Boehm and Pachelbel, via Byrd, Schildt, Scheidemann and Frescobaldi. I am told that there were some very complimentary reviews in the press – but, not being able to read Croatian, I have no idea what they said.

The two evening concerts on the same day started with the recorder player who had featured in the opening concert, Stefan Temmingh, this time playing works by Geminiani, Corelli, Handel and Vivaldi, with Russian harpsichord player Olga Wats. Apart from the posturing and showmanship, the recorder playing was devoid of any sense of period style, with huge phrases punctuated with equally huge intakes of breath, little or no articulation, and a wealth of romantic performance style. The harpsichord was played in the Russian pianistic style, using editions with romantically realised continuo. The touch was forceful, with massive chords, pianistic arpeggios and an unremitting sense of power – a fascinating insight into the Russian piano style, but far removed from the thinking on Baroque performance that has developed in Western Europe in the last half-century.

The stylistic incongruity of the first few concerts were relieved with the appearance of the Milan-based group Il Giardino Armonico, led by recorder player Giovanni Antonini, and their performance of works by Castello, Merula, Buonamente, Legrenzi, Galuppi and Vivaldi (St Nicholas Church, 26 Sept). Although there were still minor questions about the authenticity of some of their instruments (with a few violin chin rests and long finger boards) this was, at least, a sensitive, expressive, musical and thoroughly professional performance that was, for any budding recorder players listening, firmly in the mainstream 'historically informed performance style'. Both as recorder soloist and director, Antonini demonstrated a stylistic appreciation of articulation, ornamentation and

the motivic development so essential in delineating Baroque musical lines, allowing the instrumentalists to produce an expressive and dynamic sound without the overly forceful manner that some Italian orchestras relish. In an imaginative bit of promotional sponsorship, I gather than the corporate supporters of this concert were a local Italian underwear factory.

One of the highlights of the entire festival was the group Trio Symblema (Ansambl Symblema), made up of three young Croatian musicians (Bojan Čišić, violin, Nika Zlatarić, viola da gamba, and Pavao Mašić, harpsichord) who had all spent periods of time studying abroad. Their concert of Rameau, Leclair, Bach and Handel, given in the difficult surroundings of a tightly packed private house (27 Sept), was a superb demonstration of musical integrity and performance at its best. For example, they caught the contrasting moods of Rameau's *La Pantomime* perfectly and Bojan Čišić produced an excellent combination of vigour and elegance in the *Allegro* of Leclair's Violin Sonata (Op 8/2). Many of the works had the harpsichord as the principal instrument, but Pavao Mašić also gave an imaginative solo account of the 'Harmonious Blacksmith' variations, bringing a delightful sense of light and shade to the music. Nika Zlatarić excelled in Bach's Sonata for gamba (BWV1028), despite having a TV camera thrust no more than one metre from her face – the most intrusive and insensitive bit of camera work of the whole festival.

The late night concert in the Renaissance Hall of the Stari Grad castle was also given by three Croatian musicians (Ansambl Flores), but was at the other end of the quality scale. The highlight was the sensitive and musical playing of the promising young traverso player, Marta Šomodi, notably in her contribution to Bach's *Süßer Trost, mein Jesus kommt* and Telemann's *Seele, lerne dich erkennen*. However the soprano was poor, keeping her head in the score all the time, and producing a tight, pinched tone; there were also issues of intonation, pronunciation, vibrato, ornamentation and enunciation. The harpsichord playing was rather wooden, both in solo and in the unimaginative and unstylistic continuo realisations. As well as these musical considerations, with the exception of Marta Šomodi, they also lacked that spark of musical personality that so helps to project a performance beyond the mere playing, or singing, of the notes.

More Croatian performers were to the fore with the Croatian Baroque Ensemble and their programme of Corelli, Telemann and Handel – 'Concerto-Concertino' (Franciscan Church, 28 Sept). Telemann's Concerto for three violins was given an excellent performance by Bojan Čišić, Tanya Tortić and Silvio Richter, all three players showing just how colourful the baroque violin can be when played sensitively. Unfortunately the same cannot be said of the ensemble's leader, whose violin tone was almost continuously forceful, to the point of being aggressive,

producing an unpleasantly brittle tone with frequent intonation problems. Her direction of the other pieces in the concert were in the same relentless style, with little sense of light and shade, phrasing, or period musical style.

The organ in Varaždin Cathedral is a curious affair. Apparently designed specifically for use during the Baroque Festival, it fields a curious array of stops that don't seem to work in any repertoire, baroque or otherwise. Added to this are obvious technical issues with the instrument in terms of balance, a lack of cohesion between ranks, an insensitive action and the quality, voicing and speech regulation of individual stops. Despite all this, the Croatian organist Pavao Mašić (who had already impressed me in his role as harpsichordist for *Trio Symblema*), gave an outstanding recital of works from Bach's time in Leipzig (29 Sept). He brought an instrumental style of playing to the organ, combining a strong sense of momentum and pulse with the subtle flexibility of the musical line. He made some very effective choices of registrations, notably in the three preludes on *Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland* and in the Canonic Variations of *Von Himmel Hoch*, the latter being given a very persuasive performance despite being one of Bach's most cerebral and contrapuntally complex works. His sparing use of the full organ sound was well judged, the relatively light *pleno* in the concluding 'Dorian' Toccata and Fugue bringing clarity to the inner voices.

Vocal ensemble Singer Pur consists of former members of the Regensburg Domspatzen plus a soprano, and they sing a very wide range of music, including folk songs. Their programme (St Nicholas, 30 Sept) was based on 'Love and Death', with works by Marenzio, Gesualdo, Monteverdi, Schütz, Buxtehude and Scarlatti. They are well-established professional group, with a busy schedule of concerts and an impressive catalogue of CDs – and with the confidence to announce "we shall return next year" to the audience. But possibly as a result of their wide repertoire, they seemed to sing with an all-purpose voices that produced no difference in vocal style between Gesualdo and Scarlatti. They sounded like individual soloists rather than a coherent consort, and have frequent vocal edginess, partly the result of unrestrained vibrato at anything about mezzo forte. The gentler voices used in Monteverdi's *Lamento della ninfa*, for example, resulted in far less vibrato. They finished with Buxtehude's *Muß der Tod denn auch entbinden*, one of the most exquisitely moving melodies around.

The 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Varaždin Baroque Evenings was specifically honoured in the Jubilee Concert given by the Mixed and Girls' Choirs of the Varaždin Music School and a Festival Orchestra of current and former pupils (Cathedral, 1 Oct). Many of the performers had been influenced by teachers from the UK through the Aestas Musica International Summer School of Music and Dance, held annually in Varaždin. Under the title of "The Croatian Musical Heritage" they performed three works

by Jan Křtitel Vaňhal (Johann Baptist Vanhal, 1739-1813), a Bohemian composer who settled in Vienna, where he met Charles Burney. During the 1770s he made a number of visits to the Count Erdody, whose estates included Varaždin's Stari Grad fortress and the palace now occupied by the Music School – enough for Varaždin to claim him as their own. After the opening *Te Deum*, we heard his Concerto for violin, played by Jesenka Balić-Žunić, a very promising Croatian violinist who might benefit from more experience as a soloist, rather than as an orchestral violinist. In the *Stabat mater*, Ana Lice, soprano and Kora Pavelić, mezzo, made a well-matched pair of soloists, both having attractive voices with few of the operatic tendencies that seems to afflict so many singers. The orchestra included a number that had clearly gained some experience of playing in a period style, although they were let down by an elderly cellist who failed to look at either the conductor or the soloists, and frequently played slower and louder than everybody else. The excellent conductor was Dada Ruža, the director of the Music School Choir, a group of 14 to 18 year olds who produced a most impressive sound.

The Orfeo Orchestra and Purcell Choir hail from Hungary and were apparently the first orchestra in Hungary to play on period instruments. Their definition seems to differ from mine, because only a few of the strings players, notably the younger faction, used baroque instruments. They performed four Bach cantatas (Cathedral, 2 Oct). Of the four soloists, tenor Zoltán Mégyesi and baritone Dávid Csizmár impressed, and the Purcell Choir produced a coherent and clear sound. Standards amongst the orchestra varied, with the younger players having the greatest understanding of style. The leader had the habit of accenting the first note of each bar, and also played with rather too much force. György Vashegyi, the orchestra's founder, was the conductor.

The following evening (3 Oct) featured the Varaždin Chamber Orchestra and a programme of Bach, marking "45 years of artistic activity" of the harpsichordist Višnja Mažuran. Although the orchestra has spent some time working on aspects in period performance, notably with Catherine Mackintosh, it is essentially a modern instrument band playing in the Central European style. What surprised me about this performance was not the use, or lack of use, of period style, but the impression the members gave of just not enjoying what they were doing. They all played with their heads buried in the scores, without looking at each other, the leader, or the harpsichord soloist. Each instrumental section seemed to have its own idea about the speed and pulse of each piece, with players on one side seeming to wait until they had heard the sound from the other side, so that the two sides of the orchestra were frequently out of synch. There seemed to be a curious element of aggression in much of their playing too, producing a forced tone from the harpsichord and intonation problems from the strings.

A Festival Jury (of which I have been honoured to have been a member for the past two years) awards three prizes each year. This year the Ivan Lukačić Prize, for the highest interpretational achievement of an ensemble, went to the young Croatian members of Trio Symblema. The Jurica Murai Prize, for the best interpretation of Bach, went to the Trio's keyboard player, Pavao Mašić, for his organ recital. Pavao Mašić also won the Kantor Prize, given by a Croatian daily newspaper for the best interpretation of a work by JS Bach, with particular reference to his performance of the *Canonic Variations on Von Himmel Hoch*. It was particularly gratifying that the three prizes were awarded to Croatian performers, although it is worth noting that all three have spent a good proportion of their studying in Western Europe and have therefore had the chance to absorb the thinking on period performance that has developed over the past 40 years or more.

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### DIAL M FOR ???

Hugh Keyte

Dial 'M' for...Madrigal, Mannerist, Monteverdi and Misunderstood (I. fagiolini, Robert Hollingworth, Cadogan Hall, 17 November 2010)

OK, so we all know that Weelkes downed the odd drink. But did he really urinate on the head of the Dean of Chichester? During Evensong? From the organ loft? I have given scant credence to such tales ever since one of my university tutors confided that his first action on being appointed college organist had been to replace the pedalboard, which the incontinence of his aged predecessor had left in soggy decay – splashdown was usually mid-Magnificat, he chortled. All complete invention, as I later discovered from a New College lay-clerk who had sung under both men at the college in question.

But the Weelkes story, true or false, was one of many lighter touches in the intersectional chats with which Robert Hollingworth held the attention of the audience at this enjoyable *a cappella* concert. I was fascinated by the way his genial expositions both supplemented and overlapped with the already quite detailed notes in the programme book.<sup>4</sup> An odd idea, in theory, but with the right presenter it can be a positive factor, reinforcing hastily-perused programme notes, signposting those who haven't read them and allowing the singers respite.<sup>5</sup> And then there's the element of personal contact with the audience. Many of those in the well-filled Cadogan Hall

were clearly regulars who felt a direct connection with the Italian Beanz that must partly have stemmed from this kind of unpretentious expository address from their singer-director.

'I have simply chosen some of my favourite pieces that always work well for an audience,' was Hollingworth's disingenuous claim in the programme book, but a deal of hard thought must have gone into the planning. Part One consisted mostly of madrigals by German and English composers. Weepies predominated, though the culmination was that perennial favourite, Weelkes's *As Vesta was*. This was the one item that hung fire a little, to my ear, and I often wonder whether some of the larger-scale *Oriana* madrigals – and, for that matter, substantial six-parters like Weelkes's *Noel, adieu thou court's delight* that preceded it – were designed for more substantial forces than vocal consort. But I have waited nearly half a century to hear that incomparable lament for Henry Noel, Queen Elizabeth's much-loved entertainments manager, and this did not disappoint.

The bulk of the second half was taken up by a fascinating hybrid that I fagiolini will soon be taking on tour around the country: Wert's 5-madrigal cycle *Qual musico gentil* with intermezzi (in English) commissioned from composer Orlando Gough and librettist Timothy Knapman. Wert sets a five-stanza chunk from Canto 16 of Tasso's *Jerusalemme liberata*, in which the enchantress Armida bids a desolate farewell to the Christian knight Rinaldo, who has been rescued (?) by his comrades from erotic captivity on her magic island. Around this, Knapman has woven his own take on the narrative context, his evocative staccato phrases in calculated contrast with the measured classicism of Tasso's verse. This has inspired an entranced (and entrancing) response from the composer: hair-raisingly challenging for the singers, I imagine, but effortlessly realised. For the composite's first outing, the Wert and Gough were performed separately, leaving us to imagine them intertwined (no insuperable challenge), but tour audiences will hear the work as intended. Such must be the demands on singers required to move constantly between two such contrasted but equally concentrated idioms, that I wondered whether an ideal solution might be to have two separate vocal consorts – if some madrigal-loving Croesus were to step forward with the finance.

The concert ended with three powerfully-realised masterpieces from Monteverdi's fourth book. The second half in particular was an unusually demanding listen for an audience of madrigal-lovers, but they lapped it up. Audiences are, of course, less glibly categorisable than we might imagine. My own settled conviction that aficionados of this specialist repertory must inevitably be alumni of madrigal societies was knocked for six by the enthusiastic middle-aged lady in the seat beside me – she had come to madrigals via singing in a barbershop quartet.

4. Well-honed communication skills are a prerequisite. For every Chris Page or Robert Hollingworth there is an earnest, though often personally engaging, musician whose weighty exegeses between items merely serve as deflationary irritants.

5. Isn't it time that these were routinely available on-line a few days in advance of concerts, together with texts and translations?

## CD REVIEWS

15<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

*Cecus: Alexander Agricola and his contemporaries* Graindelavoix, Björn Schmelzer Glossa GCD P32105 79:08

This CD and its programme notes take us on a remarkable journey through the musical and philosophical milieu of early 16th-century Europe. Björn Schmelzer's exhaustive and innovative exploration of the theme of blindness in its broadest sense is dramatically complemented by Graindelavoix's compelling performances of works by Agricola, Pierre de la Rue, Josquin and others. Those familiar with the group's uncompromising and gritty approach have the pleasure of hearing a wide range of largely unfamiliar material receiving their distinctive treatment, while those who haven't come across them yet will have the chance to experience their radical and not uncontroversial approach to this music. Personally, I found this CD their most compelling so far. I was impressed by the confidence and authority of the improvisatory dimension, enjoyed the musicality and responded to the drama, whilst finding the booklet notes both thought-provoking and profound. Where it is possible to compare Graindelavoix's performances of familiar material with rival accounts, I have to rate the present readings very highly. The frequently recorded *Nymphes des bois*, Josquin's lament on the death of Ockeghem, has rarely been heard to greater effect than here, where it passes beyond a conventional acknowledgement of one composer by another to a genuinely heart-felt response from a great composer to the death of his friend and colleague.

D. James Ross

*Le Chansonnier Cordiforme* The Consort of Musick, Anthony Rooley 164' 06" (3 CDs) (rec 1979) Decca Eloquence 480 1819

This was a landmark recording: the first (and still only) complete recording of a MS from the 1470s, supplemented over a decade later by a modern edition and (in 2008) by a facsimile – amazingly late for a MS whose heart-shape is so familiar an image. The link between these is David Fallows, whose knowledge and understanding of the repertoire and involvement in the recordings must have been a tremendous asset, and I agree with the comment

in his introduction to this reissue: 'most of the performances here seem to me as good as any recorded performance of a 15th-century song even today'. David and I (and the performers) are of the generation that discovered early music around 1970 and were influenced by *Musica Reservata*,\* so we may not be entirely impartial. The recording was before Christopher Page presented his a cappella performances of the repertoire – and I suspect he hadn't developed it then, since he played lute in some of the tracks and I can't imagine that the idea wouldn't have been discussed, since David's original note alludes to problems with instrumentation.

Recent performances of this music tend to be more languorous and make perhaps a little too much of the beauty of sound. It's there in these performances, matching the beauty of the MS itself, but there isn't too much emphasis on it. The singers are Emma Kirkby, Margaret Philpot, John York Skinner, John Elwes and David Thomas – perhaps because of a short singing career and her particular affinity to medieval song, I'd have preferred more contralto than counter-tenor. This is a classic recording, now belatedly available in CD. Music and performance come together so well, and the booklet contains all the material (with notes on each song as well as texts and translations). You don't need to go to a website and fail to find this essential supplement to the auditory experience. CB

A collection of David Fallows's articles on music of this period is reviewed on p. 12

16<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

A. Gabrieli *Keyboard Music* Glen Wilson, hpscd & spinetta 72' 15" Naxos 8.572198 I/12; II/1, 2, 4 & 5; III/1, 9-12; V/1, 2, 9 & 10; VI/1 & 3 pieces from MS.

More often played on organ, Glen Wilson here uses harpsichord and spinetta to bring a high degree of clarity to this varied and attractive collection of keyboard works by the elder Gabrieli. There are extended ricercars, lively canzonas and a capriccio, as well as a couple of madrigal intabulations and toccatas, taken from prints and manuscripts (a few pieces are anonymous in the source). This is clean and closely-recorded playing, on

copies by Donatella Santoliquido of 16th-century instruments which suit the music very well indeed. Wilson's playing is strict and might occasionally have benefitted from more flexibility, but the quality of the music always shines through.

Noel O'Regan

*Lassus Prophetiae Sybillarum; Christmas Motets* Weser-Renaissance, Manfred Cordes cpo 777 468-2 64' 44"

See page 44

*Lassus Lagrime di San Pietro* Studio de Musique Ancienne de Montréal, Christopher Jackson 52:50 ATMA Classique ACD2 2509

This late set of twenty sacred madrigals setting texts by Luigi Tansillo is arguably Lassus's most consummate masterpiece, drawing upon a lifetime of polyphonic composition to produce a flawless, stunningly expressive sequence of music. Set in seven parts, the works are extremely demanding vocally and emotionally, handling as they do the sufferings of St Peter following his denial of Christ. Tansillo's almost forensic verses evoke a detailed and highly expressive response from Lassus, a composer whose manic depression made him identify particularly with the apostle's agony. Christopher Jackson chooses generally rapid tempi, which lend the work a powerful urgency but which occasionally rush through episodes which could do with slower contemplation. The singing, one to a part, is of a very high standard, impeccably tuned and blended and overtly emotional. Lassus published a single Latin motet *Vide homo* along with the madrigals whose text is about Christ's response to the ingratitude of man, providing an appropriate conclusion to the *Lagrime*. This fine performance provides a persuasive account of music which deserves to be more widely known.

D. James Ross

*A portrait of Thomas Tallis* Chapelle du Roi, Alistair Dixon 159' 02" (2 CDs) Regis RRC 2090 (rec 1996-2002)

This is a substantial anthology from the eight discs recorded by the Chapelle between 1996 and 2002. The first disc includes three extensive Marian antiphons, *Ave Dei Patris filius*, *Salve intemerata* and *Gaudie gloriosa*, as well as the extensive *Magnificat* a4. – an hour's worth of

stunning music, with in addition five other pieces. Is it too post-Elgarian of me to want the solid chords of *Sancte Deus* to sound powerful, not Victorian-holy? Disc two has shorter pieces, plus *Spem* and the Lamentations. I'm not sure if the series has worn as well as I hoped, but this is good way of assembling a large swathe of his music in acceptable performances. I haven't reminded myself of *Spem*: there have been so many conversations about the work in our house over the last few months that I suspect I'd be hyper-critical, and anyway I'd rather be involved in live performances. CB

*gyri gyri gaga Lust & Leben in der deutschen Renaissance* Stimmwerck 73'47" Christophorus CHR 77311

Music from the St Emmeram Codex

What impressed me first was that this well-blended ensemble sounded at complete ease with each other as their distinctive voice-parts intertwined and negotiated complex rhythms. Stimmwerck draws together the countertenor Franz Vitzthum, tenors Klaus Wenk and Gerhard Hözle, and bass Marcus Schmidl with guest instrumentalist (mainly lutenist) Christophe Eglhuber. The 27 tracks illustrate in an entertaining way the mingling of popular tunes in single compositions and incorporation of melodies from sacred contexts into secular song. For instance, we are introduced to Ludwig Senfl's *Ach Elslein, liebes Elselein* with most of the narrative sung in soprano-like tones by Franz Vitzthum against the light but rich accompaniment of the tenors and bass. The quodlibet by Mathias Greiter then intersperses texts and melodies from four tunes well known in their time – *Wann ander Leut liegen, Es taget vor dem Walde, Elslein, liebes Elselein mein* and *Greiner Zanner* – among the four voices to be sung against each other, a feat elegantly achieved here.

For both relaxation and analytical listening this is a beautifully made recording. Scholarship is abundantly present but not paraded. There are notes in German, English and French which draw attention to a few interesting aspects. The lyrics in the German of their time are occasionally annotated with modern German, but politeness has left their peasantlike flavour untranslated. The mischievous 'I'll show you mine' cover, perhaps best stored spine outwards, should not be allowed to detract from a musical treat.

Diana Maynard

*Masters of the English Renaissance* Choir of Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford, Stephen Darlington 70' 45"

Regis RRC 1320

Dering, Gibbons, Mason, Parsons, Sheppard, Taverner Weelkes

This 2992 recording avoids much of the most popular repertoire; Taverner's *Kyrie le Roy* and *Ave Dei Patris filia* may be his best known pieces, but they are not normal church-choir fodder, nor are the *Mag* and *Nunc* of Weelkes' Ninth Service. Better known are Parsons' *Ave Maria*, Weelkes' *Alleluia I Heard a voice*, Deering's *Factum est silentium* and Gibbons' *Hosanna to the Son of David*. I'll leave the rest as a surprise. The disc is a good mixture, well sung without sounding too precious. CB

#### 17<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

*Blow An Ode on the Death of Mr Henry Purcell* Purcell Songs Ricercar Consort, Philippe Pierlot 58' 00" Mirare MIR 109

I'd forgotten what a fine piece Blow's memorial to his friend, pupil and colleague is until I began to play this disc. Here it is given a strong performance by a pair of the most virile counter-tenors (Carlos Mena & Damien Guillon) I have heard for some while. Their singing is complemented by beautiful recorder playing from Kees Boeke and Gaëlle Lecoq and discreet continuo support, the whole ensemble providing 22 minutes of extremely agreeable listening. The eleven pieces of Purcell that then follow (three 'symphonies' and eight songs) are scarcely less enjoyable. The recorder and the falsettist are in some ways the emblems of the early music revival. Opinions may vary as to how authentic, if I may be pardoned the word, the latter of these is in the music of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. All I will say is that these performances make a persuasive case. It's such a shame that they are undermined by a number of misprints in the booklet. David Hansell

*Bouteiller Requiem pour Voix d'Hommes* with music by Charpentier, Frémart, Hugard & Le Prince Brossard *Stabat Mater* Le Concert Spirituel, Hervé Niquet Glossa GCD921621 60' 11"

In 1650 Jacques de Gouy described how an ensemble of 'clergy and monks' might nonetheless perform polyphonic music which would normally require dessus and haute-contre singers. For this interesting

disc Hervé Niquet has applied these suggestions to music which such an ensemble might well have found both useful in their devotions and attractive in its own right. Furthermore, he has added to Bouteiller's *Requiem* music by his contemporaries to produce a complete Office of the Dead. The use of low voices with doubling instruments inevitably produces an attractive, rich sonority which suits the essential sobriety of the music. Being hyper-critical, there are moments when the two singers on most of the parts do not achieve an ideal blend or collective intonation but I still strongly recommend this disc for its combination of fine, unknown music and experimental performance practice.

David Hansell

*Buxtehude Opera Omnia XII: Chamber Music 1 - Sonatas from manuscript sources* Catherine Manson, David Rabinovich vln, Jonathan Manson gamba, Ton Koopman hpscd & org, Mike Fentrose lute, Christine Sticher violone 58' 50" Challenge Classics CC72251

The first thing I did when I saw this CD was turn it over – only Ton Koopman is mentioned on the front and, marvellous as his inventive continuo playing is, I don't think that's very respectful to the other musicians. If this isn't an Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra recording, surely they could have come up with a name for the group (even "The Koopman Band" would do!) All that to one side, this is a thoroughly enjoyable recording of Buxtehude's unpublished chamber music. I am forever surprised that so little of it is played in concerts, as it is tuneful, dance-like, and there are some remarkable (dare I even suggest "French") harmonies that cannot fail to enrapture a live audience. The playing of all concerned is first rate, and I can heartily recommend this release to everyone.

BC

*Buxtehude Membra Jesu nostri* Emma Kirkby, Elin Manahan Thomas, Michael Chance, Charles Daniels, Peter Harvey SSATB, Fretwork, The Purcell Quartet 78' 56" Chandos Chaconne CHAN 0775 + BuxWV 69 (Laudate, pueri, Dominum) & Weckmann: *Kommet her zu mir alle*

This is the second recording of this work that I have had to review in which minimal resources are used. My previous experience had rather surprised me – having for so long wanted to hear solo voices in the ensembles, I suddenly realized that unless the blend of the five

chosen voices is absolute, a choral sound is preferable. I was therefore disappointed (mostly in myself, I think) for not especially enjoying the singing on this recording either. The choice of fillers (generous in itself, since most artists are content to consider the disc full with 65 minutes of music) was a similar surprise – instead of unearthing a festive Easter cantata, perhaps with trumpets, if not by Buxtehude, then by a contemporary, the Purcells opt for a setting of *Laudate, pueri, Dominum* by Buxtehude for two sopranos and a consort of viols, and Matthias Weckmann's *Kommet her zu mir alle* – a great showpiece for Peter Harvey's glorious voice, but slightly out of kilter with the rest of the programme. BC

Buxtehude *Membra Jesu Nostri* The Sixteen 61' 23" Coro 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

Cristofaro Caresana *Cantate Napoletane* I Turchini dir Antonio Florio 68' 52" Glossa GCD 922601

We need a 'silly pluckers' phrase for musicologically questionable percussionists. From time to time they are out in force here but did not prevent my enjoying an exceptionally interesting disc. The music dates from the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The programme includes three dramatic cantatas for the Christmas season, one in honour of Naples's patron saint and two fine sonatas (by Pietro Andrea Zani). These are at least equal in interest to the vocal music. Caresana (c1640-1709), Venetian by birth, became a leading figure in the musical life of his adopted city, composing sacred music and operas for his virtuoso colleagues. The performers, who have been responsible for unearthing this music, clearly believe in its worth and project it in interpretations which fizz with life. I'd never heard of Caresana before this disc

arrived, but it will now earn a place on my 'seasonal listening' shelf, despite the percussion. David Hansell

Charpentier & Tabart Choeur de Namur, Ensemble Jacques Moderne, Ensemble La Fenice, Jean Tubéry 130' 45" (2 CDs) Virgin Veritas X2 5099 6 28503 2 2 Charpentier *Messe & Motet pour les Trépassés, Miserere des Jésuites* L. Couperin *Carillons de Paris* Roberday *Fugue 8' et caprice* II: Grigny *Cromorne en taille à 2 parties Raison Offerte du 5<sup>ton</sup> Tabart Magnificat, Requiem, Te Deum*

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

\*The *raison d'être* for your purchase? [CB]

Charpentier *David et Jonathas* Pinchgut Opera: Anders J. Dahlin *David*, Sara Macliver *Jonathas*, Dean Robinson *Saul*, Cantillation, Orchestrea of the Antipodes, Antony Walker 120' 16" (2 CDs) ABC Classics ABC 476 3691

This performance of Charpentier's epic was recorded live in 2008. The first performance was intertwined with a five-act Latin play on the subject of Saul: Jesuit patrons clearly liked their moral improvement in large helpings. The work shows a brilliant grasp of large-scale structural issues and imaginative use of both vocal and instrumental colour. Being really picky over details I doubt that the first performance was tuned to Werckmeister 3 or included a violone – though since the work enjoyed regular performances for 40 years after the composer's death the music will have heard the instrument before, so to speak. Getting this production off the ground was a real labour of love and the musical felicities are numerous. One or two of the soloists have the odd shaky moment but overall this has to be a case of congratulations to all concerned.

David Hansell

Cozzolani *Complete Works* vol. 1: *Salmi a Ottio Voci Concertati*, 1650 Magnificat, Warren Stewart 144' 19" (2 CDs) Musica Omnia 0401 (rec 2000-2002)

Expansive settings of the opening office response *Domine ad adiuvandum me festina* are not all that thick on the ground. Sister Chiara Margarita Cozzolani's is 2'28" long, and must have tipped the wink to a Vespers congregation at the Milanese convent of Saint Radegonda that this would be no truncated celebration. Her Vesper settings are richly expansive and varied, and call for considerable virtuosity of the kind for which her convent singers were feted. She can hardly have been the wilting-violet type of nun, for her *Dixit Dominus* relishes the psalmist's blood-thirsty ravings with notable enthusiasm. Warren Stewart perhaps overdoes the vigour, which becomes a little wearying after a while. Heard on disc, the highest register can sound a bit shrill, though at the live concert of Cozzolani by Magnificat CB heard in California in June, this was not a problem. The edition, incidentally, was published in the normal SATB clefs; Magnificat try various ways of making it suitable for ladies. CB/HK

Dering *Motets* Choir of Clare College Cambridge, Timothy Brown 57' 06" Regis RRC1355 (reissue)

Unlike the two Regis reissues reviewed above, the origin of this recording isn't stated: probably Gamut from the mid-1990s. None of them have texts and translations or much about the music. I think my taste must have developed since then: I'm more aware of a lack of text-driven intensity and it seems a bit polite. But recordings of Dering are rare enough for this to be worth getting if you don't have it already. CB

Frescobaldi *Complete published works for keyboard* 12 CDs in box Tactus TC 580600

This monumental collection, begun 20 years ago, deserves several pages of discussion. But the essential point can be made more briefly. Whatever one may think of particular instruments and performers, this is an invaluable resource for study of a composer whose status tends to be forgotten by all except keyboard players. Frescobaldi's keyboard music is as significant for Italy as Sweelinck's for North Germany, but Frescobaldi also influenced transalpine Europe whereas

Sweelinck wasn't known south of the Alps. It deserves to be known by musicians who are not keyboard players or don't have access to suitable instruments. Five organs in Bologna that existed in the time of Frescobaldi are used, plus a 1657 one in Ferrara (full details are in the booklet). I'm a bit suspicious about the 1939 copy of a 17th-century harpsichord, but it is acceptable. The players are Francesco Tasini (who also contributes the excellent booklet notes in Italian and English) and Sergio Vartolo, with Roberto Loreggian playing the 1645 posthumous *Canzoni alla francese* on a brighter harpsichord and spinet.

How do you use these twelve discs? Probably not for continuous listening. What I've been doing is having them as background at my desk or in the car for short journeys; some pieces are ignored, others strike the ear or mind and I go back to them later, then perhaps listen to the following piece or two. Don't overdo it and feel that you have to be as systematic and complete as those who created this project. On-line prices work out at less than £5 per disc, so it's a bargain.

CB

Robert Johnson *The Prince's Almain and other Dances for Lute* Nigel North 60' 17" Naxos 8.572178

Two Johns and two Roberts, lutenists all. The Dowlands are better known today, yet the Johnsons were more successful. For many years John Johnson was lutenist to Queen Elizabeth, but John Dowland never managed to win that post at her court. Robert Dowland (John's son) failed to achieve anything like the renown of his father, and his surviving output is minimal. Robert Johnson, on the other hand, became, during the reign of James I, one of the most important musicians in England, and earned a considerable amount of money for his contribution to masques. For the Masque of the Middle Temple and Lincoln's Inn, Robert Johnson earned £45 for "songs and music", while poor John Dowland earned a mere £2 10s od for playing his lute. In his Booklet notes, Nigel North quotes from Thomas Mace's poem in *Musick's Monument* (1676), where the Lute says, "Despair I do: Old Dowland he is Dead; R. Johnson too; Two Famous Men; Great Masters in My art".

Robert Johnson's music for solo lute is in the new baroque style, polarised towards treble and bass, with tuneful melodies and interesting harmonies. He exploited the full range of the instrument from CC on the lowest course right up to

the highest frets. There is considerable variety in texture, from rich, dark chords under a low-lying melody to full, bright notes way up the neck of the instrument. This suits Nigel North's lyrical style, and I have to say that he plays Johnson's music exquisitely, with an extraordinary variety of sound colours, on a 10-course lute by Lars Jönsson.

The CD begins with three popular masque pieces, the Prince's Almain, Masque, and Coranto. There follows the first of four beautiful Pavans. North writes that the surviving divisions of the second Pavan are probably not by Johnson, so he has written his own instead, and very nice they are too. There are 10 Almains, all very different from each other, but all very attractive pieces. There is just one Fantasie, a sombre contrast to the sprightly Lord Strange's Almain two tracks later. The last track, *The Satyr's Dance*, is North's own intabulation. This is all excellent music, with an interpretation which does it justice.

Stewart McCoy

Lully Atys Les Solistes du Marais (Romain Champion Atys, Bénédicte Tauran *Sangaride*, Amaya Dominguez *Cybèle*, Aimery Lefèvre *Célenus* etc, Le Chœur du Marais, La Simphonie du Marais, Hugo Reyne 167' (3 CDs)

Musiques à la Chabotterie 605.008

In a previous life as a member of Les Arts Florissants, Hugo Reyne played in the late 1980s revival of Atys, Lully's fourth opera. From its first performance in 1676 it was more or less permanently in the Paris repertoire until 1753. What would Handel have given for such a sustained run? The recording was originally planned as part of Reyne's extended 'Le musicien du Soleil' series but when the recession pulled the plug on this he still found the necessary support to bring the complex project to fruition. One can forgive him the rather self-indulgent 'how we did it' account in the booklet.

Atys is in the full prologue and five acts form of the 'tragédie mise en musique', but I can honestly say that they flew by. Even Lully might have accepted the crisp ensemble of the orchestra, the alert choir, and the unfailing commitment of the soloists. It is a hallmark of Reyne's performances that there are no highlights, just sustained quality, and the pacing is superb. His various decisions with regard to scoring and ornamentation (very little) are justified historically and vindicated in performance. If you've always wondered

whether or not the fuss made about Lully's operas is justified treat yourself to this, and wonder no more. David Hansell

Monteverdi *Selva morale e spirituale* Volume 1 The Sixteen, Harry Christophers Coro COR16087 66' 46"  
*Beatus vir I*, *Chi vol che m'innamori*, *Confitebor III*, *Deus tuorum militum*, *Dixit II*, *Gloria a7*, *Laudate Dominum I*, *Laudate pueri I*, *Salve regina &*, *Voi ch'ascoltate*

This opens with the well-known *Beatus vir*, taken at a rollicking speed, which makes sense of the speed relationships, but barely gives the listener time to take in the fact that this is a song of worship. I have huge admiration for the sopranos, Grace Davidson and Elin Manahan Thomas, but here they use so much vibrato that the integrity of the line is compromised. Moreover, many notes are just under pitch until the vibrato is switched on – an infuriating habit. The tenors are fabulous, but the basses tend to sound bluff and unblended. The interpretation is highly virtuosic and clever, but seems to lack any real feeling. It demonstrates that The Sixteen can sing consort music, but I can't help feeling that they should stick to real choral music, which they sing superbly, as demonstrated in their Choral Pilgrimages. In any case it seems odd to record under the name 'The Sixteen' using just eight singers. The texts in the booklet differ frequently from those sung, and the diction differs considerably from one singer to the next.

In spite of my misgivings, this CD presents some great repertoire which is lacking from the incomparable 1981 recording by The Parley of Instruments, notably two 'sacred' madrigals from the *Selva morale* collection, *Voi ch'ascoltate* and *Chi vol che m'innamori*. The latter tests Mark Dobell's high tenor range to the limit, and lurches dramatically between secular and sacred styles. The two sopranos are much more at home in the expressive *Salve Regina* than in the more metrical music. The instrumental ensemble is lively and inventive, and Frances Kelly's harp playing is a great asset. Alastair Ross plays the 'harpsichord' (sic) with little sign of inebriation. The *Dixit Dominus* is a flamboyant show-piece which makes me want to cheer, though again the tempo is terrifyingly fast. The composition is pure genius, and the singers relish the juxtaposition of contrasting styles for each section of the psalm, such as madly repeated and

overlapping out-of-time phrases in verse 4, followed by the block chords of *Juravit Dominus*.  
Selene Mills

Pachelbel *Clavier Music Vol 2* Franz Raml organ and harpsichord (1732 Silbermann organ, Petrikirche, Freiberg, harpsichord after JB Guisti)

MDG 814 1553-2

The repertoire created by Southern German composers was not as complex as that of their Northern cousins, not least because of the different religious requirements, and the tendency of English organists is to view Pachelbel's music as light and frothy and rather inconsequential. So it is refreshing to hear his music performed on a substantial organ with a full sound. After an initial concern with the slightly mannered articulation of the pedal solo of the opening *Praeludium*, I found the rest of the playing stylish and refreshing. The *Alleluie* is played using some ornaments found in a London manuscript and are likely to be far from those that Pachelbel might have used. The Suite in F is played on the harpsichord, along with the F major *Ciaconna*. Andrew Benson-Wilson

Petersen *Speelstukken Stylus Phantasticus in the Low Countries* B'Rock XS 57' 38"  
Et'cetera Klara KTC 4032  
Also has pieces by van Steenwyck & anon.

When anyone mentions *stylus phantasticus*, I tend to think of composers like Buxtehude and Biber. Of course, it was a widespread style of playing and composing, throwing off the rigour of four bar phrases, and just letting the imagination take flight. David Petersen, about whom little is known, published his set of virtuoso violin pieces some six years after the appearance of Walther's *Scherzi*, and there is a clear correlation between the sets. Rodolfo Richter is the violinist (more than ably accompanied by gamba, violone, theorbo and cembalo) in these wonderful renditions – Richter is a familiar face in many of the leading English bands, but we get precious few opportunities to enjoy such an extended solo recital. Besides the six *Speelstukken* (nos. 1, 2, 4, 5, 7 and 10), there are two anonymous keyboard pieces and another called *Tricabyle* by the slightly earlier and not-too-long-lived Gijsbert van Steenwick. For the most unexpected sound of the disc, though, head straight for Track 8 – the opening is pure delight. BC

Purcell *The Fairy Queen* Lucy Crowe, Carolyn Sampson, Ed Lyon, Andrew Foster-Williams, Sally Dexter, Joseph Milson, Desmond Barrit, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Glyndebourne Chorus, William Christie 230' (2 DVDs) Opus Arte OA 1031 D

Purcell's dramatic music (apart from *Dido*) is so seldom encountered in anything like its intended context that almost any opportunity to experience it thus is to be welcomed. This production – essentially the original Shakespearean rewrite with Purcell's masques and other music – was much lauded as a theatrical experience and the DVD has also been warmly received by reviewers. It's easy to see why. Like most Glyndebourne presentations it looks and sounds beautiful in so many ways and the presence of William Christie and OAE in the pit guarantee smooth integration of music and on-stage action. However, I remain a member of what may well be the small minority of those who would love to see a production that is HIP in all ways – if only simply to find out what the experience is like. In this performance I do find that the choreography jars against the music and that the dress, antics, props and sometimes the vocabulary of the mechanicals place them not so much in a contrasting world as a distant galaxy. But that's just me. You'll probably love it, but if I'm completely honest I didn't, excellent though the purely musical elements are. David Hansell

Purcell *Love Songs* Dorothee Mields. Lautten Compagney Berlin, Wolfgang Katschner 76' 32" Carus 83.435

I feel a bit sorry for Dorothee Mields. 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 instrumentations 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

A. Scarlatti *Vespro della Beata Vergine Nederlands Kamerkoor, Harry van der Kamp 59' 48"* ATMA Classique ACD2 2533

'Whether they [the psalms] once belonged to a complete cycle [...] must unfortunately remain in the realm of speculation' the notes inform us. In fact little speculation is needed, since it is almost certain that this Marian Vespers was not designed as an entity. Despite the booklet's rubric 'Vespers for five voices and basso continuo', only *Dixit*, *Laudate pueri* and the *Magnificat* are scored for 5 voices (SSATB). They are also stylistically quite different from the remaining psalms and the exceptionally lovely working of the hymn *Ave Maris Stella*, being extended settings employing an alternation of rapid, largely syllabic polyphony and lavishly decorated contrasting solo arioso in the modern style. The remaining psalms are brief *stile antico* works, probably intended to be performed *a cappella*, but here given with continuo. And if you think the violin credited on the box is an unlikely basso continuo instrument, you're of course right – it's a misprint for 'violone'. Moreover both box and booklet render Ps 126/7 as *Nisi Dominus redificaverit* rather than *aedificaverit*. Rather more care seems to have been taken with the performances than the presentation, although I would personally prefer to hear this music sung one-to-a-part. The Netherlands Chamber Choir has long been a thoroughly accomplished body and van der Kamp is highly experienced in this repertoire as a singer himself, though rather more shaping and nuance in the quicker contrapuntal music would not have come amiss.

Brian Robins

A. Scarlatti *Complete Keyboard Works Vol. 2* Alexander Weimann organ (1993 Wilhelm chancel organ, Eglise Très-Saint-Rédempteur, Montréal) (2 CDs) ATMA Classique ACD2 2528

You get a lot of bounce for your buck with Alessandro Scarlatti, and the fleet-fingered playing of Alexander Weimann is well up to the task. A double CD of such lively stuff might be a bit hard going, but the shortish pieces are sensibly grouped together into well-balanced suites and there are sufficient gentler moments to counter the fizz. Although

very little information is given about the organ, it sounds very Italian in its voicing and pipe speech, with a vocal Principale stop, sparkling upperwork, and the colour stops expected of an Italian organ of the late 17th century. And judging by Weimann's neat articulation, the action is suitably sensitive for this repertoire. He gives a very convincing performance of the Toccata Arpeggio in G, a work relying on the improvisatory skills of the player in interpreting the chords marked arpeggio. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

**Gregorio Strozzi Capricci da sonar Op. IV** Elena Sartori org & hpscd (1726 organ, Basilica di S. Bernardino, L'Aquila)  
Tactus TC 614401 77' 45"

I hope any descendants who might be reading this don't mind if I suggest that Gregorio Strozzi's keyboard music is really rather odd. Published in 1687, a year before the apparent date of his death, the pieces probably date back several decades and have 'Naples' written all over them. Crashing through the normal barriers imposed by the meantone tuning of instruments of his time, he merrily includes mutually exclusive G sharps and A flats in the same piece, and relishes the melodic and harmonic clashes that such accidentals produce. He seems to owe allegiance to most of his Italian predecessors, not least Frescobaldi in the concluding *Toccata di Passagagli*, with its string of interconnected trills, not unrelated to the master's *Cento Partite*. The organ is a bit later than Strozzi would have known, and can sound rather brittle at full volume. I also have a few minor interpretation issues, so listen before you buy. A few of the pieces are also available on compilation CDs, if you don't think you can face 78 minutes of Strozzi. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

**Ach Swea Trohn: Festival Music from the Düben Collection** Göteborg Baroque, Magnus Kjellson 68' 14"  
Footprint FRCD053

Music by Buxtehude, Geist, Meder, Tunder & anon.

**Düben Delights for soprano Anna Jobrant**, Düben United 51' 35"  
Footprint FRCD049

Music by Albrici, Bütner, von Gnessel, Hanff, Pfleger, Philetari & Theile

These two CDs are the fruits of an ongoing exploration of the wonderful Düben Collection at the University of Uppsala. *Ach Swea Trohn* focusses on the music that was written for Swedish court

festivities and, alongside music by Buxtehude, Geist, Tunder and Meder there are five anonymous works. I raved about Göteborg Baroque's Buxtehude disc last year, and this marvellous recording can only enhance their reputation among the leading performers of 17th-century music. There are two anonymous instrumental works in the programme (a passacaglia for solo violin and a sonata a5 which is basically an accompanied solo violin sonata), but it is the vocal works that deserve most praise – the singing is radiant, the instrumental playing second to none, and overall this is a disc that everyone interested in this repertoire will love. *Düben Delights* features one of Göteborg Baroque's stars, the soprano Anna Jobrant, and a group of string players and continuo. One of the particular "delights" of the programme is the fact that not one of the pieces has been recorded before – indeed, several of the composers are probably new to the catalogue. It is interesting, too, that most of the solo motets last for around six minutes or more, so they are substantial pieces. Jobrant's agile voice is beautifully supported by Düben Limited throughout – this is music making of the very highest order. I recommend both these wonderful CDs very highly. *BC*

**Baroque Christmas in Hamburg** Bremer Barock Consort, Manfred Cordes 72' 18"  
cpo 777 553-2  
Music by Bernhard, Förlsch, Hieronymus & Jacob Praetorius, Scheidemann, Scheidt, Selle & Weckmann

This CD features students of the Bremen Musikhochschule's early music school (and some helpers – apparently there was a shortage of altos this year), and is a remarkable testament both to the work that goes on there and to the breadth of repertoire to which students there are exposed. Among the ensemble pieces are four organ works played by three students; I am no expert on the organ so, although I can hear differences in playing styles, it is difficult to say whether these are peculiar to the individuals or if these are general stylistic matters. The programme features music that has definite Hamburg connections – it must have been a lovely place to be at Christmas time. I especially enjoyed the violin playing, and the two pieces by Christoph Bernhard – this student of Schütz definitely deserves to be better known. Although it perhaps lacks an outstanding work that will become a

Christmas "hit", there is much to enjoy here while wrapping presents. *BC*

**The Cozens Lute Book** Anthony Rooley  
Decca Eloquence 480 2300 43' 51"  
Bacheler, Danyel, Dowland, Hollis, Laurencini, Robinson, Romani, Thomas Smythe & Anon

Anthony Rooley's recording of music from the so-called Cozens Lute Book (Cambridge University Library, Add. MS 3056) was first issued 35 years ago, time enough for him to forget, in his introduction to the re-issue, that the Mynshall lute book was once owned by Robert Spencer, not the British Library. He was probably thinking of the Hirsch lute book.

The Cozens MS contains 69 pieces for lute, some of them in unusually florid versions. Anthony Rooley has selected 14 of them, giving an interesting and varied programme. He begins with three popular English tunes: a sedate *Mall Symms*, a brisk *Spanish Pavan* with a discussion into triplas, and a mutilated *John Come Kiss Me Now*. (He omits half of it, and even turns some duple-time notes into triplets.) He takes the liberty of adding ornaments and playing a number of divisions which were not in the original. Improvising ornaments seems fair game to me, because they were often left to the player and not always carefully notated. Adding divisions and making unnecessary alterations, on the other hand, is a bit naughty, because it then ceases to be a performance of the Cozens versions.

There are three pieces by John Dowland, *Fancy* [Poulton no 5], *Lachrimae Pavan* and the *Frogg Galliard*. Again, Rooley is tempted to deviate from the Cozens text. The divisions of *Lachrimae* are quite unlike any others I have seen, and are fancy enough without the need for further embellishment. Not all the notes of *Lachrimae* are played in time, which seems due to carelessness rather than deliberately adding rubato for the sake of expression. The last dotted crotchet of the piece, for example, is cut horribly short.

There follow some less familiar pieces: a wonderful Pavan and Galliard by Daniel Bacheler, the sixth anonymous Preludium taken from a group of 14 in the MS, a lively Fantasia by Laurencini, and a virtuosic *Exercitium* by the so-called Equitis Romani [who seems to exist only in the genitive CB]. Less energetic, and nicely played, are John Danyel's lovely variations on *The Leaves be Green* for Anne Greene (pun intended). The CD ends with an anonymous Pavan, a couple of Galliards (the second without repeats) by

the enigmatic T.S., and last, but by no means least, *John Blundeville's Last Farewell* by W. Hollis.

Stewart McCoy

**Chaconne** Rinaldo Alessandrini 73'  
naïve OP 30468  
Cabanelles, Couperin, Dagincour, Fischer, Forqueray, Frescobaldi, Handel, Kerll, Ligeti, Muffat, Purcell, Storace & Alessandrini

Alongside his extremely successful career as a director, Alessandrini is clearly an excellent harpsichordist, bringing the same sense of style and pace to these pieces as he does to his vocal and other recordings. There are perhaps too many chaconnes/passacaglias for one CD, but the comparisons across the nations are intriguing. I was particularly impressed with his playing of the Frescobaldi *Cento Partite* and of Muffat's *Passacaglia*. While the Ligeti *Passacaglia ungherese* is a bit dissonant in this company it is a carefully-constructed piece. Alessandrini adds a whimsical and somewhat nostalgic chaconne of his own composition. There is no information about the Italian harpsichord used; it is well-recorded and suits this music very well. *Noel O'Regan*

**Dialogues of Sorrow: Passions on the Death of Prince Henry (1612)** Gallicantus, Elizabeth Kenny lute, Gabriel Crouch dir.  
Signum Classics SIGCD210 70' 46"  
Coprario, Cranford, Dering, Ford, Ramsey, Tomkins, Vautour, Ward & Weelkes

The death of the eldest son of James I and Queen Anne in 1612 gives rise to one of the great what-ifs of British history. Groomed for kingship, this dynamic young man had inherited the sharp wits of his father and seemed about to usher in a golden age of glamorous rule. When circumstances abruptly replaced him with his inadequate and overshadowed younger brother, the Stuart dynasty suffered a mortal blow. It is only appropriate that the many laments written to mark the occasion go far beyond the merely conventional to the genuinely moving. The Jacobean Court had assembled some of the best musicians and poets in Europe, and now they set about marking this royal tragedy with rich inventiveness and great skill. Amongst the finest contributions to this generous selection, beautifully and expressively sung by Gallicantus, are interestingly those by the least celebrated composers. An exquisite madrigal by William Cranford exploits false relations to create an impassioned response to the death, while John Cop-

ratio's seven-movement *Songs of Mourning* is represented by four particularly fine pieces. Composers such as Thomas Weelkes and Thomas Tomkins, who a decade earlier had been celebrating the triumphs of Oriana, turned their hand equally impressively to works of lamentation for Prince Henry and a rash of stunning treatments of David's laments for Jonathan and for Absalom also strove to capture the prevailing mood. This cleverly compiled and beautifully executed CD paints a very full picture of the wealth of musical responses to the tragic death of the young prince.

D. James Ross

**Lamenti – furore e dolore** Mareike Morris, Hannoversche Hofkapelle 58' 23'  
Genuin classics GEN 10176  
Arias by Gluck, Handel, Monteverdi, Purcell & Vivaldi

This is an enjoyable recital by a gifted dramatic singer, but not a recording of choice for the discerning reader of EMR. Morris's voice is mature, confident and rounded, displaying many colours. She is thoroughly familiar with her chosen repertoire, but there is a lack of spontaneity in the performance: the texts (particularly in the Monteverdi) seem learned by rote, and delivered in a somewhat formulaic way. Her English is heavily accented: as usual with Germans, it is the 'a' sound which eludes her; perhaps this is appropriate in Handel, but not in Purcell: *Thy hand, Belinda* is just not good enough! Her pronunciation of Italian is clumsy. In the extract from *Aci, Galatea e Polifemo* she fails to reach all the notes in the rapid passages.

The accompaniments are sensitive, but not especially inventive. The wind players in the Gluck are not acknowledged, though their playing in *Che puro ciel* is delightful, conjuring the questing mood of Orpheus as he vainly seeks his beloved. The introduction to Dido's dirge reveals the shortcomings in the players' understanding of the repertoire.

What is surprising and unforgivable is the omission of the chromatic rise in the famous refrain *Lasciate mi morire* in Monteverdi's *Lamento d'Arianna*. Since this occurs twice it cannot be seen as 'interpretation': it seems extraordinary that no one pointed out the error. [Arianna's chromatic inflection is unequivocal in the five-voice version, but not in all sources of the monody: but it's still an error! CB] There is a similar mistake in the recitative of the Purcell. One can imagine Morris being an excellent opera actress, and she

really gets into character in *Where shall I fly?* from Handel's *Heracles*, but her venture into Baroque repertoire is not hugely successful.

Selene Mills

**Musical Humors & Lamentations** L'Art du Bois (Mirko Arnone lute, theorbo, percussion, Maria Ferré lute, ren & bar guitar, theorbo, Verena Füllerer & Margaret Görner rec, Lena Hanisch rec & traverso, Judith Sartor gamba) 59'30"  
Et'cetera KTC 1418

Blow, Corbetta, Dowland, van Eyck, Holborne, Hume, Matteis, Purcell, Robinson, Simpson & masque dances

It's quite rare these days to get a CD of short pieces from the 17th centuries played on a variety of instruments, and this one is a welcome addition to the genre. All the composers represented here worked in England or used English tunes as basis for their arrangements and the pieces have been chosen in relation to the idea of *affekt*, or the musical humours referred to in the title, a subject which Ingo Müller writes about at length in the notes. The result is a varied programme of divisions and dances, lively, beautiful or melancholy, some for solo instruments and others for small consorts, all very well played by the members of L'Art du Bois. Thought has obviously gone into the order of the pieces, which is more or less chronological but arranged so that they follow each other after a short gap in a way which is comfortable for the listener, and I have certainly enjoyed listening to this recording. *Victoria Helby*

**Die Norddeutsche Orgelkunst Vol.1:**  
Lübeck Stellwagen-Orgel (1659) St. Marien  
Stralsund, Vol. 1, Martin Rost 65' 52"  
MDG Gold 320 1624-2  
J. S. Bach, Bruhns, Buxtehude, P. Hasse,  
Schiefferdecker & Tunder

This is a welcome introduction to the organist/composers of the Marienkirche in Lübeck before, during and after Buxtehude's tenure. It starts with two predecessors, Tunder and Peter Hasse and moves via Buxtehude to the man who eventually married his daughter, one Johann Schiefferdecker, before a diversion into JS Bach (who might have) and Nicolaus Bruhns, a pupil of Buxtehude. The importance of the Stralsund organ is that it is the finest surviving large-scale organ by Stellwagen, and a much more imposing instrument than the small Stellwagen organ surviving today in Lübeck's Jakobikirche. A recent scholarly

restoration has returned it to its 1659 state. Unusually for German organs, the case pipes survived both World Wars. The 51 speaking stops include a wide range of colour stops as well as a magnificent series of *pleno* choruses. To add to the aural splendour, the CD opens with the tinkle of the Calcant's bell and a 12 second extract of the noise of the bellows inflating. Rost plays with musical conviction and compelling style. Strongly recommended. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

*Tapas: Tastes of the Baroque* Australian Brandenburg Orchestra, Paul Dyer (TT) ABC Classics 476 3828  
Cazzati, Falconieri, Ferrari, Hidalgo, Kapsberger, Laurenti, Merula, Monteverdi, etc

This is a fine example of the ground repertoire growing out of the baroque and becoming a modern genre of its own, as developed by Andrew Laurence-King, Stephen Stubbs and Erin Headley, and Christina Pluhar. Composed works and improvisation merge, as no doubt happened in the early 17th-century; but the style of playing has a freedom that goes beyond the licence of the historically informed, yet is done in a way that feels like an extension of it. Hispanic-American links are close, returning to the source of some of the grounds. Some may hate it, and it does wear a bit thin after a while. But enjoy the enormous vitality and the play between players and the music.

I'm not sure whether this paragraph belongs here or on p. 39. Franco Fagioli's version of Monteverdi's simplest song *Si dolce è'l tormento* left me wondering why it sounded utterly wrong: Mina Kanaridis and her free accompaniment stopped me in my tracks (or rather from moving the headings of discs for which reviews haven't arrived – though I did replay that track immediately). These harmonic basses must have meant even more when they were new, but they still allow the performer to move from virtuosity to powerful emotion in a second.

My only complaint: the excess amount of small white or red print on black in the booklet: the designer should be sentenced to reading a chapter of *Scarlet and Black* every day until he promises not to do it again!

CB

*Violino o Cornetto: Seventeenth-century Italian solo sonatas* Theresa Caudle, Canzona 73'34" Nimbus Alliance LC 5871  
Castello, Cazzati, Cima, Corelli, Fontana, Frescobaldi, Marini, Stradella & Uccellini

As a player of both violin and cornetto, Theresa Caudle is a modern example of a practice that was once more the norm. She has a great facility on both instruments as they alternate through the programme. The playing is graceful and perhaps a little careful. From Cima to Corelli we span the development of the early baroque, from its more experimental and avant-guard beginnings to the regularised patterns of the mature style. For me there could have been more of a desire to shock and to dig for the kaleidoscoping of odd shapes, feints and interruptions which characterise Fontana and Castello in particular. With the full steady tone and impressive agility that characterised the cornetto playing, I didn't feel that technique was in any way the limiting factor. There was more panache in the violin playing, and still more freedom as the repertoire progressed to the later music. There was some delightful playing, in particular some lovely seamless duetting with brother Mark Caudle on cello. The baroque trick of creating two voices from one line was also convincingly and artfully rendered. In the same toolbag is all that is needed to add the grit to the earlier repertoire.

Stephen Cassidy

#### LATE BAROQUE

*Albinoni: Homage to a Spanish Grande*. Simon Standage vln, Collegium Musicum 90 69'15" Chandos CHAN 0769  
Concertos, Op. 10 Nos. 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 11, 12

Albinoni's Op. 10 concertos, published in the mid-1730s, constitute an extraordinarily varied, inventive and up-to-date collection by the doyen of Venetian instrumental composers (he was born in 1671, before Vivaldi and the Marcello brothers, not to mention Bach and Handel). The idiom is distinctly *galant*, with repeated-quaver basses, occasional sudden shifts to the tonic minor, and complex surface detail including many appoggiaturas and triplet semiquavers. Several of the 'concertos' recorded here have no solo violin passages at all: they are, in fact, 'proto-symphonies' in the same sense as Giuseppe Valentini's pioneering Op. 9 set of 1724 and the G. B. Sammartini pieces from the 1720s and 30s I reviewed in the June 2008 *EMR* – although Albinoni's music is considerably more polished than that of his younger rivals. First movements are in at least an approximation to sonata form, and there

is even a contrasting second subject in No. 1, presented in the dominant but later recapitulated in the tonic. In two others (Nos. 2 and 3) there are occasional solo passages for violin or cello, but only for variation of texture, as a later symphonist might have used wind instruments. However, Nos. 8 and 12 are 'proper' violin concertos in the latest style, full of original ideas and ingeniously varied accompaniment textures, some involving only a pair of violins besides the virtuoso soloist.

As was usual at the time, Op. 10 was published as a set of six part-books, for 'Violino Principale', two more violins, viola, cello and 'Organo', although the suspicion that the latter is really intended for the harpsichord is confirmed by a cue in No. 1 that reads 'Cimbalo Senza Contrabasso' – which also implies that a double bass should share the part in at least this piece. The string parts were certainly intended for single players in the solo concertos, which is indeed how they are played on this disc (with a 'violone' doubling the bass-line at written pitch – an interesting and acceptable solution). In the 'symphonic' works, however, more players are used, mostly with a string band of 4/3/2/2/1 including a 16' bass. It's an ingenious and not implausible idea, so long as one is prepared to accept that Albinoni may have intended different numbers of performers for different pieces in the set – though I think it's stretching things a bit to expect three players each to share the (single) violin 1 and violin 2 parts.

Having had this little grouse, I'm delighted to report that everything is as beautifully and satisfactorily played as one has come to expect from Simon Standage and Collegium Musicum 90. It's very good to have this remarkable and forward-looking music on CD at last, and one can only hope that the other four pieces in the set will follow before too long. Very strongly recommended. *Richard Maunder*

*Albinoni and Vivaldi Oboe Concertos* Paul Goodwin ob, The King's Consort, Robert King, 68'47" Hyperion Helios CDH55349 (rec. 1990)  
Albinoni Op. 9 Nos. 2, 6, 9; Vivaldi RV455, 559, 560; anon. (attrib. Albinoni) for trumpet, three oboes, bassoon and continuo.

In fact there are only two solo oboe concertos on this CD, one each by Albinoni and Vivaldi. We are also given two of Albinoni's concertos for two oboes, and two of Vivaldi's for two oboes and two clarinets (but the other piece

attributed to Albinoni is undoubtedly spurious, being in a style quite unlike his: to my ear it sounds rather Germanic. The recording is twenty years old, but shows little sign of age and is a most welcome reissue. The music is very well played, capturing both Vivaldi's quirkiness and Albinoni's elegance. Three cheers for one-to-a-part strings, too: my only quibble would be that a double bass is automatically included throughout, although it's much more sensitively played than on some recent German recordings. A highly enjoyable disc.

Richard Maunder

**Bach** *Desire Cantates* 39, 49 & 154 Il Gardellino, Marcel Ponseele dir. 67' 26" passacaille 956

The *Desire* angle comes from the cantata texts that Bach set which use the word *Verlangen* and/or refer to Christ as *Liebster Jesu*. I was delighted to hear BWV 32, which I played at the Edinburgh Festival in 1988 (yes, a long time ago!) in my "Fasch Tercentenary" series – I remember my eyes popping out when I opened the music my German soprano friend had sent me! Clearly the solo violinist of Il Gardellino do not have to worry about making streams of demisemiquavers beautiful – indeed, the word can be applied to the entire disk. The singers are very much part of an ensemble, not soloists with accompaniment, and this balance of sound and responsibility works very well. I have listened to this disc more than any other this month, so I suppose it's my recommendation for this issue. BC

**Bach Arias** Teddy Tahu Rhodes bass-baritone, Sara Macliver S, Orchestra of the Antipodes, Antony Walker/Brett Weymark dir 55' 15"

ABC Classics 476 3871

Extracts from BWV8, 39, 73, 82, 140, 192, 244 + Stölzel: *Bist du bei mir*

The publicity material that came with this disc concentrated very much on the voice of Teddy Tahu Rhodes. True, it is a remarkably strong voice across the middle of its range, capable of projecting those low-lying melodies that sometimes catch out lesser singers, and yet with a lightness of touch (without losing focus) for the higher notes. His duet partner, Sara Macliver, is another rising star of the Australian (early) music scene, and she earns a "top rate Bach singer" award from me with the two performances here. The

Orchestra of the Antipodes is no mere accompanying band here, either – they produce a rich sound, and pace their Bach beautifully; the solo playing is wonderful. I had not realised until the last minute that it is, in fact, a compilation of recordings made over six years (which partly explains why there are two conductors), but nothing clears up the mystery of who orchestrated the Stölzel, and why. BC

**Bach Organ works** David Hamilton (1998 Frobenius, Canongate Kirk, Edinburgh) Divine Art DDA25088 75' 39" BWV 552, 564, 572, 582, 622, 645, 678 & 721

Although most EMR readers may prefer their Bach played on historic organs of his time and place, the 1998 Frobenius organ in Edinburgh makes an acceptable vehicle in the UK for his music. And David Hamilton makes a very convincing and musical interpreter and performer in a repertoire that is clearly close to his heart. The relatively close microphone position means that the player's articulation and the pipe speech is very much exposed, with audible initial pipe transients. This is not unusual in organ recordings, but does give a much closer aural perspective that would be the case for an audience in the building. There are one or two interesting performance issues, including playing *Erbarm dich mein, O Herre Gott* on the manuals alone and adding a return to the ritornello section of the opening Toccata after the rather unassuming conclusion of the 'final' fugue in the Toccata ("Adagio and Fugue") BWV 564 – I now forget where this idea first came from but, although it has been around for some years, I haven't heard it on CD before. Whilst these two examples are well-known, I am curious as to the use of strictly rhythmic, and slow, timing for the trills in *O Mensch, bewein*. The recording was made by David Hamilton himself, with Philip Hobbs as the recording engineer and producer, and is packaged and marketed by Divine Arts.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

**Bach Sonatas & Partitas** Sergey Khacharyan 153' (2 CDs) Naïve V5181

Had I known a little more of this violinist's background, I would perhaps not have asked for a review copy of this set, not because there is anything especially wrong with Khacharyan's playing – indeed, he manages to embrace the conventional big sound without ever overwhelming the

music. The basic problem for a listener more in tune with HIP performances of this music is the length of time his bow remains on the string – he shapes Bach's lines (sometimes beautifully, without a doubt) but does not really allow a lot of air around the individual notes. He also has what I think of as an organist's trait – 'if the music has a semibreve, I'm going to sustain that semibreve right to the end.' To be absolutely fair, I can imagine this recording will bring plaudits from the mainstream press, since he is normally to be heard in Prokoviev and Shostakovich, and here they may discern signs of him toning down for Bach – this is not old-style Soviet violin playing, this is music-making of a very high order, even if not what our readers might choose to listen to. BC

**Bach Complete Cello Suites** Roel Dieltiens Et'cetera KTC 1403 144' 04" (2 CDs)

Roel Dieltiens, by his own confession, likes to challenge his audience's expectations. His recording of sonatas by Vivaldi, using all sorts of different accompaniments and interpolating other music, had me reaching for the eject button fairly quickly. Here, though, with only himself for company, his take on Bach's long phrases, combining melody, accompaniment and harmony, is full of insight, energy and passion. He (or the recording company?) opted to put the odd-numbered suites on one CD and nos. 2, 4 and 6 on the other. Some people will be surprised (others perhaps horrified?) that he dares to ornament repeats – sometimes adding mordents and other French-sounding decoration, and sometimes Italianate divisions. Personally, I find the embellishments both stylish and as appropriate for this repertoire as it is elsewhere. Recommended. BC

**Bach Trio Sonatas** Brook Street Band Avie AV2199 68' 56"

There are been several previous recordings devoted to "orchestrated" versions of the six organ trios BWV525-530. The Brook Street Band's approach eschews the great variety of instrumental colours used by the likes of The King's Consort in favour of the standard trio sonata line-up of two violins, cello and continuo. The results of this decision are two-fold: firstly, focus falls once more on the music since the aural palette is constant throughout, which leads to the second – it is actually quite difficult to endure the

entire CD, fabulous as every one of the 18 movements is. That is not to criticize the performances, which are engaging and well played. I just longed for a change of timbre once in a while.

BC

*Family Matters* *musica novantica vienna* (Katharina Kröpfl & Robert Pinkl *traversi*, Wolfgang Rieger *cello*, Erich Traxler *hpscd, fortepiano*) 64' 31"

Gramola 98877

Music by JS, CPE &amp; WF Bach

This CD aims to trace stylistic developments from the second quarter of the eighteenth century until about 1760, and the effect of musical education in the Bach family, as exemplified by sonatas for two flutes and continuo by JSB and three of his sons. The programme starts with BWV 1038, intended for flute and violin, and probably composed by one of J. S. Bach's sons on the bass line of the BWV 1021 violin sonata. This is followed by the trio sonata for two flutes in G major, BWV1039. These are rather solid performances, perhaps to contrast with the later works, and the players seem more at home with the expressive possibilities of the music by Bach's sons. These are the gallant-style *Trio Sonata* in D major F 47 by WFB and the *Trio* in E major Wq 162 of 1749 by CPEB with its varying moods and technical demands. The programme ends with JCB's *Trio* in G major composed around 1760, its classical style made all the more apparent by the use of fortepiano continuo. The notes by Wolfgang Rieger are admirably informative about the instruments used, pitch, temperaments and the sources of the music.

Victoria Helby

*Music for recorder ensemble* Flautando Köln Carus 83.360 56' 11"

Music by JS, JC &amp; WF Bach

Most of the music on this CD, played by the German recorder quartet Flautando Köln, is arranged from keyboard works by J. S. Bach. In the Fantasy and Fugue in C minor BWV 537, which opens the programme on low recorders, the ensemble and intonation are so good that it is hard to believe that one is not listening to a real organ. When the performers use higher instruments and more varied articulation, in the Prelude and Fugue in G BWV 550 for example, the fact that they are playing recorders is more obvious. Two pieces by Bach's sons are inserted into the programme. The Quartet in G op. 19 no. 3 by JCB, originally for two

flutes, viola and cello, works surprisingly well on recorders and adds a welcome change of style, but WF's Bach's Duo in E minor, originally for two traversi, seemed less comfortable, with occasional strained high notes and a tendency to play slightly too fast. In general, the pieces without high instruments are more enjoyable to listen to, but there is an interesting variety of music here.

Victoria Helby

*Caldara in Vienna: Forgotten Castrato Arias* Philippe Jaroussky, Concerto Köln, Emmanuelle Haim 68' 08"

Virgin Classics 50999 641 9272 7

This is the kind of innovative CD that I love. I heard Philippe Jaroussky talking passionately on Radio 3's otherwise mostly useless *Early Music Show* to Catherine Bott about his longing to rediscover the music of a whole host of Italian composers, largely coming from his near omnipresence in the glut of recordings of Vivaldi's operas over the past few years. As I have been saying for many years now, composers like Conti, Caldara, Gasparini, etc., can only really have become famous in their own day if their music had something to impress, and the 15 tracks on this lavishly packaged CD are ample proof of Caldara's gifts. As well as being beautifully illustrated, the book in which we find the disc contains an essay about the composer, and then places each of the extracts in its original context, with translations into three languages. I know he has his detractors, but I am a fan of Jaroussky's singing. Here he gets into character for each of the arias, and there can be no disputing his technical control – Caldara (like Handel and Vivaldi) knew how to write for the voice and show it off to best advantage, so I imagine these arias were a joy to sing. He is very well accompanied by Concerto Köln. If there is one grumble, it is that Jaroussky indulges in his penchant for overly decorated repeats of the first sections – it is often impossible to recall the original line. A matter of personal taste, of course.

BC

*Couperin, Colin de Blamont Concert chez la reine Les Ombres dir Margaux Blanchard & Sylvain Sastre 68'*

Ambroay AMY301

The musical *soirées d'appartement*, such a feature of life at Versailles under Louis XIV, were from 1725 continued under the auspices of his successor's queen, Marie

Lesczynska. This disc invites us to such a *Concert de la Reine* with repertoire known to have been used on these occasions. The items have short announcements in French which do not really intrude, and the text of Rousseau's *Circé* is read before Blamont's setting is sung.

On this occasion the queen's evening begins with Couperin's wonderful *L'Apothéose de Lully*, played with the care and style that it deserves. Dramatic music was also a feature of these events (sometimes a concert version of an opera might be spread over two or three evenings) and here the aptly named Mélodie Ruvio positively flings her rich though controlled mezzo-soprano voice at the woes of *Circé*, portrayed in music that captures every nuance of the libretto. Finally the full instrumental ensemble returns for a set of dances, also by Blamont. All the performances are prepared and presented with care and flair. I just wish they could resist the temptation to change the instrumentation of the dances at every double bar.

David Hansell

*Graupner Frohlocke, werte Christenheit: Christmas cantatas* Winter, Vitzthum, Kobow, Flraig SATB, Das Kleine Konzert, Hermann Max 73' 44"

cpo 777 572-2

2010 is the 250th anniversary of Graupner's death and this is one of several CDs that the enterprising German company cpo has issued to commemorate it. Hermann Max is equally well-known for championing music by the lesser-known figures of the German baroque. Here he has selected five cantatas for the Christmas season from the late 1720s and 1740s, using one-to-a-part vocal ensemble, strings and a wind trio. Within days of its release, a review of this set appeared on a Bach discussion site on the net, pretty much saying "nice music, shame it's not up to Bach's standards". The problem with this kind of "critical" assessment is obvious – why would Graupner have wanted to write music like Bach's? Besides comparing the music of the two composers on paper, we must surely look at the contexts in which they wrote it. Bach was in the service of the town and the church, while Graupner had a demanding employer breathing down his neck. One aspect of the cantatas which the net critic did highlight was Graupner's settings of chorales: rather than present them simply (as if for congregational singing), he dresses them up in dance movements – though without

any of the complications of a Bach chorale fantasy – so, in fact, there would actually be no real problem if the congregation did sing along. Hermann Max and his team are to be heartily congratulated on another exceedingly fine recording of some top-notch music, and cpo also deserve all the accolades they get for continuing to support such projects. BC

The cpo Graupner celebrations are set to continue well into 2011 – Accademia Daniel have just recorded another three discs. BC

**Handel Flavio** Tim Mead *Flavio*, Rosemary Joshua *Emilia*, Iestyn Davies *Guido*, Renata Pokupic *Vitige*, Hilary Summers *Teodata*, Thomas Walker *Ugone*, Andrew Foster-Williams *Lotario*, Early Opera Company, Christian Curnyn 146' 23" (2 CDs)

Chandos CHACONNE CHAN 0773(2)

Flavio is one of the many fine but under-recorded Handel operas. Written for the Royal Academy in the 1720s, it has a daftly complicated plot revolving around the usual love and jealousy. The music is consistently good, despite not having the spectacular moments of other Academy operas such as *Giulio Cesare* or *Rodelinda* (although *Emilia*'s Act II 'Parto si' is exquisite). There is no weak link in Curnyn's cracking cast, and the playing is always polished. Curnyn is still too British about his Handel – he needs to wallow more on occasion (e.g. *Emilia*'s 'Parto si'), and be more spirited or less polished elsewhere – *Ugone*'s 'Fato tiranno' could be fiercer, for example. The recitative is a bit staid sometimes, although there are some nice dramatic exchanges, for example between Flavio and *Teodata* at the beginning of Act II. David Vickers' booklet notes are well-written, and illustrate Handel's constant tinkering with his score right up to the first night. In all, this is a worthy addition to your Handel opera collection. Katie Hawks

**Handel Messiah** Susan Gritton, Cornelia Horak, Richard Croft, Bejun Mehta, Florian Boesch, Arnold Schoenberg Choir, Ensemble Matheus, Jean-Christophe Spinosi, staged by Claus Guth, Theater an der Wien 154'  
unitel classica / C major / ORF  
DVD 703008 (Blue-ray 703104)

Oh dear! Katie Hawks

**Handel Ombra Cara: Arias of George Frideric Handel** Bejun Mehta, Freiburger Barockorchester, Rene Jacobs  
Harmonia Mundi HMC 902077

There is no doubt that Mehta is a very fine countertenor, and this is a disc full of choice arias. If you want a Mehta recital disc, then this will suit you. But Jacobs is mannered and this can be irritating – for example at the start of Ottone's 'Voi che udite' from *Agrippina*. And if you are not a particular Mehta fan, this disc holds little interest. At least the Bostridge 'three tenors' disc (see below) had an idea behind it and is more than a bunch of nice arias. This disc does pretend to an idea – a contrast of light and dark by way of an anthology that might have been sung by a castrato. The booklet notes (by Reinhard Strohm) are full of 'might haves' – Senesino 'could have picked [pieces] up from his predecessors', for example. Well, he could – or not; it's all a bit supposititious! The real ideas behind this disc are vanity and the desire of CD companies to sell names rather than substance. You only have to look at the extra CD included to know this – a film about the making of the CD! Katie Hawks

**Handel in Darmstadt** Geneviève Soly  
hpsc'd 53' 34"  
Analekta AN 2 9121

Interest in recording Handel's keyboard music continues apace, with Geneviève Soly bringing a definite Germanic flair to this recording of Handel pieces found in a Darmstadt MS which was probably copied by Graupner. These are early versions of pieces which were later published, and her selection provides a good variety of genres. She includes an early version of the extended G major Chaconne and three suites, as well as a march by Graupner from which Handel borrowed the theme of an unusual early Sonata in G major, also performed here. Soly plays with verve and sensitivity on a Mietke copy by Matthias Griewich. Her enthusiasm for the music is infectious and the recording can be highly recommended Noel O'Regan

**Hasse Sanctus Petrus et Sancta Maria Magdalena** Kirsten Blaise S.Maria, Heidrun Kordes Maria Jacobi, Vivica Genaux Maria Solome, Terry Wey S. Petrus, Jacek Laszkowski Joseph d'Arimatea, Choir & Orch. of Ludwigsburger Schlossfestspiele, Michael Hofstetter 77' 40"  
Oehms Classics OC 950

Although Johann Hasse's two spells as *maestro di capella* at the Venetian Ospedale degl'Incurabili date from the 1730s, he would maintain connections with the institution for much of his life. *Sanctus Petrus*, the second of two oratorios he wrote for the young women of the Incurabili, is in fact known only from a performance there in 1758, although its composition may go back as far as Hasse's years as *maestro*. Following a tradition of Lenten performances in Venice, the oratorio preceded the singing of the *Miserere*, being closely tied to Hasse's D minor setting of the psalm, also given here. *Sanctus Petrus* follows the popular 18th century format of being a retrospective meditation on the events of the Passion, focussing in particular on the remorse of Mary Magdalene and Peter. Notable is Hasse's highly effective use of accompanied recitative, but on limited acquaintance the work in general does not strike me as representing the composer at his best. That impression may in part be due to a performance that I confess is not much to my taste. Hofstetter belongs to the 'aggressive tendency' breed of conductor; all clipped phrases and trenchantly articulated chords, characteristics that sit uneasily on Hasse's Italianate lyricism. I would, too, have readily traded the prominent theorist for one or two extra fiddles, while it seems perverse to cast male singers in soprano and alto parts in music written entirely for female voices. Otherwise the singing is fine, but overall I don't feel the oratorio has been as well served as it could have been. Brian Robins

**Leclair Pasticcio Barocco** 72' 00"  
Hérissons Prod. LHOI  
Sonatas op 4/1-4; Deuxième Récréation en musique

Leclair (the elder) wrote his Opp. 4 and 8 for two violins and continuo, with flutes offered as an alternative for the melody lines; the *Second Recreation* lists oboes, flutes or violins on its title page. Here the music is played on an ensemble of modern instruments – oboes, with bassoon and double bass and a rather distant harpsichord on the *basso continuo* line. This at times results in a rather heavy bass line and a sound that I associate more with the later 18th century wind divertimento, but the playing does have a sense of style and above all enjoyment. Recommended for its alternative view of a fine composer. David Hansell

Mattheson *Christmas Oratorio, Magnificat a due cori* Kennedy, Eittinger, Post, MacLeod, Crookes, Kölner Akademie, Michael Alexander Willens 55' 20"  
cpo 777 274-2

I have perhaps been a little harsh on Mattheson in the past, but this delightful oratorio dating from 1715 has forced me to reconsider my opinions. The choruses are reminiscent of those in Handel oratorios, homophonic passages alternating with fugal writing, and they are tuneful and well-balanced. Mattheson uses a range of instruments to create a colourful score (one aria is scored for soprano, flute, viola and continuo). The same can be said of the Magnificat, a setting of the German translation. The performances are enjoyable and, although the works may not be long-lost masterpieces, they are surely worthy of revival, and this fine recording can only serve to enhance Mattheson's reputation. BC

Gaetano and Giovanni Meneghetti *Sonate e Concerti per violino* Giovanni Guglielmo, Archicembalo Ensemble, Enrico Zanovello 73' 17"  
Tactus TC 731302

This disc contains six solo violin sonatas (five by Gaetano Meneghetti and the other by his son Giovanni), framed by two ensemble pieces – a sonata a4 by Gaetano, and a violin concerto by Giovanni (perhaps written in the 1770s). In truth, however, the sonata a4 is a modern adaptation of a solo violin sonata. Giovanni Guglielmi is a fine soloist – just listen to the cadenza in the first movement of Giovanni's concerto if you need convincing. The sonatas are nicely varied in their accompaniment, with the occasional good use of a bassoon on the bass line. Nice performances of music by two composers who certainly deserve re-discovery. BC

Pergolesi *Stabat mater, Salve regina, Messa* Concerto Italiano, Rinaldo Alessandrini//Europa galante, Fabio Biondi 196' (3 CDs)  
Naïve 30507

Re-issue of three separate recordings (1995, 1998, 2008)

1. Pergolesi & A. Scarlatti *Stabat mater*
2. Pergolesi & Leo *Salve regina*
3. A. Scarlatti *Christmas mass; Pergolesi Missa Romana*

These three discs are bundled together with their original documentation as a

tercentenary tribute to the Neapolitan maestro. Especially useful is the sense of context they give us. Each couples a Pergolesi work with music which throws his own into relief – the *Stabat Mater* by Alessandro Scarlatti is coupled with its famous replacement, his rather splendid Christmas mass follows Pergolesi's cantata-style *Missa Romana* (both these being Concerto Italiano recordings), and a comparatively bland Europa Galante/Fabio Biondi disc includes a *Salve Regina* by Leonardo Leo with the two by Pergolesi. For all its boldness, inventiveness and risk-taking I found it hard to really enjoy the *Stabat Mater* – perhaps a case of trying too hard to make us reassess a classic. On the other hand the disc of masses was a real revelation. Well worth exploring. David Hansell

Telemann *Lust und Vergnügen* David Walker ob, Fany Maselli bsn Mathieu Pupouy hpscd, Rémi Cassaigne theorbo Valérie Dulac cello 62'23"  
Hérissons Prod. LH03

This is a rather frustrating CD because there is so little information on the cover, and not much more in the booklet, about what these pieces are that are being played so stylishly on modern oboe and bassoon. The recording company's web site is no more informative, but study of the text in the booklet and a little research on the internet reveals that the music includes the Sonata in F minor for bassoon and continuo from *Der getreue Music-Meister* TWV 41:f3, the gamba sonata from *Essercizii Musici* also played on bassoon, Trio 12 for oboe, obbligato harpsichord and continuo in E flat major from the same collection TWV 42:Es3, and a partita from the *Kleine Cammer-Musik* played on the oboe. The title *Joy and Pleasure* is taken from a quotation from Telemann's autobiography where his advice to composers is that "if the performer feels joy, you will feel pleasure", and these are certainly very enjoyable performances, played with attention to style and ornamentation. The quality of the recording sounds very good on my equipment, and though the harpsichord is rather quiet in comparison with the other instruments this only really matters in the trio sonata. Victoria Helby

Vivaldi *Arie per tenore* Topi Lehtipuu, 1 Barocchisti, Diego Fasolis 67' naïve OP30504

This release in the Vivaldi Edition is vol. 47 in the *tesori del piemonte* series but

either vol. 10 of the *opera teatrali* (back cover) or vol. 15 (inside booklet). In either case, it contains arias that were replaced in final versions, hypothetical reconstructions of lost versions (because the solo voice was changed to baritone in subsequent performances) and fragments (where one voice part is played on a "fagottino"). That said, it is essentially a showcase for the fine voice of Australian-born Finnish tenor Topi Lehtipuu – and a cunningly conceived programme gives him plenty of scope for virtuosity and lyricism. As I recently heard Philippe Jaroussky tell Catherine Bott on the radio, we've long thought of Vivaldi first and foremost as a composer for his own instrument, but as the operas become more widely known, we are beginning to realise what a wonderful vocal composer he was, too. I thoroughly enjoyed this recording, apart from the very irritating habit of leaving a good couple of seconds of silence before final chords. That might work in live performance, but is a terrible conceit on disc. BC

Vivaldi and Friends Apollo's Fire, Jeannette Sorrell 75' 01"  
Avie AV2211

Bach Concerto for 4 harpsichords, Vivaldi op 3/10, RV571, op 8/2 (arr. Sorrell), *La Follia* op 1/12 (ditto); RV531 in G minor for 2 cellos, René Duchiffré Concerto in D minor

This enjoyable programme gives us two concertos as Vivaldi wrote them, the four-violin concerto as Bach re-wrote it for harpsichords, *Summer* arranged for harpsichord by the group's director, a trio sonata expanded to a concerto grosso and a contemporary concerto for two violas da gamba that blends fashionable tango rhythms with neo-baroque harmonies. Apollo's Fire made a strong impression with their first releases and have continued to attract positive comment ever since. Their rhetorical style is sometimes a little forced and they can be prone to the pre-final-chord gulp of air, but the playing is full of life and commitment. Multi-instrument concerti, where ensemble skills combine with individual virtuosity, are usually fun, and these performances are indeed enjoyable, the double cello concerto being a particular pleasure. For me the contemporary gamba tango is longer than its material warrants, though the concept is intriguing. David Hansell

Fiery and sublime The Sources of Quantz's Inspiration La Ricordanza 78' 05"

MDG Scene MDG 603 1644-2

Music by Blavet, C. P. E. Bach, J. G. Graun, Leclair &amp; Quantz

Between 1724 and 1727, Johann Joachim Quantz, best known now as court composer and flute teacher of Frederick the Great and composer of the *Versuch* on playing the flute, went on a musical grand tour to Italy, France and England. The choice of composers on this CD is based on some of those he met, or is thought to have met, during this journey, plus C. P. E. Bach and J. G. Graun, who both worked in Berlin while Quantz was there. As might be expected, most of the music is for transverse flute, but we are also treated to Graun's Concerto in F for recorder, two violins and bc and Quantz's own trio sonata for recorder and flute in C major, and Annette Berryman has chosen to play Leclair's trio sonata for flute and viola on the recorder. In the other pieces, traverso player and founder member of the group Brian Berryman is joined by Christoph Heidemann in CPE Bach's A major flute and violin trio sonata Wq.146 and he is accompanied by one-to-a-part strings in Blavet's Concerto à 4 in A minor and Quantz's Concerto à 5 in D QV:5:45, of which this is the first recording. This fairly recently rediscovered piece starts the programme with a sparkling performance which really grabs the attention, and the rest of the music is just as well played. The recorded sound quality is very good too. The title of this attractive CD refers to Quantz's obituary in which his playing was described as "learned, fiery and sublime". *Victoria Helby*

*Franco Fagiolini: Canzone e Cantate*

Franco Fagiolini Ct, Luca Pianca lute, Marco Frezzato vlc, Jörg Halubek hpscd Carus 83.361 60' 32"

Ferrari, Frescobaldi, Monteverdi, anon; Handel *Aure soavi, Dolc'è pur d'amor*; Paisiello *Nel corpiù non mi sento*; Vivaldi Pianti, *sospiri* RV 676; Geminiani *op. 5/6*

This begins with a series of early pieces which are treated far too seriously: compare Monteverdi's *Si dolce* on the programme by *Tapas* above (se p. 34). Things look up a bit when we jump a century to Handel. But despite several attempts, I still find that I don't enjoy the voice, which is a bit like a plummy contralto sounding a fifth or so higher. Fagiolini does his best, but it doesn't appeal to me, I'm afraid. The Geminiani cello sonata, however, is well worth hearing.

*Three Baroque Tenors* Ian Bostridge, The

English Concert, Bernard Labadie (TT)

EMI Classics 50999 6268642 6

T. A. Arne, Boyce, Caldara, Conti, Galliard, Gasparini, Handel, A. Scarlatti &amp; Vivaldi

This is an interesting idea for a recital disc, exploring music written for three great 18th-century tenors (Borosini, Fabri and Beard). Undoubtedly, these tenors were (so to speak) instrumental in helping the tenor voice catch up with, and eventually take over from, the castrato in superstardom (the London press joked that Borosini wasn't 'cut out' to be a singer), and homage to them is a worthy idea. The choice of music is varied: Handel, of course, but also Caldara, Scarlatti and some lesser-knowns. The booklet notes go on about the difference in timbre and nature of the voices, but with just one tenor singing all three, this doesn't really come across. Still, Bostridge is very good, even if he is definitely Bostridge in every aria. I rather liked the comparison between settings of the same words/ role (Bajazet, by Gasparini and by Handel) and wish that there were rather more of this, since the contrast-of-voices idea does not really work. The English Concert are sensitive and the direction sparkling. This is a must for any Bostridge fan, and a good listen for anyone interested in these legendary tenors.

Katie Hawks

## CLASSICAL

*C. P. E. Bach Symphonies & Concertos*

Gary Cooper hpscd, Claire Guimond fl, Arion 69' 38"

Early-music.com EMCCD-7771

Wq 22 (H425), 38 (H454), 182/3 (659) &amp; 182/5 (665)

Ever since I bought the old L'oiseau-lyre LP of C.P. E. Bach's "quartets" (Christopher Hogwood and co., I think), I have been a great fan of his quirky music. This CD bustles along, full of *Sturm und Drang* edginess. The first movement of the opening symphony is typical of the whole: the rising and falling surges of the duetting violin parts over a forward-driving bassline create an atmosphere that is at the same time exciting, and slightly frightening. Gary Clarke, whose sense of fun and audible pleasure I have complimented before (especially in his Mozart recordings with Rachel Podger), seems to 'get' C. P. E. Bach, placing every note perfectly, without ever sounding artificial. Claire Guimond, as we have come to expect, gives a performance that

is at once demure and virtuosic. I am truly surprised that there is so little C. P. E. Bach in the recorded catalogue – even more so, when this disc offers four works of such high calibre!

BC

*Perhaps the rapidly emerging Collected Works will remedy this.* CB

*C. P. E. Bach Pensées nocturnes* Mathieu Dupouy clavichord 60' 27"

Hérissons Prod. 02

Wq. 59/1, 5, 6; 65/27, 30; 67; 272

I know there are those who find *Rococo* and *Empfindsamkeit* music vacuous and irrelevant, but I must confess that – at least when it comes to C. P. E. Bach – I have always felt an attraction; forebodings of the *Sturm und Drang* movement dominate the music in Dupouy's chosen programme. It seems endless, and timeless, fluctuating (sometimes violently) between drama, with strong bass notes and rushing scales and arpeggios in the right hand, and more reflective passages, pregnant pauses – here coloured by the performer's ability to note-bend on his clavichord – building up an inner tension that, of course, prepares the way for further dramatic outbursts. You will have gathered that I enjoyed this CD; if you are thinking of gifting someone a disc of keyboard music for Christmas, this (or the W. F. Bach below) would be ideal. Dupouy has all the required virtuosity, and a definite insight into the composer's mindset.

BC

*W. F. Bach Claviermusik I* Léon Berben hpscd 68' 50"

Carus 83.346

The music on this CD could not be any more different from the C. P. E. Bach reviewed above; instead of the sense of written-down improvisations, here we have thoroughly worked-out, perhaps more intellectual pieces, especially the first two – a French overture and a very Italianate concerto. Sounds like something his father might have written? Oh yes, of course, he *did*. That is not to say that they sound anything like J. S. Bach, and certainly the remainder of the programme is closer to his brother's output than his father's. Unlike Dupouy, Berben elects to play a copy of a 1728 Zell harpsichord, which is very bright in the upper registers, but packs plenty of punch in the bass. These are exceptionally fine performances, and even if this were not the premiere recording of five of the

works in the recital, I would still have recommended the disc wholeheartedly.

BC  
see also under J. S. Bach for programmes including music by father and sons.

Gluck *Blessed Spirit: A Gluck Retrospective* Ailish Tynan, Sophie Bevan, Anna Stéphany SSA, Classical Opera Company, Ian Page 79' 44"  
Wigmore Hall Live WHLive0037

Individual reactions to this recording of a concert given in January 2010 will likely depend on the kind of singer you are wish to hear in Gluck's operas. If strong dramatic conviction, albeit mostly of a rather generalised kind, allied to good all-round young operatic voices fits the bill, there is much to enjoy. For my part, Gluck demands something different; here I find the continuous vibrato employed by these singers alongside little real control of line and dynamics disconcerting – there are too many explosive moments in the more dramatic arias. Most stylish is Ailish Tynan, who is especially charming in arias from *Ezio* and *Paride ed Elena* (the exquisite "O del mio"). Sophie Bevan, whose vocal qualities surely point her in the direction of later opera (the same applies to Anna Stéphany) is also capable of beguiling with her *mezza voce* floated legato. But all three ladies need to pay greater attention to the projection of words. Page's support is nicely judged and well executed, but the music frequently sounds under-nourished and lacking the more impassioned approach needed in at least the *Iphigénie in Aulide*, *Alceste* and *Armide* arias. This is the first live Wigmore Hall CD I've heard, so I don't know if the inclusion of all the applause is standard or not. I don't care for it.

Brian Robins

Gluck *Orfeo ed Euridice* 103' 43"(2 CDs)  
Ewa Podles *Orfeo*, Ana Rodrigo *Euridice*, Elena de la Merced *Amore*, Coro de la Comunidad de Madrid, Orquesta Sinfónica de Galicia, Peter Maag  
ARTS 47753-8 (SACD) (rec 1998)

This is the first time I've heard this famous piece all the way through and I must say I really enjoyed the music, even if some aspects of the performance will not please all *EMR*-type ears. The edition used is essentially that of the 1762 Vienna/Italian version, though it also includes the near-obligatory *Dance of the Furies*, one major aria and a few bits and pieces from the 1774 Paris version. *Orfeo*

is sung by the contralto Ewa Podles, who is not so different tonally from some of today's operatic falsettists. The orchestra is modern but stylish, though fewer strings would have helped avoid the lushness that creeps in from time to time. The wobbly choral sound is the least satisfactory element. This is a perfectly serviceable non-specialist performance (recorded live in 1998) with a good booklet, though it is disappointing to hear virtually no ornaments. There are surviving 18<sup>th</sup> century models for *Che faro*, for instance.

David Hansell

Gatti Chamber Music Calamus Ensemble  
MGD 603 1589-2 63.03

This disc contains just two works of the Mantuan-born Luigi Gatti: *Serenata a più strumenti di Concerto* for oboe, bassoon, 2 horns and string quintet, and the five-movement *Sestetto* for cor anglais, bassoon, violin, viola, cello and double bass, both composed c. 1790. The former is the more light-weight work, while the *Sestetto* has more interesting textures, in part due to its unusual instrumentation. The modern-instrument Calamus Ensemble gives a neat, stylish performance of these two interesting works.

Ian Graham-Jones

Gossec: *Aux Armes, Citoyens! Musique Royale et Révolutionnaire pour vents* Les Jacobins, dir. Mathieu Lussier  
ACD2 2595 57.08

Gossec has been more famous for his insignificance than for his vast compositional output. Here is an interesting selection of wind music for sextet – pairs of clarinets, horns and bassoons, performed effectively on period instruments. The music ranges from Gossec's arrangements of airs and hymns of the French revolution, including an entertaining extended arrangement of *La Marsellaise*, to *chasse* movements, a descriptive four-movement battle symphony, and a symphony for winds. Here is delightful playing of some entertaining and insignificant music.

Ian Graham-Jones

Haydn String Quartets: op. 1/6 in C; op. 71/2 in D; op. 77/2 in F Fitzwilliam String Quartet 62' 45"  
Divine Art ddv24151

Although nearly ten years old, these memorable live performances are eminently worthy of issue. They certainly give no impression that the Fitzwilliam Quartet was at the time in a

state of transition – the brief period when Jonathan Cohen was cellist – since they are above all marked by a balance and maturity of conception that speaks of long partnership. The choice of programme is interesting: a quartet from Haydn's first set (more accurately *divertimentos*), one of the quartets composed in 1793 with public performance in London in mind, and the last work for the medium completed by the composer. The early quartet is thrown off in thoroughly winning fashion, with a deliciously light touch, sense of fun and, in the *Adagio*, the *cantilena* beguilingly spun by Lucy Russell. In the *opus 71* work, the Fitzwilliam are less concerned with the big rhetorical gestures associated with these pieces designed (at least in part) for the concert platform, more with the subtlety of the composer's rich textures and the beautiful peace of the *Adagio*. In *op. 77/2*, one of the masterpieces of the genre, Haydn's sublime, hard-won mastery is complemented by playing of rare insight, the *Andante*'s wonderful nocturnal march carried far into the realms of ineffable fantasy.

Brian Robins

Haydn *Mariazellermesse* & *Paukenmesse*  
Soloists, Trinity Choir, Rebel Baroque Orchestra, J Owen Burdick 64' 32"  
Naxos 8.572124

This, the fourth in this hitherto excellent series to come my way (see *EMR* 136 and 137), brings with it a disappointment. Something seems to be awry with either the 2004 recording or transfer of the "Mariazellermesse", which suffers from muddy choral sound and scrawny strings, properties common neither to other CDs in the series, nor to the "Paukenmesse", recorded a year later. Already disconcerted by the sound, I found myself more aware of Burdick's tendency to mannered *ritardandi* at major cadences, in particular here at the end of "Crucifixus". Needless to say the sterling qualities previously noted in these New York performances are still abundantly apparent, but add a less than beguiling solo tenor and the inescapable conclusion is that this is the weakest performance so far. As intimated above, the late mass is far more satisfying, although the unsteady bass in "Qui tollis" is a minus. But the wonderful *Benedictus* is beautifully shaped and sung by the solo quartet, while the overwhelming power and staggering originality of *Agnus Dei* make for a thrilling peroration of this blazing performance.

Brian Robins

Haydn *Missa in honorem BVM (Grosse Orgelsolomesse)*, *Missa Sancti Bernardi von Offida (Heiligmesse)* Trinity Choir, Rebel Baroque Orchestra, J. Owen Burdick Naxos 8.572125 68' 27"

I've extolled the great merits of this Manhattan series of Haydn Masses in *EMR* sufficiently recently to restrict myself to a few specific details. Nearly 30 years separate the two Masses included here. The early so-called 'Large Organ Mass' is a treasure and receives a performance to treasure, with due presence given not only to its important obbligato organ part, but also to the *cor anglais* colouring that in more lyrical passages gives the Mass its slightly nostalgic character. Again there are many points of reference that mark Burdick out as an exceptionally perceptive Haydn conductor; one might, for example, draw attention to the subtle but highly effective intensification at 'miserere' (in the Gloria), thus making the plea that much more powerful. The *Heiligmesse* dates from 1796, being the first of the Masses Haydn composed after his return from London to the Esterházy court. Even by Haydn's standards of exuberance, it is remarkable for its uninhibited and boundless praise of his God. Burdick's performance effortlessly captures this quality, sweeping all before it with a blazing conviction that pauses only to pay due reverence to the inward spirituality of 'Et incarnatus est'. Finally, I cannot once again forbear to mention the magnificent orchestral playing, of which the elemental depth of string tone at *Agnus III* is just a single example. *Brian Robins*

Lolli *Sonatas for Violin and Basso Continuo* Luca Fanfoni *vln*, Marianne Chen *vlc*, Paola Del Giudice *hpscd*, Antonella Tanetti *vln*, Erich Galliani *French guitar* Dynamic CDS660 77' 12"

The opening sonata on this recording (played by two violins, the lower one as the bassetto) and French guitar playing continuo is full of staggering virtuosity – some of the very highest notes I have ever heard so clearly played in my life. Any higher and I fear I would have had to consult a sheepdog for help in writing the review. The booklet notes hint at the possibility that the boy Paganini might have heard Antonio Lolli (c. 1725-1802), a celebrated virtuoso violinist, play and have been inspired by his pyrotechnic display. Fanfoni matches Lolli's demands with consummate ease – his violin has a beautiful bright sound and the recording

captures it perfectly. I'm not sure that this is a disc I would listen to in its entirety very often, but there might be rainy afternoons which will be brightened up by an occasional Lolli sonata. *BC*

Dancing Mozart Ostrobothnian Chamber Orchestra, Juha Kangas 66' 02" ALBA ABCD 312

This is a fun CD, though it would not, perhaps, normally have made it into these pages. There are plenty of great tunes, and some toe-tapping dances (as the title suggests). The orchestra is more St Martin in the Fields than The Academy of Ancient Music, but the lack of period colour and bite of bow on string does little to reduce the enjoyment such lively and straightforward performances can give. *BC*

Mozart & M. Haydn *Duos for Violin and Viola* Maya Magub *vln*, Judith Busbridge *vla* 97' 19" (2 CDs) crd 35278 P. 127-130, K. 423-4

This recording of the six duos for violin and viola (four by Michael Haydn and the others by Mozart, whom he had asked to complete the set he had been commissioned to write) is played on two early instruments – a 1760 violin and a viola by the brothers Amati, dated 1593 – but I doubt the makers would recognise the sound they make; that is not to criticise the musicians, whose performance of these delightful works is both stylish and flawless. Even as a constant champion of the underdog, I must confess that Mozart's duos simply do outclass those by his friend – where Haydn treats the viola as a surrogate bass, Mozart treats them more equally. Perhaps the pieces were commissioned by a violinist rather than a viola player, though? *BC*

Salieri *Overtures and Stage Music* Mannheimer Mozartorchester, Thomas Fey Hänsler: HAEN98.554 51.03

This selection of overtures and entr'actes from ten operas ranges from Salieri's early period (1774) to 1803. The items vary from some numbers of high quality to the mundane. Perhaps the most interesting music is, as expected, to be found in his later offerings composed at the turn of the century. A complete symphony for double orchestra, however, from the opera buffa *La calamita de' cori* (1774) is one of the most interesting items

on this disc. Contrasting an on-stage serenade band with the main pit orchestra, it contains extended solo passages in the outer movements, an expressive adagio being scored for the lower instruments of the orchestra. The orchestral playing is lively and stylish, although the modern timpani lack the hoped-for clarity. The disc is worth buying, if only for the double orchestra work, an interesting addition to the other double orchestra works of that time – those of J.C. Bach and John Marsh spring to mind.

*Ian Graham-Jones*

Vogel *Three Symphonies* Bayerische Kammer-philharmonie, Reinhard Goebel Oehms OC735 58' 21"

When investigating the works of minor classical composers, one always looks for an unusual feature or signature that might make the works of a particular composer recognisable. The formulaic nature of classical symphonies at the hands of the B stream is evident in these three symphonies, notably in the first movements. The second movements – perhaps containing the best music – are enlivened by the use of extended, at times virtuosic, solos for the various wind instruments; the finales (the symphonies are all three-movement works) jog along nicely. These three symphonies of c. 1784 represent J.C. Vogel's only foray into the genre, and they are worthy attempts by a competent and talented composer, enhanced by spirited performances under Goebel.

*Ian Graham-Jones*

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

Cherubini *Requiem in C minor* Kammerchor Stuttgart, Hofkapelle Stuttgart, Frieder Bernius 46' 12" Carus 83. 227

It is not usual for *EMR* to comment on the technical aspect of recordings, but an exception has to be made with this SACD recording, which is of superlative quality, conveying as it does everything from the mysterious, sinuous opening to the shattering brass and tam-tam stroke at the start of 'Dies irae' with rare fidelity. This is the earlier of the two Requiem Masses composed by Cherubini, the one without higher pitched instruments that was composed in 1816 for the necessarily delayed funeral of Louis XVI. It rapidly gained fame, winning the approbation of Beethoven and even Berlioz, who of course rarely had a good word for

Cherubini. Even today – and despite weaker moments – the work makes a powerful impression, particularly given a performance as magisterial and as superbly controlled as Bernius's. From passages of huge weight and almost overwhelming power ('Agnus Dei', for example) to the quiet consolation of the closing pages, this is simply a magnificent performance featuring near-exemplary choral singing and period-instrument orchestral playing. My sole grouse is to wonder who on earth at Carus thought 46 minutes sufficient playing time for a CD. *Brian Robins*

**Mendelssohn Concertos for Two Pianos 1 & 2** Piano Duo Genova & Dimitrov, Münchner Rundfunkorchester, Ulf Schirmer 74' 29" cpo 777 463-2

This would normally very definitely be outside our remit, but I was intrigued to hear these youthful works of genius, and that is indeed what they turned out to be. In a time when television becomes easily obsessed by anyone with a talent, can you imagine what would happen if a Felix/Fanny Mendelssohn pair were discovered? How did the Mendelssohn family ever cope in the face of such prodigious talent? Researchers on a recent Channel 4 series devoted to a prodigy composer (which, in my opinion, was more media hype than substance) would have done well to consider these questions, for here is *real* genius. I continually had to pinch myself to remember that these were written by such a young person – and performed by him and his sister. The ability to sustain such long movements with such a mastery of orchestral colour, and technical control at the keyboard is astonishing. These performances have little youthfulness about them – the orchestra is pretty much full-on from the outset, and the pianists (who teach a dedicated course in piano duet at one of the German conservatories) enjoy the possibilities their modern concert grands afford. That said, this is definitely music for a relaxing evening. *BC*

**Schubert Masses Nos. 1 & 3** Immortal Bach Ensemble, Leipziger Kammerorchester, Morten Schuldt-Jensen 57' 37" Naxos 8.572279

Although Schubert left quite a body of sacred music, it occupies a relatively unimportant niche in his output. Nothing we know of him suggests that religion

played any significant part in his life, and it is surely no coincidence that all his Mass settings omit from the Credo the words 'et in unam sanctam et apostolicam catholicam ecclesiam'. Certainly these teenage Masses contain nothing that might inspire anyone to fall to his or her knees; indeed were it not for Schubert's name and a blissful setting of 'Benedictus' for the solo quartet, it is doubtful that the B flat Mass (No. 3) would retain anyone's attention for long. The composer's first effort, the F major Mass (1814), is a different matter, containing as it does enough identifiable fingerprints in more lyrical passages to retain interest in a work that has at times an almost folksy charm and sweetness. With the exception of an unpleasantly stentorian (and inaccurate) bass soloist, the performances are exceptionally pleasing, with fresh, well-focussed choral work and particularly fine modern-instrument playing of Schubert's beguiling wind writing. *Brian Robins*

**Schumann Piano Trios, Vol. 1** (op. 63, 110) Benvenue Fortepiano Trio 58' 25" Avie AV2210

I listened to the Benvenues' previous recording (piano trios by Mendelssohn) before sending them out for review and was very impressed by both the recording and the performance. The follow-up, featuring music I confess I had never heard before, is every bit as impressive. The balance between the three instruments is beautifully managed, and they bring an energy and excitement to their playing that gives a sense of hearing something for the first time – even though technically I was doing so, I get the impression on repeated listening that even long-time fans of Schumann's chamber music will be similarly drawn in to their sound world. There did seem to be one or two very minor slips (I hate myself for mentioning them, but could not refrain from doing so with a clear conscience), but I should not let them put me off enjoying some fabulous music-making. *BC*

#### VARIOUS

**La Gamba** Mika Suihkonen *gamba*, Ballo della Battalia 68' 57" Alba ABCD 301

**Ortiz Recercadas; Simpson Divisions; Marais Folies d'Espagne; Forqueray Chaconne**

I've not sent this to a viol-player to review, since the interest is in the back-

ing group for the ubiquitous 16th-century ground called *La gamba* as much as the viola da! The presence of Andrew Lawrence-King suggests that, as with Christina Pluhar's *L'Arpeggiata*, the ground has a vitality and involvement that is at least equal to the soloist. No complaint about Mika Suihkonen's playing, and the advantage of such a backing is that he doesn't have to push his playing to the extreme which some players do to make their mark. The backing contrasts the linear movement of the viol with a lot of detached playing, which sometimes seems a bit of a mannerism, but gives a distinctive style. Connoisseurs of grounds will enjoy this, and the chronological range is refreshingly wide. *CB*

**Instruments from the Rodger Mirrey Collection** John Kitchen 75' 48" Delphian DCD 34057

This CD celebrates the presentation by Rodger and Lynne Mirrey in 2005 of their collection of historic keyboard instruments to Edinburgh University where, combined with the Russell Collection, it has created probably the finest collection of early keyboard instruments in the world. To illustrate the aural delights of the additions, Delphian have called once again upon the considerable skills of John Kitchen to perform a range of appropriate pieces on them, drawing on repertoire spanning the centuries from Renaissance Flanders to Mendelssohn. The versatile and virtuosic Kitchen seems to relish the different timbres and touches of instruments as varied as a triple-fretted clavichord of around 1620, a magnificent double-manual Baillon harpsichord of 1755, an intimate little unfretted clavichord of around 1740, an exceptionally rare 1574 single-manual Trasuntinis harpsichord and a clear-voiced 1805 Grand pianoforte by Kuhlb's of Breslau. Encyclopedic CDs such as this could so easily become mere samplers, but this is so much more than that because of Kitchen's sensitive and expressive playing and the decision to perform extended sequences of music on each of only nine of the original 22 instruments in the collection. The result is a genuine exploration of the essence of each instrument and at the same time a fascinating journey through the history of keyboard music with a reliable and inspiring guide.

*D. James Ross*

**Officium Novum** Jan Garbarek, The Hilliard Ensemble (TT)

ECM New Series 0289 476 3855 (1)

Garbarek is back with the Hilliards, but not with quite the same recipe. The Hilliard contribution, ranging from Byzantine chant to Pärt, now contrasts much less with Gabarek's superimpositions: there is far less shock now when he bursts out above the voices, since they are no longer singing renaissance motets. There is a coherence between voices and saxophone that is achieved mostly by de-rhythmicising the singing while the saxophone often provides quick bursts of sound that are not regular enough to suggest a quicker tempo. *Tres morillas* comes as a relief, though even in that, each line is presented in isolation. The only other piece that we might think of as early music is Perotin's *Alleluia Nativitas*, which is lively. I'm not agin, but one does have to be in the right mood. The balance definitely places the voices as accompaniment. CB

*24 ways upon the bells* Christian Rivet  
baroque, modern & electric guitar, archlute  
Naïve AM 183 65'  
Dowland, "after Playford", Britten, "after The Beatles"

This CD is a silly pluckers' (phrase in memoriam AH) delight – and there's quite a lot for the rest of us as well. It is part of the Paris Musée de la Musique programme to record the main instruments of their collection, so Christian Rivet uses archlute, baroque guitar and various 20th century guitars for music appropriate to them – Early Music in concept if not always style or content. Among the early music I found the Dowland performances (on archlute) suffered from excessive finger noise, including an unfortunate squeak at a tense moment in *Lachrimae*. The free, folk-based approach to Playford's tunes is musically convincing, if not necessarily 'authentic'. The most substantial single work is Britten's *Nocturnal after John Dowland* – not really our territory. Neither are the highpoints of the programme but they're so high they must have a mention. The recital ends by juxtaposing electric guitar and archlute playing Beatles numbers – *Yesterday* (arr. Takemitsu absolutely brilliantly) and *Here comes the sun* – just gorgeous. Given the emphasis on the instruments there is a certain irony in the illegibility of the information about them – printed very small in white on a turquoise background. Why? David Hansell

## CHRISTMAS

*A Traditional Christmas Carol Collection Volume II The Sixteen, Harry Christophers Coro COR16083 67' 21"*

As our resident carol expert, I could hardly avoid reviewing this. But it brings me the wrong sort of nostalgia. In terms of my musical experience, it goes back to the late 1950s. The chief influence is Vaughan Williams. As readers of our last issue will know, I'm still a great admirer of his music, but 'This is the truth sent from above' doesn't have quite the power it used to – I prefer 'The darkest midnight in December' (and not because its arranger is elsewhere in the house, I hope writing some last-minute reviews for this issue). The singing is probably much better than it would have been then (at least by our standards), but tastes and the carol repertoire have changed since then. There is, for instance, no trace here of *The New Oxford Book of Carols* (which we laboured for so hard over); but nor are there new seasonal compositions, no John Rutter, and no trace of the more robust style deriving from West Gallery and Shape Note singing. The only intrusion (not, of course, one that I minded) is Elizabeth Poston's *Jesus Christ the Apple Tree*.\* I enjoyed most VW's simple version of 'Down in yon forest', with Elin Manahan Thomas as the unaffected soloist. I'd have loved this as a Christmas present fifty years ago; but like Fagiolini's recital (see p. 39) which I wrote about just before this, I should have given it to someone else to review. Sorry, Harry! I've no complaints about the performers, and had it been in a boxed set of "English Christmas Carol Concerts" of 1950, 1970, 1990 and 2010, it could have been fascinating. There's a project! *I always seem to get a footnote about her or her house in at Christmas: this time it's on p. 2. It's not actually a Christmas piece.* CB

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We are grateful for an email from Charles Padley giving us the name and number omitted from the heading of a CD reviewed in the last issue. Our apologies for the omission.

*eVIOLution: music for unaccompanied vihuela de arco, lyra viol, bass viol*  
Fernando Marin  
Quartz CD is QTZ2075

It can be downloaded from  
[www.quartzmusic.com](http://www.quartzmusic.com)

## ADVENT SUNDAY

Advent Sunday is my favourite, as far as the hymns are concerned: I was very disappointed to miss it (though these days there's no guarantee that the usual hymns will be sung). Instead, I stayed at home and tried to finish off this issue. Later in the day, the family wandered round Huntingdon, where there were various events leading up to the switching on of the Christmas lights by the mayor. This was preceded by what I assumed would be communal carols, as in previous years. Singers appeared on the temporary stage, but instead of 'While shepherds watched' or 'Away in a manger' we heard a brisk 'Gaudete' from a very alert choir and a very lively conductor. We drifted on, and missed a couple of other carols. By the time we'd warmed ourselves in the church, the choir had moved on to more popular fare, but still with an extraordinary tight rhythm and with the singers extremely responsive to the conductor. The individual vocal abilities of the choir were mixed, and several things went wrong (not all the choir's fault). I assumed it was a community choir, probably formed in response to the BBC TV chorus programmes.

Afterwards, I spoke to the conductor, Naomi D'Cunha. Witchford Voices was founded in February this year, and anyone could join. Their achievement was tremendous. The conductor was very clued up and an extremely live wire. Witchford is a small village a couple of miles west of Ely. I had gone there occasionally when Gamut Records still existed. (I used to write notes for them. I checked whether the original notes for the Dering reviewed on p. 29 were mine, but I don't think they were.) If other such choirs are anywhere near as good, choral singing really is looking up! But I suspect success depends to a large extent on the musical ability and social skills of the conductor. CB

This month, several reviews arrived very late because the emails sent to me did not get through. When I realise they hadn't come, he sent them again, still without success. He sent them elsewhere, and they arrived, but still didn't get through when forwarded to me. I only received them when BC pasted the contents onto another email. I can now say with greater confidence to correspondents that I haven't received their email! CB

## PROPHETIAE SYBILLARUM

Hugh Keyte

Lassus *Prophetiae Sybillarum; Christmas Motets* Weser-Renaissance, Manfred Cordes  
cpo 777 468-2 64' 44"

*Cum natus esset Iesus a6, Descendit sicut pluvia a5, Ierusalem plantabis vineam a5, Iubilemus singuli a6, Mirabile mysterium a5, Omnes de Saba a8, Resonet in laudibus a6, Sidus ex claro a5, Verbum caro factum est a6*

At the heart of this recording is quite the best performance of the Sibylline Prophecies cycle that I have encountered. It's a problematic work to bring off. For one thing, texting all four parts need not imply purely vocal forces, and Andrew Parrott, for one, has used instruments for the lower parts. But the cycle is the purest *musica reservata*, demanding the kind of subtle, madrigalian, phrase-by-phrase sensitivity to the verse that instruments simply cannot supply.

The chromaticism itself is another problem. Enharmonic sidestepping predominates, with the occasional word or phrase highlighted with a shockingly illogical shift; and adroit shifting between the diatonic and the chromatic pre-empts any feeling of tedium within the individual movements. Yet the law of diminishing returns will exact an increasing toll if the 13 short movements unfold in unrelieved succession. Perhaps polyphonic chromaticism would have been better reserved for single short pieces, such as Jakob Handl's celebrated *Mirabile mysterium*. And had the 16th-century humanists known that the chromatic and enharmonic genera of the ancient Greeks applied to homophony, not polyphony, composers might not have felt the same obligation to revive them. Certainly, for all the admiration that the cycle elicited at Munich, where it is preserved in a sumptuous choirbook, with miniatures by the court painter Hans Mielich, Lassus never again tackled fully-fledged chromaticism. (Nor, wisely, did he ever tackle the enharmonic genre, with its daunting micro-intervals. I can testify from the experience of an abandoned radio recording, with ideal singers backed up by a multi-manual enharmonic electronic organ, that Vicentino's enharmonic madrigals are exercises in mental and aural torture.)

Cordes' solution to the diminishing-returns problem is to present the prophecies in pairs, surrounded by imaginatively-instrumented Christmas motets. Perhaps Lassus actually intended the prophecies to be heard in pairs, which is how their notional modes group them – as do those of the triple and quadruple stanzas of the much longer *Lagrime di San Pietro*. The ampler scale of the Christmas motets makes them an effective foil to the more intimate prophecies, but I'd have welcomed a bolder distinction between the two sound-worlds: perfectly possible, even with the solo instruments and solo voices of Weser-Renaissance. It's often worth bearing in mind the

man who sang tenor in the chamber but (nonfalsetto!) alto in church: not merely in response to the contrasted acoustics, but reflecting what was surely (in parts of continental Europe, at least, and certainly in Germany) a deliberate distinction between performance genres.

This quibble aside, the recording is to be enthusiastically recommended. Played straight through it provides a balanced seasonal programme, while those who wish to hear the Prophecies as a unit (and possess the arcane skills required) may prefer to manipulate their selection buttons. Cordes opts for four solo voices, backed – and kept precisely on pitch – by Kees Jan De Koning's discreet harp, and the result is the kind of unforced communication that I have sometimes thought beyond the reach of performers of this youthful experimental work. The unhurried pace is a help, too, and so is the singers' sensitivity to the (anonymous) text. This is not at all the same thing as imposing vocal rhetoric: unlike the typical madrigal, this chromatic lily calls for no such painting up, for the kaleidoscopic harmonies are designed to 'do the expression' unaided.



## LETTERS

Dear Clifford,

Your editorial comments were especially interesting. A repeated phrase may sometimes need to be quieter, but the assumption that it should always be an echo is simplistic. Sometimes rhetorical (re)emphasis requires it to be louder; sometimes alteration of nuance within the phrase itself seems to be more appropriate. The only thing we can be sure about is that composers of the 18<sup>th</sup> century or earlier didn't clutter their scores with many tempo or dynamic cues because they assumed that their players knew what was required stylistically. Our knowledge of this will never be complete, so at least some of our assumptions will be invalid.

The multiple minuet repeat is a problem; but is progressive embellishment always wrong? At what stage does embellishment become recomposition? In his *Methodical Sonatas*, Telemann seems to have crossed that boundary. If that set of works as a didactic demonstration of what he normally expected, one might argue that what was unusual was, not that the listeners heard embellished versions, but that they were notated rather than improvised. Isn't the music that concerns us presented as a skeleton, which the performer may, and perhaps be expected to, flesh out with imaginative taste, engaging the audience with pleasure and excitement? All too often, excitement is generated by tempi that are too fast so that, for example, Purcell's glorious suspensions don't get the chance to register, at the expense of the expression of his essential romanticism.

Chris Hedge

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*The following was passed on to us by our Diary editor, who has just resigned as editor of The Recorder.*

Dear Clifford,

Hello – I'm not sure if this is the right forum for my thought, but I had a long-standing gripe re-awakened when reading Alan Davis' article in *The Recorder Magazine*, where he mentions figured bass in printed editions:

I don't understand why the figures are put under the realised keyboard part, rather than in the continuo (ie 'cello) part. If I were still a student where realising figured bass was part of the course, I should much prefer to have a bash at it for myself using the 'cello part. I'm not sure why editors/publishers do it; is it to show that they've been faithful to the original? I have on occasions written in the figures by hand, which gives the part a slightly urtext look, but I'd much rather have it done for me.

Best wishes,  
Tom Rainbow

It's a bit odd to reply to an article in one magazine in another, but Helen's right in that it's more appropriate to us. I play keyboard continuo, and as publisher (King's Music/The Early Music Company) I never write out keyboard parts, so there's only a figured line in addition to a melodic bass if the composer/scribe/original publisher has provided one. Like most modern editors, I put the figures below rather than above the bass because the space between systems is larger than the space between staves, so they don't require a bigger gap between the bottom two staves (which looks odd, so the spacing between all staves has to be bigger).

But Alan is presumably writing about parts, not scores. Where there is a single bass line, as in most 18th-century music, it is sensible to figure the bass. Cellists who need to add fingering can write above the stave, so the figures don't get in the way – and some string players are interested in the chords anyway. (I know one gamba player who used to be annoyed by the distraction of figures, but some years later expressed a strong preference that the figures should be included.) I don't think that figures under realised parts do any harm – players may perhaps take in the meaning of the figures over the years and eventually find that they can manage without someone else's right-hand part. If the bass is realised in a score, it does seem a waste of space to repeat a common bass-line, and producing a larger-print realisation under the cello/bass can make the score look like a piano quintet! If the realisation is added above the cello/bass part, it is better to be in smaller print so clearly editorial.

I was also thinking of commenting on Alan's Davis' article. In his comparison of Handel editions he doesn't mention that the Bärenreiter 'part', a two-stave score, represents the normal way of publishing 'solos' in the early 18th-century.

CB

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*Compliments to The Early Music Company from a satisfied customer: the parts of the Praetorius Christmas Mass arrive unexpectedly early. But I would have thought that time-traveling skills are more likely to be the province of professors of astronomy and physics!*

Dear Clifford,  
Minus 2 days is certainly a record for speedy delivery!  
Many thanks.

Best wishes,  
Murray.  
Professor D. M. Campbell FRSE  
School of Physics and Astronomy  
University of Edinburgh

## VENISON PASTY

Jennie Cassidy

*He kicked open the buttery door without ceremony and brought to light a venison pastry – a goodly sight to a hungry man.*

So said McSpadden 1891. He, like so many others before and since, was in thrall of a good venison pastry. In the 13th century the monks of St Albans Abbey "according to their custom, lived upon pasties of flesh-meat". A century later Chaucer wrote "All of pasties be the walls of flesh, of fish, and rich meat" and another century brought the installation feast of the archbishop of York in 1465 at which there were served 4,000 cold and 1,500 hot venison pasties.

Others were also partial to a venison pastry. In 1638 John Taylor wrote: "A Gentleman dwelt two miles from a Market-towne, where at a taverne hee caused some bottles of Wine to be fill'd to carry home, because he had invited some friends to his house to eate a Venison Pasty with him the next day."

As a pacifying object Shakespeare suggests: "Come, we have a hot venison pastry to dinner: I hope we shall drink down all unkindness" (*The Merry Wives of Windsor* Act 1, Scene 1).

John Winthrop was born near Sudbury in Suffolk. In 1630 he left his wife and family and sailed to America. He founded Boston and the State of Massachusetts and became its first governor. On his arrival in America he wrote: "About four in the morning we were near our port. We supped with a good venison pastry and good beer, and at night we returned to our ship".

Samuel Pepys wrote of concerts, theatre trips, ladies he loved and lost, the plague and the great fire of London. Amongst all this, he was sustained throughout by the humble pastry of which he makes mention no fewer than 46 times.

10 July 1666 "Afeard to send a venison-pasty that we have for supper to-night to the cook's to be baked, for fear of their offering violence to it." (There was a large group of beggars outside his office at the time). But not all pasties pleased him and in a less than contented entry he wrote:

16 August 1667 "consumed a damned venison pastry, that stunk like a devil."

In *Barnaby Rudge* (1840) Charles Dickens writes "There's a matter of cold venison pastry somewhere or another here, if that'll do."

This rather wonderful engraving entitled 'Fat Kitchen' by Pieter Brueghel shows well-fed men with food in

abundance, one of whom is shooing a thin bagpiper from the door. His large dog lends assistance by imbedding his teeth in the piper's leg. On the table lies a half-eaten pastry.

Venison pastry recipes survive from medieval times. The pastry at that time was often made quite hard and was a way of cooking to seal in the meat juices like we might use foil today. The pastry was not intended to be eaten then but over the centuries it was made softer and became part of the dish. The first pastry recipes were almost all filled with venison. Some added spices, eggs, honey, lemon and occasionally a little dried fruit but the pastry was without vegetables until the arrival of the Cornish pastry in the 18th century. The Cornish tin miners reputedly adopted the pastry because it was more convenient to eat with dirty hands. It needed no plate or cutlery and the pastry, tainted as it would be with tin and arsenic, could be rejected.

In medieval times, deer were a primary source of food and resources. Their hides made excellent leather and bones and antlers were carved into useful and decorative objects. Artists, composers and story tellers used the deer for both imagery and symbolism in paintings, tapestries, manuscripts,



music, poetry, myths and sports. The hunting of deer became an honour that was reserved for 'gentlemen'. Using bow and arrow for the hunt it was often a dangerous pursuit and there were frequent accidents, such as the death of King William II. There were many words for deer including stag, roe, buck, hind, hart, fawn and fallow doe.

Venison was cooked in a variety of ways – spit roast, boiled, baked, served with piquant sauces, rice, made into soup or mixed with eggs and fruit and baked into pies. The following recipe is inspired by many original recipes and uses only ingredients that are listed. But I have adapted it so that it is not too extreme to the modern palate and uses items which are easier to acquire, cutting down on suet, ale yeast, vinegar, cassia, grains of paradise and sugar.

**For the pastry:**

500g plain flour  
Pinch of salt  
160g butter  
60g lard  
1 egg yolk beaten with a little milk to glaze the pastry

**For the filling:**

500g venison burger (now readily available from the large supermarkets)  
or any venison minced or chopped very finely  
or venison sausages with skins removed  
(Optional) 1 tablespoon raisins chopped very small  
1 egg yolk  
Freshly ground black pepper  
Pinch of salt  
1 tablespoon brandy  
1 tablespoon honey  
1 teaspoon vinegar  
Grated zest of a lemon  
1 teaspoon ground ginger  
1 teaspoon of ground cinnamon  
Half a teaspoon of thyme  
Pinch of nutmeg or mace  
Warm the oven to 220C/gas mark 7.

**For the pastry:** Mix the flour with a pinch of salt. Rub in the butter and lard until it resembles breadcrumbs. Add just enough cold water to mix to a soft, but not sticky, dough. Wrap in foil or cling film and chill for at least half an hour. Bring back to just under room temperature before rolling out.

**For the filling:** Take a large bowl and mix all the filling ingredients together thoroughly.

**Making the pasties:** Divide the dough into 8-10 pieces and roll out into circles on a lightly floured surface.

Put a dollop of filling in the centre of each and fold over into a pastry shape.

Stick the pastry edges together with a little of the beaten egg and milk, and crimp or twist to seal in the filling.

Glaze the tops of the pasties with the rest of the egg-milk glaze.

Cut a few small holes in the top of each pastry to let the steam out.

Place them on a greased baking sheet and bake for 20 minutes before turning the oven down to 170C/gas mark 3 for a further 20 minutes or so.

*There will be a 'deer' theme at the EEMF Epiphany Party held on 8th January 2011 in Beccles (Suffolk) and venison pasties will be available there. The tutor will be Philip Thorby and he will choose from pieces such as Sicut Cervus by Palestrina, Ockeghem, Dumont, Ferrabosco, Taeggi, Tallis and Hartmann, Quemadmodum desiderat Cervus' by Schütz and Je veu le Cerf by Vecchi... maybe even Rudolphus Rubrinus.*

*Apply early: space is limited to 50.*

*jennie.cassidy@btinternet.com*

**Early Music Review  
and  
The Early Music Company  
wish all our readers a happy  
Christmas and prosperous new year**

We are grateful to all those who have contributed to *EMR* during the past year. All are busy people, and the magazine could not exist without their commitment. We are particularly grateful to Helen for her work on the diary and also for fielding messages on our old web site: we hope the EMC one will be running soon. Thanks, too, to Brian for his work for *EMR* as well as all his music setting, and to David for his inimitable cartoons – two this month.

We are also grateful to subscribers who have reacted to the appeal letter that we have been distributing: thanks to those who have circulated it through other magazines. The legal process is very slow: the trial of our two fraudsters may be as late as September 2011 – we reported the case to the police in June 2008! We have been advised not to say too much about our situation until the case is over. We still do not know what will happen about our house.

Apologies for the delay of this issue: it took a long time to recover from the Greenwich exhibition.

It's the cutbacks, I'm afraid...

