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I was about to write some comments on the differences between the Bologna and Wroclaw copies of Monteverdi's *Selva morale*, which cropped up as we were editing a few items for The Sixteen, but then the I Fagiolini recording including 40-part Striggio and Tallis arrived, so I thought that would be a more interesting topic. One point cropped up in conversation with Hugh Keyte (who had considerable input to the large-scale pieces), the suggestion that Tallis's multichoral technique was more progressive than Striggio's, because he was much more interested in polyphonic writing (e.g. the opening voice-by-voice entries of *Spem*) and partly because of his use of more Gabrielian quick-fire interaction between choirs. But what Gabrielian multichoral music by Andrea Gabrieli existed then? The big publication was 1587, by when Tallis was dead. It was a retrospective collection edited by nephew Giovanni, but how far back did that style go? I've got a fair idea how Venetian multichoral music worked around 1600, but what happened 30 years earlier is speculative. In 1515, San Marco instrumentalists were expected to play *trombe* and *piffari* (sackbuts and shawms) as well as *flauti* and *cornetti*, but not in the quantity required for large-scale pieces, and perhaps not with singers. Has anyone studied when the change to larger forces occurred? And is the Striggio Mass the earliest piece with a continuo part? (The Tallis part probably dates from 1612 or 1616.)

Another problem is: how was the music rehearsed and directed? Was there a score present? There seems to be little evidence of scores at performances until somewhat later – most early scores were copied for study, not performance. Was the 'direction' someone beating a tactus, not giving interpretative instructions? Were dynamics determined by a director or by the number of parts sounding at any moment and the shaping of individual parts? Were some tutti entries treated as *subito piano*, as is natural for a modern conductor? Does the end of the Striggio motet really fade away into a *pianissimo* "in paradisum"? Surely paradise is a reason for rejoicing, and despite "haec quies" a few bars earlier, an *esclamazione* on the last note would be more powerful: not a stress, since it's a weak syllable, but rounding the work off with some strength – the cue to a fade-away would be a reduction to a single choir!

Now I've written this, I'll listen to the recording. *CB*

REVIEWS OF MUSIC

Clifford Bartlett

MULLINER REVISED

The Mulliner Book newly transcribed and edited by John Caldwell (*Musica Britannica* 1) Stainer and Bell, 2011. xlvi + 266pp, £92.00

Fashions in musicology, as in everything else, change. The post-war ethos was to modernise. Academic editors had scored music in parts and added barlines, but retained the original clefs and note-values, which were a barrier to non-specialists, and by 1950, even music students found reading the old clefs difficult. So separate editions had to be prepared for the general musical public, which also contained additional guidance on how it should be performed. But scholarly editions were rare in Britain anyway. The Purcell Society made some compromises (such as the amazing Stanford keyboard parts for the trio sonatas) but between the wars the most notable was *Tudor Church Music*, which was slightly more user-friendly in that it adopted treble and bass clefs. But the unreduced note-values and whimsical barring meant that a series of individual pieces in updated notation with shorter note-values, transposition and dynamics was needed for church choirs.

Musica Britannica was established under the influence of younger scholars who wanted a national collection of music, like the German and Austrian Denkmäler. MB (the usual abbreviation) has as subtitle *A National Collection of Music*, though there is remarkably little non-English music featured. The editors show their modernity by bridging the gap between the scholarly and the performable by reducing note values and using modern clefs. I suspect that Thurston Dart and Denis Stevens were the main figures behind this; Dart expressed the ethos in his brilliant *The Interpretation of Music* (London 1954). There are similarities with *Corpus mensurabilis musicae*, but that went further than MB in using mensurstrich – placing bar-lines between the staves instead of through them so that ties could be avoided. When I first encountered the series in 1958, I was disconcerted by the short note-values of vol. 4 (*Medieval Carols*), though I suspect that I would have found unreduced values of that, Dunstable (MB8) and the *Eton Choirbook* (10-12) difficult to negotiate. (I only encountered the long-value editions of a few pieces from TCM comparatively recently.) But the problem was vol. 9, an anthology of *Jacobean Consort Music*. As a viola player, I was puzzled by octave-treble clefs for parts of viola range, and when in the mid-1960s I took up the viol, I discovered that players also disapproved of short note-values and two-beat bars. As time progressed, MB seemed to be losing touch with performers particularly interested in early music without having much impact on non-specialists.

Now MB has made a completely new start. This isn't a revision of Denis Stevens' edition of *The Mulliner Book* but a completely new publication from John Caldwell – academic, player and composer. His Oxford thesis (1965) was on Bl add. 29996, the most varied anthology of 16th and 17th century British keyboard music, and his knowledge of the repertoire is one of his manifold areas of expertise. He also wrote the useful down-to-earth *Editing early music*. That this new MB1 differs from the 1951 style is obvious without even opening it, since it's twice the size. Glancing at any page will show that original note values are (mostly[1]) retained and that non-keyboard versions are given for comparison. All the music in the MS is edited, including the pieces for cittern and gittern (in tablature with transcription). The concordance lists are far more extensive, and the introduction is more thorough. (Stevens published an ancillary volume, which is difficult to find and inconveniently is not normally shelved with MB1.)

The music is valuable for what it preserves of the final stages of liturgical organ music before the reformation. Mulliner may have held to the old tradition, but it isn't set out as a practical service book, and the types of music are mixed. He was a surprisingly accurate copyist, but there is little sign that he used the book. Most of the pieces are short: the longest items are the *Felix namques* by Farrant and Shelbye – Blytheman's *Te Deum* comprises many short sections. Players have also linked Blytheman's six settings of *Gloria tibi Trinitas* into a group of variations, a modern conception that works in practice. These and many other pieces are based on chant. Others are versions of vocal or instrumental ensemble pieces, not all of which have survived in their original form; calling on them can make for varied concert programmes. Perhaps sensibly, the editor doesn't go into the issue of the likely sounding pitch; the transcription are at the same visual pitch as the ensemble analogues, though the sounding pitches may well have been disparate by a fourth or a fifth. Chant and full texts are provided for the 18 hymns set in the MS, as well as six antiphons and the Te Deum.[2]

This new edition is certainly welcome. It is beautifully produced, with music that I certainly used to enjoy playing (as Mulliner may have done) in the privacy of the home: as concert pieces, they have to be very carefully placed, with more thought than as token early pieces at the beginning of recitals, as used to be their fate.

1. Curiously, the closest ratio (3/2 rather than 3/1) is used for triple mensuration, though performers seem happy to use 3/1 in Monteverdi's church music.

2. As in the same editor's *Early Tudor Organ Music I: Music for the Office* (EECM 6) which, dating for 1966, has reduced note-values.

THE BALCARRES LUTE BOOK

The Balcarres Lute Book Edited by Matthew Spring
Vol. I: Introduction and Facsimile xxxii + 271pp
Vol. II: Transcription and Commentary x + 302pp.
(The Music of Scotland, 2) The Universities of Glasgow and Aberdeen, 2010. £95.00 ISBN 978 0 85261 846 2

This is a massive project. The page-size (355x255 mm) is, of course, determined by the dimensions of the MS, and although not hard bound, with heavy paper the pair of volumes weigh in at 2.850kg. Whether reading facsimile or transcription, players will need a sturdy music stand. They will, however, find the facsimile rather hard going. The images are grey on grey – readable close-up at a desk but hard work with instrument in hand, I would imagine: even though lutenists' eyes can be nearer the music than most players, there's a wide distance between the extremities of the pages. So the transcription (for keyboard only) may be easier for lutenists as well as those of us who can only deal with tablature by slow re-notation. It is helpful that the number of each piece is printed in the margin of the facsimile.

The MS contains 252 pieces, mostly variations on Scottish tunes, but with 19 French items and some deriving from Playford. It seems to date from around 1700. There is a thorough commentary tracing the sources and analogues. This is a valuable addition to the study of Scottish popular music, especially as the composers/arrangers are named. But I wonder whether the music itself justifies such effort and subsidy. It is difficult to judge how effective this sort of lute music is from playing it on a keyboard: it can sound emptier that on a lute. If the facsimile had been clearer (could not the digital images have been enhanced?), a cheaper compromise might have been to supplement it with a commentary giving incipits, concordances and comments – or even putting the whole MS on the www (colour reproductions might have been clearer) and publishing a selection of the best pieces with the introduction and the complete commentary. I can see that such a substantial collection of characteristic Scottish music had to be made available, particularly because the MS isn't in a state to suffer frequent use. (Although the property of the Earl of Crawford and Balcarres, it has been restored by and remains in the National Library of Scotland). Had I been a member of the Music of Scotland committee, I would have agreed that publication was necessary – but I'd make sure that the next volume was of more obvious musical quality. Maybe the Earl of Kelly, or are any other of Hamish MacCunn's orchestral works as good as *Land of the Mountain and the Flood*? I'm inclined (though exaggerating) to put together two Horatian quotes: *Exegi monumentum... et nascetur ridiculus mus*. But congratulations to Matthew Spring for his thorough work: projects that reach into the world of folk music require an enormous effort in tracing concordances, though at least such studies started early in Scotland.

WHAT PASSION CANNOT MUSICK RAISE AND QUELL

Giovanni Battista Draghi *From Harmony, from Heav'nly Harmony: A Song for St Cecilia's Day, 1687* Edited under the supervision of the Purcell Society by Bryan White (Purcell Society Edition Companion Series, 3) Stainer & Ball, 2010. xxvi + 86pp, £55.00

Most musicians who know Purcell's music well but without a chronological framework in their mind will, if they hear the recording without reading the booklet or look through this score before glancing at the introduction, assume that Draghi was quick to be influenced by Purcell's style. But no, Draghi was the pioneer. His music may not withstand detailed comparison with Purcell, but this was a pioneer in its instrumentation and scale, and the music is pretty good as well. It has been recorded (Hyperion CDA66770) and has had an airing at at least one Early Music Forum course (which I sadly could not attend). Now that it is published, I hope that performances will be more frequent and the music will stand on its own merits.

It is difficult to indicate the forces involved, since various soloists are involved, and Draghi has an intermediate stage between solo and tutti. The earlier MS (in West Sussex Record Office) names seven soloists – AAATBBB, the later (RCM MS 1106) mentions a dozen, probably for a revival in 1695. The SSATB chorus has rubrics implying at least three voices a part. (Surely there's no doubt that soloists sang the chorus sections.) The orchestra is based on five-part strings (clefs G2 G2 A2 A3 F4) with at least two players per part, along with pairs of trumpets in C and recorders; oboes are not specifically mentioned. The presence of several sources (there are three secondary ones) makes it difficult to see without frequent recourse to the extensive textual commentary what is the precise terminology of changes between the number of instruments or voices on a part (which vary frequently), though this isn't a problem. The Editorial Procedure tells us that 'Loud', 'Soft' Softer' and 'Very soft' are modernized to *f*, *p* and *pp*: presumably the abbreviations for 'softer' is the one omitted. To pick up a couple of misprints, on p. 11 bar 8, *Thetuneful* needs a space and on p. 69 bar 68, that last uneditorial note for violin 1 should be E.

I may be showing myself as pedantic here, but when typing the heading to the review, I was wondering how to capitalise it since we don't preserve upper-case titles in our transcription of the title page. The version above is from a separate 'Review Note', perhaps intended to give reviewers background information to save them reading the introduction. But I looked first at the facsimile of the text and the underlay in the edition. The libretto uses the subtitle, capitalised as one expects and as used in the edition. Of the two main sources, one has no title, the other is virtually the same as the subtitle. I would prefer the first line to appear (in inverted commas) after the title

and to be printed as in the libretto: 'From Harmony, from heav'nly Harmony' just capitalising the noun.[3] But since the text is modernised, why not print *heavenly*, since *heaven* is commonly sung to one syllable?[4]

I wouldn't have bothered with the last paragraph had I not been thinking about the degree of modernisation in the edition. With an authoritative text, my inclination as editor would be to have followed it. At least new lines receive capitals in the underlay, but would *Musick*, to use a favourite phrase of our concert reviewer, frighten the horses? Another modernisation is also unnecessary. How many continuo players now tend to think of a sharp 'figure' as signalling a major chord and a flat a minor one? It's certainly how I figure basses for 17th-century music (a practice I acquired from Peter Holman over 40 years ago). The illogicality of printing naturals on the staves has never worried me. And staying with figures, I find it better to add editorial ones in brackets rather than small print: naturals and sharps can look very similar in poor light.

This is a fine edition, with an excellent introduction, of music that thoroughly deserves publication and performance, and which is historically significant. I hope the performance material will be available on sale.

PURCELL DRAMATIC MUSIC III

Purcell *Dramatic Music: Vocal and Instrumental Music for the Stage Part III: Oedipus – The Wives Excuse* Edited...by Margaret Laurie (The Works of Henry Purcell, vol. 21) Stainer & Bell, 2010. lv + 231pp, £85.00

The revision or replacement of the original Purcell Society volumes is nearly complete. Of the two unregenerated volumes, vol 6 is pretty well covered – the harpsichord music by various Stainer and Bell editions and the organ music by Novello – so its replacement is less urgent, despite the need for more thorough editorial evaluation, than the Services (vol. 23), which have achieved less modern attention. The completion of the miscellaneous dramatic music is important, especially since it includes some well-known songs that are usually sung out of context and edited from *Orpheus Britannicus* rather than perhaps more authentic MS sources. One could, however, argue that the whole performing tradition of, say, 'Music for a while' is based on OB, so that is acceptable.

My edition of that song is based on BL Add. 31452 (Laurie's A) as well as OB (a more memorable abbreviation than a different letter allocated for each source for each play). I'll use that as a sample for comparison. We are told 'A seems to be the most reliable source' which the commentary seems to implicitly justify, though there's no specific argument. The first problem is that, despite its wide independent circulation and performance, it is only half-heartedly treated as a discrete item. There is a fresh movement number, but bar-numbers continue from the previous movement (so don't relate to any separate edition with bar numbers) and, more crucially, there is no indication of the original clef, on the assumption that it is the same as the countertenor part of the previous movement: C3. But in OB it is notated an octave higher in treble clef (which doesn't necessarily imply performance at that octave). The heading 'countertenor' should be unequivocally editorial, if used at all, though when the original singer is known, comment on the voice-type should be included. The top note is A flat, which puts it in a plausible light-tenor range, and too low for the average modern countertenor. I happened to catch it sung by a countertenor on the radio a few weeks ago: it was transposed up, with the bass transposed down, which sounded somewhat grotesque. The idea that any vocal music works at any pitch strikes me as naïve! The text in bars 79 & 85 (ie 22 & 28) isn't discussed together in relationship to the rhymes and sense of singular or plural 'band(s)' and 'hand(s)'. I don't have A to hand, but OB beams the quavers in pairs whereas most editions (including the new one) beam them in fours. There's no suggestion that the notes should be played as pairs according to the beat (in fact, the musical pairing is 1 2-3 4-5 6-7 8-1), but the longer beams give an impression of a smooth progression. The editor doesn't warn off people using popular editions from singing a C flat in bar 76 (19), which looks more plausible in some transpositions. With so prominent a bass, there's little need for any elaborate accompaniment which might obscure the bass pairings, nor the addition of a cello or gamba to exaggerate them. The obvious instrument was changing from theorbo to harpsichord in the 1690s; but on the assumption that players using this volume can realise their own part, I'd prefer a two-stave score and a separate publication of the solo songs with a realisation placed between the bass and voice, not (as in the four Novello volumes of songs) with the bass on staves 2 and 4.[5] And again there are keyboard parts for dances that may well have been performed without continuo.

There are few instrumental pieces here, since only two sets of Airs were published – *The Old Batchelour* (old spelling retained for the title) and *The Virtuous Wife*. It's hard work for singers if subsequent verses are many pages away from the music, as in "As Amoret and Thyrsis lay" (p. 34-6) – and if modern voices are to be stated, I would have thought that high tenor was more plausible than soprano, despite the dramatic opportunities possible for a female and male pair. It is excellent that the volume has at last appeared. And if Margaret Laurie feels criticised, she can shelter behind the "supervision of the Purcell Society".

3. The capital for *Man* after a lower-case *diapason* could be argued to change the balance of Dryden's *The Diapason closing full in Man.*

4. I checked with the 1933 edition of The English Hymnal (though sometimes the extra syllable is required by the music, as in *Praise my soul the king of heaven.*

5. My edition, without realisation, gets the song onto two pages, not three, enabling it to be offered in one copy at three pitches costing no more than if they were not there..

OTTONE & JEPHTHA

Handel *Ottone: version of the first performance 1723... HWV 15*. Piano reduction based on the Urtext of the Halle Handel Edition by Andreas Köhs. Bärenreiter (BA 4077a), 2010. xvii + 271pp, £43.50.

Handel *Jephtha HWV 70*. Piano reduction based on the Urtext of the Halle Handel Edition by Martin Focke. Bärenreiter (BA 4014a), 2010. xi + 285pp, £22.00.

Ottone is a work I've never had to investigate: just as well, since its history is rather complex. With five months between completion and premiere, there was time for plenty of adjustments. There were changes during the 13 performances of the first run in 1723, with revivals in four subsequent seasons. The main sequence, occupying the first 200 pages, has with good reason a few later versions, and there are 71 pages of supplementary material, including the three ornamented arias published by Winton Dean in 1976. The Chrysander score is a mixture of versions, so is a poor subsitute for the HHA full score, though with a price of €398, there's a great temptation to buy the Chrysander reprint for £20.00 and mark the major corrections. There are page references in the main text to items in the appendix, but not vice versa. I can't remember if I have made this suggestion before, but it is a lot easier to find an aria quickly in the contents list if they are all visible on a single opening, which should be possible if the Italian and German texts were separated – two facing pages for Italian, two for German, and one for the appendices. I wonder how often the directors see the information in the full score before deciding on versions, etc. It is perhaps worth saying that the *Ottone* is mixture of two German emperors of the tenth century, and not at all connected with Poppea or Nero 900 years earlier.

My eye caught an oddity in a recit on p. 160, bar 38. Three minims are printed in square brackets above the first note. Since the bar appeared to have six quavers, I took a moment to work out what they meant. In fact, the bar ran from the end of the line to the next, and the sign meant a bar of 3/2 rather than C. However, the voice had six quavers on one line and the equivalent of six on the next, while the bass had two minims on one line and one on the next. I can see the spacing difficulty, but it should have been avoided. But that is a quirk: the general standard is high.

Mt first attempts at editing Handel oratorios go back to around 1980, when I worked over BBC material of *Jephtha* and *Semele* – one, perhaps both, for performance by John Eliot Gardiner. A few years later, our local orchestra and choral society, conducted by Christopher Brown, was performing the work, so I went over the orchestral parts again – old Novello ones heavily corrected with the superfluous bowings and dynamics removed. But I added other hints for an amateur band: marks for hemiola cadences (assuming that triple-time cadences are hemiolas unless there is an obvious reason why not) and adding trills with the length of the opening appoggiatura shown by the height of the first stroke (or if the appoggiatura is already notated, starting on the main note). I'm not sure whether in the latter circumstance, the trill on the main note should still begin at the speed of the rest of the trill on the upper note, but at least it was intended to make people think. Sadly, I've had no feedback from the many professional orchestras that have used the parts (including a recent recording to be reviewed in the next issue), and I have never tried that experiment again.

Jephtha is far less problematic than *Ottone*, though more so than most people who know the work recognise. The appendix contains six items – one replaced before the first performance, three written for the 1756 revival, and two of unknown date This may confuse anyone intending to perform the work, since some are printed in sequence in the accessible scores – Chrysander and the quite reliable Vincent Novello vocal score of 1851 (costing £12.95). I'll list them (mostly ignoring changes in recitative) with HHA number, title, Chrysander page and Novello movement number. I also mention the KM/EMC edition, since the parts are available on sale: not all alternatives are in the parts, but the corrected Chrysander score has most of them.

5. *In gentle murmurs* in e minor . Chr p. 32. no. 8.
5a (1756) in b minor. Chr p. 36, not in Nov & no parts in KM

8. *These labours past* Chr p. 50. no. 14 (with an extra 24 bars)
8a. Later addition, with cuts: Chr. prints the cut version as his main text, with the longer version footnoted.
No. 14 in Nov & KM in shorter version, HHA 8a. (The most obvious change is that the triplets for Hamor at bar 33-37 are cut.) KM parts have the shorter version – it is quite a long duet, and Handel may have cut it with good reason!

Unnumbered (p. 262) *Freedom now once more*
Confusingly, excluded from any numerical identification.
Chr p. 118, Nov. no. 31. KM score includes it, but also has the revised recit needed to replace it, and it is not in the parts.

39U *Laud her, all ye virgin train* Chr p. 226, Nov/KM No. 63.
Replaced before 1st performance.

40 *Sweet as sight* in D. Chr p. 228, Nov/KM No. 65
40a in G (1756). Chr p. 231; not in Nov or KM parts.

42 *Freely I to heav'n resign* (Solo) Chr p. 237, Nov no. 69.
42b Same text (Quintet) Chr. p. 242, Nov/KM no. 70

Regrettably, the footnoting of appendix items in the main sequence adopted for *Ottone* isn't used here.

The use of a b suffix for no. 42 isn't explained: perhaps the implication is that it isn't by Handel. Footnote 4 in the introdution refers to an article by Anthony Hicks in which he finds it 'hard to accept the quintet itself as a satisfactory whole'. Much as I trust Tony, I would question this. There is precedent, if much shorter, of an ensemble starting

without the full complement: the quartet in *Semele*; and unless anyone can produce a precedent, the unprepared change from G major to G minor at bar 51 which remains till the end of the movement is not something a pupil is likely to foist on a work of Handel. [6] Most transpositions and substitutions are caused by changes of singers in revivals: adding a quintet is surely an artistic decision. The only reason to cut it is the need for two bassoons in bars 60-61 (and less essentially in 67-68).

Ever since Emma Kirkby objected to the weight of my Oxford UP *Messiah* vocal score, I've paid attention to the strain on singers' arms and wrists. My copy of the Novello vocal score of *Jephtha* (bought in 1960: later reprints might be on thicker paper) weighs 360 grams, Bärenreiter weighs 810. The Novello Vs, while hardly Urtext, benefits from not being replaced by an abridged and 'modernised' edition some 50 years later, as the more popular oratorios suffered. Spaciousness and clarity needs to be balanced with practical consideration. If you can use a music stand for rehearsals and performance, fine. But it will look odd with a large choir.

As for the quality of the music, comparing the two works is hardly relevant, since one is an opera and the other, even if staged, has a substantial amount for the chorus. Some of the music is incredibly powerful, especially towards the end of Act II and the beginning of Act III. The introduction mentions the parallel with Euripides' *Iphigenia at Aulis* but ignores the Mozart equivalent, *Idomeneo*. Iphegenia is rescued from death, as is Iphis. To quote the Argument, 'This termination, although differing from the common impression of the result of Jephtha's vow, is sanctioned by the opinions of many learned commentators upon the portion of Scripture History from whence this subject is taken – *viz.*, Judges, chap x., xi.'[7] A little more could be made of the final chorus of Act II (*How dark, O Lord are thy decrees! All hid from mortal sight!*) and Handel's failing sight: the note at the end of that section should have been footnoted or at least quoted in full in the Preface.[8] Handel replaced the librettist's end of the chorus from *What God ordains is right* with Alexander Pope's *Whatever is, is right*", which in the context of his notes in the score, raises the question of the tone that the new text suggests: accepting or going down fighting.

Not having the HHA full score, I can't comment on details of improvements in the edition, but my guess is that, whichever edition is used, the work will strike home, perhaps improved by some pruning towards the end. But I suspect that HHA editors are not allowed to suggest that!

6. But there is a presage in *Happy Isis*, which is in G with a G minor middle section.

7. I've quoted this from the Novello edition; I don't have an early libretto of this work to check.

8. "Got as far as this on Wednesday 13 Feb, unable to go on because of the relaxation of the sight of my left eye." and "Saturday 23 of this month a little better, started work again".

HANDEL ARIAS

Handel *Aria Album from Handel's Operas for Mezzo-Soprano and Contralto* compiled by Donald Burrows Bärenreiter (BA 10253), 2010. xx + 92pp, £22.50.
Handel *Aria Album from Handel's Operas for Tenor* compiled by Donald Burrows Bärenreiter (BA 10254), 2010. xviii + 87pp, £22.50.
Handel Aria *Album from Handel's Operas for Bass* compiled by Donald Burrows Bärenreiter (BA 102545), 2010. xx + 83pp, £22.50.

These are excellent anthologies, compiled by one of our most distinguished Handelians. The mezzo-contralto volume is specifically for roles sung by women (even if trousered). Previous volumes in the series have been for high men, high women and duets etc. Unless I've missed it, there isn't a volume for countertenors yet. The selection is interesting – all good but not all hackneyed. Introductory recits are included when appropriate. Curiously, although each album is roughly the same length, there is space for 50% more items for mezzo than for bass – perhaps the basses bluster too much! Although the editions derive from Bärenreiter vocal scores, the indications of scoring are omitted. If I were using these volumes (not that I would dare to sing solo!), I'd want to try some arias with a few strings. Bärenreiter are not geared to providing parts of individual arias, but since the contents are from their editions, they must have parts available that could perhaps be packaged (and positively marketed) for each volume. As it is, the only easy source for individual arias is Tony Burke or me. There are good introductions and translations into English and German.

REVISED B-MINOR MASS

Bach Mass in B minor BWV 232 Edited by Uwe Wolf Bärenreiter (TP 1232), 2010. xxviii + 279pp, £17.00 (Also available: large score £69.00 pb, £254.50 hb, VSc £12.00, parts)

I hope that a fuller review by John Butt will follow: meanwhile, a few comments from me. This was one of the earlier editions of the Neue Bach-Ausgabe, and the assumptions upon which Friedrich Smend based his 1954 edition are now dubious, to say the least. In particular, incorporating information from the 1733 Kyrie/Gloria (especially the parts) needs to be handled with care. The final version, rather than being put together during the 1730s as Smend believed, was one of the large-scale monuments that Bach composed and assembled in his last years. The introduction states that information from the 1733 parts is given in greytone print. Some parts are shown thus, but I can't see any grey slurs in the study score, and my copy of the Smend score with 1733 variants marked in green (which would show me where to look) isn't currently accessible. You can, however, check the 1733 parts at www.bach-digital.de under BWV 232. The later autograph, however, has decayed since a facsimile was

published in the 1920s, and there are problems in distinguishing Bach's original from subsequence changes by CPE Bach.

The vocal score has also been revised. It is a pity that there is no comment about the degree of compatibility with the previous vocal score: choirs are not going to buy a whole set if they only need a few extra copies. Or is the old edition still going to be available (like the Prout *Messiah* from Novello)? Anyone interested in the Mass should at least read the introduction: I wait with interest for John's review.

BREITKOPF BACH ORGAN WORKS

Bach *Complete Organ Works Vol. 5: Sonatas, Trios, Concertos* **edited by Pieter Dirksen** Breitkopf & Härtel (EB 8805), 2010 215pp + CD-ROM, €29.80
Bach *Complete Organ Works Vol. 6: Clavierübubg III, Schübler-Choräle, Canonische Veränderungen über 'Vom Himmel hoch, da komm ich her'* **edited by Werner Breig** Breitkopf & Härtel (EB 8806), 2010. 156pp, €22.80

These are the first two volumes of a new 10-volumes complete organ works from a variety of editors. These two volumes contain distinctive groups. Vol. 5 has the six organ sonatas, along with three related movements and an isolated trio movement in D minor BWV 583 with some dubious features. These are followed by the five Organ Concertos, three based on Vivaldi and two on Prince Johann Ernst von Sachsen-Weimer. It's a pity that the Vivaldi opus numbers are not shown with the title. The volume ends with three further trio transcriptions (BWV 585-7) from Fasch, [Telemann?] and Couperin. There is also a CD supplement containing seven transcriptions of Bach trio movements set alongside their originals. The CD opened fine when the scores arrived, but won't at present. Vol. 6 contains Bach's three chorale publications, including of course the E-flat Prelude and Fugue.

The current standard complete organ works is Bärenreiter's offprints from NBA. Don't throw them away. But scholarship progresses, and there are advantages in a fresh look at the editorial problems, even on the analogy of the pygmy sitting on the shoulder of a giant seeing further – and the editors here are hardly pygmies. There are also additional conveniences. The critical commentary, for instance, is included in each volume (in German, with an English text at www.breitkopf.com) as well as substantial introductions in German and English. The commentary in vol. 6 is enhanced by excerpts of facsimiles, though the half-size reproductions of complete pages are a bit grey. Important points in the commentary are footnoted on the music pages. The music print is clear, if sometimes a bit squashed, but in the good cause of avoiding page-turns.

If you are equipped with the Bärenreiter organ works, you don't need to replace them (though it's worth reading the introductions and perhaps downloading the commentaries). But these two volumes are strong competitors and roughly comparable in price.

MOZART STRING QUINTETS

Mozart *Streichquintette III [K. 593 & 614]* **herausgegeben von Ernst Herttrich & Wolf-Dieter Seiffert** Henle (HN 9779) 2010. xii + 74pp, €14.00; parts (HE 779), €27.50

I sometimes wonder: what is the point of such continual competition between editions? A century or so ago, everything Peters did, Breitkopf did as well. On the whole, Breitkopf came out on top, though Peters won with Bach organ works and Schubert songs. For much of the post-war period, Bärenreiter led the way with new editions of the classics, though Breitkopf has fought back, and more recent firms like Henle and Carus are also prominent. Some of the changes are fashion, others are of substance, others of presentation. There are not too many problems with these two works, and the most significant problem cannot be conclusively solved. This is the matter of the accidentals in the main theme of the last movement of K. 593. The autograph begins with a descending chromatic scale in quavers from A to D; this is changed in the autograph (by whom and when is unknown) to give a more varied shape, and appeared in the first edition. When the 'original' emerged, the chromatic version was assumed to be correct. But a change by the composer isn't impossible, and on purely personal musical grounds, I feel that the post-autograph version is more interesting. The edition sensibly gives both versions on the page, so the choice can easily be made – though the chromatic version is in the main text. The commentary (also included in the violin I part, so accessible to players who don't feel the need to study a score) deals mostly with slurs – a tricky matter, in that they tend to be written at speed and it isn't at all clear when the absence of a slur is significant.

There is an interesting issue in the preceding movement which the editors do not address. The Trio begins with the first violin going up the D major triad for two octaves and a third in quavers. The first two notes are given staccato dots editorially. The phrase occurs seven times, and the dots are in the sources only on the fifth appearance. There is a series of descending quavers for all four instruments three bars earlier at the end of the Menuetto: every note of each part has a staccato dot. The opening of the Trio is clearly a deliberate contrast – moving up rather than down, and intervals of a third or fourth rather than consecutive notes. Are the dots missing because it is obvious that the notes must be detached in the new phrase, or because Mozart didn't want it to be exaggerated because a shortening of the notes was built into their separation of anyway? So why is it notated in bar 28-30 only? It is there preceded by three quiet, identical chords, making a temporary pause in the motion (whether or not there is much temporal delay). The chords have dashes;

the dots on the two next notes may be a reminder to move back to the style of the opening of the Trio.

Incidentally, something that is obvious on the page (so obvious to the composer, even though the performance has a repeat of the Menuetto) is that six bars before the end there is an ascending chromatic bar of quavers, which in the penultimate bar is inverted but with the last pair of notes modified to avoid a continuous chromatic scale – arguments, perhaps, for either version of the opening of the Finale. (I wouldn't push this too far, though, since the Trio version doesn't stress the accidentals.)

This is a fine edition, with sensibly-laid-out parts, though it would be useful to have the Köchel numbers included on the covers.

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Monteverdi *E questa vita un lampo*

A draft translation is offered here for the poem by Angelo Grillo (1550-1629) set by Monteverdi in his *Selva morale*. Suggestions for improvement would be welcome.

Is this life a flash
that vanishes as soon as it appears
in this mortal field.
That which looks to the past
is already dead; the future is not yet born,
the present vanishes,
though not quite formed.
Ah! fleeting flash! even if you appeal to me,
after the flash comes the thunderbolt.

REVIEWS of BOOKS

Barbara Sachs, Peter Mole, Andrew Benson-Wilson, CB

LAURA PEPERARA

Elio Durante, Anna Martellotti *«Giovinetta peregrina». La vera storia di Laura Peperara e Torquato Tasso* with CD of *Madrigals for Laura Peperara* (Biblioteca dell' «Archivum Romanicum» - Serie I: Storia, Letteratura, Paleografia, vol. 371) Olschki Editore 2010 vi + 352 pp, with 2 coloured plates. € 35,00 ISBN: 978 88 222 5981 3

This brilliant research on Torquato Tasso (1544-1595) and the famous Concerto delle Dame of the Estense Court substantially rewrites the biography of Laura Peperara (1563- 29 December 1600), the singer, dancer, harpist and pupil of Giaches Wert in Mantova, who arrived at the court of Ferrara in 1580, whom Tasso knew from her birth and admired, but who could not have been the object of his early second love and the subject of poems collected by A. Solerti and still generally accepted as dedicated to her between 1564 and 1579. This is a younger "Laura" (whose surname also appears as *Peverara*, her father's being *Peveraro*), celebrated by Tasso (and by other madrigalists) in the 1580s, and their "true story" – biographical, musical and literary – is the intriguing subject of this erudite book. A colour plate shows her beautiful chromatic double harp (1581), now in the Galleria Estense in Modena.

The authors' reconstruction regards Tasso's life, madness, imprisonment and output, and analyzes the madrigal texts inspired by the very talented Peperara. The CD included with the volume (Tactus TC530001) contains some of these: by Luzzaschi, Wert, Agostini and Virchi, performed by Silvia Frigato and Miho Kamiya (sopranos) with Silvia Rambaldi (harpsichord). The harpsichord plays intabulations of four parts of 5- and 6-part madrigals, while one or both of these virtuoso sopranos sings the upper part or parts. It's ironic that a performance appearing under the label "tactus" takes the most improbably extreme metrical liberties conceivable, but this is very difficult music to execute and interpret, as Frescobaldi himself remarked in the foreword to the *Toccate e partite d'intavolatura di cimbalo* of 1615 (dedicated to Ferdinando Gonzaga), in which the beat is to be "sometimes languid, sometimes fast, as in modern madrigals, according to the sense of the words". The 9th Toccata (included in the CD), begins like Luzzaschi's setting of Guarini's madrigal *Aura soave di segreti accenti*, which praised Laura's sweet singing, exploiting the double meanings *aura-aria, l'aura-Laura* typical of other madrigals inspired by her (*e.g.* Tasso: *Non fonte o fiume od aura/Odo in più dolce suon de la mia Laura* and Guarini's description of her harp *Legno canoro, a cui dà vita l'aura/Di dolcissimi accenti*).

"Laurel" themes in over 60 madrigal texts (*alloro* or *lauro*) began with Tasso's *Picciola verga e bella* of 1582, the year of Laura's marriage, in which a cutting or shoot will become a new laurel tree. Many things can happen to a tree, and there is no way to summarize the ways in which various poets (and composers setting these texts) portrayed Laura herself, the vissitudes of love or poetic inspiration with these conceits. However in clarifying Tasso's biography, and by distinguishing Laura Peverara from the older Laura, the otherwise contradictory texts are hypothetically explained.

The "Musica Secreta", performed two to three hours daily by the *Dame*, is the subject of a separate chapter. The three singers played harp, lute and viol, the Serenissimi Alfonso D'Este and Margherita Gonzaga sang and played as well, and at sight, as did Fiorino (maestro di capella) and Luzzaschi (harpsichord and organ). Alfonso died in 1597 and Margherita returned to Mantova. Anna Guarini (the poet's daughter) was murdered in 1598. Only Laura and Livia d'Arco were still alive to perform for the last time for the wedding of Margherita of Austria to Philip III of Spain. A few months after Laura's death Luzzaschi published his *Madrigali per cantare e sonare* to revive the "rare and singular, as judged by all, music of the *Dame*...". *Barbara Sachs*

Pangrazi, Tiziana *La «Musurgia universalis» di Athanasius Kircher. Contenuti, fonti, terminologia* Olschki Editore 2009 xxiv+208 pp with 43 illustrations €24,00 ISBN: 978 88 222 5886 1

The title which Kircher (1602-1680) gave to his scientific analysis of the production and perception of musical sounds, along with a historical overview of musical composition, practice and purpose, was itself a matter for contention. In Jesuit circles, where perhaps the mania for terminology was part of the pursuit of erudition, the indefatigably creative Kircher coined "universal musurgy" to identify this small part of his vast interdisciplinary research. *Musurgia* is to music what dramaturgy is to drama, if that helps. This is the same man who laboured to decipher Egyptian hieroglyphics (his conclusions were later disproved by the Rosetta Stone) and personally created an enormous museum of antiquities in Rome, today the core of the collection known as the Museo Nazionale di Roma.

Section by section the present book summarizes Kircher's conclusions. It is an analytical guide to the original, with many beautiful illustrations. Italians are assumed to be able to read Latin, so quotations are in the original and not always paraphrased. Nevertheless, 17th century scientific

Latin follows Italian word order, and to properly follow Pangrazi's explanations one should make a stab at reading everything. Even with this limitation the volume still offers enormous aide as a commentary.

In 1650, after ancient and before modern science and religion, *Musurgia universalis* was Kircher's attempt to account for the physical means and the spiritual meaning of musical art, from the buzzing of insects to the harmony of the spheres, from Biblical instrumentation to counterpoint, or *Symphonurgia* (the instructions for which occupy 10 chapters, idealistically borrowed from the arithmetic approach of Silverio Picerli's *Specchio secondo di musica* 1631), from the mathematics of Pythagoras to the baroque metaphors for the cosmos.

In his manifold descriptions of forms, Kircher appears to have reflected on everything: *musica pathetica* (eight *Affekten* generated by three principal ones), *musica rhetorica* (twelve figures), *musarithmi* (numerical combinations to guide composition); old and new *styli* from the *ecclesiasticus* to the *phantasticus* to the *theatrialis* – too many to be listed without explanations, and *musurgia mechanica* part of the method which enables the dilettante to make music.

Throughout the book I hoped to find a clue to why Kircher seems never to have composed a piece of music... Is this the case? *Barbara Sachs*

BOOTH on BACH

We've received two reviews of this. It's an important book, so I'm happy to print both, as we occasionally do with CD reviews. CB

Colin Booth *Did Bach really mean that? Deceptive notation in Baroque keyboard music* Soundboard, 2010. 349pp, £45.00 (going up to £60.00) ISBN 978-0-9547488 (Order form at www. soundboard-records.co.uk)

If surprise was expressed in 1651, when Thomas Hobbes published *Leviathan* at the then advanced age of sixty-three, it would have been misplaced: no-one could have produced a major work of political philosophy without a lifetime's involvement with the affairs of state. Similarly, it should come as no surprise that Colin Booth, well-known as a harpsichordist, recording artist and harpsichord maker has waited until now to produce his work on baroque keyboard notation. Without a working lifetime as a performer, acquiring a detailed knowledge of this repertoire such an enterprise would have been impossible. Nevertheless, to produce a closely argued work of over 300 pages packed with musical examples requires considerable industry and persistence. Added to which Booth has himself overseen the process of setting, printing and marketing the text. One can only stand back and salute his energy.

Those who know Booth's playing either from his concert performances or from his extended list of recordings will know that his playing is exuberant, and that he is capable of extracting considerable emotion even from the most unpromising material; not for him the academic playing of a Ralph Kirkpatrick. He is not unusual in that now (though he would have been regarded as cavalier forty years ago) but he is unusual in being able to articulate his rationale for it. His approach, as set out in this book is based on two constructs – first, that in the baroque period, notation of music was still undeveloped and like seventeenth century spelling, inconsistent; secondly that most composers were driven by expediency, and in particular by the need to simplify and shorten the labour of notation and of the subsequent task of the engraver. Developing his theme in those contexts, Booth takes us through eight chapters of detailed exposition based on large numbers of examples, beginning with the way in which the sound of a single note might be notated, through the problems inherent in notating triplets and 'swung' rhythms, and on to the notation and playing of ornaments. As Booth shows us, all is not as it seems. But better than that, all is not as complicated as it seems, with the consequence that much of this music emerges as technically easier than might at first be thought.

The primary target of this book is the keen amateur and beginner professional, as befits a work which started life as lectures at Dartington, and Booth recommends that the book be read at the keyboard. That is strong medicine, and if taken, it would necessarily have to be in small doses; your reviewer was reluctant and happily found that *physicke* unnecessary at a first reading. But there is little in life from which all the goodness can be extracted in a single pressing: as Stephen Kovacevich comments on the dust jacket, the reader will need to 'roll up his or her sleeves' if the maximum benefit is to be derived from this volume, and then indeed, it will help to be seated at the keyboard.

The book is attractively produced between hard covers and is physically robust enough to last a lifetime. The text is annotated, but only lightly, making it accessible to the general reader as well as providing a valuable resource for the serious scholar or performer. A welcome feature is the almost complete absence of typographical errors. One minor criticism is that though there is a list of suggestions for further reading, there is no formal bibliography. Though not cheap (Amazon list it at £60), it represents very good value for anyone who is serious about improving as a player of baroque keyboard music. *Peter Mole*

This book has its roots in the Dartington Summer School early music weeks, initially with the masterclasses given by Colin Tilney and, more recently, by talks that Booth himself (a long term supplier of his own harpsichords to the Summer School) has also given. The two principal underlying premises are that the nature of writing, copying or printing music was such that the niceties of detailed performance instructions was considered too

onerous a task and were therefore frequently omitted (although Booth also points out that accepted performance convention was also a key factor), and that there was, in any case, no accepted way of indicating the detailed rhythmic or ornamental conventions that might have been in the mind of the composer. Much is therefore left to the performer or interpreter. Of course, if that were not the case, we would have no need of books like this. Alongside these contentions are particular performing interpretations that Booth clearly holds dear, two of the main ones being that music of all early periods and national schools was generally played with a 'swing', and that there was far more synchronisation of triplet and double rhythms than is generally accepted nowadays. Booth does his best to make a complex subject approachable, not least by finishing each chapter with a conclusion and starting the following chapter with an introductory linking passage. This is a very impressive bit of private enterprise, self-published and promoted through Colin Booth's own record label, Soundboard, and with its own website (www.didbach.co.uk) where you can find chapter introductions and other information about the book.

Colin Booth writes as a practitioner rather than an academic and his writing reflects this, noting himself that "this is not a work of theoretical scholarship". The rather sparse academic references (with a distinct lack of recent writers – the 'Further Reading' list has no original writings from this century, and only two from the 1990s) are compensated for by some sound practical advice. Although I have heard some of the harpsichords that he has built, I have not heard Colin Booth himself playing so cannot judge the extent to which this book reflects a playing style that he has made his own – but the writing style does suggest that this could well be the case. Although this might weaken its status as a scholarly work, this remains an interesting insight into one performer's way of interpreting the "snares and delusions of notation" (to quote an article by Peter Williams – one of many writers who might have been included in the references).

Accepting that this as a very personal interpretation, there are times when I think things are pushed a bit too far, one being in the 'Swung Rhythms" chapter with the use of notational shorthand and the apparent French influence on other European styles. For example, although I am happy to accept that a composer may indicate the articulation of a theme in the first few bars and then leave it up to the player to continue in the same style without further notation, I did have difficulty with Booth's conjecture that the presence of half a bar of dotted rhythms in one line of half of the penultimate bar of a Buxtehude Allemande may not only reflect "the composers expectation of an unequal performance throughout" (in which case, why didn't he, more helpfully, put the 'clue' at the beginning of the piece?), but also (admittedly, presented as a Booth "leap of faith") the suggestion that other Buxtehude Allemandes, which contain no such 'clues', could carry the same assumption.

Although he writes as a harpsichordist, with practically all of the examples and techniques described being specifically for the harpsichord, he acknowledges other keyboard instruments. However, having billed it as being "for players of all keyboard instruments", he might have made it a bit less specific, and given more non-harpsichord examples. For example, there is only one specifically organ piece listed and I could find no reference to organ or clavichord techniques. That said, for harpsichord players, and accepting the issues inherent in a work of this nature, I think this will prove to be a valuable contribution to the understanding of the performance of keyboard music from one player's perspective. As always, the most important thing for any performer is to develop the ability to think for oneself, whether helped or hindered by teachers. This is exactly what Colin Booth has done over his career as a harpsichord maker and player. And, read in that spirit, this book can only help other players develop the same independence of thought and approach to music making.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

A problem I find in editing Handel is when some detail, like a slur or a dotting on a pair of notes, is notated only in the closing ritornello. I generally assume that the composer is getting the music down as quickly as possible, and that the notation doesn't necessarily refer only to one particular statement of a phrase: the degree of precision of how detailed a composer writes it is probably arbitrary. As an editor, I would read back the more specific notation to its first appearance, but as a performer I take it as a hint that pairs of adjacent notes (for instance) may be treated freely. I was interested in the article by Dorottya Fabian and Emery Schubert in Early Music *Nov. 2010 pp. 585-8 in which they report the result of their measurement of the lengths of dotted notes in 34 recordings of Variation 7 of the Goldberg Variations. They show how practice undermines any precise double-dotting theory, and this might well be the result of a similar study of the treatment of paired 'equal' quavers. Singers and players are capable of flexible pairing by stress without apparently extending the first note, but keyboard players have to use other methods.* *CB*

THE FALL AND RISE OF THE VIOL

Peter Holman *Life after Death: the Viola da Gamba in Britain from Purcell to Dolmetsch* the Boydell Press, 2010. xxii + 394pp, £50.00 ISBN 978 1 84383 574 5

This could have been an incredibly dull book. But Peter Holman has the knack of finding interesting information and writing interestingly about it. There's a general assumption that the viola da gamba vanished soon after 1680 (the date of Purcell's retrospective and progressive fantasies) and was barely heard again until Arnold Dolmetsch reinvented it, with the exception of Abel and Gainsborough. Abel doesn't appear here until page 169.

The book begins with the professional players in restoration England. Interest was already chiefly in the bass instrument, and a key figure was Gottfried Finger – who was, I think, long before Peter encountered the viol music, a composer who particularly fascinated him. By the end of the century, the viol was indeed a minority instrument. The viol consort no longer flourished, and what solo viol playing there was survived among very few amateurs and the occasional professional from abroad. There is a very thorough discussion of the exotic scene in *Giulio Cesare* with gamba, harp and theorbo. This prepares the way for a chapter on the cult of exotic instruments, in which the gamba is linked with a variety of weird imports and inventions.

This chapter begins with an intriguing Moravian furniture- and instrument-maker John Frederick Hinds alias Hintz. What caught my eye (p. 141) was that he took ship from London on 13 June 1738 and one of the fellow-passangers was John Wesley. Anyone with a Methodist background knows that the Wesleys encountered the Moravians on their voyage to Savannah in 1735, stayed in touch with them there, and had religious conversations with one in London on his return just before their 'conversion' on 24 May 1738, the most significant event in their life. On 13 June, John departed with other Moravians, including Hintz, to Holland and Marienborn (where Hintz stayed and acquired a wife a year later). The Wesleys were a musical family, so perhaps the two got to know each other for a common musical as well as religious interests. Though not related to the book or *EMR*, it would be interesting to investigate further. Hintz does seem, to be an interesting man.

Two chapters are devoted to Charles Frederick Abel, the only professional whose reputation was as a gambist. He seems to have had two styles, one virtuosic, the other more sensuous or sentimental – and it wasn't an accident that Laurence Sterne took up the viol. (Modern readers tend to forget that he wrote *A Sentimental Journey* as well as the unclassifiable *Tristram Shandy*.) Like most gamba players, Abel played the cello too; his gamba spots in the Bach-Abel concerts were brief. Throughout the period, however, the terminology was vague, and mentions of the *viola da gamba* do not necessarily exclude the cello. Only rarely does gamba music declare itself by using idiomatic chords. The gamba mostly played melodies, often written in the treble clef, so players could easily play down an octave pieces for flute or violin.

Iconographic evidence is often risky, but there is one artist who knew his viol from his cello: Gainsborough. There are two well-known portraits by him of Abel with his viol resting on his thigh (pl. 11) and another (on the cover) of him with his instrument, if not the bow, at the ready. His portrait of Ann Ford (later Mrs Thicknesse) shows her viol hanging on the wall (plate 15). Ann Ford was a specialist in the exotic, and seems to have had considerable musical skills, at one stage regularly performing in public, though perhaps over-sentimentalising. Gainsborough himself was a viol enthusiast: he wrote: "My Comfort is, I have 5 Viol's da Gamba, 3 Jayes and 2 Barak Normans." (p. 256). Were these all basses, or did he have a consort? If the latter, what would it have played?

The revival of early vocal music began in the 18th century, but the use of early instruments for early music followed rather later. The pioneer was Fétis in France in 1832, with an equivalent in London in 1836. Accounts differ, but I wonder what an 11-part anthem by Giovanni Gabrieli with three singers, two cornetts,[1] viols and four trombones sounded like. More significant was a concert in 1845 including two pieces played by "ancient instruments'", one apparently from Cavalieri's *Rappresentatione...*[2] for five strings, three pluckers, organ and violone – probably the largest continuo group for well over a century! A 15th-century (!) Romanesca also had five strings, with lute and violone continuo. (Dragonetti was the violone-player and probably added chords.) Bach was the impetus for public use of the gamba, and one was played in a St John Passion by John Pettit in 1872, followed by a St Matthew the following year. The assumption that the 1872 Passion was his first viol performance, however, was denied in the press. But there were not two viols to play the *Actus Tragicus* in either of the independent performances in 1875. The suggestion that the London music colleges should teach the viola d'amore and gamba was made in 1886, but took nearly a century to happen. The book ends with Arnold Dolmetsch, who operated outside Academies, and it was probably his influence that pushed interest in early instrumental music to viol and recorder ensembles rather than more soloistic repertoire.

I've just been cherry-picking rather than following an argument. The book is a bit like that, but does have several strands of continuity that I haven't expounded. It is a book to dip into, with subsections to the chapters that make it easily done. *CB*

1. The 'modern' instrument, invented in Paris a few years earlier, or cornetti?
2. It's dated 1600, but Peter argues that it was actually composed by Fétis.

John Blow's *Venus and Adonis*

Elizabeth Kenny

Had Purcell not written *Dido and Aeneas* and had he not overshadowed his former teacher Blow so comprehensively, *Venus and Adonis* would stand more vividly in our minds as a work whose powerful effects and emotions are intensely compressed into a relatively small scale work that lasts about an hour. "Second best" rhetoric has dogged this work, and though no-one who has been involved in hearing or performing both can resist counting the parallels and differences between them, *Venus* is not a *Dido* prototype, just as *Dido* itself is not a prototype for lyric opera. Venus sits squarely in the tradition of pastoral entertainment that drew on French and Italian models, and for whom pastoral is a setting for urgent conflicts between nature, civilisation, love and duty, individualism and collective good, rather than a merely diverting retreat from the important questions of life.

James Winn argued in 2008 that the librettist for *Venus* was likely to have been Anne Kingsmill, later Anne Finch, later still the published poet Anne Countess of Winchilsea, who was hailed slightly bizarrely as a kindred spirit by William Wordsworth, a point to which I shall return later. Finch's authorship of the libretto and its dramatic qualities are a good place to start this discussion of the work, as they have profound implications for its performance, and incidentally help to move it from under the *Dido*-shadow into its own light. She became a Maid of Honour to James II's wife, Mary of Modena, the Duchess of York, in 1682. Mary was known for her love of French operas and pastorales, and among earlier productions had sponsored another mythological drama, *Calisto*, in 1675. This had starred Charles II's former mistress Mary (Moll) Davies, as well as Princess Mary (aged 12) and Princess Anne (aged 10). Elizabeth Brown recently re-assigned a misattributed MS of guitar music in Den Haag to Princess Anne, showing her to be an inveterate player of song and opera arrangements including a number by Purcell. The combination of singing and guitar-playing will be familiar to anyone who has seen the beautiful portrait of Mary Davies by Peter Lely with its equally beautiful baroque guitar. A show featuring a middle aged guitar-playing mother for a court with a tradition of pluckery (Calisto had four guitar and two theorbo players): perhaps I'm a little biased, but what's not to love?

If Finch wrote *Venus* for courtly performance, she – without admitting it – came to regret the decision, saying it would have been

> a mistaken vanity, to lett any attempts of mine on Poetry shew themselves, whilst I lived in such a Publick place as the Court, where every one would have made their remarks upon a Versifying Maid of Honour; and far the greater number with prejudice, if not contempt.

The secrecy of her authorship meant there was no collaborative relationship between librettist and composer: Blow took his material and ran with it. There are a number of in-jokes, of satirical glances at court culture that can only have come from an insider, and perhaps a female one at that. The title of the manuscript source now in the British Library is "A Masque for ye Entertainment of ye King": Charles would have seen the performance, which Bruce Wood puts at a date of around 1683, but in his brother's court rather than his own (at the time preoccupied with the grander *Albion and Albanius*). *Venus* is no glorification of royalty, and the musical resources needed are relatively modest. Winn speculates that Finch might have regretted the eroticism of the text, but there is also the possibility that some of the changes she made to the myth were a little close to the bone. Keeping up courtly appearances is hard work: Venus needs time to attend to her "Magazine of Beauty" so she sends Charles-Adonis off to hunt, even though he'd really rather not, and this rather lazy hedonism is only underlined by his followers' characterisation of him as a "sprightly youth".

Germaine Greer has discussed Anne Kingsmill-Finch's work in her book *Slip-Shod Sibyls*, and she is right to caution against an overexcited hailing of female literary greatness: the absurdly over-flattering encomia to "poetesses" were as detrimental as "prejudice, if not contempt". This libretto isn't Shakespeare, but neither is it, to borrow Dr Johnson's view of female authors, a dog walking on its hind legs. In characterizing the lovers and their interaction, and in giving a voice to Adonis, it is streets ahead of Tate's slightly hysterical Dido and slightly plank-like Aeneas, who do rather need Purcell to rescue them.

English composers too often over-praised the achievements of their female students: Henry Lawes rather overdid it in his preface to his *Ayres and Dialogues* of 1655 in suggesting he'd like to have written Lady Mary Dering's compositions, but in performance – and this is germane to thinking about *Venus and Adonis* – he was not so indulgent: when he wrote the music for the part of The Lady in *Comus* (now interestingly known as "Milton's" *Comus* though at the time very much under Lawes' control as the senior partner) he required Alice Egerton to rehearse for seven weeks, and according to Ian Spink "Sabrina was a non-singing part, perhaps because the song was too long and complicated for whoever was to take the part". MS sources of English songs reveal a tradition of highly trained young women singers – the Egerton sisters, Elizabeth Davenant, Mary Knight, Anne Blount to name but a few – who took lessons with professionals, that was not always revealed on the public stage: they learned often

very florid and complicated music, and may have sounded quite different from, or may have set the scene for, the singing actresses of the Restoration. It is clear that when they were allowed to perform in a masque context they maintained high standards.

Such confidence seems to have been behind the bold move to give the opening scene in *Venus* to Cupid rather than to the eponymous couple. It underscores the point of why this is a masque rather than an opera, even though as in opera there is no spoken dialogue: Venus and Cupid were as intimately connected in life as in the story, and the downfall of the one will be the rise of the other, who is herself probably condemned to the same sort of fate. Wood has observed that the performance at court may have been part of a process of bringing ten or eleven-year old Lady Mary Tudor out into the "public" (in its most courtly sense) gaze. The young woman on the verge of adolescence is both adult and child, an idealist ("in these sweet groves, love is not taught") and a realist ("the foolish, ugly and the old...")

The "spelling scene", a parody of Blow's day-job as grammarian to the Children of the Chapel Royal, has Venus quizzing Cupid on her lessons and marshalling Little Cupids into spelling the "vain and silly", the "mercenary" and the other targets of their arrows. A reversal comes when it is Venus who asks Cupid how to keep hold of Adonis, and the girl replies "use him very ill". This is a stock treatment but, significantly, an abandonment of Venus' earlier ideal to "give him freely all delights". Blow used almost the same notes for her manic laughter – albeit a lot faster – as will reappear as her unhinged howl at the end of the story. With this exchange Venus has ceded authority to Cupid, a culture has embraced cynicism rather than the opposite, and nothing will be the same again. The young can be as callous as they like, because they are beautiful without even trying. Usually male lovers like the "decoying " shepherds in Dryden/Purcell's *King Arthur* are in the driving seat, but in this libretto it is the female desire that comes first –

> To warm desires the women nature moves,
> And every youthful swain by nature loves.

In the real world this power doesn't get them very far.

The plot as interpreted here is also about aging, and the middle-aged Venus and Adonis are different to the heroic but inarticulate Aeneas and the impetuous Dido. Theatre of the Ayre's recent tour explored the ambiguity of the child-adult boundary: on the recording for Wigmore Hall Live we have the youth in charge, voice-in-the-world of Elin Manahan Thomas, and in other performances thirteen year-old Rebecca Lyles and fifteen year-old Laura Soper sang with younger voices, but without the beauty-soon-to-disappear connotations of boy trebles.

The sense of the realities of social exchange is a key part of Finch's other work, and explains the scene which did not get written, the hunting scene: a "Versifying Maid of Honour" would have no experience of this. In Finch/Winchilsea's ambitious Pindaric Ode *The Spleen*, there is a frustration that the usual spheres of female activity are so limited, and her real interests in poetry are often derided or denied:

> My hand delights to trace unusual things,
> And deviates from the known and common way,
> Nor will in fading silks compose
> Faintly th'inimitable rose,
> Fill up an ill-drawn bird, or paint on glass....

In *Venus* the names of the hunters as Ovid had them in his Acteaon of the *Metamorphoses* are given (albeit slightly mis-remembered here and there) to the dogs rather than to the hunters, a *jeu d'esprit* which may have given away the female viewer's opinion of both groups.

It must be said that in this scene as in the rest of Act II, Blow not only got the jokes but added to them, slyly varying the hunters' music, and adding a few off-beat "Hey"s to the hunters' rather self-important apostrophizing of their dogs. It is characteristic of both Blow and Purcell, (and perhaps an aspect of 17th century theatre) that, musically, is hardest to recapture – that the most serious themes are sometimes disconcertingly mixed with humour. The tenor's excitable description of the "mighty boar" they're after but who will kill Adonis lies at the very top end of the tenor's vocal range which is both heroic and just a bit silly. With a fine sense of balance, Act III extends the conversation and re-establishes the long-standing intimacy between Venus and Adonis as he dies, which sets up the change in tone to the final lament and chorus. And in this scene Blow goes in a different direction to Purcell, whose great Lament reinforces the isolation of the central character – and which incidentally may have ensured the afterlife of the opera by the provision of such an extractable moment of musical greatness. The dialogue between Venus and the chorus – and the silent presence of the Cupids – reinforces the point that this is a tragedy of a society. This is perhaps where English musical pastoral is at its most meaningful: Handel articulated Galatea's grief at the death of Acis in the same way, a parallel that occurred to me forcibly having performed with Sophie Daneman singing both roles.

What a Maid of Honour would do instead of hunting would be to dress her mistress, and the Scene with the Graces reflects this interest in the minutiae of the ritual, which links potentially frivolous objects to a sense that Nature is the powerful force of female desire:

> Hark! hark! ev'n Nature sighs: this joyful night
> She will beget desire and yield delight.
> *While the Graces dance, the Cupids dress* Venus, *one combing her head, another ties a bracelet of pearls round her wrist &c.*

William Wordsworth knew the Countess of Winchilsea's *Miscellany Poems on Several Occasions by a Lady* of 1713 (she put her own name to it in 1714 when its success was assured). He thought her *Nocturnall Reverie*, along with Pope's *Windsor Forest*, were the only poems between *Paradise Lost* and *The Seasons* where "the eye of the Poet had been steadily fixed upon his object".

It is ironic that, just as Blow should have sometimes been misrepresented as a fledgling though second division opera composer, Finch should be regarded as a fledgling second-division Romantic. She did indeed look hard at material and natural things: some of the most beautiful passages in *Venus* do conjure up the longing for "sweet groves" and nature at its most free and generous. The point that Wordsworth suppressed, by quoting only the extracts of her poems that sounded a bit like his, was that in her poems nature is at its most beautiful when seen as a counterpoise to society. Wordsworth cut the lines that referred to the friends looking at Nature with her. The problem for Wordsworth – and the problem for us in tackling the masque repertoire with its topical references – is that "society" has a sell-by date that he regarded as alien to the duty of a Poet to write for All Time. Today's performers and audience – not in on the jokes and references – are in the same position. Furthermore, courtly audiences of the Caroline and Stuart masque were an integral part of the "show", taking part through formal dancing, the wearing of elaborate costumes and taking mythological roles. We discovered by accident a way of engaging with this topicality through different groups of children in each area taking part as Cupids. They were initiated into the music and the idea through an education programme devised and delivered by the National Centre for Early Music's education consultant Cathryn Dew, assisted by myself. Alongside the girls of Salisbury Cathedral Choir, who can be heard on the CD, these children – and their friends and parents – threw the consciousness of the audience back on themselves and provided that bridge between participation and display that proved a masque-like aesthetic without the need for the rattling of jewelry.

Bruce Wood's edition of *Venus and Adonis* for the *Purcell Society Companion Series* provides parallel texts for the first court performance and a 1690s revision, in which the sequence of instrumental dances – ranging from the achingly beautiful *Sarabande* to the wild and woolly *Ground* – is absent. This may reflect an "operatisation": removing the dances that recall the revels of the court masque. Another source of the libretto reveals it had been "Perform'd before the King, afterwards at Mr. Josias Priest's Boarding School at Chelsey", adding that "Mr Priest's Daughter Acted Adonis". One wonders if she sang Aeneas or the high-voiced Sorceress there too.

Blow's imagination was as captured by instrumental sound as by the libretto, and his use of instruments – particularly sensational novelties like the recorder which with leading exponents had recently arrived from France, also serves the double-vision between the myth and the court. Another in-joke is the duet between Venus/Davies and Jacques Paisible/recorder which threatens to upstage the ostensible love duet between Davies and Charles/Adonis. Davies and Paisible were subsequently married, which may have been a convenient destiny for a musical royal mistress in retirement, or perhaps their eyes met over the semi-quavers... the link between the amorous flute and soft guitar immortalised in Purcell's St Cecilia Ode of 1692 was born.

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Blow *Venus and Adonis* Theatre of the Ayre, Elizabeth Kenny 75' 14"
Wigmore Hall Live WHLive0043
www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/live
+ **Blow** *Cloe found Amintas lying & Ground in G minor for violin & continuo;* **Lambert** *Vos méprischaque jour; de Visée Chaconne*

It is remarkable that this is the first CD recording of *Venus and Adonis.** The piece has always lurked in the shadows as a model for Purcell's *Dido*. Here it is finally allowed into the spotlight in a performance that should henceforth guarantee it status in its own right, courtesy of a live recording from the Wigmore Hall. (I do find the applause between items intrusive, though, and that at the end even more so.) As a prelude we hear four short pieces, among which de Visée's *Chaconne* stands out if only as further proof that the only sound nicer than one theorbo is two, though the recorders at 8 foot pitch subsequently offer them serious competition. The leading singers are all well versed in this idiom, even if Elin Manaham Thomas occasionally sounds uncomfortable with the tessitura, and the bit parts combine to sing the choruses. The Cupids are sung with great charm by girl choristers from Salisbury Cathedral. There are places where the interpretation is perhaps a little over-fussy but overall the recording strikes a major blow (*sorry*) for a historically important and musically valuable piece. *David Hansell*

* L'oiseau-lyre OLS 128 is a 1971 reissue of the 1953 recording with Margaret Ritchie as Venus and Gordon Clinton as Adonis.

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ERRATUM

David Hansell wishes to point out a slip in his Quarter-centenial Commemorations of Victoria in the last issue. His double choir *Salve Regina* is for SSAT/SATB and not what he wrote. Apologies from David, and also from me, since it's my favourite Victoria work and I ought to have spotted it! *CB*

LONDON

Andrew Benson-Wilson

RENAISSANCE ROCK

The CD-linked concert tour has always been an accepted part of concert life, the latest example being the tour of the CD "Lettere Amorose" with the delightfully photogenic Magdalena Kozená and the renaissance rock-band that is Private Musicke, bringing both joy and irritation to many early music buffs (at the Wigmore Hall, 2 Feb). The joy would be in the exquisite voice of Magdalena Kozená, officially a mezzo but capable of a very wide vocal range, which she combines with similarly expansive tonal colours and textures, minimal vibrato, well-articulated runs (when she wants to) and a naturally communicative stage manner. Stopping well short of parody, she explored the emotional complexities of works from Italy around the Monteverdi era ranging from the fury of love gone wrong to the sensitivity of the *Canzonetta spirituale sopra alla nanna*, a gorgeous cradle song for the Virgin by Tarquino Merulo. The irritation that some might feel was the upbeat antics of Private Musicke, an eight-strong group of pluckers and bashers, who dragged period instruments into the 21st century with a brilliant range of effects. They starting by wandering on stage one by one and joining in a jam session, the mood of which continued throughout the show. Whatever the period purists might think, I loved it!

IL GRAN MOGUL

La Serenissima continued their exploration of the lesser-known work of Vivaldi with the second incarnation of their programme "The French Connection" (Cadogan Hall 3 Feb). Their leader, Adrian Chandler, has joined the steady stream of early musicians getting involved with Southampton University, who sponsored this concert and provided a rather curious compere for the pre-concert talk. The point of most musical interest in the concert was the first London performance of a recently discovered concerto for flute, strings and continuo called *'Il Gran Mogul'* (RV 431a) – not to be confused with the Violin Concerto in D major (RV 208) with the nickname *Il Grosso Mogul*, and later arranged for organ by Bach. This *Mogul* was found amongst the papers of the Marquises of Lothian, now in the National Archives of Scotland. Lord Robert Kerr, an 18th century scion of the family, was a flautist and may have acquired the work during his Grand Tour. The 'a' in the RV number reflects the fact that a simplified version of this work is already in the catalogue as RV 431. Those who sign up to the "one concerto written 600 times" school of Vivaldi appreciation will wonder whether we actually need another concerto and, on this one hearing, I am not sure if it will top the charts – although the Larghetto was amiable enough. The highlight of the piece for me was the beautifully sensitive playing of the flute soloist, Katy Bircher – restrained, eloquent and musical, she combined these virtues with a delightfully poised stage manner that, very refreshingly, displayed not a hint of self-aggrandisement. She also excelled in what, for me, were the two other musical highlights of the concert, the Flute Concerto in A minor (RV 440), with its florid opening Allegro and mournful Larghetto, and the Concerto in G minor *La Notte*, (RV 104), where she demonstrated exquisite control over the sensuously minimalist Largo: *Il Sonno*. The Concerto in F for violin, oboe, strings and continuo (RV 543) was a curious affair, where the oboe soloist (Gail Hennessy) played in unison with the violin throughout. For many in the audience, the sheer exhilaration of the Concerto for bassoon in C, (RV 473) (one of 39 known Vivaldi examples) stole the show, with Peter Whelan's extraordinarily agile playing being particularly noticeable in the concluding Rondo, each variation demanding increasing fireworks from the soloist.

A LOVELY LITTLE SLITHER

The ever resourceful Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment brought their attention to bear on Mendelssohn, Weber and Beethoven in their Queen Elizabeth Hall (8 Feb) with their guest conductor David Zinman making his first appearance with a period instrument band. In a programme where all the pieces were written within 15 years of each other, they started with the music from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, one of those pieces that you think you know intimately until you hear the OAE perform it. Amongst several inspiring moments was the sound of the ophicleide, a lovely little slither from Chi-chi Nwanoku's double bass and some excellent horn playing from Roger Montgomery. As usual with the OAE, one of their own took centre stage for a concerto, on this occasion the normally retiring Antony Pay with Weber's Clarinet Concerto No 1 in F, written for Heinrich Baermann of the Munich Court Orchestra. Orchestral players do not usually make natural soloists, with the panache and self-confidence normally assumed for a place in the spotlight, but what they might lack in presentational skills they generally make up for with eloquent and sensitive, if rather low key performances – this was no exception. The work was new to me, and was interesting as much for its harmonic twists and turns as for its orchestral colour. The highlight was Beethoven's 7th Symphony, giving an inspiring reading by David Zinman and the amazing sense of orchestral colour that is a hallmark of the OAE.

THE JUDGMENT OF ALFRED

Bampton Opera is an enterprising 'country house' organisation that seeks out the hidden byways of (usually) 18th century opera but usually fail to retain their possible period potential in the ultimate staging, notably by their curious insistence on using modern instruments and their use of overly operatic voices. Fortunately, the period instrument factor was not an issue for their appearance at the Wigmore Hall (12 Feb) for a concert performance of two works by Arne, starting with extracts from the 1753 version of *Alfred* with a tongue in cheek narration giving a rough idea of what was going on in between the musical numbers. Joana Seara excelled as Eltruda, Alfred's queen and later as Juno in the following *Judgement of Paris*, as did Mark Chaundy in his brief appearance as Mercury. In a rather too obvious bit of casting, Ilona Domnich as the blonde Venus was good at portraying seduction, but her strong vibrato and persistent swoops rather let the side down musically. The use of period instruments, and a conductor who knew how to use them, made a big difference to this production and one which I hope they will retain for the future. Oliver Webber and Natasha Kraemer excelled on violin and cello respectively.

ELECTRONIC DRONES

I reviewed the very first London concert of Trio Mediæval and have watched their success ever since. However, their latest Wigmore Hall appearance (14 Feb) disappointed, not least because of the choice of music. Moving well away from their latest CD of the Worcester Fragments, and, indeed, much of their normal repertoire, this concert was dominated throughout by the Norwegian trumpeter and laptop user Arve Henriksen. Even the opening chant *Alma redemptoris mater* was sung over a low throbbing electronic drone. Various other electronic and trumpet additions were made throughout the concert, leaving the three singers of Trio Mediæval very much as second-string performers. Clever is it all was, it just seemed out of place – this programme may work for audiences who have never heard the Trio before and like trumpet and/or electronic music and/or Norwegian folk songs, but I fear that the Wigmore Hall is not the place or the audience to really appreciate such things. That said, the Trio excelled in the few examples of what one expects them to sing, and I have every sympathy with their attempts to widen their audience and musical base. Many other groups have done this successfully but, for me, on this evening at least, it just didn't work.

PURCELL

Standing in front of a rather incongruous Steinway grand on the Wigmore Hall stage (15 Feb), the four members of the Retrospect Trio were joined by soprano Julia Doyle for a very well chosen selection of Purcell Sonatas and Theatrical Airs. The eight vocal contributions were beautifully sung, her clear and articulate voice and gentle exploration of the emotions of the words creating some very attractive interpretations. The instrumentalists were also on top form, with some sympathetic accompaniments to the vocal works from Jonathan Manson, cello, and Matthew Halls, harpsichord. Violinists Sophie Gent and Matthew Truscott, swapping places as first violin, gave excellent accounts of the six chosen Sonatas, playing with vigour and emotional engagement with the music as it moved from section to section in a manner reflecting the earlier *stylus phantasticis* works of Castello et al. An excellent concert.

APOLLO AND DIONYSUS

The International Baroque Players (representing 11 countries) continue their impressive exploration of the lesser-known 18th-century repertoire with their St John's, Smith Square concert (22 Feb), given under the tatle of "Journey of Discovery: Apollo and Dionysus". A slightly predictable Concerto Grosso by Platti (which reinforced my view that Vivaldi generally does Vivaldi better than most) was followed by what was possibly the first UK performance of the recently discovered Concerto for violin, strings and basso continuo by the Dresden composer Johann David Heinichen. Magnus Andersson was an impressive lute soloist in the attractive Concerto in D minor by Fasch, the lush muted strings of the accompaniment adding a sensuous colouring to the work with its elegiac middle movement. The first half ended with a thoughtful and controlled account of Bach's Ricercar à 6, while the second half ended with real Vivaldi and his rather more than usually tongue-in-cheek Sinfonia *'per l'orchestra di Dresda'* RV192. Johannes Pramsohler was a fine violin soloist and an impressively unobtrusive director – indeed, the whole ensemble has the feel of the cooperative venture that it is. Other instrumentalists that stood out, for me, were cellist Kinga Gaborjani and bassist Pippa Macmillan.

AN IMPRESSIVE DEBUT

The fortepianist Kristian Bezuidenhout made an impressive debut with The English Concert in their Wigmore Hall Mozart concert (23 Feb), playing the C minor Fantasia in the first half and two Concertos in succession after the interval. His playing of the enormous Fantasia was elegiac, almost to the point of being romantic, his use of silence and the pregnant pause bring a respectful hush to the audience. After explaining that in the Mozart era the piano lid was never 'up', but was either 'off' or 'down', Bezuidenhout played two contrasting piano concertos from the set of three Viennese concertos written during the winter of 1782/3, starting with the (perhaps deservedly) less well known F major, K413 followed by K414 in A. The positioning of the piano in the middle of the small orchestra, with the pointy end towards the audience, gave a cohesion to the overall

sound and gave more direct contact between the soloist and the instrumentalists. These were masterly performances, notably the Andante of K414, with its reference to the recently deceased JC Bach. The English Concert opened with Mozart's Symphony No 1, K16, written in London when he was about 8, and one of those works that would be rated very much higher if it was marketed as a mature work by another composer. The contrast between the chorale-like passage that follows the opening arpeggios is striking, as is the slightly sinister five note bass motive repeated throughout the Andante. *'Eine kleine Nachtmusik'* completed the programme.

50 YEARS ON THE RIVER

Until I got there, I hadn't realised that the performance of the Monteverdi Vespers at St John's, Smith Square (26 Feb) was a 50th anniversary concert for the Lea Singers, an amateur choir based in Harpenden, alongside the River Lea. I Fagiolini provided the vocal soloists and The English Cornett and Sackbut Ensemble and The Monteverdi String Band made up the instrumentalists with Robert Hollingworth and Terence Charlston on organ and harpsichord. There was only one weakness amongst the soloists; a tenor with a not altogether pleasant edge to his voice and a frequent tendency to drag. The others (Julia Doyle, Kirsty Hopkins, Nicholas Mulroy, Eamonn Dougan and Matthew Brook) were all on very good form. I think the choir are probably used to singing in a rather smaller space that St John's, Smith Square, as they all too frequently produced an overly subdued tone. This might also have been stage nerves, as quite exposed entries were particularly hesitant and intonation was not always of the best. But they produced a grand sound when they had the chance, and confidence, to let rip, as in the opening of the Magnificat. And any amateur choir that survives 50 years is to be congratulated, as is the effort in promoting a central London concert like this. The highlight was the playing, with notable contributions from cornettists Gawain Glenton and Sam Goble, violinists Oliver Webber and Persephone Gibbs, Paula Chateauneuf, theorbo. Richard Campbell excelled on bass violin, as he has done throughout his distinguished career, now tragically cut short. He will be missed (see p. xx).

COMMERCE

The surprising lack of most of the usual viol concert attendees was more than made up by a huge gathering of Spanish business people at Jordi Savall's St John's, Smith Square concert (28 Feb), a concert marking the 125th anniversary of the Spanish Chamber of Commerce in Great Britain. Playing a series of segued sequences, Savall demonstrated the range of tone colour and musical styles ranging from Hume to the Celtic Traditions via the Lancashire Pipes.

MONTEVERDI AND FRIENDS AT SPITALFIELDS

The Spitalfields Winter Festival concentrated on the music of Monteverdi, notably his books of madrigals. The first of the concerts that I attended (14 Dec) was given by Caius College Choir & Consort directed by Geoffrey Webber, all resplendent in blue-tinged academic dress. This was Monteverdi at one remove, with examples of the various arrangements of his madrigals by the likes of Coppini and Profe. The *contrafacta* retained the original music, but replaced the often erotic texts of the originals with religious ones. Concerts from college choirs at the end of the autumn term (or whatever they call it in various other places) are generally a tricky business, with at least some of the singers likely to be new entrants. Whether or not this was the reason, I was surprised to hear so many prominent vibratos, particularly amongst the sopranos – very disturbing for this young age group. That aside, they produced a good sound, although the highlight was definitely a solo work – Monteverdi's *Lamenta d'Arianna,* recast by Coppini as *Pianto Della Madonna* and sung beautiful by the very impressive soprano, Clare Lloyd, with her rich and colourful voice (with just a tinge of mezzo), excellent control of vibrato, confident stage manner and communicative eye contact with the audience.

They were followed by the distinctive sound of Corsican polyphony from the seven unaccompanied male voices of 'a filetta'. Apart from a couple of plainchant numbers, the rest of the programme was of their own composition, generally based on the Corsican tradition of *paghjella* sung by a small group of men, standing very close together with one hand cupped over their ears, and with three different vocal parts. They certainly produce a unique sound, and one that, to my ears at least, took a bit of getting used to, as did the rather curious range of facial gestures from their leader and his apparent sense of personal space as regards the other singers. I would find it very difficult to sing with my group leader grimacing at me inches away from my face and would probably respond with either a fit of giggles or a punch on the nose. The same leader also interspersed the music with some enigmatic little homilies, along the lines of "I am nothing, I will always be nothing, but I have in me all the dreams of the world". Indeed!

More traditional Monteverdian fare came from La Venexiana (5 Jan) and their selection of madrigals from books five to eight. The five singers produced an exquisitely coordinated sound, all singing with voices that were straight as a die voices but nonetheless resonant and vibrant, putting paid to the theory that a voice without vibrato is flat and boring. The highlight was the *Lamento dello Ninfa* with some of the finest singing I have ever heard from the soprano Roberta Mameli – an absolutely spellbounding sound that will remain high of my most memorable musical moments.

I wasn't able to get to the two concerts given on the same evening (7 Jan) by Exaudi and Retrospect Ensemble, so the following two review have been written by Outi Jokiharju.

The concert given by EXAUDI covered all but four of the madrigals from the Third Book (1592) and, apart from these omissions, the programme mainly followed the original published sequence of madrigals, with an occasional slight reordering for presumably thematic reasons. This left the concert divided into seven sections of one to three madrigals each, with the multi-part madrigals conceived of as pairs and triads naturally grouped together. As a twist in the tale, the seven madrigal sections were interspersed with readings, by director James Weeks, from Pablo Neruda's *Love Poems and a Song of Despair*. These echoed the themes of the madrigals, and, despite the anachronism and the change in both language and style, helped accentuate the literary dimension of the Italian madrigal culture effectively. As a downside, the technical solutions used were less than ideal: the resulting, repeated switches between amplified and unamplified voice were distracting, and the quality of the former felt somewhat out-of-place in the surroundings of Christ Church Spitalfields. On the whole, though, the readings were a pleasant surprise, and presented a concept which merits further outings.

EXAUDI made an elegant and fresh sound, capable of tackling both the graceful pastoral frolics and the more complex emotional predicaments of Book Three. The connection between the members of the ensemble held strong, even though often it was not very explicit visually. However, whilst admiring their diction in general, at the back of the nave I was left hoping for more impetus in the rich Italian consonants of many of the pieces – the lack of which made following the texts problematic. This last was effectively remedied in 'Vivrò fra i miei tormenti e le mie cure', the second tripartite madrigal based on Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata*, which consciously uses consonant alliteration for dramatic effect; EXAUDI brought this out with great style. The two Tasso madrigals and the final, thematically and stylistically related 'Rimanti in pace' (based on a text by Livio Celiano), with their dramatic and musical impact – which was soon to develop into Monteverdi's operatic idiom – seemed the best suited to EXAUDI's style and provided the most hypnotic listening experience of the concert. The other pieces, mostly based on texts by Giovanni Battista Guarini (of *Il pastor fido* fame) whose works Monteverdi went on to set extensively in Books Four and Five, were slightly more uneven in both style and performance, but nevertheless gave rise to exquisite moments.

The final concert of the Winter Festival was "Improvviso", given by Retrospect Ensemble – a showcase of music by G. B. Buonamente, Dario Castello, Giovanni Picchi, Biagio Marini (probably the first travelling virtuoso violinist), Francesco Turini, Tarquinio Merula, Giovanni Paolo Cima (responsible for the first published trio sonatas), Alessandro Piccinini, Maurizio Cazzati and Marco Uccellini – all contemporaries and compatriots of Monteverdi. Experimental in spirit, these musicians and composers were actively pushing the boundaries of musical invention, particularly in the context of the emerging Italian violin school, which provided the focus of this concert. As an apparent challenge to the forms of musical canon, Retrospect Ensemble seemed intent on downplaying individualism in favour of unity. The five 'soloists' remained deliberately anonymous, though familiar faces were to be seen, and the twelve pieces (a selection of sonatas, toccatas and ciacconas, with an unadvertised piece for theorbo by the influential Johannes Hieronymus Kapsberger) of this self-proclaimed 'jam session' were grouped into sets of three, four and five pieces respectively, the gaps in between pieces filled out with improvisation by continuo instruments. Programme notes on this fascinating repertoire were scarce; instead, before each set, director Matthew Halls introduced the pieces and composers briefly and engagingly, the lack of formality adding to the pleasure of listening. On the other hand, the amalgamation of pieces with each other could be somewhat disorientating – but I suspect that was partly the intention. Improvisation, as the title of the concert suggests, was a key element of the programme, with the four continuo players (cello, theorbo, and harp, with Halls at the harpsichord) 'making it up' for much of the evening, and the two violinists adding their own seasoning. The standard of playing was very fine, and the stylistic variety – complemented by the contrasting dynamics, textures, and techniques – made for an enchanting listening experience. The constantly improvising spirit of the performance, with Halls' flash-like harpsichord glissandi and percussion effects from the rest of the continuo players, enforced the jam-session feel of the event. An altogether compelling programme, which those who left after the Monteverdi concert earlier in the evening would have done well to stay for.

THE FORTY PART MOTET

Some readers may have seen Janet Cardiff's 2001 art installation "The Forty Part Motet". I first saw it at Tate Liverpool in 2003 and have just seen it again in the spacious surroundings of Henry III's Great Hall in Winchester Castle. In the meantime, it has been shown/heard around the world. The Canadian artist, Janet Cardiff, now based in Berlin, is best known for her audio-based art works and walking tours. *The Forty Part Motet* is a recording of Salisbury Cathedral choir (and friends) singing the Tallis work with each of the forty singers represented by a individual loudspeaker, grouped in Tallis's eight groups of five, and arranged at head-height in a large oval. In the Winchester installation, the choirs moved in a clockwise direction, but the voice types in each group were spaced from right to left (with trebles on the right), slightly upsetting the flow to those used to the more usual positioning. It was interesting to watch how

the many visitors reacted to the music, played on a 14 minute loop, with an initial 3 minutes when, with an ear close to the loudspeakers, you can hear the lead-up to the performance. Many stood still or sat on the central benches, some followed the sounds around the speakers, one or two took advantage of the scores available to borrow (something the Tate didn't provide) and some stood close to an individual speaker. If you get to hear this installation, I recommend the ear-to-the-loudspeaker for the three minute 'introduction' to the performance, where you can hear the general bustle and chatter of the singers as they await the run through – although watch out for a very loud cough from a tenor in choir eight. I am not sure if they knew that they were being recording during these moments (were any readers involved?), but the pre-performance comments are fascinating. A couple of terribly well-spoken tenors compare notes – "I'm a deputy here"; "Are you at New College?": two young trebles reveal their hierarchy as one tells the other "They are recording this one so don't make any noise", adding that, of course, he should sing. Another, who describes himself as "just a small innocent boy" excuses an earlier mishap with "Shut up! It was because everybody stopped. I've lost my nerve now"; while another treble asks the conductor "Why do you have a microphone? So they can hear you waving your arms about?". The (unnamed) conductor is heard saying "I'd like to do a run now, so if you'd just like to galvanise your energy, we will give it a run ... give it your best shot ... unless there is a calamity, we won't stop". It was apparently quite a long day – a treble complains about the time and the fact that they still have an hour to go. From the musical point of view, one of the delights is that it is a far from polished performance, although one disembodied voice opines that "that one sounded a lot better") and very few listeners would notice any mishaps. In 2009, The Guardian named it as one of the six art works that defined the 'noughties'. The installation has now moved to Brighton, where is on show at Fabrica, 40 Duke Street, until 30 May – see http://fabrica.org.uk/exhibitions/. Worth a visit.

I was intrigued by mention of this on a Radio 4 programme on the work a year or so ago: I must try to get to Brighton! You'll find another version of Spem on the Striggio Mass CD, which we'll review in the next issue.

A different sort of performance is recorded on **Alessandro Striggio**: ***Mass in 40 Parts*** *(Decca 478 2734) which arrived too late for review in this issue. Apart from smaller pieces by Striggio, it includes his 40-part motet Ecce beatam lucem (which is parodied in the Mass) and Tallis's response to Striggio's mass,* ***Spem in alium****. This is a rare exemple of a performance that mixes voices and instruments, and is performed in a manner that is more appropriate to a nobleman's hall than a royal chapel or cathedral. Maybe not as far-out as Janet Cardiff's installation, but nevertheless innovative and fascinating.* CB

Haydn's *Seven Last Words of Our Saviour on the Cross*

a collaborative re-imagination

Catherine Groom

Some fifteen years ago I was requested by a canon of Cádiz to compose instrumental music on the seven last words of Our Saviour on the Cross. It was customary at the cathedral of Cádiz to produce an oratorio every year during Lent, the effect of the performance being not a little enhanced by the following circumstances. The walls, windows and pillars of the church were hung with black cloth and only one large lamp hanging from the centre of the roof broke the solemn darkness. At midday, the doors were closed and the ceremony began. After a short service the bishop ascended the pulpit, pronounced the first of the seven words (or sentences) and delivered a discourse thereon. This ended, he left the pulpit and fell to his knees before the altar. The interval was filled by music. The bishop then in like manner pronounced the second word, then the third, and so on, the orchestra following on the conclusion of each discourse. My composition was subject to these conditions, and it was no easy task to compose seven adagios lasting ten minutes each, and to succeed one another without fatiguing the listeners; indeed, I found it quite impossible to confine myself to the appointed limits.

'No easy task', the composition may have been, but no theatrical director could have provided Haydn with a more vividly dramatic setting for his *Seven Last Words of Our Saviour on the Cross* than did the then already age-old Lenten ceremonial of the cathedral at Cádiz. Haydn penned this description of the circumstances for which the work was commissioned in the preface to its 1801 edition, evidently feeling a need to explain its uniquely weird structural make-up. The uniquely weird structural make-up that Haydn describes (he did not 'confine himself to the appointed limits' of seven adagios, but preceded them with an *introduzione* and appended to the work a *presto* movement entitled 'Il Terremoto', graphically and terrifyingly illustrative of the quake that rent the earth in the aftermath of the crucifixion) is integral to the visceral and awe-inspiring power the work must have had in Cádiz cathedral. However, it renders the performance of the music today fraught with difficulty. Stripped of the context for which it was intended, the work is a less than satisfactory whole – hardly surprising, really, since it was

only ever one facet of a ritual Haydn was well aware of the problems of the dissemination of the piece presented, issuing it in its original orchestral form, in a version for string quartet and in a version for piano, and subsequently in an oratorio version replete with an extra *introduzione* in response to hearing another composer adding choral parts to the orchestral music. The *Seven Last Words* cry out for a replacement context in which to find space, far removed from the concert format that Haydn's own age had established.

But how to go about re-imagining a work, updating its performance context? This is an aesthetic and sociological minefield. Call to mind, if you will, the 1950s revisions of P. G. Wodehouse's schoolboy classics *Mike* and *Mike and Psmith*, prompted by what an outraged Stephen Fry could only describe as 'a lamentable rush of blood to the head' on the part of the publishers. 'The language was not updated', thundered Fry, 'nor the mention of servants, nor the description of a retired soldier who had served on the North-West Frontier: only the references to cricketers. The editions available in bookshops today contain therefore the anomaly of a credible Edwardian world that inexplicably features Trueman, Sheppard, May and Compton'. A dire warning indeed of the dangers involved in trying to place an old work in a new context. Can it ever be done so completely it's convincing? The harder one tries to create an empty vessel or abstract, timeless framework within which a musical work can be understood, the more likely one is to create something less timeless and more of its own time than ever. But *Seven Last Words* is an ideal candidate for such a re-imagination, because such magnificent music is surely worthy of the attention of greater audience numbers than the ever-sparser faithful flock filling the Church of England's pews on Good Friday.

Intrinsic and necessary to the maintenance of the structure of the *Seven Last Words* is some element of spoken word preceding each adagio. The Lindsay Quartet habitually invited former Bishop of Winchester Dr. John V. Taylor to meditate on each sentence in the manner described by Haydn and thus attempted to recreate the original performance context: perfect if one is listening to a recording with one's eyes closed, but a pale imitation of Cádiz Cathedral when placed in the concert hall. Poetry has often been adopted as the spoken medium of choice. The Brentano Quartet collaborated with poet Mark Strand (whose poems, incidentally, are currently being re-used by the choir of Magdalen College, Oxford), as did the Endellions with Andrew Motion in 2001. In a version that has made an indelible mark on performance history, the Aeolian Quartet invited Peter Pears to read a selection of poetry ranging from John Donne's *Hymne to Christ* to David Gascoyne's *Tenebrae-Kyrie*, via George Herbert and Edith Sitwell. But though undoubtedly moving and effective, all of these performances are two-dimensional, and stop short of offering anything like a consuming, involving experience for the audience in the way that participation in a church ritual does.

Conductor Crispin Lewis (director of period-instrument ensemble The Musicall Compass) and choreographer Jo Meredith (veteran of such illustrious venues as the London Palladium) are fresh from collaborating at Christ Church, Spitalfields, on Buxtehude's *Membra Jesu nostri*. For readers unfamiliar with the work, the seven cantatas it comprises together form an ecstatic spiritual meditation, the medieval text graphic and erotic in equal measure, on the body of the crucified Christ. The interplay between the five singers and Meredith's twisting, visceral, gut-wrenching choreography, accompanied by a period-instrument band made innovative and full use of Hawksmoor's magnificent space and was one of the great collaborative success stories of 2009. I can still call to mind a great deal of the physical motivic vocabulary, so devastatingly effective was it.

Lewis and Meredith had an inkling that a similar approach could work for the *Seven Last Words*. Meredith tells me it's to be a kind of companion piece, but while *Membra Jesu nostri*'s choreography was an entirely abstract response to the text and music, the dancers' movement in *Seven Last Words* has been thought out with, if not quite a narrative, at least an interpretative relationship to the text; of which, more later. If I might presume to predict the potency of this venture on the basis of the previous one, given the affinity of their subject matter, it's got the makings of a creative triumph.

Why contemporary dance at all? Says Lewis, 'Haydn's audience that Good Friday in Cádiz had an active role, as participants, worshippers, in a liturgical ceremony. In a concert scenario, the audience doesn't have that role. They're passive listeners. This is an abstract interpretation of the work – we're not trying to re-create a ceremony, exactly, though I don't think the composition can be explained without significant reference to ritual, but to provide a new context in which the work can live. Creating an equivalent context means involving the listeners. Jo's choreography will use space to involve them. It's a bit of a multi-media collaboration, because the audience will be required to think in three media and to synthesize them for themselves. We're not really used to doing that. Oliver's text will require their participation through its ambiguity – they need to make their own choices and decisions about it.'

Ah yes, 'Oliver's text'. Poet and critic Oliver Reynolds (look out his latest collection of poetry, *Hodge*) was asked by Lewis early on in the proceedings to contribute a series of dialogues to precede Haydn's orchestral movements. He's come up with a set of what he calls 'Dialogues and Images', each of which is deliberately ambiguous in its subject-matter and vividly evocative of *something* that the reader or listener can't quite put his or her finger on. The

dialogues take place between a character called Lily and a character named Tom, but that's as much as we know about them. Reynolds thinks they've been married or at least in a relationship; they seem to have had a child, at any rate. Meredith feels that the child has been lost. Dramaturg Sean Damian Brunon initially felt that the male character is discussing the path through Purgatory. But they're open-ended, not actually discussing anything or coming to any conclusions; rather, presenting fragments of conversations which force the listener to address his or her own relationship with death.

A similar effect, then, to the sermons of the Cádiz bishop's discourse through which the audience would have had its collective mind focussed on its own eventual deaths through the prism of Christ's – but for a twenty-first century, probably predominantly atheist audience. The trio comes at the problem of death from an agnostic point of view; not aggressively atheist, but with an awareness that the certainty that Haydn's audience probably felt in the knowledge of ultimate cathartic release is no longer quite so universally certain. There *are* Biblical allusions inherent in the production. The son/mother relationship alluded to in Reynolds' dialogues *could* be read as a reference to Christ's third sentence, *'Mulier, ecce filius tuus, et tu, ecce mater tua'*. Meredith's single male dancer and pair of female dancers *could* be viewed as a reflection, or projection, of Jesus and the two Marys (I should add that Meredith is adamant that they aren't). But the point is that they're intended to be as close to a blank canvas as possible; an empty vessel for the audience to fill, representing everything and nothing. Reynolds feels this element of dialogue, both between Tom and Lily and between the audience and the production, is something of a unique selling point of the collaboration, something that takes it a step beyond many previous solutions to the *Seven Last Words* problem.

The team is using a dramaturg, Sean Damian Bruno, to assist in the realization of Reynolds' stripped-bare dialogues, since these are not without their difficulties, either: Reynolds points out that the writer has the great privilege of being able to write whatever he or she likes without requirement of its narrative justification. In other words, one can be as ambiguous as one likes. The performer, though, is likely to come from a school of acting that requires explication of subtext: why is my character saying this? Who is this character, and what does he or she represent? This lack of narrative lucidity is a necessary characteristic of the dialogues for Lewis, wanting as he did the audience to be provoked into sustained thought across a number of short fragments. Meredith sees the role of her choreography as both to unite and unify Haydn's classically-structured orchestral movements with Reynolds' freely-written dialogue by giving meaning to the underlying *subtext* rather than to superficial *textual* meaning. She has harvested a palette of motifs from both music and text and woven them together to create a unified whole. A physical arrangement suggesting a nest of bodies, for instance, creates loose but nonetheless present affinities in the mind between mention of, 'in the middle tree... a clutch of twigs. A nest' in Reynolds' text with Christ's crown of thorns.

Reynolds is sanguine in his summing-up of the project. 'I suppose', he says, 'none of us really knows, before it happens, whether it's going to work or not. You just do something you believe in, and afterwards, you decide whether, maybe, it worked'. It's an ambitious project with many elements to fuse into an aesthetically coherent whole. But one cannot, after all, produce an 'equivalent context' for music with a provenance in such a completely emotionally, spiritually engaging totality as a Good Friday service in late eighteenth-century Cádiz, without striving to produce a totality of some kind. Come and judge for yourself.

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Seven Last Words, *performed by period-instrument ensemble The Musicall Compass, directed by Crispin Lewis with dancers and actors, with choreography by Jo Meredith and dialogue by Oliver Reynolds, will take place at St. James's Church, Piccadilly, London on 14th April 2011. For tickets, telephone 020 7381 0441 or email sjp.concerts@virgin.net*

Catherine Groom *is a recorder player, medieval harpist, soprano and writer, performing widely across the UK and Europe and recording with her own groups Flos Harmonicus and Mascherata and freelancing in opera-orchestra pits. She studied at Oxford University, the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and the Royal Academy of Music and now lives, works and teaches in London. Cat writes regularly for Early Music Today and The Recorder Magazine, amongst other publications; recent musicological work includes a conference paper given at Oxford on late Renaissance Aquileia and its musical relationship with Venice, and a performing edition for St. David's Cathedral, Wales, of the only surviving twelfth-century Welsh chant source.*

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MORE ON STRIGGIO & TALLIS

Picking up again on I Fagiolini's Striggio/Tallis recording, which has been brilliantly marketed and even reached the Pop charts, it is worth looking at the group's website, since there is a considerable amount of background information explaining and justifying the decisions that lie behind the performance, the result of long discussions between Robert Hollingworth and Hugh Keyte (with me acting as devil's advocate in many conversations when Hugh has been visiting us). It is well worth reading, and gives the listener an idea of the decisions that have to be made when embarking on works about which every aspect of performance practice needs to be questioned. *CB*

striggio.ifagiolini.com/historical-notes/

CD REVIEWS

CHANT

Historia de Compassione Gloriosissimae Virginis Mariae: Marian Office, Hamburg 15th-Century amarcord, 57' 57"

While not quite fitting the series title "Musica Sacra Hamburgensis 1600-1800" this is none-the-less very welcome. It is based on one of the few Hamburg chant sources, MS ND VI 471 of the city's State & University Library which originally belonged to Hamburg Cathedral. It was presumably a supplement to the main service books, with music for an office and mass of the Virgin and for the office of St Anne. The music of the offices isn't known elsewhere, so they were probably composed for Hamburg. The *Historia* comprises 9 Antiphons and 9 Responsories for the three nocturns of Matins, with the usual sequence of 8 modes (+ an extra for the ninth), but unusually for the period, the new texts are in prose, not verse. The performances by amarcord are entirely convincing, and the booklet note is extremely thorough. I must confess that up till now, I've used the music chiefly as background. I have requested a review copy of the edition and facsimile of the music published last year, so hope to listen with the images of the MS in my hand. The recording was made live in the Hamburg library in 2009. *CB*

MEDIEVAL

A Worcester Ladymass Trio Medieval
ECM New Series2166 476 4215
Credo & Benedicamus Domino by Gavin Bryers

I first encountered the Worcester Fragments in the mid-1960s, soone after they had been discovered recycled as binding materials for later books. I probably knew far more about them then than at any time since, and some of the pieces here have stuck in my mind from singing them. Programmes have to be planned carefully to avoid an excess of 6/8 , but there's no problem here. The music isn't specifically for women (as is the *Las Huelgas* MS), but it sounds marvellous as transposed for the Trio. Some items are incredibly beautiful. There are also two pieces by Gavin Bryars – a Credo, since there is none among the Worcester material, and a very brief (1'19") concluding *Benedicamus Domino*. The mention of his involvement is very low key, which is appropriate for the way his music fits the context so subtly. And congratulations to Nicky Losseff for her editorial work. My favourite CD this issue! *CB*

15th CENTURY

Josquin *Missa Pange lingua* Kammerchor Josquin des Préz, Ludwig Böhme 62' 07"
Carus 83.345
Ave nobilissima creatura, Ave virgo sanctissima, O virgo virginum, Sit nomen Domini, Tu solus qui facis mirabilia

The 16 voices of this very competent German ensemble provide pleasing readings of familiar and unfamiliar works by Josquin, grouped around his four-part Mass *Pange lingua*. The largish vocal forces and the plummy acoustic of the Lutherkirche in Leipzig mean that this performance leans to the easy listening rather than the grittily authentic side, but just as it is still possible to enjoy baroque music played by modern-instrument orchestras so the music of Josquin rightly appears in the repertoire of such choral groups. Having said that, the singing and direction are highly intelligent, and each phrase of the music is interpreted in a thoughtful and expressive way. Particularly interesting are the less familiar works, particularly the ten-part canon *Sit nomen Domini*, which recalls Wylkynson's *Jesus autem transiens* in the Eton Choirbook and helps to explain why the epic ten- and twelve-part works of composers belonging to the generation after Josquin weren't perhaps the complete aural bombshell we currently consider them to have been. The very effective setting of the text of Aquinas' *Verbum supernum prodiens* to the music of Josquin's famous *Ave Maria* in the Freiburger Choirbook usefully reminds us of the pragmatism of singers in the past. *D. James Ross*

The oldest source of Sit nomen Domini *dates from a century after the composer's death, so not too much weight can be put on its attribution* CB

Conrad Paumann und sein Umkreis: Gotische Orgelmusik von 1380-1511 Raimund Schächer (Organ of the Grote Kerk Oosthuizen) 62' 02"
Cornetto COR10014

This is an intriguing programme, gathering together a range of early organ music, going back to an English *Felix namque* from c.1380 (which was the first really early organ piece I played, but whose keyboard status has been questioned) and on to Virdung. It's good to have such pieces available, but much of the music is either didactic or functional, and the latter requires relating to the liturgy. So it's a series of short pieces which may not be conducive to concentrated continuous listening unless you are a real organ buff. The instrument itself is intriguing. Some of it may go back to 1521, but a 4' Prinzipal doesn't tell us enough to get much idea of what it would have sounded like before its rebuilding in 1670. Yet if you listen with imagination, this will take you nearer to 15th-century organ music than most recordings. *CB*

16th CENTURY

Allegri's Miserere and the Music of Rome The Cardinall's Musick, Andrew Carwood
Hyperion CDA67860 67' 41"
F. Anerio *Salve Regina*; G. Anerio *Gustate et videte, De Lamentatione* (Thursday & Sat 1st lessons), *Miserere*; Palestrina *Cantantibus organis*
Various St Cecilia Mass a12

The main work here is the 12-voice parody mass on Palestrina's *Cantantibus organis a5* expanded into three four-voice choirs. There is no documentation on the origin of the mass: perhaps it was in honour of Palestrina, St Cecilia or both. Nor is it clear why there is no Hosanna and Benedictus and only a brief Agnus. The contributors were Palestrina's Roman contemporaries – Stabile, Soriano, Dragoni, Palestrina himself, Giovannelli, Santini and Mancini (in order of appearance). This is the reason for buying the disc, along with the chance to hear music by the Anerio brothers. I suppose the notorious *Miserere* had to be included to boost sales (but surely it must have reached saturation point by now by now?) I'd be far more interested in other music by the contributors to the mass? There isn't even anything new in the performance – just the standard second-half-of-the-20th-century version with a question-begging account in the booklet. Apart from anything else, note-for-note repetition of ornaments undermines their function. Otherwise, though, this is a fine recording with a singing style more forthright than the Tallis Scholars' Victoria reviewed below. *CB*

Byrd *The Complete Keyboard Music* Davitt Moroney 497' 29" (7 CDs in a box) Hyperion CDS44461/7

This is a very welcome budget price re-issue of a monumental project which won awards on its original release in 1999. It was recorded throughout the 1990s using a variety of instruments including Ruckers and Couchet harpsichord copies by Bédard and von Nagel, organs by Ahrend and Goetz-Gwynn, a Goff clavichord and a copy of a Couchet muselar virginals by John Philips. Instruments are carefully matched to particular pieces, with the muselar showing up particularly well in character pieces like The Battell. Recording quality is excellent throughout the set and the instruments are closely recorded for maximum clarity. Moroney plays with great assurance and a strong rhythmical pulse. He wears his undoubted virtuosity lightly and perhaps occasionally a touch more flamboyance would have been welcome, but there is great consistency over the whole range of works which allows the listener to appreciate the breadth of Byrd's achievement. Moroney also brought a great deal of scholarship to the project and his booklet is a mine of information on all aspects of the music and on potential instruments, with a detailed commentary on each piece. This boxed set is indispensable for anyone at all interested in Byrd who doesn't yet have it. *Noel O'Regan*

Lassus *Laudent Deum* His Majestys Sagbutts & Cornetts, Choir of St John's College, Cambridge, Andrew Nethsingha Chandos *Chaconne* CHAN0778 71'

The sound of these large choral forces augmented by sackbuts and cornetts echoing around the acoustic of St John's College Chapel is quite something, and when the repertoire is by the ever-inventive Lassus the overall effect is never less than pleasing. It is extraordinary to note the number of premiere recordings of music by such a mainstream composer, a mark of the sheer amount that he composed, and congratulations are due to Andrew Nethsingha for delving into this rich and unexplored seam of composition. Some of these pieces are charming miniatures, vocal and instrumental, reminding us that worshipers in the 16th century were much more likely to hear tiny works for two and three voices than the great showpieces we generally choose to focus on. So something for everyone here! Lavish textured showpieces and small-scale miniatures, all tastefully performed by these excellent vocal and instrumental ensembles. *D. James Ross*

Philippe Rogier Magnificat *dir* Philip Cave, His Majestys Sagbutts and Cornetts Linn Records CKD 348 72' 41"
Motet and Missa *Domine Deominus noster*; Palestrina: *Domine in virtute tua*; Rogier: *Missa Domine in virtute tua; Laudate Dominum, Regina caeli, Verbun caro factum est, Videntes stellam magi*

This CD presents two Masses by Rogier preceded by the motets on which each is based, one by Rogier and the other by Palestrina, along with four further motets by Rogier. A Fleming exported to Spain to sing with, compose for, and eventually direct Phillip II's Chapel Royal, Rogier wrote a large body of beautifully crafted and impressive church music before his untimely death in 1596 at the age of only 35. Recent interest in his work has been richly rewarded, and this superb CD by the ever-excellent Magnificat and the ubiquitous and splendid HMS&C underlines the superlative quality of Rogier's music. The lush textures of the twelve-part Mass *Domine Dominus noster* recall the music of the Gabrielis, a major influence on Rogier, but would it be heretical to suggest that the young Rogier makes more inventive and daring use of the forces at his disposal? If the eight-part texture of the Missa *Domine in virtute tua*, performed here with dulcian and organ, sounds sober by comparison, emphasis is thrown on Rogier's very fine part-writing, an appropriate response to his model by the consummate partwriter Palestrina. For more mock-Venetian display the programme concludes with two fabulously evocative 12-part Christmas responsories *Videntes stellam magi* and *Verbum caro*, as beautifully sung, played and ornamented and as exquisitely captured by the Linn engineers as the rest of the CD. *D. James Ross*

Victoria *Hail, Mother of the Redeemer* The Sixteen, Harry Christophers 72' 23" CORO COR16088
Missa Alma Redemptoris Mater a8 + motet a5, Ave maris stella, Congratulamini mihi a6, Gaude Maria, Litaniae Beatae Mariae a8, Magnificat octavi toni, Ne timeas Maria, Regina caeli a5, Salve Regina a5 & Sancta Maria

Given their history of commitment to Victoria (4 CDs) it comes as no surprise that The Sixteen has chosen to feature his music in this anniversary year's Choral Pilgrimage. And this is the CD of the tour, more or less: there are some items on the disc that are not in the concerts and vice versa. In particular it is a little irksome not to have the eight-voiced *Alma redemptoris mater* on the disc when it is the principal source of the parody mass that is the main work. One could, of course, quibble for ever about the choice of music. I'd have gone for the eight-voiced rather than the five-voiced *Regina Coeli*, but the programme as it is does give a fair picture of Victoria's output and includes three *alternatim* works in which the plainchant is a welcome foil to the polyphonic riches around it. The Sixteen is, of course, an outstanding modern mixed voice chamber choir and on this disc they sound exactly that. Tempos are inclined towards the stately, though one is startlingly fast, and all the music has been transposed up from its 'normal clef' pitch to suit the choir's standard line-up. The singing is unaccompanied throughout. This recording and the associated performances will, I am sure, give much pleasure to all who hear it, and rightly so. But, like my own performances, it is not Victoria as he himself heard it. In this country especially we have become used to performances of renaissance polyphony characterised by pure toned, high lying soprano parts that were not part of the composers' sound world. Who will be the first conductor to give the sopranos a night off? And how will he persuade anyone to listen? *David Hansell*

Victoria *The Victoria Collection* The Tallis Scholars, Peter Phillips 177' (3 CDs in box) Gimell GIMBX 304
Requiem + & Lobo *Versa est in luctum* (1987) *Lamentations of Jeremiah* + Maundy Thursday set by Padilla (2010)
Tenebrae Responsories (1990)

I thought we'd received a review of this, but I seem to be wrong. Since two of the three discs are of music for Holy Week, leaving it till June misses the occasion. Those two discs contain the Tenebrae Responsories and the Lamentations from Victoria's *Officium Hebdomadae Sanctae* published in Rome in 1585. It would have made a more coherent set if the other items in that collection had been included rather than a Requiem. The set might then begin with three Palm Sunday items: the antiphon *Pueri Hebraeorum*, the *turbae* for a Matthew Passion and *O Domine Jesu Christe* a6. Then come the Thursday Lamentations and Responsories, which would be followed by an alternatim *Benedictus* and *Miserere mei Deus.*, with a five-voice *Tantum ergo*. While these do not directly impinge on the Lamentations and

Responsories, they would show another side of Victoria and give a bit of variety. Good Friday ends with a John Passion and the *Improperaria*. The only additional item for Holy Saturday is a substantial setting of *Vexilla regis* "more hispano". But that's for another time. This set has three memorable recordings, and the Tallis Scholars present it with a fine consistency of style, considering the time-span between the first and most recent discs. But all suffer from lack of verbal clarity, thanks to too much concern with a beautiful sound and not enough projection of the powerful texts. It's not enough to rely on lixteners reading them in the booklets! (The original ones are included separately in the box.) Good value at a bit over £15.00. *CB*

All the Queen's Men: Music for Elizabeth I The Sarum Consort, Andrew Mackay *dir*, Jacob Heringman *lute* 50' 41"
Axons 8.572582

This is a nice mixture of both well-known and less familiar Jacobethan repertoire. Very little of the repertoire can be dated except for the published madrigals, but most of the items here are from after 1603. The programme starts just within Elizabeth's reign with a couple of *Triumphs of Gloriana* settings, but "As Vesta was..." sets the style by a lack of regard for, to use Byrd's phrase, 'life to the words': there's a feeling of dynamics and stress being imposed rather than shape arising from the text. Just because *was* is long, there's no need for it to be so prominent. Indeed, it is probably the least important of the seven words in the opening phrase. The function of the long *was* is to lead the listener on to *Latmos Hill*. Gibbons' "O clap your hands" (1622) is one of the best performances here, perhaps because with only ten singers, the parts can't be doubled. Elsewhere, the ten singers produce a two-to-a-part ensemble for most pieces, not as easy as one or three to bring off. Is the director's photo, sitting at a harpsichord but with a baton on his hand, meant to show that he isn't a singer? Even ten voices should be able to sing madrigals without an external conductor. The inclusion of the no-longer-by-Morley *Laboravi in gemitu meo* (marvellous though it is) seems strange: perhaps the realisation that it was by Rogier came too late – the disc would have been embarrassingly short if it had lost another six minutes! I was happy with this as background, but would recommend buying it only at a Naxos price. *CB*

Madrigali per Laura Peperara Silvia Frigato, Miho Kamiya *SS*, Silvia Rambaldi *hpscd* 61' 24"
Tactus TC 530001 *see p. 9*

Torres del alma Highlights of the Spanish consort music Bassano Quartet 57' 32"
Aliud ACD BH 052-2
Anchieta, Arañés, Arauxo, Cabanilles, Cabezón, Castillo, Castro, Encina, Flecha, Guerrero, Jiménez, Morales, Sandrin, Torre & anon

This is a Super Audio CD which can be played in multi-channel surround sound on SACD players, but even on my normal CD player the excellent sound reproduction makes it feel as if the performers are in the room. The recorders, which range in size from soprano to 3m long sub contra bass in B flat, are made by Adriana Breukink who is also one of the quartet. Many of them are based on instruments made by the Bassano family, who sold a set of *flautas* to the Spanish court in 1568. The music covers a period of three centuries, from vocal pieces from the c.1500 manuscript *El Cancionero Musical de Palacio* to 17th century keyboard tientos, and the programme ends with *Folías con 20 diferencias* by Jiménez. Ensemble and tuning are mostly very good, though there are one or two strained high notes, and the choice of music and recorder sizes leads to a varied and interesting programme. *Victoria Helby*

17th CENTURY

Lorenzo Allegri *Le Suites Medicée* Gran Consort li Stromenti, Gian Luca Lastraoli
Dynamic DM8007

A grand collection of wind (wood and brass), strings (bowed and plucked), percussion and continuo is poured into these otherwise small scale pieces. These balli, originally written and performed for the Medici (Fernando and Cosimo) are rendered in their original complete suites. The sumptuous instrumentations, which are not always grandly orchestrated individually, but rather varied in both colour and scale, are thus returned to what one imagines to be the formality and pomp of the Medici dynasty at its most extravagant. These instrumentations are not abitrary: "La Serena" is given a smooth lusciousness which befits its name, and the "Le Ninfe della Senna" is suitably skittish, for example. The playing is perfectly judged, and paced to perfection, and I am sure would be a hugely valuable resource for dancers. For compositions which, it has to be said, are fairly light in musical content, the result is a very pleasing recording. *Stephen Cassidy*

Bernhard *Geistliche Harmonien (1665) Sacred Concertos* Parthenia Vocal & Parthenia Baroque, Christian Brembeck 97' 32" (2 CDs)
Christophorus CHR 77346

I have tried so hard to like Christoph Bernhard. I transcribed some of his motets from manuscripts in Uppsala, but never got as far as formally publishing them, as I just didn't find the finished articles wholly convincing. Listening to this recording was a similar experience – so much promise, but no profound satisfaction. The singing is mostly very good, as is the the playing, both obbligato strings and continuo. Maybe it's just me – I have a similar difficult penetrating much of Schütz's output, though pleasure on that score seems to relate more to performance than music (Suzuki's take on one printed set wowed me, where Weser Renaissance's recording of the same music left me decidedly underwhelmed). Bernhard is an important figure, but maybe his writings are more impressive than his musical legacy. *BC*

Blow *Venus and Adonis* Theatre of the Ayre, Elizabeth Kenny 75' 14"
Wigmore Hall Live WHLive0043
+ Blow: *Cloe found Amintas lying* & Ground in G minor for violin & continuo; Lambert: *Vos méprischaque jour*; de Visée: Chaconne
see p. 15

Buxtehude *Scandinavian Cantatas* Theatre of Voices, Paul Hillier 59' 04"
Da Capo 6.220534
BuxWV1, 8, 18, 23, 40, 91, 114, 142 & 161

This recording has the inestimable advantage that its accompanying notes were written (in 2010) by Kerala J. Snyder, whose book *Dieterich Buxtehude: Organist in Lübeck* (New York & London, 1987, rev 2007), as many readers will already know, is a masterpiece of its kind.

The title turns out, on closer investigation, to be remarkably inaccurate. In the first place, two fine organ works – the Praeludium in E minor, BuxWV 142, and the Passacaglia in D minor, BuxWV 161 – are included as introduction and interlude, both expertly played by Bine Bryndorf on the organ of St. Mary's, Helsingør, where Buxtehude himself was organist. Secondly, although all but one

of the vocal pieces are drawn from the Düben Collection, Stockholm, several of them – in particular, the beautiful setting of the medieval Latin hymn *Pange lingua*, BuxWV 91, and the *Missa alla brevis*, BuxWV 114, Buxtehude's only strictly liturgical, *stile antico* composition – might have originated after the composer's move to Lübeck in 1668. Moreover, one piece, *Accedite gentes*, is probably spurious, according to Snyder.

On the other hand, it is refreshing to find emphasis newly laid on Buxtehude's early, Scandinavian period. Its importance is clear from some bare biographical facts. Born in the Swedish town of Hälsingborg (at that time, Danish), he moved as a child over the Øresund to Helsingør in Denmark. The first ten years of his professional career, 1657/8-68, were spent as an organist in these same two Scandinavian towns.

Only two Buxtehude settings of Swedish texts have survived, but both are recorded here. One is *Herren vår gud*, BuxWV 40, a chorale paraphrase of Psalm 20; the other, *Att du Jesu*, BuxWV 8, a solo soprano lament in strophic form, touchingly sung here by Else Torp. In addition, a Latin piece, *Ecce nunc benedicite Domino* (Psalm 134), BuxWV 23, is thought by Snyder to have originated while Buxtehude was still organist at Helsingør, i.e. before 1668. Finally, the five-voice sacred concerto (with five-part strings) *Domine salvum fac regem*, BuxWV18, a setting of the last verse of Psalm 20 plus doxology, might have been written for the composer's friend Gustav Düben, Kapellmeister to the King of Sweden from 1663 to 1690. The special splendour and elaboration of the setting, together with the repeated cries of 'O Lord, save the king', suggest performance on a state occasion in Stockholm.

For all those who love the music of this period, the CD cannot be recommended too highly: almost without exception, it is music of great charm, beautifully sung and played. *Richard Jones*

Caresana *Tenebrae* Valentina Varriale, I Turchini, Antonio Florio 64' 09"
Glossa GCD 922 602
+ G. A. Avitrano *Sonata VI a3 La Carafa*; G. Veneziano *Tenebrae & Sinfonia a7*

This window on early Baroque Naples is interesting in several respects. Firstly, the spotlight falls on Cristofaro Caresana (c,1640-1709), who contributes two sets of of Lamentations for Holy Week reveals a considerable and original musical talent. Another two more conventional sets are provided by Gaetano Veneziano (1665-1716) separated by a seven-part Sinfonia, also rather routine in flavour. Secondly, the striking importance of Holy Week at the turn of the 18th century in Naples is outlined, while the picture of a number of excellent musical ensembles vying for prominence in the city is also significant. Soprano Valentina Variale invests Caresana's music with a freshness and musicality which is thoroughly convincing, and she is ably accompanied by I Turchini. The instruments come to the fore in a concerto by Giuseppe Antonio Avitrano (c.1670-1756), which to my ears is less original than the work of Caresana, but pleasing none-the-less. If the Holy Week music of this period lacks the overt drama of its equivalent a century and more earlier, Caresana's is a distinctive voice which deserves to be heard. *D. James Ross*

Förtsch *Ich freue mich im Herrn Musica sacra* Monika Mauch, Barbara Bübl, Alex Potter, Hans Jörg Mammel, Markus Flaig *SscTTB*, L'arpa festante, Rien Voskuilen
Carus 83.363 69' 44"

This is almost certainly my disc of the month. Received wisdom considers Frötsch (if you've heard of him at all) to be a backwards-looking conservative but, since most of his music dates from the short period of his life that he didn't dedicate to medicine and diplomacy, I can think of many composers of the period who certainly did not reach the heights of the repertoire recorded here for the first time. As Kapellmeister in Gottorf, which was always under threat of Danish invasion, Frötsch had to make the most of what modest forces his employer could muster – either on a regular basis, or on hire from Hamburg (the bass singer, for example). The result, as the present disc reveals, is a wonderful collection for one or two voices with minimal instrumental support – typically violin or gamba, but as the three court *musici* could manage either, we have a couple of pieces for solo voice with a trio of either instrument. Like a previous recording for Carus of music by David Pohle, the present CD is an utter delight – Frötsch's melodic style is combined with effortlessly beautiful singing and stylish playing from all concerned. I don't expect many of our readers will be at all familiar with his music, so don't miss this excellent opportunity to remedy that situation! *BC*

Bon Voyage Music by Giovanni Paolo Foscarini, The Foscarini Experience: Frank Pschichholz *chitarra spagnuola*, Nora Thiele *percussion*, Daniel Zorzano *violone*
Raumklang RK2904 60' 25"

At first sight this extraordinary line-up of instruments seems highly implausible – guitar, violone and percussion – yet all is revealed in the interesting notes accompanying this excellent CD. Giovanni Paolo Foscarini, who was probably the most influential guitarist of the first half of the 17th century, is known to have performed on several occasions with this particular line-up in various cities of Europe. The earliest mention of the group comes in a picture dated 1615, which shows the three musicians playing on a wagon to celebrate a feast for Isabella Clara Eugenia. On this occasion Foscarini played a lute, and the young girl played a triangle. In 1621 Foscarini played the guitar, and the girl a tambourine.

Foscarini's guitar style encompasses a mixture of strumming and punteado. The notation is complex, with Italian tablature for the punteado notes, alfabeto symbols for the strummed chords, and little lines above and below the bottom stave line to show which direction to strum. Pschichholz' guitar is strung with bourdons on the fourth and fifth courses, as described by Foscarini in his "Regole per ben'" at the beginning of *Li Cinque Libri della Chitarra alla Spagnola* (1640). It makes musical sense to have the bass line reinforced by a discreet violone. This is most effective in pieces like the *Passa Cagli Passeggiati* (track 5), which begins with the ground bass played alone on the violone. The various swishings from the tambourine and cloppings from other percussion instruments add rhythmic interest and oomph, and are effective in the correnti, where exciting cross rhythms predominate. The *Gagliarda Francese* (track 9) shows the percussion off to good effect, and no holds are barred for all three musicians in an energetic *Corrente Francese* (track 10). *Toccata musicale* (track 16) would not be out of place at Glastonbury, and the *Folia* (track 22) is utterly wild with vocal interjections during the percussion break.

Yet not all is thrash and bash. There are tender moments where Pschichholz plays without his friends joining in: gentle toccatas (tracks 4 and 11), the *Baletto Fedel Amante* (track 6) with full strummed chords and extraordinary harmony, and the well poised *Capriccio sopra il passacaglio* (track 7) also with

some amazing chords. There are surprising chromatic turns in Corrente (track 9), ridiculously fast runs in Toccata (track 17), and a fade-out at the end of Sarabande (track 15). There is much variety, and Pschichholz' playing is spot on throughout. *Stewart McCoy*

Kuhnau / Albrici *Cantatas & Arias for Soprano* Barbara Christina Steude, concerto con voce, Jan Katzschke 67' 32"
cpo 777 531-2
Albrici *Omnia quae fecit Deus, Mihi autem bonum est*; Kuhnau *Ach Gott wie läßt du mich verstarren, Bone Jesu, In te Domine speravi, Und ob die Feinde, Weicht ihr Sorgen*

Neither of these composers is exactly over-represented in the record catalogue, so this recital disc is especially welcome. I only knew two of the pieces on the programme – Kuhnau's *Weicht ihr Sorgen* featured on Robert King's *Contemporaries of Bach* disc, and Albrici's *Omnia quae fecit Deus* on Anna Jobrant's excellent recent *Duben Delights*. It's often said that the first time you hear something becomes a benchmark for subsequent versions, but in both of these cases I was impressed to find that soprano Barbara Christina Steude found different interpretations that seemed equally valid – where Jobrant admirably maintained the tactus of sections of each piece constant, Steude relaxes the pace here and there, and allows the music breathing space. Some of Albrici's harmonic turns remain puzzling, and – though undoubtedly well worth exploration – his music would seem to be an acquired taste. Born 30-odd years later than Albrici, and outliving him by roughly the same period, Kuhnau's music belongs to a different generation. For want of a better description, it is more rigorously structured; his melodies are Italianate, as we would expect (and, the booklet notes argue, a sign of Albrici's influence on the younger man), and his harmonic writing a broad mix of Italian and French features. The performers are all new to me, and I sincerely hope they will continue to explore much more of this repertoire, and cpo will continue their brave sponsorship of such projects so that we can enjoy the fruits of their labours. *BC*

Meister *Il giardino del piacer* Musica Antiqua Köln 66' 40"
Berlin Classics 0016742BC

This is allegedly the final CD to be made by Musica Antiqua Köln. It seems an odd choice in some ways, though the ensemble has rarely shied away from recording unknown repertoire. Whether or not you agree with Goebel's assessment of Johann Friedrich Meister as "a real genius" will in large part determine whether or not you actually enjoy the disc, I think – there is such a mish-mash of styles, that it is slightly perplexing to find a slot where Meister's music will comfortably fit. That is not a problem, needless to say, but I don't think it's a sign of genius either. Recorded in 2004 by German radio station WDR, these performances have been "rescued from the archives" to keep Musica Antiqua Köln's exploration of exceptional music off the beaten track, as explained in an erudite (sometimes bordering on impenetrable) booklet note by the group's founder and long-time director, in typically challenging language (and with precious little information about Meister and the six of his dozen heterogeneous sonatas chosen for the disc). My advice would be to enjoy the music for what it is (a good, hearty German distillation of French, Italian and domestic styles) and forget all the hype and significance. *BC*

Monteverdi *Vespro della Beata Vergine (1610)* L'Arpeggiata, Christina Pluhar 75' 09" + bonus DVD 22'
Virgin Classics 5 099964 199429

I wondered when proofreading our Concert Diary and seeing that Christina Pluhar was conducting the *Vespers* in various places last year what it would be like. Now I know, and my expectations have been confirmed. It's definitely a performance to hear once, but it's very individual in a way that unsuccessfully tries to undermine what to me is the essence of the work. (She plays the music in the printed order that has become 'the work', so the word is appropriate.)

I quoted fairly recently the phrase "primo le parole" as the essence of Monteverdi; "In principio erat verbum" would also be appropriate – not because the words are ultimately what concerns the listener but because Monteverdi's music almost invariably arises from them. The music departs from verbal inspiration only when the words are insignificant – *illuc* and *propter* in *Laetatus sum*, for instance, or the repetions of *Sancta Maria, ora pro nobis*. Pluhar just isn't aware enough of the shape of the phrases, and tends to split them far too much. *Laudate pueri Dominum* starts OK, but at the tutti entry, which is where the conductor presumably gets involved, the three words come out unrelated rather than move through to the *Do-* of the third word. Later, the triple sections tend to be too simply phrased in threes. Surprisingly, she doesn't make much of the Romanesca. But the main problem is the use of instruments and the cornetts' continual running around (which starts at the first tripla of the intonation). There's far too much gilding the lily,. even when the instruments' presence is required or plausible. Usually, one of the outstanding moments is 'ut collocet eum', which was ruined by scampering cornetts, as was the end of *Audi coelum*. Even in voice-only sections, the accompaniment can dominate.

This is one of the fastest Vespers I can remember. Most of the recordings I have to hand include antiphons etc, but four don't. The bracketed timings are for *Nisi Dominus*.

Louis Halsey (1970)	95' 05"	(5' 36")
Cantus Cölln (1995)	90' 15"	(5' 05")
Ralph Alwood (2007)	90' 06"	(4' 30")
Sigiswald Kuijken (2008)	86' 05"	(4' 45")
Christina Pluhar (2011)	75' 09"	(3' 53")

I singled out *Nisi Dominus* because I'd checked a wider selection of timings and an amateur performance with Philip Thorby was far faster than any others (and, in my experience, faster than he's done it since). Pluhar's is the same to the second. Her performance as a whole does feel just a bit too rushed, though I would expect a live performance to make more of the resonance of the performing space. A single-disc Vespers, however, needn't be a gimmick!

I could write pages on my reaction to this recording. As always, Pluhar is inspiring, but I prefer her with music that leaves more space for the performer to improvise. *CB*

Bartlomiej Pekiel: Masses and Motets Il Canto 61' 43"
DUX 0726

The appointment in 1649 of the Polish composer Bartlomiej Pekiel as maestro di cappella to the Warsaw Court of King Wladyslaw IV marks the end of a period of direct Italian control of matters musical and the beginning of a brief window where indigenous talent was allowed to dominate. Ironically, the result was that a court which had until this point kept abreast of the latest stylistic developments through visits by Italian masters such as Anerio and Marenzio

transferred its favours to Pekiel, who quickly returned to conservative a cappella composition such as had been popular almost a century earlier. In the present selection of motets and two of his mass settings, we hear music which would not sound out of place in the middle of the 16th century. Il Canto are generally persuasive advocates of his work, and anxious moments in the driving polyphony are few and slight. Is there anything distinctly Polish about Pekiel's polyphony? This was a period when courts and courtly musicians lived lives of almost complete isolation from the ordinary populace, and Pekiel was probably far more familiar with the conventions of Roman polyphony than those of Polish traditional music. *D. James Ross*

Reincken ***Hortus Musicus Vol. 1*** Stylus Phantasticus, Frederike Heumann 59' 43"
Accent ACC 24217

I can't wait to hear Vol. 2 of this set – the intensity of these performances is something I have seldom experienced in this repertoire. The interweaving of the melodic lines, the indulgent luxuriating in Reincken's rich harmonies, and yet a playfulness in some of the faster movements that is positively boisterous – no wonder Bach was impressed by these sonatas! Stylus Phantasticus is a new group to me, but I hope they will continue to explore this repertoire; there *are* other groups with overlapping interests, but there are riches here that I have rarely heard elsewhere. I highly recommend this disc. *BC*

Rosenmüller ***Vox Dilecti Mei: Solo Motets and Sonata*** Alex Potter *ct*, Chelycus. 66'
Ramée RAM 1009

This splendid anthology gives a well-chosen selection of Rosenmüller's music, from the early works of his *Andere Kern-Sprüche* to the long and virtuosic vocal concertos that he wrote in Venice. It also includes two sonatas from his 1682 collection and the lesser known D major sonata preserved in Uppsala; these works show Rosenmüller's love of counterpoint and his flair for more soloistic writing. The programme is performed at *Chorton*, the high pitch used in German church music of the 17th century; this also ensures that the alto vocal lines are comfortably within the reach of a modern-day countertenor. We can only guess at what 17th-century falsettists sounded like, but Alex Potter shows an admirable technical command, with consistent tone throughout his range. Particularly impressive is the virtuosic opening of *Vox dilecti mei*, in which arpeggiated figures alternate with long-held notes or languishing appoggiaturas. The long multi-sectional Venetian concertos are taxing works to perform, but Potter and Chelycus maintain effective momentum while also characterising the many contrasting sections. The disc is complemented by Peter Wollny's erudite and thought-provoking notes. This is in the same league as Cantus Cölln's recordings of Rosenmüller: a landmark release showcasing music by a still vastly under-appreciated composer. *Stephen Rose*

A Scarlatti ***Sacred Works*** Gemma Bertagnolli, Adriana Fernandez, Sara Mingardo, Martin Oro, Furio Zanasi, Antonio Abete *SSAABB*, Concerto de' Cavalieri, Marcello Di Lisa 68' 12"
cpo 777 476-2
Benedicta et venerabilis, Salve Regina, Mortales non auditis, Nisi Dominus, Partite, toccatas

This is an interesting collection, though flawed in execution. *Benedicta* (here making its first appearance on disc) and *Nisi Dominus*, one of three settings by Alessandro Scarlatti, both feature unusual vocal scoring. Although *Benedicta* is listed in *Grove* as being for soprano solo with an SATB ripieno group, there are in fact also significant solos for the second soprano, alto and tenor. It's a fine work, with an affecting siciliano-rhythm second movement, affectingly done by Adriana Fernandez, and a graciously dignified setting of the third verse for alto, the excellent Sara Mingardo. *Nisi Dominus*, for solo soprano, solo alto and SATB vocal ripieno group impresses less, for here the performance is for me marred by the restless impetuosity, clipped notes and aggressive continuo chords that so many Italian groups seem to bring to Baroque music.

The *Salve Regina* recorded here is not the familiar solo soprano setting in A minor, but one for soprano and alto that is possibly inauthentic. It does not sound like Scarlatti to my ears, but there is an undeniable relationship of the opening to Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater*, leading the note-writer to conjecture that it could even have formed an early draft for that work.

Overall the performances are notable for the invariably high quality of the singing, but along with the reservation already noted the string playing is at times distinctly less than beguiling and there's one alarming moment of sour intonation. There are too many violinists anyway – the scoring of all these works suggests they require only solo strings – and much the same might be said of the substantial continuo section; the fussily anachronistic harpist might certainly have been better employed elsewhere. *Brian Robins*

Scheidemann ***Seven Magnificat settings for Organ*** Karin Nelson (Örgryte New Church, Gothenburg)
Intim Musik IMCD 116 (2 CDs)

Scheidemann is one of the unsung heroes of the early North German baroque, a key member of the school of Hamburg organist composers (like many others, a pupil of Sweelinck in Amsterdam) that eventually led to Buxtehude. Indeed it is possible that Scheidemann taught Buxtehude. But it was only in 1955 that much of his music came to light, including all these Magnificats, in a manuscript in the Lower Saxon town of Clausthal-Zellerfeld. The four verses of each of these settings (some lasting nearly nine minutes) were played in addition (not alternatim) to the sung Magnificat as a commentary on the text – a contribution to the Lutheran service almost on a par with the sermon. They encompass the extraordinary range of colours and musical textures of the 17th-century North German organ, ranging from rather austere fugal structures to wild fantasias on the chorale melody. Scheidemann was one of the pioneers of the 'chorale fantasia', a form that peaked with Buxtehude, as demonstrated in the second verses of these Magnificats.

The Schnitger-inspired organ at the International Centre for Organ Art (GOArt) in Gothenburg is one of the most important instruments to be built in the past 20 years. Karin Nelson (the co-artistic director of the Gothenburg International Organ Academy) gives an inspired reading of these magnificent works (the CD forms part of her doctoral dissertation). Recommended. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

Schütz ***Matthäus Passion*** Ars Nova Copenhagen : Paul Hillier 54' 42"
Da Capo 8.226094

This CD marks the culmination of an extended project to perform and record all of Schütz's 'narrative' works and clearly by this time the singers are not only fired up with nationalist fervour, but also with a considerable specialist expertise. The works consist largely of unaccompanied recitative (Hillier describes

it as 'quasi-plainchant') with polyphonic episodes for dialogue. This may make the genre sound a little dull, but the soloists from Ars Nova invest the text and melodies with a searing drama which brings the familiar story graphically to life. Julian Podger's evangelist is a compelling story-teller and Jacob Bloch Jespersen's anguished cries on the cross are unforgettable. The polyphony rises to similar heights of expression, and Ars Nova have clearly benefited from a cumulative understanding of the genre and also from Hillier's direction. Schütz's narrative church music is gradually reclaiming its rightful place in the period of transition between the Renaissance and the High Baroque and the present recording provides a timely reminder of the dramatic power it possesses in its own right. *D. James Ross*

Schütz *'I will lift up mine eyes'* Cappella Sagittariana Dresden, Norbert Schuster
Raumklang RK3001 60' 15"

In many ways the music on this CD is the very opposite of the stark minimalism of the narrative music of the Passion settings. Pumped up from his 1609 visit to Venice where he would have heard the polychoral opulence of the Gabrielis, Schütz published settings of the Psalms of David in 1619 which aspired to bring the same complex choral magnificence to the Court of Dresden. The stunning setting of *Zion spricht* for two six-part consorts of solo voices, two four-part choirs and BC which opens the CD is a fine example of the young composer's management of huge resources. The Cappella Sagittariana shows that this quest for aural opulence and variety stayed with the composer throughout his long lifetime. Specialising in Schütz's music (their name derives from a latinisation of the composer's German surname) means that these German forces sound completely at home in Schütz's distinctive and demanding idiom and provide authoritative and compelling accounts of all of this repertoire. Perhaps most impressive of all is the natural blend they achieve using a wide range of instruments and voices – the quirky contribution of a trio of dulcians is particularly intriguing. *D. James Ross*

Et la fleur vole Airs à danser & airs de cour autour de 1600 Les Musiciens de Saint-Julien, François Lazarevitch 66' 07"
Alpha 167
Ballard, Bataille, Beaulieu, Boesset, Chastillon de la Tour, Guédron, Mangeant, Philidor, Planson, Praetorius & Tessier

As always with Alpha, one is immediately struck by the sumptuous presentation of this release – aptly chosen illustrations, with commentary; a list of musical sources; an interesting note; texts and translations. The focus is on dance and dance music around 1600 with some *airs de cour* for variety. The music is played on gentle-sounding consorts of strings, flutes and musettes with stylish and lively divisions on the repeats. The supporting pluckers are excellent. In these ensembles the percussion can only be intrusive and it is, though not to the point of total distraction. A tighter and higher-pitched tabor might have been better. As with other performers of this repertoire, Les Musiciens de S-J sometimes over-vary their forces within a piece but it's all very slick and controlled. Enjoyable especially for some unusual performances of favourite tunes. *David Hansell*

Baroque Extravagances: the viol consort in Italian music l'Amoroso, Guido Balestracci 60' 42"
Pan Classics PC10233
F. M. Bassani, Buonamente, Ferro, Gesualdo, Piccinini, Salvatore, Storace, G. Strozzi, Trabaci, Valente & Vitali

This is a reissue of recordings made by the viol player Guido Balestracci and L'Amoroso viol consort in 1998. While some pieces were originally for viols, others are arrangements of keyboard or lute pieces, some with added plucked strings, organ, harpsichord and even percussion. Don't be put off by the mention of percussion, even though you might imagine that you are listening to the first piece, Valente's *Tenore de Zefiro con duodeci mutanze*, while sitting on a seashore. There is some terrific playing here, exciting and beautiful by turns, of a really interesting and varied selection of pieces. The booklet contains an essay by Balestracci on the theory behind the choice of music and its performance as well as a good list of sources. *Victoria Helby*

Music from the reign of King James I The Choir of Westminster Abbey, Robert Quinney *org*, James O'Donnell 76' 56"
Hyperion CDA67858
Orlando Gibbons *Almighty and everlasting God, Fancy in C fa tu, Fancy in Gamutt flatt, Fantazia in foure parts, Great king of gods, Hosanna to the Son of David, O clap your hands, O all true faithful hearts, O Lord in thy wrath rebuke me not, Preludium, See see the Word is incarnate*
Edmund Hooper *Great Service (Mag & Nunc)*
Robert Ramsey *How are the mighty fallen*
Thomas Tomkins *Be strong and of a good courage, O sing unto the Lord a new song, Then David mourned, When David heard*

This very capable English choir presents a varied programme of Jacobean choral anthems, predominantly by Orlando Gibbons but also featuring music by Tomkins, Edmund Hooper (a former Abbey organist) and Robert Ramsey, with a scattering of appropriate organ works. The Abbey choristers are clearly very much at home with this repertoire, and the full ensemble as well as the soloists drawn from it sing idiomatically and expressively. If we don't quite have the dynamic delineation and clarity of phrasing we enjoy from some of the 'commercial' early music choirs, perhaps the composers represented, who were after all part of this long choral tradition, didn't expect it either. As an enthusiastic musician and aesthete, James brought a taste for pleasing polyphony with him from Scotland and seems to have employed the more capacious English Royal purse to encourage and reward a singularly talented crop of composers. Less familiar than his contemporaries, Robert Ramsey might well be a scion of the Ramsay family, Royal trumpeters to James VI of Scotland, who traveled south with their monarch in 1604. His contribution to the body of music composed to mourn the catastrophic death of James' son Henry, 'How are the mighty fallen' is particularly effective. *D. James Ross*

LATE BAROQUE

Albinoni *Sonate da chiesa. Opera Quarta* Jaime González *oboe*, Åsa Åkerberg *vlc*, Thomas C. Boysen *lute*, Martin Müller *hpscd*
GENUIN Classics GEN 10184 53' 01"

Before I set about criticising this CD, let me assert one thing: Jaime González is an outstanding oboist. The only problem is that, by his own confession, this is a set of violin sonatas. Fair game in the world of the baroque oboist, says he. That's perhaps correct, but I cannot imagine a baroque oboist playing the music so quickly that the lines are so indistinct (on account of breath-taking speeds), or when the very essence of the music – the interplay of bow and string – are lost. There are baroque oboe sonatas after all, so why not use them on a recital to assert your claims to HIP awareness? Why assemble a diverse and interesting continuo team and then essentially play over them –

I cannot believe that they were universally happy with the tempi set, or even with the project as a whole. (Though I am prepared for an angry email refuting this!) *BC*

Arne *Artaxerxes* Christopher Ainslie *Artaxerxes*, Elizabth Watts *Mandane*, Caitlin Hulcup *Arbaces*, Andrew Staples *Artabanes*, Rebecca Bottone *Semira*, Daniel Norman *Rimenes*, Classical Opera Company, Ian Page 137' 49" (2CDs)
LINN CKD 358

Andrew Benson-Wilson enjoyed the live performances of this production (*EMR* 134, Feb. '09) and I am happy to report that everything he savoured has found its way on to this recording. It took me a while to get used to hearing 18th-century opera in English (and Arne's less inspired moments – both verbal and musical – did prompt unworthy thoughts of *G & S* in parody mode) but once tuned in, I appreciated the composer's and the conductor's efforts to keep the strange plot on the move. As Andrew noted, the cast is a young one and it is a pleasure to hear them sing the coloratura with comfort and pleasure, even if sheer exuberance occasionally provokes tonally- unwise decoration. The large orchestra is excellent and what they have to do is highly inventive and colourful. *Artaxexes* was core repertoire for 50 years from its first performance and we owe a great debt to conductor Ian Page for bringing it back to life. Look out for a revival of this production and in the meantime enjoy this recording. The booklet is excellent (if with a few minor errors in the libretto) though only in English. Perhaps there is a feeling that the composer of *Rule, Britannia* will be most enjoyed at home. *David Hansell*
The Parley of Instruments recording is available as a download from Hyperion.

J. S. Bach *Warum betrübst du dich, mein Herz Cantatas (Vol. 12: nos 27, 47, 96, 138)* La Petite Bande [Gerlinde Sämann, Petra Noskaiová, Christoph Genz, Jan Van der Crabben *SATB*], Sigiswald Kuijken 70' 24"
Accent 25312

This CD is part of Le Petite Bande's project to record a cantata for each Sunday of the year, plus the high feasts. The CD comes with an introductory leaflet with commentaries on "getting the best from listening to the Bach cantatas" and the use of vocal and instrumental forces, the latter including a note about their use of the violoncello da spalla. The combination of a wide stereo spread and a close microphone position means that singers and solo instruments tend to come from either left or right – a reminder of the early days of stereo recording. Although these are fine interpretations, in comparison to the soloists in the Retrospect Bach CD reviewed elsewhere, I fear this CD falls short. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

J. S. Bach *Easter & Ascension Oratorios* Carolyn Sampson, Iestyn Davies, James Gilchrist, Peter Harvey *ScTTB*, Retrospect Ensemble, Matthew Halls 70' 26"
LINN Records CKD 373

Despite its formal launch only in May 2009, Retrospect Ensemble has hit the road running and has turned in some impressive concert performances as well as winning plaudits for its CDs. Fielding an excellent group of singers and players, and with soloists of such calibre, this is a landmark Bach recording. Amongst many special moments are the aria "Seele, deine Spezereien", sung by Carolyn Sampson and performed with a gentle swing, and some gorgeously sensuous flute playing by Rachel Brown and Iestyn Davies's beautifully paced and articulated "Ach, bleibe doch, mein liebstes Leben," reflecting his position as one of the promising countertenors to hit the scene in recent years. The build-up to the conclusion of "Preis und Dank" is sheer exhilaration. As usual, Linn Records have excelled in their production – CD, MP3 and studio master quality are available to download. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

J S Bach *Passion selon St. Jean* Ensemble Vocal et Instrumental de Lausanne, Michel Corboz 115' 40" (2 CDs)
Cascavalle 1036 (rec 1994)

This is a re-mastering of a live recording from 1994 and features singers of the calibre of Andreas Scholl, Charles Daniels, Christoph Pregardien and Peter Harvey. Although it starts with applause, the audience noise is minimal. The problem is that there have been so many fine recordings of a work as popular as this in the intervening years that I am not sure who this release is aimed at – apart, presumably, from budget-minded customers. The singing is fine, as would be expected, but the orchestral direction is rather lumpy, with accented first beats of bars giving a slightly gullumping feel to the music. Listen before you buy.
Andrew Benson-Wilson

Bach *Partiten BWV 825-839* Francesco Corti *hpscd* 154' 20" (2 CDs)
Berlin Classics 0300039 BC

This is a personal and thoughtful account of the partitas, with a fair dose of idiosyncrasy, especially in the choice of tempi. Some movements, like the sinfonia of the second partita are very slow; others, like the third partita's scherzo or the gigue from the fourth, are very fast and suffer a bit from sounding rather mechanical and rushed. Corti mostly makes his tempi work, however, and there are some beautifully sparkling short movements as well as reflective sarabandes and exciting gigues. He plays on a copy by Matthew Griewisch of a Johannes Ruckers harpsichord which sounds well in this music. The recording is quite resonant which sometimes affects the clarity of the sound but Corti's playing is always clean and shows an excellent understanding of Bach's lines and overall structures.
Noel O'Regan

J. S. Bach *Chromatic Fantasia and Fugue, Partita 4, English Suite 3* Lisa Goode Crawford *hpscd* 62' 21"
Naxos 8.572309

Lisa Crawford brings a wealth of experience, especially of French music, to this Bach recording. She gives very satisfying accounts of all three works, capturing with ease the wide variety of styles which they encompass and underpinning all her playing with an unerring sense of rhythm. She plays on the 1624 Ruckers in Colmar's Musée d'Unterlinden which was given a *ravalement* in 1680 and further extended in 1720. It is very well suited to this music and is very well recorded, a real joy to listen to. It is a crowded field but Crawford more than holds her own with this recording which has the added advantage of being at budget price.
Noel O'Regan

Bach *[Lute works]* Rafael Bonvita 57' 14"
enchiriadis EN 2030
BWV 997-1000, 1004, 1006a + 1068/2

"Bach's music is alive. We hear it on mobile phones, in the concert hall and on street corners, in advertising campaigns and in myriad new versions ... and that is the best thing that can happen to art." [Discuss.] Thus begins Rafael Bonavita's sleeve notes, which attempt to justify his arrangements for baroque lute of music which had been composed for other

instruments. They need no apology. His performance of Bach is intense and exciting, and he shows what an expressive medium the baroque lute can be for music of quality.

The CD begins with the lute suite in C minor BWV 997. Bonavita captures the dreamy character of the opening Fantasia, although I find it unsettling that so many two-note chords are played séparé, something he continues to do throughout the CD. If two notes of a chord are not played together, one of them must be out of time, which upsets the rhythm. The long Fuga is a wonderful piece, which Bonavita sustains with suitable variety, and there are tender moments in the grand Sarabande. The suite ends with a lively Giga bubbling along at the Double.

The well-known Prelude BWV 999 consists of a steady stream of broken chords over an ever-changing three-note figure in the bass, a piece which Bonavita plays with suitable panache, followed by Fuga BWV 1000.

Next comes the Preludio, Fuga, and Allegro BWV 998, popular now with classical guitarists. After a calm opening, the Fuga rattles along nicely, but the clarity of the Allegro is lost, with a tempo verging on the frenetic and treble notes getting drowned by loud booming bass notes.

Most impressive is Bonavita's performance of the long, virtuosic Ciaccona BWV 1004 originally for solo violin, and Preludio BWV 1006a.

The encore, (hardly a "bonus track" with such a short timing, is Bonavita's arrangement of the "Air on the G string)." Extracts of the CD may be heard on YouTube at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ycTsjdaxXEM. *Stewart McCoy*

Bach *Sonatas & Partitas for Solo Violin* Pavlo Beznosiuk 148' 16" (2 CDs) Linn Records CKD 366

My acid test for any recording of these pieces – after so many years of reviewing them in these pages – is "what makes this one different from those that go before?" Truth be told, a few ornaments here and there, a slightly slower tempo than expected (but who on earth *expects* a certain tempo?), and a crisp, clear recording from label of the year are the answers. Beznosiuk needs absolutely no recommendation from me – from Biber to Benda (and beyond, of course!), he is one of the UK's leading early fiddlers – and, in my book at least, he gets extra Brownie points for being prepared not only to explore repertoire off the beaten track but to champion it actively. His take on the Bach solo violin music was always going to be worth hearing; whether or not this is the ultimate set for you depends on *your* expectations. *BC*

J. S. Bach *Six Suites for Unaccompanied Cello* Tanya Tomkins 152' 43" (2 CDs) Avie AV2212

I was interested to compare this new recording by an American cellist with my familiar set by Peter Wispelwey (1990). Both were recorded on period instruments, both use the scordatura tuning for No. 5 and a five-string violoncello piccolo for No. 6 and both studied with Anner Bylsma. Tomkins takes a much more personal and reflective view of the music, whereas Wispelwey has more sense of direction. Where Tomkins' dance movements do little to retain the basic feel of the dance and tend to lose their pulse, with generally very slow, reflective allemandes and sarabandes, Wispelwey retains the feel and character of the dances, although both have free interpretations of the preludes. The total durations of 152 minutes for Tomkins compared with Wispelwey (both play all repeats) speaks for itself. The earlier recording has a more vibrant acoustic, and those preferring a more ruminative, rhapsodic Bach may like this version; but there is rather too much rubato and too many ritenuti at cadences for my taste. Although recordings of the suites on modern cello abound, there are very few on period instruments. I must confess to not having heard the Kuijken version on the shoulder cello (viola da spalla), which could be most revelatory. *Ian Graham-Jones*

J. S. Bach *The Musical Offering* Camerata Kilkenny 54' 59" Maya Recordings MCD1003

As the name suggest, Camerata Kilkenny hail from Ireland. They were founded in 1999 by harpsichordist Malcolm Proud and violinist Maya Homburger and are joined on this recording by Marja Gaynor, violin/viola, Sarah McMahon, cello and Wilbert Hazelzet, flute, all giving excellent performances. The two Ricercars are played on solo harpsichord, the Canons on a variety of instruments, but always maintaining a single instrumentation for each piece. Stylistically there a great deal to admire, although I would have preferred a more defined closure to the *Ricercare a 6* than the gradual braking offered here, although it does impart a grandeur that anybody capable of playing this fiendish work on solo harpsichord fully deserves. The use of rather close microphone positions means that the harpsichord keyboard thumps and the flute tonguing is audible, although adjusting bass response helps with the former and the latter is an attractive addition. The liner notes had the added benefit of a poem based on *The Musical Offering* by Fergal Gaynor. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

Bach *Die Kunst der Fuge* Akademie für alte Musik Berlin 77'41" HMC 902064

The first word that comes to mind in describing this recorded performance of *The Art of Fugue* is 'arbitrary'. It is prefaced by an organ rendering of the four-part chorale that concludes Cantata No. 38 due to its perceived resemblance with the inverted subject of *The Art of Fugue*, which seems to me a very weak basis for its inclusion. The four canons are interspersed among the fugues, rather than placed together in a group as in the original edition. Above all, the work is played by various groups (or the tutti) of a chamber orchestra that consists of 16 strings (4, 4, 4, 3, 1), three oboes and bassoon, trombone, harpsichord and organ.

Here are some examples of the results. Contrapunctus 3 is played on the un-Bachian combination of two oboes, bassoon and trombone. The first fugal entry sounds weird on the trombone, causing one to reflect what indignities Bach has to suffer, even in the 21st century when we have greatly increased our knowledge of historical performance. The climax of Contrapunctus 4 is 'orchestrated' in a manner not fundamentally different from the Bach transcriptions of Elgar, Schoenberg or Stokowski. Great pains are taken throughout to 'bring out' fugal entries over the rest of the texture, e.g. by giving them to trombone while the surrounding parts are played on strings. It is a relief to hear solo harpsichord in Contrapunctus 7, but even here the entries of the augmented subject are played on solo strings.

In a brief discussion of the Akademie's approach in the accompanying booklet, their Konzertmeister Stephan Mai says: 'We can assume that the cycle was conceived for a keyboard instrument, but was laid out in score for publication. This fact has inspired many musicians before

us to produce instrumentations'. He goes on to talk about the clarity of texture and pleasure in performance that can result from this approach. It is, however, a serious misconception that open-score notation implies performance by an instrumental ensemble. As is well known, there was a longstanding tradition in the 17th and early 18th centuries, to which Bach subscribed, of presenting didactic keyboard works, composed in strict counterpoint, in open score as an aid to pupils' comprehension of the contrapuntal structure. Moreover, C. P. E. Bach was referring to the original edition of his father's masterpiece, laid out in open score, when he observed that 'everything... has been arranged for use at the harpsichord or organ'. In other words, there is no historical justification at all for the approach adopted by the Berlin Akademie. *Richard Jones*

Bach *Die Kunst der Fuge* Musica Antiqua Köln 76'
DVD Berlin Classics 0016758BC

This DVD is best taken in bite-sized sections. It is recorded in the highly reverberative acoustic of a modernist glass and concrete building (the Langer Foundation, near Düsseldorf), where it was well nigh impossible to hear the clarity of the individual contrapuntal lines so necessary in this work. What is more, the string quartet of Musica Antiqua Köln, who are not afraid to use some vibrato, have a continuously aggressive *forte* style of performance that does not help to lighten the textures. One wished for some quieter, cleaner playing where the texture calls for some contrast. While some numbers, mainly (though not entirely) the canons and the fugue for two claviers, are played on a German-style double manual harpsichord and others by two matched harpsichords, some are on string quartet alone, another with harpsichord acting as continuo. In contrast to the string playing, I found the harpsichordist(s) more responsive to the points of repose in the numbers, though the acoustic tended to exacerbate the acerbic quality of sound that might not have been present in a different recording environment. In the final incomplete triple fugue Contrapunctus XIV, the 'BACH' fugue subject, pumped out by the strings, broke off without any fading of the sound at the point where the composer's manuscript ends. Here the producers decided to finish off the fugue with loud gurgling sounds and sights of running water. Musica Antiqua Köln use the original complete edition, but intersperse the canons, grouped near the end in Bach's order, with the fugues. Annoyingly the title of each number was only briefly shown some while after the start of each item, making it difficult for those following a score. *Ian Graham-Jones*

Brescianello *Concerti, Sinfonie, Ouverture* La Cetra Barockorchester Basel, David Plantier, Václav Luks 64' 33"
Glossa GCD 922506

I remember being very excited – and very positive – in reviewing this disc first time around. The music is always interesting – he was no mere Vivaldi clone – and the performances are rarely less than exciting. With his ear for unusual combinations (like the concerto for violin and bassoon with strings), Brescianello deserves to be far better known; perhaps this re-branding will provide a fresh stimulus to his re-discovery. *BC*

Geminiani *Cello Sonatas* Gaetano Nasillo, Jesper Christensen, Tobias Bonz
Pan Classics PC 10232 57' 58"

Initially I was very put off by the closely-miked breathing of the solo cellist. My heart sank at the thought of enduring almost an hour of dramatic (are they artistic?) in- and exhalations, but it seems that either the microphone was moved further away (and if this was the case, why was the first track not re-done?) or Nasillo – who is a very good cellist – learned the art of near-silent respiration. Whether or not we actually need another recording of these works, though, is open to debate. The selling point, according to the booklet notes, lies in the continuo realizations, which have closely followed Geminiani's instructions for continuous melody in the keyboard's right hand, and it is possibly true that there is more interesting interplay between Christensen and Nasillo than on previous versions. But I'll stick with Alison McGillivray and her continuo team as my favourite. *BC*

Handel *Alessandro Severo* Mary-Ellen Nesi *Alessandro*, Marita Solberg *Salustia*, Kristina Hammarström *Giulia*, Irini Karainni *Albina*, Gemma Bertagnolli *Claudio*, Petros Magoulas *Marizan*
Bonus CD: Niccolò Manzaro *Don Crepuscolo (1815) Azione comica d'un atto solo*, Christophorus Stamboglis *Don Crepuscolo*, Armonia Atenea, George Petrou 186' 59"
MDG 6091674 (3 CDs)

As a pasticcio opera, this is endless fun for fans of Handel-borrowing-spotting. As an opera it shares features with *Ottone:* it's about a domineering mother; it's full of nice arias, but the whole is not much more than the sum of its parts – and yet it is worth listening to, and, as David Vickers says in the sleeve notes, not overlooking. The performance is good, and the singers are a strong cast. Petrou does suffer on occasion from unexciting or unsympathetic tempi, which no amount of aggression or hamming up effects (as in the overture or "Sull'altar" in Act III) will hide, but they are never less than acceptable (and he does get it just right sometimes, such as the end of Act II or "Impara, ingrata" in Act III). Annoyingly, the CDs do not match the acts. The booklet notes are informative, if slightly dry. On a pedantic note, I'm not sure that we get French and German speech marks right, but they surely don't know ours. MDG take note: there is no << or >> in English, and no „" either – we have " or ', as any fule kno. The accompanying opera, *Don Crepuscolo* by the Cretan Niccolo Manzaro (contemporary with Rossini), is more than a piece of archaeology – it is rather charming and interesting, and should definitely be in the repertoire of small opera companies. These discs are recommendable. *Katie Hawks*
I'm delighted to see our first Greek customer heading the bill! *CB*

Handel *Jephtha* James Gilchrist *Jephtha*, Mona Julsrud *Iphis*, Elisabeth Jansson *Storgè*, Havard Stensvold *Zebul*, Marianne B. Kielland *Hamor*, Elisabeth Rapp *Angel*, Collegium Vocale Gent, Stavanger Symphony Orchestra, Fabio Biondi 157' 46"
BIS-CD-1864 (2 CDs for the price of 1)
to be reviewed in the next issue

Handel *Il trionfo del Tempo e del Disinganno* Lucy Crowe *Bellezza*, Anna Stephany *Piacere*, Hilary Summers *Disinganno*, Andrew Staples *Tempo*, Early Opera Company, Christian Curnyn 137' 30" (2CDs)
Wigmore Hall Live WHLive 0042/2

Good booklet notes are hard to come by. Whereas the note for Minkowski's *Water Music* (reviewed in the last issue) is pretentious, this note is merely boring and badly written. Fortunately, this does not reflect the performance. Lucy Crowe is one of the best Handel sopranos about, and Andy Staples and Hilary Summers are a magnificent double act of Time and Truth. Anna Stephany is not quite as beguiling as Pleasure ought to be, but she

is not a particularly weak link. The orchestra is lovely. On the down side, the direction lacks Italian pizazz – Curnyn has never yet managed to shake off his British reserve. Alessandrini's recording (the best of the rest) is much more gripping, although the cast is better in the Curnyn performance. Time's amazing 'Urne voi' is just a little dull; the quartet at the end of part I doesn't have the urgent worry that it ought; Truth's 'Più non cura' needs more latitude; the quartet in part II is not nearly disturbing enough. According to the notes, Curnyn bases his tempi on a heartbeat. Perhaps his heart needs to flutter a bit more so that we don't get the same pulse for everything. *Katie Hawks*

Handel *Water Music* Les Musiciens du Louvre, Marc Minkowski 67' 32"
naïve V5234
Ian Graham-Jones reviewed the performance in the last issue; a copy reached Katie as well, so we include her comments as well.
The booklet note starts thus: 'On 1 August 1714 Queen Anne died... Though lacking a direct heir, the Protestant queen would have found a natural successor in her Roman Catholic half-brother James Francis Edward, whom Louis XIV had in fact proclaimed King of England... But the English Parliament had forestalled this possibility.' Gosh, what *was* the English Parliament thinking of? This is a reminder that chauvinism is a French word. The rest of the note is a study in French incomprehensibility. The Water Music itself is, as one would expect from Minkowski and his band, stylish and well-played. Bits from Rodrigo fill the extra space, and they are worth a listen. If you don't have a Water Music, this is a good one to get – just ignore the booklet. *Katie Hawks*

Handel *Cleopatra Opera arias from Giulio Cesare* Natalie Dessay *S*, Le Concert d'Astrée, Emmanuelle Haïm 65' 32"
Virgin Classics 50999 907 8722 5

This disc brings together three of baroque opera's great ladies. Natalie Dessay sings Cleopatra's arias from Handel's *Giulio Cesare*, including two he wrote but then re-deployed: Emmanuelle Haïm conducts and wrote the ornamentation for the da capos. Rather curiously, given who they are, the booklet tells us nothing about the artists though we do get the texts/translations in four languages and a useful note explaining the context of each piece. Not quite every sound that ND makes is ravishingly beautiful and her vibrato is sometimes intrusive in slow music or on long notes, but she is often technically spectacular and certainly has the measure of her character. EH is also good dramatically though she does allow some over-fussy continuo playing (why are there theorbos at all, other than where Handel asked for one?) and her ornaments do not always convince (some sound Classical, some sound French) but at least they exist. If the production that spawned this release becomes a DVD it will probably be a must-have. If you seek the hero, look no further than Handel. *David Hansell*

John of London: Chamber music by Jean-Baptiste Loeillet Ensemble Mediolanum (Sabine Ambos *rec*, Felix Koch *vlc*, Wiebke Weidanz *hpscd*.) 71' 34"
Christophorus CHR 77343
Sonatas I-VI, and harpsichord suite in F

The really excellent programme notes by Karsten Erik Ose in the booklet set the standard for this recording of the recorder sonatas from John Loeillet of London's *XII Solos, Six for a Common Flute Op.III* published by Walsh in 1729, about twenty four years after the composer first found work in London as an oboe player at the Queen's Theatre. These are assured performances of works which deserve to be much better known, with some really lovely expansive slow movements. My only regret is that there is only one harpsichord suite, and if the rest of the set are as good as this I hope Wiebke Weidanz will find the opportunity to record them before too long. *Victoria Helby*

Montéclair *A la guerre!* Gabriele Cassone, Antonio Frigé, Ensemble Pian & Forte 79' 07"
Dynamic DM8004
Concerts for natural trumpet and harpsichord: Troisième, Quatrième, Cinquième ("La guerre") & Sixième ("La Paix") Concerts

This is a re-issue of a 1998 recording. Montéclair was one of the first proficient French double bass players, though these pieces were originally intended for the other end of the pitch spectrum – flute (with continuo). On this recording the 64 short movements that make up these four *concerts* are played either as harpsichord solos or, where this can more or less plausibly be done, with the melody line assigned to the 'natural trumpet'. This is procedure is not without its inherent balance problems, which are not always satisfactorily solved, and I have my doubts as to just how natural the 'natural trumpet' is. *David Hansell*

Rameau *Operas* Various opera houses, Les arts florissants & Les Talens Lyriques 1145' (11 DVDs)
Opus Arte OA 1052B D
Les Boréades, Castor & Pollux, In convertendo, Les Indes galantes, Les Paladins and Zoroastre

What a feast of riches! There are six boxes of DVDs, five of them with cracking (though quite contrasting) productions of Rameau's most stunning output; the sixth is an odd combination of documentary and performance of the *grand motet* "In convertendo" (featuring some of the most grotesque facial contortions I have ever seen a singer produce while emitting the most heavenly sound) and, as if tagged on at the end, rather lacklustre readings of some of the composer's chamber music. The singing is almost universally of the highest calibre – among the very best are the high tenors (or is that just my preference?), though some of the women produce a ravishing sound, and navigate the world of French ornamentation with uncanny precision without it ever sounding artificial. There is a conductor who has been accused elsewhere of pushing Rameau's music too hard, not leaving it room to breathe – in the hands of Christophe Rousset and William Christie, there was little risk of that ever happening, and I would go as far as to stick my neck out and call these definitive musical performances. As for the visuals, well I leave that to you to decide. *Zoroastre* is done in period costume – though that still does not preclude angular and bizarre dance movements in the background – while *Castor & Pollux* looks as if it was kitted out at an upholstery warehouse closing-down sale. To be honest, though, I would still rather enjoy these works as they are than not have them at all, and, even if a more HIP production comes along, that will not necessarily suffice to supersede such fabulous readings. I envisage many an evening curled up on the sofa with these for company! *BC*

Rameau *Pièces de clavecin en concerts (1741)* Aapo Häkkinen *hspcd*, Petri Tapio Mattson *vln*, Mikko Perkola gamba 66' 25"

Such is the quality of this music that artists seldom fail with it – the inspiration of Rameau and his 'friends pictured within' reaches across the centuries. And

so this Finnish ensemble can add themselves to the list of those who have tackled these masterpieces – tinged with nostalgia yet at the same time forward-looking – with aplomb. They note the composer's stricture that the strings should yield to the harpsichord when their own material is 'merely accompaniment' and the harpsichord itself (Keith Hill 2008, after Taskin 1769) has the rich sound that the music needs. The supporting essay tells you exactly what you want to know. A very satisfying release all round. *David Hansell*

D. Scarlatti *Salve Regina* Carlos Mena, Orquesta Barroca de Sevilla, Nicolau de Figueiredo, *hpscd* 67' 07"
OBS 002
D. Scarlatti *Arias de Narciso, Salve Regina, Sinfonia in D, Cantata: Doppo lungo servire, Keyboard Sonatas, K10, K41, K5, K9, K11.* Avison *Concertos after Scarlatti, Nos 5 in d & 10 in D*

The highlight of this endlessly engaging programme is countertenor Carlos Mena's superb interpretation of the *Salve Regina*. Mena is arguably the most underrated of today's outstanding crop of male altos, a singer who has not only developed a superb technique – he even, *mirabili dictu*, owns to a genuine trill – but is also blessed with a voice of natural beauty. Here Scarlatti's familiar setting is elevated to something beyond tear-stained plea, becoming in the process a heart-wrenching, passionate supplication of noble intensity. If the other vocal items cannot reach this level, it is hardly the fault of Mena. The two little arias from *Narciso*, as it became known when it was staged in London in 1720, are charmingly done but comparatively inconsequential, while the character of the early chamber cantata *Doppo lungo* is altered from subtle intimacy to operatic public utterance by the addition of a full body of strings to the outer arias, a point graphically illustrated by comparing the effect with the central continuo aria.

In addition we have two of the concertos made by Avison from Scarlatti sonatas alongside de Figueiredo's fine performances of the originals, a bright idea that so far as I am aware no one seems to have thought of before. The playing of the concertos is so alert and accomplished that one might wish there had been more of them included. But then we would have had less of Mena... Riches indeed. *Brian Robins*

Scarlatti & Hasse *Salve Regina* Deborah York, James Bowman *SA*, Kings Consort, Robert King 77' 04" (rec 1996)
Helios CDH55354
D. Scarlatti *Salve Regina*. A. Scarlatti *Su le sponde del Tebro, Infirmata vulnerata, O di Betlemme altera*. Hasse *Salve Regina*

This is a reissue of a 1996 recording originally reviewed in *EMR 26*. It's an oddly conceived programme juxtaposing sacred and secular in rather haphazard fashion. Most of the works are at least familiar, though it should be noted that the Hasse *Salve Regina* is not the relatively well-known one in A, but an unpublished setting for solo alto in G, dating from 1744. David Hansell enjoyed the original issue, while not being convinced that *Su le sponde* is a successful piece. I think two things may account for that view: the cantata was surely intended to pit the brilliance of the obbligato trumpet against the strength and trumpet tones of a castrato – there are many passages of imitation – and for all its qualities, Deborah York's soprano never remotely sounds like Crispian Steele Perkins' trumpet; also, and this is an observation that applies to the CD as a whole. Robert King's accompaniments seem all too often content to loiter soporifically in Scarlatti's rich harmonies. For all his occasional intonation problems, the greatest pleasure to be derived from these performances comes from James Bowman's technique and superb artistry, for which one need look no further than his immaculate control of line at the opening of the Scarlatti *Salve*. *Brian Robins*

Vivaldi *Ottone in villa* Sonia Prina *Ottone*, Julia Lezhneva *Caio Silio*, Verónica Cangemi *Cleonilla*, Roberta Invernizzi *Tullia*, Topi Lehtipuu *Decio*, Il giardino armonico, Giovanni Antonini 134'
naïve OP 30493 (2 CDs in a box)

Few hot-blooded males (or others of similar persuasion) can have failed to notice the steady stream of CDs emanating from The Vivaldi Edition, most of which feature a seductive young lady on the cover. A fringed blonde with a large upturned black collar, glancing to her left, is the invitation to savour the delights of Vivaldi's first opera, *Ottone in Villa*. I have reviewed several staged Vivaldi operas over recent years (and have enjoyed them all) although I was abroad when the concert version of this CD was given at the Barbican last May. The plots are daft, of course, (this one eavesdrops on the goings-on amongst Roman youngsters) but they bounce along with merry abandon and are usually done and dusted in less than three hours – only two of the Ottone in Villa arias are more than five minutes, and the recits are brief and to the point. There are many musical gems, one being Caio Silo's second-act aria "Leggi almeno, tiranna infedele". Four of the five characters are sung by women, with three sopranos and a contralto, two in trouser roles and another in disguise as a man. This vocal cast is excellent, with stirring performances from the singers. I think this is Il Giardino Armonico's first venture into opera recording. On this showing they are a pretty secure future awaiting them. Giovanni Antonini directs with a keen eye for the dramatic underlay and forward momentum.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Zelenka *Officium defunctorum ZWV47, Requiem in D ZWV46* Collegium 1704 & Collegium Vocale 1704, Václav Luks 101' 30"
Accent ACC24244 (2 CDs)

You might imagine that two CDs of funeral music would be too much. You might even fear that Zelenka's long chromatic lines might outstay their welcome, or that he might be revealed as a one-trick pony. Nothing could be further from the truth. This slightly doctored reconstruction ("doctored" of necessity, I hasten to add – the source material is not complete) is yet another marvellous showcase for both Zelenka *and* the performers. Whether they be voices from the choir or headline artistes, the solo singers are outstanding – it may be naughty of me to draw attention to just one of them, but I feel I should herald yet another star in the Czech early music firmament, contralto Markéta Cukrová is definitely going places (you heard it first from me!) – and as an ensemble, the 1704s are among the leading Zelenka performers of the day. I *would* say THE leading Zelenka performers, but they have formidable rivals to that designation from their compatriots, Adam Viktora's Ensemble Inégal. Happy days for Zelenka fans. *BC*

Zelenka *[Trio sonatas]* Pasticcio Barocco
Hérissons Prod. LH05 50' 08"
ZWV181/4-6

Of the modern instrument discs I've had to listen to for this issue, this is the best. While the tone of the instruments can never have that bitter-sweet characteristic

of their baroque cousins, the musicians here at least have a proper sense of HIP, and their performances do not push the music in directions that don't fit it naturally. Their choice of tempi mostly matches other "conventional" recordings of the repertoire (Heinz Holliger and co. were among the first to explore and popularise this most extensive set of trios – how many other Baroque composers could fill an LP (and yes, I mean an LP – this is rather short by CD standards!) with only three pieces? While this does not challenge my beloved baroque instruments sets, it is good to know that HIP has not killed off interest in Zelenka in the bigger world of classical music. *BC*

Hamburg 1705: eighteenth-century works for harpsichord Michele Benuzzi (63' 48")
LIT Classics **LIR021**
Graupner, Handel & Mattheson

Benuzzi uses the coincidence of these three composers having worked in the opera house in Hamburg in 1705, prior to Handel's departure for Italy, to record a comparative group of works by all three. He includes two Handel suites (HWV 437 and 448, both in D minor), a partita in A by Graupner and a suite in D by Mattheson, plus some preludes and other incidental pieces by Handel. This provides a useful contextualisation for the young Handel's music while also being a reminder of the importance of Hamburg as a music centre at this time. Benuzzi is a very sympathetic player of this repertory and clearly revels in the rich sound of the Dulcken harpsichord from the late John Barnes' collection on which it is beautifully recorded with a warm close-up sound. Gaps between tracks seem unusually long, breaking up continuity in the suites, but this is a fine recording with much to recommend it. *Noel O'Regan*

Italy versus France The Bach Players
Hyphen Press Music **HPM004** 78' 52"
d'Anglebert, Corelli, Couperin, Lully, Muffat, Pasquini, Rebel & de Visée

This is a well planned programme (of generous length compared to many) which surveys the Italian and French styles as they and their combinations were around 1700. Four major works provide substance and among them Rebel's rich and inventive *Tombeau de M. de Lully* is especially welcome. Couperin's *Apothéose de Corelli* is beautifully narrated and the two suites by Georg Muffat give this oft quoted but too rarely played composer deserved exposure. The shorter items give solo spots to the excellent continuo players. This programme was thoroughly road-tested before recording and should win the group – and their featured composers – further plaudits and admirers. *David Hansell*

London Love Ensemble Rossignol (Alice Gort-Switynk *rec*, Elly van Munster *theorbo*)
Aliud **ACD BH 050-2** 64' 41"
Babell Sonata II in C minor; **Geminiani** *What shall I do?*; **Handel** op. 1 nos. 2 & 9; **J. B. Loeillet** Sonata V in C minor + Ruoff Love Story I-IV and a Prelude by J. S. Bach

The title of this CD is taken from the combination of music heard on it – baroque recorder sonatas, some by composers living in London, interspersed with four unaccompanied pieces, *Love Story I-IV*, by the German composer Axell D Ruoff (b.1957). For me, these slightly haunting and expressive pieces are the most successful performances on the CD, played with assurance and a beautiful tone quality. The theorbo continuo does little to hide any deficiencies of pitch in the recorder and there are occasional places where the co-ordination between the players isn't perfect. There is some interesting music here, though, particularly the Geminiani and the Babell sonata "with proper graces adapted to each adagio". In view of the idea behind the title, it's a pity that the person who wrote the notes has confused Jean Baptiste Loeillet de Gant, the composer of the sonata in C minor op. 4 no. 5, who mainly worked in France, with his cousin of the same name who lived and worked in London. *Victoria Helby*

Orgel und Trompete Johannes Zimmerl (1752 Hencke organ, Stiftkirche Herzogenburg), Zsolt Simon *tpt* 78' 08"
£s&%
Albrechtsberger, Bach, Bruhns, Grünberger, Loeillet de Gant, Minkowitsch, Tessarini, Vejvanovský

The 1752 Hencke organ in the generous acoustic of the Stiftkirche Herzogenburg (a sumptuous Baroque Abbey, just north of St Pölten in Austria) is an important example of the mid-18th-century south-central European organ style. Stirring solo organ performances of the Bach/Vivaldi Concerto and the Bruhns Praeludium in G demonstrate the clean brilliance of the silvery organ pleno and the remaining works (less familiar, and therefore of interest) feature some of the colour stops of the organ. Unusually for programmes with this combination of instruments, there are only two arrangements. Loeillet de Gant was a cousin of the London Loeillet – and Albrechtsberger, as well as securing some prestigious organist posts in Melk and Vienna and at the Hapsburg court, also taught Beethoven and was on friendly terms with Haydn and Mozart. Johannes Zimmerl is the Abbey organist, and clearly knows the instrument intimately. Zsolt Simon's trumpet playing blends well with the organ. I was given this CD when I played at Herzogenburg last December, so I am not sure how available it is outside Austria. It is published by the Abbey itself, and is listed on their website www.stiftherzogenbyrg.at/index.Php?submenu=8&content=293.
Andrew Benson-Wilson

CLASSICAL

C. P. E Bach Sei Concerti per cembalo concertato Wq 43 Andreas Staier, Freiburg Baroque Orchestra, Petra Mullejans (2CDs)
Harmonia Mundi **HMC 902083/84**

For one with such a keen eye for business it is surprising that Carl Philipp Emmanuel Bach actively discouraged the distribution of his solo keyboard concertos. The exception is the set of *Sei concerti* published by the composer in 1772. Sometimes referred to as the 'Sechs leichte concerti' they fit neatly as companion pieces to the series of *Kenner und Liebhaber* publications for solo keyboard: despite the modest demands of the solo part the music is full of wit and invention, surprising twists and – quite simply – is Bach at his best. They are the subject of this new recording by Andreas Staier and the Freiburg Baroque Orchestra.

Staier, of course, is no stranger to Emmanuel Bach. In a discography that goes back to the 1980s he has recorded various works including the late quartets and the Hamburg symphonies; but this is the first complete disc of solo concertos. It does not disappoint. In fact, Staier and his orchestra seem entirely at one and deliver this music most impressively. The subtle phrasing, discreet variation in tempo as well variety of orchestral colour make the performances extremely satisfying. Particularly engaging is the alertness and technical control of the violin playing: the *Prestissimo* of the F major concerto positively fizzes with excitement without ever a note seemingly out of place. Throughout, the horns are full of vigour and add much to the

ensemble. Put simply, the orchestral playing is a delight.

But of course it is the solo playing which is the focus of attention. Staier plays a Sidey and Bal copy of the 1734 Hass which affords him ample opportunity to indulge in a wealth of tonal effects. One of the more arresting is the lute stop in the slow movement of the D major concerto which makes a marvellous contrast to the dark colour of the muted string with flutes. In the finale of that work, Staier is not above bringing out the full force of Bach's humorous repartee between the solo and accompanying parts by using the buff for one phrase followed the 4' rank alone. The purist might raise an eyebrow or two at the lengths to which he goes to accentuate the phrasing, but at all times the performances are convincing. Intelligent varied repeats, poise and elegance in the slow movements, and blistering virtuosity in the fast movements make this a most entertaining disc.

But the real star is Emmanuel Bach. These concertos are delightful, supremely judged and, in Staier's hands, well worth getting to know. *Warwick Cole*

C. P. E. Bach *Solo Keyboard Music, Vol. 21.* Miklós Spányi *clavichord* 78'35"
BIS CD-1624
Sonatas, Wq. 50/1-6

Bach published his six 'Sonatas with Varied Reprises' in 1760, as models for those who did not have the talent to improvise their own variations, or lacked the knowledge and taste to do so in a way that was not, as the composer said in his preface, 'at variance with the composition ... and with the relationship of the musical ideas to one another'. The sonatas are among the most interesting and original of Bach's output, and are played here as magisterially as one has come to expect by the excellent Spányi on a superb copy of a Horn clavichord by Joris Potvlieghe. Strongly recommended. *Richard Maunder*

W. F. Bach *Concerti & Trios* Sebastian Wienand *hpscd*, Anne Katharina Schreiber & Martina Graulich *vln*, Werner Saller *vla*, Frank Coppieters *violone in G*, Ute Petersilge *vlc* 68' 50"
Carus 83.357
Harpsichord Concertos in D (BR-WFB C 9 / Fk41) and g (BR-WFB C-Inc 17 / Fk unsicher); Trios in B (BR-WFB B-Inc 19/. Fk unsicher) and B flat (BR-WFB B 16 / Fk50)

Of all the Bach sons, Wilhelm Friedemann is surely the most enigmatic. The engaging smile, the felt hat and fur coat that adorn his portrait – reproduced on the cover of this CD – suggest an established ease which belies bald facts of his career. A virtuoso keyboard player of the first rank, admired for his improvisation, a composer of some standing, yet beset by financial problems, he seems to have lacked the business acumen that made Emmanuel Bach so successful. For various reasons, not least his decline in later years, his legacy is still to be fully explored, but this new release from Carus will go some way to redress this. The fact that three of the works on this disc are recorded for the first time is perhaps not surprising, but certainly the G minor concerto deserves to be heard. As Peter Wollny points out in his booklet notes, the instrumental repertoire occupies a significant place in Friedemann Bach's output. Although some might take exception to Wollny's assertion that despite their extreme technical demands the "highly refined compositional technique... raises them far above the level of other contemporary works", Friedemann's music holds its own in terms of virtuosic content, caprice and compositional refinement. And those familiar with his solo keyboard music will recognise much of the style: quirky if not quixotic ideas, couched in a rhetoric not unlike that of his younger brother Emmanuel, but imbued with a quite dazzling level of virtuosity.

But the overriding impression of this disc is of convincing and intelligent interpretations. Sebastian Wienand is a persuasive advocate for this repertoire: his technical control is evident throughout, and the clarity of articulation and expressive nuance ideally suited to the music. His solo string ensemble – members of the Freiberg Baroque Orchestra – play with conviction and an expressivity which matches Wienand's playing perfectly. The recording is alert and the balance between the instruments, particularly in the accompanied B major 'trio', more than satisfactory. One slightly disconcerting feature, however, is the fact that some microphones are clearly sufficiently close to capture the expressive breathing of the string players on almost every phrase, which certainly allows the perception of a live performance. But it becomes intrusive on occasions, especially in the more pathetic moments; the lovely slow movement of the G minor concerto suffers from this. And in the slow movement of the D major concerto the action-noise rumble from the harpsichord is unfortunate. That said, there is much to enjoy here. While Friedemann may lack the lyricism of his some of his brothers, this disc will do much to make his work more widely known. *Warwick Cole*

F. Benda *Flute Concertos* Laurence Dean, Hannoversche Hofkapelle 69' 52"
Christophorus CHR 77342
Concertos in E minor, G & A; flute sonata & violin sonata in G

After an early career in Dresden, Vienna and Warsaw, Franz Benda became a violinist in the Dresden Hofkapelle in 1733 and was introduced to Frederick (later the Great) by Quantz. He became his permanent accompanist for the regular musical evenings held at court and remained in his service for the rest of his life. Charles Burney, who visited Benda in 1772, wrote: "His style is so truly cantabile, that scarce a passage can be found in his compositions, which it is not in the power of the human voice to sing". This is certainly true of the flute solos in the concertos, which contrast with the more exciting orchestral ritornelli, and the expressive slow movements of the flute and violin sonatas. I have previously recommended the performance by Laurence Dean and the single strings of the Hannoversche Hofkapelle of the Hasse flute concertos on the same label, and this is a welcome reissue of their 2003 recording of the Benda works. Anne Röhrig gives a sensitive performance of the G major violin sonata and Bernward Lohr (fortepiano) is the accompanist in both solo sonatas. *Victoria Helby*

Haydn *The Complete Early Divertimenti* Haydn Sinfonietta Wien, Manfred Huss 345' 50" (5 CDs for the price of 3)
BIS BIS-CD-1806/08

Although a laudable project, all but the most avid of listeners may find playing more than one disc at a single sitting somewhat daunting. Disc 1 consists of four of the standard five-movement works (with two minuets) for string quintet, most with added oboes and horns, composed between 1753 and 1758. Being the earliest of the collection, Haydn's trademark minuet triplets can become a little tedious at times. The *adagios* are well contrasted, but I found the *presto* finales a little too frenetic in this ensemble's performances, though one can help but admire the virtuoso horn playing. Disc 2 contains five *feldparthie* for wind ensemble alone, plus

three 'fillers'. I enjoyed this disc better, partly because Haydn's writing was here less cliché-ridden, partly because of the variety of instrumentation (one with just 2 clarinets and 2 horns), but also because of the extra items. The divertimento containing the St Antoni chorale movement, with its outlandish scoring and weak writing, is definitely not by Haydn; but the two marches ('For the Prince of Wales' and 'For the Royal Society of Musicians') are two fine works dating from Haydn's much later London period that I have always enjoyed. Discs 3, 4 and 5 (1760-65) contain works with unusual scorings: with cor anglais, flutes and violins, one with fortepiano, and a cassation with four horns, where there are some aural delights in store. In general I found the wind playing, with some stunning virtuoso passages from the horns – listen to the virtually unplayable trio for horn, violin and cello Hob.IV:5 – more satisfying than that of the strings, where some of the playing sometimes felt like being on a helter-skelter. The set concludes, strangely, with a concerto for violin and strings Hob.VIIa:1 with Simon Standage.

With the five-for-three price, this could be a worthwhile investment for Haydn enthusiasts keen to explore some relatively unknown repertoire. *Ian Graham-Jones*

Haydn *Three Theatrical Symphonies* Haydn Sinfonietta Wien, Manfred Huss
BIS-SACD-1815 66'18"
12 (E), 50 (C), 60 (C, *Il Distratto*)

The term 'theatrical' is used in choosing these three disparate symphonies for a single disc, as all derive from opera or incidental music to plays. No. 12 has its origins in an operatic fragment *Acide* of 1763; no. 50 derives from music from the music for the marionette opera *Der Götterrat*, while *Il Distratto*, with its bizarre modulations and outlandish contrasts, particularly in the three-section finale, comes from incidental music to a play of the same name. There are ups and downs to these performances: some excellent string playing, but I was 'distracted' by the timpani slightly anticipating the first chord that opens the disc, as well as the somewhat suspect intonation of the solo oboe, especially in the trio of No. 50. Despite these comments there is some lively and enjoyable playing here. *Ian Graham Jones*

Haydn *Organ Concertos* Ton Koopman *org*, Catherine Manson *vln*, Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra 62'41"
Challenge Classics CC72390
Hob. XVIII:1 (C), XVIII:2 (D), XVIII:6 (F) for violin and organ

Although Haydn's concerto output is generally considered slight in comparison with his symphonic canon, these three 'clavier' concertos are substantial works, lasting between 19 and 25 minutes. The F major concerto has a concertante violin part, and a substantial expressive *largo*. Although there is some doubt as to whether they were intended for organ or harpsichord, Koopman gives exciting and convincing performances of these works on the former, ably supported by the Amsterdam players. *Ian Graham-Jones*

Haydn *Missa brevis in F & Harmoniemesse* Soloists, Trinity Choir, Rebel Baroque Orchestra, J. Owen Burdick & Jane Glover
Naxos 8.572126 52'28"

When J. Owen Burdick suddenly left the musical directorship of the wealthy Wall Street Trinity Church choir at the start of 2008, three of his projected series of Haydn Masses remained to be recorded. He was replaced by Jane Glover, who here makes her first appearance in the series with the great *Harmoniemesse* of 1802. Burdick's contribution to the disc takes us back more than half a century, indeed to Haydn's first authenticated Mass. The little work exudes a fresh innocence here captured to perfection by Burdick, whose sopranos Ann Hoyt (one of the glories of the series) and Julie Liston mesh ideally in the joyous soprano roulades that are the most notable feature of the Mass.

Jane Glover was a somewhat odd choice to succeed the mercurial Burdick, being a very different kind of conductor. Here she directs a fine performance, but one in which her greater concentration on homogeneity in both choir and orchestra produces results ill suited to stand beside the blazing, fervent conviction of Burdick. For all its professionalism, Glover's more prosaic approach never approaches those powerful Tiepolesque moments of brilliant, translucent radiance that are such a feature of Burdick's visionary approach. Her solo team is good, but the soprano soloist is no match for Hoyt, while the fact that Glover has different ideas from Burdick on Latin pronunciation only serves to underscore the conclusion that while her dependable version can stand on its own terms, its inclusion within the context of this hitherto revelatory series is anachronistic. *Brian Robins*

Martín y Soler *L'arbore di Diana* Laura Aikin *Diana*, Michael Maniaci *Amore*, Ainhoa Garmendia *Britomarte etc*, Marisa Martins *Clizia etc*, Jossie Perez *Cloe etc*, Charles Workman *Silvio*, Steve Davislim *Endimione*, Marco Vinco *Doristo*, Orquestra Simfònica del Gran Teatre del Liceu, Harry Bicket 147' (1 DVD)
Dynamic 33651

It says much for his operatic genius and dominance that there are so many references to Mozart in the (indifferently translated) note. It is clear that Da Ponte took further some of the ideas he had here in other more famous libretti and also that Schikaneder based aspects of *Zauberflöte* on this piece – but that's all a bit unfair to Soler. Once it gets going this is an enjoyable *buffa* romp, propelled by some rapid exchanges between the protagonists and a high number of ensembles. These are all very enjoyable. The individual voices are a little bland but in my view that is preferable to what we often hear. The most prominent solo roles are those of *Diana* (Laura Aikin) and *Amore* (Michael Maniaci). The former copes admirably with the varied vocal demands of her role (*coloratura* and gently lyrical) and with the production's practicalities (getting into and out of a bath on stage). The latter acts his socks off but cannot always compensate for vocal shortcomings. Soler's original casting of a lady would have been a better idea. The production does not try to make any clever politico-sociological points (what a relief) and is enhanced by myriad technical effects that compensate for the plain set. In the pit Harry Bicket has injected a bit of style into the resident (modern) orchestra and keeps things on the move, even if they never quite catch fire. Very recommendable as an alternative to yet another *Figaro*. *David Hansell*

Mozart *Keyboard Music, Vol. 2*. Kristian Bezuidenhout *fp* 70'42"
Harmonia Mundi HMU 907498
Adagio K. 540, Rondos K. 485 and 511, Sonatas K. 330 and 457

The fortepiano is a copy by the excellent Paul McNulty of an original by Walter und Sohn, said to date from c.1802. No details are given, and the photo in the programme booklet is so out of focus as to reveal virtually nothing. But it's a nice instrument with a well balanced bright tone: certainly much better for this music than a Steinway, even if it's not quite

what Mozart played himself. Bezuidenhout, a pupil of Malcolm Bilson, is a fine player with a good sense of period style. His phrasing is thoughtful, his articulation is crisp and he adds some tasteful and well judged ornamentation here and there. I particularly liked the way that many chords are slightly arpeggiated – as Clive Brown has recently reminded us they should be. My only real criticism is that the temptation to use the anachronistic knee-levers is not always resisted. For example the moderator is taken off at one point in the slow movement of K. 457 when both hands are occupied, an effect impossible with the hand-stop on Mozart's own instrument of the 1780s; and I don't like the way the sustaining-lever is occasionally used to blur some fast ornamental runs. However, despite my rather niggling grouse I much enjoyed this recording. Colin Tilney remains my favourite for 'period' Mozart (see my reviews in the November 2006 and October 2007 issues of *EMR*), but Bezuidenhout is a pretty distinguished rival. *Richard Maunder*

F. X. Richter *Sonatas for Flute, Harpsichord and Cello* 1 Pauliina Fred *fl*, Heidi Peltoniemi *vlc*, Aapo Häkkinen *hpscd* 61'
Naxos 8.572029
Sonate da camera 1764, Nos. 1-3

Richter worked in Mannheim between 1747 and 1769 mainly as a composer of symphonies and sacred music, and his pupils included Carl Stamitz and Joseph Martin Kraus. Burney regarded him as one of the most important Mannheim composers and his contrapuntal style was much admired, but his lack of sympathy for the virtuosic style which became so popular at Mannheim is reflected in these sonatas. These are the first three of a set of six *Sonate da camera* published by Haffner in Nuremberg in 1764. Walsh had published Richter's six *Sonatas for the Harpsichord with Accompanyments for a Violin or German Flute and Violoncello* in 1759. A second set followed in 1763 published by Welcker, and the sonatas played here are revised versions of the flute sonatas included in these two sets. Bearing in mind that the harpsichord parts are obbligato, the instrument could perhaps be a bit more prominent in the ensemble, but these are elegant performances of some charming music, with particularly expressive slow movements. *Victoria Helby*

19th CENTURY

Beethoven *Complete Symphonies* Sinéad Mulhern, Carolin Masur, Dominik Wortig, Konstantin Wolff *SmSTB-Bar*, Choeur de chambre "les éléments", La Chambre Philharmonique, Emmanuel Krivine
naïve V 5258 330' (5 CDs)

Never a great admirer of Beethoven, with his drawn-out cadence endings, little gift for melody and relatively limited sense of harmonic progression (at least compared with Schubert), I remember as a student in the back desk of the cellos in the RAM third orchestra, our erstwhile Principal conducting us and, in the slow movement of Beethoven's second symphony, suddenly laying down his baton, raising his hands in adoration of the almighty, and saying, "Ah, Beethoven!" to stunned silence. Fortunately, such Beethoven worship, emanating from 19th-century roots, is less common nowadays.

But it was still with some trepidation that I agreed to tackle this review. With several period instrument recordings of the complete nine – Norrington, Gardiner, Hogwood and the Hanover Band to mention four, each no doubt with their idiosyncrasies of tempi, metronome markings, etc, one wonders whether another was needed. Yet, from the very first chord of Symphony 1, I felt that we were in for something special. This is certainly a revelatory recording, all the more as the symphonies are recorded live. With the orchestra living on the high wire of a concert recording, one can feel the tensions so needed in this repertoire in these astounding performances. Dynamics are remarkably contrasted, with every degree of Beethoven's *sforzandi* thought out, as are the varied levels of *pianissimo*. Second movements are taken at good tempi (the 4th symphony being the first true 'slow' movement), and the fast movements have an excitement and a real sense of direction. Listen to the finales of the 4th and 7th symphonies for a rip-roaring interpretation, yet with all the clarity of detail still present. Balance was interesting, the violins sometimes descending into virtually inaudible in order to give way to more prominent wind passages. All repeats are taken, though the scherzo of the 5th symphony does not have the double scherzo-trio repeat that some recordings use. The 7th symphony is unusual in that a contrabassoon is used. Although I could not detect its presence, it no doubt gave more richness to the bass line in places. (There is some written evidence of its use, even though not indicated in Beethoven's score).*

The 'Choral' symphony was the first to have been recorded in 2009, which came out on a separate disc before being incorporated into the set. This seemed the least satisfactory in its recording quality, perhaps performed in a deader acoustic, with a slightly muffled quality, at least in the first two movements. In the choral movement the Choeur de Chambre Les Éléments phrased with sensitivity; and, of the soloists, the three lowest voices were the least likely to offend 'early music' listeners.

So Although your reviewer has not experienced a Damascene conversion as a result of listening to all nine within the space of a few days, he can thoroughly recommend this version as surely being amongst the very best of the many – regardless of the use of period instruments. *Ian Graham-Jones*

** I remember as a student going to a rehearsal of Beethoven 8 with Beecham, who stopped at the recapitulation of the 1st mvt opening subject where it comes back in the basses, as he couldn't hear it, so he called for a contrabassoon to be found just to play these 8 bars!* IG-J

Johann Wenzel Kalliwoda *Symphonies* 2 *in Eb & 4 in C* Kölner Akademie, Michael Alexander Willens 67'41"
cpo 777 469-2

Thinking this was going to be another run-of-the –mill CD, the disc went to the bottom of the review pile. How wrong I was! Kalliwoda (1801-66) is little known today. His music – particularly that written after 1840 – is described as being somewhat uneven, bordering on the perfunctory, at times resorting to satisfying the popular tastes of his day; yet the three works on this disc all defy this assessment, and are rather fine and very well crafted. The Overture No. 17 in F minor that opens this programme is his penultimate published work, op. 242. Although short, it is an extremely impressive piece. Of his seven symphonies, the two chosen here were composed in 1829 and 1835 and are best described as post-Mendelssohn/pre-Schumann in style, though the writing is as deft as the former and orchestration much sounder than that of the latter. The extensive fourth symphony, although listed as in C major, starts with a funereal introduction in the minor, and the finale barely ends with a major chord. For those wanting to explore new repertoire in the

early romantic period, this disc is well worth the investment. *Ian Graham-Jones*

Schubert *Winterreise* Nataša Mirković *voice*, Matthias Loibner *hurdy-gurdy* 65' 05
Raum Klang RK 3003

This is one of those 'why would anyone want to do this?' moments. I'm still not sure that I know the answer to that but I am prepared to admit to having enjoyed these performances more than I thought I would and certainly more than some over-sung 'conventional' readings. At times it's like listening to parts of *Pierrot Lunaire*. If you know the songs well and are broad-minded in matters of performing practice give it a go. Think of it as Schubert as he might have been busked in 1830s Vienna. If nothing else you may well agree with me that these artists are supremely good at what they do.

David Hansell

It is rare for a soprano to get the words over as clearly as a good tenor, and I'd like to hear here sing the cycle with a fortepiano. But how naivi to take a poetic metaphor as a scoring cue: the hints of the hurdy-gurdy sound in the piano part are quite enough. *CB*

21st CENTURY

Consortium5 Tangled Pipes 78' 09"
Nonclassical NONCLSS008

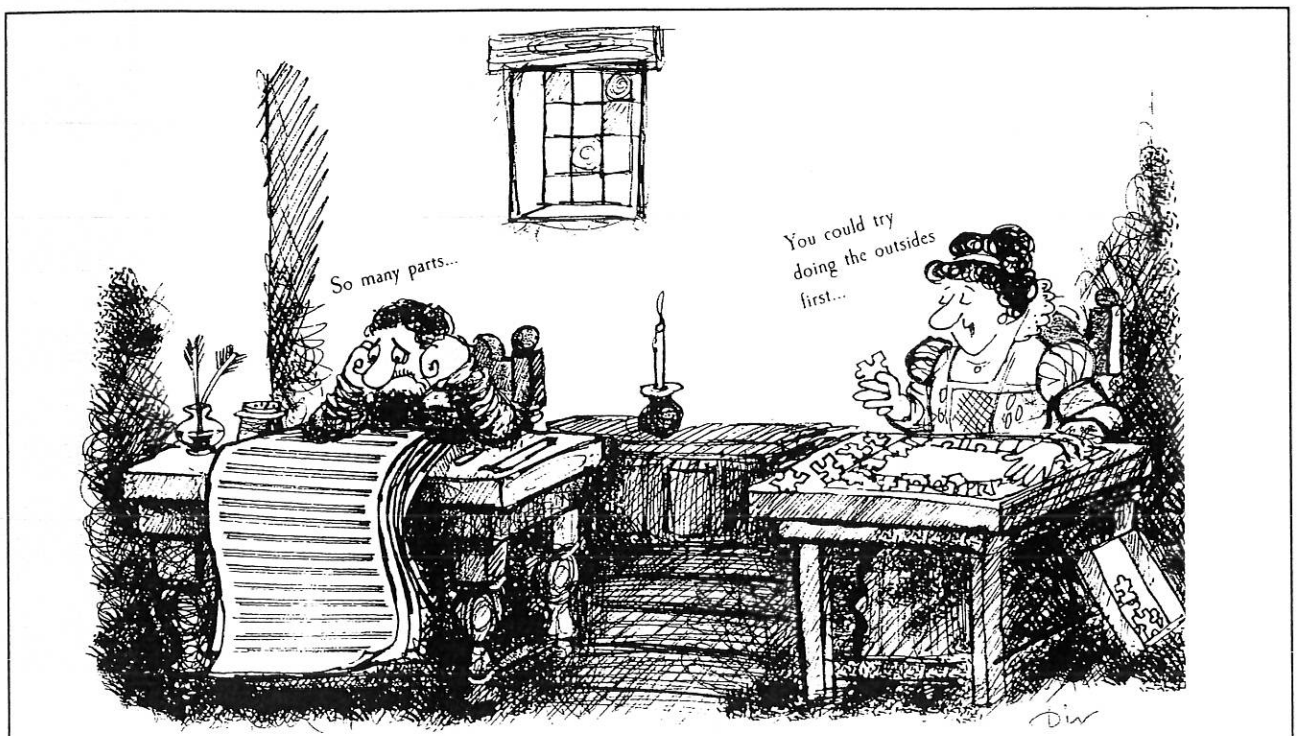
A brief mention of an exciting new CD by the recorder group Consortium5. I have reviewed them many times since first hearing them at the York Early Music competition, and have always been very impressed with their musical skills and presentation. This CD is entirely of music by seven contemporary composers and it vividly shows just how versatile "bits of wood with holes in" can be. The original compositions, all special commissions for the group, are followed by a series of remixes based on the master recordings of the Tangled Pipes tracks and aimed to "take the music to dancefloor and downtempo electronica territory". Additional versions of the original compositions and the remixes are available as downloads. The full list of the extraordinary number of recorders used is given, along with a neat little introduction to the names, pitches and ranges of the various instruments. They have already topped Chicago Time Out's "10 best classical albums of 2010" charts, and deserve further honours. The NONCLASSICAL record label and associated club nights are the brainchild of "classical DJ" Gabriel Prokofiev (he of the famous grandfather), one of a number of people presenting classical music in inovative ways to new audiences.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

MISCELLANEOUS

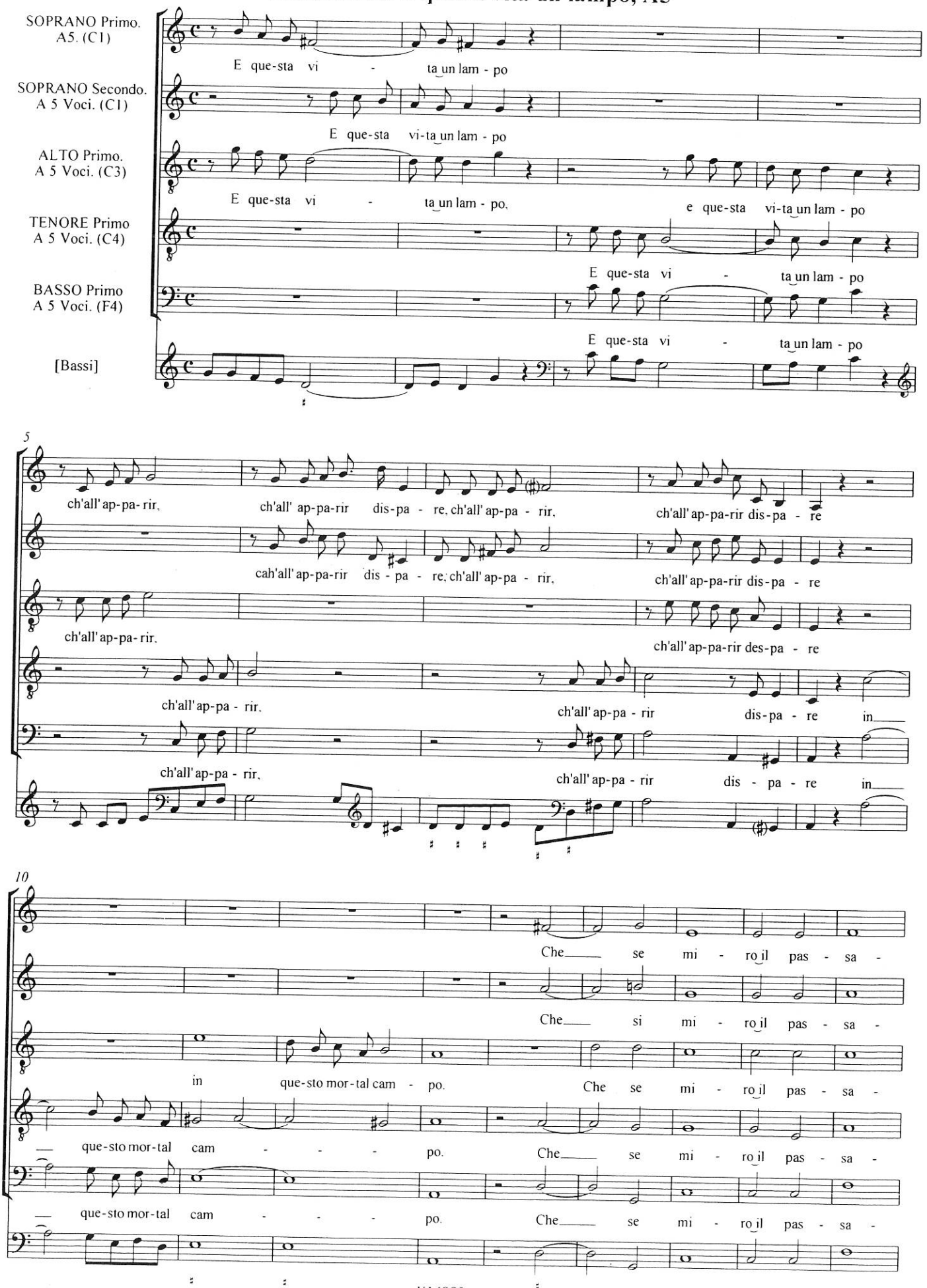
Fra' Diavolo: La musica nelle strade del regno di Napoli Marco Beasley, Pino De Vittorio, Accordone, Guido Morini 77' 35"
Arcana A 359

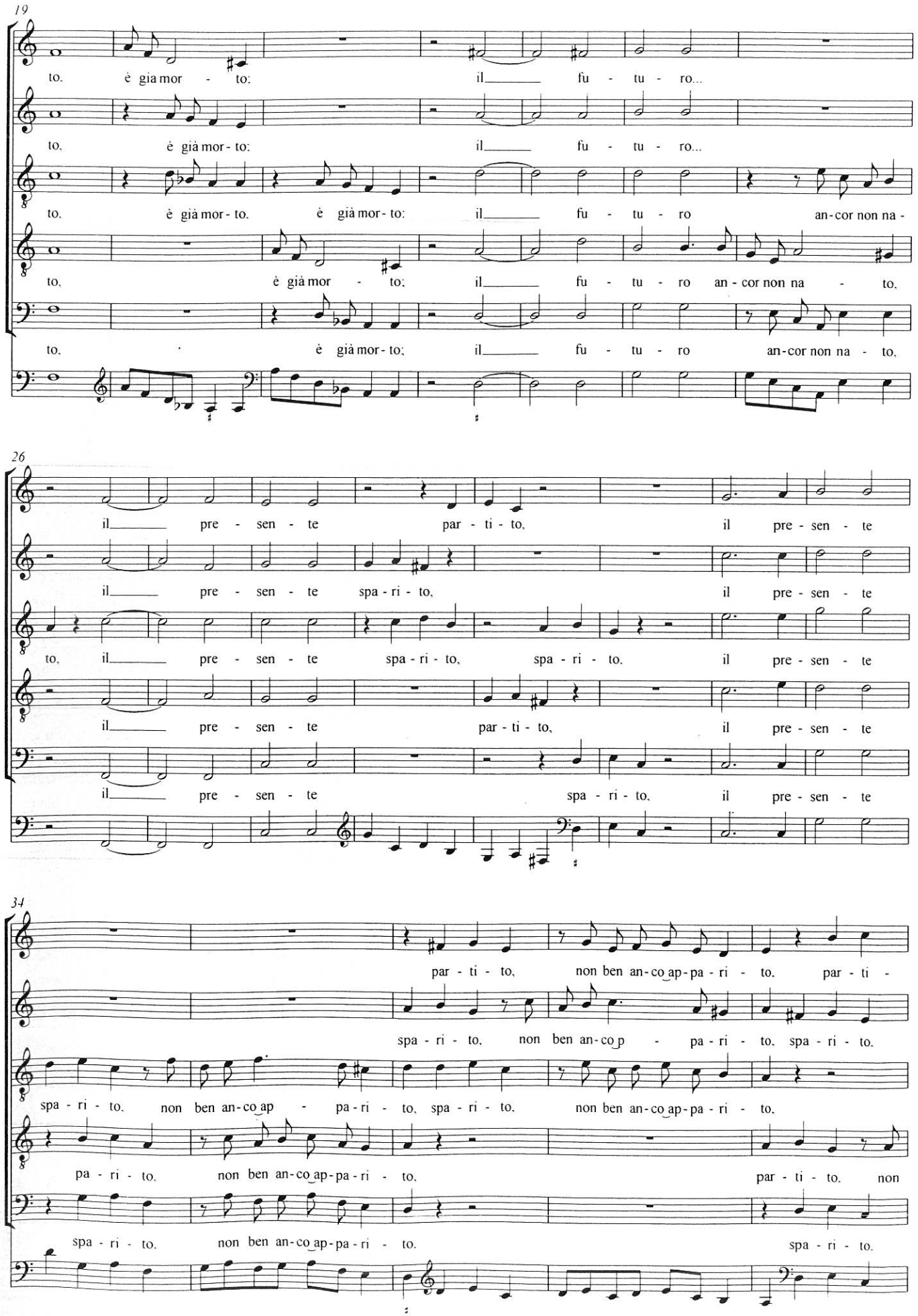
The notes for this disc are so obscured by a fog of mind-numbingly pretentious mumbo-jumbo that is not easy to say what it is all about. Fra Diavolo? Well, yes, he was a Neapolitan freedom fighter or terrorist (take your choice), immortalised by Auber in the opera that bears his name. But the connection to him in the context is oblique. 'Music in the streets of the kingdom of Naples'? That should be clear enough. But in fact most of the pieces appear to be modern compositions or even improvised. The most featured composer (arranger?) is Giuseppe De Vittorio, who I assume to be one and the same as the fine character tenor and actor who here sings under the name of Pino de Vittorio. Confused? So am I. My guess is that Pino is a (dialect?) diminutive he uses when he dons his folk music hat, the voice here at times taking on intimations of Middle-Eastern influence. As he has so often demonstrated with Antonio Florio's Capella de Turchini, De Vittorio's is unquestionably a voice of great character, if hardly great quality, but he uses it with immense skill and can certainly put a song across. Fortunately, Marco Beasley's identity is less complex and he will not need introduction to most *EMR* readers. And it must be confessed that in this instance most of the strictly limited pleasure I derived from the disc came from Beasley, the highlight for me being his version of the touching traditional lullaby *L'Angiulillo*. Those more in empathy with folk repertoire will

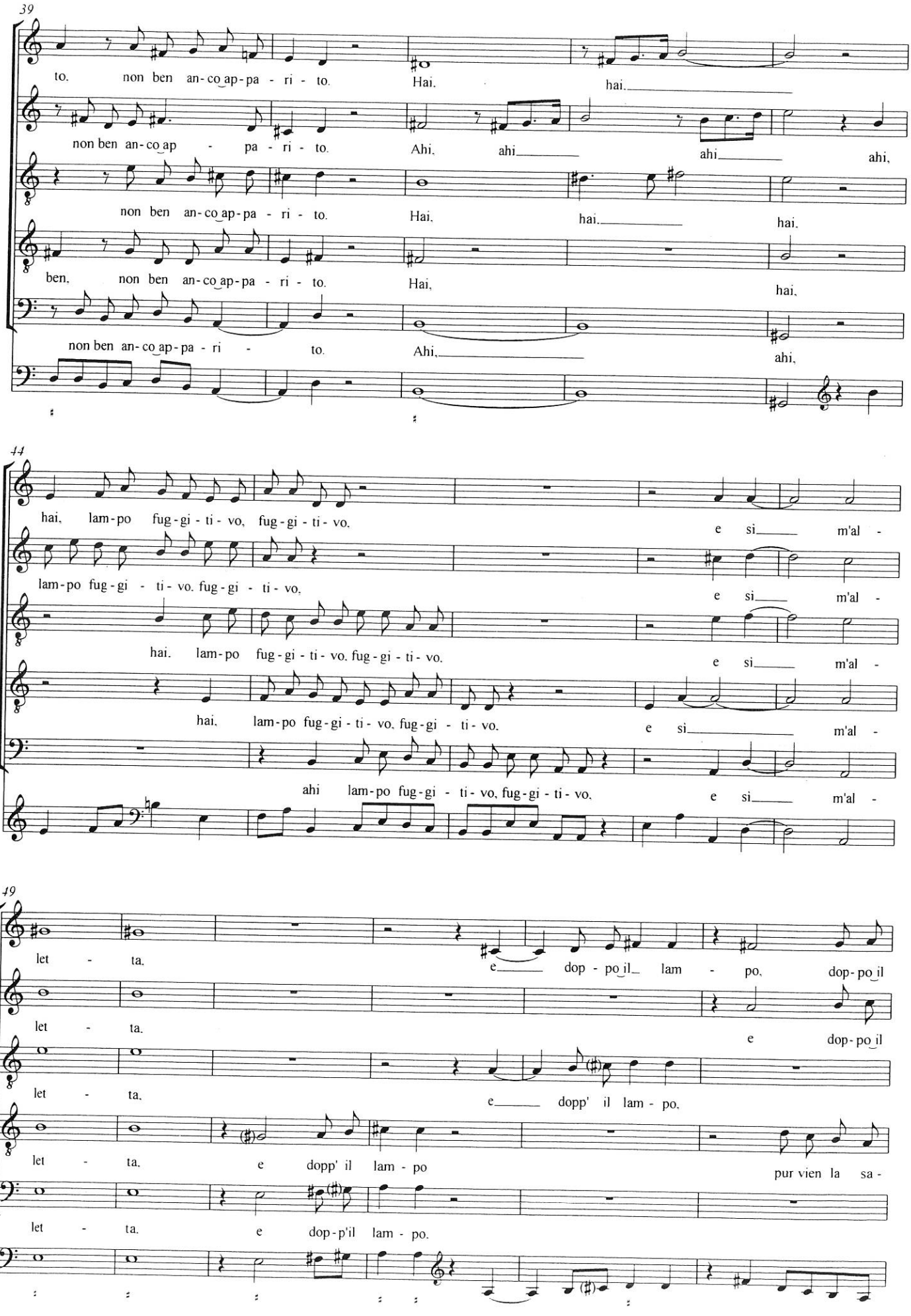


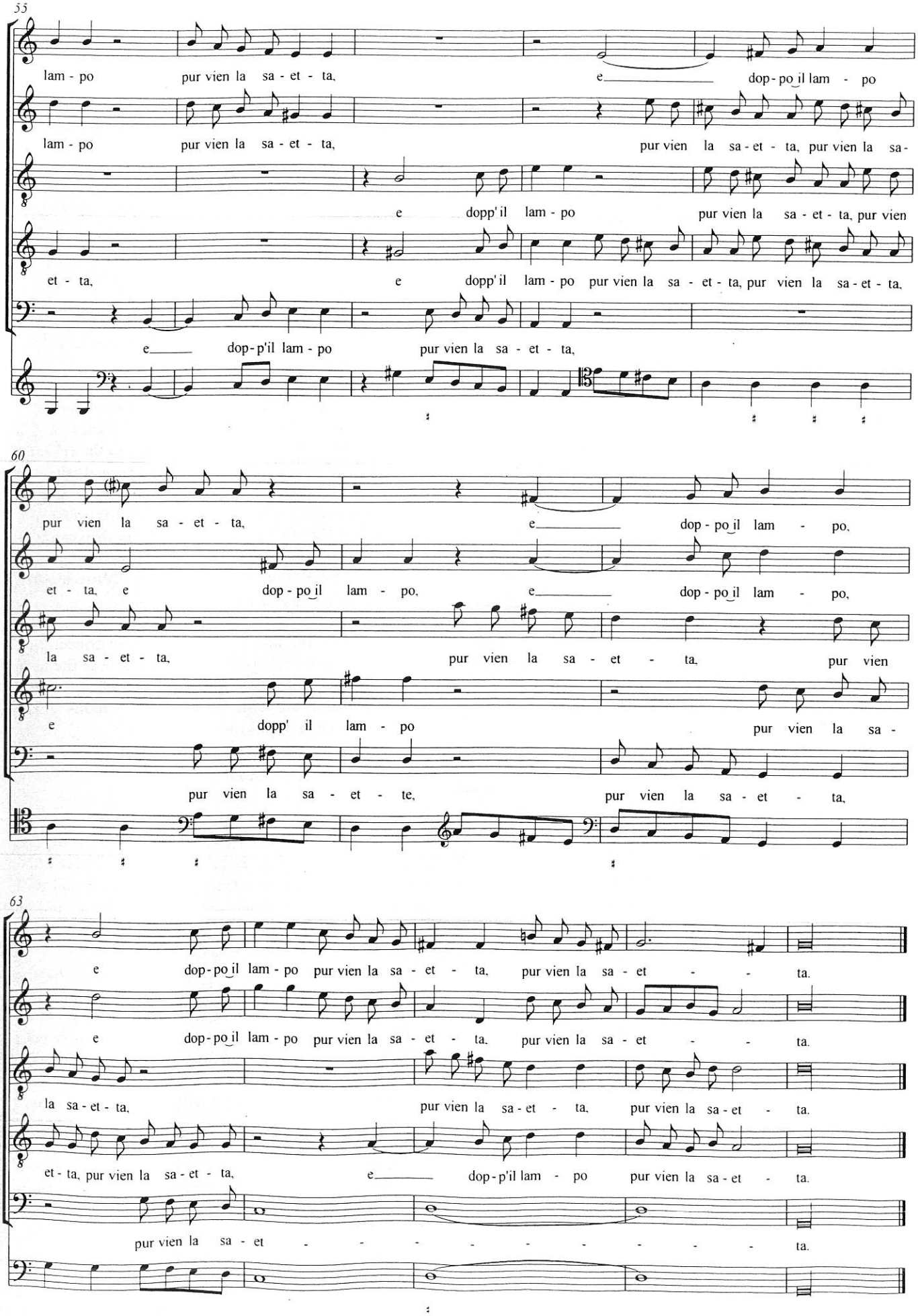
At Home with the Striggios.

Monteverdi: E questa vita un lampo, A5




19
to. è già mor - to: il fu - tu - ro...
to. è già mor - to: il fu - tu - ro...
to. è già mor - to. è già mor - to: il fu - tu - ro an - cor non na -
to. è già mor - to: il fu - tu - ro an - cor non na - to.
to. è già mor - to: il fu - tu - ro an - cor non na - to.
26
il pre - sen - te par - ti - to, il pre - sen - te
il pre - sen - te spa - ri - to, il pre - sen - te
to, il pre - sen - te spa - ri - to, spa - ri - to, il pre - sen - te
il pre - sen - te par - ti - to, il pre - sen - te
il pre - sen - te spa - ri - to, il pre - sen - te
34
par - ti - to, non ben an - co ap - pa - ri - to. par - ti -
spa - ri - to, non ben an - co p - pa - ri - to, spa - ri - to.
spa - ri - to. non ben an - co ap - pa - ri - to, spa - ri - to, non ben an - co ap - pa - ri - to,
pa - ri - to. non ben an - co ap - pa - ri - to. par - ti - to. non
spa - ri - to. non ben an - co ap - pa - ri - to. spa - ri - to.


39
to. non ben an-co ap-pa - ri - to. Hai. hai.
non ben an-co ap - pa - ri - to. Ahi, ahi ahi ahi,
non ben an-co ap-pa - ri - to. Hai, hai. hai.
ben, non ben an-co ap-pa - ri - to. Hai, hai,
non ben an-co ap-pa - ri - to. Ahi, ahi,
44
hai, lam-po fug-gi - ti - vo, fug-gi - ti - vo. e si m'al -
lam-po fug-gi - ti - vo. fug-gi - ti - vo, e si m'al -
hai. lam-po fug-gi - ti - vo. fug-gi - ti - vo. e si m'al -
hai, lam-po fug-gi - ti - vo, fug-gi - ti - vo. e si m'al -
ahi lam-po fug-gi - ti - vo, fug-gi - ti - vo. e si m'al -
49
let - ta. e dop - po il lam - po, dop-po il
let - ta. e dop-po il
let - ta. e dopp' il lam - po.
let - ta. e dopp' il lam - po pur vien la sa -
let - ta. e dop-p'il lam - po.


55
lam - po pur vien la sa - et - ta, e dop - po il lam - po
lam - po pur vien la sa - et - ta, pur vien la sa - et - ta, pur vien la sa -
e dopp' il lam - po pur vien la sa - et - ta, pur vien
et - ta, e dopp' il lam - po pur vien la sa - et - ta, pur vien la sa - et - ta,
e dop - p'il lam - po pur vien la sa - et - ta,
60
pur vien la sa - et - ta, e dop - po il lam - po,
et - ta, e dop - po il lam - po, e dop - po il lam - po,
la sa - et - ta, pur vien la sa - et - ta, pur vien
e dopp' il lam - po pur vien la sa -
pur vien la sa - et - te, pur vien la sa - et - ta,
63
e dop - po il lam - po pur vien la sa - et - ta, pur vien la sa - et - ta.
e dop - po il lam - po pur vien la sa - et - ta, pur vien la sa - et - ta.
la sa - et - ta, pur vien la sa - et - ta, pur vien la sa - et - ta.
et - ta, pur vien la sa - et - ta, e dop - p'il lam - po pur vien la sa - et - ta.
pur vien la sa - et - ta.

RICHARD CAMPBELL

21 February 1956 – 8 March 2011

Lynda Sayce

Richard Campbell was quietly ubiquitous on the early music scene. He was a regular performer with many of the leading ensembles, though he lacked the big ego which demands a solo stage. It is a safe to say that most readers of this magazine will have played alongside him, heard him in concert or will own a CD on which he is performs.

I first met Richard more than 20 years ago in the Dowland Consort on my first overseas tour. I was somewhat in awe of the seasoned professionalism of the group, and I shall always be grateful for Richard's tactful lecture on touring etiquette, delivered discreetly over a drink after the first concert. 'Always pack the night before you travel', he said; 'No matter how bad it gets...' I wish I'd thought to tell him how many times I've been glad of that advice. Although he was, in many ways, a very private person who didn't always join in with on-tour socialising, he was also a gentleman in every sense of the word, and in my early carless days of lugging a theorbo around on public transport, he would always check that I wasn't stranded after concerts. After one long-ago gig he drove me to a station; my train was visibly approaching, but he took one look at the deserted platform and insisted on driving me all the way home, although it was miles out of his way.

Richard's main ensembles were Fretwork, of which he was a founder member, and – more recently – the Feinstein Ensemble, but he had also worked with the English Baroque Soloists, Ex Cathedra, English National Opera, The King's Consort, The Sixteen, The New London Consort, and I Fagiolini, to name but a few. One could never be quite sure what instrument he would be playing, because he was far more versatile than many realized. In addition to the various sizes of viol, he played continuo on both cello and bass violin, and was one of a mere handful of lirone players on the planet. He also played plucked instruments, especially the bandora, for which he had great enthusiasm, and the baroque guitar, which he protested he couldn't play yet handled very competently. He relished the challenges of the different tunings and notations at least as much as the musical possibilities which these instruments opened up, and was one of the few viol players who would play lyra viol tablatures as readily as consort parts.

As a serious Classicist, he was the person to whom one turned in rehearsal when there was any uncertainty over a Latin text, and many a dodgy edition was quietly fixed by Richard. He could talk with considerable expertise on a bewildering variety of topics. I once had the good fortune to mention galliards within his earshot, to which he responded with a cogently argued discourse on possible galliard tempi and the evolution of the genre, complete with a professional-level demonstration of the dance steps. That he managed to do that in a bar packed with the post-show crowd behind the London Coliseum speaks volumes for his agility.

Of countless gigs we shared, the ones I shall remember most fondly are many performances of Bach's St John Passion, where, on seeing Richard walk into the rehearsal, I would always relax, knowing that the searingly poignant viol obligato to "Es ist vollbracht" was in safe hands. As the annual round of Passions is upon us, it is going to be very hard to play that piece for him rather than with him this year. It's not just his musicianship which I shall miss, but also his sheer professionalism, his razor sharp intellect, lightning wit and laconic sense of humour.

Whilst Richard the musician was always in consummate control of whatever instrument and music was the order of the day, Richard the man often found life a struggle, and on March 8th 2011 his private demons finally overwhelmed him. I shall miss him terribly.

LETTER

Dear Clifford,

I am writing to update you on *Harpsichord & Fortepiano Magazine*. As you may know, it has been successfully owned and operated for several years by Jeremy and Ruth Burbidge. On 2 February 2011, the magazine and its complete back catalogue was purchased by Early Music Media Limited (registered in England 7497254).

I will continue as Editor and *Harpsichord & Fortepiano Magazine* will continue to be published and all existing subscriptions will be sent as usual. You will probably realize that since my editorship, the magazine has been issued consistently from Volume 10, no. 2 (Spring 2006) through five successive years.

We plan to develop with faster dispatch and online supplements. The official website for all aspects of the magazine is as follows: www.hfmagazine.info

Thank you for all your support over the last 5 years and into the future! Please do include this news in your relevant newsletters.

Micaela Schmitz

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