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Having been reading a book (see p. 8) in which "Early Modern" is used continually to cover the period from a decade or two before 1600 to the mid 1850s, I was intrigued by the weekly article by *The Sunday Times*'s art critic, Waldemar Januszczak, on 8 May headed "Manet invented modern art". It begins with reference to silly games played by people like him at dinner parties claiming that the invention was down to Goya, Courbet or Delacroix. But there's no doubt in the artistic world that what is called "modern" derives from 19th-century developments. Music follows a bit later, with the over-stretching of tonic/dominant tonality in the first decade or so of the 20th century. For a single work, *The Rite of Spring* is the obvious turning point. I'm really puzzled why musicologists have adopted the historians' usage rather than that of art history. "Early Modern" (Wikipedia suggests 1500-1800) is rather too long a period. "Middle Modern" doesn't exist and "Late Modern" is a parallel to Post-modern. So historians only have "Early Modern" and "Modern", which seem too vague to be helpful, except perhaps for the musical history of the Philippines.

History is, obviously, a central part of the activity of musicologists who try to see a pattern in the styles of music over the centuries. But artist historians also write histories. And the general public wouldn't dream of thinking of Titian or Palestrina as modern. I see the current musicological trend as an attempt to define an academic status and (intentionally or not) a way of distancing themselves from the public, in accordance with the tendency not to reach out to the world beyond the professional academic one. Perhaps they will soon have to write books that will only be viable if they find a wider market than academic libraries.

I'm of the generation that periodicises Western music history through the standard Norton music-histories of my youth: Gustav Reese for the Middle Ages and Renaissance, Bukofzer for Baroque. There was a gap for Classical, then Einstein on the Romantic Era. Modern was the period that followed. That made sense to me then, despite an increasing awareness of the fuzzy borders and the strength of 1700-ish as a turning point, and it still does. It doesn't correspond exactly to artistic periods, but it does provide a framework for those who need it. *CB*

REVIEWS OF MUSIC

Clifford Bartlett

FAYRFAX MASSES COMPLETED

Robert Fayrfax III *Regali, Albanus and Sponsus amat sponsum* Transcribed and edited by Roger Bray (*Early English Church Music*, 53) xxviii + 211pp, £55.00

Fayrfax's other masses have been published in EECM 43 & 45; all three volumes are in the new style with original note-values and shapes. I've probably commented in every volume since the change that this is a step too far for most singers, but the old-notation and more clinical version has its advantages for at least the incomplete *Sponsus amat sponsum*. In addition to the masses, the volume contains the *Regali* Magnificat and a related antiphon to the *Albanus* mass, *O albane deo grate* (following the edition's decision not to update capitalisation).

There are educational benefits for non-specialist singers in this scoring up of partbooks with minimum alteration. With the short dashes that indicate the tactus, it is possible to learn some aspects of the original notation by performing from it without facing the shock of a facsimile. But it doesn't go as far as preserving ligatures or clefs, so there is still much to learn before attempting to read an original source. And there's a problem in the lack of body to the music (and to a lesser extent the text) font. There's a memorable phrase (which I've forgotten) about the white notes vanishing from the pages of *Tudor Church Music*, and that is relevant here: I wouldn't want to sing from it in poor lighting. Black notation is more legible than white!

The *Regali* Mass and Magnificat are both published by A-R Editions (RRMR 69). The editor, Margaret Lyon, follows the post-war convention of quartering note values, but prints normal barlines (the older complete Fayrfax, *Corpus Mensurabilis Musicae* 17, uses Mensurstrich, which, as I've often written, I find an uneasy compromise). I'll make a few comments comparing the two, not so much on details in choice of alternative readings but from the point of view of the user. A-R is much bolder in appearance and more legible, despite its smaller page-size – the staves are the same height, but EECM has more space between systems. A-R's text is more legible. A-R takes 53 pages, whereas EECM takes 46. This is because EECM omits blank staves. Its staves are marked clearly I, II III, IV, V at the beginning of each system, but I suspect that most singers using EECM will need to mark the lines they are singing.[1] (There's no problem in omitting staves from discreet sections, but the variation in scoring here is more subtle.) Discounting that, however, A-R is in fact more compact.

Original clefs are G2 C3 C4 C4 F4. EECM sensibly transcribes into Tr Tr8 Tr8 Tr8 B: A-R's Tr Tr8 B B B is disconcerting to read from and gives the top basses a range from the C below middle C to the F above it (exactly an octave below the top part). Parts III & IV are definitely not basses, so EECM's clef differentiation is helpful. Part II has the typical C3 range of much early music: F below middle C to the A above, and editions now tend, sensibly (except to some lady altos), to use Tr8 to avoid leger lines – not just because they are difficult to read but because they affect spacing between staves. There is a problem with the preliminary staves. A-R puts the names of the parts in square brackets and has a paragraph on the topic in the preface. EECM doesn't bracket them, so one might assume that they come from the source: they don't, and the paragraph on "Voices" in the introduction does not mention the names. More seriously, the opening note is not given in the original notation. "You don't need it if the score uses original note-values" one might argue. But the introduction has a paragraph on "Note-values" which states: "For the music which appears in the Caius and Lambeth MSS full-black notation has been converted to black void." The copy text of three of the six items here is from those MSS, so there is a degree of dishonesty here. (I repeat: "Black notation is more legible than white!")

The textual commentary is thorough. I wonder if it's necessary, but one cannot predict what questions might arise during a rehearsal, and so often one is frustrated by lack of information. Ideally, when there are a limited number of sources with lots of minor differences, the solution might be a CD with alternatives superimposed on or above the score in different colours for each source. But at least the listings are clear, with a new line for each entry.

I had intended to compare the implications of recognising cross-tactus rhythmic patterns between the two notations, but I think I've probably stretched my readers too far. The topic will no doubt come up again. But perhaps my concern with practical use is misplaced. The suggestions for performance practice, not always the strongest point in earlier EECM volumes, are missing here. Are there, for instance, chiavette implications in the *Albanus* mass (clefs G1, C1, C3, C3, C5)? Can the files of the score be converted without too much effort to more legible notation? Or is this a basis for conductors to do their own versions? It is excellent to have such thorough editions available. But I wish that the EECM committee wasn't dominated by professors and doctors: I've nothing against them, and some are engaged with the performance world. Surely there should be some representation of non-specialist singers.

1. A few hours after writing this, I sang a couple of Eton Choirbook pieces, and the coming and going of staves was, indeed, a problem.

67 PIECES BY CABEZÓN

A. de Cabezón *Selected Works for Keyboard...* Edited by Gerhard Doderer, Miguel Bernal Ripoll Bärenreiter (BA 9261-4), 2010. 4 vols, each £27.00

Cabezón's status is well established among musicologists, but less so among players. I suspect that many harpsichordists think of him as a composer for organ, and serious organists can be scornful of manual-only repertoire. Also, Spanish editions tend not to circulate widely in the UK. These volumes offer a wide selection of the composer's output, and include some of the *glosados* on chansons and motets which editors tended to ignore (apart from Maria Asunción Ester-Sala in 1974).

Despite spreading to four volumes, this is still a selection, but a wide-ranging one. Vols I & II have music that is either specifically sacred or abstract: the *tiento* on *Malheur me bat* is actually a setting of the Kyrie of Josquin's mass on the chanson. Vols III & IV contain pieces that are mostly secular, though with a few intabulations of liturgical music. For chant-based items, the chant is printed; for *glosados*, the opening of the source piece is provided (somewhat lavishly on four staves). The hymn settings seem a bit long for alternatim performance and the editor should say how it works in *Victimae paschali laudes* if the organ doesn't appear till *Dic nobis Maria* (no. 3) I'm puzzled by the chant intonations given for Nos 17-19: the *Intonarium Toletanum* doesn't match what Cabezón had in mind.

Unless you've got the Ester-Sala edition, I'd go for vol. III & IV to start with, though if you are starting with no music by him at all, try vols II & IV. All volumes have the introductory material in German & English. These *glosados* give some idea how to play chansons – though transferring the style to vocal performance should probably not be done literally: fingers and voices behave differently. But their inclusion in vocal concerts gives variety, whatever keyboard is available – and both the main printed sources state prominently on the title pages that they are for keyboard, harp or vihuela.[2] Vols I & II were published last year and there's a second printing this year: whether that is because of high sales or the need for correcting an embarrassing mistake I don't know! The volumes are published in oblong, organ format, which may not be ideal for other instruments and will inevitably be shelved in music shops and libraries with organ music, which may put off some potential users.

Much of the music is simpler to play than the embellishments might imply. Don't be put off. The musical quality is high, and Cabezón's music is satisfying to play on whatever instrument.

2. *Libro de cifra nueva para tecla, harpa, y vihuela* by Henestrosa but including a susbtantial amount of Cabezón, 1557, and *Obras de musica para tecla arpa y vihuela* edited by Cabezón's son Hernando, 1578..

LUZZASCHI COMPLETED

Luzzasco Luzzaschi *Complete Unaccompanied Madrigals. Part 4. Il primo libro de' madrigali a cinque voci (Ferrara, 1571), Secondo libro de madrigali a cinque voci (Venice, 1576).* Edited by Anthony Newcombe. (*Recent Researches in the Music of the Renaissance*, 156) lxiii + 274pp, €190.00

This completes the series. It may seem odd that the last volume contains his first two books, but the reason is obvious: Book I (1571) lacks two of its five parts and only one can be completed from a later anthology. Book II (1576/7) survives in several copies. I suspect that the editorial work was done many years ago, since despite careful checking of copies in Western Europe, the Polish ones have not been checked. An appendix contains 12 settings by other composers on the same texts (annoyingly placed after the Critical Report of the Luzzaschi madrigals, which makes it more difficult to find quickly). I have welcomed the previous volumes in the series. As expected, this has an extensive introduction and full study of the text and music. But it is odd that it is discussed with virtually no mention of the missing two parts: perhaps Newcomb was hoping they would turn up (another reason for delaying publication as long as possible). It's a shame that blank staves are not left for potential performers to try their hand, and I wonder if they will get sung by a trio that hasn't bothered to read the introduction![3] Despite this now-completed and most welcome publication, Luzzaschi is still grossly underperformed.

I would draw attention to one paragraph in the Recommendations for Performance (p. xx). After quoting Frescobaldi (Preface to Toccatas I, 1615) on making tempo match the expression of the music or the sense of the words, Newcomb reminds us that this is was "written against a background of the tradition of unvarying tactus"; we should interpret such remarks against that rather than the much more variable attitude to tempo that has prevailed in some more recent conventions of art-music.

MARINI Op. 13

Biagio Marini *Compositioni varie per musica di camera Opus 13* Edited by Thomas D. Dunn (*Recent Researches in the Music of the Baroque Era*, 16) A-R Editions, 2011. xviii + 149pp, $120.00

When and why did "chamber music" become a term referring only to instrumental music? This collection, published in 1641, has eight vocal duets (two with a pair of violins) and nine trios (all with violins), concluding with a vocal quintet with violins. The voices required are varied, and sometimes (but not always) tenors and sopranos are interchangeable. I wonder whether the use of C1 or C4 clef indicates which is the preferred voice. (I assume that the

3. The 1601 volume that is really for three ladies (+ keyboard) is not in this series but available in facsimile from SPES.

Cantus parts used C1: the edition doesn't show the original clefs.) One piece is for AA or SS: sopranos are instructed to sing a fifth higher, with the continuo down a fourth. I doubt if many performers can make that adjustment without copying the music out, so it would have been helpful to have printed it at both pitches. Alto parts are in octave-treble clef, which is a deterrent for most contraltos.

The only copy of the print, in Wrocław, is defective, lacking two parts, which contained the violin parts along with a second soprano and an alto part for the final piece. The editor postulates that the normal quarto format would have been uncomfortably small for the violins. This could account for their loss, if the two parts that were a different size were separated from the rest. However, the idea of a different size is implausible. To take an almost contemporary publication, the violin parts of Monteverdi's *Selva morale* are the same size as the rest, and have a norm of eight staves to the page. The Marini set was complete when catalogued in 1883 and the parts were probably lost or destroyed in 1945. So the editor has a considerable amount of composition to do. He rightly makes no attempt to imitate Marini the virtuoso fiddler, so it's more the equivalent of writing a keyboard realisation. Texts are problematic; poetic sources are traced, but (to the extent that it makes sense) the version of the underlay is retained. The texts are set out separately and translated, followed by various comments. The critical apparatus is separate at the end. As I have probably written before, it would be easier for the user if there was only one place to look for information on each piece. Marini is always interesting, even if he isn't as quirky here as in his earlier violin music.[4]

PANDOLFI MEALLI

Giovanni Antonio Pandolfi Mealli *Sonate op. III & IV for violin & b.c. Innsbruck 1660. Facsimile, edited by Enrico Gatti and Fabrizio Longo.* Walhall (EW 829), 2011 124 pp, €49,50 .

One of the most significant of the facsimiles from SPES was the publication of the two sets of instrumental music by Dario Castello. In some ways, these two sets of violin sonatas from 30+ years later might have brought an equal revelation of Italian freedom, flexibility and virtuosity had facsimiles of Pandolfi Mealli appeared at around the same time. Diletto Musicale published three sonatas long ago, and there have been complete recordings. Now we can welcome a complete facsimile. (They are also accessible online in the Petrucci website.) I remember how struck I was when I received a boxed set of CDs with both books played creditably by a pair of unknown players, though the standard set is Andrew Manze's. I'm not sure now that the music is quite as outstanding as I used to think – and a few minutes spent listening to automatic playback from an online transcription made it sound even worse: it is music that needs players more than most. (I find that some music loses much more than others from computer playbacks.) But it is certainly part of the repertoire baroque fiddlers should know. The cover has a completely different sort of wall-paper style from that of SPES – red and yellow flowers on a blue background – not so elegant but striking.

The publication is also important for its introduction (in Italian and English). Fabrizio Longo provides a biography as thorough as we are likely to get. The highlight is the description of how Pandolfi and a castrato were on bad terms, which got worse as a service at Messina Cathedral progressed, until for self defence Pandolfi had to snatch the castrato's sword and "thrust it right into his side, right up to the hilt." Pandolfi moved to France and Spain. The account (p. 18) is pleasingly verbose. Enrico Gatti has much of value to say about performance practice, often relating to the limitation of detail caused by the use of movable type. He is also concerned about an unfounded confidence in the absence of expected accidentals, resulting in performances he describes as "exotic" and "tropical baroque". He reckons that an organ (not a continuo band) was the most likely accompaniment, and draws attention to the need for split keys. Gatti's seven pages are essential reading for performers of 17th-century sonatas. The description *stylus phantasticus* is usually applied to this repertoire. However, a book we will review in the next issue on Schmeltzer and Biber draws attention to the rather wider definition given by the source of the description, Athanasius Kircher.

This facsimile arrived in a box with a pile of other Walhall new issues, which will be reviewed in our next issue.

DRESDEN ORCHESTRAL

Albinoni *Two Sinfonias* **edited by Reinhard Goebel** (S 20). A-R Editions, 2011. v + 26pp, $24.00; parts $38.00

Johann Georg Pisendel *Concerto da camera in B-flat Major* **edited by Reinhard Goebel** (S 18. A-R Editions, 2011. iv + 23pp + vln solo part, $33.00; parts $17.00

Johann Pisendel *Sonata for Orchestra in C minor* **edited by Reinhard Goebel** (S 17). A-R Editions, 2011. v +6pp, $12.00; parts $14.00

Johann Joachim Quantz *Pastorale in F major* **edited by Reinhard Goebel** (S 21). A-R Editions, 2011. v + 11pp, $15.00; parts $9.00

Giovanni Alberto Ristori *Concerto for Oboe in E-flat major* **edited by Reinhard Goebel** (S 19). A-R Editions, 2011. iv + 35 pp + ob solo part, $36.00; parts $25.00

Johann Christoph Schmidt *Chaconne from Les quatre saisons* **edited by Reinhard Goebel** (S 15). A-R Editions, 2011. iv + 14pp, $15.00; parts $20.00

Jan Dismas Zelenka *Hypocondrie à 7 concertanti* **edited by Reinhard Goebel** (S 16). A-R Editions, 2011. v + 26pp, $21.00; parts $19.00

S = Special Publications (score); add Q for parts (eg S16Q)

4. None of the pieces are as striking as the concluding three items of op. 7. It's nearly 40 years ago since I edited them; BC once typeset them for me, but they are still not checked!

Here is another batch of Reinhard Goebel's series of mostly late-baroque instrumental music. As I was tearing off the cellophane and typing the heading, I was puzzled that the prices looked reasonable for the set of score and parts but rather expensive for score only – apart from concertos, where the solo part is included.[5] A-R's web site shows that a set comprises strings for a conventional (modern or baroque) chamber orchestra (3-2-2-3 + wind).[6] This common practice can be frustrating, but is convenient for the publisher and shop and keeps the price down (till your oboist loses his part!) But there should be a note of what a set contains somewhere in the score. I wonder, though, whether the sets could include a score without raising the price too much, so that performers would be more likely to buy and play the music: scores could still be sold separately at the current prices to academics and librarians.

All the items here have the same introduction: two pages on music at the Dresden court. Those with four-page prelims have space for only 5 lines on the source, and the others are not much longer. It is, however, useful that, when the source is a set of parts, the numbers in the original set are given.[7] Dresden seems, at least under Pisendel, to have had a standard-sized orchestra, and music from elsewhere was adapted to fit it, with added flutes and oboes.

Both the **Albinoni** pieces are for the "Dresden" scoring. Michael Talbot writes of the Sinfonia in G minor: 'Si 7... is perhaps the most stormily dramatic work Albinoni ever wrote.... [It] must have originated as a work for strings in four parts, though the Dresden musicians saw fit to add doubling wind parts." The string parts are sufficient – indeed, the second and third movements are printed on four staves – so the forces required are flexible. (Those who wonder how oboes play below their bottom note can see that the scribe just omits them.) The Sinfonia in C (mi 2) also has a busy first movement, but is less powerful.

Pisendel is the link between Dresden and Venice; he built up links whereby Dresden is still a major source for Venetian music, though often with additions to fit the better-winded Dresden band. His two-movement Sonata in C minor (*Largo – Allegro*), fitting a title like Prelude and Fugue, would make an effective piece for string quartet or orchestra; the string parts number 3.3.2.2 + cembalo and bassoon, with the two oboe parts labelled violin or oboe.[8] The concerto is scored for unison violins, viola and bc and has parts for a smaller ensemble: 2 violin parts, 2 violas, bass and cembalo. It is probably enjoyable if not heard too often, but I suspect that a player would get bored touring it.

The information on the **Quantz** *Pastorale* is confusing. The edition is "based on the manuscript score of Johann Friedrich Agricola's Christmas cantata *Die Hirten bey der Krille zu Bethlehem* (Libretto by Karl Wilhelm Ramler) dated 1757". The Quantz thematic catalogue (QV 6:4) – the number isn't mentioned in the edition – quotes the heading to the piece "Pastoralle. Vorspiel zu Rammlers Hirten von Herrm Quantz". The scoring here is for 2 flutes, 2 oboes, strings and organ, which plays tasto solo except when the right hand doubles the flutes an octave lower. The source is a score, so there is no indication of instrument numbers and what played the bass part. As one might expect, there are a lot passages in thirds or sixths above drones – the sort of Christmas piece that can be either mesmeric or boring! The connection with Dresden is slim: it was written in Berlin, though the editor claims that the scoring could be said to be in the Dresden style (as, I suppose, could Bach's Christmas pastoral).

G. A. Ristori (1692? - 1753) is an obscure figure with an interesting life. He worked at Dresden from 1715 and survived the expulsion of Italian musicians five years previously. He was sent to Moscow in 1731 with a group of singers to celebrate the coronation of Empress Anna Ivanona: the revival of his *Calandro* there was the first Italian opera performed in Russia. He spent a couple of years in Warsaw, then returned to Dresden He was Vice-Kapellmeister for the last three years of his life. He was evidently a prolific composer, but little of his work survives. The Oboe Concerto takes us back almost to the standard Dresden scoring, including 2 ripieno oboes and bassoon (but no flutes). We are told that it is obvious from the handwriting that the first movement (of four) was composed by Pisendel.[9] This is certainly worth hearing.

J. C Schmidt (1664-1728) became a chorister at Dresden when he was ten and spent the rest of his life there, finishng up as Kapellmeister. His Divertissement *Les quatre saisons* was composed for a Festival of Venus celebrating the marriage of Prince Friederich August and the Archduchess Maria Josepha on 23 September 1719. The source is a four-stave score, with flutes and oboes doubling violin I except for some trio passages. The movement comes from *Winter*, though if the semiquavers are meant to illustrate bad weather, they are a bit tame. But it's a fine piece if you have no such expectations.

I'm not sure if we need another edition of **Zelenka's** *Hypocondrie à 7 concertanti* (which, unlike the Quantz, includes a catalogue number, ZWV 187), since it has been available from Max Sobel (Concerto Editions) for at least a decade: UK price from www.primalamusica.com £25.00. Whichever edition you buy, it's a marvellous piece.

5. Buying solo parts for concertos is annoying, since most publishers only sell them with piano reductions – not much use for professional players of early music. You often can't buy them separately, and nor are they included in orchestral sets.

6. String strengths other than composers' specifications in scores usually refer to parts, not players.

7. Though that doesn't necessarily mean that three parts imply five or six players. [According to BC, there are sets that have individual players' names on each copy so can only have been intended for one to use.].

8. Each of the two versions has been edited by Max Sobel (Concerto Editions); it probably had a liturgical function.

9. Proofreader BC wonders whether that applies to other Ristore pieces.

MORE GREEN MEN

Cedric Lee has sent two recent issues of his Green Man Press (www.greenmanpress.com; available in Euroland from Walhall). **Charpentier** wrote nine sets of *Litanies de la Vierge* (H. 82-90) which are all published in A-R's *Recent Researches in the Music of the Baroque Era*, 72. Simon Hanks has edited the fifth of the sequence. The autograph score is in vol. 25 of the composers *Mélanges*, so there are no serious editorial problems. The text is the by-then-ubiquitous Litany of Loreto, which the edition prints separately in Latin and English. The setting is for SSB and continuo, which has brief solo sections separating sections of the text. These are marked *ritorn[ello]*, an unnecessary and confusing translation of *tous*, especially as it is cancelled by *R.* I'm suspicious of his idea of using a serpent in such small-scale music. The closing *Agnus* is preceded by one of the composer's typical instructions: "suivez après une petite pause". This is definitely ensemble music, with rarely more than a few bars for solo voice. Soprano I is about a third above Soprano II, going up to A flat and the bass has a range of an 11th going down from top E flat. The package for **Cha 1** (£8.70) includes a score with cover and including realisation, three uncoverd scores with the three voices and continuo, and a bass part.

Montéclair's *Pan et Sirinx* is the fourth cantata of his second book, c. 1717. It's a substantial work for soprano with four recits and five airs. (**Mon 4**; £9.50). The composer lists the instruments as violin, oboe or flute, but there is an imitative interlude for *violon* and *viole seule* (in alto clef) with no bass and the alto-clef *viole seule* appears again as the 'bass' to an air with flute or violin; a previous air is for oboe or violin. I would imagine that the ideal performance would have taken the wind options if possible, to vary the scorings. Is the high *viole* the continuo gamba suddenly going high up his A string? The word "Tous" below the Bc part of the following recit perhaps implies that the other continuo instruments joined in rather than replaced the *viole*. This is a careful edition by Cedric himself. The vocal part is rewarding without being virtuosic. I noticed two interesting details. If the composer has to mark alternate quavers a third apart as *Croches égalles* (mov. 2 bar 3), does that mean that such an interpretation was not, as we generally assume, expected anyway? And in 8 bar 50 there is an unambiguous instruction for the singer to slide between an A flat and an A natural, illustrating the "tendres accents" of Sirinx (whom, we are told, "should be pronounced as it looks".

COUPERIN TÉNÈBRES

I should have mentioned this a couple of issues ago. Robert King has produced an uncluttered and compactly set-out edition of Couperin's three sets of *Ténèbres*. These are marvellous solos for sopranos. Presumably each does one of the first two sets, and they combine for the third *Leçon* with the marvellous *Jod*, perhaps the most striking nine bars in the repertoire. It happens to be followed by a *Petite pause*, which I describe above as a typically Charpentian feature. I'd use this edition if I needed to play the work (from info@tkcworld.com).

BACH OUVERTURES/SUITES

Bärenreiter has just reissued offprints of the NBA score of what are called the four *Ouvertüren* in German and *Orchestral Suites* in English. The musical texts are presumably the same (they bear the original 1966 © date), but the introductions by Gudula Schütz are new. These are mostly identical in each score, ending with comments on sources and dates of the relevant work. The unchanging text approaches the works through the *Air on the G String* in the 1860s. Mendelssohn had performed the whole suite in 1838 and 1840 but the Air created interest in the work, and the other two Suites. Peters had published them in the 1850s, but the fourth suite (whose source dates from after Bach's death) was not accepted until it was noticed that Bach borrowed it from Cantata 110. The four suites first appeared together in the Bach Gesellschaft in 1885. The comments on individual pieces give the current opinions (not always unanimous) on their early history. I don't think that anyone would buy these scores for the sake of the new information, but it is good that the introductions are up to date. (BA 52352-5; £13.00, 12.50, 15.00 and 17.50). The publicity states that the orchestral parts have been newly engraved, and there is a realised keyboard part for those who need one. They have new BA numbers, so perhaps there *are* changes.

GAVINIÉS

Pierre Gaviniés *Three Sonatas for Violin Opus posth* Edited by Anthony F.Ginter (*Recent Researches in the Music of the Classical Era*, C82) A-R Editions, 2011. xii + 43pp, $70.00 2 parts (C82P) $16.00

I seem to have missed the three previous volumes of Gaviniés violin music by the same editor from A-R, so will list them here:

RRMCE 43: 6 Sonatas for violin & Bc, op. 1 (1760)
RRMCE 54: 6 Sonatas for two violins, op. 5 (c.1774)
RRMCE 64: 6 Sonatas for violin & Bc op. 3 (1764)

This completes the publication of his sonatas, apart from one for violin and double bass.

Gaviniés (1728-1800) spent his life in Paris, where he had a high reputation,[10] and didn't try to make his fortune abroad; but he had financial problems in the latter part of his life. However, the fact that these three late sonatas, more advanced than his previous sets, are dedicated to Kreutzer suggests that he was in good standing with the

10. According to one sentence of a two-sentence web site, "he founded the French school of violinists" – there's no such comment in Grove Music Online! His fame survived through his studies: *Vingt-quatre matinées*.

younger generation, as does the presence of Gossec, Méhul and Cherubini at his funeral. The most obvious change is the absence of bass figuring, which may imply accompaniment by a cello alone. The title-page of the first (Paris [1801]) edition does not mention accompaniment, and has the music in score, which for most of the 18th century was the standard format for sonatas for solo and figured bass, though it is likely that, even when figures were present, the bass part was often performed as a single line without chords. The title- page of the Berlin edition of 1828 has "avec accompagnement de Violoncelle". I'm not sure that it matters very much, but by 1800, sonatas tended to have a written-out piano part.[11] Players are likely to head for the first sonata, named on the title-page as "dite Son Tombeau", though the heading to the work itself avoids the possibility that the sonata was a tombeau for himself by himself rather than for someone else. The editor manages to write descriptions of the style of the music under three headings (Form, Melody, Tempo) ignoring the significance of the title.

I don't have a facsimile of the 1801 edition, but comparison with the reproduction in the edition of the opening page does make the modern edition look fussy. It's partly the latter's larger gaps between the notes, which means that the editor has to make decisions about precise placements of instructions that are ambiguous in the original.[12] I'm not saying that the editor is wrong, but that he has to make clarifications without indicating to the player that he is using his discretion. Also, excess modernisation of house-style causes a surfeit of editorial slurs.

Bar 1. The music would be so much clearer if the two-note homophonic chords were left with a single stem, slur and one staccato each, rather have separate stems above and below, with editorial slur and staccato marks. (The 1801 engraver seems inconsistent whether to have separate stems or one, but slurs are only marked once.)

Bar 2. The editorial slur on the lower part is wrong: 1801 has a minim D with tails up, and crotchet B and G, which can only be played as a slur, though it does includes one above the minim. Since in bar 1 the slur is printed above the stave, it's logical for the same to happen in bar 2, even if it refers to the lower part. The commentary exaggerates in saying that it extends to the third beat of the bar.[13]

Bar 4. 1801 beams the three quavers in the lower part. The first of these, however, must be slurred to the previous dotted crotchet, so the dotted slurs are superfluous. It is also clear that the rhythm cannot be two dotted crotchets. I won't continue with such detail!

11. The editor might have provided some statistics on Parisian violin sonatas from the period.

12. It also means that 2011 has a page turn while 1801, with the same number of staves, gets the whole movement on page 1.

13. I find the editor's way of counting notes from the lower to upper for each chord is perverse: surely one reads the melody before the fill-in? Also, with so many annotations, it's very hard work to read them in continuous prose rather than a new line for each reference.

I haven't noted any problem with copying the dynamics in the violin part into the bass, though (in the score at least) it's just extra clutter. I don't know about the rest of the book, but I reckon that anyone good enough to play the music should be able to read the original print. What would be more useful would have been a facsimile with introduction and commentary.

However, it is good that this volume is available to complete publications of Gaviniés' sonata output. I hope I have a chance to hear them played, or to play a few simple chords while someone copes with the far more difficult violin part.

DITTERSDORF for DOUBLE BASS

Strangely, Dittersdorf is best known, not for his imaginative metamorphosic symphonies, but for his double bass concerto: it is one of the earliest, and possible the most popular. Written around 1767, it was discovered in 1938 and published with the sort of editorial freedom that is familiar from Boccherini's B-flat cello concerto, an authentic edition of which is also published by Breitkopf (OB/PB 5287). Breitkopf and Henle have now done Dittersdorf proud, with a new critical edition (OB/PB 15117, score €29.00; wind set € 28.00, strings each €5.00, realised Bc €14.00; piano reduction from Henle HN 759 €20.00). There is, however, a performance problem. The only source is a MS set of parts owned by a famous bassist of the time, Johannes Sperger (1750-1812). The orchestral parts are in E flat, but the solo part is in D. The Viennese bass tuning was, until around 1800, A-d-f# a. It was tuned a semitone higher than orchestral pitch to get some added brilliance, with its open strings sounding more clearly against the less resonant sounds of the orchestra avoiding open strings. (Mozart used the effect for the viola in the violin/viola *Sinfonia Concertante*.) I don't understand why the score and parts are transposed into D major or E major and not given in the original E flat. There must be an obvious reason that isn't spellt out in the preface. The Bass-piano edition is not only available in both keys and also has parts for solo, orchestral and Viennese tuning. The scoring is for two flutes, two horns and strings. I hope players will convert to this edition, and perhaps someone like Peter McCarthy will explain the need for the transposed scores. Surely soloists can use scordatura, even if they won't adopt Viennese tuning.

I was intrigued by the striking patterns of beamed semiquavers on a page of Breitkopf's new edition of Sibelius's En saga *and suggested that it might be used as a wall-paper design of a poster. Their idea was wrapping paper. The price is €7.50 for 25 sheets in either red or blue, but the size of the sheet isn't stated.*

PHILIP the CHANCELLOR

The review of A-R's edition of Motets and Prosulas with words by Philip is delayed until August.

REVIEWS OF BOOKS

MUSIC AT GERMAN COURTS

Music at German Courts, 1715-1760: changing artistic priorities Edited by Samantha Owens, Barbara M. Reul & Janice B. Stockigt. The Boydell Press, 2011 xx + 484pp, £50.00 ISBN 978 1 84383 598 1

This tome grew out of a round table discussion at a 2006 conference on baroque music held in Warsaw, and its completion is the joint achievement of the three editors, who have been actively involved in exploring the concept of courtly musical establishments in the German-speaking world of the Baroque period for decades. After an introductory chapter comes a series of descriptions of the organisation of music from royal courts to duchies, and from principalities to margravates. Stripping away some of the formal titles of the various courts, there are studies of major musical centres (Dresden and Berlin, for example), as well as smaller establishments (such as Sondershausen or Karlsruhe).

The amount of information given is staggering. The detail in the actual text (with full citations in most cases of primary sources – though war losses have obviously meant this is not always possible) is supplemented in each chapter with tables, listing all servants at court involved with music in one way or another. Various themes occur repeatedly, such as the not-fully-documented practice of Hofkapelle being supplemented by domestic servants when larger forces were required; the proliferation of bands of *Hautboisten* (who, it seems, were not limited to playing double reed instruments) and their function at many courts largely remain clouded in mystery.

Inevitably in such a large volume there are a few slips. C. P. E. Bach was in Zerbst in 1758, not 1759 (as stated on p. 107); despite accepting that there is no known music by Stölzel for clarinet, Bert Siegmund (p. 211) perpetuates what I consider to be Christoph Ahrens's myth that those were the instruments purchased by the Gotha court in 1742 and 1749 rather than the far-more-likely trumpets ("Klarinetti" meaning small clarini – they were pitched in E flat and F, so the description matches). On the whole, though, this valuable book provides a reliable source of information for anyone interested in 18th-century music in Germany. Indeed, no-one who works in that field should fail to digest it – whether only those portions of direct interest to them, or as a whole, there is an abundance of new knowledge here from which everyone can draw. *BC*

MUSIC IN MANILA

D. R. M. Irving *Colonial Counterpoint: Music in Early Modern Manila* Oxford UP, 2010. x + 394pp, £15.99

The heading above raises three points. First, the price puzzles me, especially in relationship to that of the Cambridge UP book reviewed below. Since the delivery note didn't show a price, I checked Amazon, which gives the full price quoted above, so the support from the American Musicological Society must have been enormous. Second, despite my comments on "Early Modern" in my editorial, it is actually a useful term here, subject to sliding it a bit later along the historical scale.

The third point is more significant: the second word of the title. The phrase "contrapuntal analysis" (p. 5) is taken from Edward Said, who used it for "teasing out distinct (and opposing) voices of the elite and the subaltarn[1] in colonial societies, revealing submerged voices and exposing the intricacies of independence and complementarity in the sounding of a cohesive whole". Said was certainly involved with music, as his well-known partnership with Barenboim in the establishment of the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra shows. But I wonder how specific his knowledge of musical terminology was. My idea of counterpoint doesn't fit his description. The more formal types, at least, tend to manipulate material that is basically similar. The counter-subject of a fugue contrasts, but the subjects are usually compatible. Combinations of clashing themes (e.g. the end of the *Jupiter* symphony) are rare. The author quotes "a form of public celebration that can momentarily suspend and invert the hierarchies of stratified societies" and assumes that the musical meaning of "inversion" represents the sort of disruption of a carnival, whereas most contrapuntal inversions have the same feel as their uninverted form: exceptions like Rachmaninov's striking inversion of the Paganini theme are the result of how the inversion is transformed, and (if we didn't know the piece) a romantic treatment of the theme without the inversion could have something of the same effect. I find the continual invocation of an unhelpful metaphor distracting, and I suspect I would have abandoned the book had I not been reviewing it or not known the author – he plays baroque violin, I've played continuo with him a couple of times, and we happened to chat after Brian Jordan's memorial service.

But I'm glad I persisted. The account of music in Manila and more widely in the Philippines is fascinating, despite the frustrating loss of virtually all scores and many other documents, the natural loss through the centuries being exacerbated by earthquakes, fires and the destruction in

1. I thought the word meant a junior army officer, but in the 1970s the Marxist theorist Gramsci used it to mean "persons socially, politically, and geographically outside of the hegemonic power structure". The Wikipedia article mentions equivalents as *other* and *proletariat*. Much as I dislike using an adjective as a noun, the former seems preferable to giving another emphasis to a Marxist word which is already overused.

1945.[2] Manila was founded in 1571, and the book covers the period up to the mid 19th-century. The relationship of Spanish and native cultures is a continuing theme, similar to the situation in Latin America,[3] though the relationship with the native populations in the Philippines was more complicated thanks to Manila being a central port for Eastern Asian trade and the contact with the powerful cultures of Japan and China. Chapter 1 begins "Manila was the world's first global city". A sign of this is that the native words for lute, flute and metallophones derive from Sanskrit, an Indo-European language, so vocabulary from the same root reached Manila from Spain in the East and India in the West (p. 79). Needless to say, the Church was insistent on its religious and social beliefs, and generally enforced both on the population.[4] But native languages and music were accepted in some circumstances. Unfortunately, with a lack of sources, it is impossible to tell how musical traditions overlapped and intermixed. I was puzzled that there was no discussion of any surviving traces of pre-Spanish culture: are there no pockets of survival?

The bulk of the information concerns music in church. At one period, each parish had eight paid musicians, with probably others receiving training and waiting for an existing musician to be promoted or die. Around 1750, there were 529 parishes, with roughly one in 250 of the population over seven being professional church musicians (p. 191). (On that basis, each of the two Huntingdon parishes should have 40 paid musicians!) And there was censorship on secular performances, whether Spanish or Chinese. Chinese culture was clearly not appreciated. Japanese was less alien, which perhaps explains Philippine sympathy for martyred Japanese Christians. An unnamed Japanese musician composed masses and antiphons for the celebrations of the beatification of Francis Xavier in Manila in 1621 which were sung by three choirs – is the author pushing the evidence too hard when suggesting: "it may be the earliest example of a Japanese-born composer writing works in a European idiom and for multiple choirs".[5] (p. 224-5). Seven choirs are mentioned in connection with the beatification of 26 martyrs, mostly Japanese, from Nagasaki.[6]

This is an amazingly thoroughly documented publication, with footnotes taking up nearly 100 pages – though they do include the original of the many translated quotations – and 30 pages of bibliography. I'm not sure how I could absorb the contents or even summarise it. I hope I've picked out a few matters that arouse our readers' interest. The book has a coda that reverts to the contrapuntal metaphor, David closes "Filipinos took colonial counterpoint and both inverted and subverted it." I suspect that, ignoring the metaphor, there probably isn't enough evidence to justify fully what I think he is saying, but the colonists controlled the definition, so such suspicions are very plausible.

2. Between 3 Feb and 3 March 1945, "indiscriminate bombing by the allies and defensive measures taken by the Japanese forces collectively resulted in widespread destruction of the metropolis, at a cost of some 100,000 civilian lives."(p.13) Perhaps four times as many deaths as at Dresden!

3. See *Music and Urban Society in Colonial Latin America* Edited by Geoffrey Baker and Tess Knighton, Cambridge UP, 2011, reviewed in ***EMR*** 140, which includes a chapter by David Irving. .

4. Religious beliefs are almost invariably interlinked with social ones, the latter are often preserved after their useful life because they have been given theological status.

5. "Tres chori" could mean merely using three choirs for separate functions in the proceedings.

6. Perhaps Gabrieli's Magnificat a33 reached Manila!

BACH'S FICTITIOUS CONTEMPORARIES

Stephen Rose ***The Musician in Literature in the Age of Bach*** Cambridge UP, 2011. ix + 237pp, £55.00 ISBN 978 1 10700 428 3

Our church has been celebrating the 400th anniversary of the Authorised Version (as it was called till recently) with a series of sermons on the Bible as literature. *The Bible to be Read as Literature* or something of the sort sat prominently on library shelves when I was a child, and I took the title's implication that it wasn't to be read for its religious content. The serious point is that, unless you know what sort of literature each book of the Bible us, you are not equipped to understand it. The sermon on May 22nd began with a comment that those people who expected to be in heaven by then wouldn't have been so disappointed if they had been aware of the literary genre of the particular source of their information. The series had begun with the advice that single Bible texts should be treated sceptically if they are not in accord with the rest of the Bible nor with common sense.

A piece of information can be dubious because it is unique or implausible; it can also be questioned because it is part of a narrative tradition. A child secretly studying music at night occurs in stories of the early life of Telemann, Bach and Handel, for instance (p. 219-11); in Telemann's case the source is his 1718 autobiography. It is not entirely implausible that parents should discourage their sons from following a profession of dubious merit: either the stories could be myths or were true but not thought mentioning until one biography set the trend.

Stephen Rose's final chapter discusses actual musicians through the 41 autobiographies in Johann Mattheson's *Grundlage einer Ehrenpforte*. The previous chapters discuss the image of musicians in German fiction of the time. There is a large element of slapstick in these, but once the literary form is understood, a good deal of information about the status of musicians is unearthed, as well as changes in their ambition and the aesthetics: the ideal of good, well-trained, hard-working, church musicians changed to the less learned but more openly virtuosic musicians at court. The medieval guild concept lasted a long time in Germany, but the court aesthetic undermined it, perhaps

by distinguishing between vagabond and touring virtuoso (though that is not a point investigated here).

I haven't noticed any references to the novels (if that isn't too pompous a word) being available in English: I suspect that the humour would be so crude (both primitive and rude) that reading more than a few pages would be tedious – Stephen has succeeded brilliantly in performing the function of a scholar to read books that are too boring for others to read! He has extracted from what are mostly exaggerated accounts and parodies a lot of background on the status of musicians and attitudes to music. But the genre is quite a closed one, and repetition of incidents and ideas in different books does not give additional plausibility (just as the presence of a story in the synoptic Gospels doesn't triple its authority).

HANDEL'S BESTIARY

Donna Leon *Handel's Bestiary: In Search of Animals in Handel's Operas.* Illustrated by Michael Sowa, Music by George Frideric Handel with Alan Curtis conducting Il Completto Barocco Heinemann, 2011. 141 pp + CD, £16.99

An intriguing way of building an anthology of Handel arias! A dozen feature here, nine from operas, three from English oratorios. Four are for soprano (Karina Gauvin), five for mezzo (Ann Hallenberg) and there is an aria each for the tenors Paul Agnew and Anicio Zorzi. The numbers don't add up, because there is also one duet – the final track, which to me was the most moving: "Fuor di periglio" from *Floridante*. It is delightfully sung by the two ladies. The author is better known for her detective stories, which reveal the life and gastronomic style of a well-off Venetian. The bestiaric introductions to the arias are entertainingly written, mythological rather than scientific, and leading to attempts – some more successful than others – to show how Handel's music draws on the animal's metaphorical significance. I imagine that the book is aimed at present-buyers: it could be a gentle way of enticing listeners towards Handel. *CB*

ORATORIO TEXTS

Bruno Bertoli *Cinque pezzi sacri – Testi poetici dell' Oratorio Sacro in Metastasio, Handel, Haydn* [Fondazione Giorgio Cini. Studi di musica veneta, vol. 29] vi-166 pp (Leo S. Olschki, 2010, €20,00 ISBN 978 88 222 6021 5

This book puts the religious themes of five 18th-century oratorio texts (Haydn's *Creation* and *Seven Last Words of Our Redeemer on the Cross*, Handel's *Messiah* and *Resurrection*, and Metastasio's *The Passion of Jesus Christ*) back into a discussion of their literary and musical contents, asserting that these themes have been missing from analyses from the Enlightenment on.

The original, lost, anonymous text of *Die Schöpfung*, the *Creation*, destined for but not used by Händel, was in English. This fact is apparent in its quotations from the *Authorized Version of the Bible* (1611)[7], the *Common Prayer Book*, *Paradise Lost* (especially for elements not derived from *Genesis*, the *Apocrypha* or the *Psalms*), and even from mistakes introduced by the German translator, Gottfried van Swieten. Bertoli points out how the resulting text is a product of rational Deism, differing from dogmatic Christian tradition, and also from aspects of *Genesis* which reflected Babylonian ideas. He doesn't mention that van Swieten was a Mason.

Its author could therefore not have been Charles Jennens, as sometimes hypothesized, whose libretto for the *Messiah* (approved by Handel) was on the side of official doctrine. The intrinsic religious value of *Messiah*, with its emphasis on Old Testament sources, is rather surprising to the Italian reader. Understanding Jesus primarily from these Biblical and liturgical sources was more important to Anglican and Lutheran traditions. Also unfamiliar are the numerous borrowings from the *Apocalypse* and the *Common Prayer Book*, such as the *Hallelujah* chorus and *"I know that my Redeemer liveth"*.

The Seven Last Words according to the Evangelists and the Church, as interpreted by the Benedictine abbott, Ernaud (d. 1156), the Franciscan St. Bonaventura (1221-74), Guiral Ot (d. 1348), St. Bernardino of Siena (1386-1446) and the Jesuit St. Bellarmino (in his work of 1618), were the sources from which various texts were created. Poems by Alonso Mesia Bedoya (1655-1732), who initiated the practice in Lima of meditating on Good Friday, circulated widely in Europe and were set by Jommelli and Giordani, inspiring Haydn to compose instrumental sonatas on each "Word" in 1787. A text by K. W. Rammler (1725-98) had been set previously by Graun and Telemann. J. Friebert (1723-99) used some of these verses in an oratorio written to fit Haydn's music, a text Haydn then had van Swieten revise. Thus the final collated text was entirely written to be added to the already composed music, which in itself had been inspired by Biblical interpretations which Bertoli outlines.

Metastasio's dramatic text, based on the Gospels, cites its sources by line, mainly from Matthew, with elements of Mark, Luke and John. Its four characters are St. Peter, St. John, Mary Magdalen and Joseph of Arimathea, who evoke the actions and words of others. The first part of the oratorio avoids the literal interpretation of some complex theological questions, accuses both the Romans and the Jews, portrays Maria as energetically suffering, and ignores Jesus's disconcerting last question. The second part of the *Passione* is more about Jesus's reappearance at the End of Time than about his Resurrection, and the Jews are blamed for having not seen the "light" of all the miracles, from the water Moses found in the desert to the

7. The name seems to have been replaced by what I thought was the USA title, *The King James Bible*.

Resurrection. The influence of Deism on Metastasio is evident in some ideas, but not all, and the oratorio was set by 25 composers from Caldara (1730) to Morlacchi (1812).

Händel's *La Resurrezione,* published in 1708, was written by C. S. Capece (1652-1728). Bertoli takes us through it in order, giving about 80% of the text, which is constructed very differently from Metastasio's or Haydn's, making it more like a sacred opera, and drawing from a very different selection of sources, mainly non-Biblical. It gives more importance to the Passion than to the barely mentioned Resurrection, though its course from Lucifer's victorious celebration of the crucifixion (probably from the apocryphal *Gospel of Nicodemus*) to his defeat, from Christ's "descent" (death and burial) to the joy of his resurrection, reflects a moral victory: more than receiving salvation, man is enabled to overcome sin. The five characters are Lucifer (Satan), in conflict with an Angel, the mourners Mary Magdalen and Cleofe (Mary of Cleofa), and St. John who comforts them.

The book is absorbing, the analyses all essential, and as intended, it responds to a lacuna in our appreciation of sacred works in general. *Barbara Sachs*

Charles E. Brewer *The Instrumental Music of Schmeltzer, Biber, Muffat and their Contemporaries* Ashgate, 2011. xxvi + 411pp, £65.00 ISBN 978 1 85928 396 7

To be reviewed by *BC* in the next issue

MUSIC REVIEWS CONTINUED

Thomas Brewer *Six Fantasias for four viols* edited by Virgina Brookes (*Viol Concert Series* 78) PRB Productions, 2010. iv +22p & 5 parts, $30.00.

Brewer is a shadowy figure. Born in 1611, he was educated at Christ's Hospital, he returned as a music master for a few years, then was sacked, either for getting married or drinking too much or both. He was a musician for Nicholas Lestrange, for whom his viol music (some airs as well as these fantasia) was probably written. They are lively pieces, quite busy and with a full texture. Not for beginners, but only the bass has to negotiate octave leaps with any frequency. Nos 3 & 4 require bottom Cs. The editor draws attention to pauses at the ends of sections; these are not consistent in the parts, so do we assume that players didn't need a sign to have a close and a fresh start. A separate organ part with no mid-fantasia page-turns is a luxury: it contains more of the notes than some such parts, missing out only unreachable alto parts. I don't remember these fantasies from my viol-playing days, but they look interesting; I suspect that the would make effective, if occasionally awkward, organ solos.

Auguste Alexandre Klengel *Canons and Fugues* arranged for viola quartet by Peter Ballinger (*Classical Series* 17) PRB Productions, 2011. 3 + 30pp & 4 parts.

Maybe not quite early music, but it follows in the tradition of Bachian counterpoint, and Bach has been appropriated by the viol world, especially the Art of Fugue and the six-part Ricercar. A glance at the thematic index to the contents would make a viol player reject the edition at once, with six of the nine pieces having key signatures of five or six sharps of flats. But the transcriptions don't go beyond two sharps or flats, so there's no reason to be scared. (I'm not assuming that viol-players can't read extreme keys, but they are not used to playing them on viols.) Klengel (1783-1852) studied with Clementi, travelled with him to St Petersburg, and stayed there for some years. He became organist at the Dresden Horkapelle in 1817. He produced an edition of Bach's "48" and worked on a set of 48 canons and fugues, which were published by Breitkopf two years after his death.[8] This selection has seven fugues, top and tailed by two ingenious and (or perhaps 'but') musical canons. Three are for TrTrTB, six for TrTTB. A few bass bottom Cs are avoidable. A lot of the music looks very viol-fantasy-ish, apart from the dynamics, but there are a few longer slurs that players may prefer to treat as legato separate bows. They seem to me to be something of a discovery. I think the original headings should have been retained in the score, not just the index, and perhaps in the original Italian: No. 9 , for instance, is *Canone doppio dlla Dominante*, a 4 parti. Certainly worth playing!

8. The original edition is online through *Petrucci* . A few of the canons are on four staves, with two-stave versions beneath (like the Brewer Fantasies!)

LONDON CONCERTS

Andrew Benson-Wilson

C. P.E. BACH

CPE Bach has always suffered undue neglect, mainly, perhaps, from people who do not understand that his music was written in a completely different style from that of his father (or for that matter, from his brother Johann Christian). The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and the efficaciously ebullient Sir Roger Norrington (and some excellent programme notes from Lindsay Kemp) helped to redress the balance from father to son in their Queen Elizabeth Hall concert (3 May) and Study Day (5 May). Four mercurial symphonies framed concertos for harpsichord and cello, the former twisting the fingers of Steven Devine and belying the notion that the family's keyboard skills were inherited by WF rather than CPE Bach. The cello concerto included a *Largo* that Beethoven would have been proud to have written. Of course, the Rococo style has its detractors and rarely rises to the heights of either the Baroque or Classical periods to which it formed a transition. But its jovial and friendly demeanour is delightfully user-friendly. Indeed, the similar demeanour of Norrington helped things along, with his almost balletic accompaniment to the music and gleeful little grins at the audience – one showman recognising the skills of another. The concert was preceded by a slightly embarrassing attempt at acting by some of the OAE players in their recreation of a flute lesson in the court of Frederick the Great (thereby, curiously, focussing far more on Quantz than CPE Bach) and, more successfully, by a post concert Q&A session with Roger Norrington. The well attended Study Day including excellent talks by Susan Wollenburg and Rachel Baldock, along with a slightly less successful afternoon focussed on the Sonata *Sanguineas und Melancholicus* and some aspects of his keyboard music.

HILLIARD ENSEMBLE

The Hilliard Ensemble treated their audience to samples from their wide-ranging *Hilliard Songbook* with works from ancient to modern, the latter represented by Piers Hellawell, Gavin Bryers, Ivan Moody and the inevitable Arvo Pärt (Cadogan Hall, 15 March). Of the early works, I particularly liked Sheryngham's "Ah, gentle Jesu", the *Passacalli della vita (*a jolly little ditty about the inevitability of death), and the simple harmonies of the anonymous "Remember me my dear". The 20th century arrangement of the traditional Armenian Sharakan *Surp, Ter zorutheanc* was also impressive, as was the concluding pairing of Pärt's hypnotic "Most Holy Mother of God" with the *Gloria* from Machaut's *Messe de Notre Dame.* I am not sure what the Hilliard Ensemble's plans are for the future, but this had something of the feel of a *valete.* The group is at a rather tricky moment where decisions might need to be taken about their future direction. They replaced one tenor, very successfully, a few years ago, bringing in Steven Harrold. Without being too indelicate, I wonder if they might need to consider whether another tenor replacement might be needed before long – and possibly, a bass. Both voices seemed to show the ravages of age during this concert. However, to my ears, David James's countertenor voice seems to improve with age, having lost its rather distinctive nasal edge – and he and Steven Harrold blend extremely well.

HANDEL IN ITALY

The concert 'Handel in Italy' at St James's Piccadilly (18 March) was given by London Early Opera, a group unknown to me and, at the time, lacking any internet presence for me to check them out beforehand. It was a rather curious affair for a number of reasons, some of which might be due to several last minute changes of personnel. The latter included not just the need for a replacement soprano, but also a completely new choir – in this case the all-female Schola Pietatis Antonio Vivaldi, one of whose members rather unreasonably dominated the proceedings at the start by giving an introduction to the concert as if it was their own, rather than them fulfilling the role of a stand-in choir. Their singing didn't gain any plaudits from me either, with some unsteadiness in all voices and almost completely inaudible tenors and basses. There were, however, two good soprano soloists drawn from the choir for *De torrente in via bibet.* Although an all-female choir might arguably have some credence for some Vivaldi, they seemed out of place in Handel, even his Italian music. The replacement soprano was a different matter – Anna Gorbachyova, a young Siberian soprano who impressed me when I heard her win the First and Audience prizes in the First International Singing Competition for Baroque Opera Pietro Antonio Cesti in Innsbruck last year, gaining the title role in *La Calisto* in the 2011 Innsbruck Festival (just one of her many competition successes). She now has a scholarship at the Royal Academy Opera. She has a keen sense of the drama of the music and a clean and powerful voice with a vibrato that she can control when she wants to. She is a singer to watch out for in the future. The ramshackle programme notes could have done with severe editing and presentational improvement, and the playing could do with some improvement – it all seemed to be grossly under-rehearsed and the conductor didn't appear to have the technical ability to keep them all together. I really do not want to discourage any musicians, particularly young ones, so will finish by saying that the applause of the audience was extremely enthusiastic.

PURCELL QUARTET + SINGERS

The Purcell Quartet continued their exploration of the North German repertoire of vocal and instrumental music with a Wigmore Hall concert (21 March) in the company of Emma Kirkby, Michael Chance, Julian Podger and Peter Harvey – what a team! The Quartet played two of Buxtehude's sparkling multi-section Opus 2 Sonatas, the first starting as most Sonatas finish, with a gigue. Some slightly unsteady intonation from the first violin (and some suspect organ tuning) interfered at times, but it takes more than that to distract from Buxtehude's sheer inventiveness. In fact, inventiveness was the hallmark of the rest of the programme, not least with two of Johann Christoph Bach's most extraordinary works, starting with his exquisitely lachrymose *Lamento* "Ach, daß ich Wassers gnug hätte" (again with issues from the first violin, this time playing too loudly) and concluding with his wedding piece "Meine Freundin, du bist schön", apparently sung at Bach family weddings and, to my ears at least, reflecting the increasingly drunken (and possibly suggestive) state of the guests. Emma Kirkby caught the mood of the delightful chaccone (with virtuoso violin) *Mein Freund ist mein und ich bin sein* that makes up the central part of the extended work. The second half opened, rather movingly, with Matthias Weckmann's plangent "Kommet her zu mir alle" (Come hither to me all of you / who are downcast and sad / for I will make you joyful), which the group dedicated to Richard Campbell who, were it not for his untimely death, would have been playing in this concert.

DECONSTRUCTED FLUTE

Although it is little bit outside of the normal *EMR* reviewing remit, Peter Brook's Mozart re-interpretation 'A Magic Flute' (sic) is worth a mention (Barbican Theatre 25 Mar). Brook's early experiences at Covent Garden and the Metropolitan Opera led to a "deep hatred" of opera and practically everything connected to it – a "motionless art form", as he termed it. Although he has moved back into the world of opera, it is very much on his own terms. Developed at his own Paris Théâtre des Bouffes du Nord, Brook takes the music and text from the original and shakes it all about (with the aid of composer Franck Krawczyk and writer Marie-Hélène Estienne). What comes out at the other end is a concise play with music (with an on-stage grand piano). The actor/singers lose their shoes and all but seven of their numbers (employment prospects being maintained by running two separate casts), gain a couple of actors (who out-stage them), a forest of sticks as the only props, get bathed in red light and hurtle through the whole thing in about the same time as a soccer match. All connection with 'threes' is lost – the text is in French, the songs German. But the magic flute in A Magic Flute (it sounds a bit better in French as *Une Flûte enchantée)* is, indeed, magic. And I rather liked the singing, from voices that would barely traverse the pit in an opera house, and the sheer simplicity of what was, in reality, pure theatre.

ORLANDO FURIOSO (VIVALDI)

The operas of Handel have dominated the London musical scene for a decade or more, but the rather more accessible works of Vivaldi might be poised for a take over. They might not have the emotional depth of Handel – or, indeed, the musical quality or memorable tunes; but the ones that I have seen are attractive, well paced and jovial works. Handel-Lite, if you like. The latest to reach London was a concert performance of *Orlando Furioso,* presented by Ensemble Matheus, who also recorded the work for the Naïve Vivaldi Edition (Barbican 26 March). Whereas Handel made two operas out of Ariosto's poem *Orlando Furioso,* Braccioli's libretto combines the stories of Alcina and Orlando into one rather complex plot. The Barbican cast was to have featured more of the CD singers, but the curse of the Barbican wreaked havoc with the announced line up, with two of the eight soloists being stand-ins – Franziska Gottwald as Alcina and Daniela Pini as Medoro, both making excellent contributions, as is often the case with last minute replacements. Of course, much hinges on the role of Orlando, here sung with extraordinary gusto by Marie-Nicole Lemieux, her mad moments being one of the most powerful opera portrayals I have seen – *Furioso* indeed. Kristina Hammarström was an agile-voiced Bradamante with Veronica Cangemi a very impressive Angelica. Many in the audience had clearly come to hear the current golden boy countertenor Philippe Jaroussky, his sensuously androgynous voice no doubt sending shivers down their collective spines. The relatively youthful orchestra were expressive, agile and forceful without being forced. Jean-Christophe Spinosi conducted with a nervous energy, extravagant gestures and obvious involvement, occasionally emoting as much as the singers.

ULYSSES' RETURN

English National Opera decamped south of the river to The Young Vic for a joint production of Monteverdi's rarely heard 'The Return of Ulysses' (29 Mar). The clue might be in the theatre's name, because this seemed to be a production aimed at a potentially new opera audience, much shortened, and presented in a striking set centred on a large glass box (some sort of Bauhaus bed-sit, with bed, sofa, kitchen and shower cubicle), the walls of which were to be frequently splattered. Shock and awe were the order of the day, with all the expected contemporary references, including Abu Ghraib, S&M and bondage – and, it being an ENO production, the usual stage nudity, in this case a 360° tour of Tom Randle (in the title role) struggling to retain some sense of modesty in the shower. Part of the plot hinges on Orlando's old nurse having seen him naked, so I suppose it was justified. It was the sort of show that seemed to be designed to upset opera purists – I am not one, and thought it was great. Because of a mix up with my tickets, I ended up sitting high up in the gallery, looking down on the stage. The ENO press office were worried that I wouldn't be able to get a good enough view

but, in fact, this proved to be a good position, as it was possible to get more of a three-dimensional view and to see straight into the glass box around which the action took place. It also made the video screens less prominent. Pamela Helen Stephen sang and acted the role of Penelope with sensitivity, while her three unpleasent suiters were suitably munpleasant – they got their come-uppance when Ulysses passed the archery test, stripped off his battle fatigues, showered and then killed everybody. Ruby Hughes and Thomas Hobbs were also very impressive as Minerva and Telemaco but I found Katherine Manley's vibrato a trifle excessive. The players were in part from the ENO house band with some of the usual period suspects. Jonathan Cohen directed with a fine sense of period style.

CANZONA IN NEWBURY

I normally have to travel up to London for my EMR concert reviewing, but a lunchtime event closer to home in the opposite direction (Newbury Corn Exchange, 8 Apr), caught my eye – Canzona, with two of the pioneers of the early music scene combining in a lovely exploration of the early Baroque repertoire for violin and cornetto, both played by Theresa Caudle, with Alistair Ross on harpsichord and organ. Part of the Southern Sinfonia Café Concert series, this well attended concert caught just the right mood for a lunchtime event, with well judged introductions to the music and instruments. The programme was based on their CD "Violino o Cornetto: Seventeenth-century Italian solo sonatas"[1] with music from a period when the cornetto was beginning to give way to the violin as the preferred solo instrument, and the two solo competitors were contrasted in the opening pair of Canzonas by Frescobaldi (*La Lucchesina* and *La Bernardina*), both featuring echo passages. The gently mellifluous tone of the cornetto was immediately apparent, reinforcing its link with the sound of the human voice. Castello's 1629 *Sonata seconda* is usually played on the violin (it includes passages in Scheidt's *Imitatio violinistica* style), but worked well on the cornetto, notably in the typically bizarre 'Castelloian' cadence. Marini's *Sonata per sonar con due corde* featured one of the earliest examples of double stopping (and more *Imitatio violinistica* moments) while in Cazzati's 1670 *Sonata Prima "La Pellicana"* we heard a very late flowering of the cornetto repertoire. Alistair Ross gave a splendid performance of Rossi's well-known Toccata Settima, with its distinctive harmonic twists and turns.

OAE

The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment wandered from their offices into the adjoining concert hall at Kings Place for a short series of events ("Baroque Contrasted") focussing on the various Baroque instrumental groupings, culminating in what was billed as "A Restoration Spectacular" (9 April). I am not sure where the title came from, because Bach and Handel had nothing to do with the Restoration and Purcell's *Fairy Queen* was written 30 years later in the time of William and Mary. But what matter, this was a great concert, full of energy and with musicianship of the highest standards from the OAE and soprano Julia Doyle, a singer who impresses me more and more every time I hear her. She has a beautifully clear tone, with a gentle and well-controlled vibrato, excellent articulation, clean leaps without the safety net of a slither and is one of the few singers who can actually trill, as in a rapid alternation of adjoining notes, rather than the more usual appoggiatura linked to a wobble. Her concluding "Da tempeste" from *Giulio Cesare* was some of the finest Handel singing I have ever heard. She also showed an impeccable sense of period style in her Purcell singing, notably with 'The Plaint'. Matthew Truscott directed a punchy performance of Handel's Concert Grosso Op 6/10, combining vigour with sensitive dynamic shading, and was joined by Alison Bury for Bach's Concerto for 2 violins.

BUXTEHUDE'S *MEMBRA*

I shunned the usual round of Easter week Passions and limited my seasonal listening to Buxtehude's bittersweet *Membra Jesu Nostri Patientis Sanctissima* performed by the Retrospect Ensemble (Wigmore Hall, 20 April). This is a tricky work to bring off convincingly, and I fear I was not totally convinced with this interpretation. There are a number of performance issues, one being whether the work was ever intended to be performed as a whole. One way that was almost certainly not intended is in two parts with two instrumental works and an interval in between. This destroyed any idea of the build up of intensity and emotion as the seven cantatas chart the visual progression of Christ's body on the cross as the eyes are raised from the feet to the face, via the knees, hands, side, breast and heart. Quite why the decision was made not to accompany cantata six, *Ad Cor,* without the usual sensuous sound of a consort of five viols is beyond me. This should be the emotional high point of the work (Düben marked it specifically as *De Passione nostri Jesu Christi* in the MS), but it just didn't work by adding two violas to the two violins and cello of the remaining works. However I did approve the use of just five singers, collectively providing the 'choir'. I know Holy Week is a tough time for singers, but the voices need to be absolutely clean for Buxtehude's often intricate and madrigal-like harmonies to be effective. There were too many unsteady voices and too much slithering around notes, and I thought the singing was unnecessarily forceful considering the nature of the text. A more relaxed pace might have helped? Many of the separate pieces can come over as rather jovial if the Italian style is taken in too Italian a manner. By far the most successful moment was Ben Davies's singing in *Ave, verum templum Dei.*

BACHS ON THE SOUTH BANK

An unfortunate series of clashes with other concerts meant that I could only get to two of the South Bank Bach

1. Nimbus Alliance LC 5871, reviewed in *EMR* 139 p. 34

Weekend events, starting with an unusual chamber organ recital in the Purcell Room (26 Mar) given by Joseph McHardy with bass Ben Davies. It was billed as *Clavierübung III*, a massive work that would involve a far larger organ than could ever be accommodated in the Purcell Room. But, rather refreshingly, this concert only featured the ten *manualiter* chorale works, omitting all the works using pedals and, slightly curiously, the four duets, which would have made a more complete programme. These were framed by two Preludes and Fugues from Book 2 of the Well Tempered Clavier, both working well on the organ – indeed, I played both of them myself in a recent recital. The concert ended with *Vor deinen Thron tret' ich hiermit*, the lack of pedals being overcome by having Ben Davies sing the upper chorale melody with the lower parts played on the organ manuals. There are many theories as to the place of these smaller scale chorale preludes within *Clavierübung III*, and they are rarely heard individually, let alone as a set. Joseph McHardy's interpretations were very effective, concentrating on the reflective and meditative side of the music, with gentle registrations and restrained speeds.

The afternoon concert was *The Passing of the Torch*, comparing the music of JS with WF and CPE Bach. I am not sure if either of these two sons could have been considered as having accepted the 'torch', the musical style of both shining a completely different musical light than one that their father would have recognised. CPE got more of a look in, with two of his flute sonatas being compared with two by his fathers. With more expression and a greater use of the articulation possibilities of the flue, Martin Feinstein might have made more of the difference in musical styles between father and son. It had been revealed that cellist Jennifer Morsches had been giving advice on the *Empfindsammer Stil* just before the concert – it was a shame that her very brief contribution didn't give her more opportunity to demonstrate it to her fellow musicians. The only non-flute piece was a WF Bach harpsichord Sonata (in Eb, F.5) which featured the *Empfindsammer Stil* normally associated more with his brother. Before playing the sonata, harpsichordist Robin Bigwood rather bravely admitted that he wasn't familiar with WF Bach's keyboard works, although he made a pretty convincing job of this one. He was also an equally convincing continuo and obligato player in the flute pieces.

LONDON HANDEL FESTIVAL

The 34th London Handel Festival took place between 14 March and 1 May, starting with their traditional fully staged opera at the Britten Theatre. This year's offering was *Rodelinda*, better known than many of the Festival's past productions. Musically this was one of the best of all the Festival's flagship operas, with some excellent singing and playing (from the London Handel Players). As usual, there were two casts that alternate over the four days of the performance. I was there on 16 March, with the same cast as the opening night. I generally avoid mentioning individuals in such young split casts, thinking, perhaps unnecessarily, that it is unfair on singers who I didn't hear not to have the chance of being mentioned. On the other hand it is, arguably, unfair not to mention the singers that I did hear. Transferring the action from 7th century Lombardy to what looked like 1990s Balkans (but with the obligatory Guantanamo reference and some rather confusing costumes) could have worked very much better than it did. We had the usual round of opera director's oddities, but a rather cheapskate set, and some on-the-night mishaps also got in the way – one of the latter being a chair that was supposed to have been thrown across the room but ended up embedded at a rakish angle, feet first, in the wall, looking rather silly. There were audience giggles at other times as well, giggles which the direction should have repressed, even if the twist at the end does deserve a smile. All this diverted attention from a very sound cast and an appealing story line, the emotional depth of which was never really explored. Lawrence Cummings conducted with his usual sprightly enthusiasm.

A new enterprise for the London Handel Festival was a daytime event (31 March) at the North London Collegiate School for girls, whose buildings are on the site of Cannons, the colossal mansion built by James Brydges, later Duke of Chandos, and the short-lived home of Handel around 1717/18. As well as hosting this joint venture, the school had laid on a small exhibition of information about Cannons and the Duke of Chandos. The day started with a fascinating talk by Adrian Butterfield on the life, times and music of James Brydges. He was joined by Rachel Brown and Erik Dippenaar for some musical examples. This was followed by a collective masterclass for a small student orchestra of girls from the school (with a couple of guests), with Adrian rehearsing the Handel Concerto Grosso (Op.3/4) that the girls would perform during an evening concert. This was at the nearby church of St Lawrence Whitchurch (a glorious Baroque gem, rebuilt by Brydges) where a number of Handel's works were first performed, including what used to be called the 'Chandos' Anthems – nowadays Handel scholars prefer Anthems for Cannons as Brydges did not assume the Chandos title until after Handel's time.[2] As well as the Concerto Grosso, the evening concert featured three of the Chandos Anthems, sung by students from the Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance with the London Handel Orchestra, conducted by Adrian Butterfield. I got the impression that the singers were not used to singing music of this period in an appropriate style. As well as some stylistic issues, there were rather too many vocal upsets, including excessive vibrato and rather strained tenor voices. Adrian Butterfield directed the ensemble very effectively, and there were some fine contributions from the instrumentalists. As for the orchestra from the school, this was apparently their first

2. I don't think this is a matter to get pedantic about: at least *Chandos Anthem* avoids remembering whether to use one N or two. [CB]

experience of playing music of this period, and I was amazed at how quickly the ten 13-17 year-old girls managed to pick up the many bits of advice that Adrian Butterfield gave them during the afternoon, including aspects of articulation, dynamics and rhythm amongst other conventions of period style. I didn't spot any aspects of their masterclass that they didn't faithfully reproduce during the evening concert. This would be quite an achievement for many professional musicians, but was the more so given the age and experience of these young women. What was particularly impressive was that they were left entirely to their own devices during the concert, being led by their own first violinist, Joanna Wu. Two other musicians had particular opportunities to shine; Haruna Yamada was an impressively eloquent oboe soloist in the *Andante* and bassoonist Rebecca Kassam made an agile contribution during the concluding Minuet.

The final of the 10th Handel Singing Competition took place at Handel's own church of St George's, Hanover Square (7 April). Five singers (all female) had got through the preliminary rounds and the 15-strong semi-final. I have had my concerns about the finalists in this competition in the past, generally wondering if the singers chosen are really the best singers for Handel, as opposed to a later repertoire. But the standard of Handel performance has been increasing over the years, with more of the finalists showing an understanding of period style and having the type of voice that Handel's music requires. I thought all the finalists had real potential. They were all very professional in their presentation, although very few of them managed the very basic courtesy of acknowledging the conductor and instrumentalists during their applause. Technically, trills seem to a bit of a no-go area for many top professional singers, let alone the younger generation – at the very least, one should be able to differentiate a trill from the surrounding vibrato.

Soprano Stefanie True was the first to appear, setting a standard that was going to be hard to beat. Her very assured stage presence, and excellent communication with the audience was just the start. Her runs were clean, intonation excellent, vibrato slight and controllable, ornaments and *da capo* elaborations appropriate and she produced a nicely restrained cadenza in 'Capricious Man', although her trills and vocal runs could do with a bit more work. Rachel Kelly (mezzo-soprano) produced a focussed tone with a pleasantly dark lower register but also a slight tendency towards harshness which was not helped by a very fast and slightly edgy vibrato. She also made good contact with the audience. Soprano Keri Fuge had a good sense of the drama of her pieces, using the agility and strength of her voice to good effect. She produces clean leaps and proper trills and kept her vibrato reasonably well under control. For some reason, Emilie Alford (mezzo-soprano) seems to have had a large crowd of admirers in the audience, if her opening applause was anything to go by. I gather she impressed many during the semi-final. She certainly had a very compelling, confident and communicative stage presence and shone in many technical aspects, including clean runs, good *da capo* elaborations and ornaments. She is a very fine and expressive singer, but her rather strong (but not unpleasant) vibrato did make me wonder if her talents might ultimately lie in a rather later repertoire. Soprano Carleen Ebbs also had an agile voice with clean and strong tone and good projection. In her case, a rare bit of questionable authenticity came, not from the singer, but from the obligato cello in *Credete al mio dolore*, which sounded rather romantic to my ears. The adjudicators were Ian Partridge, Michael Chance, Catherine Denley, Michael George and Patrizia Kwella. The first prize is £3,000, the second £1,500. Both get a performance in the 2012 Festival, although, in my experience, practically all finalists make regular appearances in future festivals and many non-winners have gone on to greater things than the winners. Other finalists get £500 and a 2012 lunchtime recital. The Audience Prize is £250. They first prize went to Stefanie True and the second prize to Keri Fuge. Rather predictably, given the audience's response, the audience prize went to Emilie Alford. This is the closest I have come to agreeing with the adjudicator's decision in many years of Handel Competition finals. As ever, Lawrence Cummings made a huge contribution to the competition through his work with the soloists and his direction of the London Handel Players.

One of the most popular events of the Festival, judging from audience numbers, was the performance of *Saul* (St George's, Hanover Square, 12 April). This is not an easy work to present, not least because of its length, the size of the orchestra (which includes three trombones and harp) and the large number of soloists (11); with 18 singers, the choir was comparatively modest. Then there is the character of Saul, one of Handel's most desperate villains in this most prominent of Handel's goody/baddy works and a rare major role for a bass. The work starts the way that many such works finish, with a rousing chorus of praise to The Lord. Handel punishes Saul from the start by giving him hardly any arias, but Njål Sparbo gave the role a huge presence with some inspired singing. And when he does get an aria, with the dramatic 'A serpent in my bosom warm'd', he aptly demonstrated that those whom the Gods will destroy, they first make mad as he hurled his javelin at David – the 'Ambitious boy', and nice textural contrast with Michal's earlier 'Ah, lovely youth'. After Saul's brief opening recitative, the goodies get an early chance to shine, with arias from David and Jonathan (Iestyn Davies and Nicholas Mulroy, both, as would be expected, excellent). The other baddy is Merab, Saul's eldest daughter, here sung with venom by Lucy Crowe, her disdain for David expressed in huge whoops around the notes and a massive cadenza. Handel is already upsetting the predicted recit-aria pairing with his rather anarchic musical structuring. Saul's younger daughter is Michal, beautifully sung by the excellent Sophie Junker, the winner of the 2010 Singing Competition – her recit 'A

father's will' and duet with David was a highlight. This complex work includes many opportunities for players to show their mettle, one being the major solo contribution from Alistair Ross, playing the copy of the chamber organ that Handel had in his home in nearby Brook Street. It was also good to hear the sound of the full organ in the choruses and symphonies rather than the more usual weedy box organ. Laurence Cummings conducted with his usual thrilling vigour, his pacing being just right for the relatively small venue, even if some of the choruses seemed to end before they had started – notably 'Eagles were not so swift as they'. An excellent evening. [3]

An unusual event was the appearance of the Orquestra Barroca Casa da Música and the Coro Casa da Música from Porto in Portugal (19 April), one of the orchestras that Laurence Cummings and Adrian Butterfield have worked with. It was a shame that more of the normally loyal festival audience didn't turn up to support them – they missed a good evening of works by Avondano, Seixas, de Gamboa, Lobo and Handel. If the two Avondano Sinfonias were a trifle predictable in their loud/soft contrasts, this was made up for by the other Portuguese works, particularly a Mass in G by Carlos Seixas. Lobo's *Audivi vocem de caelo* was a bit of a palette cleanser in contrast with the Mass, which was followed by Handel's operatic *Laudate pueri Dominum*, one delightful moment of theatre being when the choir leapt to their feet just as the Gloria intoning ended.

The festival ended with what was, for me, an oddity – the first performance of Arne's masque *Comus* in the version that was put on at the Rutlandshire seat of the Earl of Gainsborough with additions by Handel and with most of the parts originally taken by members of the family. The Handel music was thought to have been lost until Anthony Hicks (to whom this concert was dedicated) rediscovered it in the Manchester Central Library. It has been reconstructed by Colin Timms and was presented by four actors and four singers, the former taking up most of the allotted time. With no information in the programme about what it was all about, we were left to struggle with the complex torrent of text, while the vocal contributions didn't really make up for the lack of focus in the production. Of the singers, David Webb, Samuel Evans and Katie Bray were very effective, but I struggled to find anything to appreciate in Elinor Rolfe Johnson's frankly wayward singing, intonation being just one of the casualties on what seemed to be an off-evening. I confess that I (along with several other people) couldn't quite bring myself to stay for the second half, so perhaps everything improved after the long-awaited interval. I hope so.

3. I will be reviewing a staged performance of the work conducted by Harry Christophers at the Buxton Festival in our next issue. *CB*

AGRIPPINA at CAMBRIDGE

Andrew Jones, expert on Carissimi and editor of Handel, has been putting on a Handel opera in alternate years since 1985, and has now worked his way through about a third of them. Productions are simple – which is no bad thing, and this year the orchestra benefitted from Maggie Faultless's presence in Cambridge and the new focus there on baroque playing. In other respects, though, I was a little disappointed. It didn't help that, on the first night, Agrippina had vocal problems and confined her singing mostly to the recitatives, with arias sung from the side of the stage. I'm not sure if Jennifer Johnston was the ideal singer anyway, in that her voice was a bit too rich for the words of the recits, which were not clear enough. This may have been exacerbated by a surprisingly empty West Road concert hall. I don't remember so many empty seats on previous visits: perhaps the first night was a bad choice, or maybe word got out that Agrippina was twinned. People sometimes wonder why opera-houses show surtitles even when the language is English. But operatic voices, especially female ones, don't have the diction that specialists in early music or musicals have.

My problem with the performance, however, is that I still have the Birmingham University production fresh in my mind from the autumn before last, and that had a verve and vitality that Cambridge couldn't match. Admittedly, they devoted more effort to the staging, but it also had much better characterisation: as I wrote in *EMR* 132, p. 46, "The director (following the music, not forcing an idea on it) presented Agrippina and Poppea as women who used their sexuality in very different ways: Agrippina was cool and distant, Poppea was intensely physical. Between them, none of the men had a chance." Birmingham had the advantage of real early-music specialists in Emily Van Evera and a much younger Poppea, who had recently sung in *West Side Story* but must have been familiar with early music performance all her life, her mother being a leading baroque violinist. That production may have enhanced the humour,[4] but Cambridge underplayed it; a member of the audience told me that she hadn't realised there was any humour until the last act. It isn't just confined to the minor roles.

The star singer, for me and others, was Ottone (Andrew Radley), the leading male role. The main problem was a lack of inspiration from the conductor. One doesn't normally evaluate professors on their conducting skills, but Colin Timms managed to get more character out of the music than Andrew Jones, helped by more suitable singers and a full house. The smaller roles were fine, but there was something missing in the main plot. Judged as a student production, I would have been more enthusiastic, but it aimed beyond that. I wonder how the students I heard at Fitzwilliam College in a couple of modern operas later in the week would have managed Handel.

4. though I was sitting next to Tony Hicks, a justifiably fierce critic of Handel operatic performances, and was amazed how much he smiled..

In Defence of Performers' Compromises

Andrew Clark

I once asked an eminent baroque cellist why he had started using a wooden 'spike' on the bottom of his instrument. He responded that he would happily remove it if the ensemble would pay for his osteopath's fees, but until that time he would use the spike: it was a lot cheaper than the osteopath and he defied anyone except a highly trained cellist to tell the difference in the sound of his instrument.

Mike Diprose's "Holier than Thou" article was commendable for its enthusiasm for the subject, but showed scant regard for fellow musicians' collaboration, tuning, accuracy, and ultimately their employment. If his goal was to encourage other trumpeters to join him in his quest for the holy grail – the attainment of a reliable technique and musicianship on a historical natural trumpet without compromises – then describing his instrument as a "real trumpet" and his colleagues as "straineers" whose "achievements mean nothing in real terms" was probably not the most friendly way to go about it. This could lead to accusations of not mixing well with the other trumpeters in the playground.

For many music lovers, the sound of different instruments mixed together in an ensemble is more pleasing than one type of instrument played en masse. There are many wonderful works from baroque composers that combine trumpets with strings, oboes, sometimes horns and other instruments such as timpani, flutes or recorders. In such works not only do the players get to rest after their contribution, but we hear a contrast in the timbres in the orchestration and the composer can affect our senses by leading our attention in different ways. So in a mixed ensemble, despite the different natures of different instruments, the players must come together with a uniformity of acceptable accuracy and intonation. These ensembles are usually led from the violin or harpsichord (or a conductor) and their leaders have their own sense of "pure" tuning which is usually not that of the harmonic scale of a natural trumpet or horn. Short of persuading the whole ensemble to tune to the trumpet(s) and persuading whole audiences and ensembles that cracked notes are in fact "effects, namely *acciaccaturas, mordents, trills* etc" that the rest of the ensemble should mimic (whether successful or not?) the goal of giving up the compromise of vent holes on natural trumpets is not likely to happen very quickly.

Suppose for a moment that in a baroque orchestra all the different instruments adopted the "trumpet-centric" tuning of a baroque trumpet without any sliding tube for adjustment or vent holes for use in assisting either tuning or accuracy. Let us say the piece is in D major. Before the piece begins, a tuning concert A is given by the trumpet. The trumpeter can choose between the 6th or the 12th harmonic to play this pitch depending on the octave, but is this octave exactly in tune? Most trumpeters will say no: they would like it to be so (and in theory it might be) but there is a little modification required to make it sound in tune. Anyway, one of these two notes is given and the other instruments tune to it. The piece begins and for the first few bars it sounds good. Shortly there is a modulation to the dominant and the 2nd trumpeter has to play the new leading note (concert G#) whilst the 1st trumpeter has to play a minor third higher. The 2nd player will be somewhat flat on his 11th harmonic (49 cents flatter than an Equal Temperament G# without modification[1]) perhaps almost at the right pitch for certain temperaments if "lipped" up, provided that D was the starting note for that temperament (which it hardly ever is in my experience). The first player must choose between raising the 13th harmonic or lowering the 14th. The first option is too flat, thus potentially going in the same flat direction as the second player, but unfortunately it is flatter still (59 cents). The second option of 14th harmonic might be better (69 cents sharp) except that then we have a very wide minor third between the two players. The keyboard tuning now disagrees with both trumpeters whilst the string players don't know which way to go, especially as on the first run the 1st trumpeter chose (or accidentally played) the 13th harmonic, but the next time round the 14th was played. Regardless of which harmonic the first trumpeter played, he is not going to want to stop and tune that note so that the violinists can tune to it. Each time he or she plays it, it will be in a slightly different place according to how well "lipped" it is. Furthermore, the tone on this note is weak because it is not where the player wants it to be.

After a few minutes of music the wind instruments start to warm up and condensation builds up inside the tubes. Sound travels faster through warm moist air than it does in colder, drier air. So the trumpets begin to sound sharp. There is no time in the bars rest to remove the mouthpiece and add a tuning shank so the player with good acuity will attempt to flatten the notes by "lipping". This might even influence the choice of whether to employ the 13th or 14th harmonic. In the meantime the gut strings might well be beginning to slip in pitch. Let us say that the music returns to the tonic, the 1st trumpet playing concert A in the tonic chord of D. Now the open A strings in the orchestra may have become a little flat whilst the trumpet A is sharp. This problem is no longer about compromises for the 4th and 6th degrees of the tonic scale (the trumpeters' 11th and 13th/14th harmonics) it is now

1.. Figures from Wikipedia, Harmonic Series

about playing the root chord in tune. With the compromise of a tuning slide the players can adjust in a short space of time: without it life becomes uncomfortable, for orchestra and audience alike.

Assuming the keyboard instrument was tuned to a suitable temperament for the trumpets with the same starting key as the trumpets, what happens when the work in question is the Bach's *Christmas Oratorio*? In Part 4 the music is in F. Now what will the horn players (in this key) do to match this temperament? Should we re-tune every instrument to the horns and then re-tune back when the trumpets return in Part 6? Perhaps we should not be playing these six Cantatas all in one concert if they were composed for separate Sundays, but nevertheless it is one of the great joys of music to hear this as single concert. Another similar example might be Handel's *Water Music*: an F major Suite with horns followed by a D major Suite where trumpets are added. It is neither practical nor authentic to re-tune the temperament between the suites.

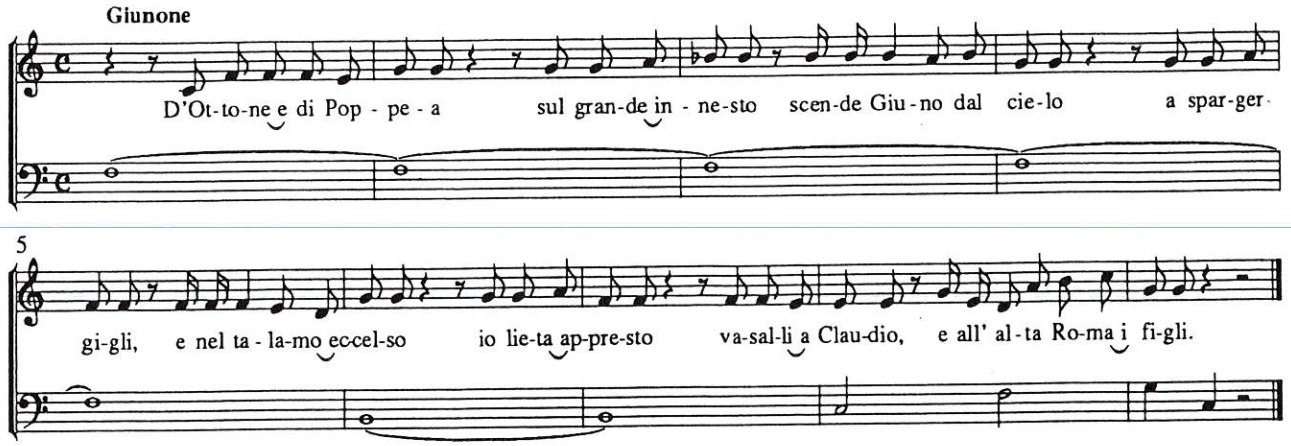
My own experience of playing historical baroque brass instruments without vent holes can be heard on several recordings, most notably Bach's Hercules Cantata BWV 213: OAE (directed by Gustav Leonhardt on Philips) and in Handel's *Judas Maccabaeus* (The King's Consort directed by Robert King on Hyperion). One can hear a subtle difference between the horn playing on these recordings when compared with the same music being played by the same horn player, even on the same horn, but with a hole drilled in it. (Historically the evidence shows that horns were played like trumpets until the mid-eighteenth century at which time hand-stopping was discovered.) Compare with Bach's *Christmas Oratorio*: (The New London Consort directed by Philip Pickett on Decca) and in Handel's *Joshua*: (also The King's Consort on Hyperion) – both composers having "borrowed" their own material. Perhaps I will be told that the performances recorded before I drilled the hole in my horn are morally superior, but not a single person has commented on how much better it sounds without the compromise. One thing I feel sure of: my technique for playing without the vent holes was not compatible with performing all the marvellous music composed for my instrument after the baroque period.

Students of historical musical instruments can benefit greatly by studying their instruments without the addition of more modern compromises such as tuning slides, finger holes, keys, differently tapered mouthpipes, chin rests and cello spikes: it leads to a greater understanding of what sounds, response, ornamentation and articulations are possible. I appreciate what I learned (am still learning) from my own experiments on historical natural horns and continue to apply that after I made the compromise of drilling a hole in my baroque horn. But how I would have regretted it if I had restricted my career to only playing baroque music without the compromise of a sliding tuning shank and a vent hole! To be a natural horn player and not play Haydn, Mozart or Beethoven? Must one refuse to play music of the 19th and 20th centuries because it might spoil the purity of a player's baroque technique? Imagine sacrificing all other repertoire for the sake of perfecting a baroque technique on an instrument which is only included in a little of the music of the period. I can well understand why full-time musicians may not wish to impoverish themselves both artistically and economically for such an esoteric and unappreciated goal.

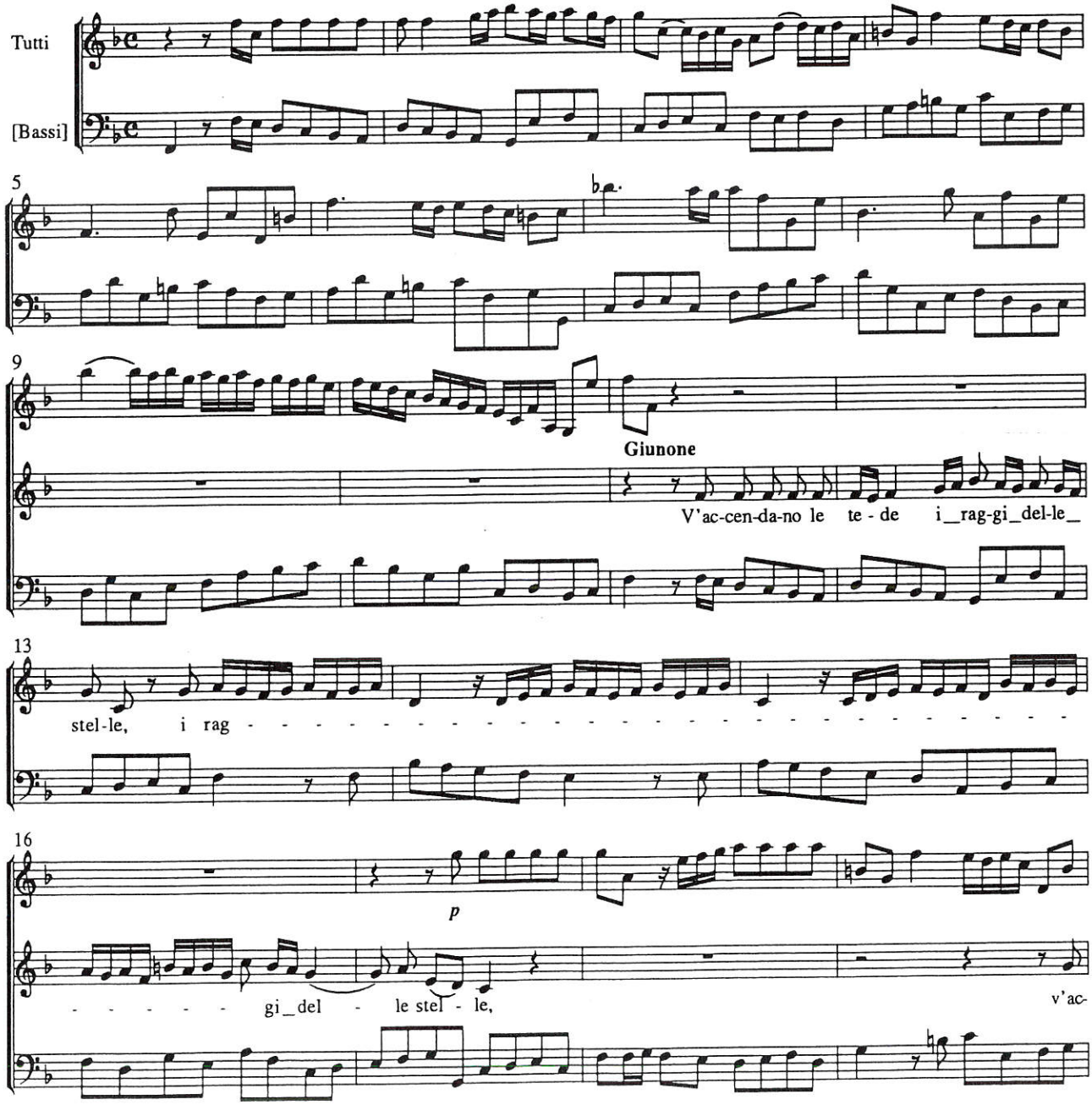
Naturally, brass players including horn players can attempt to do both: using the lips to adjust intonation without recourse to tuning slides and vent holes, as well as playing their modern instruments. Unfortunately the result is that the player gets good at what he or she practises, and whatever is neglected will become worse. After a three week patch of work playing baroque music with a baroque technique, symphonic playing simply won't be as good. Similarly, after playing symphonically (even on a historical instrument) for a period, it is difficult immediately to recover the baroque technique. In a profession that is of necessity trying to set itself perfectionist standards, a player who needs a few days to readjust is likely to be moved aside by other players who don't need to reacclimatise their techniques. It is a highly competitive world.

Whilst I find the study of organology absolutely fascinating, I believe that instruments should serve the music. If we make a few compromises to the instruments that make it sound better to our ears – ears that have been trained in appreciating much music composed before and since the baroque period and recorded in ever better studio recorded editions – then we help to promote great music. There will be musicians who might use those compromises in ways that do not suit our aesthetic taste, but others who will bring great joy through appropriate use of a tuning slide or vented (but accurate and in tune) notes. Who am I to criticise the use of a chin rest on a violin when I doubt that I would criticise (or be aware of) its absence in a blind test? And even if I did notice, would it be right for me to question it when everything else about the violinist's performance has been beautiful? Is it not acceptable for an oboe or a bassoon to add an extra key to their instrument to make a certain note better, especially when this was commonly done throughout the 18th century as the need arose? The time for giving up all technical compromises may take longer to arrive than Mr Diprose would like. If we do as he suggests then we risk becoming curators in a musical museum where the prospect of progress is discouraged. As musicians we have a duty to the art form and the audience to give musical performances that sound the best they possibly can and have those audiences wanting to come back for more.

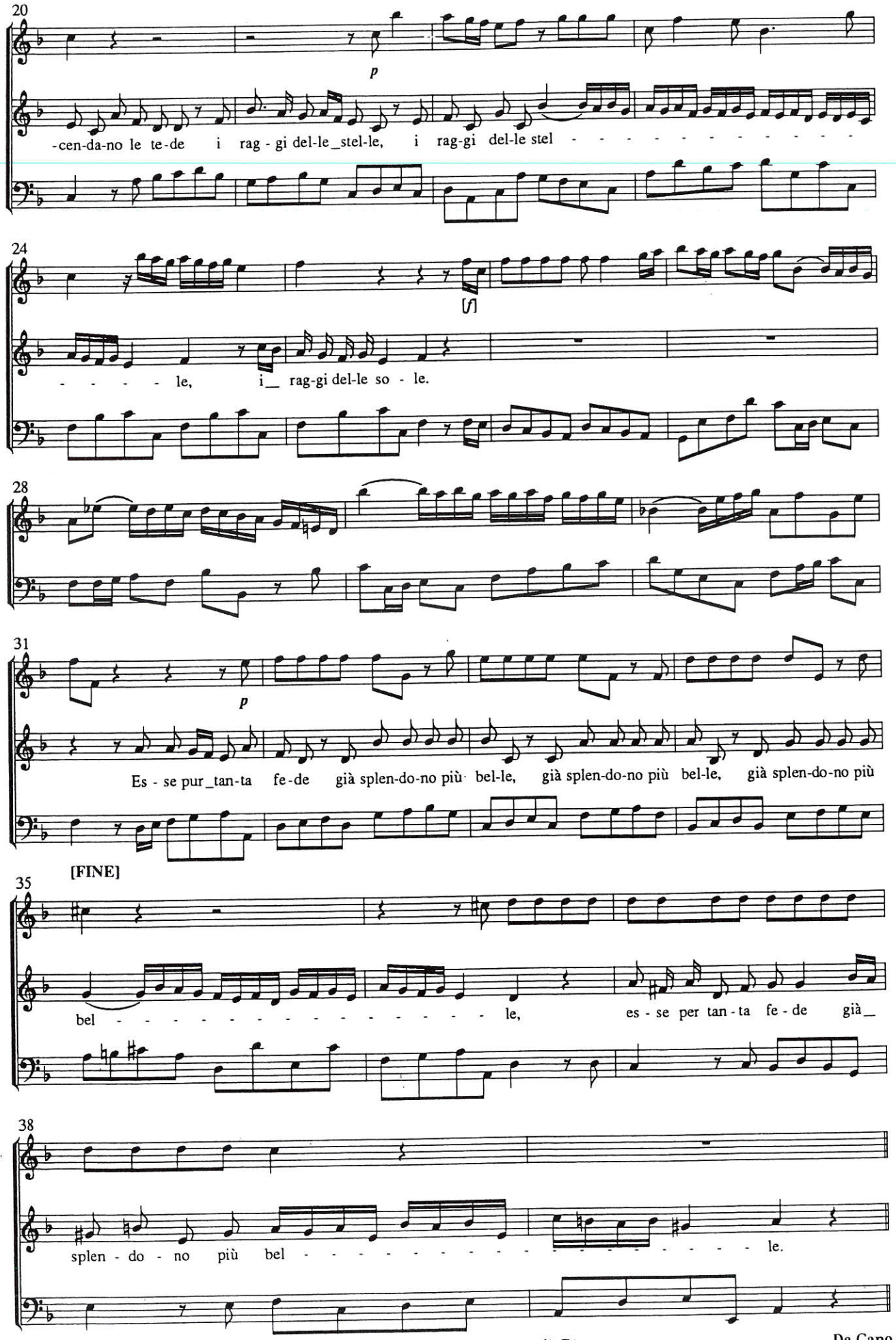
If you are curious about the author, check his website www.naturallyhorns.co.uk. As well as the usual biogs etc, there's a challenging horn quiz.



49. V'accendono le Tede *Giunone*



If oboes play in the *forte* sections (*Tutti* probably implies that they should), perhaps play quaver E and F for the third beat of bar 10.



Segue il Ballo di deità seguaci di Giunono

Da Capo

MODERNISING ITALIAN?

Clifford Bartlett

On several occasions I have commented in passing on the way recent Italian music editors insist on modernising the verbal orthography. I read a clear English-language formulation of this a year or so ago, but lost it. Fortunately, it emerged just after the April issue was published,[1] while my mind was still exercised by problems in the Monteverdi score published in that issue.

We (BC and I) were occupied editing some of the lesser-known pieces in *Selva morale*. I can cope with problems in liturgical medieval Latin texts. I'm sometimes more pedantic than at others in preserving the orthography (i/j, or ę/ae), but always keep to Italian-style syllabification (though I have doubts about its use in all non-Italian contexts). But the second section of that massive publication begins with some moral texts in the vernacular. We let through some obvious mistakes in syllabification of *È questa vita lampo* (at least partly because, by squashing the horizontal spacing to fit four pages, syllables were often very close together). But there were also textual difficulties that we didn't have time to solve. I sent it to our Italian expert, Barbara Sachs, who responded with some specific corrections as well as a statement of the general theory which follows these remarks, based on three points set out by Bujic, which is itself based on an article by Giuseppina La Face Bianconi.[2] I summarise them.

1. The underlay in the score should be treated as if in a scholarly edition of the text.

2 The text underlaid in a musical source is likely to be suspect.

3. Elisions and apostrophes should be modernised to show the vowels.

However, these principles are out of phase with scholarly practice in other countries. And one wonders why. Editors of poetic texts in English have used "original" orthography for well over a century. When I first encountered Chaucer (probably when I was fifteen) there was no suggestion that we should read a modernised text".[3] Even composers who were probably not envisaging original pronunciation have used early spellings. e.g. Britten's *A Ceremony of Carols*. Anyone who has sung French renaissance chansons is used to spellings like *Jouyssance vous donneray*. Germans, too, preserve old spellings. The "original" does, of course, beg a very big question. MSS differ, the first printed edition may be different again, and the idea of a "correct" text is often a chimera. When poetry was primarily communicated orally, changes inevitable occurred. A print culture diminishes that, but one must not expect that for all authors a "scientific" text can be produced.

1. My normal convention with underlaid texts for which there is a contemporary printed version with some claim to accuracy (eg opera librettos) is to take the orthography of the published text but follow the composer when a change appears to be intentional. A composer is not likely to be considering how his text appears in print: indeed, the authors themselves need copy-editors to tidy their work. If there are significant inconsistencies, one hopes that a literary editor has produced a text within the relevant conventions. The literary work as set by the composer is not necessarily exactly what the poet wrote: the underlaid text should, if it presents problems, be a scholarly version of the combination of text and music, which may differ from an edition of the text.

2. Composers are often unclear in their underlay, so errors are very likely. Furthermore, if the copyist is working from single parts (and I suspect that was likely well into the 17th century at least), there was no easy way of checking that the underlay was consistent. The musical editor must consider such problems, but not automatically revert to the authorial text, though it is sensible for a consistent text to be used, with variants noted with the same care as musical variants .

3. The significance of the notation of elisions depends on whether the elided letters were pronounced or not. If the latter, then there is no point in re-instating them in underlaid texts. However, it may be helpful to expand them for understanding of the text or if the unwritten letter modifies the written one.

Bujic recommends other spelling changes, such as replacing *et* by *e* or *ed*, though no reason is given. The modern edition I have of *Petrarch's Lyric Poems*[4] prints the opening of No. 164 as *Or che 'l ciel et la terra...* Monteverdi's spelling in Book VIII is *Hor ch'el ciel e la terra*. Petrarch's spelling is *et la terra*: should the T be restored?[5] Whether or not Petrarch pronounced it, Monteverdi's singers were unlikely to have done so. They certainly wouldn't have pronounced the H of "Hor", but if I was an inexperienced musican trying to find a translation of the Monteverdi, I'd expect to find it in the index under H and assume it wasn't in the book if it wasn't there. Does the difference between

1. Bojan Bujic "Do we care what we sing? Editing the poetry of Italian madrigals". *The Consort* vol. 65, Summer 2009, pp 3-17,
2. "Filologia dei testi poetici nella musica vocale italiana", *Acta Musicologica* 66 (1994), pp. 1-21.
3. i.e. The Victorian Skeat edition, which some say was less normalised than its successor, Robinson's edition, in 1957, available on line.
4. Translated and edited by Robert M. Durling, Harvard UP 1976
5. Bujic op cit p. 7

che 'l and *ch'el* affect the singer? I'm also puzzled by his suggestion of altering *ti*+vowel to *zi*+vowel, as correcting *letitie* to *letizie*: but which *ti*?

Serious singers of early madrigals want to know the pronunciation of the time and place. The printed orthography may be neither systematic nor phonetic, but hiding it will inevitably encourage singers to ape the Italian equivalent of what used to be BBC English. How far had Tuscan become the Italian standard? One principle of early-music performance is to emphasise differences rather than similarities. The varieties of the sounds of language are an important aspect of this.

Other issues are punctuation and capitalisation. I am puzzled whether the normal Italian use of commas as in "yesterday, today, and tomorrow" means that the three words are meant to be audibly separated: I've never noticed it in Italy. In English, the second comma is only used for particularly reasons – "the bishops of Salisbury, Bristol, and Bath and Wells" (the Oxford comma). I tend to keep punctuation light, especially when the musical setting in itself guides verbal phrasing. Musical setting has its own punctuation conventions, in that verbal repeats are separated by commas, though in the A section of a da capo aria, if the whole text is repeated twice with sub-repetitions, both full statements end with a full stop.

Current Italian practice is not to give the first letter of a line a capital letter. This does no harm when the poem is printed by itself, but that isn't always done. Italian musicologists write about the form of the poems much more than English ones, yet without the initial capitals, the singer loses the obvious clue to the metrical structure. The facsimile of the text which I include in our edition of Cavalieri's *Rappresentatione...* has all lines beginning with a capital: why change it?

There may be very good reasons for modern Italian literary practice. But merely adducing current text-editing practices isn't enough when the music editing follows more sophisticated principles. Musical scholars should stand up for their international principles.

PS. My final proof-reading was interrupted by watching Prince Charles's TV programme on Parry (BBC4 7.30pm 27 May). I was intrigued that the subtitles for his setting of Donne's "At the round earth's imagin'd corners, blow..." were shown with old spelling. I must confess that I didn't have an old-spelling edition within reach while watching, but I did check while writing this, and at least two words definitely corresponded (*goe* and *warre*).

Incidentally, I've often wondered why, as an easy approach to thinking how music works, one rarely hears an analysis of a well-known tune. The account of *Jerusalem* was revealing and absolutely clear. But the less technical remarks on "I was glad" didn't mention the ambiguity of the opening minor third: it sounds like a minor key -- or is it the upper half of a major triad? There's an emotional ambiguity here. (Also, it's one of those few pieces that needs only two notes to be recognised.)

È questa vita un lampo

The Monteverdi madrigal in our last issue was accompanied by a rough translation (p 8). I append a few comments from Barbara Sachs in response to a request for aid.

The first word is: È not E and the sentence is not a question, so the translation is: "This life is... "

The comma after *È questa vita un lampo* is not necessary. Remember the joke on *appare* and *dispare* in the prologue [Tempo] of the *Rappresentatione di anima et corpo.* In modern Italian it doesn't work anymore, the words being *appare* and *sparisce.* [The comma appears in A bar 3 because the phrase is repeated.]

Correct syllabification is very strict in Italian and different from English: *ch'al - l'ap - pa – rir di - spa - re*
Note typos in bars 6 and 8

miro = I see, so translation is: "which, if I see the past it is already dead, the future not born, the present vanished."

Is the mixture of *partito* and *spartito* right? I think the two possible words are *partito* (departed) and *sparito* (disappeared), whereas you have one *parito* in 34 which doesn't exist. You also have *spartito* which means a barred score. [We were not sure whether there was some word-play here, so were sitting on the fence!]

ahi, not *hai* (=you have) and the translation is wrong because the flash is NOT being addressed. *Alletta* is 3rd person of a transitive verb, so translation something like: "and yes, it attracts (pleases) me". [This is one very obvious place where the spelling of the parts differs.]

si meaning "if" is possible, tho *se* is more usual and just used... so check that it really is "si". [*Si*, "yes".] (In MSS one finds the letter e with a flourish over it, not an accent, tho sometimes mistaken for either a dot or an accent.)

e dop - p'il is the syllabification if you insist on copying the silly spelling [Agreed that T51 & A 52 need standardising.]. Better would be *si do - p'il.* Either way, you must start the syllable with the consonant. [Of course! But singers are taught that double consonants should be sounded thus, so dropping a P changes the sound.]

C1 underlay is wrong in bars 53-54 and where your computer put *po* there should be the missing word *e.* [Agreed]

[We took the Italian text from Denis Stevens' edition in vol XV of the *Opera Omnia.* Two early editions and one modern one are mentioned, but there is no editorial commentary. The line layout of our very rough and last-minute translation follows that edition. A new edition will follow, but not until we have had feed-back from Barbara.

CD REVIEWS

CHANT

Odes Byzantines á la Mère de Dieu: Chant de la Paraclisis Maximos Fahmé *protopsalte*, Malcolm Bothwell, Jean-Christophe Candau, Antoine Sicot paraphonistes 54'05
Psalmus Trésors de la Liturgie LIT 002 2010

The recording presents the liturgy in honour of the Virgin Mary, attributed in most manuscripts to Theostrictos, the ninth century monk of Mount Olympos, south-east of the Sea of Marmara. As celebrated in Syria, it is sung in Arabic and Greek, mostly in alternating sections. The text supplied was in French, though.

Maximos Fahmé was born in Aleppo in 1924 into a Melchite family. From the age of twelve he received a spiritual and musical training in Jerusalem, and at Saint Sepulchre he had the opportunity to hear great orthodox psaltes, Papadopoulos from Constantinople and Evlambios from Athens. In Aleppo he founded a fifty-strong mixed choir of Byzantine music, and in Paris, after his studies there, he established the Greek-Melchite church, Saint Julien le Pauvre, near Notre-Dame cathedral.

I had the opportunity to listen with both an Arabic and a Greek speaker, and each agreed with me that this recording is exceptionally beautiful and interesting. Fahmé has an outstanding voice, not at all diminished by his age, and his choice of distinguished paraphonistes allowed for an unusual resonance and subtlety in the drone, as deeper or lighter voices came to the fore. To the emphatic rhythms and dynamic recitation of the Greek Orthodox liturgy were added open-sounding melismas, projected excursions into space, passionate and expansive undulations, and the occasional modulation. It was the best of Arabic and Greek chant, superbly performed. *Diana Maynard*

MEDIEVAL

Crux: Parisian Easter music from the 13th & 14th centuries Ensemble Peregrina
Glossa GCD 922505 70' 44"

This is a beautiful CD: two singers (Kelly Landerkin and Lorenza Donadini) and Baptiste Romain on vielle & rubeba, are led by Agnieszka Budzinska-Bennett, who sings, plays harp, has edited most of the music, and wrote the excellent booklet note, mostly on the texts. There is perhaps an unstated implication that the emotion in the texts exists within the music, which might be questioned. It is, however, an incentive to read the Latin poems. The booklet includes full texts in four languages, and is itself an anthology of seasonal poetry – three poems, for instance, by Philip the Chancellor, one of the leading poets of the period who was closely associated with the Notre-Dame musicians.* There's a flexibility in the performances that encompasses both the regular modal rhythms and freer text-based movement. Instrumental participation isn't pervasive, but in *Planctus ante nescia* for instance it relates perfectly with the voice. Do try it! *CB*

** More on him in the music reviews in the next issue*

15th CENTURY

The Rosslyn Motet translated and scored by Thomas and Stuart Mitchell The Rosslyn Medieval Orchestra and Choir : Stuart Mitchell 34` 54"
SMMRM432

The simplest response to this CD would be to quote from its extensive notes – Oh no... not another Rosslyn Chapel, Da Vinci theory again – and simply agree with it, because that ultimately is what this boils down to. However as Stuart and Tommy Mitchell make it clear that they have devoted a considerable part of their lives to the project, we should perhaps take a little more time to dismiss it. So what is this? It purports to be a CD of music derived by means of cymatics from stone pillars in Rosslyn Chapel (near Edinburgh) arranged as for a regular medieval orchestra of the 15th century! It will already be clear that the project owes little to standard musical scholarship or indeed standard English. While it seemed improbable to me that the 18th-century German discovery of cymatics, the study of the distinctive shapes created by specific pitches, should have been pre-empted by almost three hundred years in late medieval Scotland leaving no other trace, I was still relieved to see that in fact the Rosslyn stonework bore only a passing resemblance to the corresponding Chladni plate. In other words the entire basis of the project is fantasy. A quantum leap further down the line and the alleged pitches have been miraculously sequenced, furnished with texts and harmonised by mysterious means explained nowhere in the extensive booklet. Perhaps the forthcoming collaborative book flagged up in the introduction will reveal all? At any rate, the resulting music, played on period instruments and sung by unaccompanied voices, sounds extraordinarily like Rachmaninoff. I should perhaps be more charitable to a product which is clearly targeted at the gullible Dan Brown readers crowding through the Rosslyn Chapel gift shop, but while much real early Scottish music, conventionally notated in MSS or transcribed by real Scottish musicologists, remains underperformed, it seems criminal to waste time on such palpable nonsense. Oh, and is this really just a thirty-five minute CD concealed in a DVD case? – spooky, or what? *D. James Ross*

Needless to say, this was featured on Radio 4's Today *– too long ago for me to remember the details, bit it was obviously rot a plausible story or sound. If their political stories were as incompetent as so many of their music ones, the programme would be a laughing-stock.* CB

16th CENTURY

Le Divin Arcadelt Candlemass in Renaissance Rome Musica Contexta, The English Cornett and Sackbut Ensemble 68' 14"
Chandos CHAN0779
Arcadelt *Hodie beata virgo Maria, Missa Ave Regina caelorum, Pater noster*; **Palestrina** *Diffusa est gratia, Senex puerum portabat*; **de Silva** *Ave regina caelorum, Inviolata integra et casta es Maria* + chant

It strikes me that a CD exploring the church music of the great French madrigalist Jacques Arcadelt is long overdue, and this cross-section of a Roman celebration of Candlemas is a revelation. Appearing cheek-by-jowl with music by Palestrina and Andreas de Silva, Arcadelt's mass and motets stand the comparison very well. Compact and tersely phrased as his madrigals, his church music speaks directly to the listener in a no-nonsense manner which is none-the-less very effective. Placing the music in this context, Simon Ravens draws attention to the lines of influence running from the Spaniard de Silva, whose *Ave Regina caelorum* is the model for Arcadelt's mass, through Arcadelt and on to Palestrina. Using the instruments of The English Cornett and Sackbut Ensemble, Ravens presents the music in an intriguing variety of textures.

And remarkably, with the exception of the two Palestrina motets *Senex puerum portabat* and *Diffusa est gratia*, all of the fine music on the CD is being recorded here for the first time! *D. James Ross*

I also received a copy, and sketched a review without rounding off the ABA form with renewed enthusiasm. James makes up for this or I would have added an encomium.
Try the first track, the Lord's Prayer, and you won't be able to resist this marvellous disc, with 12 singers, cornett and three sackbuts, even though the text isn't entirely clear. It is good to hear Arcadelt as a church rather than a madrigal composer (though only one of his madrigals is known at all well), and the presence of Palestrina doesn't outshine him. Oddly, the instruments give the music more shape than the singers, who try but don't come over as well. And I was puzzled why 'in medio tempi tui' in the Introit needed a gap after the second word. A final petty grouse: why is *senex* translated asexually and archaically as an *ancient*. But I share James's enthusiasm. *CB*

Balbi ***Ecclesiasticae Cantiones, Venezia, Angelo Gardano, 1578*** Ensemble di Musica Antica del Conservatorio di Vicenza. Stefano Lorenzetti *org*, Piervito Malusà *dir* 63' 50"
Tactus TC 540203
instr music by Chilese, G. Gabrieli, Merulo

Ludovico Balbi was a cantor at San Marco, Venice, and at the height of his career when his *Ecclesiasticae Cantiones* were published by Venetian lithographic leviathan Angelo Gardano in 1578. Some conjecture, therefore, is begged by their dedication to the dean, canons and chapter of Verona cathedral, and the matter is addressed at some length in this disc's informative, Italian booklet notes by a shamefully anonymous musicologist. Unfortunately, the essay is translated here into rather clunky English. Had Balbi been at Verona before his appointment at at San Marco? Was he angling for a promotion? Perhaps not the latter, since he refused several subsequent job offers before moving in 1585 to the Cappella del Santo in Padua. At any rate, he had certainly mastered the art of conjuring warmth and intimacy into music written for architecturally formidable spaces.

The *Ecclesiasticae Cantiones* (almost all notated in *chiavette*) are performed here transposed down by small groups of singers with step-out soloists, joined by one-to-a-part strings, cornetto and trombones with organ and plucked continuo. The singers manage Balbi's lines with understanding and affection (try *Deus tu convertens vivicabis nos*), and Lorenzetti's organ playing in the interpolated *Intonazione* by Giovanni Gabrieli is a masterclass in timing; he judges notated spread chords with very great subtlety. The ensemble blend is sympathetically recorded throughout. *Catherine Groom*

Eccard ***Mein schönste Zier: Missa for 5 parts, motets and canticles through the liturgical year*** Norddeutsche Kammerchor, Maria Jürgensen 57' 09"
Dabringhaus & Grimm MDG 902 1694-6

A student of Lassus, Johannes Eccard's peregrinations through the religiously divided lands of late 16th century Germany explain his works for both the Catholic and Protestant faiths. His five-part Mass, based on a chanson by his teacher, was composed for the Catholic merchant family and famous promoters of the arts, the Fuggers, and distinctly shows the influence of Lassus. Eccard's return to the Protestant milieu of the Court of Ansbach led to the publication of a set of vernacular sacred songs, which provides much of the rest of the programme of this CD. The Norddeutscher Kammerchor provides sensitive readings of his music, and if the performances lack the absolute highs and lows of expression, so does Eccard's music, which comes across as amiable rather than profound. It was this amiability which later generations found attractive and which allowed his music to remain in the repertoire of German choirs up to the present day. *D. James Ross*

Gombert *Missa Tempore Paschali*
Henry's Eight 65' 31"
Hyperion *Helios* CDH55323 (rec. 1996)
Adonai Domine Jesu Christe & O rex gloriae

The re-release of this 1996 recording by Henry's Eight of works by Nicolas Gombert recalls my great excitement at the time at hearing such fine ensemble singing from an adult male English vocal group, and listening to it again after almost fifteen years the sound remains very impressive. Henry's Eight with their three guest singers make a splendidly rich sound and do full justice to Gombert's dense and sometimes pungent harmonies – just sit back and let it wash over you! It is to be regretted that the enthusiastic exploration of Gombert's unusual music seems to have stalled somewhat and Henry's Eight seems to have fallen silent. *D. James Ross*

Lassus ***St Matthew Passion, Ave verum corpus*** Ex Cathedra, Nicholas Mulroy *Evangelist*, Greg Skidmore *Jesus*, Jeffrey Skidmore *dir* 63' 03"
Somm SOMMCD 0106
+ Vide homo, Musica Dei donum

Probably the earliest of Lassus's four Passion settings, his Matthew Passion takes the standard Renaissance form of plainchant for the two chief protagonists, the Evangelist and Jesus, and polyphony for varying combinations of voices for the other characters. Although composers had been setting the Passion story from the earliest times, it is easy to hear even the relatively sophisticated Renaissance settings as precursors of the great Baroque realisations, and indeed I find my attention wandering from a long work which is predominantly plainchant, even when it is as compellingly sung, as it is here. There is some compensation in the CD's fillers: a fine six-part *Ave verum corpus*, the magnificent seven-part setting of *Vide homo* from the end of the *Lagrime di San Pietro*, and one of Lassus's final works, the six-part *Musica Dei donum*, all given beautiful performances by the consort.
D. James Ross

Striggio Mass in 40 parts I Fagiolini, Robert Hollingworth 68' 53" + DVD of Motet, Mass & Tallis *Spem in alium* with sound & documentary *The Making of Striggio*
Decca 478 2734
+ V. Galilei Contrapunto II di BM; Striggio *Altrio che queste sopighe Caro dolce ben mio, D'ogni gratia d'amor, Fuggi spene mia, Mise' ohimè, O di la bella Etruria, O giovenil ardire*; Tallis *Spem in alium*

I deliberately didn't hasten to review this in the last issue since I wanted to experience the Striggio mass live and from the inside before listening and writing about it – I've been involved with it for nearly a year, but not in terms of thinking of it as music! I'm not sure that playing it gave any great insight on the details of the work, since I was squashed between Choirs IV and V and was aware of chords more than counterpoint; there was no way of compensating by reading the score since the figured bass part was far more convenient. Even without the surround sound, the CD is impressive in making so much detail audible without artificial highlighting, helped by the carefully planned use of instruments. The sound (Striggio's, I Fagiolini's and the engineers') is marvellous.

Several people who had sung for Robert mentioned after the Waltham

Abbey day with Philip Thorby that the approaches seemed very different. This is apparent from the CD. Robert seems to have thought of the sounds as blocks with comparatively little detailed shaping but with dynamic variety added globally. Philip, however, expected each singer or player to shape individual phrases according to verbal stress and rhetorical need. If one wanted to be critical, the former could be called simplistic, the latter fussy. I haven't seen Robert's used copies, but I was amazed when sorting out Philip's chorus scores how few pencil marks (other than marking the line to read) had been added: the clues were in the music itself and didn't need comment. Robert's is a magnificent performance, but there's room for others to go their own way.

There is much more on the recording. A group of conventionally sized madrigals by Striggio were brought to life by appropriate and imaginative scoring, making a refreshing change from 40 parts.

It is rare for a recording of *Spem in alium* not to be featured on the front of the box! This version is based on considerable thought by Hugh Keyte, who has been pondering over it and editing it for some 30 years (including a performance for Radio 3's celebration of Diana and Charles's wedding, with their names inserted into the English text). I'm sure listeners will not have been bothered that some parts in the Striggio were played, not sung. Here, the thoughts that are uncontroversial for Striggio are applied to Tallis (*Spem* was probably composed in emulation). Hugh is convinced that it was first performed in a secular context, so the presence of instruments is more plausible. He has also gone over the text in detail and thought more seriously about the underlay, since the main source is in English and there is no reliable evidence for how the Latin fits the notes. Such detail may not be obvious, but if you try listening with a score, don't assume that the singers are wrong!

An interesting feature of the mixing of instruments with singers is that they blend so well that at times it is difficult to know whether the words were articulated (that's a slight criticism of the singers, but more praise for the players). I enjoyed the soaring cornetts at "Creator", for instance. I wondered, however, about the Gs that are so often at the top of the texture. It's higher than the usual top note for renaissance vocal music, and in Gabrieli, such parts would normally be entrusted to cornetts. In this recording, we are allowed to enjoy both singers and players.

Do check www.ifagiolini.com/striggio, which has lots of information, samples of the sound and the Mass score, and interesting comments from some of the performers. It's a stunning disc, improving every time I play it, Congratulations to Robert Hollingworth for handling so elaborate and complex a project with such energy, aplomb and musicality. *CB*

Il ballo di Mantova Organ Music in S. Barbara, Mantua Liuwe Tamminga 73' 18"
Accent ACC 24225
Music by Bargnani, Brumel, Cavazzoni, Ferrini, Franzoni, Frescobaldi, Pallavicino, Roncaglia, de Wert & anon

If you ever had any doubt (and it is a doubt that I would understand) that the organ can be a living, breathing musical instrument capable of producing the inflexions of the human voice, then this is a CD to reassure you. The organ was built in 1565 by the famous Brescia builder, Graziadio Antegnati, and commissioned by the great Renaissance organist Girolamo Cavazzoni, court organist to the Gonzaga family at Mantua's Basilica of S. Barbara at the same time as Giaches de Wert was choirmaster. The CD includes works composed for the Gonzagas and by organists and composers connected with the Mantuan court, including several by Cavazzoni. Another theme is versions of popular melodies, including the *Ballo di Mantova*, also variously known as the *Noël Suisse*, the *Chant de Cécile*, the Moldavian song used by Smetana in his *Vltava*, and the Israeli hymn *Hatikvah*, with its echoes in the Israeli national anthem. *Hatikvah* opens and closes the CD programme, and is first heard on the Principale and Fiffaro stops with the organ shutters closed – a delightful sound. The *Aria della Monica* (aka *Une jeune pucelle* and *Von Gott will ich nicht lassen*) is also heard in versions by Frescobaldi and Bargnani. Liuwe Tamminga is one of the best interpreters of the Italian repertoire, and his playing is outstanding on this CD. The clickety-clack of the action is a delightful addition to the aural texture, as is the meantone temperament (the organ has split semitones providing D sharps and A flats).

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Ich stuend an einem Morgen: German songs for tenor of the 16th century Brisk Recorder Quartet Amsterdam, Marcel Beekman *T*
Globe GLO 5242
Dietrich, Isaac, Hofhaimer, Senfl & anon

This enjoyable CD features consort songs by Heinrich Isaac and Ludwig Senfl and a couple of their contemporaries, ranging from the serene beauty of *Innsbruck, ich muss dich lassen* to the bucolic sequence of earthy medley songs using the *Elselein* melody. Quite whether these pieces would ever have been heard accompanied by four recorders and gamba is a moot point, but the deft technique of the recorder quartet and their alternating use of recorders at high and low pitch is convincing. Marcel Beekman's singing is also thoroughly compelling. His flexible light tenor voice is perfect for this repertoire, and his dramatisation of the texts, delivered in authentic pronunciation, brings the songs vividly to life. These honest, folksy songs, many of them based on popular melodies of the time, are the musical equivalent of the paintings of Brueghel, and are very accessible and thoroughly engaging. *D. James Ross*

The "Vihuela de arco" in the Region of Aragon (14th – 16th Centuries) Cantar alla viola, Nadine Balbeisi, Fernando Marín 59' 51"
la mà de guido LMG 2097
Cabezón, Encina, Henestrosa/Cabezón, de Milán & anon

This is the second recording involving Ferando Marin that I have reviewed. In the first, eVIOLution, he played a wide variety of music on an equivalently wide variety of instruments, demonstrated a remarkable understanding of the variety of idioms of different periods. I gave it a 'highly recommended', and I give this the same, perhaps even more, a 'must buy'. Here he is joined by soprano Nadine Balbeisi, in a unified sound world, with variety achieved by artistry and poise, rather than radically differing instruments and idioms. The single instrument he plays is strung throughout in gut, no sound-post (I presume), bass strings dyed in iron oxide, giving a lovely crunchy bottom D (at a=415), reedy middle and glowing top string sound. He sometimes plucks (for example in Ortiz 'Spagna'), but mostly bows, adapting, as instructed by Ganassi, to suit the instrument's inability to play un-adjacent strings simultaneously. Her singing is wonderful. The music requires a wide range, from chesty low notes to lovely floating g's. She reminds me of Montserrat Figueras in the intensity of her singing, affecting in its restraint, giving way from time to time to surging passion. Her sound matches the vihuela beautifully, the tuning and

ensemble a continual delight, born of a shared sense of poise and serenity, with beautiful flickering ornaments, like two candle flames stirred by an air current. The recording has 21 tracks, mostly sung, with music from 13th-16th centuries. The booklet gives the texts in Latin and Catalan, with no translations, alas, but this is a small complaint in the face of a recording which held me rapt and moved for its entire duration. *Robert Oliver*

17th CENTURY

Biber *Vesperae longiores ac breviores* Yale Schola Cantorum, Yale Collegium Players, Robert Mealy *vln*, Simon Carrington 59' 30"
Carus **83.348** (rec 2004)
Biber Sunday Vesper psalms and Magnificat, +Sonata VIII (*Tam aulis...*) & Rosary Sonata I **Legrenzi** *Salve regina*, **Leopold I** *Ave maris stella*, **Mayr** *Domine ad adjuvandum & Sancta Maria, Mater Dei*,

I hope that the singers don't feel slighted, but for me the outstanding item is Robert Mealy's performance of the *Annunciation* Rosary Sonatas:* it is refreshing to hear one of these marvellous pieces other than being followed by another 14! The disc has the normal Sunday vesper psalms and Magnificat, with other appropriate pieces. The Yale Schola Cantorum is a fine choir – I heard them, along with BC (who edited the music) in Oxford a few years ago. The music is well sung and nicely shaped, if perhaps just a bit too well-kempt. Both music and performances make this well-worth buying. *CB*

** if "sonata" is the right word: more on that in the next issue.*

Buxtehude *Opera Omnia XIII: Chamber Music 2* (**Trio Sonata Opus 1**) Catherine Manson *vln*, Paolo Pandolfo *gamba*, Ton Koopman *hpscd & org*, Mike Fentross *lute*
Challenge Classics **CC72252** 59' 53"

Dedicated to the memory of Buxtehude scholar, Bruno Grusnick, this is a thoroughly enjoyable CD. While slightly surprised to see that Catherine Manson's brother, Jonathon, was not playing gamba as he has on previous releases, I cannot say I was disappointed by Paolo Pandolfo's presence. Violin and gamba combine to produce some beautiful sounds. With the lute adding colour and occasional definition to the continuo bass line, it is Koopman's right hand which distinguishes these readings – always ready with a neat counter melody, or a funky rhythmic accompaniment, be it on harpsichord or organ. Some may prefer to hear the melody parts supported by more simple harmonies, but Koopman's practice is well documented, and it is important that someone with his improvisational skills records these seminal works as the composer might actually have heard them. *BC*

Michael Maier *Atalanta Fugiens: Music, alchemy and Rosicrucianism in the early 17th century* Ensemble Plus Ultra, Michael Noone 71' 33"
Glossa Platinum **GCD P31407**

This was going to be the debut of a new reviewer, but I mislaid the CD and it emerged too late for this issue. Catherine Groom has contributed two other reviews instead and will comment on this in the August issue. CB

Monteverdi *L'Orfeo* Orchestra of Teatro alla Scala, Rinaldo Alessandrini, Robert Wilson
Opus Arte **OA 1044 D** DVD

This DVD is a live recording from the La Scala's September 2009 production, directed by Robert Wilson with the Orchestra of Teatro alla Scala conducted by Rinaldo Alessandrini, whose own edition is used. The notes are minimal, with only a history of the work and nothing about the opera itself or any of the performers; only the Acts are given reference numbers. A two minute 'Opening' (with added music as the credits run) leads without break into the Toccata giving a false impression of the music for those that do not know the opera. The staging, lighting and costumes are minimalist (with much use of black, blue, grey and shadows) and transfer very well from stage to screen. The setting is based on the Prado version of my favourite Titian, 'Venus and the organist', with the perspective of an avenue of cypress trees reinforcing the sense of elation of the organist who peers round to admire the naked Venus. In the production, the organist is safely in the pit (and makes some excellent contributions, particularly in Act 2), and there is no nakedness, but the perspective and trees remain. The action is relatively static, and is all the better for it, in my view. Some might not like the rather stylised gestures, but I did. All this allows a focus on the music and the development of the characters rather than on the latest musings of some over-imaginative opera director. Singers are allowed to do just that, without turning cartwheels or wallowing in buckets of blood. The singing is generally top notch, although I wondered if Georg Nigi has quite the right voice for Orfeo. Roberta Invernizzi and Sara Mingardo both excel. Although billed as the La Scala house band, all are using period instruments and play in a thoroughly acceptable period style – you get a good close up of the instruments during the Toccata. The basso continuo is from Alessandrini's Concerto Italiano, and features a pleasantly voiced regal.
Andrew Benson-Wilson

A. Scarlatti *Serenata a Filli* Emanuela Galli *S*, Yetzabel Arias Fernández *S*, Martín Oro *cT*, La Risonanza, Fabio Bonizzoni 63' 40"
Glossa **GCD 921511**
+Le muse Urania e Clio lodano bellezze da Filli

Alessandro Scarlatti composed some 35 serenatas, pieces that might be broadly defined as occupying a place somewhere between a one-act opera and a chamber cantata. The two here, both scored for three voices and strings, were composed in Rome in 1706 and undoubtedly form a linked pair. It is not known for whom they were written, although the note conjectures that it may have been the Marquis Francesco Ruspoli. Both are addressed to Filli, an unidentified beauty who in the *Serenata a Filli* is ardently though seemingly ineffectually wooed by no fewer than three suitors. *Le muse Urania* is entirely devoted to a celebration of the charms of Filli 'on the shores of the beautiful Tiber', suggesting that the lady was a member of the aristocratic Roman circles in which Scarlatti moved.

Both works are enchanting, brimming with music of the utmost grace and elegance. *Serenata* in particular is imbued with a strong nocturnal atmosphere, one of the defining features of the genre, with several lovely arias that conjure up images of the sensual longings evoked by warm blossom-laden nights. Especially memorable is Niso's 'Ombre voi d'un cor fidele', in which the voice carries exquisitely shaped melismatic lines over an ostinato bass. It is quite beautifully sung by Fernández, whose rich soprano contrasts well throughout with the brighter tone of Galli. Indeed all three singers are near flawless, with an ease and fluency that comes together to ravishing effect in the final madrigalesque trio. If *Le muse* explores exclusively lightweight territory, it is perhaps even more irresistible, its paean of unadulterated praise to the mysterious Filli clothed

mainly in dance-like arias of huge charm. The playing of La Risonanza's strings is as accomplished as the singing, the CD making for a fully worthy adjunct to the ensemble's universally praised Handel cantata cycle. Dare one hope this is the first of another series? *Brian Robins*

A. Scarlatti ***Lamentazione per la Settimana Santa*** Cristina Miatello, Gian Paolo Fagotto *ST*, Ensemble Aurora, Enrico Gatti 113" 13'
Glossa GCD 921205 (2 CDs)

Like the Accent Boccherini CD reviewed elsewhere in this issue, this set has its provenance in the now-defunct Symphonia label, having been originally issued in 1993. Its re-appearance is a major event, since it not only restores to the catalogue the only complete recording of a masterpiece (or more accurately a cycle of masterpieces) but also a performance of absolutely outstanding quality.

In an excellent note Gatti draws attention to the 'notable severity of style' of the Lamentazione, which were commissioned by an unknown patron around 1706-8. While it is certainly true that much of the instrumental writing provides ample evidence of Scarlatti's renowned mastery of counterpoint (the first *Lectio* is based entirely on canons), it is by no means the whole story, for the composer employs a remarkable wide range of devices to illustrate the potent imagery and dramatic intensity of the texts. There are six Lessons in all, the first five scored for soprano, originally undoubtedly a castrato, (solo) strings and continuo, while the last is allotted to a tenor. The vocal writing is extremely demanding, requiring not only a wide range but also a mastery of florid coloratura, strong interpretative powers, and the ability to float long cantabile melismas. Cristina Miatello meets all these demands triumphantly, throughout displaying a formidable technique, while Fagotto is equally praiseworthy in his more modest contribution. A final bouquet must be handed to the six members of Ensemble Aurora, whose sensitive and expressive playing contributes much to the profoundly moving impact of this exceptional issue. *Brian Robins*

Bernardo Storace ***Harpsichord Music***
Naoko Akutagawa 62' 37"
Naxos 8.572209

Storace's name survives only through a single publication, his 1664 *Selve di varie compositioni* for harpsichord, from which the music on this recording is taken. Apart from the fact that he was working in Messina at the time, we know nothing about him. He was clearly very familiar with the works of Frescobaldi. Indeed I found listening to his music rather strange because of its constant stream of references to the earlier composer. Most of the works presented here are variation sets or *passacagli* which owe a lot to Frescobaldi's methods, while the solitary toccata here is also very much Frescobaldi-light. Akutagawa provides a safe pair of hands and is more than capable of dealing with the music's virtuosic demands. A touch more flamboyance might, however, have made it sound a bit less dated and repetitive. She plays a 1697 Grimaldi copy by Detmar Hungerberg which is well recorded in a resonant acoustic. Individual pieces by Storace have been included in a number of anthology recordings but this seems to be the first disc devoted entirely to his music. At budget price the recording is certainly worthwhile and will help to make his music more widely available. *Noel O'Regan*

Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck ***Choral Works Vol I,II & III*** Netherlands Chamber Choir, *cond* Peter Phillips, William Christie Ton Koopman, Philippe Herreweghe, Jan Boeke, Paul van Nevel 181' 59" (3 CDs)
KTC 1426

There is nothing on the box or on any of the three individual CDs cases to indicate that this is a re-release of 1980s recordings – the only date on the box is 2011 and the recording dates appear only on the inserts to the separate CDs. The conductors' CVs have been updated but not, of course, their mug shots – and one of them has since died. I consider this to be not just a bit naughty, but frankly fraudulent. I am tempted not to bother writing any more about any of the CDs. In fact that is what I will do.
Andrew Benson-Wilson

Sweelinck ***Organ Works Vol 1*** Harald Vogel (1586/1612/1667 Slegel/Scherer/Schön organ, St Marien, Lemgo, Germany) 78' 42"
MDG 914 1690-6

This CD focuses as much on the recently restored Renaissance 'swallow's nest' organ in Lemgo as on the music of Sweelinck, for which it forms a perfect interpretational vehicle, aided by Harald Vogel, the consultant for the organ restoration, editor of the most recent edition of Sweelinck's organ music and one of the finest interpreters of the Northern European organ repertoire around. As with the *Il ballo di Mantova* CD reviewed above, this is a CD that will help you realise just what an extraordinary instrument the organ is – or can be. The flexible winding, meantone temperament, superb range of colour stops, combined with some exquisitely musical playing, make for a thrilling experience. The Lemgo organ is the only instrument around that can recreate something of the colour of Sweelinck's two Niehoff organs in the Amsterdam Oude Kerk, including the distinctive sounds of the Zinke, Barpfeiff, Cimbell (a three-rank repeating stop, used as in solo registrations rather than as a mixture) and the 2' pedal Cornet stop, a reed, used for choral melodies. Harald Vogel makes use of some of the registration instructions made by Jost Funcke (what a fantastic name!) for the 1573 Niehoff organ in Lüneburg's Johanniskirche. At the end of the CD there is an extended demonstration of the stops of the organ, with a commentary in German (but understandable to non-German speakers). This is going to be an important series of recordings and should improve our understanding of one of the most important organ composers of all time.
Andrew Benson-Wilson

Nobil Donna Suzie LeBlanc, La Nef, Alexander Weimann *dir* 69' 12"
ATMA Classique ACD2 2605
Ferrari, Frescobaldi, Kapsberger, Landi, Marazzoli, Palestrina, Rognoni, Luigi Rossi, Sances, Storace & Vitali

The Barbarini family included Urban VIII, Pope in the early 17th century and a great patron of the arts with – judging from the selection recorded here – excellent taste, including a marked penchant for chaconnes.

Suzie LeBlanc's voice is phenomenal; even when still and unvibrated, it has a warmth like the glow of a candle flame. Every note she sings is inflected to colour the word or the melody; when this is imitated by the violin and cornetto, as in Landi's *Mentre cantiam*, the effect is astonishing. Sometimes clear diction is sacrificed in favour of affect, when her singing takes on an ecstatic, translucent quality. She combines a thorough understanding and compatibility with the styles with agile and tireless singing: marvel at her galloping runs of semiquavers in the

Ferrari chaconne, contrasted with beautifully-paced recitative

The interpretation of Landi's *Amarillide, deh vieni* is derivative of L'Arpeggiata's 2002 recording, with its pizzicato-and-percussion orchestration, but nothing about the imitation is slavish. These players are not only top-notch technically, but they are bursting with the fun of the music. Alexander Weimann's riotous playing of Storace's *Ciaconna* made me smile again and again as he turned the corners into ever more exotic keys, emphasized by the harpsichord's unequal tuning. With violin, cello, cornett, recorder, theorbo, baroque guitar, triple harp, harpsichord and organ, many combinations are exploited for all their potential. I particularly enjoyed the Vitali *Ciaccona* with its brilliant arpeggios by violin and cornett.

This is a hugely enjoyable recording which I have listened to repeatedly, each time wishing more that I had lived at the Barbarini Palace. *Selene Mills*

Venezia: **Rosenmüller, Legrenzi, Stradella** The Rare Fruits Council, Manfredo Kraemer 81' 53"
Ambronay **AMY 028**
Items from **Rosenmüller** *Sonate à 2,3,4,5* (1682), **Legrenzi**, *La Cetra*, op. 10, **Stradella** *Sinfonie*

This remarkably generous programme is an exact duplication of a concert given at the Ambronay Festival in September 2010, an event I reported on in *EMR 139*. It is not however the live concert but a 'studio' recording made at the time of the concert in a local church.

As noted in the earlier report, the major criticism has nothing to do with the quality of performances that rarely dip below outstanding, but with style. As John Holloway and all too few others have demonstrably shown, this is music that ideally demands string instruments set up and bowed in accord with 17th century precepts. Then it takes on a highly individual 'tangy' character lost when it is played in an all-purpose (i.e. 18th century) Baroque style. Still, providing such concerns are put aside there is much here to enjoy. The players work together exceptionally well, as, for example, in the beautifully nuanced imitative passages between Kraemer and fellow violinist Guadalupe del Moral in Rosenmüller's fine Sonata seconda, a work in which the German composer shows how effectively he grasped such Italianate concepts as *sprezzatura* during his sojourn in Venice. Elsewhere, too, it is Rosenmüller's star that shines most brightly in what is a brilliant firmament, his rich textures, noble breadth and playfully thrusting fugues constantly touching the heart as well as beguiling the ear. But Legrenzi also provides a wealth of lasting memories, as with the strange, almost hallucinogenic opening of his *Sonata terza à 4* or the obsessive march-like subject on which his fine Sonata prima for four violins is founded. Recommended, despite reservations. *Brian Robins*

LATE BAROQUE

Bach ***Mass in B minor, Ich will den Kreuzstab BWV56*** John Shirley-Quirk *B*, Margaret Marshall, Janet Baker, Robert Tear, Samuel Ramey *SS/ATB*, Academy and Chorus of St. Martin in the Fields, Neville Marriner 140' (2 CDs)
Decca Eloquence **480 2338**

The fill-up comes first, both on the CDs and in order of recording. That's fine, except that a bigger gap is needed before the Kyrie – pressure of getting 80 minutes onto the disc, perhaps. The cantata was recorded in 1964, while Neville Marriner was still generally directing from the leader's position. I would probably have been enthusiastic at the time: most of the Bach cantatas I had heard then (from Paul Steinitz's London Bach Society) had John Shirley-Quirk as bass solo. It would be interesting to hear him, David Thomas and Peter Harvey in succession. The St Anthony Singers' version of the chorale would have been disappointing even in 1964.* The orchestral playing is rather subdued and uneventful.

We skip to 1977 for the Mass. Marriner was experienced in early music from the start of the ASMF in 1958 through his playing with Thurston Dart. He didn't, though, get the feel of baroque bowing: he told me once that the down bow and the upbow could both sound the same with his players. But by 1977 there were models of an appropriate sound, and this is as good an example you can get of the chamber-but-not-early-instrument performance of the period. I suspect that the unnamed as well as the named players were among the best modern-instrument baroque players around (the organist, Nicholas Kraemer, became a successful early-music conductor). Due acknowledgment should be paid to the chorus-master László Heltay. Two of the soloists, Janet Baker and Robert Tear, had also been regulars for Paul Steinitz in the 1960s, and probably would have had less prominent vibratos then.

There is a thorough programme note, ascribed to DECCA: a name would be useful, if only to know who to blame for the second sentence: "the motet was gradually replaced by the cantata". Bach's service still began with a motet, from an anthology of double-choir music published over a century earlier. *CB*

** I used to assume that the Anthony from whom the choir took its name was Anthony Barnard, but perhaps Anthony Lewis was more likely.*

Bach ***Oster-Oratorium Cantatas for the Complete Liturgical Year Vol. 13*** (BWV249, 6) Yeree Suh, Petra Noskaiová, Christoph Genz, Jan Van der Crabben *SATB*, La Petite Bande, Sigiswald Kuijken
Accent **ACC 25313**

I am glad to have had a chance to review this CD. The last few releases in Kuijken's series that I have written about haven't exactly set my heart alight; I've even been forced to not be complimentary about the quality of string playing, which, I confess, has rather shocked me. Here, the balance between the four singers and the colourful array of instruments is wonderfully managed, both in the solo numbers and the "choral" ones. As well as the "Easter Oratorio", the disc includes the cantata for Easter Monday, *Bleib bei uns*, the opening movement of which Kuijken believes to be among the gems of Bach's cantata creation. That is quite an accolade, coming from someone who has spent so much of his life immersed in the Leipzig Kantor's music. *BC*

The opening chorus of Cantata 6 is certainly one of my favourites, taking up the mood of the closing choruses of the Passions. CB

Bach ***Passio secundum Johannem BWV245*** Hans-Jörg Mammel *Evangelist*, Matthias Vieweg *Christus*, Maria Keohane, Helena Ek, Carlos Mena, Jan Börner, Jan Kobow, Stephan MacLeod *SSAATB*, Ricercar Consort, Philippe Pierlot 114" (2 CDs)
Mirare **MIR136**

As *EMR* is currently struggling for a Bach reviewer (any volunteers?), I am temporarily stepping into the breach. This is essentially the 1724 version of the St John Passion with two additions (one bass aria, and the chorale verse that concluded the 1725 version). With eight soloists and a smallish band, Pierlot draws a well-paced, beautifully performed reading. Hans-Jörg Mammel has always impressed me, but this is the first time

I've heard him in the role of Evangelist – I was not in the slightest surprised by the dramatic pacing he brought to this pivotal role, and was equally impressed by Matthias Vieweg's Christus. The other vocalists are no less inspired, and the impressive sound they produce as "the chorus" is truly noteworthy. The added aria, *Himmel reiße, Welt erbebe*, must have made quite an impression on the original congregation – its many facets are here so skilfully balanced. All in all, this is a fabulous recording of one of the monuments of Western music, and deserves all the plaudits it receives. *BC*

J S Bach *Organ Works* David Sanger (2003 Heiko Lorenz organ, Bidin Church, Norway) 3 CDs 212' 59"
Euridice EUCD 59

These CDs were recorded just a few weeks before David Sanger's sad and untimely death. One of the most important English organists and teachers of his generation, Sanger combined a performing and recording career that influenced many other players. Although he could not really be considered at the forefront of the international masters of early music interpretation, his interest in musical sources and his playing showed that his heart was musically in the right place. His rather methodical and subtle playing style is revealed well in these three CDs, recorded on an impressive modern Norwegian organ based on North German baroque models by Arp Schnitger and Christian Vater. Although I would sometime yearn for a bit more personality to shine through, these are recordings that will repay frequent listening even if the playing doesn't leap out and grab you. Each of the three CDs are a programme in themselves, but there are themes running over the whole set, notably with 17 of the youthful Neumeister Chorales discovered in 1984. Sanger's registrations are generally appropriate, if rather restrained, although the mixtures are rather more suitable to the earlier North German repertoire for which the organ was designed, rather than Bach. This three-CD set makes a very appropriate salute to David Sanger's lifetime of devotion to the organ and its music. It is such a shame that everything seemed to go so wrong at the end.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

J S Bach *Orgelbüchlein* Pierre Bardon (Isnard organ, St Maximum) 132' 03"
Syrius SYR 141436 (2 CDs)

I am often sent CDs by Pierre Bardon to review, and I do find it difficult to be positive about them. Bardon is apparently celebrating 50 years as organist at St Maximum and, whilst I can congratulate him on lasting so long, his longevity does become rather evident in his playing. He could do with a more ruthless editor to catch all the little slips, but it might be harder to deal with the rather erratic timing and articulation and the fact that the right and left hands are not always in time with each other. The organ could do with a bit of a tune as well. And, much as I love the sound of the French organ, it really is very much better in French music than in Bach.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Bach *Goldberg Variations* Colin Booth *hpscd* 73' 58"
Soundboard SBCD210

One way of reviewing performances of much-recorded works is to collect as many versions as possible, assess each aspect and movement (in a case like this with 32 tracks perhaps marking them on a chart) and totting up the score. But such inspection of trees rather than the whole wood is only likely to identify a winning performance if one disc came top on most variations, and that is unlikely. The opposite way is to listen to the work as a whole: at the most basic level, does it leave you wanting to play it again or relieved that it is over? For me, the former. I don't feel that I'm listening to a monument but to attractive, sensitive music and playing. I can imagine someone visiting the Boothery and Colin saying: "I've been working on the Goldbergs lately: have a listen?" and playing it through for an audience of one. (No: that has not, alas, happened to me!) His booklet note mentions, among other performance matters, the practice of lilting regular short notes unevenly, but not so as to sound forced. Colin succeeds in this – I was going to write "brilliantly", but it is not the brilliant passages that require such playing but the more gentle ones. I don't want to single out one aspect. This is overall a pleasing performance that I recommend strongly. *CB*

Bach *Sonatas and Partitas for Solo Violin BWV 1001-1006* Ruth Waterman 158' 16"
Meridian CDE 84595/6-2 (2 CDs)

This is an impressive modern instrument reading of the Bach solo violin music. There are some technical aspects of the performances that most period players would eschew, but that does nothing to lessen the integrity of Ruth Waterman's interpretations. She has taken inspiration from keyboard versions for some of her decorated repeats, and deviates rather more from Bach's lines than I'm used to. Tempi are never too fast, nor too slow. Waterman is most outstanding in differentiating between melodies and accompaniments, and in pointing the important structural moments in longer movements. Although this will not replace my favourite recordings of this repertoire, I feel all the richer for having heard these performances, and if you don't already have a recording on your shelves, you could do a whole lot worse than buying this set. *BC*

Bach *Concertos for Flute, Oboe and Violin* William Bennett *fl*, Neil Black *ob*, Carmel Kaine, Henryk Szeryng, Maurice Hasson *vln*, Academy of St. Martin in the Fields, Neville Marriner 141' 49" (2 CDs)
Decca Eloquence 480 2202

These recording from 1974-75 sound more relaxed and stylish than Marriner's B-minor Mass from a couple of years later (see above). It contains seven concertos that included harpsichord restored by Christopher Hogwood for the likely original instruments. It's an interesting collection, stylishly played if on modern instruments, There are also the two solo violin concertos not transmogrified into anything else played by Szeryng which are more 'modern', joined by Maurice Hasson for the double concerto. I wonder if Hogwood's influence went beyond supplying the reconstructions: I know he advised Marriner on another Bach recording. *CB*

Brescianello *Sonatas for Gallichone* Terrel Stone 73' 07"
Dynamic *Delitiae musicali vol. 13* DM8013

The gallichone may be unfamiliar even to the most ardent early music buffs. It has many names including mandora and colascione, which confusingly were also used to describe other instruments. The gallichone is similar to a bass lute, but with a slightly longer neck allowing room for ten tied frets. There were about 40 different tunings for it altogether, although only three are mentioned in the booklet: D G C f a d', F G C f a d', and D# G C f a d'. The first tuning is the same as the modern classical guitar tuned a tone lower, so music for the gallichone,

at least in that tuning, transfers easily to the guitar. The gallichone was played as a continuo instrument in Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Austria, and a fair amount of solo music for it survives.

Brescianello (1690-1758) spent most of his working life in Germany, first as a violinist in Munich (1715-6), and then for the rest of his life in Stuttgart, becoming Ratkapellmeister and Oberkapellmeister in 1731. Amongst a variety of surviving compositions are 18 sonatas for gallichone, half of which are recorded for the present CD. The movements are a mixture of French (Entrée, Menuet, Gavotta, Gigue) and Italian (Aria, Allegro, Andante, Adagio). The music has more of an early classical feel to it rather than baroque. It is pleasant, easy-to-listen-to stuff, with tonic and dominant chords to the fore, and lacking the subtlety of Weiss or Bach. The Neapolitan sixths in the Adagio of Sonata 4 in F major (Track 13) and the diminished seventh in the Allegro of Sonata 7 in C major are as adventurous as the harmony gets. I found Sonata 6 in G major quite attractive: a courtly Entrée embellished with triplets and broken chords; a straightforward, march-like Menuet; a bustling Scherzo; a contrasting shift of tonality to the minor for a tuneful Aria with occasional bass echoes; and a jolly 3-section Finale, first in G major, then G minor, and back to G major, with a preponderance of tonic, subdominant and dominant chords worthy of an unimaginative German folk song.

Terrel Stone's playing is fine, and I like his interpretation, but some clarity is lost in a rather echoey acoustic. It sounds as if someone dropped something off-stage 12 seconds into Track 14. *Stewart McCoy*

Fasch, Graupner, Graun ***Concertos, Arias, Sonatas*** Collegium Pro Musica, Stefano Bagliano 51' 05"
Dynamic Delizie musicali vol. 15 DM8015
Fasch Sonatas in G and B flat, one aria; **Graun** Concerto for recorder, violin and strings; **Graupner** Concerto in F, two arias

This re-release showcases the recorder player Stefano Bagliano. He is only silent in two of the three arias which are extracted from unnamed church cantatas by Fasch and Graupner, and rather well sung by mezzo Susanne Kelling. The packaging is definitely the weak point – the playing is perhaps not quite top-notch (and the performers' decision to replace the oboe in Fasch's B flat quartet with a second violin is unforgivable), but it deserves better presentation! *BC*

The Forqueray Family Magdalena Malec, *hpscd*, Chrstoph Urbanetz, bass viol + Sara Ruiz Martinez *bass viol*, Soetkin Elbers *soprano* 106' 24" (2 CDs)
Brilliant Classics 93802

This 2-CD set is mostly devoted to the music of Antoine Forqueray, published after his death by his son Jean-Baptiste in two forms, one for the bass viol, for which it was originally written, and another in an arrangement for harpsichord. Jean-Baptiste also included some movements that he composed himself. In his preface to the latter publication, he explains that his motive for publishing the alternative version is so that his father's music will be played more widely. It is, indeed, so challenging that it remains to this day a pinnacle of gamba technique. In its own day it was described as being so difficult that only Forqueray and his son could play it with grace.

These publications, long available in facsimile, have provided modern players of both instruments with great challenges, both technical and musical. Here the suites are played in turn by harpsichord or bass viol, interspersed with music by Michel Forqueray: a brief *Prélude* and *Musette* for harpsichord, and three light *aires*. In J-B Forqueray's publication, he explains that he has added some movements which he has composed himself to fill out the suites, and this recording attributes those movements to him specifically, and also includes some manuscript pieces by Antoine, a *Musette*, *Allemande* and *Sarabande*, survivors of an output which apparently exceeded 300 *pièces*.

The playing throughout has all the required bravura and flair. The harpsichord plays the first suite (d) and in the second (G) the movements are shared alternatively by the two instruments. In the great suite in c, movements are again shared between the two players. I really enjoyed the harpsichord movements, and the viol is superb in *La Rameau*, wonderfully delicate in *La Léon*, and in *Jupiter*, he unleashes his technique in a performance of power and passion. Great music, marvellously played. *Robert Oliver*

Graun ***Concerti*** Cappella Academia Frankfurt 62' 53"
cpo 777 321-2
J. G. Graun: Symphony & Concerto for violin, viola and strings; **Graun(?)**: Concerti for recorder, violin and strings, flute, two violins and continuo; **Graupner?**: Concerto for bassoon

Deciding which Graun wrote which piece is an often difficult task. One of the pieces on this disc turned out more likely to be the work of the Darmstadt Kapellmeister, Graupner, who copied the manuscript – the musical language is certainly more his than either of the Grauns. Apart from that work, only the Flute concerto is new to disc. The Violin/Viola concerto has previously been recorded in the alternative version for Violin/Gamba, and I have to say that I prefer Christophe Coin's performance – I found the cadenzas here a little odd; the Recorder/Violin concerto is a bit of rococo fluff. The flute concerto on the other hand is a substantial work, worthy of a composer who was personally acquainted with both Quantz and Frederick the Great. As one would expect of a recording headlined by Michael Schneider, the performances are top notch – and clearly, he and his colleagues are producing a new generation of first rate early musicians. *BC*

C. H. Graun ***Montezuma*** Encarnacion Vazquez *Montezuma*, Dorothea Wirtz *Eupaforice*, Conchita Julian *Tezeuco*, Lourdes Ambriz *Pilpatoè*, Angelica Uribe Sanchez *Erissena*, Maria Luisa Tamez *Ferdinando Cortes*, Ana Caridad Acosta *Narvès*, Kammerchor Cantica Nova, Deutsche Kammerakademie, Johannes Goritzki TT (2 CDs)
Capriccio 7085

This is a re-release of 1992 recording (although you reach page 6 of the rather pathetic booklet before you find that out), in which six of the seven soloists are from Hispanic backgrounds, though again no information is given of why this might be: one could understand if they were singing in Spanish (which they aren't!) or if this were a collaboration with a Mexican opera house (which it might have been). Another lavish extravagance on the part of the Prussian king, Graun's opera gives vocal display priority over dramatic drive, and impressive as his gift for melodic invention is, aurally it is rather a monotonous sequence of set numbers, lacking any overall purpose. Performance-wise, although the singers relish the challenge of the arias they are allocated, the recitative (which the booklet highlights as one of Graun's strengths) is so robotically handled that it, too, lacked shape and purpose. *BC*

Handel ***Ariodante*** Joyce DiDonato *Ariodante*, Karina Gauvin *Ginevra*, Marie-

Nicole Lemieux *Polinesso*, Sabina Puértolas *Dalinda*, Topi Lehtipuu *Lurcanio*, Matthew Brook *The King of Scotland*, Anicio Zorzi Giustiniani *Odoardo*, Il complesso barocco, Alan Curtis 192' 59" (3 CDs)
Virgin 0708442

Ariodante is one of Handel's most dramatically satisfying operas. This recording is not. The tempi are 'median Handel' – either too fast or too slow; the mood is the same, so that there is no obvious differentiation between characters. The youthful, innocent-but-passionate love of Ariodante and Ginevra in Act I doesn't come out at all – the singers sound as if they're entering into at least a second marriage. It's a good cast, although the King is a little low for Brook, Lehtipuu is not the stocky fighting Scot that he might be, and I could do without Puértolas. However, they all take part in some crashingly insensitive ornamentation, for example DiDonato in 'Scherza infida' or Brook in 'Nel sen ti stringo'. This recording is not a patch on Minkowski's DG one. *Katie Hawkes*

Handel's Bestiary Il Complesso Barocco, Alan Curtis 64' *see p. xx*

Handel in Ireland Bridget Cunningham *hpscd* 62' 46"
Rose Street Records RDSR002
Babell, Carter, Handel, Roseingrave & anon
www.bridgetcunningham.org.uk

An enjoyable CD, even though Babell died 18 years before Handel visited Dublin. The pieces featured here are his versions of two arias from *Rinaldo* (1711). *Lascias ch'io pianga* has some nice expressive embellishments, but one might call *Vo far guerra* a monster. Taking 25 pages of condensed typography,* including over three pages where every note is a hemidemisemiquaver, it goes far beyond Handel's own elaboration – at least, to the extent which that is notated; but Babell may have been imitating Handel more closely than the version the composer had printed.

The genuine Handel pieces are a MS version of the Overture to Esther and No. 7 in G minor from the 1720 Suites. I used to play this over and over again on the piano at home in my teens, and enjoyed this performance very much. Thomas Roseingrave studied in Italy in 1709 and became a friend of D. Scarlatti, and worked in London from 1717 till his death ten years later. I'm not sure if Charles Carter (born in Dublin c. 1735 and moved to London in 1772) is a lesser composer or just a slightly later one. The CD is rounded off by the player's arrangement of a couple of folk songs, described a bonus track, which sound as if they belong to another disk. The playing is impressive (and not just the virtuosity of the Babell), and despite the forced title, this is a tempting recording. *CB*

*Facsimile available from The Early Music Company,

Hasse *Cleofide* Emma Kirkby *Cleofide*, Derek Lee Ragin *Poro*, Agnès Mellon *Erissena*, Dominique Visse *Alessandro*, Randall K. Wong *Gandarte*, David Cordier *Timagene*, Cappella Coloniensis, William Christie (4 CDs)
Capriccio 7080

It has been interesting listening to this in conjunction with reading the Music at German Courts book reviewed above. The astronomical amounts lavished on opera in Dresden and Berlin is astounding even now. I did my very best not to try to follow the plot of this four-disc set, but sat back to enjoy the music instead. It was a successful ploy – the music is richly varied (try Alessandro's aria *Cervo al bosco* on Disc 4 with it's obbligato horn and theorbo, for example). Hasse certainly knew how to write for the voice – even if some of these voices might not be to everyone's taste. Over an entire evening, one does rather long for a tenor or even a blustering bass to balance all the treble! *BC*

Jiránek *Concertos & Sinfonias* Sergio Azzolini *bsn*, Marina Katarzhnova *vln*, Collegium Marianum, Jana Semerádová *fl & dir* 66' 48"
Supraphon SU 4039-2

František Jiránek began to scratch his name on musical history in the late 1720s or early 1730s, having begun his working life as a gentleman usher or page of some kind at the court of Count Wenzel Morzin in Prague. He had been fortunate: Count Morzin, seeing musical potential in the boy, had sent him to study in Italy between 1724 and 1726. Most probably, Jiránek found himself under the tutelage of Antonio Vivaldi himself, since the latter composer was Morzin's *maestro di musica in Italia*. The fact that the Vivaldi's titular position in Prague existed at all is testament to the extent of the vogue for the *concertante* style, as developed by the northern Italians, that swept across Bohemia. Jiránek's concertos are very much in Vivaldi's structural mould, tempered with elements of Bohemian dance rhythms in their third movements and a high degree of *galant* influence. There's conjecture that the bassoon concertos here may perhaps have been written for star bassoonist Antonín Möser; Sergio Azzolini is a splendid soloist, balancing an agile flexibility with a rounded, plangent tone. Flautist Jana Semerádová is also excellent, and her ensemble Collegium Marianum is steeped in the language of the Czech Baroque. Well worth discovering. *Catherine Groom*

Telemannia REBaroque Maria Lindal *dir.*
Proprius PRCD 2059
TWV42:B5, TWV52:F1, G1, Concerto in G (4 vlns), Quartet in D minor (*Tafelmusic* 2), Concerto in B minor (vln, gamba, bsn, bass)

This is an interesting collection of Telemiscellanea which will appeal to the Telemaniacs amongst *EMR* readers. There is some unusual writing in the two G major concertos for violins, tempered by more recognisably stylistic Telemann in the works with wind. Not all, I suspect will appreciate some of the liberties taken with the printed score, which might seem a little excessive. The performances are full of energy, the players clearly relishing the opportunity to energise the music with their ornamentation. It was a pity that the ensemble could not have produced some more informative booklet notes. *Ian Graham-Jones*

Telemann *Trios & Quartets* Epoca Barocca 65' 57"
cpo 777 441-2
TWV 41:g12; 42:d4,e9,F16,G13; 43:A2,D2, E1

Tastes of Europe: Telemann trios & quartets Ensemble Meridiana 61'00"
Linn CKD 368
Quartets: TWV 43: G8, a3 Trios: TWV 42: e11, F3, g5, h6; Prowo:Trio in D minor (formerly TWV 42: d10)

Two contrasting Telemann CDs this issue, taken from the same repertoire but with fortunately no duplications. Both are stylishly played on period instruments but the effect is surprisingly different. Epoca Barocca's performance is elegantly paced, occasionally perhaps a little on the slow side, but always with a lovely sound quality. The flute features in six of the eight pieces and the beautifully matched playing of flautists Marcello Gatti and Elisa Cozzini in three of the quartets is particularly enjoyable. The Quadro in F major for oboe, two bassoons and bc has been reconstructed by Sergio Azzolini, one of the bassoonists, from the surviving single bassoon and continuo parts found in the Münster University and State

Library. Ensemble Meridiana's first CD is recorded in a much livelier acoustic.

While Epoca Barocca might make good background music, though they are worth closer attention, Ensemble Meridiana always make you listen. There are trios and quartets in combinations or recorder, violin, oboe and gamba. The works chosen are generally more lively though there are some nicely ornamented slow movements too. Surprisingly, it was the trio by the Hamburg-Altona organist Pierre Prowo which really had me dancing round the kitchen as I emptied the dishwasher. With its folk music-influenced last movement it's no surprise that it used to be attributed to Telemann. *Victoria Helby*

We also received another review of the Tastes of Europe, so are printing it as well.

Back in February I wrote: "One of the nicest aspects of this reviewing lark is watching the career development of young musicians as they make their way on the professional circuit after there time at conservatories.", before reviewing a concert by Ensemble Meridiana, the winners of the 2009 York Early Music International Young Artists Competition and many other prestigious competitions. They have now sent me their debut CD, the result of a series of workshops and recording sessions with Philip Hobbs of Linn Records that formed part of the competition prize goodies. The five players have the flexible line up of violin, oboe/recorder, recorder/bassoon, viola da gamba and harpsichord, so it is no surprise that Telemann is high on their repertoire list. His music needs brilliant performers, both technically and musically, which Ensemble Meridiana provide with consummate ease – their three solo instrumentalists (Dominique Tinguely, Sarah Humphrys and Sabine Stoffe) have an outstanding sense of articulation and musical line. The final work on the CD used to be Telemann's "Trio in d for recorder, violin and basso continuo" (TWV 42.d10), but is now known to be by the little known Hamburg organist, Pierre Prowo (1697-1757). Sadly this means it may never be heard again, but that is also a very good reason to buy this CD. As usual with Linn recordings, a comprehensive website gives you all the information and downloads that you could ever want, including programme notes and samples of all the tracks. You can buy the recording in seven different formats, including a Studio Master (FLAC 24bit 192kHz, for those that care). This is one of the most impressive debut CDs that I have ever heard. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

Telemann *Ich hoffete aufs Licht Funeral Music for Emperor Karl VII* Gabriele Hierdeis, Annegret Kleindopf, Dmitry Egorov, Ulrike Andersen, Georg Poplutz, Benjamin Kirchner, Nils Cooper, Stephan Schreckenberger *SScTATTBB*, La Stagione Frankfurt, Michael Schneider 62' 53"
cpo 777 603-2

There is a wealth of quality music here – very modern-sounding and scarcely what one would call suited to mourning. The lengthy libretto is not exactly going to resonate with modern listeners. Even given that Hamburg faced a period of uncertainty on Karl VII's death, there is precious little hint of it on hearing this CD. The notation of the autograph score (with vocal parts notated in either treble or bass clefs) has given rise to some arbitrary scoring choices – allocating some arias to soprano and others to tenor, for example, and with some of the choruses sounding in octaves (an odd, but not unknown texture in Telemann's choral writing). Indeed, only seven of the named singers perform arias or recitatives – though, they all made splendid work of what they are given. I am not convinced that this is a masterpiece, or even that it will find a place in the repertoire of many choirs (there is simply too much solo work for that to be a realistic proposition), but once again cpo are to be lauded for continuing to support such projects. *BC*

Vivaldi *Vespro a San Marco* Choeur de Chambre de Namur, Les Agrémens, Leonardo García Alarcón 117' 48" (2 CDs)
Ambronay AMY 029
Dixit Dominus RV 807, *Confitebor* RV 596, *Beatus vir* RV 795, *Laudate pueri* RV 600, *Lauda Jerusalem* RV 609, *Magnificat* RV 610, *Laetatus sum* RV 607

Like the Rare Fruits Council's *Venezia* reviewed above, this release stems from the 2010 Ambronay Festival, in this case directly since it is a live recording given in the abbey church on 2 October which was also covered in my survey of the festival (*EMR* 139). Despite the partial liturgical reconstruction, the 'Vespers at St Mark's' appendage is a marketing ploy that can be taken with a large pinch of salt, the likelihood that this widely assorted collection of Vespers psalms were ever performed together at a Vespers service being remote. One curious textural point is that for some unexplained reason *Laetatus sum* has been placed at the end, after the *Magnificat*, which was not the case in the live performance.

The performances are marked above all by the utter conviction of Alarcón's conducting, qualities that made for a thrilling, vibrant evening's music-making. It is perhaps that very fervour that on a re-hearing at times gives the impression that Alarcón's Latin temperament leads the director to adopt tempos that push his singers just that bit too hard, and there are movements ('Quis sicut' from RV 600, for example) where he is not averse to the kind of rhythmic spikiness all too prevalent in southern Europe. By contrast, the brief plainsong antiphons are allowed to drag. But these are minor points in the context of the fervour and fire that inspires all involved, not least the superb Namur choir, which throughout responds with razor-sharp attack and outstanding articulation and diction. Among a large array of soloists the two gloriously uninhibited principal sopranos, Maria Soledad de la Rosa and Mariana Flores perhaps steal most of the honours, but the lustrously-toned alto Evelyn Ramirez also provides many memorable moments, not least with her alto colleagues Joëlle Charlier and Fabián Schofrin in the rapt repose of the sublime "In memoria" from RV 795. The playing of Les Agrémens is every bit as committed as the singing, so that in sum this is a recording that admirably conveys the visceral excitement of the original event. *Brian Robins*

Concerto à la carte: Baroque trumpet concertos, 18th century flute concertos, Concertos for strings John Wilbraham *tpt*, Claude Monteux *fl*, Academy of St. Martin in the Fields, Neville Marriner 136' 32" (2 CDs)
Decca Eloquence 480 2333

For what these recordings are – performances on modern instruments in a pseudo-early music style – there is much to enjoy. The repertoire is surprisingly broad, with works by Johann Wilhelm Hertel, Quantz, Loeillet, Grétry, and Leclair as well as the more usual suspects, Handel, Telemann, Albinoni, Fasch and (slightly out of kilter with the others) Giovanni Gabrieli. The string playing is definitely more dated nowadays than the wind playing, though the obviously wrong timbres of modern instruments means these can never be substitutes for performances on period instruments, with all the technical advances that have been made in the interim, as well as a

marked move away from a clinical (some would say "sterile") "baroque style" after which many of the pioneers of this movement strove. *BC*

'La Geniale': Sinfonias and Concertos Les Boréades de Montréal, Francis Colpron *recorder/dir*
Atma Classique ACD2 2606
A. Scarlatti Sinfonias nos. 4, 8, 9, 12 (1715); Albinoni op.9 no.2 (oboe); Vivaldi RV 441 (rec.); Torelli op.8 no. 9 (vln)

A refreshing selection of Italian concertos, with the Alessandro Scarlatti works featuring predominately. They are concise four-movement works, with some interesting harmonic twists – well worth exploring. No.12 in C minor (*La Geniale*) gives the title of this disc, though it is far from genial in style, with an extensive chromatic fugue and an intense sostenuto *adagio* over a Corellian walking bass line. Of the other works, the Albinoni concerto is one of the more interesting of the op. 9 set, with a sublime *adagio* central movement, for a solo oboe. The Vivaldi concerto gives the soloist the opportunity for some virtuosic passage work, while the Torelli has some Corellian writing for the violin in its impressive last movement. This is an enjoyable recording, and the performers make no pretence of imposing any unnecessary excesses to detract from the music. *Ian Graham-Jones*

Piano e forte: Music at the Medici Court on Cristofori's early pianoforte (c. 1730) María Cristina Kiehr, Edoardo Torbianelli, Chiara Banchini, Marc Hantaï, Rebeka Rusò, Daniele Caminiti 78' 51"
Glossa GCD 922504
Music by Barsanti, Bitti, A. Marcello, Giustini di Pistoia, A. Scarlatti & Veracini

This is a very attractive programme of mostly less well-known music associated with the Medici court in the early 18th century. Its main focus is a Cristofori/Ferrini fortepiano copy constructed by Denzil Wraight in 2003 but it also showcases a group of musicians associated with the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis where that instrument is now housed. Wraight's fortepiano shows itself to be a highly versatile instrument with a range of tone qualities and dynamics which make it ideal for both solo and accompaniment. Torbianelli puts it through its paces very successfully and the other performers are uniformly excellent. Particular highlights are a couple of Marcello cantatas and sonatas for flute and violin by Barsanti and Veracini, respectively, but all the music and performances are well worth listening to. Well recorded and strongly recommended. *Noel O'Regan*

CLASSICAL

C P E Bach *The Solo Keyboard Music vol 22 (Probestücke)* Miklós Spányi *clav*
BIS-CD-1762 67' 30"

Miklós Spányi's odyssey through the voluminous keyboard works of Emanuel Bach has now brought him to the 18 *Probestücke* from the *Versuch*. Designed primarily as didactic pieces illustrating the various themes of the treatise, they occupy a unique place in the composer's output. Whether or not we agree with Spányi's assessment that they represent 'a pinnacle in the entire literature for the keyboard', they certainly repay close study and listening.

Although not the first to record these works on the clavichord, Spányi's consistent championing of Bach's music deserves much credit, and a brief comparison of this new recording with that of Christopher Hogwood of 1980 for Decca is revealing and by and large serves to highlight Spányi's superiority. First, the sound world is infinitely preferable, even though Hogwood uses an original Hass of 1761. Spányi's instrument – used on previous recordings in this cycle – is a copy by Joris Potvlieghe of a clavichord by Horn (Dresden, 1785) and produces a beguilingly sweet sound. It has been recorded at sufficient distance to avoid any action noise. (Readers familiar with the previous clavichord discs by Spányi on BIS will not be disappointed.) Secondly, his technique is impeccable: all of the ornaments are delivered with the utmost attention to detail, and there is never a hint that any are performed without consideration of their contribution to the logic of the music. Spányi's playing is uniformly lyrical and expressive, and is frequently delights in its subtle phrasing.

Finally, comparison with Hogwood reveals just how cautious Spányi's tempi can be. Surprisingly, because he is capable of performing with as much virtuosity as any, he chooses steadier speeds for all of the movements. On occasions the effect can be rather ponderous. Certainly, the movements of the opening two sonatas border on being too slow; and the F minor *Allegro di molto* of Sonata VI lacks drama because the delivery is too sedate. Similarly, the alla breve *Allegro* of Sonata III barely establishes two beats in the bar. This is a disappointment since it gives the disc a somewhat monochrome feel and belies the diligent attention to contrast that Bach clearly seeks in the variety of the keyboard writing.

That said, readers who have collected the previous 21 volumes will be satisfied with this latest offering. But if these works really do constitute the pinnacle that Spányi maintains, the performances do not quite reflect the stature of the music. *Warwick Cole*

Balbastre *Pièces de clavecin (1759)* Sophie Yates 76' 29"
Chandos *Chaconne* CHAN 0777

Balbastre and his contemporary Armand-Louis Couperin are the often-forgotten final links in the chain of French harpsichord music. They represent the end of an era, with Balbastre famous both as the organist who, during the Ancien Régime, was banned from playing before midnight Mass because of his popularity and who, during the Revolution, saved Paris's organs by playing the Marseillaise on them. There is nothing decadent about these tightly-constructed pieces from 1759. There are clear echoes of François Couperin and of Rameau, but Balbastre has an individual voice which is too often ignored, despite the cleverness and easy charm of his music. These are character pieces which represent the world of Louis XV's court, conjuring up that age in which faux-country music sat easily alongside courtly dances. Sophie Yates is an ideal interpreter who revels both in the music and in an Andrew Garlick copy of a 1748 French harpsichord by Jean-Claude Goujon. She plays with a strong sense of rhythmic constancy, though showing flexibility when needed, and brings a deep understanding of the sound-world and the courtly background of this music. Highly recommended. *Noel O'Regan*

Boccherini *Divertimenti op. 16 Vol. 1* Piccolo Concerto Wien, Roberto Sensi
Accent ACC24245 70' 58"
G462, 463 & 465

This well-performed CD of agreeable music was recorded in 2001 and first issued on the defunct Italian Symphonia label. So far as I'm aware the original label never issued a second volume, but one is now promised by Accent to complete this set of six 'Sestetti o divertimenti' composed in 1773 for the

Spanish Infante Don Luis.

If the opening description sounds a bit like damning with faint praise, it is not intended to. Although these works, scored for obbligato flute, 2 violins, viola, 2 cellos and *ad libitum* double-bass (included here) in general conform to the easy-going character associated with divertimenti, they for the most part hold the interest with ease. While there are times when Boccherini uses the flute in a concerto-like manner, there are others when he employs it to purely colouristic effect and interestingly, when he seeks an occasional deepening of feeling, he disposes of its cheerful chatter entirely. There is also much other characteristic use of instrumental colour, including high writing, at times *sul ponlticello*, for both violins and cellos. Especially appealing are those movements (the opening Adagio of G465 is an example) flecked with that vein of gentle melancholy trademarked by the composer. The performances are extremely accomplished: unostentatious, yet at the same time fully alive to the sometimes virtuoso demands of the writing. *Brian Robins*

Haydn *Trios for Piano, Flute and Violoncello Hob. XV:15-17* Annie Laflamme *fl*, Dorothea Schönwiese-Guschlbauer *vlc*, Richard Fuller *fp* 58' 38"
Coviello Classics COV21011

These three trios were commissioned by the music publisher John Bland who travelled to Austria in 1789 to persuade the composer to undertake his 1791 concert tour to England. The flute was a popular instrument in there at the time but here it and the cello play a mainly accompanying role. Indeed, when Haydn offered Trio 17 to Marianne von Genzinger the following year he wrote: "I take the liberty of sending you a new pianoforte sonata with flute or violin, not as anything at all remarkable, but as a trifling resource in case of very great ennui." Haydn was rather underselling these charming and lively pieces, though they are certainly drawing room music rather than major works. I would have liked some information about the period instruments used here. *Victoria Helby*

Haydn *Lieder & Keyboard Works* Anne Cambier *S*, Jan Vermeulen *fp* 66' 54"
Accent ACC 24230
Extracts from: *Lieder für das Clavier, English Canzonettas + Variations in C, Hob XVII:5, Adagio in F, Hob XVII:9*

The past year or so has seen splendid additions to the Haydn song listings from Emma Kirkby (Brilliant Classics) and Stéphanie d'Oustrac (Ambronay). Those discs complement each other well, Kirkby's inimitable understanding of the expressive qualities of the English language revealing new insights into the English Canzonettas, while d'Oustrac's inherent feeling for drama and humour pay particularly rich dividends in the Lieder and *Arianna a Naxos* (and I must respectfully distance myself some way from BC's dismissive review of d'Oustrac's disc in *EMR 136*). Regrettably this new offering from Belgian soprano Anne Cambier has little to offer in the way of competition or in its own right. Although it could be felt that there is a certain appropriate quality to the youthful tremulousness of the opening *Der erste Kuss*, the continuous fast vibrato soon becomes a distraction. There are other technical problems, too: in attack the pitch is not always centred, while there is also a tendency for it to wander on sustained notes. While Cambier's English pronunciation is not bad, diction is not particularly good in either language. Vermeulen plays well enough both as accompanist and in his brief solo contributions, but his playing in the songs fails to reveal the poetry in Haydn's writing as well as do Marcia Hadjimarkos and Aline Zylberajch for Kirkby and d'Oustrac respectively. A disappointing issue. *Brian Robins*

Haydn *Kleine Orgelsolo Messe & Theresienmesse* Soloists, Trinity Choir, Rebel Baroque Orchestra, J Owen Burdick & Jane Glover 56' 04"
Naxos 8. 572128

Unsurprisingly, the observations I made in *EMR 141* regarding the enforced midstream change of conductor for this series apply equally here. I've not heard the *Theresienmesse* (1799) for some while, so it is good to be reminded that although it is one of the less frequently performed of the later Masses, it is a magnificently structured work, fully worthy of comparison with its more famous brethren. Glover's performance gets off to a good start, with some fine work from the solo quartet in the Kyrie. Later, as at 'Qui tollis' (Gloria), suggestions of rhythmic heaviness are not avoided, while for all its vitality 'Quonium' (Gloria) remains firmly in the comfort zone rather than producing the kind of sparks that have so illuminated Burdick's performances in the series. But again it would be both wrong and unfair to suggest that this is anything other than a fine performance, once more distinguished by unflagging commitment, superb choral singing and first-rate playing.

Nothing could be further removed from the sustained magnificence of the *Theresienmesse* than the *Kleine Orgelsolo Mass*, a *missa brevis* with severely telescoped text in both the Gloria and Credo (the first four sections play for under 8 minutes here). The heart of the Mass lies in the beautiful setting of 'Benedictus', a cantabile soprano solo with an elaborate organ solo that gives the work its name. It is gloriously sung by Ann Hoyt, who as I've reminded readers to the point of tedium, is the solo star of the series. The Mass makes few interpretive demands on a director, but Burdick's conducting is imbued with the vital freshness that has marked all his work in the series. *Brian Robins*

van Maldere *Sinfonie* The Academy of Ancient Music, Filip Bral 58' 49"
Et'cetera KTC 4036 (rec 2000)
Symphonies op 4/1 (G minor), op 5/1 (D), in A (obbligato viola) & F (a4)

This re-issue contains some worthwhile music. The symphonies of the Netherlander Pieter van Maldere (who died aged thirty-nine in 1768) date from the early 1760s and show a maturity that compares well with Haydn's works of that time. In the standard eight parts with the middle movement for strings only, there are obvious Mannheim influences, but they possess an individuality that places them above the run-of-the-mill. The G Minor work is impressive, and the *presto* finale of the D Major Sinfonia is worthy of the best of early Haydn. The two works that conclude the disc are for the strings only – the first a string quartet with solo viola. The addition of a theorbo continuo makes an interesting (and anachronistic?) addition to the texture of these two works. A re-hearing of these four works has strengthened my previous enjoyment of Maldere's symphonies, which are well worthy of this re-issue. *Ian Graham-Jones*

Mozart *Don Giovanni* Gerald Finley *Don Giovanni*, Anna Samuil *Donna Anna*, Kate Royal *Donna Elvira*, Luca Pisaroni *Leporello*, William Burden *Don Ottavio*, Anna Virovlansky *Zerlina*, Guido Loconsolo *Masetto*, Brindley Sherratt *The Commendatore*, The Glyndebourne Chorus, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment,

Vladimir Jurowski
EMI Classics 50999 0 72017 9 0

This double DVD set features the 2010 Glyndebourne Festival production of *Don Giovanni* with Vladimir Jurowski conducting their period 'house band', the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment. The director was Jonathan Kent, also responsible for Glyndebourne's 2009 *Fairy Queen*. I had hoped to see this performance live at Glyndebourne but their "continuing economic uncertainties" meant that they were less generous with press tickets than they have been in the past. On the basis on this DVD, they lost out on a good review. At least it is slightly easier to get tickets nowadays – I used to refuse to review Glyndebourne on principal because of the impossibility of normal mortals ever getting tickets, and then only started with the more accessible touring opera. Of course, nothing can replace the atmosphere of actually being there, but at least you don't have to dress up – or experience the sheer arrogance and pretentiousness of many of the country house opera set. It is a live recording (with applause after certain numbers) and much use of close ups, rather then full stage shots – one advantage of DVDs if you are the sort who takes binoculars to live opera. And I suppose the lingering shots of Vladimir Jurowski at the start might appeal to some, if not to me. But the set construction was apparently quite spectacular, and that is lost on film. Gerald Finley seems a bit too nice to be the sort of Don Giovanni that I imagine Mozart intended, although his singing is gorgeous – and the 1950s setting does rather suit the smoothy style of seduction (his white DJ presumably matching many smoothies in the audience). Anna Virovlansky is a buxom and knowing Zerlina, and Luca Pisaroni a very effective Leporello. But the real joy of this DVD is the performance by the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, with their impeccable sense of instrumental colour. The notes are comprehensive, with a detailed synopsis. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

Platti *The Late Keyboard Sonatas* Luca Guglielmi *fp & hpscd* 69' 36"
Accent ACC 24228

Charles Burney's disparaging observation that Italian harpsichords were 'more wood than wire' captures pithily the perception that Italian keyboard instruments of the 18th century were distinctly inferior to their north-European counterparts. But what is undeniable is that many Italian keyboard players were at the forefront of the transition in taste which popularised the solo sonata and in turn informed the early works of Haydn and Mozart. One of these was Giovanni Benedetto Platti, whose sonatas, on the evidence of this recording, deserve to be more widely recognised.

This disc presents mixtures of sonatas from MS and from Op. 4, published in Nuremburg in 1746, and features two instruments by Kerstin Schwarz. Both are copies after Cristofori: the 1726 pianoforte, and the 'Ebony' harpsichord of 1698. The combination of Platti and Cristofori is an interesting one, even if the reasons for connecting them are somewhat tenuous. That said, it is the pianoforte which is the more attractive instrument, not for reasons of any proto-pianistic leanings on Platti's part, nor even what the booklet notes describe as 'the Italian origin of the Romantic in music'; but simply because the harpsichord is rather unpleasantly bright.

Four sonatas are performed on the pianoforte, two on the harpsichord. Luca Gugliemi's playing is characterised by a strong rhythmic drive which suits Platti's music particularly in the fast movements. The *allegro assai* of the of A minor sonata stands out in this respect. On occasions, however, his touch sounds heavy handed at times – action on the harpsichord is clearly audible – but he contrives to create some attractive sonorities on the pianoforte, particularly in the use of the *una corda* in the adagio of the B flat major sonata.

Platti's music displays a keen sense for structure, concise ideas coupled with a flair for unexpected melodic twists. It is well worth hearing, and in Gugliemi's hands has a persuasive advocate.

Warwick Cole

19th CENTURY

Berlioz *Les Nuits d'été*, op. 7, Handel *Arias* Lorraine Hunt Lieberson, Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, Nicholas McGegan 71' 44"
Philharmonia Baroque PBP-01
Arias from *Giulio Cesare, Ottone, Arianna, Radamisto, Agrippina*

One of the first issues on Philharmonia Baroque's own newly established label, these live recordings will arouse considerable interest among the singer's legion of fans. That said, the Handel arias, recorded in 1991, seem to me to represent the singer at something less than her best. That may have something to do with a far-from-ideal recording, which in addition to giving the orchestra little presence captures to a distracting degree a fast vibrato in the unique voice. One or two awkwardly negotiated corners and some unconvincing ornamentation do not further the cause. Of course, as one would expect, there are also things to savour: the wonderfully sustained cantabile and understated, yet palpable emotional intensity of "Ombra cara" (*Radamisto*) go directly to the heart, while the flightiness of Agrippina is vividly conveyed within the short space of time it takes to sing "Ogni vento", a feat few singers could hope to emulate. Yet overall the arias remain a little disappointing.

In every respect the Berlioz is quite another matter. For a start the 1995 sound is greatly superior, with the orchestra far better balanced. Indeed, one of the joys of this performance is the obvious relish the players take in the luminous delicacy of the orchestral writing. But then how could they have failed to respond in the face of such music and such singing? For this is without doubt a *Nuits d'été* worthy to stand alongside such classics as Régine Crespin's 1963 version or Colin Davis' 1969 Philips employing four singers, in accordance with Berlioz's original intentions. From the magical air of vernal freshness captured in 'Villanelle', through a 'Sur les lugunes' where overwhelming grief is somehow, if barely, suppressed until the shattering closing lines of each strophe, to the unattainable longing of 'L'Île inconnue', Hunt Lieberson not only sings these songs but also lives them, drawing in the unresisting listener unrelentingly. Perhaps only 'Absence' marginally disappoints, the deliberate tempo missing not only the flow of the song, but also equally something of its ardour. But make no mistake. This is a magnificent performance. *Brian Robins*

Dussek *Piano Concertos* Andreas Staier, Concerto Köln TT
Capriccio 5072
Concertos in B flat *op. 22*, & G minor *op. 49*, & *Tableau "Marie Antoinette" op. 23*

Like many of his contemporaries, Dussek has been unjustly overshadowed by comparison with the classical triumvirate of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven – the yardstick by which so much of the music of this period seems to be measured. But in fact Dussek's is a unique and original voice. This disc, originally recorded in

1992, is a powerful advocate for one of Dussek's concertos, but elsewhere does little to enhance Dussek's standing.

The more successful of the two concertos here is undoubtedly op. 49 in G minor. From its opening bars, it is full of interest: effectively scored – particularly in the use of the wind – and peppered with subtle harmonic touches. Of course, there is an abundance of virtuoso writing, but it is kept in balance. Staier plays an 1806 Broadwood and works hard to employ the various sonorities that the instrument has to offer. His phrasing is well-judged and he keeps the music taut and focused. The orchestral accompaniment is exemplary. The one slightly tiresome feature is the sweeping cascades of arpeggios and scales which traverse the keyboard from end to end punctuated by forte chords from the orchestra. Here the performers do the music few favours by the lack of variety – it all gets a bit dull. And here also Staier's playing lacks subtlety as he too often succumbs to forcing the instrument. His over-use of the pedal clouds the textures, and detracts from what otherwise could be sparklingly clear.

The B flat major concerto is somewhat tedious. Staier tacitly acknowledges this by providing what he describes as 'a small introduction' – in fact a third of the length of the slow movement – and questions why Dussek wrote all three movements in the same key. 'I myself cannot decide whether this is an advantage or not', he writes. Actually, the answer is quite simple: it isn't. The music is pretty enough but there are vast tracts which are harmonically static.

Completing the disc is the tableau on the imprisonment and execution of Marie-Antoinette, complete with voice-over description of the individual movements. This is not great music, and when it comes, the climax of the falling guillotine is so predictable that it is hardly worth the wait. A curious conclusion to disc that has some wonderful moments. *Warwick Cole*

Schubert *Schubertiade Nachtmusick* Orpheon Ensemble, Jan Vermeulen *fp*, Daniel Reuss TT
Et'cetera KTC 1421

If this is how an evening in Schubert's house went, I would have happily accepted an invitation. With, perhaps, a slight reservation over the tone of the period piano ("every silver lining has a cloud"), the balance here of (beautiful singing by the male ensemble and what might be considered "pop music" of the day, waltzes and ländler – nothing too taxing – is perfectly managed. Similarly, the balance and blend of voices between the four parts of the Orpheon Ensemble is impeccable. Regular readers will know that I have a soft spot for German language part-songs from this period, so it will come as no surprise that I recommend this recording. *BC*

Come to the River: An Early American Gathering Apollo's Fire, Jeannette Sorrell
Avie AV2205 64' 53"

This is an interesting mixture of secular and sacred, folk and shape-note music. Nothing wrong with that, but we are not clear what social image the performers are creating. It seems a bit refined with what sounds like composed arrangements that don't ring true. Some of the music may well have been performed by upper-class trained musicians, but it feels a bit too controlled, often too slow and too beautiful. Perhaps I'm sentimentalising the opposite way from Jeannette, who at least has roots in the right place. We were pleased to hear some fine songs that we didn't know, but often a performance which started well was spoilt by the tempo being too slow for a strophic song and elaborations which were less moving than simplicity. The widely-known poor wayfaring stranger suffered particularly. CB enjoyed some of it, but EB (with more of a folky youth) was disappointed. *CB/EB*

VICTORIA & ALBERT

Music all powerful: Music to entertain Queen Victoria Purcell Consort of Voices, Grayston Burgess 52' 19" (rec 1969)
Decca *Eloquence* 480 2091
Prince Albert, Barnby, Beale, Callcott, Chaminade, Galkin, Klosé, Mendelssohn, Pinsuti, Alice Mary Smith, Sullivan, Tours, Walmisley,
Music of Albert, Prince of Saxe, Coburg and Gotha: 16 Lieder Purcell Consort of Voices, Grayston Burgess 50' 45 (rec 1968-9)
Decca *Eloquence* 480 2092

The Prince Consort was a more-than-competent composer, as these songs show. The one that struck me particularly was *Der Ungeliebte*, with a touch of melancholy that wouldn't be too emotional for a social gathering (or for Victoria to sing with Albert on the piano). The songs are well-written, and I doubt if they w ould be recognised as the work of an amateur in a blind hearing. The programme ends with Albert's *Invocazione all' Armonia*. The Victoria disk is more erratic musically, with some pieces like *Sweet and low* and *The long day closes* where it is difficult to know whether to exaggerate the expression. The Consort avoid that by being just a little early-music-ish. The musical quality is not so consistent as on the Albert disk, but both are delightful examples of music for domestic and social entertainment of the earlier Victorian era, while she was still capable of being amused. The performers are among the best of the period, with Jennifer Partridge accompanying her brother Ian among others on both disks. Iona Brown plays Prince Albert's *Melody for the Violin* on the Victoria programme and there's an ophicleide piece by Klosé from Alan Lumsden. David King recites *A Loyal Ode* by A. C. Benson. Don't sit down and listen for two hours with wrapt concentration, but well worth having around the house. *CB*

20th CENTURY

Satie Le fils des étoiles Alexei Lubimov (Bechstein 1899), 50'32"
passacaille **965**

I'm not sure if this yet qualifies as Early Music but it is played on an 1899 Bechstein which is more or less contemporary with its date of composition.* The three preludes from Satie's incidental music to *Le fils des étoiles* are reasonably well known but here the Russian pianist Alexei Lubimov plays the complete piano version, which also includes music for the three acts of the drama. The work comes from Satie's Rosecrucian period in the early 1890s and eschews any dramatic representation or indeed development of any kind. It is more a collage of chords, textures and harmonic colours in Satie's inimitable style. It is immaculately played by Lubimuv and the Bechstein responds very well to his demands for great clarity as well as bringing out the contrasting colours of different registers and chord placements. Good as 'furniture' music rather than for deep listening! *Noel O'Regan*

I reviewed a disc of Alban Berg at least 20 years ago with a cover that prominent proclaimed that it was recorded on a piano of the period. CB

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Welcome to another new reviewer, Catherine Groom, a professional recorder player. You can hear her on her web site: just google her name.

STONDON BYRD FESTIVAL

Andrew Smith

Early-music lovers from far and wide flocked to hear the music of William Byrd at Stondon Massey Church over two weekends in May. William Byrd lived in the village until his death in 1623.

A 'William Byrd Festival' was organised by the congregation of St Peter & St Paul Church in order to raise money to build a new Garden of Remembrance in the churchyard where Byrd is thought to have been buried in an unmarked grave. The Festival not only realised £2200 but also raised the profile of the man who ought to be as well-known as his contemporary, William Shakespeare. To use a pun, the Festival killed two birds with one stone.

William Byrd was a recusant Catholic, refusing to attend the Church of England at a time when staying away from Services was illegal. He, with other papists, was frequently named before the Archdeaconry Court and fined huge sums of money. Byrd wrote music for the Catholic faith, which was banned, but was spared punishment because he had friends in high places. He was a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal, the monarch's personal choir, and his music was liked by Queen Elizabeth I and her successor King James I. The Petre family of Ingatestone Hall were his Patrons, and it was to John Petre that Byrd dedicated his second book of Latin Catholic liturgical music in 1607. He was both loyal and yet a traitor.

Leading the cast on the first Saturday of the Festival was Richard Turbet, now retired from the University of Aberdeen, an expert on the life and work of Byrd. He led a lecture/recital entitled "William Byrd: His Essex Years" which explored the composer's musical output while living in Stondon Massey. He was supported by the Stondon Singers under their conductor Christopher Tinker. The event was held twice, the present Lord Petre attending the matinee performance.

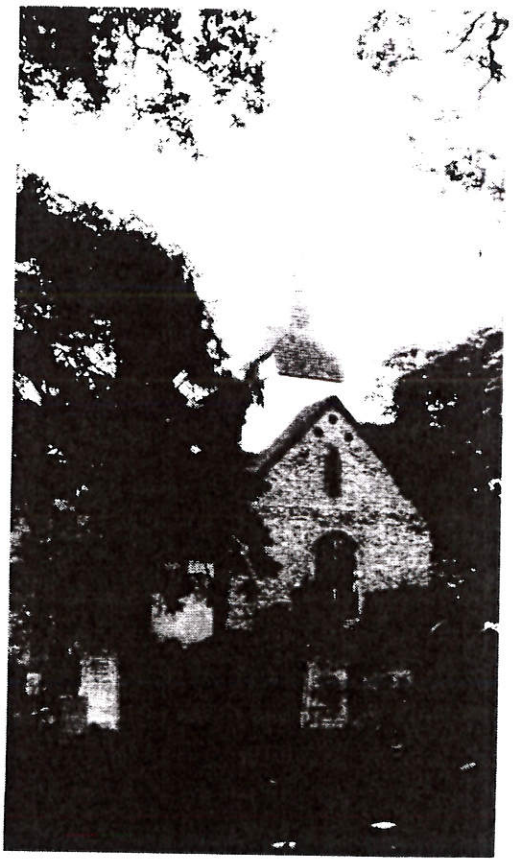
A Prayer-Book Matins was held the following morning with music by Byrd played on the organ by John Hatt and an anthem sung by the church music group, Jubilate.

The second weekend's events were led by a Saturday concert by the Writtle Singers, under Christine Gwynn, making their debut performance at St Peter & St Paul Church. Their programme – 'William Byrd: Loyal Heart or Traitor?' – explored Byrd's life as a recusant Catholic and the protest songs he secretly composed. The Festival concluded on the Sunday with a service of Favourite Hymns, reflecting Byrd's wish that 'every man should learne to sing'.

The event has put William Byrd on the map as far as the church is concerned. During the second week, one of the congregation visited the church in order to set up the space for a choir rehearsal to find affixed to the door a bunch of flowers with a request to place them on the grave of the 'English composer'. The flowers were sent by well-wishers from 'Tom Garrison and the Trinity Choir' which following a little Internet research turned out to be the Episcopal Cathedral in Kansas City. It was decided to arrange the flowers on the Memorial Tablet to the great composer inside the church. The Festival website (www.williambyrdfestival.blogspot.com), which remains open, shows that William Byrd is very popular in America with over a third of the hits coming from that country.

Members of the congregation received some lovely comments and have been encouraged to make more of William Byrd's name in Essex. As Revd Edward Reeve, Rector of Stondon Massey wrote a century ago: "We can claim Byrd for our own".

Two books are available at the church priced £2 each: *William Byrd: Some Notes*, and a biography of Reeve himself.



CLIFFORD BARTLETT APPEAL

We are extremely grateful for all the contributions to the Clifford Bartlett Appeal. We would like to thank you individually, but we are not recipients of any detailed information of donors. As the leaflet said, the target is only a proportion of the family's losses. The chance of getting any money from the fraudsters is minimal, and we will not know for some time what we will need to retain our home. Clare and John are not consciously aware of our problems, but they certainly miss the foreign trips that they used to enjoy and must somehow be aware of the stress under which we are living.

The fraudsters have appeared in court briefly since Christmas, but the arraignment hearing of 4 Feb. was postponed and we still do now know what their plea will be nor whether the date announced earlier in the year for the trial (September) still applies.

There is a tangential but reassuring development in that the boss of our fraudster was castigated by a civil court judge for treating his victim in a way that parallels ours very closely. The solicitor involved has now heard of over 25 similar victims.

We are also grateful for the various acts of kindness we have received, which include purchasing new spectacles for us both, 'overpaying' for music, legal help & advice, and twice allowing us to get a break in a family holiday cottage. Several people have started organising concerts on our behalf or have promised that we will receive a contribution from already organised events. All the ways we were trying to prepare for Clare and John's lives without us were scuppered by the bankruptcy, she money received from events so-far is encouraging.

It was Polly Sussex, a subscriber whom I had only met for a couple of minutes at the Greenwich exhibition, who led the way by suggesting a concert in Auckland and thus contribute to the appeal. I've known Wendy Hancock (a Nottingham student who has stayed in the area) since the 1970s. She has an annual concert by her students whose proceeds go to charity, and we were the choice this year.

The next concert is particularly appropriate, since the first concert I ever heard was *Messiah* at the Albert Hall. It was basic repertoire in our church choir and I was proud to have edited it for Oxford University Press. It will take place in Great St Mary's, Cambridge's University Church where I sang in a choir as an undergraduate and will be directed by Peter Holman, a close friend since about 1969. (June 26, 6.00 pm. Details in Diary on pp. 9 & 14.)

There is a change in one of the *Messiah* soloists.
Michael Chance is replaced by
mezzo-soprano Clare Wilkinson.

We are likely to be one of the beneficiaries from Ian Honeyman's musical walk from Lands' End to John o' Groats, singing to raise money for various charities at each resting place – an event at Abergavenny around 15 August will be supporting the CB Appeal..

The organiser of the appeal, Nick Fisher, has arranged for James Bowman and Dorothy Linell to give a programme of lute songs in Northleach Church. "The Cathedral of the Cotswolds" on 10 September.

We are also aware that concerts are being considered in France or Germany and next spring in New York.

If any reader would like to help by circulating appeal leaflets, we can either send some or send a pdf to have printed – a subscriber is kindly doing the latter at the Boston Early Music Festival. *CB*

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HANDEL AGRIPPINA

The music on pp. 20-21 is that of the *Dea ex machina* – Juno descending to round the story off neatly with a lively aria on a theme he had already used twice. As a solo to sing for fun, context (or, indeed, meaning) do not matter very much (an unlikely statement from me), and if you don't have the tutti instruments, keyboard alone will do. *CB*

LETTERS etc

MUSETTE REQUIRED

I don't suppose you know of anyone with a musette (de coeur) who would like to sell (or loan) it? I have been seized with an irrepressible urge to learn the instrument and am finding it impossible to find a second hand one (new ones being rather expensive).

If you could put the word out and let me know if you hear of anything I would be eternally grateful!

Amanda Babington

FOSCARINI EXPERIENCE – BON VOYAGE (RAUMKLANG RK 2904)

I can't help writing to express my surprise that when reviewing this CD in the latest issue of *EMR* Stewart McCoy seems to have taken everything in the liner notes at face value. I would have thought it was obvious that these were pure fantasy intended to justify the unusual manner in which the group has performed some of the music.

There is no evidence to suggest that Foscarini toured Europe with violone and percussion players in tow. The illustration referred to in the liner notes is Denys van Alsloot's "The Ommeganck in Brussels on 31 May 1615: The Triumph of Archduchess Isabella". This was an procession that honoured the prestigious Crossbowmen's Guild in Brussels: It can be seen at

http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O18973/painting-the-ommeganck-in-brussels-on/

On the float is a large group of musicians playing various instruments but there is no proof that either of the lutenists is Foscarini and indeed as far as one can tell most of the musicians are women although I suppose they could be men in drag!

In the typeset introduction to *Il primo, secondo, e terzo libro della chitarra spagnola* (ca. 1630, reproduced in all subsequent editions), Foscarini says that he is a lutenist by profession and claims to be well known as a lutenist both in Italy and abroad, especially at the court of the Archduke Alberto in the Spanish Netherlands. A note at the end of the list of contents an earlier book, *Intavolatvra di chitarra spagnola. Libro secondo* (Macerata,1629) refers to him as "Musico, e Sonatore, di Liuto, e Tiorba, della Venerabile Compagnia del Saatissimo [sic] Sacramento d'Ancona". He was also a member of the Accademia dei Caliginosi in Ancona, identifying himself in his earlier books by the name of the society with his own academic name "Il Furioso"- "L'Accademico Caliginoso detto il Furioso". That is as much as we currently know about his early life.

To my mind performing the music in this way trivializes it and would rarely be acceptable in other repertoires. Fortunately most of the pieces are played on the guitar alone in a way which is reasonably faithful to the original although at least some of the dissonance referred to is due to the chaotic and inaccurate way in which the music is notated and printed. But presenting completely false information in a way that suggests it is true is unhelpful and should be discouraged. *Monica Hall*

Recordings of Venus

We have never had so many correcting phone calls and emails as those pointing out that there have been other recordings of Blow's *Venus and Adonis* than the one reviewed in *EMR* 141 p. 15 and the one noted in the footnote to the review. I had intended to list the other CDs, but didn't want to leave any out. The obvious ones are accessible on Google, but were there others? I decided to give the minimum information, but didn't adjust the text of my footnote.

I had some involvement in two of the CDs, so am certainly aware of them. My 1984 edition of the work was commissioned by Anthony Rooley and the Consort of Musicke (and it has been the standard edition since then until Bruce Wood's, and will probably continue to be used unless Stainer and Bell sell orchestral parts). I can't remember if Philip Pickett's Decca recording was from the same edition, but I was at some of the sessions to write PR biograpies of some of the performers. There is also a CD by Réné Jacobs.

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There were probably more misprints in the April issue than usual. One was "Stainer and Ball" (reminding one of the singular Beecham quote). The last line of the CD reviews was missing: it contained

doubtless disagree. *Brian Robins*

the blank top line of the column should have been deleted. There are no doubt others. *CB*

The AUGUST issue is likely to appear a few days late , because of CB's presence at the Beauchamp Summer School

Entries for early August need to be in the July diary

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