

Early Music

REVIEW

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delays to EMR but not the diary

What is the point of vocal scores in baroque music? They didn't exist then. Opera and oratorio singers sometimes worked from a two-stave score, the upper one for the soloist, the lower for the continuo player/repetiteur, with the top line of the ritornellos inserted as cues. Otherwise, like Bach's singers, they just had their own part. The public would buy separate arias or scores with a bit more information, with maybe separate staves for the main instruments, and the bass would be figured. Chorus singers, however, sung from parts, like players. Occasionally, full scores were published, but vocal scores came later.

It is quite common now for 17th-century pieces to be published as scores, and if the work has more than a few instruments, chorus scores (ideally with full continuo line) can keep the price and page-turning down. But when singers ask for a Handel aria, I have to explain that we will be sending them the "full" score. There are many arias that only need three staves anyway – unison violins (with no violas), voice and bass – virtually the same as a vocal score, except that there is nothing for the right hand when the violins are silent. The harmonic movement is almost invariably clear from the bass, especially if it is figured. While learning a piece, there's no point in picking up cues from the top note of a continuo realisation, since there's no guarantee that you'll hear the same top note next time it's played.

If there are more instrumental staves, the accompanist (or singer alone learning at the piano) can focus on the essence: ignore the wind unless it is obbligato or has solo passages, and ignore the viola. The only problem is if the continuo slips into tenor clef. It is useful to be able to see what the instruments will be playing at the concert, and you get a better idea of the music from the score than a piano reduction (especially those where the continuo fill-ins are not shown in smaller print).

And it puzzles me why publishers don't offer parts. Even if you are producing a piano reduction, it's sensible for the type-setter to begin with the full score. He can then produce the parts, copy the file, take the violin I or obbligato instrument as the right-hand part and drag the lesser parts that can be accommodated below it: minimal extra work!

CB

REVIEWS OF MUSIC

Clifford Bartlett

NANINO MADRIGALS

Giovanni Maria Nanino *Complete Madrigals. Part 1: Il primo libro de madrigali a cinque voci* Edited by Christina Boenicke and Anthony Newcomb (Recent Researches in the Music of the Renaissance, 158) A-R Editions, 2012. xlv + 168pp, \$156.00.

Nanino is little more than a name to me. I checked the index in Alfred Einstein's *The Italian Madrigal* and the name only occurs in lists of madrigal composers. I haven't got a list at hand of the vast number of madrigal books he transcribed, but I guess that he gave Nanino a miss, since it is evident from this volume that it deserves attention. His popularity is attested by there being three different reprints, the first edition not having survived. His status is confirmed by the number of his madrigals in anthologies. He was born in 1543 or 1544 and worked chiefly as a Roman church musician, being a member of the Papal choir from 1577 until his death in 1607.

The editors deduce that this first volume of madrigals was published in 1571. It contains 15 items, but 11 of them are sonnets, which have two parts. There is a useful table of clefs, signatures, meter, lengths, number of lines of the poems and gender of the "speaker" – in this case nine for male, six unspecified. This is a serious publication, as the number of sonnets suggests, but the most reprinted item "Morir non può 'l mio core" is short and less predictable. An early example of a text often set, with a chain of relationships chased here and in editions by Newcomb of other composers; Nanino's setting appears in Thomas Watson's *Italian Madrigalls Englished* in 1590. The introduction is thorough, with each madrigal's text set out in Italian, translated, and with a textual and musical commentary. Eight other settings relating to madrigals in Book I are printed in full for comparison, supplementing the editorial comments. The critical commentary would have been more accessible at the end of the volume rather than squashed between the 15 madrigals of Book I and the supplementary pieces. I was puzzled by a remark in the last paragraph of the introduction that transposing as much as a minor third "does not falsify the the sound envisaged by the composer". Newcomb did his work on the madrigals at Ferrara before the implication of *chiavette* became significant, and the initial arguments were chiefly concerned with church music, so perhaps he would argue that madrigals follow different conventions. Either the concept is rejected or the paragraph isn't clear, and as anyone familiar with transposition of English church music is aware, a minor third is significant.

If you are a poor scholar wanting to sing the madrigals, you can download the facsimile from IMSLP (I prefer "Petrucchi" as being an appropriate and more memorable

name than a set of initials, but I haven't found anyone else who does), though it needs some considerable enlarging: the price of five copies of the score is an incentive to get used to the original notation! But the score helps understand the relationship of music, words and context.

RAVENS-CROFT

Thomas Ravenscroft *Rounds, Canons and Songs from Printed Sources Transcribed by John Morehen and David Mateer* (*Musica Britannica* 93). lii + 191pp, £90.00

This volume contains *Pammelia* (1609), containing 100 rounds, *Deuteromelia* (1609), with 24 rounds and seven folk items for solo with three instruments and chorus, *Melismata* (1611), with more elaborate songs for soli and chorus with instruments, and the musical items from *A brief discourse* (1614), with 20 more four-part pieces published somewhat inappropriately with his musical instruction book. There are great advantages in having this popular repertoire collected together, though the MB format does seem in some ways inappropriately formal. I suppose that the four-part pieces at least could be considered as portraits of popular material, so appropriate for studying and imitating lower-class entertainment. I've had copies of all the music here for several decades, so it is not inaccessible, though as far as I can see, the MB volume doesn't let on that facsimiles are likely to be available in libraries and are accessible on line. It's excellent that this repertoire is taken seriously, though the format is hardly practical for singing in the pub.

It is probably better to think of Ravenscroft as an editor rather than a composer in this context. He *can* compose well: I was very impressed by *O clap your hands* edited by Ian Payne, which we sang at a workshop at the NEMA voice conference in 2009: it's now available on line. His most circulated publication was *The Whole Booke of Psalmes* (1621), another anthology, not primarily his own composition.

The lengthy introduction updates what was previously known about Ravenscroft's life. Grove Online still has his dates as ?1592-c.1635, whereas he was probably born in 1589 and is last heard of in 1622, unless he was involved in a second edition of his psalter in 1633. The edition itself has the right balance of pedantry and over-modernisation, apart from the usual treatment of the time/mensuration markings. It puzzles me that Chappell is the main source for early history of some of the pieces: my normal means of checking would be the first edition of Chappell's *Popular Music of Olden Time* (1859, Dover reprint 1965: the revised edition isn't necessarily an improvement). The ballad tradition doesn't feature much, but one particularly famous song, *The Three Ravens*, is short-changed by

failing to plug into Bertrand Bronson's essential compilation and ordering of versions in *The Traditional Tunes of the Child Ballads* (Princeton UP, 4 vols, 1959-72), and surely a mention of Thomas Hardy in the notes to *Remember O thou man* would have given a hint on its reception history.

I hope that Stainer & Bell will try to sell copies to libraries specialising in folk and popular culture.

JEFFREYS & HILTON

George Jeffreys *Six Motets for two tenors and continuo...*
Edited by Derek Harrison Green Man Press (Jef 4), 2012.
 21pp + 2 extra scores and a Bc part, £9.90

Jeffreys is a fascinating composer, offering few editorial problems since most of his music survives in his own autograph volume, British Library Add. MS 10338). Out of curiosity, I compared *Erit gloria Domini* with my edition, based on *Cantica Sacra... The Second Set* (Playford, 1674), where it is for two sopranos. There are a few insignificant differences, and a more noticeable one in the second B in the Bc part, which is natural in 1674. In bar 14, the Bc is minim and semibreve D then minim A. Bass figuring varies. These variants don't affect the essence of the work, and I doubt whether any scholar would find the 1674 version of dubious authenticity if the motet hadn't been in the autograph MS. (Even if it had been a deliberate change, I wouldn't use the "creative" concept discussed in connection with Purcell on p. 9) The opening piece, *Timor et tremor*, is sadly not the text as set by Lassus and Gabrieli – though there is a slightly tamer version of the Gabrielian G to E major in bar 18. Highly recommended.

John Hilton *Three Dialogues... for solo voices and continuo* Edited by Peter Holman & Cedric Lee. Green Man Press (Hil 1), 2012. 27pp + extra scores & Bc part, £11.80

These three dialogues survive in a sequence in the composers hand in British Library Add. MS 11608. A secular one comes first, a concise Judgment of Paris, which may have been suggested by a masque by James Shirley. Juno, Venus and Pallas [Athene] are in treble clef, though only Juno (who gets the lion's share of the three candidates) needs to be a proper soprano, while Paris is a baritone. They all come together in a concluding chorus. Solomon and the two Harlots require a bass and two sopranos and the Dialogue of Job needs SATB. I'm puzzled that God (originally in tenor clef) is transcribed for bass, whereas the expected octave-treble clef would have dropped the hint that his sound should be different from the bass Satan. Job (alto clef) is fine in octave-treble – the range is high tenor. There are also four messengers (treble clefs). The versification isn't brilliant. Getting the forces together to work on these short pieces with fairly brief solo sections might be awkward, but they would be interesting diversions in a small vocal ensemble singing church music or madrigals. The Jeffreys volume is easier to handle, and probably better music.

BALTZAR UNACCOMPANIED

Thomas Baltzar *Works for Violin* Edited by Patrick Wood Urlbe. A-R Editions (S 032) ix + 19pp & part, \$28.00

Baltzar was born in 1630 or, if he was legitimate, 1631 in Lübeck into a family of town musicians. He was in Sweden around 1653, returned to Lübeck when Queen Christina abdicated, and was in London by 4 March 1656 when Evelyn enthused over his ability to "play a full consort" on his violin. He may have learnt his skill from Nicolaus Bleyer (1591-1650), who worked in Lübeck from 1621 and played music for unaccompanied violin. The statement that Bleyer learnt about "rich double stopping" from English models doesn't fit with the English 4 and 5 part string music. Urlbe suggests that Baltzar got some inspiration from English [lyra?] viol music.

The volume contains 16 pieces (not numbered), most of them short. Three are Preludes and 12 are dances. The first group, from Bodleian Mus. Sch. F. 573, has eight pieces. The Allemande & Sarabande in B flat and Allemande and Variation, Courante & Sarabande in G minor are on consecutive pages in the MS and could be played as two short suites, but there doesn't seem to be any coherent relationship. Four pieces (two Allemands, Corant and Sarabrand) for scordatura violin are headed "A Set of tunings" in the source, Christ Church MS Mus 1125, are in A major, but notated in scordatura. The final group comes from Playford's *Division-Violin*, two from 1684 and two more in the 1693 sequel.

One item is of a different genre, the 15 variations on *John come kiss me now* – I hope players don't look at the comma that the editor puts after "John" and try to incorporate it in their phrasing! The edition has a separate insert with the identical bass underlaid throughout. Playford is more economical, printing the bass only once (all that is needed is what Playford prints at the end of the piece

|| : Ggg|Ccc|Ggg|Ddd|Ggg|Ccc|GD|G: ||

(Capital letter = minim, small letter = crotchet.)

Playford prints the version needed for then first statement, but the other variations all require DD in bar 7. It should be possible for a player to memorise the bass (as Playford presumed): an eight-page score slipped inside the edition seems pointless. At least there is no realisation! "Superfluous" original accidentals are retained. However, the notation of F sharps (the only inflected note) is a bit confusing. There is a one-sharp signature, but often utterly obvious F sharps are added. I wonder whether the copy text had no signature and Playford's engraver updated it inconsistently. There is also the possibility that in some variations the first and 5th bar might have F naturals on the last beat (and an option for continuo passing notes) as transition to the C major of bars 2 & 6, where there are often Fs which could be natural: none of the possible naturals have superfluous sharps! (cf p. 34)

It's a welcome volume. The other pieces may not quite match Evelyn's description, but are certainly valuable study material, useful contrast with the Playford-style grounds, and refreshing to hear.

To be reviewed in the next issue

Motets by Emperor Ferdinand III and Other Musicians from the Habsburg Court, 1637-1657 Edited by Andrew H. Weaver (Collegium Musicum Yale University, Second Series Volume 18) A-R Editions, 2012. xxxiv + 15 facs + 2434pp, \$220.00

GROSSI for TRUMPET & STRINGS

Andrea Grossi 2 *Sonatas a5, op. 3 for Trumpet, 2 Violins, Viola, Bassetto and Organ...* edited by Friedrich Cerha. Diletto Musicale (DM 1418), 2012. 27pp + parts, £38.00.

Little is known about Grossi, who may have been a descendent of Ludovico Grossi da Viadana. His *Sonate A due, tre, quattro, e cinque Instrumenti* was published in Bologna in 1682, containing three pieces for each category. The pieces here are Sonatas 10 & 11, each for trumpet, four strings and organ. The editor gives two suggestions for *bassetto*: a type of gamba or a cello: the latter seems more plausible. I don't understand why the publisher supplies a separate part labelled *Basso*, which is the organ part without figures: even if you are performing the work orchestrally and add a 16' bass, the figures don't do any harm. Cerha makes a point of placing the "figured" thirds on the stave, which is presumably how they were printed in the original. I'm not too worried whether they are on the stave or with the other figures, but at least he doesn't change sharps or flats to naturals. It is, however, a bit odd to have a sharp placed as if before a note that is below the bass (Sonata 10, bar 11), which at least confirms that the sharps are not intended to be played at the octave in which they are notated, and I don't understand a sharp with a bracketed natural above in the next bar: there's no way a standard 4-3 cadence could be minor. These can be promoted as trumpet concertos, and add to the variety of such works. There are four movements: framing a triple Adagio and a duple Grave.

RUGGIERI CANTATAS

Giovanni Maria Ruggieri *Cantatas op. 5* Edited by Jasmin Melissa Cameron (Recent Researches in the Music of the Baroque Era, 187). xxvi + 95pp, \$90.00

Ruggieri has so far been known chiefly as the source of a Gloria which Vivaldi borrowed from in his RV 588 & 589. Two Glorias were in Vivaldi's library, at one stage given numbers in the Vivaldi catalogue, Anh 23 and another setting, Anh. 24, which was not, as far as is known, quarried for further Glorias. The editor has published these as RRMBE 152. She has also investigated Ruggieri's sketchy biography. In 1697 he embezzled his employer, Domenico Contarini, of 4496 ducats, which he had to repay at a rate of 200 ducats per annum – a heavy burden for life! Perhaps he needed the money when he volunteered to be *impressario* at the Teatro di San Cassiano the year before. In 1712, he took a loan to buy a house, but defaulted and was in prison in 1713. It is probably he who died in prison in or before 17 May 1714.

His ten Cantata op. 5 were published by Sala in Venice in 1706. There are four for soprano & continuo, 2 for alto & continuo, 2 each for soprano and for alto and two violins, one for two sopranos and one for two altos, both with unison violins. The idea of unison violins seems odd to me, but the specific instruction is added to the part by hand before no. 9. Since only one copy of the publication survives, this cannot be checked. Was there a habit of publishing in tens rather than dozens at his period? Bonporti was doing this at the same time. As always, texts and translations are given; here they are side by side, though A-R isn't always consistent. Unusually, there is no section on performance practice. Is the harpsichord now the natural accompaniment by 1706, and were cellos generally used to double the continuo line or to play it without harpsichord? Notationally, I'm puzzled why some of the 3/8 movements are set so sparsely. These are certainly good practice for playing virtually unfigured basses, especially in the solo cantatas. These are useful for singers who don't want to push themselves too early into operatic virtuosity. That doesn't diminish their musical quality. So ladies, find yourself a harpsichordist you are happy to squeeze on the music stand with or lean over (do you really want to spend £60 for another copy?) and enjoy some close study. Eventually, the singer will have to memorise her part, which will probably improve the performance compared with hiding behind a music stand – the format is a bit big for that anyway.

BONONCINI TRIOS

Giovanni Bononcini *Twelve Chamber Sonatas* (London, 1732) Edited by Jeffrey Noonan (Recent Researches in the Music of the Baroque Era, 183). A-R Editions, 2012. xvii + 87pp, \$85.00, parts \$40.00

Bononcini is still often discussed in opposition to Handel, so it is good that the editor avoids that issue. His main contention is that Bononcini goes beyond the *da camera* and *da chiesa* patterns, which may be true, but which isn't argued in depth on relationship to other trio sonatas (a term that Bononcini avoids) of the period. He does, however, make the point that divisions between movements are more flexible. Unfortunately, the three facsimile pages do not show an example of a time signature being shown before a page-turn and a new tempo marking. It's a pity that there is no facsimile available. Bononcini's title page insists that the bass line is doubled – it is surprising that by 1732, it was not assumed to be normal, so perhaps we should be more prepared to have either a cello or a harpsichord, not both. The music is fluent and pleasing, but the second part is mostly playing second fiddle, alas!

EDITION BAROQUE

I came across Edition Baroque at the Greenwich exhibition last month, and was intrigued by their wares. Apparently I had met them a few years ago, and indeed I had: I reviewed seven items in *EMR* 117 (Feb. 2007), and now have another batch. My apologies for my forgetfulness – but I wasn't at my best at Greenwich. I'll begin by repeating part of my 2007 introduction.

"Their Autumn 2006 list had about 70 titles; the ones I have seen are A4 format, nicely computer-set, with coloured covers, thin enough to be stapled, and with the requisite parts. Some have optional continuo realisations. The short introductions are in German only and sometimes need more precise editorial information." I would, in fact, stress even more the need for an English translation as well: most serious musicians who don't know German will have some English. Edition Baroque provides two copies for solo songs, one with a cover, the other without, which is a sensible way of selling them.

Autori Diversi Lullaby... herausgegeben von Jörg Jacobi
Edition Baroque (eba 3064), 2011. 27pp, €15.90 (2 copies)

This is an anthology of English lullabies, mostly accessible in facsimile in the Garland English Song series. I checked a few songs, and the transcriptions were reliable. The first item is the best-known: "Sweet was the song the Virgin sang" in the version for voice and bass from Egerton 2971, and second best is Byrd's "Lullaby, my sweet little baby", though there's something seriously wrong with the pitch: there are rather a lot of top As for a lullaby. In fact, the wrong part is given to the singer: "The first singing part" is the second part down (C2 clef), not the top part in G2. Other sources have the work a tone lower. The other six songs are virtually unknown. The anonymous "Beat upp a dromm" (from the John Gamble book) is very lively. This too is high, but may be an early example of writing a high tenor part to be sung an octave lower, as occurs later in the 17th century. Sensibly, it is also printed down a fourth. A "glee" by Henry Lawes manages to bring the sober Roman Republican Cato into the Christmas feast within the first couplet. I won't go through every piece, but it's a good quarry for Christmas solos. The most likely accompaniment is a lute of some sort; if you are playing organ or harpsichord, thin out the chords a bit.

Rosenmüller Lamentationes Jeremiae Prophetæ Band 1... herausgegeben... von Jörg Jacobi. Edition Baroque (eba 3001), 2004. 13pp, (2 copies)

This is the first of two booklets of Lamentations. Eba 3002 (vol 2, which I haven't seen) is for soprano and continuo. Vol 1 is headed as Bass/Tenor. Literally, this means that settings the first and third setting is for bass, the second for tenor (at least in terms of clef). The two bass settings are definitely for bass voice, as is apparent from the falling into cadences with the continuo – though this is rarer in the first setting. The other setting is definitely for tenor. The style is eloquently declamatory, with some short florid sections, mostly at the Hebrew letters. Performers should be sure that the audience has the text and a literal translation of the Latin in facing columns.

Christian Flor Pastores currite in Bethlehem... Herausgegeben von Arnds Schnoor und Jörg Jacobi Edition Baroque (eba 6071), 2007. 11pp, €7.50

Flor (1626-97) is a new composer to me, and this makes an attractive welcome to his music. It is for SATB soli and perhaps for choir – but the source (Uppsala vmbs 21:6)

only has single voice parts. This isn't in the Italian shepherd style, being rhythmically less regular, even in the opening 6/4, and being in D minor, which wouldn't work on shepherds' bagpipes – and it's more interesting than the later pastorales. There's no mention of instrumental parts being available.

Anonymous Sonata Á 6. Violin... herausgegeben von Olaf Tetampel. Edition Baroque (eba5009) 2010., 15pp + parts, €9.00

This is definitely a piece to take with you if you go to a summer school! It looks entertaining, and more, but isn't enormously difficult. You do need a continuo – the Düben MS (imhs 011:19) has two string bass parts and a [keyboard] continuo part with a few figures. One page is devoted to a family tree of the Dübens, who are responsible for the vast library at Uppsala which is now becoming available online.

Christoph Graupner Monatliche Clavierfrüchte 1722: April – Mai – Juni herausgegeben... von Jörg Jacobi. Edition Baroque (eba 4010) 27pp, 2005. €11.00.

This edition splits the 12 months into four quarters, and the one I've received is, I suppose, Spring. I can't detect any Vivaldian pictorialism, but they are still excellent suites with eight or nine movements, beginning with a prelude and including an allemande, courante, sarabande and menuet, with airs and (in April and June) a closing gigue. They are rewarding to play and worth buying – my favourite item in this batch. It's a bit tight to have 14 staves on a page, but at least it avoids page-turns, and keyboard music is usually nearer the eye than orchestral parts shared by two players.

C. P. E. BACH – SMALLER WORKS

C. P. E. Bach Kleinere Werke für Orgel... Edited from the sources by Jochen Reutter, Notes on Interpretation by Gerhard Weinberger. Wiener Urtext Edition (UT50149), 2012. xxxii + 116pp, £21.25.

I know (or at least knew) the CPEB organ sonatas from an earlier edition, but had never registered the other miscellaneous pieces. It so happened that the pages first fell open at *Aus der Tiefen* (p. 52-55 followed by a version for manuals only). It puzzled me. The chorale itself is written with thick chords, sometimes in both hands: I wonder what sort of organ it would sound sensible on. Presumably it was not intended as a prelude to the following setting. The editor places a thick, conclusive double bar at the end of the chorale, and the elaboration of the melody that follows should surely start as a new piece. The chorale melody is slightly embellished as the treble, two parts (sometimes only one) are on the middle stave, and the bass is for the pedal; it's one of those pieces where the tune is primarily in crotchets, the bass in quavers and the middle in semiquavers. There is no

1. Incidentally, the piece has a JSB number, adjusted in the 1990 BWV as Anh. 745 and no Helm number.

ascription, but the figuration resembles the Allemande of CPEB's keyboard suite in E minor, Wq62/12, published in 1751. The previous piece also has a BWV number (Anh II 73, cf BWV 639), in three parts layered more systematically than *Aus der Tiefen*.

The volume begins with a Prelude and six fugues, followed by a single-movement Trio. After the two chorale settings already mentioned there are five four-part chorale harmonisations (H336/1-5). The appendices extend the music from 62 to 86 pages. There's a three-page Fuga (H. 372) and a batch of 30 pieces for a musical clock or barrel organ (H. 635). The Trio and the two chorale preludes are the only pieces with significant pedal parts. There is a substantial preface in German, English and French and a critical commentary in German and English, with a summary of relevant material from CPEB's *Versuch über die wahre Art das Clavier zu spielen*. I was amused that the French equivalent of "Minor Works for Organ" in the title is "Oeuvres de plus petite dimension".

HENLE VERLAG

C. P. E. Bach Gambensonaten Wq 88, 136, 137 Ausgabe für Violoncello. Henle (HE991), 2012. viii + 44 pp + 3 parts, €35.00

As well as an edition for the original instrument (HE 990), Henle has carefully prepared an edition for the cello and also for viola (which I haven't seen). Each of the three editions is basically Urtext with introduction and critical commentary, except the alternative bowed and fingered version for the soloist. I can't trace a review of the gamba version – my library is still disordered and dispersed – but I'm sure that it was (or will be) fine.

Mozart "Wunderkind"-Sonaten I für Klavier und Violine, KV 6-9... edited by Wolf-Dieter Seiffert. viii + 42pp + 2parts (Urtext and marked by Benjamin Schmid), €18.00

Mozart "Wunderkind"-Sonaten II für Klavier und Violine, KV 10-15... edited by Wolf-Dieter Seiffert. viii + 56pp + 2parts (Urtext and marked by Benjamin Schmid), €21.00

Mozart "Wunderkind"-Sonaten III für Klavier und Violine, KV26-31... edited by Wolf-Dieter Seiffert. viii + 38pp + 2parts (Urtext and marked by Benjamin Schmid), €18.00

As far as I can remember, the Henle edition of the Violin sonatas that I have had for 50+ years did not have the early sonatas. The first set was published in February 1764 in Paris. The Mozarts (father and son) moved to London in April, and the second set was published towards the end of the year. That set was influenced by J. C. Bach's recent op. 2, six sonatas for piano with accompaniments for violin/flute and cello, so that is how the Mozarts published it. The new edition ignores "flute" on the title page or headings in the score. The flexibility of scoring (the cello isn't essential) makes it sensible for this set to be treated as violin sonatas, but the edition does include a cello part. Mozart left London in August 1765 spent a month in Lille, then stayed in Amsterdam. The third set

was published in The Hague in April 1766. The Mozarts were then preparing for a slow journey back to Salzburg.

The three sets give a clear idea of Mozart's development as a composer. Scholars argue the extent to which the works may have been joint compositions: perhaps father added some sophistications, though I'd like to think the opposite – that father tamed the impetuous imagination of the son. The original sets 2 and 3 were engraved with considerable care to avoid awkward page-turns, and this edition commendably does the same. The music is clear, the introductions and commentaries thorough, and it is commendable that both are given in German, English and French – but should the third language now be Chinese?

HAYDN SYMPHONY 73

Haydn Symphony No. 73 in D major La Chasse arranged by John Peter Salomon, edited by Christopher Hogwood Edition HH (HH 66 296), 2012. xii + 58 pp + parts, £37.00

The Bärenreiter series of Salomon's arrangements of Haydn's London symphonies seems to have petered out. Photocopies of an early edition are available from KM/EMC, but they don't have the advantage of comparison with Salomon's own score. Less well known are the similar arrangements of another dozen symphonies reprinted by Robert Birchall around 1820. Some of these (and not all need have been by him) were played through in the presence of John Marsh in 1799. Salomon's autograph survives for two of the set (73 & 80) on paper water-marked 1801. This was at one stage owned by William Reeves, who as well as being an antiquarian music-dealer also issued the first legitimate edition of *The Communist Manifesto* in 1888.² Hogwood now owns both symphonies.

The instrumentation is more-or-less as in the twelve London symphonies: flute, string quartet and optional piano. The piano is not included in the autograph score but is in Birchall's publication, borrowed from elsewhere. As always, HH has produced an interesting and well edited publication, though I find that in the score (but not the parts) the stave lines seem a bit faint – but my eyes are not at their best at present. It is definitely entertaining music to play – some of the orchestral detail is missing, but you get more out of it if you are responsible for the performance without a conductor getting in then way.

Kozeluch Complete Sonatas for Keyboard II [& III] Edited by Christopher Hogwood. Bärenreiter BA 9512-3), 2011 [2012]. xxxvii + 203pp [xxxix + 239pp], £37.50 each.

With only a harpsichord and pseudo-organ in the house, I'm not in a position to evaluate these. I thought I had written generally on vol I, but my computer search hasn't found it. So all I can do is congratulate the editor and publisher on a gap-filling publication. The remaining volume will include works from MSS. I hope that not too

2. He was also a publisher of leftist literature, and the name still survives as a publisher.

far ahead, we will encounter recordings of this music to review, perhaps by the editor on a suitable instrument.

CARUS-VERLAG

It is some time since we had a batch of Carus editions to review. Most are a little modern for us, but I'll begin with the major work, with the rest as usual in chronological order.

Verdi *Messa da Requiem*... edited by Norbert Bolin Carus (27.303), xiii + 305pp, €119.00 [Also available: clothbound €162.00, Vsc €15.90, chorus score and orchestral parts due by the time the review is published].

The new edition in the Verdi Collected Works was edited by David Rosen and published in 1990: it runs to two volumes, "beautifully bound... and printed on high-grade paper in an oversized format" – I'd read "oversized" as a critical comment were it not in the blurb on the Chicago UP web site. Its price is \$375, but is only available in Europe from Ricordi and I haven't found a price on the www.

This coincides with the 200th anniversary of Verdi's birth. Compared with the older editions I've seen, this is a delight to read – though I don't have an edition at hand to compare it with. (The online score is an Eulenburg one, not the original engraving – presumably Ricordi didn't formally sell theirs till quite recently, so they could retain the copyright.)³ The only archaic features I've noticed are the preservation of three trombone parts as chords on one stave and the squashing of pairs of wind on single staves in places like bars 5-8 of *Dies irae*, when the upper and lower instruments are playing very different music – I hope the individual parts separate them. I don't actually understand the notation of two beamed pairs of two minims in a bar, each pair looking like French baroque white-notation. The lower strings, after a normal crotchet, have three further crotchet-lengths written as a single pair of white beamed dotted semiquavers. They only add up if you think of French white notation, but I think I must be out of touch with 19th century abbreviations!

This is a work that I know by ear rather than by eye (unusual for me). I was intrigued, for instance, that the opening duet (and chorus repetition) has a slur right across the two statements of "Agnus Dei": should the singers ignore the comma? There are some variations in slurs reported in the extensive commentary, but not affecting this issue. It does, incidentally, nearly always annoy me that the two singers don't make a *dolcissimo* sound: I suspect the intonation only works with very restrained vibrato. The choral repeat has one of those illogical dynamics: it starts *ppp*, then, with no other dynamic in between, has a decrescendo going down to just *pp* (literally, a louder dynamic), with *ppp* half a bar later: lesson one in realising that dynamics are not always logical.

3. In the small office in which I began to catalogue the Royal Academy of Music's library in the mid-1960s there was a bookcase containing several printed Verdi full scores described (I can't remember the exact term) as being considered as manuscripts.

One feature of lay-out worried me a bit. Take the two horn staves on page 98, bars 424-7. The total space between the staves is 9mm, both staves in treble clef:–

Semibreve Cs below the stave for each bar
Editorial (dashed) ties below the stave joining each semibreve
Editorial (dotted) crescendo extending for four bars with only a 2mm opening
Descending minim/semibreve phrase starting on top F with the dotted slur staying above the stave,

This looks very confusing, especially when all the lines are dots or dashes. I think that the alternative way of showing these as being editorial would be less distracting if normal lines and curves were printed with a slash in the middle, though I think that is only a UK device. It is, however, a beautiful score and, even more important, assuming that the vocal score and orchestral parts are equally well done, this should become the standard edition.

If I were Italian, I'd be disappointed that the introduction wasn't translated in full, but shortened from five to two pages, as is the English version: this seems a bit petty. In comparison with other editions reviewed this month, English language publications are assumed not to need translations, whereas German editions usually have full English translations, including critical commentaries, and sometime French as well. My guess is that this sends a message, perhaps subliminal, that Carus isn't a fully international publisher, which is entirely wrong.

Bach *Man singet mit Freuden vom Sieg BWV 149*... edited by Ingrid Jach... Full score Carus (31.1490) 50pp.

As one expects in a cantata for Michaelmas, this begins with a joyful 6/8 noise of three trumpets and timps, three oboes and bassoon, strings and chorus in a massive da capo movement based on the closing movement of BWV 208, the hunting cantata. The remaining movements are not da capo. In contrast, the next movement has only two staves for bass solo and continuo. After a short alto recit, the soprano sings a more lyrical 3/8 aria with strings. A tenor recit is followed by an alto/tenor duet with bassoon and continuo with the same magnificent text and melody that ends the St John Passion, though a minor third lower. A nice touch is the trumpets playing just six semiquavers and a semibreve at the end. The theme relates to angels in general, not just Michael. It's a fine, extrovert work. No source deriving directly from Bach survives, but there are no serious problems. The copyright-free translation by Henry S. Drinker is underlaid below the German and shouldn't be scorned.

Durante *Magnificat in B [flat]* Carus 10.270/45. 23pp.

This looks like a good piece, rather more compact than most Magnificats and largely choral (with STB solos). This particular score is intended for church choirs with the accompaniment arranged for manuals with pedal acting as the continuo line, which might have happened in 18th-century Germany but less probable in Italy. The original

score is available at Carus 109.270 (€13.00), with parts and Christmas inserts.

Johann Michael Haydn *Te Deum* in C “Zum Namensfest des Bonapart producirt”... edited by Hans Ryschawy Carus (54.998), 2012. 32pp, €19.00 (Vsc €6.50, parts €59.00)

This work has hitherto been associated with Joseph Haydn, and has a Hoboken number of XXIIIc:1 and is not in the Michael Haydn thematic catalogue, though Hoboken offers enough Michael attributions to justify caution. It was published under Joseph's name by Robins Landon in 1966 (Doblinger). The non-autograph MS is dated 28 Nov. 1765, presumably the date it reached Götting. The MS lists 14 performances. The one the writer of the introduction highlights is a performance on Napoleon's name day in 1809. More interesting is the later dates in the list (reproduced on p. 9) which gives 1886 as the last performance. Was the same material used for over 120 years? How different would a performance in 1886 have sounded from 1765! The running order for the other music in the 1809 performance is also listed. The mass was by Michael Haydn, but with an offertorium by Hasse. The scoring of the *Te Deum* is for SATB soli and choir, two violins and continuo, with two trumpets and timps ad lib. Despite a couple of double bars, the work runs continuously (as implied by the bar numbering) and apart from nine bars setting “*Te ergo quaesumus...*”, it moves briskly – which is just as well near the beginning of Mass. The publisher reckons it last seven minutes, so it is short enough to give a concert a lively send-off; alternatively, it could end a programme with earlier pieces for the standard two violin and bass accompaniment,

Hummel *Messe* in B [flat] op. 77... edited by Mario Aschauer. Carus (40.664), 2012. ix + 132pp, €42.50.

Hummel followed Haydn as composer to Prince Nikolaus Ersterhazy and wrote this mass in 1810: it was performed on 16 December, after rehearsals on the 4th and 15th. The work seems to have been intended for the prince's nameday, but perhaps there was a last minute change, since it was rehearsed the day before. It was published in 1818, with the dedication to his new employer, King Wilhelm I of Württemberg. In addition to parts, there was also an organ part notated so that the Mass could be played without the pairs of oboes and bassoons: it would have been interesting to have seen a facsimile of a page: there was space on the blank page x. The trumpets and timps, however, are necessary, if somewhat less exciting than in the Bach cantata reviewed above. The *pp* drum roll at the end is worthy of note. The score is in landscape format, perhaps for the convenience of the organist: there is a realisation, justified by the bass figures, but it doesn't look very essential and is not the version that allows for the woodwind to be omitted.

The initial attraction is the chance of performing a 35 minute choir-and-orchestra work without needing to pay for soloists – if you can find other such examples for the rest of the programme. (I'm writing in terms of concert performances, since there are few Latin masses sung in

church in Britain.) The edition omits the German text which the original edition included.

Gounod *Requiem* in C op. posth... arrangé par Zigmund Szathmáry Carus (27.315/50), 2012. 117pp, €52.00 (Vsc €11.90)

This is way out of my concept of early music, and it doesn't have the demanding interest that Verdi's *Requiem*, does. This is a cut-down version of a much larger scoring of 11 woodwind, 9 brass, percussion, harp, strings and organ: the Carus catalogue lists it without price. The preent version has strings and organ, with oboe, clarinet and horn ad lib. Vocally, it is for SATB soli and chorus. I'm not au fait with Gounod enough to comment musically, but it looks more interesting than I expected. I hadn't noticed before how much church music by Gounod Carus publishes. The estimated duration is the same as the Hummel mass: 35 minutes.

CONSERVATOIRE SIGHT-READING

We have received some interesting anthologies of sight-reading pieces written specifically to test the abilities of students at the Paris Conservatoire. They are all too modern for us, so I won't write anything in detail. The current batch ore for B-flat instruments, F or E flat instruments, Bassoon and low brass, all with piano. I presume that the pianist doesn't sight-read – it might make it difficult if he went wrong, though it could work with a skilled wind player. The music is interesting,, even if most of the composers are little-known – I wonder who might hide behind “anonymous”? Obviously, the books had to be kept away from the pupil, which is why new pieces were composed each year. But they would be excellent studies, and unless colleges wish to use them for their original purposes, they would be useful on the library shelves.

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REVIEWS OF BOOKS

Clifford Bartlett, Judy Tarling, Andrew Benson-Wilson, Barbara Sachs

PURCELL ESSAYS

The Ashgate Research Companion to Henry Purcell Edited by Rebecca Herissone Ashgate, 2012 xviii + 420pp, £85.00. ISBN 978 0 7346 6645 5

I apologised in the last issue for the delay in reviewing this. Apart from it disappearing twice, it needed careful reading. But there was then a gap before I could write it up, and many of the thoughts on the musicological and other ideas that exercised my mind while reading it had become too diffuse to argue.

The tricentenary of Purcell's birth in 1959 didn't produce much of value, though there were a few useful contributions in Imogen Holst's slim gathering of essays. But the 1995 commemoration of his death produced more scholarly publications and, in advance, a conference on performance practice that I hoped would discourage musicians from making Purcell sound like Handel.⁴ There was one fundamental book after that – Shay and Thompson's study of Purcell's MSS⁵. The new Ashgate volume is the first significant book to move on from that. The contributions are substantial – excluding the short introduction, the average length is nearly 50 pages each, with fairly small print – rather longer than such chapters usually are, plus nearly 70 pages of bibliography and indexes.

After a short introduction by the editor, chapter 2 carries on from Shay and Thompson with a contribution by the latter on "Sources and Transmission". The investigation of the paper, binding, how the music was written and changed, etc is expounded by a series of details – the whole study is a matter of details related to other details, which requires enormous skill and memory. I enjoyed it, but won't discuss it here.⁶

More debatable is Alan Howard on "Understanding creativity", concentrating largely on *My beloved spake*. There are composers for whom comparing versions is important – Bruckner, for instance. There is no guarantee that his final versions were superior to his earlier ones (or has that controversy been solved now?) A leading Brahms

scholar, however, was sure that any editor should seek out the last printing in Brahms's life-time. There are some pieces which have two significantly enough versions to be printed independently – the *Funeral Sentences*, for instance. But most of the examples are quite petty. If Purcell was copying a verse anthem and occasionally changed instrumental details, was it a matter of creativity or did he just not bother to read the details of what he had previously written. It may have been less bother not to have to glance continually at the MS once the shape of the music (usually the treble and bass parts) had been copied. One needs significant corrections before thinking about creativity. I occasionally reuse an old programme note and find some things need expressing better, but that's no big deal, and similarly minor changes to his music would have been no big deal to Purcell. The chapter takes itself a bit too seriously, though much of it would be acceptable if the big word "creativity" didn't loom so large.

Stephen Rose contributes the chapter on Performance Practices – nice to see it in the plural! This was well covered around 1995, and Stephen is left more with detail than announcing revolutionary ideas. One significant point is the demolishing of Howard Ferguson's assumption that Purcell's tables of keyboard ornaments were misprinted (pp 141-4), a point first emphasised by H. Diack Johnstone in 1996.⁷ References to Andrew Parrott abound, as well as to Peter Holman (who is probably cited more than anyone else through the book as a whole). The closing section on Continuo Practices (also plural!) is important: all relevant players should read carefully pp. 155-164. How rarely, for instance, do we hear the Fantazias played with organ – I can't remember ever hearing them played thus; yet the fantasia tradition earlier in the century through most of the 17th century included an organ part, though omitted by most amateur consorts and some professional ones. It is, however, possible that four-part dances were played, at least in one theatre, without keyboard. One footnote (p. 161 & note 221) by David Wulstan – not someone I associate with such a topic – encourages the avoidance of filling in a unison final chord; it's a practice I follow more and more now, probably following a long-standing practice of Peter Holman.

Andrew Pinnock draws together the wealth of information about Theatre Culture. This chapter is essential preparation for understanding the stage works Read it!!!

Politics, Occasions and Texts (Andrew R. Walkling) is interesting, but some examples are a lot more plausible than others. He is concerned that "we relegate [the court odes] to lower status on account of their supposedly

4. I suggested recently to someone who had written a book about UK early music in the last 40 years that a study of Purcell recordings from around 1995 might distinguish between performers who approached Purcell from 17th-century music and those who looked back from Handel. He liked the idea, but it was too late to follow up.

5. Robert Shay and Robert Thompson *Purcell Manuscripts: The Principal Music Sources* (Cambridge UP, 2000).

6. One small point on p. 56, note 167 interests me; the survival of a microfilm of the Royal Academy of Music's lost copy of what was catalogued in the British Union Catalogue of Early Music as a 1684 edition of the 1683 *Sonnata's of III Parts*. I saw it and assumed that it was dated 1684, but can't remember whether my RAM catalogue entry was made before or after its loss: the edition was passed on to a member of staff to microfilm it, but it was never seen again.

7. In Michael Burden (ed): *Performing the Music of Henry Purcell* (Clarendon Press, 1996), pp. 94-100

compromised universality". But virtually anyone who listens to them (Robert King recorded them all for Hyperion) is interested in the music rather than the politics, apart from a few historians. Programme notes or CD booklets should, of course, explain the texts, but that still doesn't make them a lot more significant. Some listeners tend to ignore words anyway. Scholarship can only change that under rare circumstances and that must be considered when including such odes in a programme. One wonders how much the controversy about date and function of *Dido and Aeneas* (and *Venus and Adonis*) actually affects the listener – unless, perhaps, a knowledgeable stage director tries to place the works in an "original" context. The section on Catches seems terribly serious: they are meant to be fun pieces, cocking the snook a bit at the respectable, both socially and politically, or supporting someone too powerful to offend. Their main problem is that they are boring unless you sing them, and you don't want to hear more than two or three at a time!

I didn't relate to Amanda Eubanks Wikler's book *O let us howle some heavy note* (Indiana UP 2006) so I left her chapter on Society and Disorder till last. She seems to be interpreting *Dido and Aeneas* with a body of ideas that mix valuable information on how audiences may have thought at the time (though Burton's 1621 *The Anatomy of Melancholy* was hardly new in the 1680s). If you want to discover how ladies of the day felt, don't get mixed up with extraneous elements that bring in Virgil (over 1700 years earlier) and the myth itself, up to a thousand years before that. A phrase that sticks out (p. 302) – the "pornography of grief", suggests that the author experiences opera and theatre in a rather different way from the rest of us. I wonder if she really wants to "enrich our comprehension of our Orpheus Britannicus and the musical decisions he made" when she thinks of it as pornography.

The final chapter, by the editor, covers performance history and reception. Personally, this fascinates me, though I can understand that some musicians are happy to jump from 1695 to the invention of the early music revival (however dated). I'll mention a few specific points.

I suspect that there must be more evidence about survival of Purcell's music in cathedrals – the statistics of modern cathedral repertoire was surveyed a few years ago; but church choirs cannot make quick changes within a fairly coherent repertoire. The fact that *Orpheus Britannicus* was reprinted through the first half of the 18th century is surely significant⁸ and one of Purcell's famous tunes was evidently in Charles Wesley's head when he wrote "Love divine, all loves excelling" (1747), though it isn't sung to "Fairest isle", alas.⁹ I'm not entirely convinced that the attitudes expressed about the limitations of Purcell's circulation abroad should be criticised too much. (cf pp, 343+).

Are we really going to find much evidence of knowledge of Purcell on the continent at any time until fairly

recently? And it is too easy to assume that the operas are viable now any more than they were in most of the time between Purcell's death and the present. As editor and publisher of all the operas, my experience is that *Dido* is still by far the most popular. The reasons are obvious: it is cheap, it is short, it only needs strings, it has more choruses than most baroque opera, and it is a concise and powerful work. I am, however, surprised at the current interest in France in Purcell – perhaps it is because it can be made to sound French if you exaggerate the extent to which notes inégales are used! Purcell's music has been immensely successful on disc, but the operas don't include the spoken text, and live performances thus are few. I think I've only heard – a semi-staged one of *The Fairy Queen* at one of Roger Norrington's South Bank "Experiences" and *King Arthur* at the Boston Festival.¹⁰ I found *King Arthur* more convincing than I expected, and the Boston Festival audience didn't treat the patriotic elements as funny. But whatever academics think, the chance of the form being revived except under special circumstances seems unlikely.

It's a bit naïve to be surprised that a volume of essays on Britten published by Faber had uncritical comments on Britten's realisations of Purcell songs (p. 347, note 205). and Purcell wasn't a unique victim in suffering reorchestration (p.348): it happened to any old composer!

The book is well worth reading. There is an excellent index, essential for a book with useful information and ideas scattered throughout. The vast number of footnotes are fortunately in their proper places at the bottom of the page: as well as extensive bibliographical citations; they also include useful information." I've been a bit sceptical of some aspects: if I had been able to write the review immediately after reading it, I would have engaged more seriously with the musicologist/musician/listener divide. But even the sections that irritated me are valuable. CB

BEFORE THE CHINREST

Stanley Ritchie *Before the Chinrest: a Violinist's Guide to the Mysteries of Pre-Chinrest Technique and Style* Indiana UP, 2012. xviii + 147pp, £23.99. ISBN 978 0 253 22318 0

Stanley Ritchie is one of our most eminent performers and teachers, and a pioneering master of what has become known as 'the baroque violin'. The choice of title for his book reflects the major technical issue which has divided players and teachers of the instrument since the revival of

10. I saw the spurious *Tempest* at the Old Vic in 1959. Incidentally, the *King Arthur* score published by King's Music/The Early Music Company in 1995 with significant input from Peter Holman should have been listed in the bibliography, since it is based on a more recent evaluation of sources than the revised Purcell Society vol. 26 and is the only Purcell opera edition, as far as I know, to include the complete play text in sequence..

11. It would, however, have been useful to agree on a standard abbreviation for Purcell Society volumes and editions to avoid complicated footnotes. For Handel there's HG + volume. and HHA + series and volume. For Purcell, perhaps PS and page number is adequate, but when there are revised editions (as there are for most volumes), add the date as well. Perhaps the Purcell Society could come up with a standard short citation system at their next meeting.

8. The later editions are not mentioned on p. 312 or in the bibliography.

9. Wikipedia has a thorough entry on the hymn, though I've been aware of the relationship for several decades earlier than the reference quoted.

period playing in the 1970s. The sub-title could be interpreted as a reference to the medieval practice of craftsmen who hoped to keep the secrets of their skill restricted to an inner circle of initiates, a situation in the baroque violin world which has unfortunately been intensified as more players take up the baroque challenge. The suffering caused by the guilt of using one's chin has become deeply ingrained by the school of chin-off, advocating this way as the only route to baroque heaven. Ritchie, far from keeping his cards close to his chest, has now generously shared his extensive knowledge and experience of how to acquire and put into practice old techniques through the medium of this book. We find here positive and helpful advice for those 'curious' players who have a 'genuine, untainted desire' to know more about and master 17th- and 18th-century style and technique. Players who jump on board the early music bus to earn a quick buck without 'paying their fare' are given short shrift.

The book is a personal manifesto addressed to the already skilled modern player who wishes to obtain knowledge of the pre-chin lapsarian world, to acquire both style and technique for performing music from Marini to Beethoven. Ritchie suggests an added benefit of learning this technique by hinting that there is a technical pay-off when playing the modern violin as well, with a more relaxed approach and less reliance on the chin. The nettle is grasped in the Introduction, 'How to Support the Pre-Chinrest Violin', which takes the player through a detailed sequence of how to approach the problem, before sections dealing with Right and Left Hand Technique, Interpretation, Technique and Intonation Practice Guide.

His writing style is informal but informative with references end-noted. His teaching voice comes through the text, and although this book has obviously given him the opportunity to express all his favourite *bêtes noires*, the advice given is always derived from historical sources. Harmony is central to all his arguments, choice of tuning, bow strokes, articulation and expression. There are sections on rate of harmonic motion for tempo, affective words, simple rhetorical devices (question, exclamation, silence) and slurs. His advice is hardly ever rule-bound and always refers to context (e.g. length of dot). I like his description of the 'gravitational pull towards dissonance', and the section on 'Baroque Clichés'. Having recently suffered an old-fashioned 'repeat piano' *Messiah* overture, I thoroughly support his anti-echo stance on repetition generally, and the choice of natural dynamic applied to rising and falling sequences and diverging treble and bass, all useful style tips for players unused to playing without editorial interference.

I have only a few small complaints. The musical examples are sometimes too detailed and prescriptive when stating and illustrating a general convention. The danger in over-describing only one way to deal with a common musical situation such as a cadence is that it becomes authoritative. 'The Classic Cadential Formula' example (p. 76) giving 'Correct' and 'Incorrect' versions reminded me of Leopold Mozart's bow-hold illustration of 'The Error', as if there is only one. While not disagreeing with the

'Correct' example, I fear that this version might get adopted as the gold standard for all cadences everywhere. However, if it eliminates loud resolutions generally, that is what it intends to achieve. The use of double down bow for the rebound syncopation (p. 81), which I usually prefer down-up, seems to go against his recommendation to emphasise harmonic rhythm. In the example labelled 'stylistically normal' (p. 79), it is not clear whether this is what we normally hear or what we should be doing. But these are minor details only.

My main criticism of the book is that because it is a bound paperback (slightly smaller than A4), it cannot be opened flat on a music stand. So to make effective use of the 50 pages (one third of the whole book) containing very useful and extensive musical examples for tuning with narrow fifths and left hand independence from chin based on Geminiani, some photocopying will be necessary.

Although the book is obviously aimed at new converts to baroque style and technique, there is much here for the old hand, if only to hear the voice of this great teacher using his own words to describe and explain ways we have become accustomed to. The detailed pre-chinrest *vade mecum* will be useful for those who still wish to improve their technical facility using old techniques (this probably means all of us violinists!). Recommended for a helpful, concise and practical look at perennial problems.

Judy Tarling

ORGAN BOOKS

Peter Williams *The King of Instruments – how the organ became part of western culture*. OHS Press, 2012, xiv + 174pp, \$19.95. ISBN 978-0-914399-44-3

This is a revised version of Peter Williams' 'The king of instruments: how churches came to have organs' published by SPCK in 1993 and itself a much reduced version of his 'The Organ in Western Culture, 750-1250s' (CUP 1993). Williams explores the very earliest days of the organ before they became church instruments, then looks at how and why they became associated with the church and what these early church organs actually did. He then delves into the available sources, many of which are very shaky, to find out what these early Christian organs looked like and how they worked. This includes the influence of different pipe metals, and the development of the keyboard, arguably an invention that created both our musical scale and harmony. Many assumptions that have grown over the years are laid to rest, many of them founded on a misinterpretation of the words *organa*, *organum* and their various other Latin derivatives. This led, for example, to an illustration of Psalm 136/7 ('by the rivers of Babylon') in the Stuttgart Psalter (c820) showing a pair of tiny organs hanging from the trees. Although the basic organ technologies of wind-raising, lever-mechanism and pipemaking have their roots in the Hellenistic/Roman *hydraulus*, the organ didn't reach a state of near perfection until around 1500, and, in Williams' view, has been subject to only relatively minor tampering since. Peter Williams has a questioning style to

his writing, often raising questions that he is not able to answer but which usefully opens the topic for the reader to ponder. Unfortunately, the book has very few reproductions of the MS illustrations mentioned, and those that are included are not of the highest quality and are not labelled. Fortunately a quick search on the internet will find most of the relevant pictures. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

Christoph Wolff & Markus Zepf *The Organs of J S Bach: a handbook* translated by Lynn Edwards Butler University of Illinois Press, 2012, xxv + 208pp. \$30.00 ISBN978-0-252-07845-3 (paperback)

This is a translation into English of the original German edition, first published in 2006, with revisions based on new research, corrections and updates. It is published with the support of the American Bach Society. A new introductory essay looks at Bach as organist, organ composer and organ expert, noting, for example, Bach's apparent liking for lighter key actions and a shallow keyfall. After a timeline of organ-related dates in Bach's life, the organs with a proven (or, in some cases, strongly surmised) connection with Bach are listed. This is followed by reference organs from Bach's world (including several Bach-era cases with later instruments inside them) and instruments that he may have played and almost certainly knew. The second part of the book includes Bach's reports on the organs that he tested and examined, together with a description, perhaps by Gottfried Silbermann, on how to test and report on a newly completed organ.

The final section is devoted to the organ builders known to Bach, or associated with Bach's organs. New colour photographs have been made of most of the existing Bach organs. Sadly, there are also many historic photographs of organs that no longer exist. Each organ has a full specification with details of accessories, temperament, manual and pedal compass, wind pressure, wind supply, pitch and available literature. Some specifications have been clarified, for example, the Leipzig St Paul's, where the division of the pedal chests is now indicated. In all cases, the information given is on the organs as they were in Bach's time. The issue of organ pitch (Chorton and Kammerton) and temperament are also addressed in the introduction. Helpfully for travellers (or web-searchers), church names are given in German as well as their English translation – but stops names remain in German, as they should. References and literature now include many sources in English. Although the technical details will be (or should be!) of obvious interest to organists, this makes a good read for anyone interested in the link between composer and instrument. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

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All nine articles, three of which are written in English, are followed by summaries in both Italian and English (and in

one case I would have preferred to read that study in Italian, because the Italian summary explained the conclusions better than the English of the study itself). I sound like a broken record criticizing English written by foreigners, but there is a slight difference between “ignored” and “unknown”, “operas” and “music performances”; and are editions “with printed scores that were unknown” those of which not a single copy ever got perused? Obviously not, since they were performed. When I think of the amount of research reflected in every issue of *Recercare* I cannot help asking if the editorial staff scrutinizes the submissions (as they obviously do from a musicological standpoint) to correct ambiguities and make them intelligible to readers. In praise of *Recercare* it cannot be denied that it presents new branches of research, new sources, new methods, and speculations that go beyond the confines of music. At the end of the volume there are six authoritative and particularly interesting book reviews by Arnaldo Morelli, Stefano Lorenzetti and Patrizio Barbieri,

Stefano Lorenzetti's *Public behavior, music and the construction of feminine identity in the Italian Renaissance* discusses the contradictions between the approved arts, permitted to women and the disapproved seductiveness of beauty (in art and performance, and in love). An error to be noted: Barbara Strozzi was the illegitimate daughter and sole heir of the Venetian poet and librettist Giulio Strozzi (1583-1652), and no relation whatsoever to the Genovese priest and painter Bernardo Strozzi (1581-1644) who did her portrait (see also *Recercare* XIV for Robert Kendrick's article on her sacred music), which gets discussed here, although 1640 is quite past the Renaissance.

Marco Di Pasquale's reflections and conjectures on the *Accademia Filarmonica di Verona's* patronage of music in the 16th century describes a unique historical institution. Deprived of political power, as Verona was under the rule of the Republic of Venice, its aristocrats created in 1543 an identity-serving idealistically “Platonic” court around a “philharmonic” Academy, which called its members “princes” and ran artistic and literary functions including showy musical events, and interacted with the nobles of other cities. They didn't rely on patrons, they themselves being the patrons, furthering and conserving (or publishing) motets and madrigals by Orlando di Lasso, Jan Nasco, G. F. Anerio, G. M. Asola, V. Bellaver, I. Camatero, G. Corona, G. Croce, B. Donato, M. A. Ingegneri, L. Marenzio, C. Merulo, B. Pallavicino, M. A. Pordenon, G. de Wert, et al., and continuing to exercise their power throughout the following century.

Renato Meucci writes about the Venetian builder of harpsichords and *arpicordi*, Iseppo Ruosa (previously known only as Joseph Salodiensis). His actual surname, plus new insights on such virginals (polygonal) are drawn from the testament of Marco Facoli (1536-1586).

Ivano Cavallini, reworking a paper from 2005 on Orazio Vecchi and the “madrigale rappresentativo”, offers interesting new reflections on the dramatic madrigal, a short-lived genre with some exceptionally influential and

long-lasting manifestations. He discusses less elevated contemporary “musical comedies” as well -- Banchieri, Striggio, G. Torelli – also set to polyphonic music and elaborately staged with actor-mimers, the singers and players being hidden from view.

Federica Dallasta examined notarized documents from the early 1600s about a family of lutenists active in Parma, the Garsi. They show something of their socio-economic standing, and, more interesting, of the instruments, books and scores they owned.

Patrizio Barbieri, in *Music-selling in seventeenth-century Rome: three new inventories from Franzini's bookshops 1621, 1633, 1686*, lists the hundreds of titles in stock during the period of activity of several generations of Franzini booksellers. He also analyzes statistically the annual activity of the firm by their handling of volumes from various Italian cities and the relative proportions of sacred, secular and instrumental music sold. A curiosity of mine (not satisfied) is that while Franzini commissioned a volume of *ariettas* printed by Andrea Fei in 1646, no such title turns up in the last inventory, and in fact only one copy is known to be extant today. So an interesting statistic would have been to discover how fast certain items went out of print, and why.

Anne-Madeleine Goulet writes about Marie-Anne de La Trémoille, or the Princesse des Ursins, having married Prince Flavio Orsini in 1675, and her sister Louise-Angélique, who married Antonio Lante della Rovere in 1682, and how documents collected by these noble Italian families reflect the importation of French fashion, especially in the social functions of Marie-Anne's salon. Only in passing is her preference for Italian music affirmed, which perhaps is proven by the scores she accumulated, but is hardly touched upon in the article.

Finally an analytical article about music: Michael Talbot's *Domenico Silvio Passionei (1682-1761) and his cello sonatas*. Falsely attributed to Carlo Passionei, these 12 sonatas (Amsterdam, Jeanne Roger, c. 1718), composed by a highly-trained amateur musician who later had an international diplomatic and scholarly ecclesiastical career, were published only one year after the very first Italian publication exclusively for the cello (in Rome, not Bologna, and by Gaetano Boni). Talbot describes them in great detail, and despite his only luke-warm evaluation of their significance, underlines the many ways in which they are technically and stylistically important. The article also contains many leads as Talbot follows Passionei's movements and interests. Continuo players will appreciate his asking his father, in 1710, to please obtain for him B. Pasquini's “instructions” for playing the harpsichord (whom Gasparini considered the inventor of the full-style of accompaniment), and he frequented the house of Pier Leone Ghezzi and corresponded with Padre Martini.

Included as a “communication” rather than a study, Vincenzo De Gregorio's *Tre flauti dolci poco conosciuti a Bologna* presents corrections to the measurements of three

recorders in the Museo della Pusica in Bologna, a Schell contralto and two Bressan voice-flutes, along with drawings and photographs.

Barbara Sachs

Apologies for the delay in reviewing the following these two books. The first is, I believe, written but hasn't reached me. I haven't found a review for the Bassoon book yet: any volunteers?

Mary Tiffany Ferer *Music and Ceremony at the Choir of Charles V: The Capilla Flamenca and The Art of Polical Promotion* The Boydell Press, 2012 xii + 304pp, £60.00 ISBN 978 1 84383 699 5

James B. Kopp *The Bassoon* Yale UP, 2012. xviii + 297pp, £30.00. ISBN 978 0 300 11820 2

GREEN MAN JONES & HANDEL

Dear Clifford,

I suppose that I must have omitted to send you copies of the Green Man Press edition of the Second book of Songs and Ayres. (published in 3 volumes beginning in 2004) so I only have myself to blame for your not mentioning this by now well established edition. My comfort is that the edition – at least the first volume – got the warmest possible review from Lynda Sayce in *The Lute*, Vol XLIII pp 80,81. At £28.20 for the 3 volumes it compare quite well with \$ 53.00 for the PRB Productions edition.

On the subject of Handel's *Mi Palpita il cor*, I am grateful that you mentioned that I have published HWV 132b version; the main reason for doing so being that Timothy Roberts' Grancino edition is out of print, and has been for some time. A quick check on the internet confirms that it is not available from Jacks Pipes and Hammers as you imply.

Cedric Lee, Green Man Press

Sorry I ignored your version: it's always more interesting writing comparative reviews, and there is room for different approaches. Grancino Edition was revived, and I chatted to the those manning their stand at the Berkeley early music exhibition in 2010 – thanks to Early Music America for subsidising me to the Vespers Conference. New editions are being published and old ones revived, including *Mi palpita il cor*. Check their website. Jacks Pipes and Hammers/Recorder Music Mail have some Grancino publications in stock and can order others.

CB

A colleague was puzzled by the orchestration “2 vln, Vc, Fag, BC (no custard)”. You can recreate this at home. The original had helpfully pointed out “(no vla)”. Machine translation into Dutch and thence back into English had provided the sauce.

email from David Todd

REVIEWS AND REFLECTIONS

Simon Ravens

I'm not the first musician to take a swipe back at a critic, as I did in the last issue of *EMR*, and I surely won't be the last. Now that I've calmed down a bit, I'd like to reflect.

What, I've often wondered, is the point of a music review? If there is one – and I say this as one who's been there and done that – I've never really got it. What is it that makes most of us (and again, please note the inclusive pronoun here) when we've been to a concert, keep at least an idle eye out for any reviews? Or what, in an age when we can easily listen to excerpts of any recording we might be interested in, leads us to search out the opinions of others?

There was a time, I know, when the review had an obvious function. In an age when the only way to hear a musician was to hear the actual musician, a 'notice' in the press did precisely that – it gave promoters and their audiences notice that such-and-such might (or might not) be worth an outing. In contrast to our own democratised age, past listeners had to rely on the opinion of an unelected select. Reviewing was an evil, then, but a necessary one. And today? Middle-men, such as promoters, recording executives and broadcasters, still exist. An increasing number of performers, though, bypass these unreliable conduits by promoting, recording and broadcasting themselves. Yet still music reviews appear. Music magazines may dwindle, and column inches in newspapers diminish, but I suspect that the burgeoning world of cyber comment means that the word count is only growing.

Why? If I was a cynic, I might say that we read reviews out of intellectual insecurity. Since the time of Hegel, we have been encouraged to think that good taste is a peculiarly singular thing. There is still a school (Wednesdays at 8pm on BBC2 if you want to see its crassest teachers) which peddles this line, telling us that the 'right' wine to have with 'correctly-cooked' turbot is a Sancerre – implicitly dismissing the poor Japanese chef who would have us eat it cured and accompanied by saké. Now, lest we chuckle too indulgently at this prescriptiveness, let us think about how the early music movement grew out of a similar premise: that if Beethoven imagined this work at this metronome mark and with these instruments, then any version which wilfully ignored the recipe was inferior.

Before the rise of the early music movement, the most renowned critics needed no musical education: Shaw, Newman and Cardus claimed no more for themselves than ears, inquisitive minds and literary skill. Only when 'authenticity' became a factor did the musical media need a different kind of reviewer – someone with the scholarly

heft to act as judge. Look today in the potted biographies of record reviewers in music magazines, and you will find any number of academics listed. This is supposed to reassure us that the scholarly fire of performers will be met by the scholarly fire of reviewers. There is a problem, though, and that is that the technical language of the academic is not permitted in general readership magazines. This allows a perfect alibi for some academics, who feel that they can seal their cases by waving with one hand towards an offstage musicological argument, whilst with the other hand pointing firmly to that doctorate spotlighted in their biographies. The reviewer who refers to a work's 'architectural sense' or 'melodic syntax' – as if these terms had some basis in reality – calls to my mind the medieval churchman cowing his flock with talk of purgatory.

Inevitably, the reforming sweep of the internet has brought with it a more comprehensible style of review and yet, with a sigh, I have to admit that this new broad church is as flawed as the older one. At its most inclusive but most frightening, if I scan down the comments under a Youtube performance I feel as I do when I see the words LOVE and HATE tattooed onto the knuckles of the man next to me at the bar: unsettled, but not inclined to engage. The online magazine reviews and blogs offer more reasoning than this, but whatever funding they receive can only come from the industry, and that spells trouble. Reading the online reviews of my Byrd Great CD I felt as if I was walking down a red carpet of platitudes. Nice for a while, but had the reviewer who described a motet performed by six cornetts and sackbuts as 'played on the organ' actually listened to it? Whatever the answer, it's a worry.

There is a saying that 'if it doesn't kill you it makes you stronger'. Whilst we might normally hear this about that piece of suspect cheese at the back of the fridge, if I turn my cynicism about music reviews on its head, I wonder if their real purpose isn't that they prey on our intellectual insecurity, but instead nurture our security. Whether I'm reading the comments of musicologists or unqualified music-lovers, when I read reviews I'm gauging my mind against theirs. And as long as the man who described a Palestrina clip of mine on Youtube as 'peedofiles music' doesn't get hold of my home address, I probably come out of the encounter slightly stronger.

If you read a reviewer regularly, you get to know his taste, and you can guess that you might like what he doesn't, and vice versa. And there are points of fact that can be stated – whether a Monteverdi opera is lavishly orchestrated, for instance. CB

IN SEARCH OF RICHARD JONES (d. 1744)

Peter Holman

Richard Jones *Sets of Lessons for the Harpsichord* op. 1 (London, 1732), Mitzi Meyerson *hpscd*, Glossa GCD 921805, 52' 33", 59' 48" (2 CDs)

Richard Jones *Chamber Airs for a Violin (and Thorough Bass)*, op. 2 (London, 1735), Kreeta-Maria Kentala *vl*, Lauri Pulakka *vlc*, Mitzi Meyerson *hpscd*, Glossa GCD 921806, 65'

Richard Jones is little more than a name today, even to those with an interest in 18th-century English music, though it is going a bit far, as is claimed in the notes to the first of these CDs, that his compositions 'seem to have been inexplicably forgotten over time'. Of his three published collections of instrumental music, the six *Suits or Setts of Lessons for the Harpsicord or Spinnet*, op. 1 (London, 1732), were edited complete by Stoddard Lincoln in 1974,¹ while the first four of the *Six Suites of Lessons for a Violin with a Thorough Bass for the Harpsicord*, op. 3 (London, c.1741) were edited by Gwilym Beechey in 1973.² Only one, no. 4 in A minor, of the eight sets of *Chamber Air's for a Violin (and Through Bass)*, op. 2 (London, c.1735) has appeared in a modern editio.³ It was edited by Lionel Salter in a 1975 Associated Board anthology,⁴ and was included by Elizabeth Wallfisch on a 1991 Hyperion CD.⁵ Myerson is not the first person to record pieces from Jones's op. 1: there is a 2006 Hungaroton CD by Judit Péteri of suites nos. 1, 3 and 5.⁶

Little is known about Jones's life, doubtless because his common name makes it difficult to pick him out from the many other Joneses in the records of contemporary English musical life. The notes to these CDs are full of inaccuracies and omissions, so I summarise what is currently known,⁷ adding bits and pieces here and there

from recent publications or electronic resources; I am grateful to Michael Talbot, who has been researching the life and music of Giovanni Stefano Carbonelli,⁸ for his help, particularly with Richard Jones's activities at the Drury Lane theatre. Nothing is known for sure about Jones's family, training or early career as a professional musician. His op. 1 suggests that he spent much of his time as a young man teaching the harpsichord, though he is only known to have appeared in public as a violinist. If, as is likely, he was the 'Jones' who appears as a violinist in the preliminary lists of the orchestra for the Royal Academy of Music, the Italian opera company set up in London in 1719-20,⁹ then he may have been the Mr Jones who was paid £2. 3s. as a violinist in the band at the King's Theatre in the Haymarket for five nights between 8 December 1716 and 29 June 1717,¹⁰ and perhaps the 'Mr Jones' who played as a violinist in the smaller of two orchestras recruited for the festivities welcoming George I to the Guildhall on Lord Mayor's Day, 1714.¹¹

However, there are other candidates for these sightings among the many musical Joneses of the time. They include Charles Jones, a member of the Private Music (the royal orchestra) from 1709 until his death in 1722,¹² and John Jones, a friend of the trumpeter John Baptist Grano and a royal musician from 1723.¹³ The 'Jones' that the composer J.C. Cousser included as a violinist in a list of London musicians was presumably yet another individual,¹⁴ since the list seems to date from about 1706; he was perhaps Francis Jones, a member of the Private Music from 1701 until his death in 1713.¹⁵ It is possible, of

1660-1800 [BDA], ed. P.H. Highfill jr. *et al.*, 16 vols. (Carbondale and Edwardsville IL, 1972-93), vol. 8, pp. 221, 239-40.

8 M. Talbot, 'From Giovanni Stefano Carbonelli to John Stephen Carbonelli: a Violinist turned Vintner in Handel's London', *Göttinger Händel-Beiträge*, 14 (2012), pp. 265-99.

9 Suggested in J. Milhous and R.D. Hume, 'New Light on Handel and the Royal Academy of Music in 1720', *Theatre Journal*, 35 (1983), pp. 149-67, at pp. 158-61.

10 'Mr Jones (*fl.* 1716-1717), violinist', *BDA*, vol. 8, p. 220.

11 D. Burrows, 'Handel's London Theatre Orchestra', *Early Music*, 13 (1985), pp. 349-57, at p. 357.

12 *A Biographical Dictionary of English Court Musicians 1485-1714* [BDECM], comp. A. Ashbee, D. Lasocki with P. Holman and F. Kisby, 2 vols. (Aldershot, 1998), vol. 2, pp. 632-3.

13 *Handel's Trumpeter: the Diary of John Grano*, ed. J. Ginger (Stuyvesant NY, 1998), esp. p. 14. Ginger's statement that John Jones was a violinist seems to be based solely on the questionable assumption that he was the 'Jones' who is listed in the Royal Academy documents; see fn. 8.

14 Yale University, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, James Marshall and Marie-Louise Osborn Collection, Osborn Music MS 16, p. 413; see S. Owens, 'Johann Sigismund Cousser (Kusser): a "European" in Early Eighteenth-Century England and Ireland', *Händel-Jahrbuch*, 56 (2010), pp. 445-67, at pp. 454-63.

15 *BDECM*, vol. 2, pp. 633-4.

1 R. Jones, *Suits or Setts of Lessons for the Harpsichord or Spinnet*, ed. S. Lincoln, Le Pupitre, 49 (Paris: Heugel, 1974). There is a facsimile published by Performers' Facsimiles, PF 242 (New York, 2000), based on the copy in the Library of Congress, M24.J765 W3 Case, and a selection, R. Jones, *Keyboard Dances*, ed. R. Jones (London: Associated Board, 1985).

2 R. Jones, *Suite 1 in A major; Suite 2 in G minor; Suite 3 in D major; Suite 4 in B flat major*, ed. G. Beechey, *Musica da Camera*, 27-30 (London: Oxford University Press, 1974). There is a copy of the original print in the British Library, g.448.

3. There is a copy in the British Library, g.422.a.(7.).

4 *Eighteenth-Century Violin Sonatas*, ed. L. Salter, 2 vols. (London: Associated Board, 1975), vol. 2, no. 3.

5 *English Eighteenth-Century Violin Sonatas*, The Locatelli Trio, The English Orpheus, vol. 13, Hyperion CDA66583 (1992; rec. 1991).

6 *Richard Jones: Suites for the Harpsichord*, J. Péteri, Hungaroton HCD 32454 (2007).

7 For published biographies, see R. Platt, 'Richard Jones', *Grove Music Online* (<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com>; accessed 14 November 2012); 'Mr Jones (*fl.* 1728-1731), violinist', 'Richard Jones d. 1744, violinist, composer', *A Biographical Dictionary of Actors, Actresses, Musicians, Dancers, Managers, and other Stage Personnel in London*,

course, that Richard was related to one or more of these men. From his career profile and the style of his music I would guess that he was born in London around 1700, though no record of his birth has come to light.

We move from speculation to fact with Richard Jones's work at the Drury Lane theatre. He wrote music for four of its productions: the masque *Apollo and Daphne* (August 1723); its transformation into a pantomime, *Apollo and Daphne, or Harlequin Mercury* (20 February 1725); the pantomime *The Miser, or Wagner and Abericock* (30 December 1726); and the ballad opera *The Mock Doctor* (23 June 1732).¹⁶ He is also mentioned as one of those playing 'select Pieces of Musick' by Corelli, Carbonelli and Charles Dieupart between the acts of Etherege's *The Man of Mode* on 29 April 1724, and he played a solo, presumably on the violin, in a concert in the theatre on 26 March 1729.¹⁷ Sir John Hawkins wrote that 'Dicky Jones' (as he calls him at one point) succeeded Carbonelli as the leader of the Drury Lane orchestra, and was in turn succeeded by Richard Charke.¹⁸ It is not clear exactly when this was. The evidence is complex and needs more space to tease out that I have here, but Michael Talbot has suggested to me that he held the job for only one season, 1728-9; Charke seems to have been the leader from the 1729-30 season until 1736.¹⁹ Jones's contribution to *The Mock Doctor* shows that he was still connected with Drury Lane in 1732,²⁰ though it is not clear whether he was still playing in its orchestra.

Jones also played in public concerts elsewhere. He was advertised as playing 'A Solo on the Violin' at York Buildings on 13 March 1728,²¹ and he shared a benefit concert with the singer-actor James Excell on 30 November 1731; it consisted of 'Vocal and Instrumental MUSICK, By the Best Masters' and was given at the Sun Tavern behind the Royal Exchange.²² He was still active in 1740. On 6 October that year he wrote to Edward Thompson, organist of Salisbury Cathedral, asking whether a leader was required for the forthcoming Salisbury Festival.²³ Another letter in the same collection, written the following month, reveals that in the event Francis Riggs, the current leader of the Drury Lane orchestra, was chosen instead. Nothing for sure is known about Jones's private life beyond the suggestion that his wife was the Christobell, wife of Richard Jones, who was buried in St Paul's, Covent Garden on 30

March 1742.²⁴ However, it is known that he died on 20 January 1744, according to a brief obituary published four days later: 'On Friday Night last died at his Lodgings at Mr. Stephenson's in the Strand, Mr. Richard Jones; a Gentleman well known and respected for his Musical Performances and Compositions'.²⁵

Richard Jones's violin pieces suggest that he was a fine player, though his short tenure as leader at Drury Lane and his failure to be employed by the Salisbury Festival might mean that he was a better composer and soloist than an orchestral leader. Perhaps, as Charles Burney said of Geminiani, he was 'a bad Timist in playing'.²⁶ In the notes to the CDs, Mitzi Myerson ranges far and wide in her attempt to find a context for his music, mentioning Lawes, Locke, Purcell, Corelli, Scarlatti, Veracini, Vivaldi, Leclair, Couperin, Handel and J.S. Bach at various points. In fact there are more convincing models closer to home. William Babell is one: he was about ten years older than Jones, he also played and composed for the harpsichord as well as the violin, and their music is similar in style in a number of respects.

Both composers were heavily influenced by modern Italian music: they clearly had little interest in counterpoint or formal structures, preferring flashy passage-work and the type of florid ornamentation associated with Italian opera singers, and they frequently used thick textures with bass lines in octaves, presumably imitating orchestral music – though Jones does not include arrangements of actual orchestral overtures and arias, as Babell does. Jones's lack of interest in formal structures is also reflected in his long, rambling keyboard suites, including, for instance, a prelude and two toccatas among the dance movements in the first suite. The sixth keyboard suite has movements in four keys, G major, F major, C major and D major, recalling Restoration theatre suites or the miscellaneous collections of pieces in early 18th-century printed anthologies of keyboard music. Some of the pieces in this suite, such as a 'Scotch Air' and a hornpipe in F major, are rather old-fashioned for the early 1730s, and were perhaps composed much earlier.

The op. 2 sonatas for violin and continuo are much more regular, consisting of a prelude ('being Written (chiefly) in the Grace manner' according to the title-page) followed by two or three movements, many of them based on dance rhythms and the last often being a jig. Again, the prevailing style is extremely modern, with elaborate written-out ornamentation, complex passage-work and many double stops. The lack of interest in counterpoint rules out such classics as Corelli's op. 5, Handel's so-called op. 1 and Geminiani's op. 1 as models, though there are

16 R. Fiske, *English Theatre Music in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 2/1986), pp. 75-6, 81, 90-1, 125.

17 *Daily Journal*, 22, 23, 27 April 1724; *Daily Post*, 20, 21, 24-6 March 1729. For Riggs, see *BDA*, vol. 12, p. 384.

18 J. Hawkins, *A General History of the Science and Practice of Music* (London, 1776, 2/1853; repr. 1963), vol. 2, pp. 891, 892.

19 See Talbot, 'From Giovanni Stefano Carbonelli to John Stephen Carbonell', p. 274.

20 *Music and Theatre in Handel's World: the Family Papers of James Harris 1732-1780*, ed. D. Burrows and R. Dunhill (Oxford, 2002), pp. 106-7.

21 *Daily Post*, 12 March 1728.

22 *Daily Post*, 30 November 1731.

23 *Music and Theatre in Handel's World...*, pp. 104-5.

24 *BDA*, vol. 8, p. 240.

25 *Daily Advertiser*, 24 January 1744.

26 In a letter to Thomas Twining dated 21 January 1774; see *The Letters of Dr Charles Burney*, vol. 1: 1751-1784, ed. A. Ribiero (Oxford, 1991), p. 164.

some similarities with Geminiani's op. 4 sonatas, interestingly not published until 1739, a few years after Jones's op. 2. Vivaldi occasionally comes to mind; Jones would doubtless have known some of his concertos and his op. 2 sonatas were reprinted in London in 1721.²⁷ The overall impression is of a virtuoso violinist who writes fluently and effectively for his instrument, with a good ear for harmonic progressions and an ability to write good tunes but with little interest in formal organisation – a common trait among English composers of the period.

Above all, Jones strikes me as a remarkably forward-looking composer, and this is reinforced by the discovery of a three-movement 'Sonata à tre' in A major for violin and obbligato harpsichord attributed to 'Mr. Jones' in a manuscript at Uppsala University Library in Sweden, Leufsta Mus. Ms. 12. It came from the library in the manor house at Leufsta Bruk (now known as Lövestabruk), collected by 18-century members of the De Geer family.²⁸ Its music collection also includes a number of English music prints of the period, including some Walsh editions of Handel, and a few other Mss that may be of English origin,²⁹ including some more Handel (Leufsta Mus. ms. 19, 37), a set of variations for violin and continuo on Geminiani's well-known D major minuet (Leufsta Mus. ms. 1), also known as the song 'Gently touch the warbling lyre'³⁰ and a concerto for harpsichord and strings by a certain N. Smith (Leufsta Mus. ms. 33).

I am grateful to Michael Talbot and Mattias Lundberg for obtaining a copy of the Jones sonata for me at extremely short notice; at first sight the sonata seems to be compatible in style with his other music, allowing for the fact that it is essentially a trio sonata along the lines of J.S. Bach's sonatas for violin and harpsichord rather than a solo sonata with continuo. If it is by Jones then it must be one of the first English pieces for violin and obbligato harpsichord, other contenders being the anonymous sonata in D minor published by Hugh McLean from a MS in his possession,³¹ and a set of variations on the first half of the Sarabanda from Corelli's op. 5, no. 7, published by Layton Ring in 1958 with an attribution to Geminiani.³² The A major sonata is one of three surviving works by Jones not in opp. 1-3, the others being a cantata 'While in a lovely rural seat' for soprano and continuo, published

separately around 1720,³³ and a suite of orchestral music for the pantomime *The Miser, or Wagner and Abericock*, published in keyboard reduction in *The Ladys Banquet First Book* (London, c.1732).³⁴

Turning at last to the performances on these CDs, Mitzi Myerson is a fluent and generally stylish player, with a good understanding of Jones's harpsichord music and the technique to do justice to it. She uses a double-manual harpsichord by Michael Johnson after Ruckers, which makes a splendid sound, though it would have been interesting to hear Jones's harpsichord music played on an English harpsichord of the period, such as those by Tabel, Coston, Hitchcock or the early Shudis. My other reservations are that the 4-foot stop of the harpsichord is not always in tune, and that Myerson alters the order of the movements of some of the suites, often moving the jigs to make the sequences closer to conventional suites of the German type, which is a pity.

I was less convinced by the performances of the op. 2 sonatas. Kreeta-Maria Kentala is an accomplished violinist, but she plays rather unstylishly, either using extremely short and violent bow strokes or exaggeratedly legato ones with not much in between. She also pulls the music around in an unnecessary way, often grinding to a halt in the middle of a movement, in the process making Jones's music sound more capricious and less coherent than it should be. By contrast, Elizabeth Wallfisch's performance of op. 2, no. 4 is less affected and more stylish, and is therefore more convincing. Nevertheless, these three CDs throw valuable light on an interesting and neglected composer, and should be required listening for anyone with an interest in English eighteenth-century music. I hope that someone will now make the op. 2 and 3 collections available in facsimile, and that someone will record the op. 3 sonatas.

27 W.C. Smith and C. Humphries, *A Bibliography of the Musical Works Published by the Firm of John Walsh during the Years 1721-1766* (London, 1968), p. 338-9.

28 A. Dunning, 'Die De Geer'schen Musikalien in Leufsta', *Svensk tidskrift för musikforskning*, 48 (1966), pp. 187-210.

29 Catalogued in *RISM Series A/II: Music Manuscripts after 1600* (<http://opac.rism.info/index>).

30 E. Careri, *Francesco Geminiani (1687-1762)* (Oxford, 1993), pp. 196-8, 287, 288, 292.

31 Anonymous, *Sonata in D minor for Violin and Continuo*, ed. H. McLean, *Musica da Camera*, 103 (Oxford, 1987).

32 F. Geminiani, *Chaconne upon the Sarabanda Theme from Corelli's Sonata, op. 5, no. 7*, ed. L. Ring (London, 1958). See also P. Holman, 'A Purcell Manuscript Lost and Found', *Early Music* (forthcoming).

33 Copy in the British Library, H.1860.zz.(11). See P.F. Rice, *The Solo Cantata in Eighteenth-Century Britain: a Thematic Catalog* (Warren MI, 2003), pp. 298-9.

34 Copy in the British Library, R.M.7.e.17.(1). See S.-A. Churchill, 'The Tradition of Transcription: Handel Aria Arrangements in the Fifth Book of *The Ladys Banquet*' (Doctorate of Musical Arts, University of Toronto, 2011), pp. 52-5.

FRENCH EARLY MUSIC FESTIVALS IN 2012: AMBRONAY & SOUVIGNY

Brian Robins

Festival d'Ambronay

The much-trumpeted success of last year's grossly inflated performances of Michelangelo Falvetti's oratorio *Il diluvio universale* inspired the festival to open with the resurrection of another of the Sicilian composer's oratorios, *Nabucco* (1683). Given that the performance was obviously going to follow the same course, including the preposterous addition of such Middle Eastern percussion instruments as oud and zarb, I thought it politic to give it a miss. Let me make it clear that my objection is not to what Ambronay's principal artist-in-residence, Leonardo García Alarcón, does with these scores, but the fact that his totally unhistorical approach is misleadingly given under the auspices of an organisation that, in addition to being a festival, justifiably prides itself on being a historical research centre. It has, indeed, published under its own imprint an excellent scholarly treatise on *Il diluvio universale*. (Reviews of *Nabucco* by French critics suggest that my fears were not unfounded).

Otherwise Ambronay remains a joy. The first weekend (14 to 16 September) of the festival, this year held under the collective title *Métamorphose*, was blessed with glorious summer weather, allowing the crowds that thronged the park in which the abbey stands to enjoy a wide range of events extending from informal jazz and folk music to no fewer than eight concerts. The first we attended was given in a new abbey complex venue, the Salle Monteverdi. Les Surprises are one of the ensembles to benefit from Ambronay's admirable young artist residency scheme. Consisting of seven instrumentalists and two singers, their programme was devoted to Couperin (*La Superbe*), Rebel (*Tombeau de Monsieur de Lully*), along with cantatas for bass and soprano by Campra (*Enée et Didon*) and the little-known Jean-Baptiste Stock (1666-1747), whose fine *Héraclite et Démocrite* suggested he is a composer worthy of further investigation. The performances were never less than enjoyable, but the instrumentalists will improve once they learn to relax more and convey to a greater extent their enjoyment of the music. Bass Étienne Bazola proved himself the more capable of the vocalists, singing with a confidence not shared by an apparently nervous Violaine le Chenadec, who possesses some lovely head notes but has work to do on the middle and lower ranges.

The major concert that day (15 September) was devoted to Mozart's 'Coronation' Mass, K. 317, 'Jupiter' Symphony and Haydn's Symphony No. 49 in F minor *La Passione*, given under the direction of Jérémie Rhorer, with his Le Cercle

de L'Harmonie. Rhorer is a natural Mozartian who has matured greatly since he was fortunate enough to be allowed as a very young man to learn his art conducting the great Mozart operas at the Beaune Festival. Although he directs in a traditional manner, with an unusually long baton that at times has one fearing for the safety of his closely situated leader, his credentials as a historically informed director were apparent in the plangent winds and satisfyingly scrunchy chords he inspired in Haydn's *Sturm und Drang* symphony. After a fine opening movement, the 'Jupiter' was overall less satisfying, with an *Andante cantabile* that needed more forward momentum (though Rhorer did find the undercurrent of pain that is often missed). The finest performance of the evening was reserved for the Mass, whose joyous spirit was infectiously conveyed by the Choeur Aedes and a finely balanced solo team, among whom soprano Sylvia Schwartz looked and sounded ravishing, her exquisite *mezza voce* in the *Agnus Dei* leaving a memorable impression.

The weekend concluded late the following afternoon with Marc Minkowski directing his Musiciens du Louvre Grenoble in Schubert's final symphonies, now designated No. 7 for the 'Unfinished' and No. 8 for the 'Great' C major, works recently recorded by these forces as a part of an *intégrale* of Schubert symphonies. As one would expect from one of France's leading period instrument practitioners, these impressive performances were fascinating to hear juxtaposed. Minkowski would appear to be at one with Arthur Hutchings in finding the B-minor Symphony to be the great tragic symphony, his performance of the opening *Allegro moderato* inexorably developing from the mysterious opening bars to achieve overwhelming anguish in the development. If the succeeding *Andante* dissipated a little of this powerful impression, it is probably because Minkowski, like so many conductors, failed to take sufficient account of Schubert's 'con moto'. From the opening horn solo to the exuberant peroration of the final *Allegro vivace* (though it was disappointing to find the repeat not taken), the 9th, oops, sorry, 8th, conveyed a life-affirming spirit, with much felicitous wind playing, a nice sense of forward momentum in the *Andante con moto* (ii), and delicious bucolic playfulness in the Scherzo (iii). Given the quality of the performance, it was a pity the repeat in the final movement was not taken. Playing as encore the *Andante* of the 2nd Symphony was a mistake; charming in its own right, it sounded merely trivial coming in the wake of the C major.

The following weekend brought frequent Ambronay visitors in the form of Sigiswald Kuijken and La Petite Bande (21

September). It is one of the current scandals of the musical world that Kuijken, one of the most influential figures of the early music revival, and his admirable band have once again had to resort to the begging bowl in order to attempt survival. Notwithstanding, there was no sign of worry and concern in the outstanding Bach concert at Ambronay, just the total integrity and deep understanding Kuijken always brings to the composer, insight born of a lifetime's thought and experience. Yet Kuijken has never stood still, constantly full of fresh ideas such as the pioneering use of hole-less trumpets (three thrilling players here in the 3rd and 4th Orchestral Suites) and the use of the viola da spalla, taken by Kuijken himself in a wonderfully translucent one-per-part account of the Brandenburg No. 5. The central *Affetuoso* in particular featured unforgettable exchanges of loving tenderness between Barthold Kuijken's dulcet-toned flute and his niece Sara Kuijken's violin. An evening to cherish.

If the festival theme of metamorphosis seemed a little obscure at times, it was clearly apparent in the concert devoted to Ovid heroines given on 27 September by Roberta Invernizzi and Accademia Bizantina under the direction of Ottavio Dantone. It presented a clear divergence in platform manner between soprano and conductor, Invernizzi being a singer who positively exudes charm, while Dantone just doesn't do charm, either as a person or a musician, or only very rarely. But his orchestra plays with splendid precision and attack and he led them through virtuoso performances of concerti grossi by Handel (op. 6/2) and Corelli (op. 6/7 and 4), the latter in versions employing oboes, and Handel's F-major Organ Concerto, op. 4/4. But it was left to Invernizzi to beguile, singing "Qui l'augel da pianta" from Handel's *Aci, Galatea e Polifemo* with lovely phrasing and sense of line. Two arias from Porpora's *Polifemo* (1735) served to remind again of how much we lose by neglecting Handel's rival, while "Mirami altero" from Giuseppe De Majo's *Arianna e Teseo* (1747) produced a glittering display of coloratura juxtaposed with some exquisite floated notes.

The final weekend of the festival (5 to 7 October) should have included two visits, but indisposition meant we had to forgo the first, performances of Charpentier's oratorios *Caecilia, Virgo et Martyr* and *Filius Prodigus* by Les Arts Florissants under William Christie. Both are works originally recorded by Christie nearly 35 years ago, a disc we listened to in lieu of the concert and rediscovered that it still retains an astonishing quality. The final concert at Ambronay marked a return by countertenor Max Emanuel Cencic, who has already made his mark at Ambronay on several occasions, not least in Vivaldi's *Farnace* last year. For this recital he was supported by Concerto Köln, who on their own account gave characteristically brilliant performances of Dall'Abaco's Concerto grosso, op. 5/6, an Avison concerto and Handel's op. 6/1, the last named in particular a delectable performance full of wit and good humour. Cencic's contribution was devoted to operatic

arias by Alessandro Scarlatti (*Tigrane, Cambise* and *Massimo Puppieno*) and Handel (*Giulio Cesare, Rinaldo* and *Alessandro*, a Cencic recording of which has recently been issued). He is a singer who has improved immeasurably since he first appeared on the scene. Among many other attributes, he now boasts a firm, confident middle range, much in evidence in this particular selection, an excellent technique that includes clean and unaffected articulation of *passaggi* and an ability to shape a line with grace and ease. Complaints are few, but a reluctance to sing trills (he can do so) figures among them, especially at a point like the cadenza of "Aure, deh" (*Giulio Cesare*), which screams out for one. Still, this was a concert that formed an appropriate conclusion to another Ambronay Festival of rare high quality.

Journées musicales d'automne – Souvigny and Saint-Menoux

Lying some 125 miles west of Ambronay, the autumn festival at Souvigny in Allier, Auvergne, takes place during the final weekend in September (28-30 September). A more modest, intimate affair, it makes no pretension to challenge its rival, but has grown greatly in the 12 or so years of its existence to become a much-loved event that each year attracts a loyal audience. This year's festival featured five concerts plus a festive Mass in the abbey church of St Pierre and St Paul, whose famous Cliquot organ of 1783 always plays an important role in the festival, this year featuring in a stunning virtuoso recital of 17th and 18th century French organ music by Olivier Latry, the organist of Notre-Dame in Paris. I consider myself not at all qualified to comment in detail on an organ recital, nor can I have been the only auditor to have derived benefit from the organist's performance being relayed to the church's audience on a giant screen, thus allowing spectacular insight into some dazzling finger- and footwork that would have done credit to Lionel Messi. The recital opened with a tribute to Henri Delorme, the greatly respected organist of Souvigny for over 40 years, who died on 18 August.

The festival had opened the previous evening with a concert given, not in Souvigny, but in the beautiful 12th century Romanesque church of the neighbouring village of Saint-Menoux, now an established venue. Given by La Rêveuse, the interesting programme set out to examine the relationship between Charpentier and his Roman models. The first half was devoted to Charpentier's rarely heard *Quatuor anni tempestates*, H.335-8, Latin settings of verses relating to the four seasons from the Song of Solomon. Scored for two sopranos and continuo, this is a thoroughly Italian work (or works) exploiting the sensuality of the texts through closely woven canonic imitation between the voices. The pure young voices of Hasnaa Bennani and Myriam Arbouz were ideally suited to the music, particularly in the upper register; both voices at this point in their development are rather weak lower

down. The second half was devoted to the Romans, both native and otherwise, including of course Carissimi, who greatly influenced (and almost certainly taught) Charpentier during the Frenchman's three years in Italy. Both halves of the concert were punctuated by instrumental pieces, including a spellbinding, rapt performance of the Marais viol work from which *La Rêveuse* takes its name.

More viol playing was to be heard the following day from Ensemble Spirale, a concert for me marred by too much involvement by a fussily-played Baroque guitar. The fad for including this instrument in orchestral and ensemble music has become an epidemic and a positive curse, particularly when it adds all kinds of distracting and extraneous twiddles in largely introspective pieces like Marais' Tombeau's for Sainte Colombe and Lully. Elsewhere the concert was distinguished by some exquisite viol playing at the opening of Sainte Colombe's *Prélude* (from the Tournus Manuscript) and some persuasive harpsichord playing, although the balance between the instrument and strings and continuo in two of Rameau's *Pièces de clavecin en concert* was not totally satisfactory from where I was sitting.

The Sunday morning breakfast concert is always an agreeably relaxed event, this year enhanced by a charmingly presented and performed recital of keyboard music by Byrd, and lute songs given by David Ponsford on virginals and his countertenor son, Simon, a highly promising young singer. Ponsford senior's contribution was played with idiomatic assurance and unerringly clean and precise finger work, while Simon's personable singing of such lighter songs as *Fine knacks for ladies* demonstrated a natural, easy ability to communicate with an audience. In some of the more serious Dowland songs he may come to find a slightly quicker tempo will better sustain them, as indeed I'm sure he will look to adding more ornamentation to strophic songs to provide a little more variation.

The final concert in the Eglise Saint-Pierre et Saint-Paul featured two of Handel's Roman favourites, *Laudate pueri Dominum* and *Dixit Dominus*, interspersed by Muffat's *Armonico tributo*. The Handel pieces were interestingly given exuberant and compelling one-per-part vocal performances, not the way they might have been given in the context of a Carmelite Vespers in 1707, but surely a legitimate possibility for less lavish occasions. It certainly allowed the young Handel's already extraordinary contrapuntal mastery great clarity, while the alternation between solo and chorus was well managed by the five soloists, though as with *La Rêveuse* the sopranos tended to lose authority within the overall texture once they entered the lower register. With the exception of some questionable oboe tone, the small orchestra played well for François Bazola, whose direction exhibited both style and spirit.

It would not be right to conclude this Souvigny survey without mention of clavichord master-class conducted by our friend Marcia Hadjimarkos. Five pupils attended, of

varying ages and abilities, and during the session we were permitted to look in on, unvarying good humour. As would be expected by anyone who knows her, Marcia's guidance combined insight with real warmth and unfailing encouragement. The dividend was the marked improvement she found them to have achieved over two intensive days of practise and instruction.

LASSUS not PALESTRINA

Many readers will have spotted the mistake in the second editorial on p. 41 of *EMR* 150. I'm sure that I've mentioned Sherlock Holmes as a Lassus expert before, so it was from sheer carelessness that I substituted *Palestrina* for *Lassus* as the last word of the first paragraph. The exact reference is at the end of *The Bruce-Partington Plans*, whose final paragraph contains the sentence: "As to Holmes, he returned refreshed to his monograph upon the Polyphonic Motets of Lassus, which has since been printed for private circulation, and is said by experts to be the last word upon the subject." The topic is also mentioned a few pages earlier.

While trying (in vain) to check on the web the date of publication of the story itself, rather than its appearance as one of eight stories in *His Last Bow* (1913), I came across an article "Lost in Lassus: The Missing Monograph" by Leslie S. Klinger (1999) at <http://webpages.charter.net/lklinger/lassus.htm> which was quite entertaining, mixing a considerable degree of ignorance and the usual treatment of Holmes as a real person. Haber's edition of Lassus's works began in 1894, the year before the story was set, but the series had progressed in the decade or so by the time the story was written, so it would have become clear that alternate volumes were devoted to motets. Furthermore, the massive *Magnum opus musicum* would have been available in the British Museum. Did Conan Doyle realise that, I wonder. And was he more aware than comments quoted in Klinger's minigraph that it would have been perfectly natural for someone of Holmes's intellectual ability to study the music on the page without hearing it.

I've often wondered why the opposite of a monograph isn't a polygraph. I happened to come across a book I didn't know I had while looking for Sherlock Holmes – *The Librarian's Glossary*.^{*} The noun *polygraph* isn't listed, but *polygraphic* is given as "Written by several authors" and *polygraphy* "Books consisting of several works or extracts from works by one or a number of authors". I've never been quite sure about the difference between a book and a monograph – in the academic world they seem to be identical. So I turned to *monograph*: "A separate treatise on a single subject, or a class of subjects, or on one person, usually detailed in treatment but not extensive in scope and often containing extensive bibliographies". *Monograph* has caught on, but it's a pity that *polygraph* had another meaning even in Conan Doyle's time. . CB

^{*} By Leonard Montague Harrod, London: Otto Deutsch. Third Edition, 1971

LONDON & BRIGHTON

Anrew Benson-Wilson

Online chansons

In collaboration with Early Music Online and the Electronic Corpus of Lute Music (two recently launched online resources of early printed music) and the British Library, the Brabant Ensemble gave a delightful concert of some of the French chansons and arrangements that are now available online (Kings Place, 7 Sept). The evening started with *Je ne me puis*, a piece that was not part of the EMO resources, but is found in a British Library collection of domestic music; another focus for the concert being how some of these French works were performed in a domestic setting. In Crecquillon's *Alix avoit aux dens la malerage* (which compares the pain of love with that of toothache), the keyboard transcription by Paix was used as an accompaniment to the voices. This was followed by a version for recorder and gamba, with William Lyons making his virtuosic divisions and ornaments sound effortless. We also heard solo lute versions of several of the chansons, played by Jacob Heringman and Hector Sequera. The only setting of a religious text was Josquin's *Pater Noster*, the four singers of the Brabant Ensemble complemented by a pair of viols (Emilia Benjamin and William Hunt). The remaining texts focussed on the love lives of the likes of Guillemette and intriguing chat up lines like *Mais que vouloir lever la chemisette*. Of the four singers, soprano Kate Ashby deserves special mention for her solo performance of *Susanne un jour*.

Mini OAE's mini concerts

The Kings Place 'Festival 2012' included 100 short concerts spread over three days, including a couple from miniature incarnations of Kings Place residents, the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment (14 Sept). The first little concert was 'The Two Haydns and Pleyel', with Lisa Beznosiuk, Kati Debretzeni, Tom Dunn and Robin Michael playing Joseph Haydn's Trio (Op11/5), Michael Haydn's unusual Duo in F for violin and viola (with the viola relegated to a bass role for most of the time) and Pleyel's Quartet in D, with its rather ghostly central Adagio. The latter two players returned later in the afternoon with Rinat Ibragimova for two of Haydn's rarely heard Divertimento's for baryton, viola and cello, two of 126 of Haydn's trios for this combination. For those not familiar with the baryton, it is a member of the viola da gamba family and has an extra set of wire strings that respond sympathetically when the main strings are played and can also be plucked by the player's left thumb from the back of the instrument. The resulting little twangs were heard to excellent effect in this performance. It has a beautifully plaintive tone, and was clearly played by an expert.

Another blast

For those who haven't quite had enough of this year's celebratory razzmatazz, the Academy of Ancient Music gave us another blast with their Barbican concert of Royal Music by Handel (26 Sept). This gave them the chance to perform the Water Music on dry land after their rather damp experience during the Diamond Jubilee Pageant. I wasn't convinced by the percussion battering that Richard Egarr added to the score. They sandwiched this and the inevitable Royal Fireworks Music (complete with an unfeasibly large contrabassoon, with a pair of Union Flags stuffed into its tip) between the four Coronation Anthems and finished with, what else but the Hallelujah Chorus running into the concluding Amen for good measure. The female voices of the AAM choir included far more unrestrained vibrato than I would have expected from a group like this. Perhaps of more relevance than the actual concert, this marked the beginning of a new residency for the AAM as Associate Ensemble at The Barbican, starting in earnest in September 2013 with the opening of the Guildhall School of Music's new concert hall.

Queens, Heroines and Ladykillers

The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment's snappy titles department has come up with 'Queens, Heroines and Ladykillers' (borrowed for our headline) for a series of four concerts during their 2012/13 series. The first of these had the sub-title of 'Three eras of divas'. The presence of a present day diva, in the form of soprano Anna Caterina Antonacci, elevated the concert from the OAE's usual home in the Queen Elizabeth Hall to the Royal Festival Hall (30 Oct) and attracted an audience to match. Many of her admirers would have welcomed rather more of her than the three works that were offered, given her rare appearances in London. The 'Queens, Heroines and Ladykillers' had a pretty rough time of it, not least in Antonacci's first piece, the extraordinarily intense Act 1 aria *Dei tui figli la madre* from Cherubini's *Medea* with its repeated cries of *Crudel!* and the bittersweet *Pietà*. Her ability to absorb herself in the tragic and terrible mind of characters like the tortured Medea was immediately apparent. She followed this with *O malheureuse Iphigénie*, Iphigénie's grief-stricken flagship aria from Gluck's *Iphigénie en Tauride* and, after the interval, Berlioz's take on Dido's lament, *Ah! Je vais mourir ... Adieu* from *Les Troyens*. It was only in this last scene that I felt her voice really found its natural home, the earlier works suffering somewhat from portamento and vibrato. Sir Roger Norrington drew some fantastic orchestral colours from the OAE and added his own general air of *bonhomie* to the proceedings.

Buckets of blood – ENO's *Julius Caesar*

I sometimes wonder if opera directors really like music, such are their attempts to distract our attention from it. On this occasion, the powers that be at English National Opera are largely to blame for hiring a dance choreographer to direct Handel's *Julius Caesar*. Not content with directing, the director turned it into a co-production with his Fabulous Beast Dance Theatre. The dancers might have been fabulous, but their very involvement and direction really was beastly. Although dance is an integral part of a number of Handel opera's this is not one of them. The opening was sufficient warning as to what sort of production this was going to be, with an enormous trussed alligator suspended centre stage and what seemed like a primary school class practicing for what would be their later embarrassing drunken interpretations of YMCA. Bits of a giraffe, including its ripped-out tongue, came later. Why? There seemed to be no link between the story and the way it was being portrayed. Everybody started off clad in white, but it was clear that they would not stay white for very long. As the evening progressed, endless buckets of blood covered the stage and protagonists. Fortunately, there was the music and a cast of fine singers, notably Lawrence Zazzo as Caesar, Patricia Bardon as Cornelia, Anna Christy, Cleopatra, Tim Mead, in fine voice as Ptolemy, Andrew Craig Brown, Achilla, and Daniela Mack, given the task of playing Cornelia's son Sesto as a daughter, for no apparent reason. Christian Curnyn made the wise choice of reinstating often-omitted arias, but cutting some of the recitative to bring the evening down to a manageable length. He directed the ENO house band with clear focus and energy, projecting the music well despite the distractions. But, overall, this was another occasion when the radio broadcast would have been far preferable to seeing it live.

Perhaps each production should be given once as a concert performance! CB

Fretwork, Hilliards and Gibbons

In what was something of a pairing of supergroups, Fretwork combined with the Hilliard Ensemble (joined by sopranos Julia Doyle and Julie Cooper) to present a selection of Orlando Gibbons' 'First Set of Madrigals and Motets of 5 Parts, apt for Viols and Voyces', published in 1612 (Wigmore Hall 2 Oct). To this was added the world première of Nico Muhly's 'My Days for voices and 5 viols'. This wasn't an evening for anybody looking for a bit of a giggle – death was a major theme. Indeed, Muhly's composition was centred on a description of Gibbons' own autopsy, sandwiched between Psalm 39. Three of Gibbons' pieces were given instrumental interpretations, revealing the innate ability of Fretwork to project the emotion and sensitivity of a piece despite the lack of the text – notably in their reading of 'Now each flowery bank' with its gentle unfolding texture. Vocally, the only issue for me was that the two sopranos rather dominated the texture – when the four men of the Hilliards were on their own the consort

was excellent. Yet again we had the irritation of a BBC announcer mumbling away in the corner, extending the gaps between pieces.

Missa Solemnis révolutionnaire et romantique

The Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique and the Monteverdi Choir topped a three-week, ten-country tour of Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* with a fundraising gala concert at The Barbican (17 Oct). There were certainly no signs of fatigue – indeed this was one of the finest performances of this complex work that I can recall. One key aspect, sadly rather rare in many concerts, was a perfect stylistic match between the vocal soloists and the orchestra and choir. Too often one hears a period orchestra with far from period singers, but on this occasion the well-matched and well-balanced line-up of Lucy Crowe, Jennifer Johnston, James Gilchrist and Matthew Rose were all on the same wavelength. Another key factor was the extraordinary emotional strength and depth of this performance, with John Eliot Gardiner pushing choir and orchestra to extremes. Of course, orchestral colour was paramount, as it would be in any performance on period instruments, but the players seemed to find that extra bit of colour, for example, in the wind-band passages in the Gloria. Vocally, and within the same movement, we heard the *et in terra pax* almost inaudibly intoned, a *sotto voce* reading of the extended final *miserere nobis*, and a huge range of expression in the concluding Amen. Particular mention must go to Peter Hanson for his exquisite violin solo as Beethoven's organ-like *Praeludium* leads into the Benedictus with Marten Root, flute, Adam Woolf, trombone and Robert Kendall on timpani. It was also nice to see six members of the orchestra's apprenticeship scheme playing. The staging was interesting, using the full extent of the wide Barbican stage, but keeping the orchestral forces relatively shallow. The woodwind were positioned at the front right of the stage, with the soloists just behind the orchestra. The concert was recorded for later broadcast on BBC Radio 3.

Terpsichore at Versailles

Handel's first production at John Rich's new Covent Garden Theatre (in November 1734) was a reworking of his 1712 *Il pastor fido*, to which he added the French-style ballet *Terpsichore* as a prologue. *Terpsichore* is based on the meeting of the muse of music with the muse of dance, and was intended as a showcase for Marie Sallé's dance company (recently engaged at Covent Garden) and for the castrati Carestini, who sang the role of Apollo. It has been revived in a fascinating presentation from Les Talens Lyriques and the seven dancers of Compagnie Fêtes galantes, the concept and choreography being by Béatrice Massin and the musical direction by Christophe Rousset. They have reinforced the French influence on Handel's *Terpsichore* by combining it with extracts from Jean-Féry Rebel's 1720 *La Terpsichore* (also written for Marie Sallé), *Les*

plaisirs champêtres and *Les Éléments*. First performed at the lovely little Goethe Theatre in Bad Lauchstädt as part of the 2012 Halle Handel Festival, I saw this production in the rather more appropriate and sumptuous (and very much larger) surroundings of the Opéra Royal, Versailles (9 Oct). The large gathering of schoolgirls in the audience suggested that the dance was as important an attraction as the music. And with the orchestra and singers in the pit, the focus was on the colourfully attired dancers on stage. Their movements were attractive and blended well with the music, no doubt reflecting the fact that not only was Marie Sallé the first female choreographer, she also changed baroque dance from the merely virtuosic to a more expressive and dramatic style. The singers were the Spanish soprano Sabina Puértolas as Erato and the Norwegian mezzo, Marianne Beate Kielland as Apollo, the latter being particularly impressive to me. Christophe Rousset caught the varying moods of the music to perfection, and was well supported by his players. This production continues to tour but, sadly, not to the UK. You can see extracts at <http://vimeo.com/48039403>

Anniversary madrigals

The vocal consort Exaudi is celebrating its 10th anniversary by compiling a madrigal book of new works by living composers. They reflected their focus on both contemporary and early music by presenting four of these new pieces together with madrigals by Gabrieli, Monteverdi and Gesualdo and two other contemporary works (Wigmore Hall, 21 Oct). Exaudi's director, James Weeks, introduced the programme by describing the mood of the evening as "dark and tragic – that's where we get our kicks". I may be biased, but on the basis of this concert, I think the old masters came out on top in terms of musical and emotional intensity, for example in Gesualdo's painfully intense *Mercè! grido piangendo* (with its extraordinary harmonic twist on the concluding word 'moro') and Monteverdi's three reflections on love, *Sovra tenere erbette*, *Io mi son giovinetta* and *Vattene pur, crudel*. Gabrieli's opening *Vieni, vieni Himeneo* introduced the emotional intensity of the singing, but also the fact that much of this emotion was provided by unnecessary vibrato, affecting intonation and having an unsettling affect on tone and repose at cadences – although that didn't particularly bother me in the modern pieces.

A touch of brass

Some of the finest performances that I have heard from the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment are when they elevate some of their own players into the solo or directing role. This was the case in the programme "A touch of brass" (Queen Elizabeth Hall, 25 Oct) when Margaret Faultless led the band in works by Mozart featuring their own principal horn player, Roger Montgomery, in the Eb major Horn Concerto (No 4), with its 'famous bit' in the central *Romance*. I will rarely, if ever, criticise a player of the early horn, viewing their ability to get a sound out of plumbing as something approaching magic. But when

they demonstrate the musicality of somebody like Roger Montgomery, they approach God-like status – he absolutely transfixed the audience with an exquisite and eloquent performance, full of expressive colour and with two excellent cadenzas. The concert opened with the 'Linz' symphony, one of those Mozart works with an unsettling undercurrent. Directed in an admirably unobtrusive way by Margaret Faultless, this was one of the finest arguments for looking upon conductors as a dying race. They finished with *Serenade 9*, the 'Posthorn'. I am used to seeing David Blackadder (and fellow trumpeters) wander on stage a few minutes before the end of a concert, play something loud, and then get picked out by the conductor for special applause, often before the continuo cellist and keyboard players who have been slaving away all evening. But on this occasion David Blackadder didn't even make it to the stage, appearing in the central aisle for a blast on a very authentic looking posthorn. This concert was followed by one of the OAE imaginative Night Shift events, aimed at young people, although it was good to see rather more than usual of that ilk in the audience for the main concert.

Motets and dance

St John's, Smith Square (26 Oct) was the venue for a concert combining music and dance, with The Muscicall Compass following on from their similar take on Buxtehude's *Membra Jesu Nostri* in Christ Church Spitalfields in 2009. This time it was five Bach motets that were the musical focus. What was noticeable about this presentation was that the choreography infused the entire performance, the eight singers and conductor of The Muscicall Compass slowly moving around the SJSS stage while they were singing – they started in the back corner of the stage, facing away from the audience. In *Jesu meine Freude*, two of the singers peeled away from the choir to join the two dancers. Only in the very last piece was the normal stage format reached, with the conductor centre stage. The five motets were sung without an interval, and we were asked not to applaud until the end (which made those who hadn't read their programmes look a bit silly after the first piece). The eight unaccompanied singers produced an excellent consort sound, with well-blended voices and no interfering vibrato, and with particularly fine contributions from the three female singers, sopranos Emily Atkinson and Claire Tomlin, and alto Cathy Bell. Their fine blend was helped by the fact that the director, Crispin Lewis, kept the voices at a gentle level, with no attempt at forcing the voices – a very welcome change from the many 'belt-it-out' vocal groups. With one exception, the singers were noticeably aware that they were part of the choreography, keeping their eyes focussed on the conductor as the dances weaved through, the exception being one of the two tenors who kept on glancing distractingly (and inappropriately) at the audience. Julia Pond's choreography was flowing and coherent, the mood of the two dancers ranging from exuberance to gentle intertwining in a series of evolving tableaux, some evoking recognisable

baroque sculptural groupings, for example, a couple of Pietàs. The dancers frequently immersed themselves within the choir, moving with them as they slowly changed positions, often carrying the conductor's music desk with them.

A video of the performance can be seen at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fk84Ca7VPyM>.

Youthful Journeys through Europe

The Brighton Early Music Festival continued their important work with young musicians approaching the end of their professional training through their Young Artists scheme. As part of this year's festival (with the theme of "Journeys through Europe") five young ensembles were invited to take part in an "Autumn Lates" event at St Bartholomew's Church (27 Oct), each giving two performances, starting at 8.30 and, in theory, 10.30. Music Poetica London opened with 'Mystics & Alchemists', with music by Biber, Becker and Buxtehude. I was particularly impressed with the sensitive and musical playing of violinist Claudia Norz and Kate Conway, viola da gamba, but was rather put off by the other violinist's nodding and grinning stage manner, his tendency to dominate proceedings (both visually and aurally), and some moments of wayward intonation and pulse.

The Borromini String Quartet (which I first heard in the 2010 York competition) gave a programme of Boccherini's Spanish-inspired scary music under the heading of *Noches de España*, featuring the middle three movements of his *Musica Notturna delle strade di Madrid* (*Minuetto dei Ciechi*, *Il Rosario* and *Passa calle*) and the last two movements of the Quintet for guitar & strings in D major (*Grave assai* and *Fandango*). As well as some fine playing by James Toll and Naomi Burrell, violins, Carina Drury, cello, and Johan Löfving, playing a rather quiet guitar, we had shadow puppetry from Matthew Robins and some delightful dance sequences, choreographed and performed by an impressive young dancer, Justyna Janiszewska (her name was incorrectly spelt in the programme sheet). The performance can be seen at <http://cargocollective.com/justynajaniszewska#NOCHES-DE-ESPANA>.

They were followed by Flauguissimo, pushing the boundaries of 'early music' with music by Paganini, Schubert and Gluck arranged for flute and played by Yu-Wei Hu, with some occasional accompaniment from Johan Löfving, guitar, interspersed with Ed Tolputt reading extracts from Keats' 'Ode to a Nightingale'. The flute made a delightful sound in the big acoustic, although Gluck's 'Dance of the Blessed Spirits' didn't quite work in this combination as the well-known melody was not actually heard in the flute, but shared with the guitar, which wasn't really audible from where I was in the cavernous church.

Ensemble de Trianon's programme was *Les Plaisirs de Versailles*, a reflection of the music of the French Court in the 17th and 18th centuries, with works by Charpentier,

Montéclair and Leclair. The highlight was the central Cantata *La Depit Généraux* by Montéclair, beautifully sung by Emilie Renard, a very impressive mezzo-soprano who, as Emilie Alford, won the audience prize in the 2011 London Handel Singing Competition. She has a very compelling stage presence, and projects the music expressively, both vocally and physically. She uses more vibrato than I would normally like, but it seems to suit her voice and does not affect clarity of her ornaments or her intonation. The band (Yu-Wei Hu, flute, Magdalena Loth-Hill, violin, George Ross, cello, and Aiden Phillips, harpsichord) played well in the surrounding instrumental works, but allowed rather too long a gap between the various movements of the cantata, confusing the audience as to when the work had ended and making it sound like a series of separate pieces rather than a continuous whole.

Unfortunately the event had started running late right from the start. I am told that each group had been allocated 20 minutes playing time, but no time had been allowed for changes between the groups. This meant that I could only hear a very short bit of the last group, Oxford Baroque, from right at the back of the church, just as I was leaving for my late night train home. Their programme was 'Perpetual motion' with works on a ground bass from Schütz, Monteverdi, Merulo, Landi and JC Bach, to the accompaniment of a specially commissioned film by Yaiza Gardner. I will try and review them properly soon. *BEMF's 1589 Intermedi* is reviewed on p. 25.

European Union Baroque Orchestra at Greenwich

The 2012 incarnation of the European Union Baroque Orchestra (EUBO) made its only UK appearance during the Royal Greenwich International Early Music Festival (10 Nov). As regular readers will know, EUBO re-forms each year with a new batch of players at a critical moment at the start of their professional careers, giving them a unique experience of what life can be like as a touring musician. Their Greenwich visit was a good example of the pressures they will face, as they had all woken up in Germany that morning. They usually meet, rehearse and tour around four or five programmes over a six month period, each with a different conductor and experienced concertmaster. For their Greenwich concert, they were directed by the EUBO's artistic director, the inspirational Lars Ulrik Mortensen, with Bojan Čičič (a former member of EUBO) as concertmaster. Their programme, 'All roads lead to Rome', included music by Muffat, Handel and Corelli from around 1700. Lars Ulrik Mortensen's extravagant conducting encourages the young performers to bring out every nuance of the music in their performances, with exciting and intensely musical results. I sat in on their rehearsal, so realised that, on this occasion, the concertmaster was more than usually involved in giving direction and focus to the playing. He also persuaded several of the violinists to use an early style of bow hold for the Muffat works – and was outstanding in his many solo roles. But the focus must be on the players

of EUBO, all of whom are clearly extremely talented. The players that had a chance to shine included, in particular, the key second violinist, Kacek Kurzydło (together with violinist Joanna Kaniewska during Handel's Sonata a5, HWV288), cellist Petr Hamouz, Kim Stocks, bassoon and Jean-Christophe Dijoux, harpsichord. UK readers will have more chance to hear EBO next year as they have become Associate Artists at St John's, Smith Square, presenting four concerts through the year.

Greenwich Recorder Winner's recital – and Early Music Show

Also at Greenwich, I heard the concert by the winner of last year's Moeck/SRP solo recorder competition, Eva Fegers, with her group, Scaturigine di Musica. Although I didn't hear last year's competition, on the basis on this performance she was a well deserved winner, giving an outstanding performance of works by Virgiliano, Corelli, Castello, Finger and Eccles, the latter two composers in delightful works from the collection *40 airs anglois pour la flute*. She produces an eloquent, subtle and beautifully singing tone on her recorders, with nicely delineated articulation and note attacks reflecting the mood of the piece, for example, in her use of tonguing in the Vivace from Corelli's Sonata 5/5 – a work *EMR* readers may have heard her play on the Early Music Show, broadcast live from Greenwich just before the prizewinner's concert. In the final Giga: Allegro, she provided her own exiting elaborations in the doubles. Incidentally, the Early Music Show also featured the brilliant young recorder player Charlotte Barbour-Condini, finalist in this year's BBC Young Musician of the Year, the first time a recorder player has ever got near such giddy heights.

1589 INTERMEDI in BRIGHTON

Clifford Bartlett

The 1589 Florentine Intermedi 10 soloists, 23 players, BREMF Consort of Voices, The Renaissance Singers, David Allinson conductor & Deborah Roberts conductor and musical director + Zu Aerial Dance. 3 Sept 2012. St Bartholomew's Church, Brighton

I don't know how many performances there have been of the complete 1589 Intermedi elsewhere, but as far as I know, the one reviewed here is only the third in the UK.¹ The first two were undertaken by Musica Reservata and

the Taverners, both conducted by Andrew Parrott. All three have been concert performances, the first in 1979 mounted for the European Broadcasting Union by Radio 3 in St John's, Smith Square, the second a Prom in the Royal Albert Hall with associated EMI CD and video. It had been hoped that the video would convey some idea of the original staging but, alas, the companies concerned were not prepared to go down the authenticity route for the visual aspects,² thus undermining the detailed scholarship on the music and ignoring the research they had been at pains to commission. I don't want to remind myself of the video, so haven't played it again, and all I can remember are the Madonna-type pointed bras.³

The original staging was for the wedding of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, Ferdinand de' Medici, and a not-too-distant relative Christine of Lorraine. These dynastic nuptials were celebrated with enormous extravagance, the climax being a play-with-interludes at the Uffizi Theatre.⁴ The play was *La Pellegrina* by Girolamo Bargagli (1537-86), which is believed to be a source of two Shakespeare comedies. Starring a female protagonist who dons a pilgrim's disguise to find and rescue her lost husband, it has attracted the attention of at least two feminist historians. But it is the six interludes (*intermedi*) which alternated with the five acts that achieved instant and enduring fame. Each was a classically- or Dante-inspired mini-drama, with sumptuous music matched by lavish costumes and scenery, the designs for which survive. Most of the music was preserved in an admirable edition by a court composer Cristofano Malvezzi, one of a fleet of contributing composers, several of which went on to create the first operas.⁵ Each scene had its own distinctive instrumentation and vocal line-up, calling on 32 singers and 35 players for 33 musical items, though some musicians almost certainly sang and played simultaneously, not necessarily the same parts, each with a different instrumentation.

A detailed though not always accurate synopsis of each scene was provided in the official printed account of the entire wedding celebrations. Since the auditorium remained brilliantly lit throughout the evening, this would have been a boon for the high-caste wedding guests who

1. Musica Reservata (Michael Morrow was the group's instigator and researcher, John Beckett the conductor) gave excellent performances of Intermedi II & VI at the Queen Elizabeth Hall in the early 1970s. Like the Brighton performance, it didn't attempt to reproduce every jot and tittle of the original scoring, but got very near it. Musica Reservata later recorded the same Intermedi as *A Florentine Festival* Argo ZRG 602. Two Intermedi were also performed in the early 1970s by Ars Nova: Judging by the pencil figures in my score, we probable played Intermedio III and I clearly remember the *Ballo della Gran Duca*, so must have played Intermedio VI.

2. Partial exceptions were the costumes, on which some trouble was taken to follow the many original designs that survive. But these were marred by – for example – reproducing the pale browns to which the original brilliant crimsons had faded over the years (“because it looks nice”) and some of the new costumes were risible – e.g. the historicist one that Elizabeth Taylor had worn in the film *Cleopatra*.

3. Classically-exposed breasts were a notable feature of the original costumes, and there was a rumour that for the Italian Prize-Winning Channel 4/EME/Thames Television film that followed the Taverners' Prom and EMI recording a list had been drawn up of lady singers prepared to appear topless. In 1589, most of the female roles were taken by boys and men, who were, when necessary, fitted with *papier-maché* chest-pieces.

4. Designed by Vasari and Buontalenti, this vast edifice concealed within the palace was the forerunner of baroque theatres Europe-wide.

5. Modern edition by D. P. Walker: *Musique des Intermedes de "La Pellegrina"*, CNRS, Paris, 1963. Web entries lead to libraries, not booksellers!

formed the audience at the premiere, but for some reason it was only distributed the following day and the detailed account by a talented German musician-artist among their number shows that even he was all at sea much of the time. Intermedio I, with its Platonic cosmos peopled by planetary gods, sirens and heroes was, for him, "a sky full of angels". The Brighton audience was in the opposite situation, with a detailed and accurate account of the action in the programme books but no light to read them by – at least, not in the 9 o'clock performance, though they may have been partially visible for the 5 o'clock one. I almost groaned when the lights were switched off. Flashing up a modern title for each intermedio didn't tell one enough, and the intermittent light show projected on the walls hardly compensated for the lack of words.

In most respects, this was a concert performance, and such semi-staging as there was didn't always strike a happy note. In the Muses-versus-Pierides singing competition in Intermedio II, the cheering crowd-participation was at odds with Marenzio's sublime music, and it was a pity to have no hint of the losers being turned into magpies. In Intermedio III I couldn't make much sense of choir-members running to the back of the church to shout and scream in representation of Apollo's battle with Python (not "the Python"). And elsewhere, hints at story-lines by choirs moving from place to place were simply obscure. Nor was the flow from number to number slick enough within each intermedio – and the frequent swapping between the two conductors didn't help. I heard a few days later that the conductors were inadequately illuminated. David at least wore a white shirt, but Deborah was in black. I wondered at the time whether Steven Devine's rather extravagant movements at the organ were intended to compensate, and he told me later that this indeed was the case.

The players were magnificent – maybe not quite as numerous as in 1589, but still the biggest one-to-a-part ensemble a concert-goer is likely to hear. The advantage of the 1979 performance was that the band was raised enough to be visible; at Brighton, the delight in seeing the players was a privilege for those in front rows. Adapting the original (and often problematic) scoring to the forces available was perfectly justified – but what a range of textures was nevertheless on display, with embellishment now impressively fluent among all the players. The vocal soloists were mostly admirable, too. I can't allocate praise (and occasional blame) since, even if I remembered the names in the programme, there were changes, so I'm not sure who sang what. In Intermedio V, Mark Tucker was isolated on a high pulpit, successfully emulating Nigel Rogers' 1979 virtuosity in Arion's great aria (composed and sung by Peri), the wind and waves responding with quite the most convincing double-echoing that I can recall in live performance. Harmony's opening aria is as daunting a piece of coloratura as Monteverdi's "Possente spirto" in *Orfeo*. It was ably negotiated by a very pregnant Katy Hill – I was not surprised to learn afterwards that she had been

coached by the Harmony of the 1979 Taverner performance, Emma Kirkby.⁶

I was less impressed by the two choirs, which sometimes sounded on the woolly side. I'd have welcomed a more Italian delivery, with some rhythmic bite and better shaping of the phrases. The choirs also needed to be nearer the front and closer to the players. A piece of unintended surrealism was the Devils' Lament that concludes the Inferno scene of Intermedio VI: the spotlight singers lined up before the most uninfernal magnificence of the high altar.

The church did present problems. St Bartholomew's is one of the clutch of Brighton parish churches paid for by a wealthy Anglo-Catholic cleric, Fr. A. H. Wagner: an extraordinary building, the highest in Britain, and cast in a brutalist variety of red-brick Gothic. (Despite its size, it took ages to find it even though we drove only a few yards away from it on our way into Brighton.) I hope the audience at the back could hear everything. It did, however, provide spectacular space for the three female aerial dancers, though their ascents, descents, gyrations and eventual ecclesiastical mountaineering, striking (and sometimes alarming) as they were, didn't seem to have much relevance to the rest of the event. We had seen I Fagiolini's similar show in Ely Cathedral with the Australian troupe Circa, who had one piece explicitly related to the music. A musician mentioned at Brighton that the vertical dancers knew the music better than he did: I wonder how they felt they were relating to the music. Did they know the words as well?

Debbie, I'm sure we don't need to remind you what an amazing achievement this event was to plan, rehearse and perform – but the audience might not be quite so aware as we are how much preparation was needed.⁷ You don't have a wealthy plutocrat to subsidise the organisation and pay for the best performers (though you had a body of players at the top of their profession). This glorious and enormously demanding music deserves to be heard more often, and all praise to the Brighton Early Music Festival for taking on so massive a challenge. Particularly in view of the late withdrawal of Arts Council support, it was a significant achievement for the Festival and we were very glad to have made the round trip. And thanks to EB for volunteering to drive us (she was impressed by the Woman's Hour interview). So we had about ten hours in the car, since it took seven hours to get to Brighton driving through London to pick Hugh up.

6. Emma was in the 2012 audience. Two of the 1979 players were in the Brighton band: Theresa Caudle – I remembered her because she was dressed in male attire and the person handing the ladies a flower during the applause had one left over – and William Hunt;

7. I say "we", because a considerable input to this review comes from Hugh Keyte, who probably knows more about all aspects of the 1589 Intermedi than anyone, and was musicologist and more for the previous two performances. We are in agreement with what is written here, but the historical information mostly comes from Hugh.

CD REVIEWS

CHANT

Ossuaries: Office for Elizabeth of Hungary
by Pierre de Cambrai Graindelavoix, Björn
Schmelzer 64' 17"
Glossa GCD P32107

There are so many ways this disc is original. Start with the sound. I've never heard chant like this. It has a solidity that most plainsong lacks. Most of the chant is sung boldly above a low drone, or at times sung in fifths. There is a strength here that I've never heard in chant singing. Behind it is a panoply of ideas. This is volume 1 of a series "Villard de Honnecourt, Métier, memories and travels of a 13th century cathedral builder" and the booklet essay (by Schmelzer and Mark Wiggins) explores the architect's visit to Hungary and the broader concept of the idea of an ossuary. I think I need a book to absorb what lies behind this recording – I certainly need something in larger print, so await further information from Schmelzer's book, due next year, and I'd like to see Barbara Haggh's edition. At this stage of my acquaintance of the music, I'm happy to listen to it with an innocent ear and enjoy a magnificent and original sound. CB

MEDIEVAL

Conductus 1: Music and Poetry from Thirteenth-Century France John Potter, Christopher O'Gorman, Rogers Covey-Crump 60' 39"
Hyperion CDA7949

First, an apology. We printed an article by John Potter introducing the Conductus project in the August issue, then somehow I never wrote up my thoughts on the CD, so I'm now having to think about it again. The poems themselves are intriguing, with short lines whose strong patterns enables the rhymes to be flexible and the rhythm (stress not length) only fixed at the end of the line (some "lines" are single words). This verbal structure comes across in the music. The Project (which includes Mark Everist, who provides the excellent booklet notes), accepts that the *caudae* ("tails" – pure music with no text) should be sung in the normal "Notre Dame" rhythmic modes. But the syllabic sections are sung more freely, balancing the stress of the text and the number of notes – groups of notes do not always coincide with a rhythmic stress.

Those with some knowledge of Latin will probably enjoy this more than others, but (if your eyes are good) the short lines make it easy to match the English translation with the Latin: in fact, the lines are so short that there are three columns on a single page for one piece. The singing is absolutely clear. I would have picked John Potter and Rogers C-C as my choice of singers for the repertoire, and Christopher O'Gorman is of the same ilk. CB

Dulci Vento Trio Dulci Vento (Johannes Kurs rec, shawm, Enikő Ginzer psaltery, Julian W. Gretsche sackbut)
Hevhetia HV 0055-2-331

From the instruments and titles, I was expecting a throwback to the 1960s when early wind players programmed vocal and instrumental music ranging from the 14th to the 18th centuries. This is far more sophisticated, though I'm not convinced by the more serious Machaut (*Ma fin est mon commencement*) – but *Douce dame* works with anything. The dances and lighter music is more attractive and the combination of recorder, sackbut and psaltery is refreshing. I assumed that the ensemble was Hungarian, but central European is probably a better description. The three players perform contemporary music as well, which perhaps gives them a broader perspective. Well worth hearing, though I kept on hoping for a fiddle or voice. CB

if you are intrigued by the detail of putti players on the cover, check Jacob Cornelisz van Oostanen at www.recorderhomepage.net/arto.htm: Cornelisz painted several different Mary & Childs with a variety of instruments.

Crossing the channel: Music from medieval France and England Ensemble Providencia Tacet S 201 (SACD) 61' 25"

This disc explores the interaction of the music of France and England across three centuries, from early 11th-century Winchester organum through 12th-century conductus to the late 13th-century motet. It is well researched, and almost all of it quite richly sung and sensitively shaped, though since everything is presented in a very similar style, the cumulative effect is inevitably same-ish. The didactic experience, already a big ask, is somewhat masked by production values which seem primarily concerned with the 'listening' experience. The opening pages of the CD

booklet trumpet the novelty of Tacet's approach to SACD and the different placement of the four singers for each item. Not having SACD I was unable to test this, though the quality of the ambient sound and some of the spatial effect is evident even on headphones – though I'm not sure quite how musically important or even realistic this is. The excellent booklet notes which follow discuss the works broadly chronologically, but irritatingly the tracks appear in a quite different order.

Four ladies singing medieval music inevitably invoke comparison with Anonymous 4: a direct comparison of performances of the late 13th-century Anglo-Norman motet *Au queer/Je ne mi repentiray/Joliettement* reveals that Anonymous 4 sing with straighter voices, better blend, better tuning and a firmer sense of pulse – all of which I prefer. Others may prefer the warmer sound and greater fluidity of Providencia, though I find the almost continuous vibrato inappropriate. The motet *Hare, hare, hye/Balaam goudalier/Balaam* is by far the least successful performance, with all prone to verbal excess and prominent vibrato in an effort to convey the humour of the text, but it is not typical. For a more concentrated exploration of the conductus, sung by male voices, try Hyperion's recent CD *Conductus I*; and for a more detailed examination of the links (and differences) between English and French music, various CDs by Gothic Voices. Keith Bennett

Percival's Lament: Medieval Music and the Holy Grail Capilla Antigua de Chinchilla, José Ferrero 54' 25"
Naxos 8.572800

The ensemble comprises six players, three of whom also sing, but no tracks are without instruments. An obvious opportunity for greater variety would have been to leave the two Hildegard songs to the singers, not just because they are at least semi-liturgical but because if you want a drone, it can be vocal (as Sara Stow and Jennie Cassidy showed at a concert celebrating St. Hildegard's formal status a few days after her recognition as Doctor of the Church had been conferred on 7th October). But the rest of the programme seems determined to undermine the theme. The instrumentalisation of texted pieces detracts from the idea on which the programme is based by diminishing the

significance off the words, and Vogelweide's *Palästinalied* loses any text-based rhythm by having a drum sounding every syllable. Unless a song has a strong rhythm, leave it to the singer (with perhaps a drone or interlude, which is what happens in the most successful vocal tracks). I think the programme would work well as a concert, with introductions linking pieces and developing the theme; but a continual flow of music with an introductory note that doesn't deal with each piece in order and is in very small print doesn't help to enable the listener to follow the plot.* However, there is plenty to enjoy here, and the performances themselves are fine.

CB

* It's worth downloading the introduction and enlarging it. It is, however, more difficult to manipulate the texts so that the original and the translation can be enlarged and remain visible side-by-side. Surely that can be remedied.

14th CENTURY

La Bella Mandorla: Madrigals from the Codex Squarcialupi palatino87 63' 32"

cpo 777 623-2

Jacopo da Bologna, Giovanni da Cascia, Andrea Donato, Gherardo & Lorenzo da Firenze, Landini, Bartolino da Padova & Vincenzo da Rimini

The music of the Italian *trecento* was remarkably different from that of contemporary France and England. This was partly the result of a completely different notational system, which by comparison with French *Ars Nova* notation provided much greater flexibility within the bar but none at all over the barline, and partly because of the Italians' love of vocal virtuosity: both led to music of often rapid movement and great embellishment, though this became modified as French influence crept in later in the century. The major contemporary source is the *Squarcialupi Codex*, a richly illuminated manuscript dating from 1410-15, which contains a quarter of the entire known *trecento* repertoire, covering roughly 70 years. You can get a good flavour of it, including portraits of all the composers included, from a YouTube video – just search for *Squarcialupi Codex*.

palatino87 (named after the MS's library shelf number) is a group of four musicians – one singer and three players of a variety of plucked and bowed instruments, recorder and portative organ. On this delightful disc they perform 23 pieces (none longer than four minutes) from *Squarcialupi*, plus one rogue item from the *Codex Faenza*, an instrumental arrangement of Jacopo da Bologna's madrigal *Non al su'*

amante, which follows in its original form on the disc (Petrarch's text was later set by Marenzio, but musically the *trecento* madrigal is not related to its 16th-century successor). 17 of the works are in two parts and the rest in three, apart from one monodic *estampie*. Ten composers are represented, the most significant being Francesco Landini, who has six (four also being given an additional instrumental performance with diminutions) – which roughly represents the proportion of his works in the original manuscript. The pieces are arranged to provide the utmost variety in form and style, and also of vocal and instrumental combination – these are essentially vocal pieces but this variety of treatment suits them well, although it could be argued that the humorous *cacce* lose their point if they are played rather than sung. However, all is tastefully and stylishly done. I would except from that only a hectic rendering of Landini's three-part ballata, *Questa fanciulla' Amor*, which seems to contradict both its graceful nature and the lovelorn text (compare the lyrical renderings of Landini's *virelai Adiu, adiu* and Niccolò da Perugia's ballata, *Dio mi guardi*, which closes the disc). Otherwise Maria Jonas sings with the grace and flexibility required and, in the caccia *A poste messe* by Jacopo da Bologna, with great humour and verve. The three instrumentalists are uniformly excellent, as are the booklet notes. Keith Bennett

15th CENTURY

Music from the Eton Choirbook Tonus Peregrinus 79" 00"

Naxos 8.572840

From the booklet note it is clear that this CD is intended as one in a series of recordings marking the milestones in English musical history, and as such the performers are duty bound to seek out the works from the Choirbook with novelty value. So they present Richard Davy's ground-breaking setting of the *St Matthew Passion* and Robert Wylkynson's quirky 13-part canonic setting of *Jesus autem transiens*. We also have a premiere recording of Hugh Kelly's Magnificat as well as more familiar material by Browne, Lambe and William of Stratford, whose four-part Magnificat is 'spiced up' by being formed by alternating choirs of high and low voices, which finally combine forces in the conclusion, an approach not entirely explained in the notes and in which the resulting doubling of octaves proved unsettling for me. There is also substantial

intervention in these performances in the form of *musica ficta*, which renders some passages almost unrecognisable from earlier recordings. After directing performances of the music of Robert Carver (the Scottish near-contemporary of Eton) eventually shorn of just about all the editorial *ficta*, I have become increasingly sceptical of the need for substantial intervention. Anthony Pitts' performance note talks of the pursuit of 'beauty' rather than 'necessity', but of course our modern perception of a beautiful harmonic progression is hopelessly compromised.

The performance of the 13-part Wylkynson could neatly have used all the voices of Tonus Peregrinus, but the decision to employ only men's voices entails double-tracking, and this track sounds a little synthetic in tone. The whole recording was made using new 'elephant ears' technology devised by Geoff Miles – which looks uncannily like the sound gathering-technology I devised forty years ago when recording bird calls on Orkney cliffs – and while the performers are delighted with the honesty of the sound, I have some reservations about the way the microphones seem to 'listen in' to the group, breaking up the ensemble sound. Possibly as a result of this, I feel that the recording lacks the ultimate focus, passion and intensity achieved by Harry Christophers and the Sixteen in their famous Eton Choirbook series. D. James Ross

16th CENTURY

Attaignant Jeux d'orgue et de voix Jean-Patrice Brosse (renaissance organ of Saint-Savin en Lavedan), Vox Cantoris 67' 38"

Psalmus PSAL015

Music by Compère, de Févin, Gascongne, Lafage, Obrecht, Sermisy + chant / organ

Pierre Attaignant was renowned for his success as a music publisher, using high-quality moveable type rather than the elegant but more expensive system pioneered a quarter-century earlier by Petrucci. His first publications were chansons, but he rapidly paralleled them with seven little books for "Orgues, Espinettes et Manicordions", three with transcriptions of chansons, one of dances and three of church music. The CD explores the last three volumes on a fascinating Renaissance organ dating back to 1557, just after Attaignant's death. Although it only has eight stops (and a *Rosignol*), the organ has a wealth of tone colours, not least from the 16' *Régale en Roseau* used to rather startling, if not bizarre, effect in the

opening Praeludium. In welcome contrast, the CD ends with the sound of the 8' Montre – a wonderfully breathy and vocal sound, so characteristic of Renaissance organs. The organ pitch is A365, a third lower than today's standard. Jean-Patrice Brosse applies a gentle inequality to many of the notes, giving a slight lilt to quaver passages. Although generally associated with the Baroque repertoire, this practice of *notes inégales* is well documented in the Renaissance period. Andrew Benson-Wilson

I also received a copy of this CD. I'm happy with Andrew's greater experience of historic organs and the playing of them, but the singing is also worthy of note. It struck me as an imaginative approach to church singing, briefly justified by the booklet. The slow speeds match the conclusion of Mary Berry's thesis on English chant of the period and the sound is refreshingly unSolemes. The motets are also taken leisurely, and are convincing. One item that particularly struck me was Févin's *Sancta Trinitas*, apparently his most popular piece; lutenists might know it from the Capirola Lutebook. This isn't just a recording for organ freaks! CB

Byrd *The Great Service* The Cardinall's Musick, Andrew Carwood 59' 15"
Hyperion CDA67936

Make ye joy to God all the earth, Praise the Lord all ye Gentiles, This day Christ was born, Turn our captivity O Lord & Unto the hills mine eyes I lift

Byrd's Great Service was discovered in the library of Durham Cathedral in 1922 by the indefatigable Edmund Fellowes. He might well be astonished, but also thrilled, by the fact that we now have multiple recordings via which we can explore and savour this amazing music. He would also, I think, regret that it has all too little liturgical use. This recording presents the music in what might be described as a 'minimalist documentary' style. We hear the notes sung by single voices to a part accompanied by organ and transposed up a minor third from the written pitch to suit modern SAATB voices. The seven movements appear successively on the disc so we have 43 minutes based in the same key and at more or less the same tempo and dynamic. Even with Byrd's variations of scoring this is a hard listen, however good the singing. The English anthems which complete the programme might have been effectively disposed among the service canticles, though this would have highlighted their different performance practice – male voices at written

pitch. There are valid reasons for this but the note needs to comment. So there is marvellous music here, but I do think it needs more imaginative presentation.

David Hansell

I'm not commenting on the singing itself (I haven't heard this CD) but the Chandos recording (see EMR 149 p. 29) avoids the problems mentioned above. CB

Certon *Missa Ave sanctissima Maria*
Ensemble Vox Cantoris, Jean-Christophe Candau 68' 43"
Psalmus PSALOXI

Principally remembered nowadays for his chansons, Certon was employed as a singer and Master of the boys at Sainte-Chapelle in Paris and also composed Mass settings and motets, many of which made it into print collections. This four-part Mass is particularly fine, and interestingly in a much more elaborate idiom than his chansons. It is presented here by the ensemble in a liturgical reconstruction using the Propers for the Purification of the Virgin. The eight singers produce a nicely balanced and full-toned sound. In his booklet note, Jean-Christophe Candau interprets von Zabern and Tinctoris as suggesting that plainchant should be performed in sustained even rhythms, rejecting current practices of singing the chant more flexibly and rapidly as deriving from later spurious schools of performance. The result is that all the chant in this recording proceeds at a slow dignified pace, varied by an occasional bit of florification, except for the Sequence, which is rendered in triple time. This approach may seem a little dull at first listening, but certainly makes a lot of sense when it comes to relating the surrounding chant with chant embedded in the polyphony, which now proceed at similar tempi. The thought struck me that the group sounded rather like the Dutch group Cappella Pratensis, and a photo in the programme booklet revealed that they too sing grouped around a single lectern reading from a facsimile. The resulting sound is certainly beautifully blended and admirably free from a limiting sense of barlines.

D. James Ross

Palestrina Vol. 2 *Missa Hodie Christus natus est* The Sixteen, Harry Christophers
Coro COR16105 67' 34"

Christe redemptor, Hodie Christus natus est (motet), Magnificat V toni, O magnum mysterium, Reges Tharsis, Tui sunt caeli, & (from Song of Songs) Nigra sum, Osculetur me, Trahe me post te.

The sound of The Sixteen is warm and

blended, with almost impeccably sweet tuning, beautiful phrasing, and deep understanding of the music. The balance of voices is just right, so that the top line never obtrudes and all the parts are clearly audible. I find it surprising that only one of the altos is female: if I were in charge I would replace one of the men with another woman, to temper the very slight astringency of the alto sound, noticeable at the start of *Tui sunt caeli* and 'Et exultavit' in the *Magnificat*, as well as the *Benedictus* of the Mass.

Much of the music is familiar; the CD opens with the well-known motet *Hodie Christus natus est*, which makes a good enough reason to buy this lovely recording as a Christmas gift – ideally for yourself. The Mass on this motet forms the core of the disc, with the *Magnificat V Toni* and three motets from the Song of Songs, offertory motets for the Circumcision and Epiphany, and the marvellous double-choir *O magnum mysterium*.

The booklet has some inaccuracies, such as 'hic' for 'sic' and Caroline Trevor's name misspelled; the translations are a strange mixture of standard Prayer Book texts and a disconcerting conflation of the Douay-Rheims 1899 version of the Bible with a made-up translation, with 'thine' and 'your' occurring in the same passage (*Tui sunt coeli*). The first and last pieces are described as motets in the playlist, but not others.

However, it is not the booklet for which you will buy this recording! Afficionados of the Philip Thorby school will relish the triple-time rhythms at 'omnes gentes servient ei' in *Reges Tharsis*, and the sensually laid-down discords in the last few notes of *Osculetur*. The repeated 'sanctum nomen eius' in the *Magnificat* builds wonderfully, adding layers of meaning each time. My favourite moment is the fifth verse of the hymn *Christe Redemptor omnium*, when the choir bursts out of the plainsong verse with an unexpected rising fifth on 'hunc caelum', followed by the dancing rhythms of 'laudans exultat cantico' – a perfect example of the singing doing what is described in the text. The excitement is irrepressible!

Selene Mills

Victoria *Canticum Nativitatis Domini*
Capella de Ministrers, Carleos Magranraer
CDM1130 60' 04"

Alma redemptoris mater, Ave Maria a4 & a8, Congratulamini mihi, Ecce Dominus veniet, Gaude Maria Virgo, Hostis Herodes impie, Magi viderunt stellam, Ne timeas maria, O magnum mysterium, O regem caeli, Quam pulchri sunt, Quem vidistis pastores?

This release comes in the form of a hardback book, more or less the same size as a standard DVD case, with the CD tucked into the end papers. The programme is a good mix of well-known and more unusual repertoire (*O regem caeli*, *Hostis Herodis impie*) and also explores the possibilities of the various performing practices that can legitimately be used in this music. Whether these should all be used in the same piece is open to question, however. The repeated *alleluia* in *O regem caeli*, for example, begins with solo voices and gradually acquires instruments and more voices. And given the title of the programme, why are the pieces not in narrative order? This Spanish ensemble has, however, clearly made a real effort to honour the quatercentenary of one of their finest native composers. It therefore gives me no pleasure at all to observe that the translation of the supporting material lets them down hopelessly. Rendering 4° *tono* as 'quarter tone' is a low point, but there are few sentences which can be described as idiomatic or even sensible English. Much though I'd like to recommend this, I have to put it down overall as a missed opportunity.

David Hansell

Ay Portugal! Music from the Renaissance to the New World La Compania, Danny Lucin 50' 20"
ABC Classics ABC 476 4955

The wistful villancico by the Portuguese-born New World composer Gaspar Fernandes, which provides the title of the CD, dates from after the death on crusade of Sebastiau I and the demise of Portugal. However, the bulk of the programme comes from the country's golden age and consists largely of anonymous toe-tapping villancicos from a collection of 1523, probably compiled by the great Portuguese church composer Pedro de Escobar. Interwoven with these are later villancicos by Manuel Machado (a pupil of Duarte Lobo, another great composer of Portuguese church music), Francisco Guerrero, and further work by the Mexican resident, Fernandes, one piece in the language of the Nahua Indians.

The catchy rhythms of the settings and saucy double meanings of the texts suggest a flirty style of performance which is perfectly realised by the Australian consort and their guest soprano Siobhan Stagg, whose engaging voice bears an uncanny resemblance to the late Montserrat Figueras, even down to the habit of tweaking up the ends of phrases. A brief

Fantasia by Luis Milan, exquisitely played on the vihuela da mano by Rosemary Hodgson, provides a moment of sobriety, a mood taken up in the hauntingly sombre *Dos estrellas le siguen* by Machado. Elsewhere, deft percussion and guitar playing and nimble contributions on cornett and dulcian ensure that this programme both entertains and satisfies musically as well as evoking a very specific sense of place and time.

D. James Ross

The Leiden Choirbooks, vol. III The Egidius Quartet and College 139' 34"
Et Cetera KTC 2412 (2 CDs)

This admirable series committing the contents of these important choirbooks to CD, accompanied by lavishly illustrated explanatory materials, is going from strength to strength. The choral forces, essentially an expanded manifestation of the Egidius Quartet, are producing a much more unified sound and if I still have reservations about the lack of tempo flexibility, due perhaps to the apparent absence of an overall director, the music is allowed to unfold with the undeniable dignity of inevitability.

This snapshot of music to be heard in the Renaissance Low Countries is impressive indeed. Motets by Josquin and by the established masters of the post-Josquin generations such as Clemens non Papa, Johannes Lupi and Pierre Moulu are found in company with the less familiar Cornelius Canis – a Gombert student, represented here by a magnificent *Missa Pastores loquebantur* in six and eight parts – and Jheronimus Vinders, both of whom were active in Ghent. An anonymous six-part *Regina caeli* and magnificent four-part *Missa pro fidelibus defunctis* suggests, perhaps, the presence of a talented local composer among the ranks of the singers of the Hours of the Pieterskerk in Leiden, adding some potential local colour to these truly international documents.

In his exemplary programme note Eric Jas creates a compelling picture of the round of services in Leiden, how the Choirbooks satisfied the demand for music as well as how they would have been deployed by the original singers. Altogether, this project supplies a valuable insight into the practices and aspirations of this important establishment. Notwithstanding the not entirely disagreeable degree of inflexibility mentioned above, the singing is beautifully crafted and phrased, and the blend is also more impressive than in the previous volumes. The singers achieve a natural-sounding

authenticity of pronunciation and the sound is vividly captured in the generous but not over-resonant acoustic of the Laurentiuskerk, Mijnheerenland.

D. James Ross

Luther in Rome: A 'soundtrack' to Luther's stay in Rome Concerto Romano, Alessandro Quarta 53' 10"
Christophorus CHR 77361

Concerto Romano take the pilgrimage to Rome by Martin Luther in 1511, when reformation was only a twinkle in his eye, as a starting point for this attractive CD of the music he might have heard around the city in that year. Luther's evaluation of the hub of Catholicism under the direction of the warrior Pope Julius II was 'hell on earth', and the visit clearly served as a formative stage in his rejection of the established religion, which would culminate a few years later in his epoch-making break with Rome.

This CD is a delightful and evocative fricassée of sacred and secular music, vocal and instrumental such as Luther would undoubtedly have experienced as he wove his way round the streets of the eternal city, passing through open-air markets and in and out of churches. The singing and playing of *Concerto Romano* is beguiling and impressive by turns, and if I have one tiny criticism it is that group's soprano, Lucia Napoli, sounds a little bit over-cultured even in the more saucy street songs. A more bawdy approach would have evoked the monkish Luther's 'hell on earth' more graphically! Having said that, the group's approach to the church music, combining voices and instruments, is highly convincing, and the male voices' wonderfully granular 'folk' rendition of the anonymous sacred songs is just right. The concluding medley is a joy to listen to while looking at the splendidly scowling portrait of Luther by Lucas Cranach reproduced in the booklet – although the song texts only appear in the original and in German it is easy to follow the gist, while the notes appear in English translation. A highly imaginative and refreshing recording.

D. James Ross

Tudor Church Music The Clerkes of Oxenford, David Wulstan 175' 43" (3 CDs)
Phaia Music PHU005.7 rec. 1975 & 1977
O. Gibbons Church Music Sheppard Mass & Spiritus Sanctus Tallis Missa Puer natus est White Lamentations

The Clerkes of Oxenford were the fashionable Tudor vocal ensemble in the late '60s/early '70s, offering a contrast with cathedral-style choirs. They were particu-

larly famous/notorious for upward transposition. "Up a minor third" had often been used to make the pitch of Tudor and Jacobean music more useful to modern Anglican choirs, but Wulstan turned the practice into a musicological theory which he believed dogmatically. This was applied systematically to Wulstan's two *Early English Church Music* volumes of Gibbons (vol. 3, 1964 and 21, 1978), the dates framing the period of the Clerkes' fame. It was the high trebles that caught the ear, but in fact the difference was primarily one of performance style, though it was the counter-tenors who benefitted most while the basses became baritones. But they had positive merits: a greater clarity than we were used to, and more controlled vibrato. Quite how Wulstan expected Gibbons' verse anthems to be accompanied is mysterious. Most sources have organ parts: what temperament was used to make B flat minor in tune in any plausible temperament of a historic organ? How did the viols manage? Did viols play verse-anthems in church anyway? – if at home, church pitch was irrelevant. (EECM really should revise the Gibbons and Tomkins verse-anthem volumes) Current theory is that church pitch of the period was about 3/4 of a tone above A=440, very near the Venetian/German cornett pitch of A=465.

One gets used to the pitch level. The second CD is filled by Sheppard's magnificent *Missa Cantate*; the most accessible edition is in Oxford UP's *Series Musica Dei Donum* edited (untransposed) by Sally Dunkley, who sang on these recordings. Disc 3 has what is performable of Tallis's *Missa Puer natus est* followed by White's *Lamentations* 25. This contrasts the large-scale, ceremonial mass with White's restrained music.

I was intrigued by some aspects of Wulstan's interpretation. The Tallis seemed to be shaped in waves of sound, not all with any particular justification. The phrasing is smooth and long. However, the stress of the Latin texts was underplayed: "miserere", for instance. Instead of stressing the third syllable he often places the stress on the first, with an expressive "M"; stresses tend to be minimal, with the emphasis on musical shaping. My experience over the last decade or so is that the verbal stress gives a shape that interestingly undermines the tactus, and the phase is shaped by awareness of the main stress, which is ideally towards the end of the phrase. This generally avoids the need to impose dynamics. But I wonder how aware of the Latin rules English choirboys and men were.

While I don't think that the Gibbons disc is one of the "1001 Classical Recordings you should hear before you die" (according to Peter Quantrill – have I thus made my farewell to getting any booklet commissions from him?), the impact of the Clerkes as a whole was significant, even if some of it is dated now. Well worth buying if you don't have the original discs. CB

17th CENTURY

Bernardi *Motetti in Cantilena* Ensemble Cantimbanco, Roberto Balconi 50' 40"
Tactus TC 570201

The designation "in cantilena" is described in the slightly convoluted booklet note as marking a distinction between passages for solo voices and those for a larger ripieno group. But the only hint of doubling the soloists occurs in six of the 20 vocal works (Bernardi's op. 5 of 1613 also includes six sonatas, which are recorded here as well), whose solo/tutti markings are more likely to be an indication of the style and volume he needs to adopt. There are 12 singers in total, and an accompanying ensemble of three cornetti, trombone, dulcian, violone, harpsichord and organ. Since the recital only lasts a little over 50 minutes, it might have been an idea to provide several different versions of some pieces – for example, one with soloists throughout, one with instruments substituting for voices (rather than "doubling them" – I found the cornettist's ornamentation extremely distracting in this context). In general, this disc fills a gap in our knowledge of north Italian music for the period; Bernardi had studied in Rome before returning to his home city of Verona and clearly introduced the most up-to-date musical styles there. BC

Cavalli *La Didone* Anna Bonitatibus *Didone*, Kresimir Spicer *Enea*, Xavier Sabata *Iarba*, Les Arts Florissants, William Christie 176' (DVD)
Opus Arte OA 1080 D

I have on several occasions lamented either that I wish I could see an opera CD performance or that a DVD were only a CD. This is a bit of both. I never did work out the significance of the pile of pallets in Troy, the scaffolding tower and pile of suitcases in Dido's palace or the dead stag (last seen in Troy) dragged onstage in Carthage just after the hunters have sung about killing a boar. References in the

libretto to helmets and armour also fell rather flat when the cast were wearing long grey overcoats. Staying with the visuals – the pegbox of the archlute that juts above the front edge of the stage does become a distraction whenever it is in shot. But the plot is essentially about people and relationships and it is worth a lot to see the various agonies of the defeated Trojans in Act 1, the rejected Iarba and Dido and Aeneas's reaction to his dilemma later on.

The principals (who have to work really hard) sing Cavalli's subtle blend of recitative and arioso with great sympathy, intensity and skill while the few lighter moments with Dido's maidens are also well characterised. Cadential ornamentation is musically devised and neatly sung. In the pit William Christie uses his great experience to control the pacing, though I am less happy with what I assume are his scorings. I just don't believe that Cavalli would ever have used a single intermittent recorder or dulcian, especially to double a singer.* The large continuo section also exceeds the probable resources of the 17th century Venetian commercial theatre, though is not quite so unlikely. Some previous productions of *La Didone* have eschewed Busenello's happy ending. At least this complete performance gives us the chance to judge its success/failure for ourselves. David Hansell

I have a facsimile of Act I, and that gives few hints of instruments, and not, of course, any clue that unusual instruments might accompany the voices. There is, however, a short piece as at the end of the Act that could be played on trumpets (like the opening of Orfeo). The bass part (with a blank staff above) at the end of Scene 1 is a cue for repeating the chorus, not getting a trumpet group to improvise – G isn't a plausible trumpet key anyway. The opening sinfonia as and a couple of ritornellos are presumably for strings. CB

Gabrieli *Sacred Symphonies* Ex Cathedra, His Majestys Sagbutts & Cornetts, Concerto Palatino, Jeffrey Skidmore 66' 16"
Hyperion CDA67957

Exultet iam angelica turba, In ecclesiis, Kyrie a 5/8/12, *Litaniae* BMV a8, *Magnificat* a12, *Maria virgo*, O Jesu mi dulcissime a8 (C24 & C36), *Omnes gentes*, *Vox Domini* + *Canzon primi toni aro*

It is a mark of diversity and the sheer amount of magnificent polychoral music penned by Giovanni Gabrieli that an enthusiast like me can put on a CD like this and hear three substantial pieces that were completely new to me. The ten-part *Vox Domini* is a stunning masterpiece, as is the seventeen-part setting of *Exultet iam angelica turba*, while the eight-part *Litaniae*

has an exquisitely dignified beauty. The winning combination of two of the world's premiere cornett and sackbut ensembles and some of the finest solo voices around brings out the best in this rich repertoire. It is interesting to note that Ex Cathedra have gradually moved in the direction of other ensembles, performing the music of this period by reducing their vocal forces to solo voices – at times I missed the lavish sound of the massed voices that was their hallmark, but undoubtedly this sound-world has more scholarly integrity. The choice of voice types, most noticeably the male voices, is particularly fine with the tenors demonstrating a very pleasing leonine quality which very much suits the repertoire. The obvious comparison with the Gabrieli Consort and Players makes this recording sound rather tame and cool if beautifully polished, and we never get the almost desperate drama and passion McCreesh managed to inject into some of his early Gabrieli recordings. *D. James Ross*

Gabrieli Canzoni Liuwe Tamminga (1471-5 +1531 da Prato and Facchetti 'Epistolae' organ & 1596 Malamini 'Evangelii' organ, San Petronio, Bologna), Bruce Dickey and Doran Sherwin, cornetts 78' 21" Passacaille 994

Liuwe Tamminga seems to be going through a particularly productive stage at the moment, judging by the recent flow of CDs, generally performed on his own wonderful pair of organs, one 24', one 12', facing each other across the choir of Bologna's Basilica of San Petronio. As with all historic Italian organs, the Principal pipes have a mellow, speech-like vocal quality, sending a beautifully singing sound in the generous acoustics of the vast Basilica, and contrasted with the sparkling *Flauto in VIII*. The welcome addition of a pair of cornett players on five of the tracks adds even more vibrant colour to the CD. San Petronio is one of the few places where the sound world of St Mark's Venice can be recreated. As well as the *Canzoni* of the title, there are other examples from the wide range of Gabrieli's compositional styles, including Toccatas and Ricercars. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

I listened to this several times in insomniac mood, initially without looking at the booklet at all: I noticed the names of the two brilliant cornetti, but not the smaller print on the next line "at the organs of San Petronio in Bologna". However, I did guess the location, appropriately in one of the cornettist's home town, and San Petronio

is the only church where I have heard a pair of famous old organs. But that experience (in 1972, I think) proved a disappointment: perhaps I was misled that all old organs sounded a bit like the instrument at the Royal Festival Hall! But more seriously, their soft edge doesn't quite match the other instrumental sound in Gabrieli's Venice – cornetts and sackbuts. I'm not implying that they are coarse, but they do have a bit more bite. Why the incompatibility? And why do I not lap up the alleged delights of the organ music by the Gabrieli's, Merulo etc? I'm very happy playing continuo for Gabrieli, but (even if I had retained the technique) I don't think I'd want to play the solo music. What's wrong with me? *CB*

Hacquart The Triumph of Love Camerata Trajectina 52' 22" Globe GLO 6069

+fragments from *The Courtship of Cloris and Rosie* & *The Wedding of Cloris and Rosie*

These three Dutch works, a more-or-less complete piece and two fragments, belong on the sliding scale of stage works leading to Baroque opera. The substantial *Triumph of Love* by Dirck Buysero set to music by the gambist Carolus Hacquart was written in 1678 to celebrate the Peace of Nijmegen and is a sort of masque in a rustic setting populated by nymphs, shepherds and classical deities. Among the sung sections are spoken passages, omitted in the present recording, while missing dances only mentioned in the score are replaced by music from suitable sources. The complete work with its pared down score works rather well, and reminds us that the development of opera was a Europe-wide enterprise rather than just an English, French and Italian concern. Buysero went on to write further theatrical pieces, including the rustic farces *The Courtship of Cloris and Rosie* and *The Wedding of Cloris and Rosie*, although by 1688 the relations with Hacquart had broken down and the music was supplied by Servaas de Kooning. The loss of most of both scores in a fire in the Amsterdam Theatre in 1772 has left us only isolated fragments from both these earthy pieces, and Camerata Trajectina has done well to reconstruct some engaging sequences to give us some impression of this popular entertainment. *D. James Ross*

Hammerschmidt Machet die Tore weit Gli Scarlattisti, Jochen Arnold 47' 30"

Carus 83.375

+ Rosenmüller: *Magnificat* a5

This is the first of two Carus recordings to mark the 400th anniversary of the birthday of Andreas Hammerschmidt. The works are chosen from his considerable printed output, topically including many for Advent and Christmas, combining solo voices, a brightly-voiced choir and a wide range of instrumentalists. The balance is very well managed, and the tempi well chosen. The longest work on the disk, though, is not by Hammerschmidt, but rather a setting of the *Magnificat* in Latin (there are two German settings earlier) by Johann Rosenmüller, of which The Early Music Company publishes my edition. It is an exceptionally fine setting for SSATB, five-part strings (Gli Scarlattisti opt to take the middle parts on gambas) and continuo. As the work seems to be unavailable elsewhere, this would be justification enough to buy this disk. Since it is about time Hammerschmidt's music was more widely performed (it works well with choirs), anyone looking for an alternative (or perhaps a complement) to Schütz should definitely buy this recording. *BC*

William Lawes The Passion of Musicke: Consorts for the Harpe, Basse Violl, Violin and Theorbo and Lessons for the Lyra Viol Sophie Gent, Giovanna Pessi, Eduardo Egüez, Philippe Pierlot 60' 50" Flora 1206

Performing as I do regularly with a leading exponent of the early harp, it is to my shame that I had not come across these delightful Harp Consorts by William Lawes. In his informative note John Cunningham creates a compelling picture of the rise and fall of the genre in 1630s Carolingian England, and the modestly presented CD makes a powerful case for the wider dissemination of music which is attractive and imaginative. Lawes composed some 30 pieces for this combination of instruments, of which the CD presents a brief cross-section, interspersed with selection from his almost 40 pieces for solo lyra viol. Hugely popular in 17th-century England, the lyra viol has also fallen into something of a modern day eclipse. Philippe Pierlot, director of the Ricercar Consort and an extremely fine exponent of the viol, plays the lyra viol works with finesse and elegant musicality, while the whole consort presents the harp consort music in beautiful readings which make a powerful case for more frequent performance. It is a genuine tonic to see a package where the music is clearly the top priority, and biographical information about the players, who don't even bother

with a group name, is kept to a minimum. Instead we have a very informative programme note, an attractively illustrated cover and booklet, and a touching quote from Charles I who took time out from the Civil War to mourn a composer 'whom he loved when living, and commonly called the Father of Musick.' That says it all. D. James Ross

Legrenzi Il Sedecia Oficina Musicum, Riccardo Favero 61' 39"
Dynamic CDS711
+ Sonatas Op. 2/3, 4 & 15

I was thrilled to see that another Legrenzi oratorio had made it on to disk. Any such undertaking requires some padding out, since 50 minutes of music is simply not enough to fill a CD. In the absence of an original instrumental introduction, the group's director (Riccardo Favero – whom the booklet note credits with the arrangement) chooses a trio sonata from Legrenzi's op. 2 set. He uses two more; one to introduce the second half and the second to conclude the disc. He also, not unreasonably, adds sackbuts and cornetts to the "choruses", but (to my mind) oversteps the mark by adding solo violin interjections to the arias for Zedekiah's sons, and over-colouring the continuo by allocating each character (including the narrator) a distinct accompaniment. His biggest misjudgment in my opinion is to understand the ensemble movements as choruses in the modern sense – there are five characters (SSATB), meaning that even the larger Tutti movements can be sung by an ensemble of the five; instead we have a rather loose choir of varying ability, "doubled" and embellished (especially in the concluding madrigal) by the wind players and, while I'm sure the cornettist is very good, the best ornamentation in the world is not going to draw attention away from the singing. Happy as I am to have the recording, it would have been nice to have a translation of the text in the booklet, and I could have done without the many non-Legrenzi elements. BC

Monteverdi Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria Vesselina Kasarova *Penelope*, Dietrich Henschel *Ulisse/L'humanita frailita*, Malin Hartelius *Melanto*, Jonas Kaufmann *Telemaco*, Rudolf Schaschin *Iro*, Orchestra La Scintilla of the Zürich Opera House, Nikolaus Harnoncourt 155'
Arthaus Musik 101 660 DVD

First released in 2003, it is difficult to imagine why anyone would have taken the trouble to reissue this lamentable staging

taken from a Zürich Opera production of the previous year. In its way it is quite as anachronistic as Raymond Leppard's old Glyndebourne version, which is infinitely better to look at and has the inestimable benefit of Janet Baker's *Penelope*. As in his earlier Zürich production, Harnoncourt uses a large orchestra of strings, brass and continuo, which contributes countless vulgar effects, as in *Penelope's* opening 'Di misera' (which is truncated), where the first heightening of emotion is a cue for the strings to enter Mantovani-style. Any portentous announcement by a god is accompanied by infantile toy-town trumpet fanfares and so forth. Not one of the cast has been encouraged to attempt an interpretation that would have been recognisable to the composer, the singing alternating between a cantabile lyricism (frequently vibrato-laden) that undermines the critical importance of the text and blustery hectoring, a particular shortcoming of Dietrich Henschel's *Ulisse*. Visually the production is a mess, a minimalist setting with no palace, only the wall of a Mediterranean peasant cottage. Costumes are non-descript modern: Nettuno and Giove look as if they have wandered in from a production of *Waiting for Godot*, Telemaco from a yuppie party, while *Ulisse* wears a nice patterned woolly Sarah Lund would be happy to own. Some of the acting would not be acceptable in a village pantomime; the recognition scene between *Ulisse* and *Telemaco* is a monument to hilarious ineptitude. What is truly alarming – and raises ethical questions I cannot go into here – is that Harnoncourt is still believed by many to be an arch-proponent of HIP. Indeed, I have seen this set described as such. And that is utter poppycock!

Brian Robins

Piazzolla-Monteverdi Una Utopia Argentina
see p. 49

H. Praetorius Organ Works Friedhelm Flamme (Scherer organ St Stephanskirche zu Tangermünde, 1624) 135' 45" (2 SACDs)
cpo 777 345-2

This is a very welcome recording of the organ works of Hieronymus Praetorius, a representative of the North German organ school before the influence of Sweelinck and his pupils (including Hieronymus's own sons) on the Hamburg organ scene. Although his large-scale Venetian choral Magnificats are performed occasionally, his organ music (which include eight Magnificat settings) is little known, even to organists. Part of the problem is work-

ing out how to play them: what, for instance, should be on what manual and whether or not to use the pedals. The 1624 Tangermünde organ is very well chosen. It was built by Scherer the Younger, an organ builder that Praetorius knew, and it contains more pipework from that period than any other organ and speaks with a distinctively late-Renaissance voice. If I needed reminding of how impressed I have been with Friedhelm Flamme's playing, this CD's notes include quotes from several of my earlier reviews. I continue to admire the sensitivity of his playing, his use of articulation and his sense of projecting a musical line.

Andrews Benson-Wilson

Purcell Fantazias and In Nomines – 1680 Les Basses Réunies, dir. Bruno Cocset 50' 33"
agogique AGO007

Played by a French ensemble on violins, with fretted violone and gut-strung harpsichord, this recording promises a different 'view' of these wonderful and enigmatic works. Viol players regard them as the climax of their repertoire. With their technical demands a considerable challenge to any players, they were once considered to be more suitable for a mixed consort of violins and viols. Peter Holman wonders whether Purcell was ever able to assemble a consort of viols to play them. He also notes that there is no sign of the dance-like idioms commonly used in English violin music of the time, and that Purcell sticks consistently to the range and styles idiomatic to viols.

Thus this recording could seem to hark back to much earlier renditions by ensembles of violins, while in the meantime we have become used to excellent recordings by consorts of viols: Fretwork, Phantasm, the Rose Consort, to name a few. It is, however, a more than worthy addition to these. It fully meets the challenge, sheds new light on this wonderful music, and deserves to be widely heard.

The harpsichord is used with excellent judgement, its sound blending with the strings, adding a pleasing immediate attack in the homophonic and brisk sections of, for example, the 4-part G minor fantasia (track 2). The use of the violone in the 3-part fantasias allows it to drop the octave at times. None-the-less these are literal renditions, without the excessive mannerisms of the 'Frenchified' approach of *Les Voix Humaines*. The consort plays with very little vibrato, articulates clearly, if rather more evenly

than my favourite recording (Fretwork) and with lovely tuning. And there is no resisting the eloquence of their playing, particularly in the slow sections. The 'One Note' Fantazia is marvellously played with an extra expressiveness, enhanced by the harpsichord's attack. The climactic final track is the 7-part In Nomine – wonderful music, wonderfully played.

The booklet notes give full details of the instruments and their tunings, a consort of 17th-century violins, all by one maker. The Italian-style harpsichord was made especially for the recording. Whatever recording you already have of these works, you must also have this one. Robert Oliver

Schütz *Mehrchörige Psalmen* Dresdener Kreuzchor, Rudolf Mauersberger 75' 06" Berlin Classics 0300370BC (1967+bonuses) SWV23, 24, 25, 28, 29, 31, 33, 34, 35, 36, 41

These 1967 ADD recordings of a selection of the *Psalms of David*, SWV 22-47, issued on the Eterna label in their historical series Kultur Spiegel, are unsurprisingly showing their age. The male-voice choir sings with great commitment, but there is a lack of subtlety and musicality, which becomes very wearing after a few tracks. Any dynamic variation is executed rather mechanically and the lasting impression is one of a rather desperate earnestness. At the time, the accuracy of the voices and the good tuning and punchy attack must have impressed, but these are all aspects in which great leaps forward have been achieved. Interesting is the use of violas da gamba and the full sound of the boy alto section of the choir, and as a celebration of the long and noble musical tradition of Dresden the CD is a valuable historical document, and it is in no small measure due to enterprising recordings such as this that the modern standards of performance and recording we enjoy today have come about. D. James Ross

Sweelinck and the Art of Variation Brisk recorder Quartet Amsterdam, Camerata Trajectina Globe GLO5253

This CD is an absolute delight. Transferring Sweelinck's keyboard variations to a recorder consort has been done before (I have used such recordings in organ workshops to encourage organists to breathe and articulate like an instrumentalist), but here we get sung texts as well, from Camerata Trajectina, who also add viol and lute to the consort. Unfortunately the song texts are only

given in Dutch. Sweelinck's variation sets are treated to a range of interpretations, including a couple of modern takes. This CD is recommended for all, but should be compulsory listening for organists.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau sings Baroque Arias 74' 09"

hänssler Classic CD 94.218

Bruhns *De profundis, Erstanden ist der heilige Christ* **Buxtehude** *Ich suchte des Nachts* **A. Krieger** *An den Wassern zu Babel Stölzel* *Aus der Tiefe Tunder* *Da mihi Domine*

These recordings are, of course, historically important, representing – as they do – some of the earliest HIP performances of rather obscure repertoire. Few people would be queueing at the door to hear such renditions today – there is a little too much emphasis on the beauty of the voice and not enough on the structure or phrasing of the music itself (too many *rallentandi*, for starters!) The instrumental contribution is spoiled (for me) by the tinkly harpsichord and growling double bass on all tracks. Some of the tempi are also on the turgid side. The sad thing is that, with very few exceptions, the repertoire remains in the shadows. BC

Division Music: English duos for viol and lute Pellingham's Saraband (Susanna Pell gamba, Jacob Heringman lutes) 65' 50"

www.pellingham.co.uk PSoor

Music by Byrd/arr. Cutting, Collard, Draghi, Solomon Eccles junior, Finger, Johnson, Keller, Simpson & anon

Jacob sent a copy to BC to distribute, and another to me "as a present from us". How nice – to be able to listen to a CD without having to write about it! But I've done so anyway, though I hope a further review may come from New Zealand later. Readers will know that I like grounds. The current approach tends to be towards a folky vigour, which is fine. But this calmer, more intense manner is equally effective, and one track (Dowland's *Robin*) brought tears to my eyes – but that may have been because I have been having eye problems. It is good to hear the less aggressive viols (treble, tenor and two basses, all made by Jane Julier) and a lute each by Michael Lowe and Grant Tomlinson, which help to make the sound pleasing. The booklet as well as the playing is attractive, and I like the way Susanna's spectacles are echoed as a design on the centre spread – delicate enough not to get in the way of Peter Holman's succinct history of the ground in Britain. CB

An English Fancy Trio Settecento (Rachel Burton Pine vln, John Mark Rosendaal gamba, David Schrader hpscd/org) "79' 47" Cedille CDR 90000 135

Baltzar *John come kiss me now*; **Byrd** *Sellinger's Rownde*; **Hume** *Capt, Hume's Lamentation*; **Jenkins** *Suite 3 in G*; **Locke** *Suite in Bb for several friends*; **Purcell** *Ayres for the Theatre, Pavan in Bb*; **Simpson** *The Little Consort Suite in G/g*

Mostly avoiding the more melancholy areas of 17th-century English music, this is an enjoyable programme, with full value in duration as well. While violin and gamba make a fine combination, I'm a bit suspicious of so much emphasis on harpsichord. I was particularly interested in Baltzar's "John come kiss me know", since it's the most substantial piece in the edition of his violin musi, reviewed on page 3; it survives in a Playford collection that seems to me to be nearer the folk than the arty violin style: I assume that the rhythm was virtually continuous, unless varied in a witty way. Rachel Burton Pine gives us a more arty approach, which sometimes worked but sometimes felt forced. There are similar tensions elsewhere. I hope this disc will draw people into the delights of English music of the period. CB

Festmusik zur Reformationsfeier 1617 Kammerchor Bad Homburg, Johann Rosenmüller Ensemble 67' 21" Christophorus CHR 77363

Altenburg *Gaudium Christianum*; **J. C. Bach** *Es erhuh sich ein Streit*; **Demantius** *Und es ward eine Stille*; **Franck** *Und ich hörte eine große Stimme*; **Scheidt** *Herr Gott dich loben alle wir*; **Schütz** *Es erhuh sich ein Streit*; **Sweelinck** *Echo Fantasia in a*; **Tunder** *Choralfantasia "In dich hab ich gehoffet"*

This CD explores the world of early 17th-century German protestant polyphony, and in particular celebrations for the 100th anniversary of Luther's symbolic nailing of his Theses to the church door in Wittenberg, later regarded as the starting point of the Reformation. Specially composed for the occasion, Altenberg's *Gaudium Christianum* in up to 16 parts is receiving its recording debut here. Sounding rather like proto-Biber with impressive tutti passages where the voices are joined by drums and trumpets, Altenberg's harmonic conservatism soon becomes clear, and the performers wisely intersperse the six rather static movements with organ interludes by Sweelinck and Franz Tunder. There are some balance issues in the performance too, with the chorus sounding a little distant

and fluffy and the drums sometimes rather 'jamming' the texture.

The rest of the CD consists of works St Michael's Day. As in earlier times, the invocation of the martial archangel was an excuse for musical bombast and display such as in an 18-part showpiece *Es erhob sich ein Streit im Himmel* attributed (doubtfully to my mind) to Heinrich Schütz (SWV Anh. 11) and the 22-part setting of the same text by Johann Christoph Bach. Both these lavish works, the exact musical equivalent of Pieter Brueghel's chaotic *Fall of the Rebel Angels* which adorns the booklet cover, suffer the same recording shortcomings as the Altenberg, whereas the more modest three-, four- and six-part contributions by Scheidt, Melchior Franck and Demantius are more successfully captured. If the quality of the music on this CD is variable and the recording balance is not always entirely successful, this enterprising recording project does shine an interesting spotlight on largely unexplored territory.

D. James Ross

The Guerra Manuscript vol 2: 17th-century Secular Spanish Music Juan Sancho T, *Ars Atlantica*, Manuel Vilas 64' 53"
Naxos 8.572876

This second CD in the complete recording of the 100 songs contained in the Guerra MS features the attractively idiomatic tenor voice of Juan Sancho accompanied by baroque guitar and Spanish baroque harp. Compiled by Jose Miguel Guerra, a scribe of the Spanish Chapel Royal, this unique manuscript records anonymously songs for voice and continuo, about half of which have been identified from other sources and ascribed to composers such as Juan Hidalgo, Harpist to the Chapel Royal and Jose Marin, a guitar-playing priest, with something of a chequered biography. Juan de Navas, the third composer represented here also became Harpist to the Chapel Royal. Clearly the prominence of guitars and harps in the environs of the Chapel Royal endorses *Ars Atlantica's* choice of accompanying instruments, and indeed the texture works extremely well. Although the booklet doesn't provide the song texts, they appear to be a mixture of love songs and laments of the lovelorn, and they are immediately attractive in their mixture of simple melodies and Iberian cross-rhythms.

D. James Ross

Jubilate Deo: Early Baroque Festive Music for Christmas Time Orpheus Chor München, Les Cornets Noirs, Ger Guglhör 61' 42"
OEHMS Classics OC839

Gabrieli Hodie Christus natus est, Magnificat, O Jesu mi dulcissime, O magnum mysterium Schütz
Rorate coeli, Verbum caro factum est Stadlmayr
Missa Jubilate Deo + Domine Dominus noster, Exaltabo te Domine, Exultate Deo & Venite filii

This collection of a very familiar genre of large-scale early Baroque music for voices and instruments for the Festive Season has the virtue of integrating the largely unfamiliar music of Johann Stadlmayr into the more expected company of Giovanni Gabrieli and Heinrich Schütz. Highly regarded during his lifetime, Stadlmayr held prominent posts in Salzburg and Innsbruck and published much music, including masses and motets for multiple choirs. The motets and the mass *Jubilate Deo* recorded here show him to be the musical equal of his more famous contemporaries and explain why several of his works were previously ascribed to Schütz. There is an obvious interest in the latest music trends demonstrated here as well as a fecund musical imagination, and in a career of forty years Stadlmayr developed a considerable facility in writing for large and complex forces. The performances by the German forces are generally excellent, with the large choral forces only occasionally sounding a little spongy, and the vocal soloists and the instrumentalists of Les Cornets Noirs supplying a highly virtuosic contribution. I look forward to hearing more Stadlmayr.

D. James Ross

O poore distracted world! English songs and anthems Les Voix Baroques, Alexander Weimann 71' 42"
Atma Classiques ACD2 2630
Music by Blow, Coperario, Croft, Locke, Theophilus & Thomas Lupo, Milton, Peerson, H. Purcell, Ramsey & Weelkes

If you're allergic to suspensions and false relations give this one a miss. If, on the other hand, you savour a late evening dose of melancholy this is definitely for you. Just be warned, however, that the note says nothing about the music and, although the English texts are given complete, there are no translations for those who may need them. The solo singing in this sequence of songs and anthems is especially good from the gentlemen. The ladies are not bad, though one of them occasionally sounds a little fragile. In the large scale anthems with strings I did miss the sonority of multiple strings and voices in the relevant places though these interpretations as devotional symphony songs are a valid alternative approach. And it's not all doom and

gloom. The most substantial piece is Croft's anthem *Rejoice in the Lord* and its alto solo with instruments *Praise the Lord with harp* one of the disc's highlights. This can be recommended as a carefully compiled and performed programme of mostly unfamiliar but more than simply worthy music.

David Hansell

Royal Music by Purcell and Handel Alison Balsom *tpt*, Trevor Pinnock 66' 17"
EMI 4403292

This smacks of a record company combining two popular composers and two popular artists with a 'royal' tag to make an impact on the Christmas market. The technical skill on display here would certainly be an excellent model for any aspiring trumpeter. Those listening with 'early music' ears, however, may well feel that the trumpet is surplus to requirements in *Fairest Isle* and that we certainly don't need to hear *Sound the trumpet* with the second part an octave too high (whether sung or, as here, played), let alone *The Plaint* from *The Fairy Queen* in this arrangement. At least we do get Handel's *Eternal source* correctly scored, in contrast to the version reviewed last time. But the playing is marvellous. Just the programme, at least in HIP terms, is questionable.

David Hansell

sogno barocco Anne Sofie von Otter *mS*, Sandrine Piau *S*, Susanna Sundberg *A*, Ensemble Cappella Mediterranea, Leonardo García Alarcón 71' 41"
naïve V 5286
Music by Cavalli, Monteverdi, Provenza & Luigi Rossi

In her contribution to the programme notes, von Otter comments how her preferences in Baroque vocal music have moved in later life from short recitatives coupled with long arias to longer recitatives with shorter arias, and indeed this CD takes the form of a thoughtful tribute from this musical *grande dame* to the less showy and more gently expressive music in the repertoire. A sequence of familiar vocal pieces by Monteverdi and Cavalli alternate with instrumental music by Cavalli and less familiar repertoire by Luligo Rossi and Francesco Provenza. Von Otter is joined by Sandrine Piau and Susanna Sundberg for duets and all are beautifully accompanied by sensitively responsive and highly imaginative playing from the instrumental ensemble. Particularly interesting is the extraordinary mock lament on the death of the Swedish King

Gustavus II Adolphus by Provenziale in which the mourning of his widow Maria Eleanora is regularly interrupted by lively dance music and bawdy interjections – did Provenziale feel he had been passed over for a court post? Beware a musician slighted! A regular crowd-pleaser at von Otter's concerts, this irreverent work was found by Arnold Ostman, and hints at the existence of a whole tradition of anti-laments as well as supplying a very useful source of Neapolitan dances. It is performed here with enormous gusto, contrasting completely with Rossi's 'genuine' Lament for the widowed Queen. Generally, the mood of this CD is pleasingly melancholy, with von Otter's many years of experience feeding into profound readings of some lovely music.

D. James Ross

Terpsichore: Music of the Dance Capriccio Stravagante Renaissance Orchestra, Skip Sempé 63' 27"

Paradizo PA0011

Music by Bennet, Brade, Holborne, Moritz von Hessen & Michael Praetorius

Fresh from recording the Florentine Intermedi, Skip Sempé has employed similar large-scale forces in this recording of dance music from the Renaissance. If like me you have qualms about the concept of the 'Renaissance orchestra' as an entity, there is little in the Q&A style programme note which will convince you one way or the other. To cite the handful of examples we know of where huge numbers of Renaissance instruments were employed – such as the Intermedi – to make a case for widespread existence of such an entity is tantamount to using the opening ceremony of the 2012 Olympics as evidence for the regular use of such forces at regular sports events. Notwithstanding Praetorius, who attests to the existence of complete families of most Renaissance instruments, that they convened in huge orchestras alternating textures like the sections of the later Baroque and Classical orchestras seems largely fantasy. That they would have sounded magnificent, we know from the efforts of David Munrow and later followers, all of whom presented the larger textures with scholarly provisos. Indeed, listening to the present CD with its intelligent grouping of dance tunes, songs and motet music into Ballo suites played tastefully by virtuoso performers, phrased exquisitely and exploiting textural contrasts and combinations to the full, even this doubter found himself wishing it could all have been authentic. To the familiar sounds of viols, recorders, cornetts, sack-

buts, virginals and percussion, Sempé contributes the exquisite timbres of the tiorbino, a gut-strung spinet which adds a genuinely unique dimension to the texture. Dipping into the familiar dance music collections by Brade and Praetorius, Sempé also cleverly incorporates madrigals, part-songs and even motets from *Musae Sioniae*, just as players of the time would undoubtedly have done. If some particularly densely-scored episodes sound almost like Bruckner, just close your eyes and let visions of entire courts of galliarding dandies sweep across your imagination.

D. James Ross

Treasures from Uppsala Les Cornets Noirs, Wolf Matthias Friedrich bass 65' 48"

Raumklang RK3101

Bertali *Omnes Sancti Angeli*, Sonatas a3 & a6
Förster Sonatas a3 & a7 Furchheim Sonata a5
Gletle *Salve regina Peranda Cor mundum crea in me*
Pohle *Vox Domini Reina De profundis clamavi*
Tunder *Salve coelestis pater* Anon Sonata a2 cnt

Ever since I started editing music as part of my degree (long before music-setting software allowed me to make a living of sorts from it!), the Dübén Collection at the University of Uppsala in Sweden has been a major resource: literally hundreds of pieces of 17th-century music in organ tablature scores and/or MS parts (lots of them now available to view online) provide the source material (and even now, excitement!) This new recording by Les cornets noirs (despite the name, actually pairs of cornetts and violins, with trombone, dulcian and continuo) explores repertoire for solo bass voice (beautifully exploiting Wolf Matthias Friedrich's wide range), as well as purely instrumental pieces, such as the Sonata a7 by Caspar Förster which opens the recital. The dulcian is a little buzzy at times, and there can very occasionally be a rather harsh edge to the recorded sound of the cornetti, but these are very minor quibbles, given performances of this quality. There is an impostor in the nest, though – the sonata a6 by Bertali is from that other repository of this repertoire, in Kromeriz. Who could care, though?

BC

Scintillate anticae stellae: In Natali nei conventi italiani tra Cinquecento e Seicento Cappella Artemisia Candace Smith dir

Tactus TC 280003 79' 12"

Assandro, Badalla, Casati, Cozzolani, Leonarda, Massaino, Massenzio, Perucona, Reina, Rota, Soderini, Speer, Strata, Taeggio

This generous CD contains 16 items of music published between 1580 and 1688 performed by nine singers, two violins,

three viols, flute, harp, guitar/theorbo and keyboard – all female except for a violinist and the plucker. All the names look Italian, except the Irish harpist (Maria Christina Cleary) and Candace Smith, who is one of the singers as well as director. She is an American who studied with Andrea von Ramm and Cathy Berberian in the late 1970s and settled in Italy. The singers are not quite up to their standard with regard to control of vibrato. Six of the sixteen tracks are by female composers – I would hesitate to identify them by ear! Daniel Speer would seem to be an outsider among the composers: his role was to add instruments to a monody by an unnamed Roman nun. There is one track that is purely instrumental – a vocal piece with diminutions written by Bruce Dickey, the director's husband. The music is enjoyable, though this is one of those discs that probably benefits from not being listened to intently for the whole eighty minutes: it will sound better with a half-time interval, and a break after track 9 would be sensible. Some texts are liturgical, but others are poetic, and trying to follow the meaning without even the Latin texts is difficult, even though the pronunciation is clear: there is no reference to texts online. But do buy it.

CB

Thomaskantoren vor Johann Sebastian Bach Kammerchor Josquin des Prés, Ludwig Böhme 66' 58"

Carus 83.342

J. S. Bach *Kyrie (BWV236)*, *Wir glauben all*
Calvisius *Komm Gott Schöpfer, Praeter rerum*
seriem **Knüpfer** *Mein Gott betrübt ist meine Seele*
Kuhnau *Ach Gott wie lässt du, Gott hat uns nicht*
gesetzt, *Tristis est anima mea* T. Michael *Aus der*
Tiefe, *Unser Trübsal* Schein *Gott sei mir gnädig,*
Verleih uns Frieden Schelle *Komm Jesu komm*

This is a fabulous CD on so many levels. Previous tributes to J. S. Bach's esteemed but little-heard predecessors at the Leipzig Thomaskirche have usually focussed on one composer, or gone for the often-lavishly scored works of the two who held the post immediately before him, Kuhnau and Schelle. Ludwig Böhme's selection of pieces goes right back to Seth Calvisius who was there while Monteverdi was in charge of San Marco in Venice. It is lovely to have some Tobias Michael on the menu! The Kammerchor Josquin des Prés is a new ensemble to me, and I look forward to hearing lots more from them – in fact, I'd be more than happy to listen to them singing more of the same, or perhaps with a handful of instruments, but again with the emphasis on variety of composers.

The individual lines are distinct within a beautifully blended whole; the intonation is wonderful, and the recorded sound clean but not clinical. I hope the disc gets lots of air time, if only to show that J. S. Bach was nothing if not following in a marvellous tradition – most of the pieces on this disc deserve to be mainstream repertoire!

BC

LATE BAROQUE

Bach & Luther Bach in Context Musica Amphion, Gesualdo Consort Amsterdam, Leo van Doeselaar (1730 Gottfried Silbermann organ, Glachau) Book in English and Dutch with 77'232 CD
Et cetera KTC1442

This CD comes tucked into the back of a beautifully presented A5 size, 92 page, hard back book, the second in a "Bach in Context" series which presents Bach's choral and organ works in a liturgical context. There are 32 pages of essays (in English and Dutch) on the programme, Leipzig liturgical performance practice and the organ. Indeed, for me one of the most attractive features of this CD is the use of the organ – not a tiny little box continuo organ, but one of Silbermann's finest instruments, used for the opening and closing Praeludium and Fuga, two chorale preludes, and during the vocal works, notably the use of its majestic 16' pedal Posaunen to reinforce the bass cantus (in canon with 3 oboes) of the opening choral fugue of the first cantata, *Ein feste Burg* (BWV 80). A "secure fortress" indeed! The chorale prelude on *Dies sind die heil'gen* uses the delightfully delicate Vox human stop. As well as two Bach cantatas (*Ein Feste Burg* BWV 80 and *Christ lag in Todesbanden* BWV 4) there is a motet by Johann Christoph Bach (*Merk auf, mein Herz*) with its colourful word painting, including the braying of an ass. The singers of Gesualdo Consort Amsterdam include such distinguished names as Dorothee Miels and Charles Daniels.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Bach Cantatas for Christmas Various soloists, The Monteverdi Choir, The English Baroque Soloists, John Eliot Gardiner (6 CDs)

Soli Deo Gloria SDG178

BWV16, 28, 40, 41, 57, 58, 63, 64, 65, 91, 110, 121, 122, 123, 133, 143, 151, 152, 153, 171, 190, 191 & 225

I apologise for reviewing this – not to readers, so much as to my fellow writers who, I imagine, would have fought tooth and

claw to have this amazing set; sadly, had I not written about it, it would have missed the December issue and I saw no sense in that happening! The fact that these are among the best recordings of the 23 surviving cantatas Bach wrote for the period from Christmas Day to Epiphany notwithstanding, it is astonishing that they are now available in a box for less than £20 – no, your eyes are not deceiving you! The performances, of course, date from the epic Bach Pilgrimage, but I imagine there are even Bach fans out there who chose not to buy the recordings as they appeared because they were already committed to buying the Suzuki or the select Kuijken cycles, but even *they* will surely not be able to resist such a temptation. The soloists (apart from CD1, which was recorded in Weimar and features a more international line-up) are the cream of the English-speaking-world's Bach singers. I know the Eliot Gardiner Christmas oratorio is a regular feature of my present wrapping activities; now I have six lovely CDs to see me through the rest of the season too!

BC

Bach Concertos and Chorale Preludes Kåre Nordstoga (1761 Andreas Silbermann organ, Arlesheim Cathedral, Switzerland) 2 CDs

Lawo LWC1035

BWV592-6, 695, 701, 709, 711, 713, 715, 717, 718, 726, 727, 731, 733, 734, 735, 736 & 768,

The Arlesheim Cathedral organ is one of the finest examples of the work of Andreas Silbermann (the Alsace Silbermann, brother of the Saxon Gottfried). Unfortunately, the concertos are given overblown and bombastic performances that do little justice to the music or the organ. The second CD, of miscellaneous chorale preludes, is a bit easier to listen to. It includes the wonderful *Partite diverse sopra Sei Gegrüßet*.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Bach 6 Suites for Solo Cello Pieter Wispelwey 133' 43" (2 CDs + 52' DVD documentary)

Evil Penguin Records Classic EPRC 012

This is Wispelwey's *third* recording of the Bach cello suites, but it is VERY different from the others, not least of all because of his choice of pitch. Looser, thicker strings, makes tuning more difficult but also gives the instrument a sound that is not very far removed from the *violoncello da spalla*, so recently espoused by Sigiswald Kuijken in his Bach cantata recordings (and else-

where). The closest I have come to a description of that sound is like a deep grumble that an ancient teddy bear I was given as a very young child used to make; not quite rasping, but something of that sort. Important as the dramatic shift in timbre is, Wispelwey's new reading of the music is every bit as impressively different from what went before; the preludes in G and E flat (which regular readers will know are my benchmarks for *any* performance of these works) are nothing like his previous versions – partly a compliment to him as performer but also, of course, to Bach for writing such amazing music within such strictly self-imposed limitations that can easily allow for many, many variant readings. I feel there is no point in highlighting any specific movements, or even to suggest trying before you buy – it is quite simple: this is a must-have set. And for so many reasons!

BC

Bach / Telemann Concertos for Viola & Bassoon Lars Anders Tomter vla, Martin Kuuskmann bsn, IBI 65' 08"

SIMAX PSC1326

Bach Vla conc in E flat (after BWV1053), Bsn conc in d (after BWV1059), Conc in c for vla, bsn (after BWV1060) Telemann Vla conc in G, Conc in G for vla, bsn

Before we start, let me just say (as I have several times before in these pages) that I have no problem with arrangements. The solo viola concerto by Telemann is the only one on the disc in its original form. I don't know where the impetus for the choice of soloists came from – perhaps simply that Tomter and Kuuskmann are outstanding performers? The fact that the bassoon spends most of its time in the stratosphere, however, would suggest that the pairing was very unlikely ever to have been the original. Virtuoso it might be; even fun, perhaps. It is interesting that, as well as Bach's oft-plundered keyboard concertos, they have opted to re-work a piece of Telemann which is not terribly well known, even in its original version for two viollette, which the booklet note confuses with Vivaldi's *viollette all' inglesi*. An interesting release, but our readers should handle it with care.

BC

Corelli Sonate à 3 op. 4 Ensemble Aurora, dir. Enrico Gatti 85' 59" (2 CDs)

Glossa GCD 921207

It is a pity that the sets of trio-sonatas are much less well known than the twelve concerti grossi op. 6, or indeed the violin

sonatas op. 5, perhaps because getting to know all 48 of the op. 1-4 is a daunting prospect! They are, however, fine works, all worthy of exploring. The last set of twelve is here presented complete on two discs, though not in numerical order. The pitch chosen is A=400, the argument being that the 'Roman diapason' was about one tone below 'Venetian diapason' (A=440), though few listeners would detect that is a notch below our standard baroque of A=415. Both archlute and harpsichord are used in the continuo performance, although the latter is less easy to pick out than the plucked instrument, perhaps due to the somewhat over resonant recording environment. Ensemble Aurora gives a fine performance of the works, stylistically appropriate, with some typical Corellian ornamentation at suitable places, and all thoroughly enjoyable.

Couperin *Les Nations* Les Ombres, Margaux Blanchard, Sylvain Sartre
Ambronay AMY035 105' 56" (2 CDs)

Ensembles sometimes take the various rubrics that Couperin attached to his chamber music as a licence to change instrumentation at every double bar, the result of which is to deny any single movement a real sense of identity. At the other extreme are those who play the complete collections with an unchanging sonority, which in my experience is preferable but does require playing of the very highest order. This ensemble plots a sensible middle course with pairs of violins, flutes and oboes deployed above mostly suitable continuo combinations (including on occasion and rather dubiously, in my view, a guitar) to provide the listener with a varied but still coherent presentation of this brilliant music. I can honestly say that I really enjoyed every movement. Broad issues such as tempo have been carefully considered and the myriad details that are the essence of the French Baroque are successfully assimilated within the general sweep of the whole. The welcome bonus of JS Bach's organ arrangement of a movement from *L'Impériale* just about offsets the pretentious and sometimes strange language of the note. This bonus, by the way is the second half of the final track on CD2 and follows the chamber music after a gap of several seconds. And it is worth waiting for. This is my favourite disc in an uneven month's listening for *EMR*. David Hansell

Durante *Neapolitan Christmas II* Monica Piccinini, Christina Kühne, Ursula

Eitinger, Alberto ter Doest, Thilo Dahlmann SSATB, Kölner Akademie, Michael Alexander Willens 70' 27" cpo 777 734-2

Kyrie-Gloria "in Afflictionis tempore", Laudate pueri breve "detto il Grottesco", Litanie à due voci con violini, Pastorale "Cito Pastores"

As with the first of this pair of discs devoted to similar repertoire, volume 2 confirms Durante's reputation among his contemporaries. It is actually surprising that his choral writing (although here taken by an ensemble of the five soloists) has not caught the attention of choirs looking for pastoral music to fill Christmas concert programmes – it's very tuneful, not especially demanding, and the instrumental requirements (strings with oboes, trumpets and horns) won't exactly break the bank. The five singers blend well in ensemble without compromising their full voice sound, and the arias and duets are nicely taken; it is good to have a female alto – somehow the combination with the soprano is more euphonious than it might have been with a countertenor. I hope Willens and his enterprising Kölner Akademie will now go on to explore music by other composers in the same vein – Francesco Mancini, Diogenio Bigaglia and Giovanni Maria Clari, for example; I fondly remember a tape one of my German friends gave me of their choir in concerts of very fine church music by those three. BC

Handel *Dixit Dominus, Zadok the Priest, Ode for the Birthday of Queen Anne*, Apollo's Fire, Jeannette Sorrell 64' 38" Avie AV2270

The main feature here is *Dixit*: it hits the balance of being exciting, well-shaped and musical, but not turned into an exhibition piece. Orchestra and choir are brilliant, the soloists not quite at that level, but acceptable. It would certainly be worth buying if the rest was up to scratch. The problem is the odd opening. A timpani prelude is OK, but making it lead to "God save the King" (the last few bars of *Zadok*) is ludicrous, especially since it is heard in context later. Then we move directly on to *Eternal source* – such pieces are not called *Odes* by Purcell and Handel, though the poems use the title. The opening seems to me too affected to work – pulling the semiquavers around, for instance, and it is too slow: sing the following lines at a normal speed and take that back to the opening. Two movements are omitted: "Let rolling streams" & "Let Envy then" – a

shame, since much of it is so good (and it's a relief to have the opening at the right octave). The CD ends with a bonus track (which hardly makes up for the missing movements): "The Lord shall reign" from *Israel in Egypt*. It's certainly impressive, but a far more apposite encore would have been the close of the *Ode/Song for St Cecilia's Day*, to match the marvellous trumpet-and-voice sound that begins *Eternal source*, Handel's other celebration of voice and trumpet. I don't understand how Avie could accept such a disc – it feels more like a recording made to sell to friends and followers, whereas it could have been much more acceptable: after all, there are not many rivals for the complete *Eternal source* rather than just the first 38 bars. I was impressed by the soft opening to *Zadok*, with virtually no crescendo before the tutti entry. CB

Handel *Violin Sonatas* Riccardo Minasi, Musica Antiqua Roma (Marco Ceccato vlc, Giulia Nutti hpscd, Luca Lianca archlute) 72' 20"

deutsche harmonia mundi 88697705312
HWV 358, 359a, 361, 364a, 370-72, 375

One cannot fault the booklet notes for this disc, which give the source references of all eight of these sonatas in the Roger and Walsh editions as well as Chysander's opus numberings, the dates of composition (as far as is known) as well as a note on the borrowings. Minasi's ornamentations of the slow movements in particular are noteworthy in these virtuosic and dynamic performances, which always hold the listener's attention; though I found Minasi's Paganini-like liberties with the last movement of the 3-movement G major sonata (HWV 358) hardly suited to a historically aware performance. Gimmicks designed to produce audience titters are better suited to live performances. The ensemble appears to have chosen to play at 'modern' pitch, which perhaps explains the edginess of sound quality. Otherwise these are enjoyable performances of some of the best of Handel's sonatas.

Ian Graham-Jones
Riccardo Minasi seems unaware of research over the last 50 years on the authority of Chrysander's ascriptions: the first edition of HHA followed Chrysander, but that was revised by Terence Best and published by Bärenreiter (BA 4226). CB

Leclair & his Rivals Leila Schayegh vln, Jörg Halubek hpscd 66' 12"

Pan Classics PC 10278

Cardonne Sonate IIIe Duphy Pièces de Clavecin (1756) Guignon op. 1/9 Guillemain Sonata IV Leclair Sonata XII

This is the kind of recording I really love hearing. Somehow, in my mind, Leclair was the only Frenchman of any quality who wrote for the violin. What utter rubbish! (Of course, I knew it could not possibly be the case – but when did anyone ever demonstrate the contrary?) Well, here is my answer – Leila Schayegh and Jörg Halubek, both products of the Schola Cantorum in Basel (amongst many other teachers), give absolutely wonderful renditions of five remarkable pieces. To be fair, two of Leclair's "rivals" (Cardonne and Duphy) were of a younger generation. Guillemain and Guignon's sonatas are definitely for violin and continuo, while Cardonne's reverses the roles. The Duphy is a purely keyboard piece, and provides a nice change of sound world. At the end of the day, though, Leclair still reigns supreme in my mind – the *Chaconne* that concludes his G major sonata from his third book (1734) is all that is sumptuous about the French baroque. BC

Marino Works for Strings and Continuo
Orchestra da Camera "Carlo Antonio Marino", Natale Arnoldi 66' 28"
Tactus TC671301

Don't worry if the name is unfamiliar – this is the first ever recording of music by Carlo Antonio Marino. Although some details of his life are known, these do not include either the date or location of his birth. His music is tuneful and full of energy, more Albinoni than Vivaldi in its fairly constant texture and rather limited technical demands. The performers here are possibly more used to playing classical and romantic repertoire, but they do tone down their use of vibrato, and they are not afraid to use open strings. Only the lower parts' inability to let notes breathe around the edges prevents me giving this a 100% thumbs-up – I can imagine the music really coming to life with top-notch baroque band. BC

Pergolesi *Il prigionier superbo* / *La serva padrona*
Antonio Lozano Sostrate, Marina Rodriguez Cusi Rosmene, Marina De Liso Metelce, Ruth Rosique Ericlea, Marina Comparato Viridate, Gaicinta Nicotra Micisda, Alessandra Marianelli Serpina, Carlo Lepore Uberto, Jean Méningue Vespone, Accademia Barocca de I Virtuosi Italiani, Corrado Rovaris 177' (2 DVDs)
Arthaus Musik 101 654

This forms part of the same Pergolesi project as the DVD of *Adriano in Siria*, reviewed in depth in EMR 150 (October

2012). There all comparison ends. This so-called production of the 3-act opera seria *Il prigionier superbo* (1733) opens in near darkness with two minutes of weird electronic sounds to which oddly dressed figures gyrate. A brutal attack on the overture follows, a riot of 'silly pluckers' run berserk. It is accompanied by yuppie party-goers setting up puppets dressed in period costume, who interact with the modern cast in the opening exchange of recitative. The first aria is wretchedly sung by a tenor in a wheel chair... Need I go on? Well, I didn't, not being prepared to have my intelligence or Pergolesi further insulted by this crass manifestation of Regitheater (yes, the 'producer' is German) and Italian period performance at its worst. Brian Robins

Perti *Il Mosè conduttore del popolo ebreo*
Gloria Banditelli Mosè, Marco Bussi Faraone, Laura Antonaz Generale di Faraone, Alberto Allegrezza Capo del popolo ebreo, Elena Biscuola Testo, Ensemble "Les Nations", Maria Luisa Baldassari 59' 42"
Tactus TC661603

This fine, if short, oratorio was penned by the 24-year-old Perti, seemingly part of a tradition of works dedicated to the life of Moses at the Modena court. The five singers (SSATB) join together for the sole ensemble piece, which rather surprisingly follows the opening aria; the first half opens with a duet for the pharaoh and his general, while the work is concluded by an aria for the alto narrator and trumpet with continuo in a patchwork form. I cannot actually tell you what she is singing about because the text is not online (as the booklet says it should be – though I'm sure that is just a temporary situation) and, even if it were, it seems that only the Italian version will be given. Unlike the Legrenzi performance oratorio I reviewed above, this rendering is much truer to the original with some enjoyable singing and playing. Perhaps we will hear more of the Modena pieces in future releases? BC

Telemann *Gott Zebaoth in deinem Namen*
Cantatas Vol. 2 Veronika Winter S, Lena Susanne Norin A, Jab Kobow T, Ekkehard Abele B, Rheinische Kantorei, Das Kleine Konzert, Hermann Max 51' 51"
cpo 777 261-2
Gott Zebaoth TWVW 1:698, Sie verachten das Gesetz TVWV 1:1339, Weine nicht! TVWV 1:1541

I wonder what else is hidden away in the cpo archives – these recordings were made

at the 18th Magdeburg Telemann Festival in 2006! There seems to be no connection between the three works: *Weine nicht* is one of the larger versions of the cantatas which some readers will know from the *Harmonischer Gottesdienst*; *Sie verachten das Gesetz* is from a printed cycle from the 1740s, here given in the composer's recommended line-up for expanded performances; *Gott Zebaoth in deinem Namen* is for the 16th Sunday after Trinity. As we expect from Max and his ensembles, these are lively performances which bring out all that is best in Telemann's music – listen to the opening 40 seconds of Track 20 and see how many different musical ideas you can identify; then listen to the next four minutes and discover just how many ways he finds to develop them – including quite a few shocks! What little background noise there is (inevitable with live performances) is minimal, considering the warmth of the recorded sound. BC

Telemann *Concerti per strumenti vari*
Accademia Hermans, Fabio Ciofini
La Bottega Discantica 194 61' 28"
Concertos in d (2 chalumeaux), e (flute & recorder), F (2 horns / recorder & bassoon) and G (violin)

I remember getting very excited the first time I heard an Italian ensemble play Fasch's music; similarly I wrote a very enthusiastic review in these pages of the Brandenburg Concertos recording made a few years ago by Alessandrini. The present disc presents a nice cross-section of Telemann's instrumental concertos; only the ubiquitous flute and recorder concerto will be known to most people – the D minor work for a pair of chalumeaux with strings is a really delight, as is the chamber work for solo violin, two ripieno violins and continuo. The playing is bright and lively, and the recording clean and warm. If you're looking for a Christmas present for a Telemanniac who has everything, this could be the CD for you! BC

Telemann *Wind Concertos* Vol. 8
Camerata Köln, La Stagione Frankfurt, Michael Schneider 69' 38"
cpo 999 951-2
TWV 43: D7, 51: G3 & D5, 52: C1 & F4, 53: a1

This review could almost have written itself. Give Michael Schneider a blank CD and *carte blanche* to record any Telemann concerto he wants, and you can sit back and enjoy as varied a programme of 18th-century music as you would if you cherry-picked any number of other composers.

The range of the man's imagination is astounding – the Polish bagpipers may well have grabbed his attention, but you surely wouldn't expect them to come barging in after the most suavely Francophile *Lentement* you have ever heard, yet that is exactly what happens within two tracks of the latest installment of their survey of the wind concertos. There are works for solo trumpet (with only two oboes and basso continuo for accompaniment), oboe (with two violins), oboe d'amore, two horns and two chalumeaux (with ripieno bassoons – did I mention how creative his ear was, too?) Just listen to the sumptuous Track 9 and tell me Telemann is inferior to Handel! I dare you! Bravo, Prof. Schneider! BC

Bach/Telemann Concertos for Viola & Bassoon Lars Anders Tomter vla, Martin Kuuskmann bsn, IBI 65' 08"
SIMAX PSC1326 *see under Bach*

Telemann 12 Fantasias for solo violin Lara Hall vla 67' 02"
atoll ACD341

"As a performer on both the baroque and modern violin, I have two very different musical personas. With this CD I have tried to create, on a modern violin, as much of the sound world of a baroque violinist with minimal concession to the natural characteristics of the modern violin." Thus writes the performer on the back of the CD. One might wonder why. Indeed, there are so many whys. Before voicing them, though, let me first say that these are very neat performances of these pieces, which remain too little played, in a generous but not over-resonant location, nicely caught on the recording. But why not just play a baroque violin? If you're going to play modern violin, why not use a modern bow? It's all too contradictory. I know we always say that, if you're going to record something that people know, you really should have something new to say and I'm not sure that, enjoyable as these renditions are, Lara Hall comes close to challenging Rachel Podger, or even Andrew Manze. BC

Telemann Flavius Bertaridus Maïte Beaumont *Flavius Bertaridus*, Nina Bernsteiner *Rodelinda*, Ann-Beth Solvang *Flavia*, Antonio Abete *Grimoladus*, Katerina Tretyakova *Cunibert*, Jürgen Sacher *Orontes*, David DQ Lee *Onulfus*, Mélissa Petit *Regimbert*/*Guardian spirit*, Academia Montis Regalis, Alessandro de Marchi (3 CDs)
deutsche harmonia mundi 88691926052

This recording of Telemann's sole surviving *opera seria* was made during a run of performances at the Innsbruck Early Music Festival. Various cuts and re-assignments have been made to make it more workable, but there is still plenty of evidence of Telemann's great gifts, both in terms of melodic invention and his wonderful ear for effects. The long and typically complicated libretto involves an assortment of star-crossed, disguised and misguided lovers, but all is well that ends well. On the way, there are some first rate arias – though regular readers should not be surprised by this news! I know that my personal taste in singers is just that, but I feel that they are the weak link in this production; or rather, the casting team behind their selection is: of course, in the theatre, there is a visual cue to which character is which; the fact that one of the parts was originally sung by a 17-year-old girl should have suggested something of what the composer – who would have been in charge of the Hamburg production – had in mind for that role.

I also think that, in a situation where it is very unlikely that there will ever be another recording made of the work, that performers have a certain responsibility to give as true a performance as they can. But using the *Sonate metodiche* as a basis for vocal ornamentation is rather pointless, since some of the voices are hidden under a generous helping of velvety vibrato, and others are simply unable to sing the composer's original lines, let alone the decorated ones. When we read in the booklet that the conductor has "filled in the notated instrumentation" (with, for example, the gratuitous use of an onstage chalumeau for the director's similarly gratuitous re-assigning of the role to a previously silent character!), we must conclude that this is at best an approximation of the work. I wonder if Handel's operas would have been treated as freely? * Clearly, all Telemann fans will have to buy this, and it will not harm any other lovers of baroque opera to familiarise themselves with the marvellous music. Just be aware of the limitations. BC

* Early Handel revivals (stretching well within living memory) were treated the same way as your review suggests, and it is still only the pit that is likely to be reasonably HIP. CB

Vinci Artaserse Philippe Jaroussky *Artaserse*, Max Emanuel Cencic *Mandane*, Daniel Behle *Artabano*, Franco Fagioli *Arbace*, Valer Barna-Sabadus *Semira*, Yuriy Mynenko *Megabise*, Coro della Radiotelevisione svizzera Lugano, Concerto Köln,

Diego Fasolis
Virgin Classics 5099960286925

With Porpora, Leonardo Vinci (c.1696-1730) was the most important opera composer in the Neapolitan style during the first half of the 18th century. By the time his life ended prematurely with his suspected murder, he had composed more than 30 operas, of which *Artaserse* was the last. The original setting of a Metastasio libretto that would subsequently be employed many times, *Artaserse* dates from the year of the composer's death. It was first given at the Teatro delle Dame in Rome, a provenance that explains its all-male cast, this being one of the periods when women were not allowed on the Roman stage. Widely considered Vinci's most successful opera, *Artaserse* enjoyed an unusual number of revivals after its composer's death, a distinction rare at the time.

Its arrival on CD in this sumptuously cast recording is a major event. For a start the opera lives up to its reputation, being a compellingly dramatic setting of Metastasio's book dealing with political intrigue and treachery at the court of the Persian king Serse. Vinci's arias provide a judicious mix of powerful, surging coloratura showpieces with andantes of gracious, lyrical nobility. The manifold opportunities for display are eagerly seized by a superb cast that involves no fewer than five counter-tenors, of whom Philippe Jaroussky, Max Emanuel Cencic and Franco Fagioli in the leading roles are outstanding, as is tenor Daniel Behle as Artabano, the villain of the piece. Diego Fasolis conducts his virtuoso orchestra with fiery commitment, drawing strongly characterised playing that is arguably a little too trenchant at times. His inclusion of timpani is almost certainly spurious, as is the absurd use of long, sustained bassoon notes for Artabano's plain recitatives. Such caveats apart this is a marvellous set. Brian Robins

Vivaldi L'oracolo in Messenia Julia Lezhneva *Trasimede*, Vivica Genaux *Epitide*, Ann Hallenberg *Merope*, Romina Basso *Elmira*, Franziska Gottwald *Licisco*, Magnus Stavelund *Polifonte*, Xavier Sabata *Anassandro*, Europa Galante, Fabio Biondi 156' 41" (2 CDs)
Virgin Classics 5099960254726

Although labelled as a Vivaldi opera, this curious issue is nothing of the kind. Rather it is a reconstruction by Fabio Biondi of the composer's penultimate opera, first given in Venice at the end of 1737 and then posthumously in 1742 at the

Kärntnertortheater in Vienna. The score is lost, but the Viennese libretto is extant and it is from this that Biondi has produced a *pasticcio* performing version, drawing not only on other Vivaldi operas, but also works by composers such as Broschi, Hasse, and above all Geminiano Giacomelli (1692-1740), whose *Merope* (composed to the same Zeno libretto as *L'Oracolo in Messenia*) of 1734 accounts for more than half the score.

The present recording is taken from lavishly cast performances given at the Resonanzen festival in Vienna in January 2012. As would be expected from such a line-up, there is some truly splendid singing here, most notably from Ann Hallenberg's commandingly imperious *Merope* and Vivica Genaux as her son Epitide. The casting of Julia Lezhneva in the relatively small role of Trasimede is luxury indeed, though she does have the most demanding aria in the opera (from Broschi's *Artaserse*), in the course of which she manages more perfectly executed trills than the rest of the cast put together throughout the performance. Much of the effect of the performance is however undermined by Biondi's characteristically edgy direction, dominated as it is by thin and acidic sounding spiccato bowing from the strings, explosive dynamic contrasts, and tempos that are frequently so fast that the singers can hardly articulate, let alone project any sense of the text or line. The exercise was essentially a waste of a wonderful cast.

Brian Robins

Vivaldi *La Vivaldi – La Senna festeggiante* Yetzabel Arias Fernández, Martín Oro, Sergio Foresti SAB, La Risonanza, Fabio Bonizzoni 78'12"

Glossa GCD 921513

Given that there are already two fine recordings of Vivaldi's delightful serenata in praise of Louis XV, first reactions to this release might perhaps be regret that Le Risonanza did not follow up on their superb record of Alessandro Scarlatti's *Serenata a Filli* (EMR 142) with another of that composers's neglected serenatas. Yet such thoughts are rapidly banished. To a greater degree than either Robert King or Alessandrini, Bonizzoni captures the light-hearted festive spirit of the piece to near perfection. His tempos, never too fast or (with one exception) too slow allow for wonderfully lyrical and supple phrasing. Rhythms are light and buoyantly articulated without ever finding the need to resort to percussive exaggeration. And, merciful heavens, just when I was despair-

ing of again hearing continuo playing that is not in some way over-elaborated, Bonizzoni provides a perfect example without acres of arpeggiations or a lute or Baroque guitar within earshot. Indeed, had the diction of the singers been better, this might have been as near perfect as recordings get. As it is, all three produce excellent vocal performances in a work that shares the load about as democratically as is possible, although technically it is the bass who is given the most demanding music. Sergio Foresti copes admirably with some formidably low tessitura, especially in 'Pietà, dolcezza', one of the few slow arias (and the one noted above as an exception to Bonizzoni's otherwise perfectly judged tempos). As in the Scarlatti, Yetzabel Arias Fernández uses her gloriously rich, yet pure soprano to beguiling effect, while countertenor Martín Oro is thoroughly comfortable with his relatively undemanding music.

Brian Robins

Vivaldi *Concerto con molti istromenti* The King's Consort, Robert King 68' 42"
Hyperion Helios CDH55439
RV97, 555, 562, 566, 574, 579 & 781

This is a re-issue of their recording of 1998, and well worth it, too. The King's Consort has chosen a selection of some of Vivaldi's finest and most imaginative concertos, many of which are free of some of the run-of-the-mill hallmarks of this composer's style, and boasting of a large array of wind (including chalumeau), strings (with three viole d'Inglese) as well as 'tromboni di caccia', horns and trumpet, all used in various combinations in these seven concerti. Particularly fine are the 'Concerto funebre' RV579 with its surprisingly cheerful concluding fugue, and the colourful multi-instrument RV 555. My only grumble with these Helios re-issues is the tiny print and condensed font used in the booklet, clearly with the intention of reducing the original 32-page insert into just 16 pages. As excellent as the music is, the booklet does not make for comfortable reading.

Ian Graham-Jones

Antonio Vivaldi *Recorder Concertos* RV 108, 441, 443, *The Four Seasons* Feinstein Ensemble, Martin Feinstein rec Catherine Manson violin 68'14"
Barn Cottage Records bcro09

This is some of Vivaldi's most popular music – *The Four Seasons* plus the recorder concertos in C major, A minor and C minor. Martin Feinstein is at his best in the virtuosic fast movements of the

concertos and could afford to take a little more time over some of the largo movements. The Largo from *Winter* swirls along at quite a fast tempo too, but rather effectively. There is some fine playing and dramatic effect in the *Seasons*, and although they are so well known I would have welcomed rather more information in the brief booklet about the programme behind the music.

Victoria Helby

Vivaldi *Venetian Dreams* Matthias Maute rec/fl, Rebel, Jörg-Michael Schwarz 56' 40"
Bridge 9377
Six Concertos Op. X, Suonata à 4 RV130, Concerto in g RV157

Vivaldi produced his Opus 10 concertos at the request of the publisher Le Cène to satisfy the market for music for the transverse flute which was just becoming popular in northern Europe in 1728. This was the year in which the traverso was first taught at the Ospedale della Pietà in Venice, so Vivaldi had to rework some of his existing concertos, mostly originally for recorder, to fulfil the order. To the resulting five concertos he added one completely new one in a more modern and less virtuosic style, no. 4 in G major, and the whole set was published in Amsterdam in the following year. In spite of Vivaldi's changes to make these works more suitable for the flute, No. 4 is the only one Matthias Maute has chosen to play on the traverso, four of the others being on alto recorder and No. 3 *Il Gardellino* on the smaller sixth flute, the soprano recorder in D. Matthias Maute and New York-based baroque ensemble Rebel have produced some sparkling and surprisingly varied performances, casting a fresh light on these well-known pieces.

Victoria Helby

Werner *Pro Adventu* Ars Antiqua Austria, Gunar Letzbor 58' 09"
Challenge Classics CC72513

Six quartets, Concerto a 5 parti, Pastorale in G, Aria pr Dominica prima Adventus, Cantilenas pro Adventu, pro Adventu de immaculata conceptione & de immaculate

Werner's is a name that frequently pops up in articles and books about Austrian music, but it is still a relatively rare occurrence when his music appears on disk, and virtually unknown for an entire recital to be devoted solely to him. Werner was no minor figure – from 1761–66, no less a figure than Joseph Haydn was his assistant at Esterhazy, where Werner had been in charge since 1728. Shortly before

his death, Haydn carefully edited the six two-movement quartets (with fugues) for publication by Artaria. These form the framework for a disk which also includes other instrumental music and some of the church music for which he was also famed (settings of texts for Advent which give the disk its name). The singers are a choirboy and the viola player, and this gives the performances a real honesty, and they are all the better for it! **BC**

Zelenka Solo Motets Alex Potter cT, Capriccio Barockorchester 81' 10"

Pan Classics PC 10274

Alma Redemptoris Mater ZWV126, *Barbara diva effera* ZWV164, *Christe eleison* ZWV29, *Dormi nate dormi Deus* ZWV171, *Lamentatio III/2* ZWV53/6, *Sollicitus fessor* ZWV209, *Hipocondrie* ZWV63 & *Sinfonia in c* ZWV63

This is one of the longest CDs I have ever heard! Not that length is a problem, when one is in the company of such an inventive composer, such a stylish orchestra and such a fine singer. Zelenka's music is full of melodic and harmonic interest – listen to the opening ritornello of *Sollicitus fessor* and you will get the measure of the man: solos for bassoon and cello, shifts back and forth from major to minor, unison passages for the whole ensemble, and then a vocal entry that both Handel and Hasse would have been proud of. It is also demonstrative of the high standard of the Dresden Kapelle, for whom he wrote most of his music. Alex Potter has none of the "listen to me" attitude that seems to affect so many top singers; instead, he carefully crafts melodic lines, slowly warming long notes, adding tasteful ornaments in *Da Capo* repeats, and deftly getting around the coloratura without a hint of strain in the voice. The orchestra also perform two instrumental pieces, one of which has unfortunately been wrongly identified on the cover of the disc. **BC**

A Cavalier's Tour through Baroque Europe Concerto Grosso Berlin 77' 43"

Berlin Classics 0300424BC

Avondano Sinfonia à 4 in D Corrette Sonata for 2 vc op.24 de Fesch Concerto in a for 3 vlms **Fux** Rondeau à 7 (FedF 111) **Handel** 'Alexander's Feast' Concerto in C (HWV 318) **Roman** Overture in G min (BeRI 43) **Rameau** Aria from 'Castor and Pollux' **Telemann** Concerto (TWV 53:D4) **Vivaldi** Concerto C (RV554)

Although not normally a lover of pot-pourri 'Grand Tour' recordings, this one has some interesting and unusual music. The J.H. Roman Overture is for the usual two oboes and strings, but the Fux, sur-

prisingly French in style, is scored for violino piccolo, bassoon, strings and continuo, and is a delightful gem. Michel Corrette's four-movement Sonata from his *Methode pour le Violoncelle*, here played without a harmonic continuo, has great unacademic charm. The Willem de Fesch for 3 violins and ripieno strings is given a spirited performance, while the Telemann – whose music nearly all has something to delight the listener – is unusual in its scoring for 2 violins, bassoon and strings, the bassoon having a singularly more prominent role than just acting as the bass line for the upper soloists. The Portuguese Pedro Avondano rarely gets an airing, and this simple three-movement Sinfonia for strings is one of this composer's few instrumental works. Of the two more well-known works, the Vivaldi Oboe Concerto is one of those with an obbligato organ, though here the violin takes the upper line of the organ part, while I find the Handel Concerto (first performed during the interval of *Alexander's Feast*) somewhat less imaginative than his Op. 6 concertos of a similar date. The choice of a Rameau operatic aria (Marie Friederike Schröder, *sop*) as a bonus track does seem a little bizarre in an otherwise purely instrumental programme. The Berlin group exhibit some skilled and stylish playing in this interesting disc.

Ian Graham-Jones

18th-century Portuguese Love Songs L'Avventura London, Žak Ozmo 71' 13"

Hyperion CDA67904

Music by Avondano, Da Silva Leite, Maurício, P

Who knows what a "modinha" is? I confess that I didn't, until this CD arrived. The appearance of modinha music in mid-18th century Portugal is a bit of a mystery: a link with Brazil seems likely. But rather like the popularity of folk music in the late 18th century French court, they soon found their way into the musical lives of the saloons of the Portuguese nobility and bourgeoisie – and MSS survive in the Portuguese Royal Library. The traveler and accident-prone house builder William Beckford described them as "the most seducing, the most voluptuous imaginable, the best calculated to throw saints off their guard and to inspire profane deliriums" in 1787. The rhythms vary from languid and melancholic, via slinky and exotic to gutsy and wild, with more than a touch of Afro-Brazilian folk idiom to them. And then we have José Maurício's slightly Mozartian *Sobre as asas da ternur*, which would make a good revivalist hymn.

Although they were usually accompanied by fortepiano or guitar, some specify instruments such as the viola francesa (five-course guitar) or the mandolin. L'Avventura London use a wider range of instrumental colour, with notable contributions from David Gordon showing his jazz credentials very successfully on harpsichord, Joanna Lawrence and Marta Gonçalves on violin and flute and the group's director Žac Ozmo on guitars. But the key contributors are the two Portuguese sopranos, Sandra Medeiros and Joana Seara – both outstanding singers with a real depth of passion. There are excellent notes by David Cranmer. This CD comes with a health warning – the plethora of catchy melodies will fill your head with ear-worms for weeks to come. **Andrew Benson-Wilson**

Le Concert Spirituel, Hervé Niquet – les 25 ans! 155' 46" (2 CDs)

Glossa GCD 921626

CD1 d'Agincourt, Boismortier, Bouteiller, (Gustave & Marc-Antoine) Charpentier, Gilbert, Handel, Purcell & Striggio

CD2 Boismortier, Campra, Destouches, Grétry, Marais & Purcell

These two jam-packed discs celebrate 25 years of this often pioneering ensemble, though all the recordings bar one were made this century. Niquet himself is quite a card, as is clear from his personal and relatively informal note. He appears as a vocal soloist in a music hall song – 'like being let loose in a sweet shop' – as well as conductor and harpsichordist, and all the tracks are his personal selection. CD1 includes sacred music (mainly Charpentier), a selection from *King Arthur* and a riveting performance of the overture to Handel's *Fireworks Music*. I'll certainly be seeking out the complete recording. CD2 offers selections from six operas – mainly French but also *Dido and Aeneas* – and a final selection of HN's personal favourites. My only gripe is his tendency to add unnecessary and improbable percussion to dances in operas. Otherwise this is doubtless a good-value way to explore the ensemble's work and some otherwise unavailable though interesting repertoire.

David Hansell

Le Dessus de Viole Music for treble viol from 18th-century Paris Simone Eckert *pardessus de viole*, Hamburger Ratsmusik 142' 50"

Pan Classics PC 10279 (2 CDs)

Music by Heudelinde & Blainville

Music for the *pardessus de viole*, the instrument felt to be appropriately elegant

for upper class French women to play, is not often recorded. There are several possible reasons for this, to modern eyes an apparent patronising sexism inherent in the genre, the perception that the treble viol is a consort instrument, and the bass the soloist of the family. Further, the pardessus, with its tuning up a fourth from the treble, is a specialist instrument, useful only for its own repertoire. Finally, the music is often very demanding, full of chords, rapid passage work, requiring a considerable commitment to play it. My copy of Heudelinne's 2nd book, is for the treble and bass viols, but offers also the option of violin and harpsichord.

The pardessus, originally developed to allow women to play violin sonatas, quickly gained its own repertoire. This recording clearly demonstrates the quality of this repertoire, and also the demands it makes on anyone who would aspire to play it. The instrument is no mere toy for the idle rich, and the music fully repays those who develop the necessary skill. One such is undoubtedly Simone Eckert, director of the ensemble and as fine a treble player as she is on the bass. Her accompanying team of lute/guitar, harpsichord/organ and bass viol allows for considerable variety of texture.

The music is delightful. I'm familiar with Heudelinne, though not with book 1, published in 1701, from which the suites on this recording are all taken. His music is very idiomatic, uses the same ornament signs as Marais, and is fully bowed. He writes up to a top d', well within a good dessus technique but made easier on the pardessus which has a top g' string.

Blainville, however, is a new name to me, a 'cellist and music teacher, his style is much later, as one would expect from the presumed publication date of 1732. He seems to write to the same range as Heudelinne, to a top d', his ideas reminiscent of Telemann, his format more Italian than French. The music is inventive and varied to make very enjoyable listening, and the playing very much in command, expressive and lively.

Robert Oliver

Drama Queens Joyce DiDonato, Il complesso barocco, Alan Curtis 77' 18"
Virgin Classics 50999 602654 2 5

Music by Cesti, Gaicemelli, Handel, Hasse, Haydn, Keiser, Monteverdi, Orlandini & Porta

As she reminds us in the striking photos that adorn both front and back covers (not to mention her Tweets), Joyce DiDonato is one of the most vivacious and vital of today's prima donnas. Her new recital disc

explores the passions, tragedies and loves of a series of highborn ladies (mostly, if not all, queens) stretching chronologically from Monteverdi's stricken Octavia to Haydn's enraged Armida. They are as it happen the portrayals that to my mind are the most convincing. DiDonato's Octavia is indeed fearsome in her anguish, calling up a wide tonal range and considerable vocal acting prowess, though some may find the histrionics overdone.

For the rest, I leave admiration to those more responsive to these performances than I find it possible to be. Fast arias are taken at a tempo that even this singer finds almost impossible to articulate. As an example listen to 'Col versar' from Orlandini's *Berenice*, turned here into an inconsequential babble of notes, a vehicle for virtuosity that enables DiDonato to highlight the single word 'barbaro' to misplaced dramatic effect. It is the kind of thing that, sadly, brings the house down in the theatre. With the odd exception slower arias are just as disconcerting, fragmented in a curious, disruptive manner. Anything than can be done simply is smothered in baroque (in the bad sense of the word) artifice. Of course, there is much to admire: the technique is staggering, including the perfectly executed trills; the ability to float a line and to sing a ravishing *mezza voce*. But there is just too much contrivance here for my taste. Sorry, I've often admired the lady in the past. Not this time, though.

Brian Robins

Una Follia di Napoli: concerti & sinfonie per flauto anno 1725 Maurice Steger rec, dir + ensemble 72' 40"

Harmonia Mundi HMC 902135

Barbella Concerto 3 in C; **Fiorenza** Sinfonia in a; **Leo** Concerto in G; **Mancini** Sonata 11; **Sarro** Concerto 11 in a; **A. Scarlatti** Improvisation on *Partite Follia di Spagna*; **D. Scarlatti** Sinfonia 1 in DVD realised by Joël Cormier & Diego Saldiva

1725 is the date which appears in a manuscript of twenty-four concerti for recorder from the library of San Pietro a Majella in Naples, and is also the year in which Quantz visited the city. His arrival marked the beginning of the end for the recorder, with composers beginning to write for the traverso, but the age of the recorder certainly ended with a flourish. Instrumental music made up only a small proportion of the output of Neapolitan composers, but the influence of opera, in a city with four opera houses, is very evident in this dramatic music with its extreme emotions and sudden changes of

mood. Maurice Steger always produces exciting recordings, and his brilliant but lyrical playing is well matched by a small one-to-a-part ensemble with a big continuo section including harpsichord, organ, bowed and plucked strings and a psalterium. With the CD you also get a bonus twenty-five minute DVD of excerpts from the recording sessions, including short interviews with Steger and some of the other players. Unlike the CD, this isn't totally satisfactory as Steger never seems to know which camera is looking at him, and only at the end are the titles of the music listed. I wish the booklet was more explicit about the sources of the music, which comes not only from the San Pietro manuscript but from other publications and manuscript sources of around the same date. However, neither of these shortcomings should put you off this beautifully performed and recorded CD.

Victoria Helby

Rachel "The music I love" (2 CDs)
Channel Classics CCS SEL 6212

This is nothing short of shameless self-promotion, but when you're as talented as this, and you also showcase some of the wonderful fellow musicians and ensembles with whom you have had the good fortune to work, why not? Rachel Podger has chosen everything from solo Bach, through chamber music by Rameau and Mozart to concertos by Vivaldi, Bach and Haydn, sharing the limelight with violist Jane Rogers, keyboardists Gary Cooper and Trevor Pinnock, as well as the OAE, Brecon Baroque, Holland Baroque Society and Arte dei Suonatori. All in all, there are 13 pieces (multi-movement works are compressed to single tracks), and I would seriously struggle to pick out highlights – everything is simply wonderful. Ideal seasonal gift for all Podger fans – actually, for ANYONE interested in HIP performance that has a soul.

BC

CLASSICAL

J. C. Bach / C. F. Abel Sonatas for Viola da Gamba Thomas Fritzsche gamba, Shalev Ad-El fp / hpscd 60' 52"
Coviello COV 21205

Abel Solo in G, WKO149, Sonata in e WKO150
Bach Four sonatas* Warb B 2b, 4b, 6b & 15b
[*world premiere recordings]

Abel's music for viola da gamba is familiar to viol players, perhaps more than his other music, but that of his partner in London music scene, the 'London Bach', for viola da gamba, is new to me, and

presumably to many, as his four sonatas for gamba and obbligato cembalo/pianoforte are recorded here for the first time. Thomas Fritsch's biographical notes in the booklet display an impressive array of recordings and appearances, but he is an unfamiliar name to me. Notwithstanding, he is a superb player, his instrument a full-sounding late-18th-century German 7-string viol by Casper Göbler, which he plays with great virtuosity and musicality.

There are two Abel sonatas with harpsichord, in E minor (WKO 150), and G major (WKO 149). Abel's great gift is in his lovely melodic invention, together with his understanding of the expressive possibilities of his instrument. The fully-written out obbligato accompaniment for harpsichord, in the galante style, highly figured and elaborate, has the viol often in an accompanying role.

The J. C. Bach sonatas, very much in the Berlin style of his brother CPE, are idiomatic, melodic and chromatic, with cadential chords, using the upper register of the instrument. They are performed with great energy and virtuosity by both players, and are a marvellous addition to the repertoire. The fortepiano, an early 19th Century instrument, has a more rounded sound than I expected, but nevertheless is a very pleasing combination with the viola da gamba, which here has an equal, frequently an accompanying role, more so than in the Abel. The F Major sonata has a rondo in which the viol and piano play the theme in octaves, and the viol then accompanies the piano in chords, an unexpected and delightful combination.

This is followed by a sonata for bass viol and obbligato harpsichord in B Flat, which starts out with the theme of the prelude of J.S.B.'s Partita BWV825 in Bb, but which soon follows its own path. It's a nice thought that JC could use and develop his father's ideas, and to do so as well as he does. The delightful final sonata, in F with piano, is reminiscent of Mozart. Highly recommended. Robert Oliver

Haydn Divertimenti a tre per il baryton, viola e basso Philippe Pierlot, François Fernandez, Rainer Zipperling 64'20"
Flora 0102
Trios 66 (A), 70 (G), 96 (b), 97 (D), 101 (C)

The immediate problem here is the lack of any accompanying booklet. For further information on the baryton trios we are referred to a website, which – as far as I could find – doesn't give any relevant information. First wanting me to download rap music, then entering

'baryton' into the search box on the site gave me no result except wanting to sell me insurance or a mortgage. Ecological tree saving and penny-pinching cost saving with on-line booklet notes may be the way forward in the future, but until CDs become a thing of the past, the intelligent listener needs information to hand. Viola and baryton were so closely matched in sonority and pitch that it would be useful to know which instrument Haydn gave to the top line, as well as more information about the trios themselves. I have nothing to fault in the sensitive interpretation of these performances, or indeed the quality of this rarely performed music itself. Ian Graham-Jones
Scores I have seen always place the baryton on top, notated in treble clef, though I presume it sounds an octave lower to fit tuning as a bass viol. CB

Mozart Don Giovanni Teddy Tahu Rhodes
Don Giovanni, Conal Coad *Leporello*, Rachelle Durkin *Donna Anna*, Daniel Sumegi *The Commendatore*, Henry Choo *Don Ottavio*, Jacqueline Dark *Donna Elvira*, Taryn Filbig *Zerlina*, Andrew Jones *Masetto*, Opera Australia Chorus, Australian Opera and Ballet Orchestra, Mark Wigglesworth 174'
opera australia OP0256023 (2 DVDs)

Taken from an Opera Australia production given in Sydney Opera House in October 2011, this is a traditional *Don Giovanni* conflated from the Prague and Vienna versions and first staged 20 years ago by Göran Järvefelt. As such its appeal to historically aware readers of EMR is likely to be limited: the orchestra employs modern instruments; most of the singers sport continuous, in some cases wide, vibrato; and you'll need an aural microscope to detect appoggiaturas or indeed any other form of ornament. Nonetheless, it is an interesting production, not least for the black voiced and handsomely saturnine Don of New Zealand baritone Teddy Tahu Rhodes, at least once we get past his exit from the Commendatore's house looking like Batman without his trousers. Otherwise the costumes are fine, setting the action in Mozart's own day against an all-purpose set that serves effectively both for street scenes and the Don's house, if rather less convincingly for the graveyard. Both finales are well staged, especially that of act 1, with its on-stage dance bands, although the Don's yobbish behaviour in the act 2 supper scene is misjudged and quite what the Commendatore's coffin is doing in his dining room is unclear. Much the most stylish singing comes from the enchanting

Zerlina of Taryn Fiebig, whose partnership with Andrew Jones' appealing Masetto makes for an uncommonly attractive peasant couple. Worth investigating if you're not too concerned about HIP. Brian Robins

Mozart Coronation Mass Teresa Wakim, Paula Mrihy, Thomas Cooley, Sumner Thompson *SmSTBar*, Handel and Haydn Society, Harry Christophers 67' 27"
CORO COR16104
+Haydn Symphony 85 "La Reine" Mozart
Exsultate jubilate

Why can't record companies list all the major works on the front of their CDs? For here we have two major works besides the mass: the Haydn symphony and one of Mozart's most popular motets, works which moreover come first on the CD, before the only listed work on the front, the mass. Now that I've had my little rant, I cannot fault Harry Christopher's performances with Boston's long-established Handel and Haydn Society, nor indeed the soloists, notably Teresa Wakim's performance of *Exsultate*, or the comprehensive booklet notes – all in English. The size of orchestra is quite large and the texture comes over as being fully orchestral rather than purely 'classical' in size and quality. The only minor comment I might make is that some may find quality of the timpani somewhat boomy. The symphony is one of Haydn's most delicate works of the period, and the mass receives a spirited performance, with the most delicate sections, such as the Crucifixus, Benedictus and Agnus Dei, sensitively sung by the solo quartet. This CD follows the Society's successful recordings of Mozart's Mass in C Minor and the Requiem with Harry Christophers. Ian Graham-Jones

Mozart Concertos for piano and orchestra No. 20 (K.466) and No. 21 (K.467) Bart Van Oort *fp*, Accademia Hermans, Fabio Ciofini 58' 30"
La Bottega Discantica 254

Mozart Piano Concerto No 17 in G (K.453) & No 26 in D (K. 537) Ronald Brautigam *fp*, Die Kölner Akademie, Michael Alexander Willens 55' 04"
BIS-1944 SACD

Mozart Piano Concertos K. 453 (No. 17) & 482 (No 22) Kristian Bezuidenhout *fp*, Freiburger Barockorchester, Petra Müllejans 72' 41"
harmonia mundi HMC 902147

By chance, Bart Van Oort chose the two piano concertos by Mozart which were the

subject of an essay I was obliged to write as a St Andrews undergraduate following our "introduction to the concerto" course. Both, of course, are striking works in their own right, and well worth studying. Of course, in those days, the very idea of someone (anyone!) attempting to record them using period instruments was about as likely as Mozart himself appearing as soloist on the recording. Now it is not that unusual to see reviews of several new interpretations in every issue. Here, I can imagine that regular readers will already have a favourite soloist; when I worked in a CD shop in Covent Garden, the big decision was between Ashkenazy and Brendel's Mozart; nowadays Brautigam and Bezuidenhout have carved out considerable reputations in this repertoire, and I imagine that is how many people will decide which of these three CDs they will buy. For those who need more technical information, Van Oort plays a copy of a 1795 Anton Walter with a string band of 44221, Brautigam a different copy of a 1795 Walter, supplies his own cadenzas for K. 537, and uses a band with one more double bass, while Bezuidenhout plays a copy of an 1805 Anton Walther with 55432. The last-named recording also features ornamented wind parts and occasional use of solo string accompaniments (though not in any "regimented" way). Personally, I have enjoyed listening (repeatedly) to all three CDs – I had not realised how much I missed Mozart's music! If I were forced to return two to the distributors, it would be a very difficult choice indeed. BC

Paul Wranitzky String Trios Ensemble Cordia (Stanley Ritchie *vln*, Stefano Marcocchi *vla*, Stefano Veggetti *vlc*) 56' 02" Brilliant Classics 94339
Opp. 3/1, 3/3 & 17/2

Wranitzky was an important musical figure in late 18th-century Vienna (directing the first performances of Haydn's Creation and Beethoven's first symphony, for example), and through shrewd business principles ensured that his instrumental music was widely disseminated. Ensemble Cordia give world premiere recordings of three string trios in a grand salon, the acoustic of which would surely have been entirely different for the original audience, simply because of the presence of so many other human beings. As it is, the recording sound is not exactly big and booming, but it is obvious that the excellent musicians (who are all given ample opportunity for display) are in a

very large space. On this outing, I should rather like to hear more of *this* Wranitzky's music; the Antonín in the following review was his half-brother. BC

Cello Concertos Kraft, Vranický, Stamitz Michal Kaňka *vlc*, Prague Chamber Orchestra 69' 31" Supraphon SU 4108-2

Kraft Concerto in C, op. 4 Carl Stamitz Concerto No. 2 in A Antonín Vranický Concerto in d

Before I start this review, let's just agree that musically the performances are first rate; the soloist is a true virtuoso of his instrument, and the orchestra (surprise, surprise) are marvellous. That said, they sound nothing like how (I imagine) the composer would have expected – amongst other things, the uniformly rich tone that the strings produce, the regular vibrato of the woodwinds and the layered dynamics overall have little HIP accreditation. It might seem a strange thing to say, but I would actually quite like to hear some evidence that the soloist is being pushed to new limits – it all sounds, frankly, rather unchallenging, even though it simply must have posed enormous difficulties for contemporary cellists. While it is interesting to put better-known concertos into perspective, and while I cannot deny that this would have been a very enjoyable live concert, I can only recommend it to our most open-minded readers. BC

19th CENTURY

Beethoven "Eroica" Symphony

See Mendelssohn below

Devienne Six Trios op. 17 Mathieu Lussier *bsn*, Pascale Giguère *vln*, Benoît Loiselle *vlc* Atma Classique ACD2 2583
+3 movements from "Les Visitandines" (arr. Lussier)

A first recording of Devienne's Opus 17. A virtuosic bassoonist himself, Devienne uses the full compass and capabilities of the bassoon in these trios – expertly executed by Mathieu Lussier. The bassoon at times takes a supporting role, but often takes the lead and some movements feel positively concerto-like in places. There are just two slow movements in the entire opus, the *Andante and variations* of Trio no. 4 making a very welcome and elegant change of pace, with each instrument given its chance to shine. The recording finishes with Lussier's own arrangements of airs from Devienne's opera-comique *Les Visitandines*. An interesting recording

which adds to the overall picture of Devienne's development as a composer. In places the works inevitably feel a little 'thin' – but there is a surprising range of mood – and Lussier's warm and velvety tone is a delight. A CD for the bassoonist in your life. Maggie Bruce

Ferdinand Heller Die Zerstörung Jerusalems Gudrun Sidonie Otto Chamital, Annette Markert Hanna, Patrick Grahl Zedekia, Tobias Hunger Achicam, Daniel Ochoa Jeremias, Vocalconsort Leipzig & Gewandhaus-orchester Leipzig, Gregor Meyer 105' 53" (2 CDs) Querstand VKJK 1202

Heller's two-part oratorio is very much in the Handel / Mendelssohn tradition, with a fairly equal distribution of material between a small cast of characters and a chorus, required to represent various groups, Israelites, King Zedekia's followers or Babylonian warriors, depending on the demands of the libretto. The solo music is lyrical and enjoyable, the choral writing skilful and neatly worked. It is a work that deserves to be better known – the fact that not one but two of the German "cultural" radio companies supported the production speaks for itself. Among many gems, I was especially taken by some excellent singing from the young tenor, Tobias Hunger: his aria with obbligato cellos, "Du wirst ja dran gedenken", is simple but beautiful. The booklet notes are informative and in English and German, though the text is given only in the latter (though with Biblical references). Choral societies looking for a break from Mendelssohn should seriously investigate the work! BC
The 1842 full score can be downloaded from IMSLP/Petrucci

Mahler Totenfeier, Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen Sarah Connolly *ms*, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Vladimir Jurowski Signum Classics SIGCD259 38' 18"

I find myself writing this through a confusion between two of Mahler's song-cycles. BC mentioned *Kindertotenlieder*, which interested me because it is an underlying clue in my favourite detective story – *On Beulah Heights* by Reginald Hill, who died earlier this year. The TV version (in the Dalziel & Pascoe series) was dire, but it had a connection in that Sarah (as a contributor to *EMR*, the christian name is appropriate) was the invisible singer. But instead, she sings another early song-cycle, preceded by an early version of the second symphony's first movement.

I'm not approaching this as a perfect Mahlerite. I heard most of his music in the 1960s and bought the scores, but interests moved elsewhere. The *Resurrection* at a Prom in the 1960s was particularly memorable, and not only because of Stokowsky's bad taste in encoring the final movement – one *Resurrection* is enough! The OAE performance of a precursor sounds fine, but I don't now have the score of either version for comparison. But the song cycle seemed both fresh and familiar, right from the opening clarinets. There's a tendency to think of Mahler as a 20th-century composer, but Brahms was still composing while they were being written, and his orchestral imagination in the cycle has a fresh originality, especially in its variety of quiet sounds. Sarah fits the style well, though I wish there was more variety in her vibrato (which was even more a problem in Handel's *Saul*, though I didn't raise the issue in the review in our last issue). In a piece like this cycle, I hoped to hear what (wrongly) is usually referred to as "non-vibrato" in some of the more innocent passages. The price of this short CD is around £7.00.

* I did suggest that she might record *Kinder-totenlieder* in Hill's English translation (though Hill was better at prose than verse) with piano accompaniment – such a version begins the story with Pascoe listening to Radio 3's Saturday-morning record review and it is performed live by the same young singer at the climax of the story. If I'd known that Hill died early this year, I'd have suggested a memorial recording! CB

Mendelssohn *Italian Symphony* + Beethoven *Eroica Symphony* Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra, Bruno Weil 77' 29" Tafelmusik TMK1019CD

If I'm not careful, I'll end up converting to the cause of Romanticism! I enjoyed this disc so much, I spent much of the last few weeks listening to it. Based on live recordings (making both the quality of the performances and the sound all the more remarkable), the disc absolutely showcases Tafelmusik at its very best – guided by one of the best "period" interpreters of this repertoire, Bruno Weil, they cleverly place the later work first on the programme; somehow that makes the odd opening of the *Eroica* seem all the more striking and revolutionary. Of course, the unexpected C sharp of the basses' opening melody was not the only shock in store for the original audience; Beethoven was kicking off the classical yoke movement by movement, and (cheesy as it might sound) Tafelmusik, with their dramatically tiered

dynamics, punchy brass and timps, and beautifully differentiated woodwinds, and Weil with as much control of the overall shape as of the minutiae, genuinely do recreate some of the *frisson* of that first performance. Just hearing it reminded me of the first time I played period Beethoven professionally (the C major mass with a choir and orchestra in Glasgow), when the hair on the back of my neck literally stood up – but that perhaps had more to do with the fact that I was mostly sight-reading! This is an exceptional CD and I recommend it heartily! BC

Mendelssohn *Violin Concertos* + *The Hebrides* Alina Ibragimova, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Vladimir Jurowski. 56' 22" Hyperion CDA67795

I first heard Alina Ibragimova in 2007 in a student concert and, a couple of years later, playing solo Bach at the Yehudi Menuhin School. My review of her Bach concert included the words "I don't think I have ever heard a more promising musician on any instrument... Alina Ibragimova has an exquisite musical talent and an inspiring musical mind". That early promise has been fulfilled, and she has since walked on musical water as far as I am concerned. The first of her (now many) CDs were of works by K.A. Hartmann, Nikolay Roslavets, Szymanowski and Bach – an indication not only of the breadth of her musical horizons but also of the seriousness with which she takes her music making. Following her tour of Biber, Vivaldi and Bach with the Academy of Ancient Music earlier this year, she now starts another promising new partnership with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, imparting her musical magic into the two Mendelssohn Violin Concertos. She brings a fresh and imaginative new insight into these work-horses. If you thought you knew these works, listen, for example, to the way that Alina delicately teases her way into the 2nd theme of the opening movement of the E minor concerto – or her sensuous reading of the opening theme of the D minor Concerto. Inspiring! The OAE/Jurowski partnership has been a compelling one, and is shown to great effect in their supporting role and in *The Hebrides* overture. Incidentally, they are playing at A 437.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Having not realised that Andrew had already written about this disc, BC has also written a review.

Thank goodness we are not committed to having a recording of the month! I do not think I could part with Pieter Wispelwey's Bach Cello suites (reviewed above) or this fantastic new recording from Hyperion. Ibragimova's unaccompanied Bach on the same label drew a lukewarm response from me in these pages (I seem to remember being impressed by her daunting technique, but unimpressed by too many a *subito pianississimo*) but there's not a negative word in sight where this disc is concerned. Oh, actually, maybe a little one – why is the disc so short, when there is still unrecorded Mendelssohn out there? Ok, so that's that out of the way... Why should every young violinist hear this? Well, quite simply because, possibly we are hearing it as the composer intended for the first time. Not especially because the OAE use period instruments, although of course that (and the fact that numbers are restricted) helps, but rather because Ibragimova plays pretty much exactly what Mendelssohn wrote – no dramatic rallentandos into cadences, no Adagio middle movement (it's an Andante, for goodness' sake) and not Fritz Kreisler-esque cadenza. It's beautifully paced, impeccably played without a single piece of self-indulgence, and the recording is every bit as true to the performance, as the musicians are to the score. The lesser known D minor concerto will, I fear, always struggle to gain popularity when there is a superior sibling in the repertoire, though Ibragimova and co. demonstrate that, had he not written the E minor, this smaller scale piece quite possibly would be popular with soloists. The orchestra give a wonderful account of themselves in *The Hebrides*, a glorious piece of orchestral music from one of Scotland's biggest musical fans. Might we be treated to some Spohr concertos now? BC

Neukomm *Three orchestral Fantasies*, *Sinfonie Heroïque* Die Kölner Akademie, Michael Alexander Willens 63' 02" cpo 777 573-2

Until now, Neukomm has just been a name I've seen in music history textbooks, primarily in conjunction with Haydn, but this typically enterprising release from Willens' Kölner Akademie and cpo reveals an interesting composer, borrowings from Handel notwithstanding. His fantasies are, of course, symphonies with changes of tempo but without dramatic distinctions between individual movements. Die Kölner Akademie are here larger here than they were for the Mozart reviewed above (65332

strings), and even boast an ophicleide. They make a tremendous sound, and I hope both the orchestra and the recording company will further explore his output. BC

Ries Piano Concertos Op. 42 and Op. 177 Christopher Hinterhuber piano, New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, Uwe Grodd 78' 06" Naxos 8.572742

+Introduction et Rondeau brillant, Op. 144

This would not normally make it into these pages, since they are not period instrument performances, but I requested a review copy since we get to hear so little music by Ries, an important figure who, of course, suffers from comparisons to his towering contemporary, Beethoven. The two concertos on the recording reveal, as one would imagine, wonderful writing for the soloist; in my imagination, they would both work better with HIP performers, but full credit to Hinterhuber, his Kiwi orchestra and Naxos for championing the under-dog. BC

Rolla 3 Violin Concertos Paolo Ghidoni, Orchestra da Camera del Conservatorio di Mantova 60' 30" Dynamic CDS 714

How enterprising of the record company to undertake a project like this with a student orchestra. Of course, the very top-flight conservatory ensembles are just one step short of professional grade and here (for sure) the rich sound of this band (which also includes former students and teachers from Mantua and Parma) in these three world premiere recordings confirms that. These are not HIP performances by any stretch of the imagination, but they are well-paced and the recorded sound is excellent. The soloist teaches chamber music and makes a tremendous sound, displaying a wide range of bow strokes, and projects well over the orchestra. Rolla's music is not especially well-known; this is not the first release on Dynamic, so check out their catalogue if you are intrigued. BC

Saint-Saëns Complete organ works Ben van Oosten (1846 Cavaillé-Coll organ, Eglise de la Madeleine, Paris) 3CDs MDG 316 1767-2

This might not appeal to many *EMR* readers, but I was glad to receive it for review. Both the Madeleine Cavaillé-Coll organ and Saint-Saëns' music are fine examples of the French school of symphonic organ building and composing.

Saint-Saëns was organist at the Madeleine from 1857 to 1877, a key post also held by the likes of Fauré and Widor. Ben van Oosten's interpretations are excellent, with successful choices of registration. As with many French organs, tuning is not a strong point, but that rather fits with their inherently colourful character.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Schubert Complete Symphonies Les Musiciens du Louvre Grenoble, Marc Minkowski 244' (4 CDs) naïve V 5299

One need hear only the beautifully balanced and weighted wind chords at the opening of the Symphony No. 3 (for some reason placed first on the CD containing the first three symphonies) to be aware that this set is going to have exceptional qualities. And so it proves. Time after time the ear is drawn to Minkowski's ability to lay out Schubert's wonderfully felicitous wind writing as a balanced and component part of the orchestral structure. Here is confirmation, if confirmation be still needed, of the inestimable benefit of using period wind instruments in this repertoire, especially when they are as supremely well played as they are in these live performances recorded in the Vienna Konzerthaus in March 2012.

Minkowski shows very real affection for the at times undisciplined teenage Schubert of the first two symphonies, though given their sprawling length he perhaps wisely omits the first movement exposition repeats. Tempos through the first three symphonies are near unexceptionable, though the wistful romanticism of No. 1's Andante offers the first hint of a tendency to allow Schubert's andantes a little too much space. That of No. 4 (a work we are interestingly told reminds Minkowski of Haydn's 'Seven Last Words') I think certainly needs to be treated with rather less hymn-like reverence. Might the equivalent movement (which adds 'con moto') of No. 5 also have been given a little more momentum? Well, maybe, but it is so much in keeping with the warmly radiant glow of the performance as a whole that I for one am not going to complain. The flecks of Rossinian (Allegro) and Haydnesque (Andante) humour in No. 6 are pointedly realised, although the conductor fails to convince me any more than anyone else that the work does not have structural weaknesses, especially in the operatic finale. And his heavy *marcato* in the Scherzo's trio is a throwback (the only one throughout the set I hasten to

add) to the old, mannered Minkowski. I've already spoken elsewhere in this issue of Minkowski's account of the last two symphonies in relation to his performances at the Ambronay Festival; unsurprisingly my impressions here are much the same, although I would again draw attention to the huge tragic power Minkowski finds in the opening Allegro of the 'Unfinished', the development in particular achieving an overwhelming effect. As at Ambronay, the exposition repeat of the C-major's final movement is not taken, especially regrettable given that there are no unwanted 'heavenly lengths' in a performance that is utterly compelling from first to last note and a worthy conclusion to an exceptional set.

Brian Robins

Schubert An die Musik Famous songs Klaus Mertens B-Bar, Tini Mathot *fp* 69' 02" Challenge Classics CC72559

Auf dem Wasser zu singen, Du bist die Ruh, Erlkönig, Die Forelle, Frühlingsglaube, Gesänge des Harfners, Heidenröslein, Lachen und Weinen, An die Leute, Memnon, Der Musensohn, An die Musik, Litanei, Prometheus, Ratlose Liebe, Das Rosenbad, Schäfers Klagelied, Ständchen, Der Tod und das Mädchen

Continental listeners (and many British ones) may be unaware of the origin of that widely-used English expression 'Curate's Egg' which we use to describe something that is 'good in parts', either to praise or bury. Suffice it to say that there is a good (i.e. correct) Wikipedia entry on the 1895 George du Maurier Punch cartoon in question, but when listening and re-listening to this disc, I found that useful phrase nagged me.

Mertens will be very familiar to those who know the Ton Koopman Bach cantata cycle, where he is the 'house bass', singing almost all of the bass arias in the series. Tini Mathot, aka Mrs. Ton Koopman accompanies Mertens on an 1810 Viennese fortepiano, which is an excellent choice. Many older instruments, even after extensive restoration, show their age, and modern reproductions can often give a better impression of how they may originally have sounded, but this example seems to have been sensitively restored, and is beautifully played here. In fact, one even forgets that it is a fortepiano.

It would be unkind to describe Mertens at only 63, as a bit of an old instrument as well, for he has an amazingly well-preserved voice, always pleasant tone, and remarkable technique, though this same lovely unvarying 'Bach singing' straight tone can seem like a surfeit of cream after several songs. I admire him enormously, and looked forward to this disc. It begins

well with several favourites, including: the *Litanei auf das Fest Aller Seelen*, and *Auf dem Wasser zu singen* showing off his outstanding voice and particularly his drum-tight technique and vocal control to perfection – this is absolutely lovely singing by any standards, and I would steer any student towards this recording as an example of the kind of disciplined singing that one needs to be able to begin studying this difficult repertoire. Anyone who can sing Schubert half as well this when they are Mertens' age probably has a painting hidden in their attic.

Unfortunately, here comes the other aspect of that 'Curate's Egg'. Mertens goes on to sing the most completely 'un-involving' version of *Erlkönig* that I have ever heard. Bizarrely, he seems to feel that since Goethe and Schubert have put all the expression into the elements of the poem and dramatic musical setting, all he needs to do is sing the notes exactly as they are written, and no more. In *Erlkönig* he makes no attempt to play this drama as the miniature operatic one-man-scena it so clearly is, nor does he attempt to differentiate at all between the narrator, the frightened child, the galloping father or the Erl King and his Daughter – they are all delivered with the same lovely Mertens voice, but with a complete lack of expression to any of the text. It is a most peculiar interpretive choice to have made, and is clearly deliberate on his part, but 'huh!' Taking the surprisingly slow tempo adopted by the performers into consideration, I'm afraid, for me, 'das Kind war tot' almost at the outset. Mertens takes over a minute longer than Fischer-Dieskau, which is remarkable when one considers it is only four minutes long in most performances anyway. I suppose one could argue that in most of these songs Mertens is stepping back and allowing the superb writing of Schubert to work the magic as he floats the lovely lines, and often, this simple approach can work; but many of the songs are strophic, and surely there should be some variety between verses? Yes, one *can* float the *Litanei* and allow it to work its magic, but most singers would agree that there is always a lot more one should do to put a song across.

He perks up a bit to serve us up a nice Trout, *Ständchen*, *Du bist die Ruh*, and many of the favourites from Peters' Schubert volume 1, that everyone should learn, and, yes – they are all beautifully sung. But sung very straight indeed.

So apart from *Erlkönig* and some rather bland singing in a few of the songs, I have to agree with the Curate: '...parts of it are

excellent'. Best dipped into rather than consumed in one sitting. David Hill

Schumann Piano Trio No. 2 – Kinderszenen – Piano Quartet The Benvenue Fortepiano Trio (with Adam LaMotte vla) Avie AV2272 71' 07"

This recording is a little out of my comfort zone since I am neither a pianist (much of the disc is taken up by the 13-part piano cycle, *Kinderszenen*) nor a good enough violinist to have ever tried to play Schumann chamber music. That said, I have attended concerts that have featured the piano quartet (which I already know quite well, since it is regularly a companion piece for, in my opinion, the far superior quintet), though I am not familiar at all with the 2nd piano trio. The one thing that always strikes me about Schumann's music is a remarkable ability to produce great sweeping melodies which are then able to be combined in all sorts of different guises (and, more often than not, in some complicated contrapuntal texture – his love of Bach is never very far away). The members of the Benvenue Fortepiano Trio are at the very epitome of the profession and together they produce a glorious and radiant sound – Schumann gets a lot of bad press, so I am more than happy to re-dress that balance by heartily recommending this to all music-lovers. BC

Viotti Flute Concertos from the Violin Concertos Nos. 23 and 16 Mario Carbotta fl, Orchestra I Pomeriggi Musicali, Pietro Mianiti 56' 53" Dynamic CDS 727

The two works on this recording are arrangements of violin concertos. So why, you ask, are they being reviewed here? Well, although they are not at all HIP performances (despite the famous Gainsborough on the cover), the arrangements at least *are* contemporary ones – the G major work (Wla: 18), having already been published in a piano version by Dussek, was arranged for flute by Devienne, while the E minor concerto (Wla: 17) was adapted for flute by Caspar Fürstenau. Both works' opening movements are the most substantial. The slow movements, in contrast, are relatively short. Of the two, Fürstenau's adaptation is the more virtuosic in its demands – in comparison to Devienne's single-keyed instrument, his had six keys. These performances are what they are – fine soloists, accompanied by a professional orchestra, well caught by the recording engineers. BC

Leipziger Klavierquartett Jadassohn, Mendelssohn, Schumann 78' 57" querstand VKJK 1222 Jadassohn op. 77 Mendelssohn op 2 Schumann op. 47

This was not a request, but I was delighted to receive it as I have long wanted to hear Salomon Jadassohn's music – for purely selfish reasons; as a tutor at the Leipzig Conservatory, he taught several musicians from my home town of Dundee in the late 19th century and I was intrigued to see if I could discern any connections between his music and theirs. As it happens, there is a broad sweep about his music that is oddly reminiscent, but then the other two major works on the recording are equally grandiose in style and scope (and would have been studied and played, no doubt, by my Dundonian subjects), and these beautifully paced performances (albeit on modern instruments) by the Leipziger Klavierquartett are delightful. BC

VARIOUS

The Ministry of Angels The Society of Strange and Ancient Instruments Taith Records TRCD00014

The role of angels in musical life and in human consciousness is the focus for this CD as it takes an extremely attractive journey with them, in all their various manifestations. Right from the start it is clear that this CD is aurally different, as Clara Sanabras's exotic and rich voice rings out in the joyfully declamatory opening of the Burgundian Carol *Guillô pran ton tamborin* – a version of Bernard de la Monnoye's song of the shepherds during which the Devil (also an angel, of course) makes a brief appearance. There follows a lovely selection of songs and melodies, well-known and otherwise, many with a Christmas theme, ranging from the Play of Daniel to Playford. The colourful accompaniments are arranged by Clare Salaman, who also features on nyckelharpa and hurdy gurdy alongside Clara Sanabras who, as well as singing, plays oud and guitars, Joy Smith, harps, dulcima and percussion, and Peter McCarthy on various bass instruments. Particular delights for me were *A solus ortus cardine/Personent hodie*, the deliciously melodic *Es sungen drei Engel* and Clara Sanabras's own arrangement of *El Recer del Vol Dispers* by the Catalan poet and musician Joan Llongueras. The attractive cover has a useful diagram showing how angels fit into the hierarchy of the

heavens, coming in at No 10, just above the planets but way below the cherubim and seraphim. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

Piazzolla–Monteverdi *Una Utopia Argentina* Mariana Flores, Diego Valentin Flores, Quito Gato, William Sabatier, Capella Mediterranea, Leonardo García Alarcón 71' 50"
Ambronay AMY034

Determined to pre-empt any prejudices I may have regarding this sort of cross-over recording, I decided just to put it on and listen. However I was soon reaching for the booklet in search of explanation. There I encountered not even the sort of annoying Q & A format which is depressingly on the increase, but rather its trendy cousin the dialogue in which all the performers seem to chip in at random 'bigging' one another up and competing for pseud of the week. No help there. By this time I had heard the familiar sounds of Monteverdi arias with piano accordion and piano input and sung as if they were popular ballads in a smoky nightclub somewhere. Don't get me wrong, some of my best friends play the piano accordion, I like Piazzolla, and the Piazzolla pieces here are very effective and beautifully played -- but why drag Monteverdi into it? Some of the tracks sound innocuous enough, like mood music for Inspector Montalbano, but just as you drift off some more Monteverdi is mangled. The playing is stylish, the singing atmospheric and dramatic -- just leave poor Monteverdi out of it please! I shall be filing my copy in the bin marked 'what were you thinking' next to my copy of 'Sting murders Dowland'. Fortunately, this is not the only CD by the Cappella Mediterranea on my review shelf this month, and listening to their lovely CD of Baroque vocal music with Anne Sofie von Otter I was almost able to forgive them. *D. James Ross*

Cantatas – Max Emanuel Cencic Vivaldi – D. Scarlatti – Caldara with ornamente 99, Karsten Erik Ose (3 CDs + bonus DVD "The Portrait")
Capriccio C7142

If you missed any of the releases which make up this new boxed set, now is your chance to pick them up cheaply. He is one of the countertenors of the moment, and there are many nice performances of works that are otherwise unavailable (especially the Caldara set!) There is also a bonus DVD of 62 minutes that will answer all of his fans' most pressing questions. *BC*

CHRISTMAS

Jólasagan The Christmas Story The Hamrahlid Choir, dir. Þorgerður Ingóldsdóttir, Guðný Einarsdóttir org 63' 21"
Smekkleysa SMC12
Music by Amner, J. S. Bach, Buxtehude, Byrd, Handl, Philips, Scheidt, Sweelinck, Victoria & contemporary Icelandic composers.

This is not a newly recorded CD, but seems to have been re-released (or perhaps released for the first time some time after it was made?) I especially relished the youthful sound of the choir -- some of the pieces they have chosen are quite difficult, but they rise to the challenges well. It is also nice to have the old contrasted with the new (I loved Hugi Guðmundsson's *Jólasöngur*), and vocal pieces to be interspersed with organ pieces (though it took a little getting used to the change in temperament!). The texts are only given in the original languages and Icelandic, but it's easy to imagine what is being sung from the mood of the performance. I can imagine this being an ideal musical backdrop to Christmas Eve socialising. *BC*

Navidad Christmas Music from latin America and Spain The Toronto Consort Marquis 7 74718141352 5 68'02"
de Araujo Ay andar Cárceres Riu, riu, chiu
Guerrero A un niño llorando, O grandes paces!, Sanctissima Maria, Virgen Sancta Escalada
Canten dos jilguerillos Fernandes Tleycantimo choquiliya, Xicochi Ortiz Recercada segunda de Salazar Tarara qui yo soy Anton de Zéspedes
Convidando está la noche + Gaitas & Filias gallegas, + anon

If you prefer a livelier take on Christmas than the previous offering, look no further! The Toronto Consort really let their hair down -- and their enthusiasm (if that's what it is, and not the fact they overdid the Aztec chocolate!) is bound to be contagious. This is the sort of repertoire where performers must embrace their fears and inhibitions, otherwise it just sounds silly. There is a range of voices on display here, some a little more rustic and naive-sounding than others, and -- if this disc really deserved criticism -- that might be a problem. In this context, though, I suggest you stick a sombrero on and join the party -- you're unlikely to know the words, but after a couple of slugs of Glühwein you'll soon know when to whoop and when to stomp. Great fun! *BC*

LE PETIT BANDE at 40

One of the very earliest memories I have of HIP music-making was a Radio 3 programme the year I went to university (1979) which featured a programme of Handel concerti grossi, broadcast from somewhere in Belgium -- the Radio 3 presenter even let us hear some of the Flemish introduction, which I also found quite captivating (destined as I was at that stage to study languages). Anyone who reads these pages hardly needs to be told how important an ensemble LPB, as they are known to facebookers, has become, with their hippy (lower and upper case H) directors, especially Sigiswald Kuijken, a staunch pioneer of chin-off fiddling, and more recently of shoulder-held cello. Their recording of Corelli's op. 6 set completely new standards of HIP performance, and almost everything they do challenges received wisdom -- and the musical world is a far better place for that.

Having narrowly escaped having all of their state funding taken away in 2009, they continue to produce fresh recordings; in the next issue, someone will write about their new versions of Haydn's symphonies, *Die Tageszeiten*.

To mark their 40th anniversary, the record company that has been their home for some time, Accent, has re-packaged some of old recordings and issued them at special prices.

A *Portrait* (ACC 24271, 234' -- 3 CDs) covers the gamut of their work, with one disc devoted to opera (Gluck, Pergolesi and Mozart), one to Bach (extracts from their on-going edition of the church cantatas) and the third labelled "Baroque & Classical", which runs from Lully's *Armide* to Mozart's *Requiem*. The list of vocal and instrumental soloists reads like a *Who's who?* of HIP specialists.

If samplers are not your thing, then two other sets might appeal: a live 1982 performance of Haydn's *Die Schöpfung* cher, as well as Philippe Herreweghe's Collegium Vocale Gent (ACC 24270, 108' 55", 2 CDs) must have been among the earliest HIP performances of such an important late Classical work. Indeed, Kuijken tells the story in the booklet of how he had initially only suggested the piece for the Flanders Festival as a joke... and then had to commission new woodwind and brass instruments at a=430Hz, and the rest is history. It is, therefore, all the more remarkable that the performance sounds so assured and authoritative. It is

not at all surprising that the recorded sound is so high quality though, for Accent's engineers have always had the very best of ears. Although I have played *The Creation*, I do not feel I know it particularly well, but I shall be listening to this recording again, and getting to know it!

The final set we received for review was a real treat – a 9 CD-set of the Mozart/Da Ponte operas (ACC24269, 509'). All of my friends know that opera is almost the last form of musical entertainment I would choose for a night out (narrowly pipped by the ballet, I'm afraid), but I do love a bit of fun Mozart. Ever since seeing *Amadeus* (on stage as well as in the film), I find them ever more amusing (annoying productions aside), and what's not to like about them – glorious arias and ensembles, delightful orchestrations and down-right amusing storylines. The recordings are from La Coruña in 1998 (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Santiago de Compostela in 1995 (*Don Giovanni*) and Budapest in 1992 (*Così fan tutte*). Once again, the casts are star-studded, though of course no one tries to sing his or her rivals off the stage, since the Kuijken/LPB approach to these things is that soloists and singers are part of a team at the service of the music. Personally, I prefer to hear Mozart's beautiful melodies sung clearly as he intended, rather than some vibrato-laden diva's take on them. This set is available online for a little over £20 – that is *amazing* value, and means a total bargain Christmas present! BC

CATCHING UP ON ZIG-ZAG

While surfing my favourite CDs website (www.jpc.de), I spotted a disc I didn't recognise of some lovely looking music by Johann Rosenmüller on the ZigZag Territoires label. When I clicked on the link that shows all of their currently available titles, I found a whole lot of repertoire that we seemed somehow to have missed. The UK distributor very kindly responded to my request for back copies and generously sent me a dozen fabulous recordings, any one of which would make a wonderful Christmas present, especially taking into account the quality of the artwork of each release.

The disc that had first drawn my attention is entitled *Beatus Vir: Motets & Sonates* (ZZT100801) and is performed by a group called Gli Incogniti, directed by violinist Amandine Beyer. We will encounter her again later (in dramatically different

context), and I hope also to encounter the group again – they make a sumptuous sound, essentially a one-to-a-part string band with theorbo and keyboard continuo. Their programme consists of three sonatas from the set published in 1682 (two years before Rosenmüller's death), and five vocal works from manuscript sources in Berlin (three for soprano, one for bass and one duet). Raquel Andueza and Wolf Matthias Friedrich are fine singers and blend very well with the players, who quite clearly understand the way that their parts often “have invisible texts”.

Matthias Weckmann *Abendmusiken* (ZZT110502) presents three lengthy works for voices and instruments (*Wie liegt die Stadt so wüste*, *Weine nicht* and *Wenn der Herr*), two keyboard works (*Komm heiliger Geist* and a Partita in d), as well as two sonatas a4 (violin, cornetto, fagotto and trombone!) The performers are Ensemble Les Cyclopes, directed by Bibiane Lapointe and Thierry Maeder, and they are without exception wonderful. The recorded sound is also beautiful. Weckmann's music is still not very widely performed, and these very fine performances can only help promote it. They definitely save the best until last – the opening of *Wenn der Herr die Gefangenen zu Zien* is an utter delight, with layer upon layer of sound.

Another terrific 17th-century group presents one of the least well-known Biber printed sets, the *Fidicinium Sacro-Profanum* (ZZT080701); Les Plaisirs du Parnasse are a six-part string band with organ and archlute, directed by a wonderful fiddler, David Plantier. I suspect the set has not been recorded as frequently as the others because the music is so dense and intellectual, yet here the complexities are forgotten. Yes, there are plenty of harmonic shocks along the way for the unsuspecting listener; and there are sudden juxtapositions of ideas that seem on paper not to work, but here they are utterly convincing. It is also nice to hear a group who are not afraid to use vibrato as an ornament in this repertoire!

The next disc chronologically is *Albinoni Sinfonie a Cinque op. 2* (ZZT090202), performed by Ensemble 415, directed by Chiara Banchini. The six works are re-ordered for the CD (which I always find slightly odd – I know they were not published as a programme, but modern technology allows me to hear them in any order I choose) and played one to a part

(with keyboard and theorbo continuo) and sound absolutely delightful. I have not always been enthusiastic about Ensemble 415, but this is quite different to anything else I have heard from them, and I wish they would record much more of this repertoire – there is plenty of it!

Vivaldi: *Concerti a Quattro Violini* (ZZT070902) is also an Ensemble 415 release, and I was equally impressed. The four concertos from op. 3 that specify four solo violins (as well as, occasionally, solo cello) are performed around the B flat major concerto for the same scoring (RV553) and the F major concerto for three violins (RV551). There are no fewer than six violinists involved (of whom only one does not get a solo turn), as well as pairs of violas and cellos, one bass and harpsichord. The performances are lively and a real joy to hear.

I did not have to wait terribly long to hear Gli Incogniti again – I also received a copy of J. S. Bach: *Concerti a violino certato* (ZZT070501), which includes the two standard violin concertos in a and E (BWV1041 & 1042 respectively) and concertos in d and g (arrangements after BWV1052 and 1056). Such recordings succeed or fail, not so much on how you react to the fact that they will always be reconstructions, but rather on the quality of the performances. As Beyer says in her neatly argued booklet note, the two concertos she has chosen require very little amendment from Bach's keyboard versions. In fact, I would have preferred her to simplify the melodies of the central movements even more and to have added her own ornamentation as and when she felt necessary. There is little doubt in my mind that the keyboard instrument's inability to sustain long notes is the sole reason that the “tunes” are so ornate, and by extension the “original version” (if indeed such a thing ever existed) must of necessity have been much barer in comparison. That said, there are some priceless moments on this CD, the most impressive of which is the understated ending to the first movement of the G minor concerto.

Amandine Beyer is also the violinist in a CD of music by one of the Bach sons, Carl Philipp Emanuel: *Sonates pour violon et piano* (ZZT050902), in which she is partnered by Edna Stern. This is an interesting – and obviously fruitful – combination; Stern comes at earlier music from her “day job” of

concert pianist, where Beyer's HIP training obviously informs her take on the music. What an interesting meeting point then! When I have tried to play his keyboard works, I have found myself struggling to believe that the music is really of the 18th century – his turn of phrase, his sudden flights of fancy, his harmonic audacity and his Empfindsamkeit often border on what one would more normally associate with the early Romantics. For the recital, Beyer and Stern chose H512-514 and 545; only 513 is in a major key, and all four are in three movements (fast-slow-fast). If this is part of the composer's output with which you are unfamiliar, do not miss this wonderful recording – when he writes *Presto*, these ladies really believe him!

The next recording in the bunch features another amazing violin/piano duo – Midori Seiler and Jox van Immerseel. In fact the CD (, ZZT070802) is part of a complete recording of *Beethoven's 3 Sonates op. 12* for keyboard. Having already waxed lyrical about the recently completed series on Accent with another top Japanese violinist with Teutonic connections, I find that I must suggest readers keen on the repertoire acquire *both*! There is perhaps a little more wit in the present performances, lacking in the other, and op. 12 seems to be abundant in it. The acoustic is more open, too, so the sound is allowed a little more blossom, without becoming at all cloudy. These performances should be compulsory listening for anyone planning on performing the pieces.

Van Immerseel steps away from the keyboard for the penultimate disc in this review – Debussy: *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune, La mer & Images* (ZZT313). I seem to be mentioning my days in St Andrews too often in this issue, but once again listening to this brought back memories – not very fond ones, I confess – of studying *La mer* as a set work. Either I have matured, or Debussy has improved, or perhaps it's just a totally different approach to his music, the clearer orchestral texture allowing the sounds of individual instruments to be heard without being forced making it all the more accessible. One time, I listened to it in the car during a rather rain-swept drive to Dundee, and it was somehow all the more apt. Even listening to it at my desk a few days later, though, I still enjoyed it a lot. Oh my! Did I really write that? Am I growing old? Hopefully not maturing...

Seriously, had there been recordings of performances like this in the 1980s, my life would have been totally different. Thank you, Mr van Immerseel for showing me the beauty of Debussy's imagination.

Somehow it seems right and proper that we should come full circle with the last disc. Most of it is not strictly for our pages, but I am very happy to have it – and I shall cherish it. It is simply entitled *Chaconne* (ZZT50601), comprising four “versions” of one piece – the famous D minor chaconne that concludes Bach's Partita 2 for unaccompanied violin. Edna Stern (Beyer's partner in the C. P. E. Bach recording) plays three piano arrangements by Busoni, Rudolf Lutz (born 1951) and, of course, Brahms, and then Beyer gives a monumental performance of the original. The ordering is a stroke of genius: the solo violin version – normally thought so complex and intense, where really it is suggestive of so much more when one is playing it (I often find myself singing counter-melodies as I murder it!) – now sounds not exactly “simple”, but familiar, like coming home after a long journey of discovery.

In fact, listening to this batch of recordings has been exactly that – a rich and eventful odyssey, encountering many new things that have brought smiles to my face, or forced me to think about how I feel about particular works. But remember, this is only a sample of the ZigZag Territoires catalogue – check out their website for all the latest information. Brian Robins will write about their new release (J. C. Bach: *Amadis*) in the February 2013 issue of the magazine. <https://outhere-music.com/zigzag>

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*Merry Christmas and
a happy new year to our
subscribers and readers.*

Our apologies for the delay of this issue. The main cause is my eye problems. Over the year, I have had various checks for glaucoma. A couple of months ago, the regime for eye-drops increased to two different types. I wasn't warned about side-effects. The night drops make me wake up very early and the two during the day make me drop off to sleep. Furthermore, for the first few weeks my eyes were very tired. This made *EMR* 151 a week late and may be responsible for more than usual typos.

Meanwhile, cataracts have become a problem. In a few months, I'll be having separate operations (at least six weeks apart) to clear each eye, and I may well have difficulties in computer work and reading small print for a couple of months or more. We will keep the Diary regular, but issues of *EMR* may become erratic, though they will eventually balance out. Recent issues have been longer than usual, so this year subscribers have had good value, at least in quantity.

We haven't had a date yet for the second series of the BBC1 TV programme *You've been scammed II* mentioned in the last issue's editorial: it's a bit late for a series lasting two or three weeks to be fitted in before Christmas, so it has probably been delayed. Also, both us and the police are waiting to hear whether one of the solicitors involved in our case is going to be brought to justice. Our overall position is unresolved.

We have had some problems with subscriptions, particularly with failure to remind some readers. We are now sorting out the mistakes.

Our thanks to all the contributors, especially to Brian and Helen, CB

ORGAN RECORDINGS

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Andrew has been seeking out organ music that we were not aware of, so we have assembled some anthologies in a separate section. Other CDs are mixed in the main review sequence, and a few non-organ CDs have also reached both him and BC, hence an occasional double review.

Sinus-Verlag organ CDs

I have been sent a large number of CDs of historic organs from the Zürich based record company Sinus-Verlag, all featuring the Swiss organist Albert Bolliger (b.1937) who set up the company in 1990. I will hold some of the reviews over to the next *EMR*, but will now cover five CDs from the 'Historic organs in Switzerland' series, two recordings of Danish organs, finishing with several other anthologies. The CD booklets are impressive, with good photographs, detailed information about the composers, pieces, the organs and the registrations used. Albert Bolliger's playing is unmannered and rather methodical, making it ideal for 'reference' CD sets like these, which are likely to receive repeated listenings. Some of the registrations are a bit neo-baroque and sparkly, and there are some occasional wobbles in wind that could have been avoided by more careful touch. But on the whole, the restored instruments, most with flexible winding and early temperaments, are fine examples from a country that is not normally considered a haven for historic organs. The repertoire chosen is usually apt for the instrument, although there are some oddities, notably with most of the English pieces played on quite the wrong registrations. The editing of the earlier volumes is not quite as smooth as on the later CDs.

HISTORISCHE ORGELN DER SCHWEIZ

Vol 1 *Rheinau, St Katharinental* 1994. 67'25. Sinus 6001

The first CD of the series explores three organs from the area north of Zurich, starting with the two organs in the former monastery church at Rheinau. The 1715 Hauptorgel is the work of Johann Christoph Lou, Court Organbuilder to the Elector of Mainz-Bamberg. The third manual originally just played chimes, although Lou was soon asked to replace those with a small third manual. The organ has been restored back to its 1715 state, complete with meantone tuning. Track 2 features a lovely example of a baroque Salicional, a stop that later became ubiquitous in romantic organs. One of the nicest sounds is the breathy Coppel accompanying the delicate reed sound of a Geigen Regal. A choir organ was added to the church in 1746, in a case from 1709, producing a similar bright and strong tone. The 1736 organ at St Katharinental

is a rare example of the work of Johann Jakob Bommer, a Swiss organ builder. The music includes works by Speth, Froberger, Pachelbel and Bach.

Vol 3 *St Urban* 1996. 66'31. Sinus 6003

The 1721 Bossard organ at St Urban is one of the most interesting of the Swiss historic instruments, and a whole CD is devoted to it. It is very much in the South German/Austrian tradition of one large manual with two much smaller subsidiary manuals, with few reeds and lots of colourful 8' stops. By and large the music chosen (with its focus on Pachelbel, Pasquini and Froberger) suits the organ, although the Handel and Stanley pieces are given pretty bizarre performances. As with some of the other CDs, some of the editing is audible. The Scheidemann and Weckmann pieces, although from a very different tradition, also sound well. And Weckmann's *Lucidor einß hütt der schaf* features the little bells of the Glögglein at end of each phrase.

Vol 4 *Solothurn, Lauenen, Würzbrunnen, Köniz* 1998. 62'23. Sinus 6004

This CD samples four organs in central Switzerland, dating from 1781 to 1816, all producing a rather different sound from the early instruments on Volumes 1 and 3. The Solothurn organ is the only surviving organ by Franz Josepf Otter, who came from a nearby village. For those who like such things, the arch above the organ features reliefs of some rather bonny bare-breasted young ladies. I am not convinced with the choice of French music as the ideal repertoire for this instrument, although it does have an impressive Cornet stop. There was a tradition in some 17th century Swiss churches of accompanying hymn singing with trombones. At Lauenen, the standard of playing declined sufficiently for them to order an organ instead, which was installed in 1816. It was built by a local craftsman rather than an acknowledged organ-builder. The registrations for the English pieces are far from authentic.

The tiny pilgrimage church at Würzbrunnen stands in a meadow next to a farm on the edge of a forest and is apparently much in demand for weddings. It houses a small, but impressively bold, organ dating from 1785. Köniz was another church where the trombones "sounded wretched", leading to the installation of an organ in 1781. Half of the current stops date back to this original organ. Two angelic trumpeters on top of the case raise their trumpets to their lips when the organ wind is activated, lowering them as the wind subsides.

Vol 10 Zentralschweiz 2007. 67'13. Sinus 6010

Six of the eight organs on this CD are choir organs, secondary to the principal west end instrument. The oldest is also the smallest, a tiny table positive in Basle Historical Music, known as the "Ab Yberg" for a reason that is no longer valid. It has four stops, with the bellows stretching out behind the pipes, and also includes 'mouse ledges' to protect the bellows leather. The other choir organs date from c.1600 through to the substantial 1902 Goll choir organ in the Klosterkirche at Engelberg, steeped in the romantic idiom, with pieces by Reger and Liszt to prove it. I liked the well-behaved Regal stop on the 1692 Beromünster organ and Valentin Rathgeber's *Aria* 48, played on the Coppel stop of the 1796 Ruswil organ.

Vol 11 Tessin/Ticino (4 organs) 2008. 64'38. Sinus 6011

The four organs on this CD are in the very south of Switzerland and are in the Italian/Lombardic tradition. They date from 1588 to 1797. The CD starts with the bombastic *Ballo della Battaglia* by Storace on the 1797 organ Morcote organ. The distinctive sound of two Elevation toccatas are played on the 1796 Bosco-Gurin and 1746 Carosso organs, the latter having the more appropriate registration. The most interesting organ is the one with the earliest roots, the 1588 Antegnati organ at Bellinzona, now restored back to its state after its enlargement in 1816 Bossi. The Echo division that Bossi added is heard in Banchieri's delightfully named *La Organistina bella: in Echo*. Bellini gets a rare hearing as an organ composer with the concluding, and very theatrical *Sonata per Organo*.

DANISH ORGANS

Roskilde Dom, Denmark 2005. 75'21. Sinus 4005.

I am probably biased but, for me, by far the most interesting CD of the ones I was sent for review is this recording of the organ in Roskilde Cathedral, Denmark's Westminster Abbey and resting place for generations of Danish Royals. The organ dates back to 1554/1654, and is one of the finest of the Northern European organs. Its very generous acoustic really helps, something missing from many of the Swiss organ recordings. After an opening pedal solo (in Bruhns' *Präludium in e*) that is played far too fast, Bolliger settles down to give fine performances of an interesting repertoire. As well as several works by Buxtehude and his better-known predecessors Weckmann (his gorgeous *Ach wir armen Sünder*) and Tunder, we hear works by fascinating but lesser known composers such as Hintz, Lorentz (son of the 1654 Roskilde organ builder), Radeck and Geist. Track 13 features the distinctive sound of the Cymbelstern and Fuglesang.

Many readers will have heard this organ on Paul McCreesh's *Praetorius Christmas Mass*.

Frederiksborg (Esias Compenius, 1610) and Sønderborg Castle (Rottenstein-Pock? "Dorothea organ" c1550?), Denmark 2006. 67'12. Sinus 4006

Close behind the Roskilde organ in international importance comes the unique 1610 Compenius organ in Frederiksborg Castle – a remarkable survival of an entirely secular organ built for the Duke of Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel, but left to King Christian of Denmark in the Duchess's will in 1617, apparently to settle a debt. The pieces are well chosen for the instrument, showing off the wide variety of colours. Track 12 is Jacob Praetorius's *Herr Gott, dich loben wir*, the German *Te Deum*. The 16 pieces on the Frederiksborg organ finish with the sound of little bells before the bold opening piece on the Sønderborg Castle organ – a rather scary link! That organ dates back to 1570, and could be by the same organ builder as Roskilde. Sweelinck's lovely *Paduana Lachrima* is one of the finest tracks on this organ. But again there are some bizarre registrations for the English pieces, including a little Tallis piece played on the trumpet – there were no such things on English organs for many years after Tallis's death!

FUGUE STATE FILMS

In recent years, Fugue State Films have been producing some interesting CD/ DVD sets (see www.fuguestatefilms.co.uk). I review three of them below, and will cover the sumptuous 5 CD, DVD and hardback book 'Historic Organs of the province of Groningen' in the next issue of EMR.

The Elusive English Organ Daniel Moult (1653 Robert Dallam organ, Lanvillac; 1680 Thomas Dallam de la Tour organ, Notre Dame de Ploujean; c1680 anon organ, Adlington Hall; 1749 Thomas Parker organ, St James Great Packington; 1704 Renatus Harris organ, St Botolph Aldgate; 1829 Bishop organ, St James Bermondsey) DVD 50'; CD 72' FSF-DVD-002 £21.50

Byrd, Tomkins, Blow, Locke, Purcell, Handel, Hart, Worgan, Stanley, Russell, S Wesley.

This CD and DVD look at the history of the English organ, from around 1550 to 1830. As Daniel Moult states early on in the DVD, this is "something of a quest". The journey starts in Brittany (a welcome haven for English organ builders as the Commonwealth approached) and the wonderfully jovial and complex rhythms of Byrd's opening *Fantasia in A* (Fitzwilliam Virginal Book no. 52) and Tomkins' *A sad pavan; For these distracted Tymes*. We then tour four of England's most interesting historic organs, dating from around 1680 to 1829, with a programme of well-chosen pieces apt for each instrument. Of course, the organ is as much a visual as musical splendour, which makes the accompanying film important. The DVD starts earlier, with the reconstructions of the Tudor organs based on surviving sound boards from Wingfield and Wetheringsett in East Anglia. With contributions from Kimberley Marshall, Dominic Gwynne

and John Mander, Daniel Moulton leads us through the search for the 'elusive' English organ, noting its refined and sophisticated tone and the influences from abroad, notably France after the Restoration. The tour finishes at St James Bermondsey and its almost completely unaltered 1829 organ, with a little separate keyboard on the left of the console for a second player to play the pedal parts. Daniel Moulton is a very fine organist and his playing in this repertoire is exemplary, notably in the way that he integrates rapid-fire runs and ornaments into the flow of the music. The DVD comes in NTSC and PAL formats and you can 'pop-up' the specifications of the organs via your remote control. There is no booklet.

Bach *The Art of Fugue* + Documentary Film "Desert Fugue" George Ritchie (2006 Richards, Fowkes & CO organ, Pinnacle Presbyterian Church, Scotsdale, Arizona; 1985 Taylor and Boody organ, College of the Holy Cross, Worcester, Mass; 1977 Bedient Pipe Organ Co organ, Cornerstone, Lincoln, Nebraska; 1986 John Brombaugh 'Anton Heiller Memorial Organ, Southern Adventist University, Collegedale, Tennessee). 2CDs (76'37 + 74'20) + DVD 90' FSF-DVD-0001 £31.50

The DVD opens with tantalising photographs of organs in Saxony and Thuringia before retiring to organs in the Arizona desert for the actual recordings. The CDs are taken from George Ritchie's existing recordings from the 1980/90s, and are digitally re-mastered. The DVD includes the 90 minutes film 'Desert Fugue' with Christoph Wolff and organ-builder Bruce Fowkes discussing aspects of the *Art of Fugue*, with lengthy contributions from George Ritchie – who gets a whole 111 minutes in the second part of the DVD where he gives detailed information about each of its movements. Most *EMR* readers will know this already, but for those to whom the work is new, I do wonder if a more focussed and more tightly edited film and introduction might have been more appealing. And, of course, anybody who really wants to hear the works on the CD, played by Mr Ritchie, they are all available already on the CDs published in the 1990s. Which leaves me not quite knowing who this package is aimed at. The playing is sound, if unadventurous, and the American organs sound good. Ritchie acknowledges his debt to Helmut Walcha, and includes his completion of *Contrapunctus 14* at the end of the 2nd CD.

Ex Tempore *The Art of Organ Improvisation in England* Ronny Krippner (2002 Goetz & Gwynn "Wetheringset" organ; Adlington Hall; St Lawrence Little Stanmore Bristol Cathedral; Liverpool Anglican Cathedral; Kingston Parish Church) CD 53'40 + DVD 97'38 FSFDVD005 £28.50

The DVD includes both a visual version of the pieces included on the CD, and a film giving the background to the improvisations, as well as the pieces. The DVD starts by explaining Ronny Krippner's approach of using formulas and patterns from existing pieces, practiced

beforehand, to form the building blocks of an improvisation. The danger of this approach is all too apparent in his Byrd improvisation, in that sizeable chunks of recognisable pieces keep popping up.

Although clearly aimed at teaching improvisation, the DVD also gives a useful insight into the compositional techniques of the various composers, with contributions from David Briggs, Martin Baker and Donald Burrows. Of particular interest to *EMR* readers is the *alternatim* setting of *Ecce tempus idoneum* in the style of Tallis, played on the Wetheringsett organ, with sung plainchant verses. There are one or two matters of historic style I could debate, one being an improvisation after Stanley and Handel, but using pedals, which hardly existed at the time. But overall the information given, and the improvisations played, are sound. It is slightly disconcerting that Krippner is usually not looking at the camera/viewer, but well beyond our right shoulder. As well as pieces in the style of Tallis, Byrd and Handel, the improvisations work themselves right up to the recent times in the style of Britten, Howells and Mathias.

Flemish Organ Treasures Volume 8 Christophe Bursens (1675/2008 Bremser/ Thomas organ, Sint-Elisabeth Hospital chapel, Antwerp) Het Orgel in Vlaanderen 2009/1

Although Antwerp does have a few 17th century organ pipes hidden away inside romantic instruments (often in fine 17th century organ cases), it does not have an organ capable of playing 17th century music with any degree of musical integrity. So working out the puzzle that was the organ in the Elzenveld Chapel presented a particular opportunity. The fine 17th century case lost its original Blasius Bremser 1675 organ when it was replaced in 1844, under rather curious circumstances, by an undistinguished instrument by Loret, showing little respect for the original case. The successful solution was to remove the Loret instrument, restore the old case, and insert a new organ built in uncompromising style by Dominique Thomas, based on the original 1675 Bremser organ. Because of the lack of a surviving Bremser instrument to base the work on, an instrument of his father, Jan, was used. Although not thought highly of, the Loret pipework was considered historically important, and has been transferred to a small new organ case, hidden way high above the chancel arch of this small chapel.

This CD focuses on the new Thomas/ Bremser organ, with only one track played on the Loret. Drawing on the enormous repertoire of 17th century European organ music, Christophe Bursens puts the new organ through its paces, curiously ignoring any composers from what is now Flanders/Belgium, although John Bull, organist at Antwerp Cathedral does get a look in with one piece, *Een kindeken is ons geboren*.

ALISON BAGENAL

18 Feb 1927 – 8 Oct 2012

The Bags (Michael and Alison) were a delightful couple, intelligent, open-minded, enthusiastic, sociable and good friends. One of them spoke at the 1977 Early Music Conference about their visits to schools, linking early music with history and the culture of a period in a way that was extremely effective, even at the local special school which our children attended. A glance at the *www* under either Michael or Alison gives an idea of the circulation of booklets linked with their performances visits.

A few years later, we bought a small, thatched cottage in the middle of Godmanchester. We were intrigued by what looked like an antiques shop next-door until we saw the notice "This is not a shop". We soon met our neighbours, and were delighted to find that it was the Bags. They were kind and helpful, but also very busy (as we were), so we weren't close friends, but we got on well with each other, and when my mother took over the cottage, she found they were ideal neighbours.

Alison's father, David Rutherford Adams, had been a GP in a wealthy Edinburgh practice, then served in the army in Serbia after the First World War and died of rheumatic fever in 1928. Alison was born in Torquay, but moved to Glasgow as a baby with her mother, Isabella Susan, née Strathie, to Glasgow – she was a graduate of the Glasgow School of Art. Alison went to Craigmount School for Girls in Edinburgh and was awarded a music scholarship to the sixth form of Cheltenham Ladies College, where her sister was a music teacher. She went up to Girton in 1945, reading English Literature then Music, but until 1948, girls were not allowed to receive degrees: Alison received hers in 1998. I've heard that she rather fancied David Willcocks, but that was still a common response to female Cambridge musicians a decade or so later when I would witness it.

But her main attraction was to Henry Michael Bagenal. They were married in 1948, and after a year teaching in Hanford School for Girls in Dorset, the couple became part of the British Council team in Budapest and soon after their first child, Philip, was born (1950), they moved to Greece. Susie (who wrote the short biography that this is based on) was born in 1951, and the family, together with most expats, were evacuated back to England in some haste in 1952. Francie (who kindly sent me an email with some dates to give a framework to the biography) was born in 1954. Alexander, the last child, was born in 1962.

Michael had a successful career as teacher at Bryanston then Dartington, while Alison taught music. After three years in educational administration, he became History Advisor (or something of the sort) to Huntingdonshire

education authority, getting early retirement when it was merged with Cambridgeshire in 1972.

That gave the Bags time to develop their early-music activities. They formed an ensemble for concerts as well as the less formal school visits. They bought a big red van and used it to take their Box of Delights roadshow to schools nationwide. Alison expanded from her main instrument, the violin and Michael learnt how to make early and folk instruments and how to play them. He even built a harpsichord, which stood alongside the "shop-window", which most tourists stopped to admire. They had dancing skills. I happened to be at a social event, and they were able to lead the guests in some early dances, and they also led the dances at my mother's 80th birthday gathering. Both Michael and Alison enjoyed playing the viol, and had no difficulty in finding others to make up a consort. I met Michael outside his house after he had been to the hospital for a check-up and he said, with some delight: "I've got two years to live, and I want to spend them playing Byrd's consort songs".

Their house – formerly a grocer's shop – had enormous character. It opened straight on the road, but there was a long, semi-wild (by intent) garden. The house was almost open-plan on the ground floor, but there were rooms upstairs with plenty of space for visitors – and the spare rooms were frequently used. Sometimes they obliged and put up musicians we needed to accommodate. Our viol reviewer Robert Oliver was one of their guests. The variety of books on their shelves was notable, and somehow they owned a drawing by Picasso. Michael died in 1998 (that long ago! It seems so recent).

The Bags were well-known in the village. I'm sure they were good friends to many people we did not know. One example: the vicar of Godmanchester and his wife used to go up to London once a week for the Bach Choir rehearsals, but felt they couldn't when they started a family. Alison heard about this and insisted on baby-sitting, so that they could have their weekly fix of Bach (and Willcocks). I was told this story by the adult baby, now married to Paul Willenbrock, one of our subscribers.

Alison gradually declined after Michael died, and she was anyway unable to perform all the petty maintenance jobs that a 16th-century house required. She eventually moved to a splendid converted pub overlooking the harbour at Brightlingsea before moving on to a care home in Colchester. There was a celebration for her life on Sunday 18 November in Brightlingsea with family and friends.



Christmas at the Praetoriuses