

Early Music REVIEW

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Editors: Clifford Bartlett
Brian Clark (CDs)
Renewals: Elaine Bartlett
Diary & Advertising: Helen Shabetai
CD Reviewers:

Ian Graham-Jones
David Hansell
Katie Hawks
Victoria Helby
Stewart McCoy
Robert Oliver
Brian Robins
D. James Ross

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tel +44 (0)1480 452076 fax +44(0)1480 450821
clifford.bartlett@btopenworld.com
elaine.bartlett2@btopenworld.com
Contact for CD reviews bci6661@hotmail.com

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I hope this will be the last issue in which my eyes are a handicap. At the end of April, I had an operation to correct my inturned lower eyelids so that the lashes stopped irritating the eye. The surgeon noticed that the eye-drops had caused an allergic reaction, which explains the constant pain an inflammation all this year. He sent an urgent note to the glaucoma team that the medication needed to be sorted out. Two days later, everything changed. I was taken off the drops, and given pills instead – admittedly with the possibility of side-effects, but the eyes cleared themselves in a couple of weeks.. I picked up a newspaper a few days ago, and found I could read it, and am reasonably confident that I can play for Philip Thorby's long weekend on Francesca Caccini's *La Liberazione di Ruggiero* (publ. 1625, edited by BC). Because the glaucoma team want to find suitable drops, I now find myself high priority on the cataract list, with the first operation on the May 30th. A less good outcome on the day of the operation was that the current case against a solicitor who involved our children has been delayed till November 18th. We hope he'll eventually receive his just deserts.

I am well aware that book reviews have been thin this year. We are now finding new reviewers. I was flattered that David Fallows offered his services about as quickly as he could have done after my appeal in the last issue, and other names are shown in the list of books on p. 12 that will be reviewed in the next issue. We are also pleased that Brepols has sent some large volumes that will be reviewed in the August issue (except for the amazing Pasquini cantatas, in this issue, page 4). Meanwhile, Hugh Keyte has become a fairly regular contributor. We met when Hugh was in charge of early music at the BBC, and in the 1990s we worked together on the *New Oxford Book of Carols*, Hugh occupying a caravan since I was allergic to his cats Felix and Nam (clue to the name is in the report of the Dowland conference).

We have been thinking about circulating on-line, initially the Concert Diary. We'll be experimenting later in the year (I doubt if we'll have time with June already having its distractions and the August issue having to be finished before the Beauchamp Summer School). If you would like to receive material on-line in addition to the hard copy, please send your email address. (Yes – we probably have most of them, but we need to keep a separate list.) CB

REVIEWS OF MUSIC

Clifford Bartlett

THE TALLIS PSALTER

The Tallis Psalter: Psalms and Anthems, Canticles, Preces and Responses Edited by David Skinner. Novello (NOV293612), 2013. [xii] + 97pp, £8.95.

I was delighted to see this neat little book containing the English church music, expressing the simplicity of the needs of the reformed church and the needs of current Anglican choirs. It begins with the eight psalms and *Come Holy Ghost* [no. 9], versified in standard meters. The original texts are slightly modernised. They are not likely now to appeal to singers and congregations: indeed, only No. 8 (Tallis's Canon) and No. 9 (Tallis's Ordinal) have survived in current use, despite Vaughan Williams including No. 3 in *The English Hymnal*. The rhythms of this are particularly interesting. There is no time signature or bar lines – the cover facsimile makes that clear for No. 12. No. 3 has a flexible rhythm, which defies regular barring and was probably one reason why Vaughan Williams used it. The trouble with changing bar lengths (as here) is a mix between bars as tactus and as rhythm. I'm not surprised that nos 1-7 are not used for other texts, despite their being in standard meters.¹ But other texts could be used as anthems. It is worth noting that the tenor is "for the people when they will syng alone". Presumably the tenor is sung in octaves, whether or not the other three voices are added; people encountering the later "West Gallery" style should hardly have been surprised, since congregations usually sing in unison even now, despite a choir in the chancel.

After the *Preces* and *Dorian Magnificat* and *Nunc dimittis* there are ten anthems. The best-known ones are short, but not many church choirs will know all of them. The problem is the tessitura. Most of the four-part anthems have original clefs C₃C₄C₄F₄ (3,4), C₂C₃C₄F₄ (5,6,7,9), C₁C₃C₄F₄ (8,10). The editor states that there was no pitch standard in mid-16th-century England. There seem to be some conventions of clefs, which hint at a range, and choirboys may or may not have been taught to relate sung pitch to instruments. But the range seems rather low, and if it is transposed (as here), basses have rather high bottom notes. I wonder whether in the early period of Elizabeth's reign, boys were not included in much of the repertoire. I approve of all the music being available at the notated pitch at www.hybridpublications.com, code WB559.² Of the other pieces, the *Preces* are for C₂C₃C₄F₄, the *Dorian Service* for C₂C₃C₄F₄, No. 1 (*A new commandment*) for C₄C₄F₄[F₄]: the missing bass is easily reconstructed. No. 2 (*Blessed by those that are undefiled*) is for G₂C₂C₃C₄F₄ and is the only item here that fits modern choirs. You won't get a concept of Tallis's breadth of style (and

compass) from this: I suppose the challenges are *Gaude gloriosa*, *Spem in alium* and Tallis's half of *Cantiones Sacrae*. I celebrated Tallis's notional 500th anniversary with a residential weekend directed by David Skinner, which failed (my fault, and it was before David's reputation had been established in Cambridge) to assemble enough good voices – though it worked well socially. Don't look down on these apparently simple pieces, but I'm not sure that they should be forced too often into modern four-part choirs. Some Latin motets work in English – perhaps that could be vol. 2.

SCHÜTZ *O du allersüßester...*

Schütz O du allersüßester und liebster Herr Jesu SWV 340 Carus 20.340 16pp, €6.80, chorus €2.80, 2 vlms €2.00, Bc €3.00

This is an isolated publication from 1646 on the name of Jesus with no specific liturgical association. The vocal scoring by clef is SSATB, but it makes no sense for mixed voices. There's a section where A and T sing in thirds for three bars (33-35) with A singing only the F, G and A below middle C: the alto range is a standard tenor from the E below middle C to the A above, the tenor range is, as so often, baritone and the other three parts are normal. With such open scoring, it's clearly for solo voices (though reductions are offered for lots of copies, which clashes with the one-to-a-part implication of "Sacred Concerto" on the online catalogue page). My guess is that the two violins don't need a cello or equivalent unless the organ is a small portable one. It doesn't strike me as one of the composer's best works, but it's certainly worth singing if you've got suitable forces.

LOST & LOST AGAIN FROBERGER

Froberger Neue Ausgabe sämtliche Werke... VI 1... Keyboard and Organ Works from Copied Sources, New Sources, New Readings, New Works (Part 1)... edited by Siegbert Rampe Bärenreiter (9213), 2010. x + 60 pp, £33.50. VI 2... (part 2)... Bärenreiter (9269), 2010. x + pages 53-126, £33.50.

These are strange volumes. The *raison d'être* is the discovery of lost sources, primarily a MS sold at Sotheby's in 2006 and Berlin Sing-Akademie MS 4450, which was returned from Kiev to Berlin in 2001 and published in facsimile in 2004; pieces from a few later MSS from Kiev/Berlin are also included. The editor seems a bit miffed that he had to wait three years until the facsimile of SA 4450, but that's trivial compared with the secrecy of the purchaser. Surely information must have circulated through the grape-vine.³ I'm reminded of an important

1. The headings look bare without metrical indication.

2. As so often with downloads, I failed to get through.

3. It's worth googling *Sotheby Froberger* and reading the article from *Journal of Seventeenth Century Music* 13/1 by Bob van Asperen.

17th-century French keyboard MS that the London owner kept to himself for decades. At one stage, an edition was advertised, but I never saw it, and have lost touch with its present state.

I'm a little puzzled by this pair of volumes. A petty curiosity is the way vol. 1 ends with page 60 but vol. 2 begins (after the prelims) with page 54 (the obverse has no page number but is logically 53). The introduction is on the point when discussing the validity of different versions of the keyboard works, in some cases in the composer's hand, in others by sources close to the autographs. But publishing them in hard copy seems unnecessarily expensive. The serious performer or academic should be able to read facsimiles on-line, and if the alternatives are worth making available in modern notation, they can be typeset. Anyway, it seems a bit premature to build the volumes round a MS that may well be allocated to another scholar – I can't believe that it is an investment likely to be sitting in a bank vault awaiting vast increases in the value of a secondary Froberger source! There should surely be access to cultural objects, whoever owns them. Froberger enthusiasts will no doubt buy these two volumes, following up vols I-IV, but I'm more interested in vol. 7, which includes non-keyboard works and the Froberger catalogue (FbWV).

LUIGI ROSSI CANTATAS

Alessio Ruffatti. *Cantate di Luigi Rossi e rielaborazioni strumentali di Joseph Chabanceau de La Barre*, Padova, Cleup (Coop. Libreria Editrice Università di Padova) 2007. ISBN 978-88-6129-084-6. Out of print. Print pdf from <https://sites.google.com/site/alessioruffatti/pubblicazioni>

Not counting prints, there are 900 non-autograph pre-1800 manuscripts of 307 cantatas attributed to Luigi Rossi (1597-1653), most produced after his death, about half outside of Italy. Ruffatti's edition of four includes three of the most often copied, circulated and therefore popular ones. His aim is to speculate on different models of transmission.

Cantatas were usually copied and adapted for specific occasions. Successive MSS tended to accrue numerous changes, so, alas, a high number of "agreeing" variants is not at all a sign of the authenticity of those details, or even a clear indication of filiation. The sources to be deemed the best are generally the earliest ones, drafted close to where Rossi was active, if relatively free of obvious errors. Obvious errors, on the other hand, may indeed help identify the filiation of a source. Ruffatti's critical notes give primarily the rejected readings from his proposed source(s), which occasionally he corrects. For studying and performing these long-cultivated pieces, we might want to see *all* the other variants. But at least this volume points the way.

Due labra di rose (SS, Bc; 11 MSS and 5 printed sources) is a strophic aria about a lover forced to avoid his beloved's wounding glances. Suspensions and dissonances between the voices recall Monteverdi, hemiolas not necessarily in

all parts, and a rhetorical device ("chiasmus") whereby one voice anticipates the last syllable while the other places it on the downbeat, are especially characteristic of Rossi. Such traits were often edited out of later French copies. The version used here is one of two careful copies by Antonio Chiusi, a Roman scribe active until 1668. Other Italian sources are from 1650-80, French ones mainly from after 1700; the piece was attributed to Carissimi in 1680 by Philidor and Fossard, and to J. de La Barre around 1701 by Ballard; Charles Babel (*sic*), the father of William Babel, attributed it to Rossi around 1700.

Vorrei scoprirvi un di (SS, Bc; 22 sources) is here preceded by a 'ritournelle' for two instruments and continuo attributed to Joseph de La Barre (1633-78), which appeared with the duet in Ballard's *Recueil des meilleurs airs italiens* of 1701. The pair might have been performed for Christina of Sweden in Rome, perhaps by Anne de La Barre and an Italian castrato, accompanied on the theorboe by Angelo Michele Bartolotti (the copyist of Ruffatti's preferred source, GB-Och Mus 377, from 1652-4) with J. de la Barre at the harpsichord. The instrumental piece goes just as well with *Due labra di rose* (all three are in Bb), and is melodically like instrumental pieces by Falconieri, a Neapolitan contemporary of Rossi (*i.e.* his *correnti* 'L'Avellina' and 'la Mota'). There are some mistakes or questionable part-writing (bars 8-10 and 52), and no critical notes are provided, presumably because Ruffatti did not offer corrections to the single source.

This fashionable duet was called "divine" and "better" than Lully's *Scocca pur* in a letter of 1675 by Marie de Rabutin-Chantal, marquise de Sévigné. It was published five times by Ballard (1701-8) and even as late as 1765 (Breitkopf). The later copyists had multiple sources to collate, so while many were quite accurate, it is impossible to assess the lines of transmission. The piece is in binary form, with a short recit for the 2nd soprano between its two parts. It contrasts a sea of amorous pain with the heavenly beauty of the beloved, but the playful syncopations and voice crossings belie and defy the sufferings. Nor is the tongue 'silent' in its grief.

Dite o cieli se crudeli sono i sguardi del mio ben (SB, Bc; 36 sources). This, too, circulated for over a century, sometimes attributed to Carissimi, and was copied twice by a scribe close to Rossi, Giovanni Antelli. Other copies from Rossi's circle, either incomplete or untrustworthy, were not used. The foreign sources have too many errors and differences for tracking their filiation. So this edition is based on Antelli's two versions, which preserve slight differences between the two strophes, indicating that these came from his source. Ruffatti chose not to list any of the "more satisfying" variants from other sources, which frustrates my curiosity: there are legitimate doubts about accidentals, which later copyists may have viewed differently; and in one place (in both strophes) the non-agreement between the vocal bass and Bc is strange enough that a startled listener would hear it as a mistake. *Hor ch'in notturna pace il mio bel sol riposa* comes down to us in 6 MSS of varying usefulness and completeness showing three distinct lines of transmission. Ruffatti gives

showing three distinct lines of transmission. Ruffatti gives two complete versions of the cantata, both attributable to Rossi and probably used for different occasions. The trios are for SAB, though in the second version a tenor could do the bass part (changing only one or two notes). The first version, however, requires a bass in the trios and for the 2nd recit-arioso. The other recit, and both in the second version, are for soprano. The 4th and final section, a lullaby, *Dormite begl'occhi*, was changed by Rossi himself (from SAB to SSS) for use in his opera *Orfeo* (1647). The three voices speak as one, in the first person. In the cantata it is a lover gratefully at peace while his beloved sleeps, unable to wound him with her glances. He excitedly tries to placate querulous voices threatening to disturb her, and then addresses her sleeping eyes. In the opera it is Euridice who asks the Dryads to put her to sleep.

The second solo in I-Bc Q 50 is the elaborate 50-bar bass recit-arioso, entirely in c minor, with wide leaps, a range from F to e' flat, passages reminiscent of Seneca in *Poppea* and some very interesting contrapuntal continuo fragments. GB-Och Mus 996 (probably transcribed by A. M. Bartolotti, active at the Swedish court in Rome 1652-54, and compiled by John Alcock after 1740) gives a simpler recit in C major of only 28 bars to the soprano. The two versions of the trios are slightly different, I-Bc having more counterpoint and ornamental rhythmic figures, GB-Och being more homophonic but exploiting the characteristic chiasmi of the other cantatas. The scanty continuo figures are obvious, but several are misaligned, and I would argue that modern editions should not only place them under the right notes, but also opt for putting the rare accidentals that alter an expressed interval *right before* the number, instead of at a distance after it (cf p. 48).

Ruffatti's excellent writings (this volume, his thesis on the diffusion of Rossi's cantatas in France, and other articles) can all be accessed through the site above. He teaches Music History at the Sorbonne and the Conservatory of Palermo. See also his article "La produzione di manoscritti musicali di lusso a Roma dopo la morte di Luigi Rossi" in the *Journal of seventeenth-century music* at <http://sscmjscm.press.uiuc.edu/jscm>. *Barbara Sachs*

PASQUINI CANTATAS

Bernardo Pasquini *Le Cantate* Edited by **Alexandra Nigito** (*Monumenta Musica Europa III Baroque Era*, vol. 2) Tournhout: Brepols, 2012. cclxxxi+ 764pp, €150.00.

This is one of those publications which draws attention to and makes available a new repertoire. Coincidentally, this review follows a small selection of Luigi Rossi cantatas, but this offers the whole corpus of a composer between Rossi and Alessandro Scarlatti.

Physically, this is an extraordinary volume, with over a thousand pages and weighing 3.360kg. I can't find any music on my shelves to match it – the nearest is The Handel Society's *Judas Maccabaeus* (edited by Macfarren) of 1855, but that has a very heavy binding. In terms of value, the Brepols volume is amazing – around £130 or

US\$200: compare it with the A-R volumes reviewed in recent issues, all of which are proportionally considerably more expensive. There must have been considerable subsidy from the "Amici di Groppoli" in Pistoia and the Province of Pistoia. (Pasquini was born there but spent most of his life in Rome.) The volume derives from the editor's work at the University of Cremona, supported by Albert Dunning, which is a good recommendation.⁴

Most of the music is for voice and Bc. The arrangement is by voice – 42 for soprano (originally in C1 clef – everything is transcribed in the normal modern clef), 2 for mezzo (C2), 1 for tenor (C4), and 6 for bass. There are two duets for SS, one for SA and a trio each for ATB & SAB. There are four cantatas with instruments – two for S, 2 vlms & bc, one for S, 2 vlms, vla & bc and one for SB, 2 vlms & Bc. There are two Cantate Festive, one for SSSTB the other for SSB, both with strings (one in the Corellian concerto-grosso format, the other for 2 vlms, 2 vla & bc): these are substantial works, horizontally (running to over 1000 bars) as well as vertically and would more usefully be published separately with score and parts. These are followed by two solo motets: *O benedicta Jesu* is the only alto solo in the volume (apart from incomplete or dubious works) and *Quaenam portenta* is for soprano.

Pasquini is primarily known for his keyboard works. Seven volumes were published in the 1960s. The most interesting are sonatas for figured bass – 14 for one and 14 for two harpsichords, which are invaluable for learning continuo playing. He wrote 18 operas between 1672 and 1692, none of which seem to be published – though I think *Il Colombo* (1690) may have been revived since I ran a copy of the score off for a proposed performance. Few of his 17 oratorios survive. Grove Online is very sketchy about the cantatas, and offers no list of titles or comments on where they fit into the cantata tradition.

I haven't been able to invite a singer along to try some of them out – the weight of the book would collapse my harpsichord's music stand. What I have read through seems impressive. I heard one cantata on You Tube – *In solitaria spiaggia (Il girasole)* (p130) – which has a flexibility that is quite refreshing: unlike the later Italian cantata, one is not sure of a standard formal procedure. One point that arises from that performance is the routine use of cadential appoggiaturas. I don't know how the change from Monteverdi around 1640, when they are not called for, to around 1700, when they became part of the grammar, developed. The music is imaginative, and I hope singers turn their attention to it.

The introduction is extensive, thorough and well laid-out. Pasquini's life and works are tabulated in parallel columns and the MSS and copyists are described, with facsimiles.

4. Dunning was a musicologist who firmly believed in publication of editions, especially the complete Locatelli; I assume that it was he who kindly arranged for the whole set to be sent to me to review, appropriate since we published facsimiles of the 18th-century prints. His book (with facsimile of the MS score of the *Concerti armonici*) established that the set was not by Pergolesi or Ricciotti but by Wassenaer and complements the printed parts, which we've made available about 25 years ago. An edition of the score is Vol. 1 in this Brepols series.

Ten pages discuss the poets and texts. Documentation of instruments at the Casa Borghese between 1652 and 1683 is given. Five pages on the basso continuo are not rigorously enough confined to sources of the period. Editorial practices are carefully stated. It seems that by page xcv, the designer was worried about space, so 71 pages of the texts of the poems are in minute print, yet with vast expanses of blank paper. There's a basic printing rule that small print is more easily read if set in columns. The 10-point font of *EMR* would be too small for an A4 page but is manageable in two columns (as here). Two columns for the cantata texts would be more legible and could even then, with a few design changes, have a larger font. After the music, the descriptions of the MSS needs its larger print but the *apparatus criticus* could easily be printed larger in two columns.

This is an immensely useful and well prepared study and edition, and it's good value.⁵ However, one returns to the size of the volume. It's not just my harpsichord stand that is the problem. No singer can hold it. Manipulating it face-down on a photocopier will break the spine quite quickly, though snapping it and downloading it onto your computer may work. I need to find a tight bookshelf to stop the pages sagging – I've just noticed signs of that in the facsimile of *The Eton Choirbook*, and that will have to lie flat since I don't have any shelves 43cm high: at least Pasquini's 31cm is manageable! I hope the volume survives the extensive use to which it should be put by singers.

RESTORATION TRIO SONATAS – Parts

I reviewed briefly Peter Holman and John Cunningham's edition of *Restoration Trio Sonatas* (Purcell Society, Companion Edition 4) published by Stainer & Bell (see *EMR* 150, p. 4). I intended to write more when I had a chance to play them. This was more delayed than I expected, but taking advantage of BC's visit to us over Easter, he and Selene Mills (vlins), Anne Jordan (gamba) and me (organ) spent an afternoon playing through the first nine sonatas – the remaining three are incomplete. They are issued in three sets, with a score and three parts. Order numbers are Y301 & 302 (each £20.00) and the shorter Y303 (£15.00). Titles are listed in my review of the score. Set 1: nos 1, 3 & 4 Set 2: 2, 6, 7 Set 3: 5, 6 & 9

Set 1 has three pieces in G minor: sonatas by Draghi and Keller and a ground by Blow. Two of the string players found this the most enjoyable of the sets. I can't make the comparison with sets two and three, since we had a tea break before playing them then I fell asleep on a sofa – and not because of the quality of the music. I can certainly recommend starting from Set 1, buying the others later if you have enjoyed it. The essential feature is that there is only one stave for bass and that it is not figured. This caused particular problems in the Blow trio, on a ground bass which is not consistent on whether the second bar of each statement begins with major (as for the first two statements) or minor. Fine if you are an experienced

score-reader, but one tends to assume that the expectations for filling out chords in the period should apply. Set II has a fourth, figured part in the score (except that the figures are lacking in some movements of Dieinnee's sonata (no. 6). Set 3 contains music on three staves, with a continuo bass for which a melodic instrument is optional. This is music that is little-known, but deserves playing, and is not too difficult. I hope more keyboard players now can cope with figured and unfigured basses – though no-one complained about that soporific keyboard-player.

FOR ALTO, TWO TROMBONES & Bc

Pietro Cassati *Salve Regina: Marianische Antiphon für Alt solo, 2 Posaunen und Basso Continuo* herausgegeben von Guido Erdmann. Carus (27.703), 2012. 11pp+parts, £ 26.50

Cassati was born, perhaps in Italy, in 1684, worked in Rome for Ruspoli in 1715 and spent most of the rest of his career in Vienna with support from Caldara. This setting begins with a movement that has the parts the two trombones and voice on show together. Then there is an *Andante* (Ad te clamamus) for one trombone and voice, a short *secco recit* and a *Largo* for all. "All", however, is interesting, since there are parts for M[ae]stro], presumably the main keyboard player, organo and violoncello, i.e. three bass instruments balancing (or not!) two instruments and a voice! Needless to say, Carus supplies only 2 scores and 3 parts. There must be a significant repertoire of music for trombones and voice: I'd love to hear more, though Carus seem to think it only of interest to German readers: the only English words are "edited by" and "full score"

BWV 143

J. S. Bach *Lobe den Herrn, meine Seele... BWV 143... Edited by Andreas Glöckner*. Bärenreiter (TP1143), 2012. viii + 32pp, £7.50
Vocal score (BA 10143-90), 2012. iv + 23pp, £5.00
Strings £3.00 each, wind set £10.00, organ £11.00

The publication of the Collected Works of a composer with a substantial output is never done. Even if no subsequent works are discovered (it rarely happens with Bach), more information is discovered about the changing status of existing works, and there is the inevitable movement between the spurious, the doubtful and the genuine. So NBA is succeeded by NBA^{rev} and made more accessible by separate editions. When the NBA edition including Cantata 143 was published (NBA 1/4, 1965), only sources from the 19th century existed. More recently, one from 1762 has emerged. This is by no means the only early cantata to survive in a late source. The estimated date of performance is New Year 1709 to 1711. The surviving scoring looks odd, starting with three corni da caccia and timps. It's difficult to imagine that at any period, but it makes much more sense in C for trumpets, and the whole piece is transposed thus. The other instrumental group is two violins, viola and bassoon – a common German tradition a couple of decades earlier. It's odd that the bar

5. The most recent comparable volume of Handel, HHA V/7 (chamber duets and trios), has xxvi + 234 pp and costs £242.00.

lines are broken between the three strings and the bassoon whereas the four instruments form a single group. The performer needs some advice on whether in this layout, continuo implies a string instrument as well as the organ. The bassoon certainly has a great time – as good as a concerto. The vocal pitch-level is a bit high, but not exceptional for Bach – and what was the pitch of the church at which it was performed, anyway? The chorale *Du Friedenfürst* is sung in no 2 (against unison violins and Bc) and 7 (tutti with the chorale taken by the soprano) and played by the violins and viola in unison in No. 6 above a duetting bassoon and continuo and tenor solo. No. 4 is for tenor, with triplet violin and accompanying chords. No 5 is for trumpets, timps, unison bassoon & bc with bass voice. Unmentioned so-far is a 5-bar secco recit for tenor. After an outstanding bassoon, you need a good tenor! Early Bach cantatas don't appeal to everyone, but our joint admiration for the early cantatas sealed my friendship with Peter Holman when we met in the late 1960s.

REVISED DIXIT

Handel Dixit Dominus HWV 232... New edition by Hans Joachim Marx. Bärenreiter (BA 10704), 2012. xviii + 88pp, £24.00. ... Vocal score... Piano reduction by Andreas Köhs. (BA 10704-90). vii 93pp, £13.50. Strings each £5.00, organ realisation £13.50.

This revised edition is reproduced from the recent HHA III/1, replacing the original edition of 1960, prepared before HHA aspired to being a proper scholarly edition. I remember the first time I heard it very well. This was at a BBC Invitation Concert at Maida Vale in the early 1960s. I'd bought the score soon after publication, but the music meant little to me until that performance, directed by Arnold Goldsbrough. I doubt if there had been many, if any, UK performances before then, and the choir must have found it hard going – now most chamber choirs have a go at it. The organ concerto op. 4/4 was familiar from Thurston Dart, but the marvellous motet *Silete venti* was new: I think mine is still the only edition other than Chrysander, which doesn't, of course, have parts.

For reasons made clear in my last editorial, I can't make a detailed comparison of the two editions, though with the autograph as the only significant source, it shouldn't have been too difficult to get an accurate version – or did the 1960 editor Eberhard Wenzel merely follow Chrysander? Marx devotes some attention to how to interpret who plays the continuo line when it moves from the bass clef. My usual assumption (a common and plausible one) is that the C1 and C3 clefs are left to the organ, the cello joining the organ for C4 clefs. Wenzel uses treble clefs for sopranos and alto but octave-trable for tenors, which is as adequate a cue for cellos as C4 would be. Handel may have used a 16' violone, but a quotation from the English author Peter Prellieur (London, 1731) is irrelevant to Rome in 1707. He may well be right, but if Marx can't find any stronger evidence, perhaps Rome is still in the world of violones playing at pitch but bending octaves. Roman pitch being a tone below A=440, violones are perhaps less

likely to play at 16'. I certainly can't imagine them playing the alto solo (no. 2).

Why couldn't Marx retain the gradations of *piano* (five markings in consecutive bars) at the end of "Juravit Dominus" instead of modernising them and adding a remark that the dynamics "are probably to be understood as *decrescendo*". In fact, they make perfectly good sense if each phrase (from the second quaver of the bar) has a shape of its own, rising a bit but ending quieter than it began. I don't have a facsimile at hand to show what and where really is under the middle parts, but Chrysander (HG38 p. 78) looks plausible while Marx doesn't. It is much easier to make sense of the dynamics if they have the fuller spelling than the abbreviations of the two HHA editions. It's a pity that No 3 (*Tecum principium*) is spread to an extra page, when it would have been convenient if the page numbers agreed: if anything needed expanding, it's the alto and busy continuo No. 2 (*Virgam virtutis*) that might benefit from a bit more space. Better still would be to have started No. 1 on a left-hand page so that there would be no page-turn for the continuo in No 2. Why does the new edition use the sexually-specific *contralto* when the neutral alto of the old edition is preferable. Thanks to *Messiah* if nothing else, musicians are used to flat minor keys with one flat short: why should minor keys be renotated? There are plenty of editions of baroque music that don't modernise.

Marx makes the point that the singers are in two groups: soloists and cappella. but by the end of the paragraph "the soloists were part of the cappella". I'm not sure why he should be so critical of the editorial method of *The Roman Vespers of 1707*, promoted by H. C. Robbins Landon (Cardiff, 1985). As a reconstruction, it was (and is) controversial, but I don't see that the addition of period bowing marks disqualifies it from being a useful edition – up and down bow signs didn't exist in 1707, so are obviously editorial, while added slurs are slashed – and it has the fullest critical commentary (other than what Marx may have supplied).

I'm handicapped by not having the critical commentary. Why should conductors not be interested in them? Perhaps scores could be published by subscription for hard covers (as they come now) and the soft-cover scores could have the same content at prices like the sum charged for this *Dixit*. After all, it is conductors who generate royalties! My feeling over this new edition is that it is a luxury while there are still Handel works that HHA has not published. If there are misprints, they could have been corrected. Every time I compare the scores, I see no advantage – except that comparing them note-by-note is time-consuming and eye-straining. Was the machine for collating First Folios at the Folger Shakespeare Library over 50 years ago developed and adapted for music as a computer programme? If so, I'd welcome it.

There's lots of information in the preface. How Psalm 109/110 was put together, for instance, though paired halves are typical of psalm techniques, not unique to 109/110. It's good that the myth that the cantus firmus

was pseudo-chant is demolished – it is Tone I. I suggest in the Pergolesi review below that a Latin text with two translations should be placed centrally (not, of course, as underlay), so that each modern language is placed next to the ancient one. Good that the new edition prints the texts, here the German stands between the Latin and the English.

ALLELUIA, AMEN

Handel Neun Amen- und Halleluja-Sätze... HWV 269-277, Edited by Stephan Blaut, Continuo Realisation by Christoph Harer. Bärenreiter (BA 10256), 2012. vi + 26pp, £11.00.

For a scholarly edition (this is based on HHA III:15), the German title seems inappropriate. The underlaid text contains a few examples of *Hallelujah*, and one *Allelujah*, but *Alleluia* (with i for j a trivial difference) is the norm. Do Handel-loving Germans object to the A word? It doesn't seem to worry singers here, who (if they have the skill) are perfectly happy singing the normal last movement/word of a solo motet like Mozart's *Exultate, jubilate*. Curiously, these pieces do not go back to Catholic Italy, but from watermarks it seems that they were written between 1728 and 1747. However, the possibility that they were written as exercises for royal children isn't certain. Their function now is probably educational – for continuo players as well as sopranos (or tenors). Good that they are available. Perhaps other publishers would consider Cedric Lee's baroque solos with an extra unbound score without realisation and a bass part. It's good that these pieces are now accessible, and you can legally and economically make extra copies from the last pages of Chrysander vol. 38.

OPUS 3 for KEYBOARD

Handel's Celebrated 'Oboe' Concertos. An anonymous late 18th-century adaptation for Organ, Harpsichord or Piano Forte of Handel's Six Concerti Grossi, Op. 3 edited by Gerald Gifford Edition HH (HH 11 288), 2012. ix + 60pp. [The HH website was blocked when I needed it.]

I'm puzzled. I wanted to check to what extent the keyboard version may have corrected the mistakes of the original edition in parts and found that the still-uncorrected Bärenreiter score and the facsimile had a copy of the HH Edition between them. I don't remember writing about it, and a computer search for Gifford produced nothing relevant. So apologies for the delayed review, and I'll send the spare copy back.

No. 3 is the obvious concerto for comparison. I don't understand why the transcriber ignored the flute/oboe solo in the Adagio, printing just accompanimental chords without the solo. There's Handelian authority for the alternative, except for a few changes from the source in the *Te Deum* in B flat, HWV 281/5 bar 253; Chrysander p. 125). The *Allegro* (composed as one of the six Fugues, c.1715-17) was not printed before op. 3, but has several awkward passages and a missing bar (80). Is the accuracy

of a posthumous arrangement the paramount consideration? It's fun to play, though if there are no clef problems, a facsimile would be more interesting – I don't think there is any serious problem in playing the three sets of organ concertos published during or soon after Handel's life-time – though I haven't played them recently.

ENGLISH SONGS

Richard Leveridge Twenty-one Songs for bass (F-f#'). Edited by Timothy Roberts. Green Man Press (Lev 1), 2013. 46pp + unrealised score, £15.50
English Baroque Songs – I, for high voice (c'-a'') and continuo. Barrett, Boyce, Carey, Clarke, Eccles, Harris, Lampe, Leveridge, D. Purcell. Edited by Timothy Roberts. Green Man Press (EBS 1H), 2013. 25pp + unrealised score, £7.90

Leveridge (1670-1758) had a career that extended from singing "Ye twice ten hundred deities" for Purcell (*The Indian Queen*, 1695) to his retirement in 1751, the year of Handel's last major work, *Jephtha*. He was a bass, but the facsimile edition of his songs has a remarkable freedom from the bass clef for the singer. So the 21 items here have been transposed and notated in the bass clef. I don't know how carefully harpsichordists of the period placed their right hands: Tim keeps them low. What are missing are typical bass songs which are anchored to the music's bass, where the harpsichordist has to provide a treble. The songs are, however, entertaining and attractive.

There's a bit more flair in the anthology, one song for each composer. It begins just post-Purcell – indeed, with Daniel Purcell's "Alas! When charming Sylvia's gone", a typical dying-for-love song. Then comes "Cease of Cupid to complain" by Eccles based on a continuous quaver bass, though not a ground, apart from the first section having its opening nine bars repeated. I was intrigued that the six quavers of the bass of every bar were beamed together except for bar 35, where they are paired. This follows the original edition, but Tim didn't follow beaming in the voice part. I don't think it matters in this context. The third song, by Jeremiah Clark, is "Jocky was as brisk and blithe. Rondo: a Scotch Song sung by Mrs Cross". The main section has a very short "ground": a single bar of an embellished octave C, while the three verses each have two bars of G and two of C – how simple! Did Mrs Cross have a convincing Scottish accent? I presume the song works better thus.

I'll skip to the last two pieces. No. 9, "Who is Silvia?", differently spelt, is by Leveridge. The song is in the range indicated for the edition (c' – a''), so it's odd that it is transposed down from G to E, especially if the harpsichord is appropriately tuned. The underlay between bar 33 and 34 needs spacing. It is followed by "O nightingale", Milton set by Boyce, in C minor. Singers are likely to want to sing the two best sets of texts (and fine music), which doesn't work that well in E then C minor even if you are accompanied by equal temperament. The collection is well worth buying.

GUNN'S SOLOS

Barnabas Gunn *Six Solos for the Violin and Violoncello with a Thorough Bass for the Harpsichord*, Birmingham 1745 edited by Martin Perkins and Chloe Werner. Edition HH (20 319), 2013. viii + 35pp + 2 parts. £24.95

Gunn was born in 1680, studied with Pepusch, and was organist at Thomas Archer's St Philip's Church (which eventually became Birmingham Cathedral) from its beginning in 1715. He was organist at Gloucester from 1730-39, but returned to his previous job, though was also nominal organist at the Chelsea Hospital. Despite scorn by William Hayes, his fairly small output was successful, and from 1748 till his death in 1753, he organised an equivalent to Vauxhall Gardens. His set of violin sonatas was published in 1745.

The keys are B flat, A, e, b "in the compase of the German flute", c and D – definitely a sign of late baroque rather than early classical. The movements are not systematically the same in each sonata. Attractive to play (and hear), they need a certain amount of technical skill and musicality for pleasurable playing and enjoyable listening. Do include them in concerts, especially in Birmingham, Chelsea and Gloucester, where local audiences might be enticed by a local man!

PERGOLESI STABAT MATER

Pergolesi *Stabat mater*...Edited by Malcolm Bruno [&] Caroline Ritchie. Bärenreiter (BA 7679), 2012. xii + 50pp, £21.00. Vocal score (BA 7679-90), 2012. vi + 42pp, £8.50. String parts £4.00 each, organ realisation £7.50.

This was one of the first Italian post-Monteverdi pieces that I got to know – it might even have gone back to my pre-Monteverdian school days. I certainly bought the Eulenburg miniature score over 50 years ago. More recently, I reviewed the Breitkopf edition. I usually keep a score, a few vocal scores and set of parts to sell, but unfortunately I've either run out or misplaced them.⁶ The problem with editing the work is the inability of editors to trust the autograph. Are they unable to resist the greater performance detail in the Neapolitan source, which may show how it was performed, or do they believe that it was only a first draft? The facsimile by Walhall (EW880; £49.80) will at least make it possible to see what the composer wrote, even though an autograph score is not necessarily the main authority.

The editors are, I think, more conservative than previous ones, but still take some later readings, notably the elongation of the last few bars. There was a convention whereby the printed score matched the parts that had to be engraved or copied from it. This takes a step in returning to the way composers wrote their scores. So here, when violin I & II are unison, they remain on one stave. But is it necessary to print *colla basso* viola parts? Less space is occupied and less effort in reading lines that

give no information: parts can be restored to what the violas need by the pressing a button on the computer. The score has smaller print than, for instance, the same publisher's Handel *Dixit Dominus*. But the vocal score is large enough. It doesn't include the three "corrected" passages that conductors may prefer – there's enough blank space to include them in small print on p. vi. Prices are more-or-less comparable with Breitkopf.

There is a thorough introduction. The comment on the Latin version is helpful, but it is a pity that there is no text or translation. Despite my comments on small texts in the Pasquini edition, it should be possible to print 60 lines in three columns (German, Latin and English – the reason should be obvious!) starting on p. xiii and filling the following blank page. One virtue of Pergolesi's composition is that he manages to avoid the tedious textual rhythm better than most composers. There's a slip enclosed with 6 errata: correct them at once or you'll lose it.

HAYDN FAREWELL & MARIE THERESA

Haydn *Symphony in F-sharp minor [Farewell]* Hob. I:45. Score. Edited by Carl-Gabriel Stellan Mörner Bärenreiter (BA 10971), 2012. iv + 35pp, £21.00. Wind set £12.50; strings each £5.00

Haydn *Symphony in C major "Marie Theresia"*, Hob. I: 48. Score. Edited by Christin Heitmann. Bärenreiter (BA 10972), 2009. iv + 35pp, £21.00. Wind set £12.50; strings each £5.00

This comes from Reihe 1, Band 6 & 5a of the Henle *Joseph Haydn Werke*. Apart from the music, there's a page of introduction each in German and English. To comment on 45 first, one point is that the indications *geht ab* as cue to individual exits at the end of the work is not explicit in the autograph but from one of the secondary sources – surely it could be named? (Strangely, I never noticed the absence when I had the facsimile around the house!) The notation looks a bit compressed in the first two pages of the Finale's *Adagio*. It's a nice touch that a bassoon stave appears there with rests until it plays two pairs of two bars and the stave stops: this is a clear indication that what a bassoon plays doesn't depend on whether it appears in a score, since the player surely didn't sit in silence throughout the first three and a bit movements. If I were conducting this, I'd hope for a bit more editorial information – not all conductors have easy access to Collected Works unless they have reached the top earning level. The scoring of both symphonies is for 2 horns, 2 oboes, un-notated bassoon and strings – the current expectation is no keyboard. No. 45 has horns in A and E, no. 48 in high C but in F for the slow movement. Later MSS have different spurious parts for trumpets and timps, which are not shown in the score.

The *Farewell* is one of Haydn's experimental symphonies, in the rare F sharp minor, A major for the *Adagio*, F sharp major for the Menuet, with prominent horns and oboes, and F sharp minor for the finale, though the *Adagio* starts in A major and twists to F sharp major for the last farewells. The music is particularly expressive. The

6. We're not a shop, and only keep a few items by other publishers.

authority of the name *Maria Theresia* (and hence its date) is now questionable. One source is dated 1769, four years earlier than Maria Theresia's visit to Esterházy. This has fewer surprises than 45 but is probably easier to negotiate.

VIOLA & CELLO

Cajetan Wutky *Duetto op. 2/1 in C: score and parts*, edited by Rudolf H. Führer Diletto Musicale (DM 1383), 2012. 10pp & 2 parts, £12.95.

Wutky lived from 1735-1815, His father was head of a band of city waits. Cajetan was a horn player, capellmeister of the ducal chapel and door guard for Duke Albert of Saxony-Teschen. He followed the Archduchess to Brussels in the 1780s, but returned to Vienna in 1792. He wrote a considerable quantity of violin duets, but these three duos to keep lower members of the quartet busy look more interesting than most two-violin duets I've seen. (The other two are being published separately.) It would be interesting to pair them with Mozart's two violin-violas duos: the latter will no doubt outshine Wutky, but perhaps not as much as one might expect. It's odd that players were happy with a pair of parts for duets (as, for that matter, orchestral works), but now they have to pay for a score as well.

J. C. BACH GAMBA SONATAS

Johann Christian Bach *Music for Viola da Gamba and Cembalo/Pianoforte* Edited Thomas Fritzsche and Günter von Zadow. Edition Güntersberg (G226-7), 2012.

The four Sonatas for viola da gamba and keyboard by the 'London Bach' are published here for the first time. I reviewed a performance of them by one of the editors, Thomas Fritzsche, viola da gamba, with Shalev Ad-El, fortepiano and harpsichord, some issues ago, and found them delightful listening and an important addition to the repertoire. This publication makes them available to players at a reasonable price – two volumes at €17.50 each according to their current catalogue. The layout is excellent, and the parts are provided in both alto clef and treble to be played in the lower octave.⁷ I have only one very minor complaint, and that is the lack of a facsimile example of any of the sources. In every respect, however, this is an excellent production, and a worthy, not to say essential part of any viol-player's library. The musical type is very clear and elegant, page turns are well organised, and the music is very rewarding for the viol player, without being technically advanced.

The excellent introductory notes by Thomas Fritzsche describe the fascinating story of their discovery, leading to the first modern performance in 2008. The technical level of the gamba part is not nearly as demanding as that of Abel's music, and the viol is always in an accompanying role, so the question arises: for whom were these sonatas written? His suggestion that a possible performer was the artist Thomas Gainsborough, an accomplished amateur

player and pupil of Abel, is reinforced by the Gainsborough's fine portrait on the composer which graces the cover of each volume.

Volume one has two sonatas described as for *Cembalo e Viola da Gamba obligato* with the viol part written in treble clef. The first, in B flat major, has two movements, as they all do, *allegro* and *allegro assai*. The former uses the theme of the prelude of J.S.B.'s Partita BWV825 in B Flat, with the viol providing a simple but elegant third part to the predominantly two-part cembalo writing. Neither movement provides a particularly challenging viol part, and the hypothesis that Gainsborough played them seems appropriate to their technical level. The second sonata in G major is melodically much more like C.P.E.'s though far less extravagant in its range and technical demands.

Volume two has two further sonatas, both in F major, the first designated *Sonata a Piano Forte e Viola da Gamba*, and the second merely *Sonata a Piano e Forte*, so the accompanying role is explicit. In fact, in another document, Bach himself described one of the sonatas as a "musical composition for the Harpsichord called a Sonata together with an accompaniment for the Viol da Gamba". The second of the two is a little more demanding for the viol, and all of them demand a level of agility and certainly taste. The far more demanding cembalo parts give rise to the pleasing picture Thomas Fritzsche imagines in his introduction, of J.C. playing them accompanied by his portraitist. They are well worth having for students, but teachers would also enjoy playing them as the music is well worth the attention of good players. Robert Oliver

GAMBA

Richard Sutcliffe & Leonore von Zadow-Reichling *Stücke für den Unterricht auf der Bassgamba* Edition Güntersberg.....

This excellent collection of graded pieces for students of the bass viol, spread through three volumes, will be welcomed by teachers and students. The volumes are respectively 'Beginner', (28p pages €14.90) 'Intermediate' (28 pages €14.90) and 'Advanced' (32 pages €15.50). The selections are well-informed, carefully graded, chosen from repertoire, ranging from very basic (*Frère Jacques* in four keys and four languages) to moderately advanced. Every teacher will have their own selection compiled over the years, but these modestly priced and well produced volumes bring together so conveniently examples from Ives, Telemann, Marais, Boismortier, etc. So far as I know, this is rare in that it offers such a 'gradus ad parnassum' – a commonplace for most instruments, but not readily available for the viol. Francis Baines' tutors for the treble, tenor and bass viols are similar, and one could almost describe this as an extension, for the bass viol, of that series.

What sets them apart, and makes them so useful, is that they are no more than a guide to what a student should play at various stages of her or his development. They are not yet another tutor, the only suggestions for bowing or

7. Treble clef is normal for "late" gamba music.

fingering are those which appear in the sources. The selection is made from a German perspective, so there is little from the early English repertoire, for example, Simpson's chord exercise doesn't appear, nor does anything by Hume. But this should not be a problem for most teachers, who can readily provide that music where appropriate.

The selection and its ordering take into account the student's need to understand the long-term development of their technique: bowing patterns, different clefs, string crossing, reading from facsimile, there are regular reproductions of the pages from which the transcriptions are made.

Volume 1 has 22 pieces taken from Praetorius, Sermsy, Benjamin Hely, Boismortier, Haydn (Baryton trios) Abel, Simon Ives, Telemann and Schenck. The Hely is described erroneously in the bibliography as 'anonymous'. It is true that the pieces quoted here and taken from the book are anonymous, but it is confusing to so label the publication. Most are duets, so that the pupil and teacher can enjoy playing them together – so important as an introduction to the pleasures of viol playing, and continued through all three volumes. The level is organically developed, so that fluency and enjoyment progress together.

Volume 2 selects more demanding selections from the same composers, and introduces Ortiz, Matthew Locke and Marais. Here are to be found the challenges of shifting to higher positions and playing above the frets, up to a c'. There are explanations of Marais' bowing, fingering and ornamentation signs, with facsimile reproductions.

Volume 3 takes the student a little further, with music by Ruhe (new to me), Leclair, Telemann, Bach (a duet from the Art of Fugue), at last some Simpson, Couperin (from *Les Goûts-réunis*) Morel, Christoph Schaffrath, Handel, Guignon and Schenck. Some Abel is presented in a choice of clefs – both the treble clef, which one has to play an octave down, and the alto clef.

I find the choices illuminating, not necessarily ones I would make, but valuable as they bring in areas of repertoire which I might not have thought of: Abel, Schaffrath, Haydn. By the end of Volume 3, fluency in string crossing, rapid passages in semiquavers and triplets, familiarity with the 'keyboard' up to c' on the top string, have all been introduced. When the student has played through this volume, they are ready for their Fuzeau facsimiles, Simpson divisions, Bach sonatas, all the magnificent challenges which await them, if they choose.

Of course there are gaps: no Hume, little Simpson, no specific preparation for the demands of Jenkins or Lawes, no suggestion of the bastarda or lyra repertoire, significant omissions all. However they are for a more advanced level than these books, and are so easily remedied that they do not diminish the usefulness of this publication. As Hume would have said, 'if thou dost dislike let me see thine'. I am already using these books,

and would like to see their equivalents for tenor (to go with the very good Saraband Music publications) and treble players. Many thanks Edition Güntersberg, you've saved me a lot of trouble.

Robert Oliver

A-R EDITIONS

Daniel Eberlin *Four Sacred Cantatas* Edited by Michael William Nordbakke (*Recent Researches in the Music of the Baroque Era, 184*) A-R Editions, 2013. xxiii + 69pp, \$72.00
Parts available for sale. CB

Joseph Riepel *Violin Concertos* Edited by Stefan Eckert (*Recent Researches in the Music of the Classical Era, 90*), A-R Editions, 2013. xviii + 155pp, \$150.00 BC
Parts: 1 in Bb \$16.00, 2 in g \$18.00, 3 in G \$22.00, 4 in C \$28.00

Stanley Sadie *Completions of Mozart Aria Fragments* Edited by Dorothea Link with a foreword by Julie Anne Sadie (*Recent Researches in the Music of the Classical Era, 88*), A-R Editions, 2012. xix + 196pp, \$160.00
Includes music from K87, 119, 178, 435, 440, 492 & 580
Richard Maunder

Joseph Schubert *Viola Concerto in E-flat Major* Edited by Andrew Levin (*Recent Researches in the Music of the Classical Era, 88*), A-R Editions, 2013. xviii + 103pp, \$144.00
Parts available from the publisher (2.2.2.2 2.1.0.0 timps str) BC

***German-Jewish Organ Music: an anthology of works from the 1820s to the 1960s.* Edited by Tina Frühauf.** (*Recent Researches in the Music of the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries, 59*.) A-R Editions, \$280.00. xxvi + 13 plates + 131pp.
Andrew Benson-Wilson

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REVIEWS of BOOKS

Alas, for another issue book reviews are delayed. However, we are taking steps to find a wider range of reviewers. I was particularly pleased to receive the following batch of symposia from Brepols. These are substantial books (including the edition of the complete cantatas of Bernardo Pasquini reviewed above, the total parcel of five books weighed over 12 kg!) and cannot be absorbed quickly, and not all aspects can be covered. But they are stimulating volumes. I was particularly pleased that David Fallows offered to review for us as soon as he received the April issue. Books awaiting review are listed below

Manuel Pedro Ferreira *Revisiting the Music of Medieval France*. Ashgate Variorum, 2012. x + 202pp, £85.00 ISBN 978 1 4094 3681 2

Ferreira (b. 1959) is known in the English-speaking world mainly for his path-breaking work on the songs of Martin Codax (1986), his beautiful facsimile edition of the fifteenth-century songbook in Oporto (2001), and his book on the most impressive discovery of the past quarter century in the world of medieval song, the works of King Dinis (2005). In addition, he is particularly active in early chant studies and as a composer. As he states, though: 'Half of these essays have been published in Portugal; this testifies to the international outlook of its small musicological community, but does not favour widespread reading'. And it is embarrassing to have to report that, although I have followed Prof. Ferreira's work eagerly for over 25 years, there is only one of these articles that I knew before (and it's not the one about Du Fay); and only two (one of them the one I knew) appear among the 21 entries for Ferreira in the online catalogue of the libraries in Bern and Basel.

Which is all a reminder that Lisbon, where Ferreira works, is far more cut off from the main body of Europe today than it was in the 15th century, when ships visited regularly on their way from Venice to Bruges. That this should apparently remain the case in the day of the world-wide web may be a symptom of how slowly attitudes change.

Ten essays are reprinted here, two of them in French (among them his very ambitious 50-page essay on the roots of the *Ars Nova*), the rest in excellently written English. They range in topic from the earliest sources of western chant, the earliest polyphony, the roots of the *Ars Nova*, the motets of Philippe de Vitry and the music of Du Fay (full details on Ashgate's website). All benefit from his gift of clear exposition, perhaps learned in part from the great Kenneth Levy who directed his doctoral studies. They also benefit from his ability to distance himself from his own viewpoint, to explain the prejudices that underlie it, to accept the possibility of people thinking otherwise. In the case of the *Versus de Sancto Marziale*, more or less as plain a case of early polyphony as survives in the sources of the 11th century, he is so determined to be fair to earlier scholars who thought it was monophonic rather than

polyphonic that he gives them every possible argument; and at the end he is still conceding that it is a problematic case, therefore moving on to the truly unexpected (and unconvincing) conclusion that one of the voices was for an instrumental accompaniment.

One slight caution is that the essays on Philippe de Vitry and Du Fay are work produced when he was a graduate student in the late 1980s, very lightly adjusted for publication in, respectively, 2008 and 2009. He is absolutely candid about this in both cases, down to the detail of mentioning later work in footnotes and in angled brackets. In the 40-page Du Fay paper he even writes: 'Too much of a burden for a first-year student; and consequently, the paper remained unpublished until I decided that it was time to assume its paternity, in spite of all its shortcomings.' Well: I suppose we have all found ourselves in the situation where somebody begged us to provide an article, and we had no time, or perhaps nothing new to say, and we went back to earlier unpublished material, ever so gently warming it up. And it is certainly true that these are most remarkable graduate-student papers, the one giving a magically clear exposition of the authenticity-problem of Philippe de Vitry's motets and the other including the only full-frontal response to Charles Warren's theory that the fermata chords in Du Fay's work are moments for improvised embellishment (and firmly rejecting that theory). So this is all readable, challenging material, hard to find otherwise.

David Fallows

Maria Teresa Rosa Barezzani *Guillaume de Machaut le maître; Redazione e aggiornamento bibliografico a cura di Michele Epifani*. (*Strumenti per la musicologia*, 1) San Miniato (Italy), Sillabe, 2013. 119pp, €15.00 ISBN 978 88 8347 659 4

As an elegantly produced first volume in a new series 'aimed at scholars, advanced students and a wider public with musicological interests', this book fills an obvious need. Its main body comprises the text of a lecture series Dr Rosa Barezzani devoted to Machaut, but not so much to the music as to the part of his output most music-lovers often avoid, namely the sixteen narrative poems, of which only the *Voir dit* actually contains any music. This is plainly a courageous approach for a music-historian addressing students of music. But she makes the case that lovers of Machaut's music need to grasp the details of these narrative poems, since they fill by far the greater part of his output. Treating the poems in what seems to be a broadly agreed chronological order (because internal references make them far easier to date than most of his music), she devotes a few pages to outlining the nature and the story of each. And because she treats each poem so compactly the writing never loses direction.

In a separate and independent chapter, with the more ambitious title 'Dal tessere al mosaico: sui percorsi

notazionali e sulle strutture compositivi di Guillaume de Machaut: Appunti per una lezione' (pp. 75–87), Rosa Barezzani does offer her views on Machaut's musical style – or rather, the style of his polyphonic songs, since she specifically excludes the *lais* and makes no mention of the sacred music or the motets. Her main point is that in the polyphonic songs there is very little difference in style between the *discantus* and the other two voices (though she says nothing of the articulation of the phrases). But she also draws attention to various structural details in the exploitation of rhythmic patterns, melodic outlines and sequential devices. One slightly disorienting feature of this discussion is that she increasingly finds the same features in the music of Matteo da Perugia (probably some fifty years later) and the entirely anonymous music of the French-Cypriot manuscript in Turin (date still very much in dispute). Another is that she never puts her findings in the context of other recent writing about Machaut. But in both cases the situation arises from the decision to keep the statements as compact as possible.

The volume ends with a chapter on 'Guillaume de Machaut: recenti linee di ricerca' (pp. 97–119) in which Michele Epifani, described here as a doctoral student in the Cremona department where Dr Rosa Barezzani taught for many years, outlines the state of research on Machaut since the Lawrence Earp's still jaw-droppingly impressive *Research Guide* of 1995. Actually, he goes a little earlier than that, if only because his discursive approach often makes that necessary. Nearly all of the material he discusses is in English, notable exceptions being the doctoral theses of Hellmut Kühn (1973) and Christian Berger (1992). But he does cover a wide range of materials and approaches, up to and including *The Companion to Guillaume de Machaut*, ed. Deborah McGrady and Jennifer Bain (2012).

David Fallows

Proportions: Science – Musique – Peinture & Architecture. Textes réunies et édités par Sabine Rommevaux, Phioliope Vendrix & Vasco Zara. Turnhout: Brepols, 2011. 461pp, €85.00. ISBN 978 2 503 54221-8 Ben Hebbert

La musique en Picardie du xiv^e au xvii^e siècle sous la direction de Camille Cavicchi, Marie-Alexis Colin et Philippe Vendrix. Turnhout: Brepols, 2012. 455pp + CD, €100.00. ISBN 978 2 503 53666 8 ? Graham O'Reilly or friend

Thomas Schmidt-Beste *The Motet around 1500: On the relationship of imitation and text treatment?* Brepols: Centre d'Études Supérieures de la Renaissance, 2012. 565pp, €100.00. ISBN 978 2 503 52566-2 CB

Les Fées des forêts de Saint-Germain, 1625: un ballet royal de "bouffonesque humeur" édité par Thomas Leconte. Tournhout: Brepols, 2012. 425pp, €80.00. ISBN 9 782503 547930 Hugh Keyte

Claire Fontijn *The Vision of Music in Saint Hildegard's Scivias: Image, Notation, and Theory.* Custos, 2013, 84pp, \$34.50/£22.95 ISBN 978 1 99737 330217 or iPad ...330095 electronic version at www.musicwordmedia.net or iPad ...330095 Jennie Cassidy

Tihomir Popović *Mäzene – Manuskripte – Modi: Untersuchungen zu My Ladye Nevells Booke* (Beihefte zum Archiv für Musikwissenschaft, 71). Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2013. 269pp, €52.00 ISBN 978 3 515 10214 8

I have failed to find a reviewer for this: I might have to admit defeat. It would have been easier if Bärenreiter had been willing to provide a review copy of the new facsimile.

Richard Turbet *William Byrd: A Research and Information Guide. Third Edition.* Routledge, 2012. xii + 286pp, £95.00 ISBN 978 0 415 87559 2

Sarah McCleave *Dance in Handel's London Operas* (Eastman Studies in Music). University of Rochester Press, 2-13. xiii + 266pp, £55.00., ISBN 978 1 58046 420 8

Brian Robins

Anthony R. DelDonna *Opera, Theatrical Culture and Society in Later Eighteenth-Century Naples.* Ashgate, 2012. xxi + 318pp, 65.00. ISBN 978 1 4094 2278 5

I've been trying to think of a reviewer for this and failed. Brian Robins has reviewed it for Opera.

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

Katherine Ellis *The Politics of Plainchant in fin-de-siècle France.* (Royal Musical Association Monographs, 20) Ashgate, xxiii + 137pp, £45.00. ISBN 978 1 4094 6373 3 CB

Peter Phillips *What we really do: the Tallis Scholars. Second edition.* The Musical Times Publications, 2013. 344pp, £25.00. ISBN 978 0 9545777 2 8 CB

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CELEBRATING JOHN DOWLAND'S 450th ANNIVERSARY — 4-5 May 2013

Clifford Bartlett

Sponsored by Fitzwilliam College (where the event was held), The Lute Society and the Royal Musical Association, this was truly a mixed conference of scholarship and performance. To the extent that I knew them, amateur performers mixed with the professionals. I was most interested by Paul O'Dette's master class. I felt sorry for the poor victim who probably didn't require teaching on that level, yet found himself the silent witness to an exposition of the inadequacies of the Poulton/Lam edition of one fantasy. I assumed I'd identify it when I got home, so didn't make notes. But I couldn't find it, and having heard so many Fantasies over the two days, I couldn't recognise it when I borrowed back a copy of that edition from the music I donated to Fitzwilliam College. Paul's editorial perspicuity comes from knowing the music internally, as well as the various sources and the music from which Dowland assembled ideas.

The Fantasy in question was virtually the last piece of the Cambridge lute MSS copied by Holmes, who by then must have lost any enthusiasm for careful copying. One of his short cuts was to simplify stems with two strokes and dot followed by three strokes: Holmes gave both notes two strokes and put a dot above the first one. Diana Poulton ignored the dots above the note and treated the pairs as equal notes, though some pairs were notated correctly, which an alert editor should have spotted.¹ There were also contrapuntal errors that could be self-corrected even if there were no other sources. Paul, thanks to his enormous, internalised knowledge of the lute repertoire, was able to spot short passages that Dowland had borrowed. The most surprising were from Tallis's two monumental *Felix Namque* settings, longer than any lute or other keyboard piece. There are single lute transcriptions. But perhaps more sources for Dowland will be found if lutenists play the keyboard repertoire!

Christopher Hogwood made a plea for more awareness of keyboard "concordances" (mostly parallel compositions rather than simple transcriptions). This was a double act, with Christopher talking about his assemblage of keyboard settings related to lute music and Francis Knights playing them. The handout was a thorough list of arrangements taken from the imminent (we hope) *Early Music xli/2* – May 2013.²

I'm not describing the events in chronological order, nor mentioning all of the papers. Some were inaudible, and not just to me: the person next to me at one session seemed to show no interest in what was being said by one speaker in a strong foreign accent. The hall is on the cusp of needing amplification: some speakers were fine, others were a strain. And anyway, why do people stand up and read papers when they can best be circulated in advance, and then discussed at the conference? I've never understood the logic. I found the screen invisible, but that was probably unique to me between eye operations. I suppose getting the papers in *Early Music* is the next best thing, but pointless for discussion and chat over coffee. It does, however, make it unnecessary to summarise them here.

Tim Crawford has done a lot of basic work on what can be learnt from extensive computer transcription, in particular comparing quantities of sources and relating them in an objective way rather than assuming that a good source for one piece is therefore a good source for others. His colleague David Lewis discussed the project with *Lachrimae* as example. It will be a long time before it can catch up with Paul O'Dette's memory of sources, dependent on the physical act of playing (perhaps remembering the feel of placing the fingers as much as actually playing the music – I meant to ask him!), but Tim and David will no doubt rock the text-critical boat.

The culmination of the first day was a concert in the small College Chapel. About 100 squashed in to enjoy the excellent acoustics and even more excellent singing and playing by Emma Kirkby and Jakob Lindberg. Dowland has been a centre point of Emma's singing for more than 40 years – I first heard her when I was sitting alongside David Munrow and vetting the early-music course at Dartington and encountered the most individual and beautiful voice I had ever heard. Now her voice isn't quite so extreme, and I suspect that some of those who couldn't accept her then can do so now that she has matured into a very individual voice but with a more inviting sound: I hope she hasn't lost fans on the way. Apart from her sound and musicality, her most significant principle is Byrd's "framed to the life of the words". Her words are audible, and she now does a certain amount of gesture. The concert included well-planned groups of songs from each book, with lute interludes. The small chapel was just the right size – though is difficult if speech is involved.

A little to my surprise, two sessions focussed on the four-part vocal settings. As someone whose voice was never up to singing solos and who doesn't play the lute, the only way to experience this music is as a member of a small

1. Basil Lam, whom I knew better than Diana – I had lunch with him in the BBC canteen regularly for several years – was a very good and intelligent talker but towards the end of his career not inclined to exert himself and seems not to have exerted his full intelligence on the transcription of the tablature.

2. Keyboard music related to Dowland (30 pieces) was edited by Christopher Hogwood and published in 19005 by Edition HH.

madrigal group. I mentioned to Anthony Rooley that the only song that has a specifically known performance setting (sung at Sir Henry Lee's retirement in 1590) works marvellously as a slightly heterophonic ensemble. In my *Madrigals and Partsongs* anthology for John Rutter's Choral Classics series I included three Dowland songs. *Come heavy sleep* needs more than a lute to sustain it. *Weep you not more, sad fountains* has features of a tenor song: the tenor clearly has the main tune for the first line, and probably most of the second line until the soprano accent on "so" moves interest to the soprano, which it retains till the end of the first section. After the double bar, the piece is utterly polyphonic, and defies tonality at the end. This needs each line to be audible. I'm glad that Tony was reminding listeners that the voice parts are significant – even the bass in *Flow my tears*. I did, however, raise the point of clefs. The Marenzio pieces Dowland knew must have been notated in C1 C3 C4 F4 (when not in *chiavette*). *Musica Transalpina* (1588) was probably the most influential and biggest madrigal book available in England. C2 clef occurs customarily in *chiavette* configurations but there are only two examples in the lower configuration, and they are in pieces with more than four parts, where there is sometimes more flexibility. Has anyone studied whether (unlike church music) choice of clefs in part-songs is more flexible? They tend to have C1 on top (but *Weep you no more...* has G2). Italian madrigals do tend to follow the conventions.³ Incidentally, Tony wins the hypothetical prize for the elaboration of his handouts.

Some of the papers are already printed in the next *Early Music*. There is some convenience in holding the event at a college whose Musical Director is also editor of that journal. The event began with an introduction to her biography of Diana Poulton by Thea Abbott, which I hope to review in our next edition. The amount of playing was extraordinary, despite the academic sponsorship.

I began my report, not chronologically, but because Paul O'Dette pulled everything together about the pieces his students were studying. He also gave a recital. I've always found that Paul is less restricted by the awkwardness of the instrument than most players. He can be bolder than most, and seems more in touch with the audience – lutenists do tend to look down at their instruments. And he has a wider range of expression, as was shown in his recital. I didn't mention it to anyone, but I was amused by

the encore – a lute version of one of the songs Emma had sung the previous evening. He played it in what I took as a parody of Nigel North's recital, which was just a touch too serious. Obviously Nigel doesn't play as if he's making intimate sounds for his neighbour, but there was an element of that, and not being able to see the player (at least, from my seat I couldn't) is a handicap at a live concert – listening to a CD is different. (I avoided that problem at Emma/Jacob's concert by perching on the organ bench.)

The final event was a larger concert by the Rose Consort of Viols, local singers directed by Francis Knights, Emma Kirkby popping down from the audience, and four lutenists (playing separately) – Elizabeth Kenny (whose prominence at the event I've managed to pass over, alas), Nigel North, Paul O'Dette and Hector Sequera. The climax was the *Seven Tears*, a suitable farewell to the event, though I was very sceptical of Alon Schab's "passionate interpretation" of them. He noticed that the words in the seven titles occurred (in no apparent order) in the Holy Week liturgy and imagined that the Seven Tears might have been performed quasi-liturgically. If so, they would have to have been very private, and might well have been thought blasphemous, since the Pavan was a secular form, perhaps doubly so if it was presented at a catholic quasi-liturgy in a protestant country.

Cambridge Early Music Festival of the Voice

12-14 April 2013

Emmanuel URC, Cambridge, Saturday 13 April
Conductus: medieval song from 13th-century Europe

Robert Johnson

This unusual concert was an outcome of a research project into 13th-century music and poetry led by Mark Everist of Southampton University, in collaboration with tenors John Potter and Christopher O'Gorman. In an introductory talk, John and Chris explained for the benefit of any who were not familiar with the conductus (and there are many such) that it was a vocal style that flourished in the 13th century. The timeline was: plainchant – organum (represented by Pérotin) – conductus (part of the *ars antiqua*) – the motet. All sources of the conductus are anonymous, with a scribe (perhaps author and/or composer) known as Anonymous IV as the main source. Producing a modern edition is difficult as there are errors in all the manuscripts. The poems are mostly non-liturgical, sometimes devotional, moralising or exhortatory, but scurrilous in part. Most pieces are for one or two voices: very few pieces are for three or four. The polyphony is complex and distinctive: the singing may start at the octave or at a more awkward interval such as the seventh, and there are points which are not clear, such as how the singers found their starting notes: did they agree in advance, or just start singing random notes? Single notes are often held for a long time by one voice, with decoration by the others (known as *discant*). The music goes in and out of rhythm frequently, making

3. A spot check on *The Oxford Book of English Madrigals* edited by Philip Ledger (Oxford U.P. 1978) shows the rules roughly followed. I've discounted the three-part pieces and ignored second parts, which are numbered separately, but have found a dozen irregularities – mostly having G2 at the top and F4 at the bottom in madrigals with more than four parts. Interestingly, the three favourite Gibbons pieces have G2 and F4: *Ah dear heart* (C1 C2 C3 C3 F3), *The silver swan* (G2 C2 C3 C4 F4) and *What is our life* (G2 C2 C3 C4 F4). I don't know if any meanings are attached to this. I'm more aware of clef conventions in polychoral than smaller pieces, and in much continental polychoral music, a G2 clef usually means cornetto, not soprano. Recently, I sent Philip Thorby a score of a 24-part motet (three equal choirs with G2 at the top) by Leonhard Lechner: it was obvious to both of us that these were for cornett. Similarly, if one four-part choir had C2 C3 C4 F4 clefs, it was the *cappella* whether or not it was entitled thus. Were the English differences random or significant? Does the English conductor's lack of awareness of clefs go back to the 16th century?

it tricky to coordinate the voices. The locations where the conductus was sung are unknown, with conflicting theories abounding as to its purpose. It should be remembered that music was a special thing at that era; it wasn't generally available, and could only be sung by a few experts.

A short demonstration of how the voice parts fit together was given by John and Chris during the talk, and there was a handout of a facsimile page, with full texts and translations. They sang the concert as a duo, but on other occasions they would be joined by Rogers Covey-Crump when the music requires the 'three tenors'!

The concert itself was an exquisite experience: fifty-five minutes of delicate, precise singing, coolly executed with immaculate control and musicianship. Any more would have exhausted singers and audience alike. The two singers faced each other, not the audience, with perfectly blending voices: this was key to the performance. There was an opening solo 'Quo vadis, quo progredieris?' by John, followed by a number of two-part pieces, measured or unmeasured, with Chris singing solo in one version of 'Qui servare puberem'.

During the singing a film by Michael Lynch was shown and provided a welcome visual distraction. Shot in Italy and England, a succession of images floated across the screen, evoking the medieval age: textiles, landscapes with cypresses, ruins, abandoned villages, effigies of kings and queens in prayer, frescoes, reliefs, mosaics, flag twirlers at the Siena Palio, massive churches, and medieval town squares, all of which enhanced the bare music and (as John said) helped prevent any boredom! A combination of wet weather and obscure music kept the attendance low, but those who came went away enriched. CDs of the conductus project may be purchased from Hyperion. There is an analysis by Mark Everist at www.hyperion-records.co.uk/al.asp?al=CDA67949

VESPERES MAXIMI

Monteverdi *Vespers* National Youth Choirs of Great Britain, La Serenissima, Ben Parry conductor. Royal Albert Hall, Sunday 14th April

Those who reckon that Monteverdi wrote his *Vespers* for ten singers and a dozen or so instruments⁴ will be surprised that I enjoyed a performance with over 600 singers. The performers were the National Youth Choirs of Great Britain (NYCGB) at the Royal Albert Hall on April 14th. Since our Clare and John love watching events at the Albert Hall on TV (Last Night of the Proms and the Remembrance show) and had many years ago attended Girls' Brigade events, it seemed a good idea to take advantage of a box so that there was an easy means of exit. In fact, Clare, who isn't particularly interested in

music (though she can recognise any TV programme from the first chord) sat quietly throughout, and seemed to be alert – though since she can't read (except place and shop names) it must have been a coincidence that she flipped through the programme and opened it at *Ave maris stella* at the right time! John, however, had had enough by the interval, though he sat quietly at the back of the box. What really disappointed him was not being able to buy a DVD of the show on the spot, as if it was a musical.

I am a great believer that every singer should experience the *Vespers*. I have no desire to discourage choral societies from putting on performances – and, indeed, often have long phone conversations with choir conductors about aspects of performance – especially "Don't sing *Lauda Jerusalem* at notated pitch" and "don't sing the Magnificat untransposed unless you've checked with the cornetti". Over the last few years, a compromise has emerged – *Lauda* down a tone, *Magnificat* down a minor third, keeping plausible keys. All the performances in which I have played (apart from my first, for Louis Halsey in the 1970s) have had these movements down a fourth, and I prefer that in itself, apart from doing it because that's how it was intended. But it worked well in this context and seems to be growing popular. I have no financial complaints, and those who want to believe they are being "correct" can accept Roger Bowers' transposition research.⁵

The enormous delight of the concert was the choral singing. There were eight individual choirs, who sang separately in some sections as well as all together. There was a convincing compatibility of styles, and the precision was brilliant, the enunciation was clear and the cohesion of the sound was amazing. I expect Monteverdi would have been extremely surprised to hear *Pulchra es* and the *Sonata sopra "Santa Maria"* sung by massed trebles – though the tradition of tutti sopranos for the *Sonata* is still alive. I was impressed by a Schütz CD sung by a smaller NYCGB ensemble a few years ago and wondered how a large *Vespers* recording might sell. Irrespective of that, other aspects needed more attention, largely because the RAH can be a good acoustic but needs experience.

The soloists were a problem. Only the three tenors were named – Mark Dobell, Benjamin Hulett and Matthew Long. They are fine singers, but did not come over well.⁶ I suspect that the inappropriate degree of vibrato came from an apparent need to over-sing, which spoilt the precise intonation in the duets and trios. There must be a way of harnessing the natural resonance of the building, which may have required a slower tempo. Unnamed female soloists had the same problem. The echo in the *Gloria* of the Magnificat didn't work, since he seemed to be out of sight of the conductor, and picking up the entry points can only be done by eye, not ear.

5. Bowers may prefer Magnificat down a tone, but a minor third is easier with respect to early instruments. Ironically, although I've been convinced by the *chiavette* theory (explained in the introduction to my edition, more fully in 2010 than 1990) since Andrew Parrott's article in *Early Music* 12/4, 1984, pp. 490-516, the only available edition of the compromise transposition is mine.

6. But see Mhairi Lawson's comment below.

4. See Roger Bowers in *Music & Letters* 90/3, 2009, pp. 331-371. This is to beg the question whether it was ever performed as an entity for some years into the 20th century.

No complaints about the players as such. It was good to see extra organs higher up alongside separate choirs. But it was a pity that the strings and wind were not separated – acoustically, it probably made little difference, but seeing them in groups helps the audience, especially in the Sonata. I'm not sure whether having 4. 4. 3+3. 4. 1⁷ strings makes much more of an impact than the usual one-to-a-part: the duet in the Sonata was clear enough.⁸ Again, it's a matter of resonance if the groups are separated.

Congratulations to Ben Parry, who was conducting his first performance as Director of the NYCGB. It's a piece he knows as well as soloist as conductor, and commanded his forces in such a way that they didn't feel massive. I suppose that with so many singers, there's a need to have more variety in dynamic level than ten singers might use: such a group can generate variety by the rise and fall of the phrase using the hierarchy of accents. Two little points struck me. In *Laudate pueri*, despite attempts to unaccent the -te, it was still over-prominent. And in the hymn, the hemiolas don't have to be 1 2 3 4 5 6. It works sometimes, but often 3 has just a slight stress, with the main one on 5. And I didn't notice the presence of the Romanesca underling in *Laetatus sum* "in atriis tuis Ierusalem" – perhaps hinting at Rome as the new Jerusalem. I liked the way he handled the Amens, though the As could sometimes have more body.

The audience seemed not to be familiar with the work – I think it's the first time I've heard applause between pieces, yet with only a moderately enthusiastic applause at the end – though I suppose they had clapped each choir separately. They might have been a bit more aware of what the music was about had their been a little more light and the font somewhat larger (as in the back of our score) but fitting sensibly the text's structure.

But I am not denigrating the performance. With a five-year contract for regular performances, I hope that the conductor can make more of the very individual acoustics and arena-layout of the RAH. The two/three Seraphim, for instance, cry out for separation and the third should be a surprise. (I wonder if Andrew Parrott has ever joined in as no. 3 – perhaps increasing the effect by initially not even turning round so that he sounds like an echo!)

NYCGB seems very well organised and has a varied programme, generally rather nearer 2013 than 1610 – do watch out for them. They didn't have the *Vespers* music for very long, so must work intensely with a short rehearsal period – probably far more effectively than a choral society!

There was also a new piece: *Exile* by Mark Simpson. The effect was fine, but I couldn't follow the text in the gloom.

7. I found the grumbling of the violone distracting. The general consensus for this period is to play at 8', but bend down some octaves. (I go by ear, but Bill Hunt and Peter McCarthy have both considered the topic.)

8. This was played by solo violins. I used to ignore the simplified doubling of the duet by the organ, but more recently I've played it, and it seems to work very well thus.

Additional comments from Mhairi Lawson

Having been a member of the National Youth Choir some 25 years ago, I was really looking forward to being in the audience for this concert. I don't know how I thought several hundred singers would be arranged around three organs and the players of La Serenissima, but the ensuing sensory experience was completely wonderful: the text was clear, the singing was full, beautiful and unaffected, the playing was deft and the entire performance clearly heartfelt. In fact, I was reminded of how each National Youth Choir rehearsal was like having a solo singing lesson, and it struck me whilst listening tonight that the singers truly did embody the ethos of singing well whilst in a large choral group. The choir has expanded hugely since my day, and Ben Parry (who negotiated the large ensembles through a couple of slightly hair-raising moments) used all the associated youth choirs to create a wide palette of multi-choral colours which was ever so entertaining and had me grinning from ear to ear. I don't know the *Vespers* very well, but on tonight's hearing, I'm struck by the variety and sensuality of the compilation of movements, and the sheer operatic nature of its sound world. Cue: three tenor jokes! They were ringingly fabulous, and could even have sung somewhat less in a few places. The other step-out soloists were lovely.

I have attempted to convey how much I enjoyed this concert, although I was in charge of my four-year-old boy during the event, wasn't able to take notes, and also had to oversee an unscheduled loo and sandwich-eating break which meant that I didn't hear all of the first half.

Mhairi subsequently, after seeing my remarks, added (less formally):

Yes, re the tenors, looking out into a hall the size of the Albert, it very probably takes more courage and experience for a singer to dare to trust that the acoustic will do its job – as we discussed in the interval, this aspect of the concert could have been different had someone listened from the hall in rehearsal. In fact Adrian⁹ and I chewed over the particular peculiarity of opportunities for internal competition which arise in the piece... tenors, fiddles, cornetts and their embellishments written and improvised: he also thought the tenors oversang, and apparently had to rein in the cornett players during rehearsal.

More generally, I am getting a bit tired of excess embellishments from cornettists. In the Girton Gabrieli programme reviewed in the last issue (p. 19), the concert reviewed here, and the CD reviewed on p. 33, I found myself getting tired of their continual activity. Some Gabrieli canzonas were elaborated right from the first "Long short short" and cornetts were just too prominent when doubling choirs. The model divisions on madrigals and motets are not always applicable! CB

9. Adrian Chandler (Mhairi's husband) led his band, *La Serenissima*. Was it booked on the very dubious assumption that the *Vespers* were written for Venice, despite lack of evidence that Monteverdi had any connections there apart from publishing until he left Mantua. CB

DE PROFUNDIS & BRABANT ENSEMBLE

Hugh Keyte

De Profundis, cond. David Skinner: *Victoria Requiem* and *Funeral Motets* of the Spanish Golden Age: the chapel of St. John's College, Cambridge, 20 March.

Back in musically conservative 1950s London, the revival of historically-aware performance of renaissance choral music was largely led by amateur choirs, prominent among them Michael Howard's Renaissance Singers and the choir of Morley College.¹ And amateurs still have a part to play, to judge by this De Profundis concert in St. John's College chapel (architecturally a neoGothic dodo, acoustically a singer's paradise). At the centre of their well-planned programme was *Victoria's Requiem*, which I had a few days previously encountered in a television recording by The Sixteen, directed at what sounded like (high-clef) notated pitch by Harry Christophers. The credibility gap between Harry's extravagant interpretative gestures and the cool, seemingly deliberately-distanced performance that his singers produced revived my old nagging doubts: was *Victoria* really the triumphant summation of Roman/Iberian renaissance church music that the textbooks make him out to be? De Profundis set my mind at rest. Their all-male, low-pitch line-up (4 voices on each of the six parts, alto I & II, tenor I & II, baritone and bass) allowed an infinitely more expressive delivery and a much more sensuously appealing timbre, the dark, velvety (but always focussed) tones as suited to a Spanish funeral mass of the period as the altar furnishings and ministers' vestments would have been. As so often, pitch was the crux. Singing high-clef pieces such as this at notated pitch places unnatural constraints on the sopranos and chips away at the intended deep-bass foundation. To my ear, at least, the result is too often the musical equivalent of the botox smile, with an underlying frigidity that no amount of seductive tone and expressive phrasing can entirely obviate.

De Profundis was founded a couple of years ago by Mark Dourish specifically to "present continental renaissance polyphony at the original low pitch and using the all-adult-male singers appropriate to the period". Standards were generally on a par with the best of the choir's professional counterparts. Guest conductor David Skinner addressed the audience interestingly and succinctly at various junctures, encouraging them to view the facsimile opening of the choir book containing the *Requiem* that was on display as a cerebral alternative to the interval drinks in the cloisters. Future guest conductors include such luminaries as Andrew Parrott, Jeremy Summerly and Andrew Carwood, and a commercial recording is under discussion. More strength to their fledgling arm (or wing!)

Brabant Ensemble, dir. Stephen Rice: CD *Palestrina*

Missa ad coenam Agni and Eastertide motets, Hyperion CDA 67978; and concert, St. Gabriel's, Pimlico, 25th April

The all-pro Brabant Ensemble (founded 1998) now has an impressive twelve Hyperion recordings under its belt,² many of them showcasing the kind of admirable but not-quite-first-rank renaissance composers whose church music has tended to lie fallow in the volumes of *Corpus Mensurabilis Musicae* - Dominique Phinot, for example, a long-term enthusiasm of mine. Their concert of Easter Music from Renaissance Rome in the resonant spaces of the somewhat off-the-beaten-track church of St. Gabriel, Pimlico, drew on their most recent CD, but set the Palestrina items off with pieces by four other papal singer-composers: Du Fay, Morales, and (less predictably) Johannes Beausseron and Johannes Lheritier. Like Skinner at St. John's, Rice addressed the concert audience between items, not always quite loudly enough, but (as in his booklet notes) sharing the kinds of insight that are peculiar to the talented scholar-performer. The CD is entirely of Easter music by Palestrina, beginning with his 5-part mass based on the plainchant melody of *Ad coenam Agni providi*, and ending with his magnificent alternatim setting of this same Eastertide office hymn. In between come other paschal settings, including a succession of five short Offertories.

The recorded performances are all splendidly alive and convincingly nuanced. The Brabants' particular glory is their clear, incisive soprano line (three singers genuinely sounding as one: two of them are identical twins). My one slight disappointment is that the lower parts do not always quite match them, the basses being sometimes a mite less focussed and the altos a touch underpowered when their lines are low. This latter may well reflect the perennial Palestrinian problem of performing pitch. All the works are notated in high clefs, but rule-of-thumb downward transposition of a fourth is ruled out by Roman pitch of the period, which was about a tone out from A440. Stephen Rice sensibly opts for down-a-tone, but this can leave the alto line a little low for females, a little high for Crump tenors. (It will be interesting to hear the two sexes combined on de Rore's alto and tenor lines on the ensemble's immanent Brumel CD.)

Palestrina fans will wish to add this highly enjoyable CD to their collections, not least because the recording of the fine mass (from his first book, 1554) is so good. Those who have yet to get to grips with his music could find this sequence of festal settings an ideal introduction. As for those who have got to the wrong kind of grips with it via dismal undergraduate efforts to imitate the style, they might find the record a refreshing antidote. *Hugh Keyte*

1. Sufficient credit is not always given to the pioneering effort elsewhere of such church musicians as H K Andrews at New College and Boris Ord at King's. Their recorded performances of 16th-century repertory, like those of the real-life von Trapps, are often surprisingly in accord with our current notions of HIPpy correctness.

2. Due for release in August is a thirteenth, of church music by Cipriano de Rore, which includes his five-part masses *A note negra* and *Doulce mémoire*. The latter will form the backbone of their Christmas concert in St. John's, Smith Square, on 21st December.

LONDON CONCERT

ANDREW BENSON-WILSON

Stile Antico use the London Church of St Sepulchre-without-Newgate (often referred to as the 'Musician's Church') as their practice base, so it was an appropriate venue for a preview of their new touring programme, 'Masters of Europe', featuring composers associated with four generations of the Hapsburg dynasty during the early 16th century (5 March). Although the family goes back much further than Maximilian I (Holy Roman Emperor, Archduke of Austria and Duke of Burgundy), he was the founder of the dynasty proper. He was a good starting point for a musical journey that passed from his son, Philip, who married into the Spanish crown, his grandson, Charles V and his great-grandson, Philip II, who came close to turning England into a Hapsburg domain by marrying Mary Tudor. It is arguable which of these Hapsburg rulers provided the greatest musical achievement, although Stile Antico gave Gombert prime position by building their programme around his *Missa Quam pulchra es*, an early work, written well before his fall from grace from what still seems to some musicians' predilection for sexually abusing children. I particularly liked the Amen of the *Gloria*, the aural equivalent of folding clothes, wrapping layer upon layer. The *Sanctus* showed Stile Antico's superb control of volume and tension, their gradual crescendo from the gently rising opening phrase being the more powerful by its very restraint. The programme didn't follow a chronological order (something I usually favour) but was grouped into five groups based on occasions, concluding with 'Occasions of State' and the sort of sycophantic tosh required of composers of the day with Clemens non Papa's *Carole magnus eras*, (with its curious cadence when one voice doesn't quite do the expected thing) and Morales *Jubilate Deo*. As ever, the 13 conductorless singers of Stile Antico combined exquisite intonation and purity of tone with subtle shading of timbre and volume. Their avoidance of the full-blooded and overly emotional interpretations heard from so many other vocal groups is refreshing, and allows the music to be absorbed by the audience, rather than having it thrust upon us.

40 Tallis Scholars

From a young student's admiration of the Clerkes of Oxenforde to a sell-out extravaganza in St Paul's Cathedral 40 years later, the development of the Tallis Scholars has been an impressive story. At the start of their 40th anniversary tour, they gave a comprehensive account of their musical history to a packed St Paul's (7 March), starting, naturally, with Tallis – his glorious *Loquebantur variis linguis* and *Miserere*. This was followed by two examples of their forays into contemporary music, with Pärt's *Nunc Dimittis* (with its enormous crescendo to *Lumen ad revelationem gentium*) and the world premiere of Gabriel Jackson's *Ave dei Patris Filia* (with some distinctive

free-floating high sopranos over four lower voices generally moving in step) before Byrd's *Tribue, Domine* completed the first half. Further new music commissions came with Eric Whitacre's *Sainte-Chapelle* and Robin Walker's *I have thee by the hand, O man* (world and London premiere's respectively) wrapped within the comforting familiarity of Allegri's *Miserere* (with the semi-choir singing from the Whispering Gallery and Amy Howarth as the soaring soprano) and Tallis's *Spem in alium* – the singers stood close together in a shallow arc, giving an excellent acoustic structure for those lucky enough to be sitting right at the front, but probably not for those further back. Although their recordings often demonstrate a gentle, unforced tone, I have often felt that, in their live performances, often in large resonant churches, the Tallis Scholars can sound rather forced and edgy with some over-prominent individual voices. But in recent years this tendency has reduced, and they now sing with a much more effective gentle sweetness and cohesion. Quite how the singers follow Peter Phillips nervously jerky conducting is beyond me, but they do.

Lully's *Phaëton*

The continuing slow introduction of French opera to English ears goes on apace, the latest offering (after the ENO's version of Charpentier's *Medea*) being Lully's 1673 *Phaëton*, presented in a concert performance by Les Talens Lyriques, directed by Christophe Rousset (The Barbican, 8 March). As is so often the case with baroque opera, the plot is almost incomprehensible and doesn't really impinge on the enjoyment of the music. The Prologue is an extended outpouring of predictable sycophancy in praise of Louise XIV (the Sun King) and *Phaëton* himself is the son of the Sun God Apollo and, although not a God himself, has God-like pretensions that lead him to fly his chariot rather too close to the sun, with inevitable consequences. "Don't get too close to the Sun" is the clear message, with various sub-texts about love, including the concluding thought that "those who love too much are never happy". Discuss! In fact, the conclusion was rather prophetic, as the concert was just after the Russian comet and the asteroid that just missed the earth. The usual five Acts of French baroque opera spin out the story, each act ending with dance movements. The final act finishes as *Phaëton* crashes to earth and is musically brief, but in the original staged version would have been accompanied by some spectacular stage machinery.

Ingrid Perruche (Clymène) was by far the most impressive performer, bringing a fine dramatic presence to her role and showing the rare ability to sing quietly. Isabelle Druet was disappointing, with a shrill and edgy tone, bizarre and unattractive hand movements and rather laboured ornaments. The title role was taken by Emiliano Gonzalez Toro, singing with a tonally richer

timbre than many *haute contre* singers. Cyril Auvity came closer to the expected *haute contre* timbre in his various roles. Virginie Thomas stepped out from the choir to make three short, but very effective contributions. Sophie Bevan, Matthew Brook and Andrew Foster-Williams completed the cast. Christophe Rousset directed Les Talens Lyriques and the impressive Namur Chamber Choir with characteristic aplomb, balancing pace and musical insight. My only quibbles were that the bass line was too prominent (not something I normally associate with the Barbican), leaving the viola line rather hidden – and the frequent exaggerated *rallentandos* were stylistically curious.

Tenebrae by Candlelight

The run up to Easter revealed the usual round of Messiahs and Passions, as well as Chapelle du Roi's annual 'Tenebrae by Candlelight' concert at St John's, Smith Square (27 March). Three Lamentation settings were performed, from Palestrina, Victoria and Lobo, each followed by *Responds* by Victoria. *Tenebrae* is a special service sung during the three great days of holy week. It combines the pre-sunrise office of Matins with the sunrise office of Lauds and is usually performed during the late afternoon as the sun sets, reversing the normal progression of darkness to light. This luminar progression is enhanced by the extinguishing of candles (and, in this case, the dimming of lights). A more curious habit was the throwing of thirty pieces of silver onto the floor (here, apparently and perhaps appropriately, done with takings from intervals CD sales) together with various other clattering and knocking noises and the throwing of the lectern bible onto the floor, the latter activities mercifully absent from this performance. As it was, the money throwing must have been a bit of a surprise for those who hadn't managed to read the extensive programme notes before the concert started. Despite the nod towards authenticity of the coin throwing, the programme stepped away from the *Tenebrae* service on a number of occasions, most notably for what was probably the first modern performance of Lobo's *Credo Romano* (*Credo IV* in the current Gradual) from the new edition by Bruno Turner. It is an unusual work (and was apparently sung in Seville Cathedral well into the 18th century), mostly homophonic with occasional flourishes, the sense of momentum coming from rhythmic alterations. Clarity of text was paramount, something the young singers of Chapelle du Roi managed to perfection. Other *Tenebrae* departures included three works by Tallis and Byrd and Victoria's concluding Marian Antiphon, *Ave Regina Coelorum*. This was an excellent concert, well sung and directed with musical insight by Alistair Dixon.

Not-the-Messiah

Another not-the-Messiah pre-Easter event was the English Concert at the Wigmore Hall (28 March), where Lawrence Cummings directed Bach's *Christ lag in Todesbanden* and Biber's fascinating *Missa Christi resurgentis*. The latter work was probably written for the 1674 Easter celebra-

tions in Salzburg Cathedral, where it would have been performed from the four organ galleries in the corners of the huge central dome. However attractive the acoustics of the Wigmore Hall are, they are very far from the spatial extravagance of Salzburg, and the spatial effects were sadly missing. Although Biber is certainly not Bach, he represents a distinctive baroque idiom, with several moments when the 17th century instrumental *stylus phantasticus* became apparent in the writing as sections evolved into each other with occasional snatches of little *fugettas*. Interspersed before the Credo and the Sanctus were two Sonatas by Pavel Vejvanovsky, pieces found alongside the Biber manuscript in Prince-Bishop Olomouc's musical collection in Kroměříž Castle, for which Vejvanovsky acted as librarian. Lawrence Cummings may have had a bit of a telling off during the interval (alongside the note I made in my programme) for not acknowledging the excellent contribution of cellist Sarah McMahon in the Bach piece (very unusual for him), for he handed her the flowers that he was presented with at the end of the concert. Cummings also had the rare opportunity to showcase his fine tenor voice when he turned to the audience to intone the Credo. I was rather disappointed with the sound of the choir, with rather too many operatic voices, notably the sopranos, and an unsettled sense of consort. The instrumentalists, however, were on top form, as was countertenor Timothy Travers Brown.

Polyphony's Passion

Over the years, the choir Polyphony have managed to create the must-see Easter Passion event at St John's, Smith Square. This year (29 March) it was the turn of the St John Passion (incidentally, created at the same time at St John's) with Stephen Layton directing an impressive line-up of soloists, including Ian Bostridge, Neal Davies, Julia Doyle, Iestyn Davies and Nicholas Mulroy. I don't know if Stephen Layton is a believer, but his fervent and emotionally intense interpretations suggest that he might be. There was an enormous sense of urgency in a work that already pushes the pace along in a way that the Matthew Passion never quite manages, with its regular sequences of recitative, aria and chorus. But Layton pushed the musical flow more than usual, with the Evangelist's recitatives (brilliantly sung by Ian Bostridge) frequently starting before the echo of the previous movement had died away. I am not sure where the habit of pausing after *Und neiget das Haupt und verschied* came from, but Layton's silences at this point seem to be getting longer and longer, on this occasion getting to the point of awkwardness – something not helped by an inappropriately-timed sneeze that very nearly gave me the giggles.

Jiggy Bach

What was to have been an all-day event, starting with the St John Passion in the morning, the Bach Marathon ended up as an equally impressive afternoon and evening extravaganza celebrating Bach and Jiggy's 70th birthday (Royal Albert Hall, 1 April). The programme cover seemed to show John Eliot Gardiner giving Bach a stern

finger-wagging ticking off, followed a couple of pages in by a gushing forward by somebody calling himself Charles from Clarence House. As this was broadcast live on Radio 3, and was available for four weeks afterwards via the internet, most *EMR* readers will have already heard much of this event. The live music was interspersed with discussions with representatives from a range of disciplines, including professors of psychology, geriatric medicine and neurology, and a science commentator, all making various attempts at analysing Bach's character. Such is the nature of such things that the professor of psychology retracted her statements broadcast the previous day on television that Bach suffered from "childhood issues". So far, so intense. In practice, the best moments came when the musicians were talking, with special accolades going to John Butt for his lucid contributions and for Kati Debretzeni, leader of the English Baroque Soloists, for one of the bravest comments of the day (and the one that brought the biggest applause from the audience) – something to do with what it must be like to work with somebody who is intolerant, demanding, obsessive and prone to bouts of aggression. As somebody else commented, good music doesn't have to come from a good person! As well as the set piece sessions from the Monteverdi Choir (*Singet dem Herrn, Christ lag in Todesbanden*, and the evening performance of the Mass in B minor), we had an eclectic range of individual performances, starting with the 6th cello suite played by Alban Gerhardt, reworking the violoncello piccolo original for a modern instrument. Although it was lovely hearing the sonorities of a solo cello in the space of the Albert Hall, I wasn't too surprised when Gerhardt (and cellist Matthew Barley) both admit in discussion that they knew nothing about baroque dance. This was followed by Joanna MacGregor giving an "eratic" [AB-W is inaccessible reviewing in Regensburg, so I don't know if he meant *erratic* or *erotic*] performance of the Goldberg Variations on a modern concert grand.

So far we had heard rather a lot of Bach as the performer wanted it, but one exception was Viktoria Mullova, giving the strong impression of wanting to play Bach as Bach wanted in her spellbinding performance of the Partita No 2 in D minor, with its concluding Ciaccona. This was as far from the Ice Queen style that Mullova has, unfairly, been accused of, her playing being full of emotion – but with the emotion inherent in the music, not in the performer. The closest we got to Bach the Performer was with John Butt's heroic efforts in playing Bach on the gargantuan Royal Albert Hall organ – not an easy task. This was one occasion when the sound was rather better on the BBC recording than live in the hall, where the massive depth of the organ meant that some of the sounds (notably when moving onto a secondary manual) seemed to come from somewhere down the road. *O Mensch, bewein dein Sünde gross* was given a beautifully reflective reading, with an attractively simple registration, the harmonic twist at the end helped by an out of tune pipe on the organ, rather than any period temperament. John Butt's concert ended with an energetic performance of the Fugue in Eb 'St Anne'. The evening performance of the Mass in B minor seemed a rather tense affair, with little

obvious sign of enjoyment from the players, although they performed very professionally, with notably contributions from Kati Debretzeni, cellist Piroska Baranyay, Flautist Rachel Beckett and Anneke Scott, horn. James Johnstone's organ continuo was the more effective for its restraint. The choir were on very good form, with fine solo performances from singers drawn from the choir, notably from Esther Brazil.

LONDON HANDEL FESTIVAL

Imeneo

The 36th annual London Handel Festival opened with its showcase fully stage opera production (Britten Theatre, 12 March) of Handel's last-gasp 'operetta' *Imeneo*, a work described as "the worst of all Handel's compositions" by Charles Jennens. It is certainly a curious piece, short by Handel standards, and with a plot that is suprisingly understandable. For some reason, the Handel Festival, who usually provide copious programme notes, went all minimalist on this occasion, with no synopsis or background information other than an essay on Hymen. Unfortunately, that meant the audience had to rely on Paul Curren's fussy and over-blown production, which was mostly aimed at generating laughs – or, indeed, irritation from those who are rather tired of productions centred on the use of mobile phones. The setting was a sort of up-market 18-30s weekend break in a Greek spa, with a series of moveable and rather clumpy arches demonstrating scant regard for classical architecture, and peopled by a group of thoroughly unpleasant wannabes. I suppose it is inevitable that the love child of Aphrodite/Venus and Dionysus/Bacchus is bound to have issues, but *Imeneo* (aka Hymen, the Greek god of marriage) seems to have more than his fair share, if this production is anything to go by. He first appears clad in an off-the-body gold lamé number, apparently in a ruse to get close to his unresponsive amour, Rosmene. She, in turn, is in love with Tirinto (who in Handel's interpretation becomes the lead male, with a lengthy opening exposition) whilst Clomiri is in love with *Imeneo*. The whole affair builds up to Rosmene being forced into making a choice between Tirinto and *Imeneo*, a decision that sends her into an extended and dramatic mad scene. Handel made an interesting use of the chorus, who comment on the action throughout, rather than just having a blast at the end. In this reading, they were allocated the additional role of the bustling staff of the spa hotel. Musically, this work has a lot to offer, and the instrumentalists and young singers (this was double cast over four days) gave their best. But throughout, the comedy antics that the singers were required to go through got in the way of the plot and the music. Apart from being particularly irritating, I do wonder if this wasn't a misinterpretation of what Handel was trying to achieve in his music – most of the emotion and mood is in the music, and letting the singers just sing what Handel wrote would have certainly worked for me. Lawrence Cummings was at his usual sprightly best, and did his best to overcame the director's attempts at subverting the work.

Orpheus – Telemann style

Vivaldi and some of the French baroque composers are already beginning to ease the stranglehold that Handel has had on the London and country house opera scene in recent years, but Telemann has not really had much of a look in. That is until the Classical Opera Company gave us an excellent concert performance of his *Orpheus* (St George's, Hanover Square, 18 March). Telemann probably wrote more than 50 operas, although there is only documentary evidence of around 29. *Orpheus* (with its subtitle *The Marvellous Constancy of Love*) was composed in 1726 for Hamburg's Gänsemarkt Opernhaus (one of 35 he wrote for them, seven of which survive), but the MS was lost until around 30 years ago. As was the taste of the time, the plot was elaborated, not least to introduce a comedy element. Telemann also added extracts from the works of other composers, a common enough habit in those days, but kept them in their original language and musical idiom, resulting in a multi-lingual piece including German, Italian and French. Conductor Ian Page has made some slight amendments to the surviving MS score, not least adding a missing overture. In this version of the well-known story, Orisia, the thoroughly unpleasant widowed Queen of Thrace (obsessed by Orpheus) is the instigator of all Orpheus's troubles, engineering Eurydice's death, only to be then rejected by Orpheus. Her role was perhaps well cast with Eleanor Dennis, an overly operatic singer who clearly doesn't do quiet. For me, the most successful singers were Jonathan McGovern in the title role, Alex Ashworth as Pluto, Rhian Lois as Eurydice, Rupert Enticknap as Ascalax, Alexander Sprague as Eurimedes and Susanna Hurrell as Cephisa, the latter two involved in a superfluous comedy love-plot. Musically there was much to like about Telemann's music, even if the idiom was a little hard to grasp. Orpheus's *Ach Tod, ach süer Tod*, with its plucked string accompaniment was lovely, as was Eurimedes' *Augelletti, che cantata*. The instrumentalists were on top form, with Georgia Browne contributing some superb flute solos to that, and several other arias and instrumental interludes. However, I was distracted by the antics of the leader (not one of the usual suspects) who not only played far too loudly and aggressively throughout (with frequent audible foot taps) but also seemed to think that he should be the centre of attention. Ian Page conducted with his usual restrained enthusiasm, devoting his energies to the music.

One year on

The Handel Festival has traditionally taken good care of their Singing Competition winners and finalists, with regular invitations back to perform in later festivals. But a recent addition to the list of concerts is a Showcase concert for the finalists of the previous year's competition. Five of the six finalists were available (Lucy Hall was gainfully employed elsewhere) for a nicely structured concert. Niel Joubert opened with two big sings – *Ciel e terra*, Bazajet's Act 1 aria from *Tamerlano* as he believes his daughter has betrayed him, followed by Bazajet's later aria *Empio per farti Guerra* as he reveals his barely controlled rage beneath a veneer of dignity. Joubert

demonstrated his strong and rich tone, with clarity of articulation and clean leaps between notes. Two of Grimoaldo's contrasting arias from *Rodelinda* were chosen by Alexander Sprague, as he subsides from anger and resentment to a concluding lament – evidence that not all of Handel's heroes are present-day countertenors. Lawrence Cummings gave a very good introduction to the pieces, and played exemplary harpsichord continuo – an activity often overlooked in his more prominent conducting profile. The three female competitors joined for the 1708 cantata, *Olinto, Tebro & Gloria*, singing the three roles of a shepherd boy, a river (the Tiber) and Glory. Anna Gorbachyova excelled as Gloria, notably in *Tornami a vagheggiar* where her clean and well articulated runs were well tested, and in *Atsro clemente* where her mellifluous tone suited the gentle chorale-like melody perfectly. Anna Starushkevych impressed as Tebro (Tiber) for example in her *Chi mi chiama?* where she held her long note beautifully, applying just a touch of an attractive and gentle vibrato. Along with Raphaela Papadakis, she was also something of a rarity amongst singers today in being able to produce a proper trill, rather than just a bit of a wobble. Raphaela Papadakis was the shepherd boy Olinto, demonstrating her consistency of tone over a wide tessitura and her ability to express a wide range of emotions.

Handel Singing Competition

The Final of the 12th Handel Singing Competition featured six singers, two sopranos, a mezzo, two tenors and a bass-baritone (St George's, Hanover Square, 11 April). The evening opened with soprano Natalie Montakhab. She demonstrated a clear and focussed tone, minimal vibrato, well-articulated runs, a powerful sense of the drama of the text (using simple hand gestures), and the ability to do something both interesting and appropriate in the *da capo* sections – the latter no mere repetition but, notably in 'Endless Pleasure', creating a different reflection on the text. In my view, this represents exactly what a Handel voice should be – and what should surely be the main focus of this competition. She also sensibly kept her cadenzas simple, apart from one rather wild leap at the end of *Tornami* – an example of her ability to play with the music. She was followed by tenor Stephen Chambers, again demonstrating a rich and clean tone with minimal vibrato and excellent intonation. He engaged well with the audience, and elaborated the *da capos* well, including some proper vocal trills. He did well to capture the conflicting moods of the music. Frederick Long (bass-baritone) also made very good contact with the audience and gained Brownie points from me for acknowledging conductor Lawrence Cummings and the London Handel Orchestra as he took his applause. On this occasion he had a slightly muffled tone and a tendency to slither over runs – his vibrato also interfered with the perception of intonation. He showed his comfort in his lower register in *Sorge infausta*. Mezzo Hagar Sharvit started with the unaccompanied opening to 'She's gone' (from *Theodora*) – a good demonstration of her expressive and rather sultry voice. She had a good dramatic presence, notably in *Già nel seno*, where she floated her voice very successfully.

She also engaged well with the audience. But I thought she was a little underpowered in *Svegliatevi nel core* and had a tendency to slightly slur her runs and occasionally lift herself onto notes. Soprano Heimi Lee has a strong voice and a focussed and clean tone, although her vibrato rather got in the way, and also doubled as trills. As with the previous singer, she had a tendency to lift onto notes and was not entirely convincing in some admittedly tricky runs. But her leap to the heights in the cadenza brought the inevitable burst of enthusiastic applause from the audience – Handel Festival audiences always seem to love such things. As with a number of the other pieces heard during the evening, she included an example of a work where the most memorable moments came, not from the soloists line, but from the instrumental accompaniment – in this case, ‘With darkness deep’ (*Theodora*). Tenor Rupert Charlesworth started in agitated mood with *Tra sospetti*. He showed an ability to get into the different roles required for his three pieces, showing comfort in both high and low registers, a strong, rich and expressive tone with a light but fast vibrato that didn’t affect intonation, fine acting.

In my view, the standard of singing in this competition has increased over the years, with far more singers demonstrating an understanding of the sort of voice that is suited to Handel’s music. I also attended the Semi-Final, where 15 singers battled it out for a place in the Final. I admit that one of the chosen finalists was a bit of a surprise to me, and there were three semi-finalists that I thought deserved a place in the Final, notably mezzo Anna Brull for her excellent performance of ‘Whither shall I fly?’ from *Hercules*. She had a most attractive tone with a very gentle vibrato, cleanly enunciated runs and a fine sense of dramatic presentation. The First Prize (and the Audience Prize) went to Rupert Charlesworth with Stephen Chambers getting the Second Prize.

F**K MUSIC

Simon Ravens

Folk music indeed! Not a topic I ever thought I would write about. Recently, though, I’ve been wondering what lessons we can learn from the kind of folk musicians who turn up to an ad hoc session with no firm idea of what will be played, or by whom. I might as well come clean and say that I am interested here not in what they do, but in the way they do it. In truth, much of what today passes as ‘folk’ music I despise with a passion. Newly-minted old-style ballads about dead lifeboatmen, soulfully delivered in a faux rustic twang, perplex me: who, I wonder, is trying to kid who? And why? Now, you might point out that this kind of fakery is no more dubious than when Allegri’s top C, Monteverdi’s 1610 Venetian Vespers and Bach’s choral music are passed off as having some historic veracity, and I would agree: I have no time for any myths peddled as fact.

For all that today’s early and folk music fraternities share a soft spot for fakery, and are closely related in the public consciousness, as musical life-forms I believe they have as much kinship as families of squirrels and jellyfish. Where we value an archetype, they value a continuum. Where we value the written, they value the oral. And, where we value the pursuit of aural perfection, they value... well, this is more difficult to define, but whatever it is I think we could do with more of it. For the moment I’ll say that it has something to do with an alternative concept of ensemble.

In the previous issue of *EMR* I suggested two reasons why ensemble – in the sense of technical precision – might be a modern preoccupation. Firstly, in my experience historical observations of performance which laud ensemble are notable by their absence. Secondly, the lack of rehearsal for historical performers, and the ambiguity of their written musical sources, would have made unanimity a game of high and quite unnecessary chance. If we quickly run this process in reverse, we can see how much modern performers differ: we produce editions which iron out matters of possible contention; we rehearse with the initial aim of getting things together; and togetherness having been achieved in performance, this aspect (at the very least) will probably be noted by listeners.

Now, in the context of this process of preparation, let us bring folk music back into our sights. For the sake of comparison, if we bring down from their pigeonholes three varieties of musician – modern folk, original early, and modern early (that’s us, by the way) – an odd alliance presents itself: in their preparation (or lack of it) for music-making, most original early music ensembles would have shared more in common with today’s folk musicians than with us.

At some stage the folk musician I have in mind will have acquired proficiency, even mastery, by solo practice. But whereas today’s early musicians will extend this mindset to ensemble practice, trying to excise imperfections which the group makes as a whole, from what I have seen of folk musicians they bypass this process in ad hoc sessions. Of course, the respective sources we use give a vital clue to why this should be so: if our copy has accidentals, trills, double-dots, word-underlay, and even ‘expression’ carefully added by an editor, at least until we make different group decisions, it seems a reasonable default that we try to realise these details. By contrast, a folk musician may have picked up a tune by ear, or by reading from a basic transcription of the piece. Either way, the folk musician is not encouraged to presume that by precisely reproducing their source they will have achieved anything. Rather, the details ‘missing’ from their sources call to my mind a geographical area for which only the most basic map exists: the implication of such a map being that to really get the feel for that place they will have to go there and fill in the blanks themselves – not forgetting that a point on the map can, in the real world, be viewed from infinite perspectives in infinite conditions! Extending this analogy for a moment, it is quite easy to argue that the basic map

is not necessarily an inadequate one: paradoxically, it is potentially a spur to true understanding.

Now, if we re-read the paragraph above, substituting 'original early' for 'folk', assuming that it made any sense at first, it should continue to do so. And if so, it implies that if we are genuinely interested in historical performance practice, we should be prepared to be less prepared. Why not just steep ourselves in the relevant style, practise alone, then together walk on stage to read from un-edited facsimiles, revelling in the heterophonic jamboree that follows?

At this point, though, we run into the buffers of reality. However much we might like to pretend, the truth is that we are not they. Modern classical musicians consider unanimity to be a prerequisite of performance. So do our audiences, and they pay good money on that understanding. We might well be a group that these people have first heard on CD, and in concert audiences reasonably expect something similar: namely ensemble.

When I first experimented with the choirbook format for reading Renaissance polyphony, one of the decisions I took was not to add any editorial word underlay or *musica ficta* to our 'edition'. At the first rehearsal (yes that's right, rehearsal, I know, I know, I'm all talk!) I suggested that we should not take corporate decisions about these matters, but do our own thing. To judge from the faces of the singers, it was as if I had just suggested that we would be performing nude. And sure enough, when I looked at our choirbook after the concert, I noticed that cabals of tenors had pencilled in flats, and coteries of sopranos had cued repeated sections of text. I even saw the occasional dynamics, and a comma to bring one section off with another part! Looking at these, I had to admit that if my aim was to recreate an original performance practice, I had failed to convince the performers, let alone the audience.

I know, then, that the change in approach I am tentatively suggesting cannot happen overnight. And in a way I'm relieved about this, because if early musicians all adopted it, we could easily throw the baby out with the bathwater. The truth is that although observers of historical performances might never have commented on the phrase ending in bar 17 not being together, they most certainly did comment on the aural beauties of what they heard, and what I am suggesting could easily be misconstrued as advocating a rough-and-ready approach to early music. No way!

One of the paradoxes I see in being human is that whilst we all aspire to the highest standards, and whilst the logical goal of this aspiration is perfection, nothing is more likely to distance us from other humans than perfection. As part of the same paradox, I do wonder whether part of the reason why audiences for classical music are diminishing is that technical levels of performance are too high. Neville Cardus once told of how a young pianist, having studied the work fastidiously, had privately played the Liszt Sonata to Artur Rubinstein.

"After he had heard he performance he sat for a moment in deep contemplation, then said: 'Very good, ver-ry good – but not enough wrong notes'." I firmly believe that wrong notes for the right reasons are one of the great human connections which performers and listeners can make, and I look forward to the day when our current priority with technical perfection resumes a more subservient place in the pecking order.

Is it possible, I wonder, that the world of commercial recordings, which has largely caused our skewed perspectives, may in due course restore a more realistic focus? In the good old days, when the market was buoyant, the deal was that groups received artist's fees from a record label. With the market now in freefall, and groups virtually having to pay for the privilege of recording, it is harder and harder for professional ensembles to justify extensive rehearsals and sessions. If the next kids on the block want to have something to sell at the back of their concerts, or on their websites, it is quite possible that it will be an unpolished item. And that, in turn, might eventually lead to audiences having realistic expectations of the folk they hear live. And yes, by 'folk' I mean future early musicians.

THE HORNIMAN MUSEUM
100 London Rd London SE23 3PQ
020 8699 1872

The Horniman Museum and Gardens in Forest Hill has launched a competition, inviting young musicians to compose a solo harpsichord piece to celebrate a new permanent display of keyboard instruments in its acclaimed Music Gallery.

The winning piece, which will earn a young composer £1,000 in prize money, will premiere at the launch of a display called *At Home With Music* in January 2014. It will be performed on the Horniman's 1772 Jacob Kirckman harpsichord, which is currently being returned to playing condition in a major restoration project.

The competition will be adjudicated by harpsichordist Jane Chapman, and composers Alexander Goehr and Rhian Samuel. Full details, including terms and conditions and how to enter, can be found at

www.horniman.ac.uk/composition



As CB remembers in the 1940s

ALCINA AND THE PROBLEMS WITH HANDEL OPERA

Katie Hawks

Alcina: Catherine Naglestad, Alice Coote, Helene Schneiderman, Catriona Smith, Rolf Romei, Staatsoper Stuttgart, Alan Hacker cond., Janos Darvas/Jossi Weiler/Sergei Morabito stage directors. 1999/2008. Arthaus 102300 DVD

It appears that the feminist movement is in crisis. Despite forty years of women's lib, there are still disproportionately few women in top jobs and women are still thought of in largely sexual or stereotypical terms: girls must wear pink and make-up and heels and like dollies and washing up; female intellectuals, such as Mary Beard, are not criticised for what they say, but for what they look like. Many things have changed for the better – women are no longer chattels – but in essence, society's attitudes are not much different than they were fifty or a hundred years ago. What has this to do with Handel opera? I am not going to link it to the characterisation of women in *Alcina*, interesting though that is, but I am going to use it as an analogy with period performance.

From the middle of the 20th century, interesting and intelligent musicians started to challenge the rich sludge used to play baroque music, and to approach it in an historically-informed way, with instruments and playing styles from the period. A lightness and freshness was breathed back into Bach and Handel and their contemporaries. Nowadays, period instruments are standard, just like women in the workplace (yes, that tenuous analogy is not forgotten). However, it is still the case that period performance is a specialism, and one which a lot of musicians do not touch. Just as you still do not find many women on building sites, for no reason other than women aren't routinely expected to be able to build, so violinists aren't routinely expected to learn to play baroquely. This is the case with singers: I often wonder whether the early music revolution actually reached the singing world, since – as in this production – singers invariably over-vibrate and over-project their Handel so that there is no appreciable difference between their singing *Alcina* or *Aida*. So although period performance has become accepted, nonetheless in essence and attitude a lot of playing and a lot more singing have not changed since before the revolution.

It's the same with opera productions. Handel is now a stage regular, and more than just *Alcina* and *Giulio Cesare*, too. But directors still seem to think that the audience will get bored with those interminable *da capo* arias and that Handel's music needs constant peppering up with inappropriate actions and gratuitous gimmickery – forgetting that audiences enjoy hours of undramatised oratorio. This is a huge problem: the 'drama', instead of amplifying Handel's music and its characterisations, is a distraction, working against the score. This production is a case in point. It is from 1999, and shows how little Handel opera fashion has changed in the last decade-and-

a-bit. It is also a good example because the director does not go in for weird gimmicks, and so we can cut to the chase – just as we can with the musical side, which is pretty standard stuff.

This *Alcina* is set in a declining stately home: hardly original, but it works. What doesn't work is the characterisation. The director clearly can't read music. For example, Handel's Morgana is skittish, playful, wilful and wild. She knows that she has Oronte under her paw – that's why she is so poleaxed at the end when he, having been pushed too far, tells her to get stuffed. She flirts outrageously with Bradamante's male guise, Ricciardo, aware of Oronte's helpless subservience to her. Catriona Smith's Morgana, however, has little stage presence. Her clothes don't fit her, and she clumps about in heels, looking as though rigger boots would be much more comfortable. (Which, of course, they would.) When Oronte pleads with her after a scene with Ricciardo in Act I, she lords it over him – but in this production, she clings onto a door frame and looks as though the relationship is equal or in his favour, which it is not. Mind you, he's also hugging a wall at that point: in fact, there is so much wall hugging that there's no room for drama and the recitative is so moribund that it almost dies. This is a classic case of the stage happenings (drama is too good a word) dictating the music, when it should be the other way around. (Oronte then tries it on with Ruggiero.) The practice of looking weak in arias of strength and of hugging the walls or the floor pervades the opera and helps extinguish any momentum or dramatic tension.

Alcina from the start is another case of bad characterisation. Her lovely first aria tells us in the music about her and the situation: she is genuinely in love with Ruggiero. This is the Real Thing, not like her other men, whom she's cast off and turned into beasts. The music is innocent, even girlish: she is momentarily not the worldly-wise, powerful, all-controlling woman, but a helpless, green77 lover. But here there's too much canoodling with Ruggiero, and far too much of his touching everyone else up, so we do not get any sense of her absolute and innocent ecstasy. When she finds out that Ruggiero has betrayed her, she spiritedly vows vengeance in the middle of her heart-stopping 'Ah, mio cor' – but Morgana is holding her arms to the wall. Grrr: *Alcina* is not yet powerless – that happens in Act III. The director has in one action destroyed the suspense of the whole opera. *Alcina* throughout lacks the poise and power that Handel imbues her with.

The music direction does not help the drama. The instruments are modern, and played quite modernly [Alan Hacker was a pioneer virtuoso on the classical clarinet but less involved in early-instrument baroque *CB*], and the

tempi are sluggish – except, like ‘Ah, mio cor’ when they are too fast. The melodrama of such French conductors as Minkowski and Haïm might not be to everyone’s taste, but there are many Anglo-German conductors who could take several leaves from their books: this performance is just boring. The worst aspect, as so often, is not the arias, although it would be nice to hear the music through the vibrato, but the recitative. Every opera singer should, I think, have to listen to Giulini’s *Marriage of Figaro* as a lesson in how to sing recitative. Admittedly, that is buffo, but why does opera seria recitative have to be so measured and lifeless? This is where the drama happens, not the arias! Just because the notes are a series of quavers, it does not mean that they have to be sung as such.

This production is entirely conventional. It is time that convention changed for the better: it is time that stage and music directors started with the score and worked out what Handel was doing. It is too apparent in too many productions that neither music nor stage director has a clue.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

THE VIRTUAL HAYDN

Richard Maunder

The Virtual Haydn: complete works for solo keyboard Tom Beghin (clavichord, harpsichords, fortepianos), 854'33" (12CDs, plus DVD) Naxos 8.501203

'Virtual', because an attempt has been made to capture the acoustical properties of the rooms in which the music might first have been played – not by recording the pieces in the original venues, but by reproducing the different acoustical environments electronically in the studio. This very clever project has been brilliantly executed, and at first sight appears to offer a much more convenient means to an end than transporting instruments to various locations in Austria, Hungary and England. On further consideration, however, the 'convenience' argument rather falls apart, since all but one of the instruments Beghin plays were made in Belgium and Austria and had to be shipped across the Atlantic to the recording studio in Montreal. So what is to be gained by using 'virtual rooms' instead of the real ones, apart from the satisfaction of designing and making some impressive electronic wizardry? True, it's explained on the fascinating DVD that accompanies the CDs that traffic noise would in practice have ruled out the Lobkowitz Festsaal in Vienna and the Holywell Music Room in Oxford; but wouldn't it have been possible to adopt the common expedient of making the recordings in the middle of the night? I recall, too, the old days of the Kingsway Hall in London, where work had to stop every time an underground train approached in the tunnel underneath – but one learned to cope, and some fine recordings were made there. It's also claimed on the DVD that availability of rooms was a problem: for

example the Holywell Music Room was simply not free for the clear fortnight needed to make CD12. A fortnight? For just over 46 minutes' worth of music? How many takes were necessary?

I have to say, too, that I'm a bit unconvinced by one or two of the choices of rooms to sample electronically. Given that the Hanover Square Rooms in London no longer exist, was the Holywell Music Room the ideal substitute, or was it chosen just because it happens to be a surviving 18th-century English concert hall.¹ And is a grand drawing-room in Montreal, furnished with mahogany panelling brought from France, a realistic equivalent of a room in what the programme booklet calls 'a cottage in the [English] countryside', the venue for one of the sonatas on CD12? But I don't want to appear too negative about the idea of 'virtual rooms', for the results can sound pretty convincing, and the technique obviously has wider applications than this one recording project.

I have nothing but praise for the use of no fewer than six different instruments for the recordings (well, seven if the two actions in the Walter copy are counted). As in earlier times, 18th-century composers revelled in the variety of different keyboard instruments that were available, each with its own particular characteristics: various models of harpsichords, spinets, grand and square fortepianos, clavichords and *Tangentenflügel*, not to mention several kinds of combination instruments. As Beghin says on the DVD, the 'one size fits all' notion that a single standard instrument is suitable for all keyboard music of a given period is a thoroughly modern idea that would have seemed as alien to Haydn as it would have done to Bach. Martin Pühringer's superb copy of the 1755 Leydecker harpsichord, though not quite the 'world premiere replica of an 18th-century Viennese harpsichord' claimed by the programme booklet², has a beautiful, well balanced sound, and is eminently suitable for the music Haydn wrote in the 1750s and '60s. Like nearly all Viennese keyboard instruments made before about 1780, the Leydecker has an elaborate form of short octave in which what looks like the bottom C key actually plays the F a fifth below, and the intervening notes (minus a few accidentals) are sounded by sections of split keys, one natural being divided into three parts. It looks complicated, but some wide left-hand intervals are possible that would be unplayable on a conventional keyboard (and the odd missing accidental can occasionally be supplied by re-tuning: in the sonata Hob. XVI:45, for example, bottom E is tuned to Eb instead). On the other hand some of Haydn's early sonatas are, very appropriately, played on a fine Saxon-style clavichord; and a big harpsichord after French models is used for the six 'Esterházy' sonatas of 1773. Certainly some of the textures in that set appear to presuppose two manuals, and there is a case to be made that Prince Esterházy might have had a French instrument. But I wonder if a large English harpsichord isn't more likely? Frederick the Great presented Empress Maria Theresia with a Shudi & Broadwood in 1773, and it's

1. The Oxford room must be much smaller than the London one. CB

2. Albrecht Czernin and Alfons Huber had already made a copy of an instrument inscribed '[Franz] Walter fecit 1703 Viena'.

clear from a 1784 newspaper advertisement by Artaria that English harpsichords, 'made with every possible refinement and luxury', had an enormous snob-value in Vienna. From about 1780, Viennese keyboard makers were beginning to turn to the fortepiano, though they did not at first use the *Prellmechanik* action invented by Johann Andreas Stein of Augsburg, where the hammers are mounted on the key-levers. Instead, they used a version of *Stoßmechanik* in which the hammers are pivoted on a fixed rail at the back of the action-frame, and point towards the player. It is now known that Mozart's own Walter fortepiano almost certainly had an action of this kind when it was first made, and that the *Prellmechanik* it now has was substituted by the maker after Mozart's death. It was therefore a clever idea of Beghin's to commission a Walter copy from Chris Maene with two alternative actions, one a reconstruction of the earlier *Stoßmechanik* and the other of the later *Prellmechanik* type. Both are used on these CDs – which also feature Maene's copy of a square piano by Ignaz Kober of Vienna, similar to the Wenzel Schanz squares Haydn bought for himself in 1788 and recommended to his friend Maria Anna von Genzinger two years later. It's a little odd, therefore, not to use this instrument for the sonata Haydn wrote for her at the time. The Kober also has *Stoßmechanik* action, which remained standard on Viennese square pianos until at least the mid 1790s. It has a beautiful sound, unfortunately marred by an occasional buzzing damper and a tendency for top notes to 'block' when played *forte*: a pity, because the effect becomes irritating after a while. I am surprised that neither maker nor player was able to devise a way of obviating this fault. Finally, Haydn's London sonatas are played on a copy by Maene of a Longman & Clementi English 'grand pianoforte' of 1798. It's very different from Viennese models, and is recognizably the ancestor of the modern concert grand. The original Longman & Clementi can be heard – and seen – on the DVD, which as a bonus also includes a video performance of the 'Acht Sauschneider' variations on the Leydecker copy, complete with Martin Pühringer's delightful reading of the bucolic dialect poem of the title.

In the end, of course, what matters most is how these electronic and mechanical resources are put to musical use. The first thing to say is that Beghin is equally at home on all the instruments, and has a happy knack of bringing out their best qualities. He clearly has a profound knowledge of Haydn's keyboard music, and his masterly treatment of 'varied reprises' (to use C. P. E. Bach's term) is as imaginative and convincing as anything I have heard. It's almost as if we were eavesdropping on Haydn himself, extemporizing – an impression reinforced by the rather free rhythm, which may not be to everyone's taste but is always well controlled and is done for the best of expressive reasons. Occasionally Beghin adopts Haydn's text as the *decorated* reading, preceding it by a simplified version: an ingenious reversal of the usual procedure with repeats. Now and again he omits several bars first time round, restoring them on the repeat. Sometimes, for example with a cadenza-like passage, this makes good sense, but more often the purpose is less clear and strikes me as taking too much of a liberty with the music. To my ear, too, Beghin is over-fond of what C. P. E. Bach called the 'undamped register'. Some of the effects are magical, especially when raised dampers are combined with the 'moderator' or *una corda*, as at Haydn's 'open Pedal' markings in Hob. XVI:50; but to play the finale of Hob. XVI:32 with the dampers off throughout is definitely OTT: it sounds horrible! I agree with Burney's views on such a practice, expressed after visiting the celebrated *clavessiniste* Mme Brillon de Joüy in Paris in 1770: 'I could not persuade Madame B. to play the piano forte with the stops on – *c'est sec*, she said – but with them off unless in arpeggios, nothing is distinct – 'tis like the sound of bells, continual and confluent'.

Despite my few quibbles, however, the realization of this important project is a very fine achievement which reflects great credit on everyone concerned, especially Wiesław Woszczuk, the acoustical electronics expert, Martha de Francisco, the record producer, and above all Tom Beghin, the brilliant performer.



Edition HH

CARL FRIEDRICH CHRISTIAN FASCH
Complete Keyboard Works
in three volumes
edited by
CHRISTOPHER HOGWOOD

Carl Fasch was notoriously reluctant to have his music made public and even asked that much of it should be destroyed. What remains, however, supports the view of the contemporary writer on music Johann Reicheardt that Fasch was the true successor to C.P.E. Bach, with whom he shared keyboard duties for Frederick the Great. The first volume of his complete keyboard works, the six sonatas, which appeared in print and were well regarded during the composer's lifetime, show him to be a minor master and an eloquent advocate for the eclectic expressive style then current in Berlin. The second volume contains two unpublished sonatas (one unusually in the key of B flat minor) and his considerable output of "character pieces", short descriptive works. These individual vignettes are ideal for playing on either clavichord or fortepiano and provide an expressive foil to the more extrovert and extended sonatas in the first volume. The third and final volume contains all Fasch's keyboard variations



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TAVERNER @ 40 Oxford, 7 April 2013

Simon Ravens

The nature of this event spoke volumes. I can think of groups much less celebrated than 'Taverner' which, given the excuse of a circular anniversary, would have regarded it as an opportunity for some fairly lavish self-basting. Not Taverner. Andrew Parrott opened proceedings by remarking that this event was not about wallowing in the past. For all the laughs and good humour, this was a serious day of ideas and provocation.

On the ideas front, Malcolm Bruno eloquently challenged the real benefit of technological progress in the recording industry, David Vickers questioned the rationale and integrity of certain cheap imitations of the Taverner Liturgical Reconstruction™, and I offered the same airy flannel which appears elsewhere in this issue.

Musicologically, perhaps the heaviest hitter of the day was Charles Medlam, who presented his take on a relatively new argument that the Bach 'Cello' Suites were not written for the cello at all, but for the viola da spalla. There are many strands to the argument: the practical demands of the music; the absence of a likely cellist in Cöthen; the ease of the viola da spalla for violinists; and the influence of the French viol suites which were Bach's likely model. If time judges this argument to be true (and to the layman it sounded mighty compelling) it will surely be one of the most significant 'discoveries' in the whole of the early music revival.

Yet even when speakers presented ideas which were unlikely to grab the headlines, these found sympathetic ears. There was an awareness, amongst us all, that although the immediate impact of a Taverner canvass may result from its bold brushstrokes, its lasting strength also lies in the fine-pointing of details. So Silas Wollstan on the second part down in English Restoration violin band music, David Lee on Christopher Gibbons' music for the Oxford Act, Christopher Suckling on chordal cello accompaniment to recitative, and Emily van Evera on the notational quirks of Francesca Caccini – these all contained exactly the type of (apparently) minor probings and revelations which have subsequently played major parts in distinctive Taverner projects.

Emily and Andrew (an explosion of the falsetto counter-tenor myth) aside, key figures from Taverner's past touched on the nature of their contributions: Jeremy Montague on the instruments of the (increasingly dusty) Bate Collection, and Rogers Covey-Crump on vocal intonation: anyone who has enjoyed the solo trumpet on the Messiah recording, or the wide fifths of the Taverner's Machaut, has reaped the results of this expertise.

In the history of Taverner's work these figures may represent a core, but never a clique. Indeed, any organisation less clique-ridden than Taverner would be hard to imagine. On a practical level, it could never have been otherwise, since at its most active the organisation may have been fielding a vocal consort one week and an orchestra the next. But beyond that, at the centre of every Taverner project is someone who has always seen knowledge as something to be given and taken without prejudice. One does not need to hold a chair in musicology to gain access to the Taverner court. Indeed, such a professor is perhaps more likely than most to need a letter of introduction. He'll certainly require a translator.

One of the curious paradoxes of Taverner is that whilst it has always been embracing, it has been uncompromising in equal measure. Yes, ideas are welcome, but unless there is a chance of being able to realise them fully, ideas they will remain. Gone are the days of six-figure advances for recordings, and non-educational arts funding. Without these, Taverner projects (such as the recording of Monteverdi's *Orfeo*, which is just out) are likely to be rarities. So whilst this day was not about the past, there was a certain sadness that at least as far as Taverner was concerned, there was a limit to how much it was about the future. But what's in a name? It is surely significant that Taverner gave its first concert before a number of the speakers at this symposium were born. These individuals simply would not have been present here if the currency of Taverner's philosophy held no value for them. The new performers will, of course, develop and adapt the Taverner philosophy, but evidently they want to pick up the ball and run with it, rather than boot it into touch and find another game to play. So although at the next anniversary Taverner may have added little to its own roll of honour, it appears as if its influence will be flourishing.

I was sorry I couldn't get to the event – previous ones had always been provocative and inspiring. I'm grateful for Simon's summary. CB

¹ Taverner (disambiguation): may in this article refer to a modern period performance group or its director. Not a man called 'Taverner' [nor, indeed, Tavener, whose sister claimed the two Johns were related despite having lost one R over the centuries CB].

GEISTLICHE KANTATEN

Brian Clark

In 1728, Fasch senior (to distinguish him from his son Carl Friedrich Christian, whose keyboard music is advertised on p. 26) published an open letter in Mattheson's *Der musikalische Patriot*, in which he suggested that his fellow Kapellmeisters might like to help him set up an exchange networks; by sharing the sets of cantatas they had written for the church year, they could save themselves a whole lot of hard work, and at the same time learn more about musical styles outside their immediate circle.

In the early 18th century, textbooks for such cantata cycles were published by many poets, whether they were employed at the same court as the composer who would set the music, as was the case of Christoph Graupner and Georg Christian Lehms at Darmstadt, or whether an early acquaintance led to a lifetime's collaboration, as was the case of Erdmann Neumeister (possibly the most famous cantata text author of the time) and Telemann.

Although cantatas by less well-known composers have appeared in modern editions, a new undertaking by a group of musicologists, typesetters and editors under the *Prima la musica!* imprint aspires to draw attention to a wealth of wonderful music as never before. The surviving works from annual cantata cycles by Stölzel, Graupner and Fasch, as well as the complete "choral" works of Erlebach, will be published in chunks as well as the complete "choral" works of Erlebach, and volumes devoted to settings of the same poet by several composers will be published in chunks – Advent to Christmas, Epiphany to Palm Sunday, Easter to Whitsun, then Trinity Sunday and its variable number of following Sundays, as well as Marian and other feasts. The precise breakdown will depend on the number of surviving cantatas, but each volume will include between eight and 15 works, complete with a theological introduction and rather literal translation of the texts, including those that do not survive in musical form.

By choosing cycles from different times in composer's careers, we hope that it will also be possible to trace the development of their styles and that of church music in general. So, for example, we have chosen Stölzel's first cycle for Gotha (1720–21), the cycle that it is possible Bach performed in Leipzig, and a later cycle that was only relatively recently identified as his work at all. The first cycle we have chosen from Graupner's output is the even earlier 1713–14 cycle, which should contrast nicely with the 1741–42 set. In addition to these series, individual cantatas by Telemann will form another sequence, and there will be another devoted to less well-known composers.

In an ideal world, these new editions would not simply be created to sit on a library shelf. It would be wonderful if each volume could be taken on by some music college as the basis of a term's or even a year's worth of "early music" study – 10 cantatas would be solos for upwards of two dozen singers, and there are plenty of instrumental obbligati (the 1720 Stölzel cycle has lots of fine oboe d'amore solos, for example); interdisciplinary possibilities

cry out to me, too – students of sound engineering could record concerts or arrange specific dates for formal recordings (they gain experience working with real musicians, who in turn benefit from time in the alien environment of a studio), while young photographers and graphic artists can design packaging ideas for the CDs, which could be distributed to anyone who buys the music, or set up a website to stream downloads. Perhaps a Lutheran (or Lutheran-friendly) church would host a series of the cantatas in a liturgical context? The possibilities are endless...

The project (with the snappy name of *Geistliche Cantaten*) has the feel of an important step towards contextualizing the work of the great composers. A concert series presenting the complete cantatas of Bach recently concluded in Switzerland, but the musicians have decided to continue by exploring the music of the previous generation. Sign up to *Geistliche Cantaten* as an active participant, and you could be part of the next big thing.

The volumes of this series will be professionally printed on quality paper and with hard covers. Individual cantatas will be offered for sale after the volumes have appeared, and performing materials will be available.

The series are numbered as follows:

A Various – edited by Brian Clark, Cosimo Stawarski

- Vol. 1 Kuhnau: *O heilige Zeit*
- Vol. 2 Boxberg: *Alle Könige werden ihn anbeten*
- Vol. 3 "Herr Bach": *Der Herr Zebaoth*
- Vol. 4 Boxberg: *Taube voller Lieblichkeit*
- Vol. 5 Pezold: *Meine Seufzer, meine Klagen*
- Vol. 6 Liebe: *Und du Kindlein*

B Telemann – edited by Cosimo Stawarski, Brian Clark, Dale Voelker

- Vol. 1 *So du mit deinem Munde*
TELO72
- Vol. 2 *Auf, reinigt das Feld*
TELO31
- Vol. 3 *Christus ist ausgezogen* TEL069
- Vol. 4 *Welch Getümmel*
TELO68

C Graupner – edited by Kim Patrick Clow, Brian Clark, Niels Danielsen, Cosimo Stawarski, Evan Cortens

Series 1 – the 1712/13 cycle

Series 2 – the 1741/42 cycle

D Stölzel – edited by Brian Clark, Kim Patrick Clow

- Series 1 – the 1720/21 cycle
- Series 2 – the 1729/30 "Bach" cycle
- Series 3 – the 1739/40 "Berlin" cycle

E Erlebach – edited by Brian Clark and Niels Danielsen

All surviving "choral" music

F Fasch – edited by Brian Clark

The 1735/36 cycle

FASCH-FESTTAGE – 18-21 April 2013

Brian Clark

Where previous Fasch-Festtage in the Sachsen-Anhalt city of Zerbst have been spread over two weeks (or even more) and delivered maybe two dozen events and concerts, this year's affair – in keeping with the austerity which the arts are enduring throughout Europe – was condensed into one wonderful weekend.

The opening concert (18 April) was given by Les Amis de Philippe, directed by Ludger Rémy. The programme was broadcast live by the regional radio company, and consisted of five so-called overture-sinfonias – three-movement works in the typically early 18th-century sinfonia style, the first of which is a French overture. Two of them add trumpets and drums to the “normal” line-up, while another is scored for four horns, three oboes, bassoon and strings. Readers will be able to judge the music for themselves when the CD of the programme (recorded in the Zerbst Stadthalle the week before) is released on cpo.

The concert was preceded by the presentation of the town's Fasch-Preis to Gottfried Gille, who has devoted much of his lifetime to producing a highly detailed catalogue of all of Johann Friedrich Fasch's church music; it will soon be available online. After the concert, the Zerbst major, Andreas Dittmann, hosted the now-traditional reception at the town hall.

Over the following two days, a conference devoted to “Fasch and Dresden” took place. The opening session was preceded by a short recital by Mary Oleskiewicz, flute, and three students from an ensemble called Bach's Erben; violinist Jonas Zschenderlein is certainly a name to look out for in the future (his performance of the E minor sonata, BWV1023, was spellbinding), and his colleagues, Karl Simko (cello) and Alexander von Heißen (harpsichord) will also go far! They played a fairly random programme, given the theme of the conference – as well as Bach senior, it consisted of a Fasch trio (FWV N:D3) and another by C P E Bach (Wq 149). Be that as it may, when one considers that it was just after 9 am, it made a truly enjoyable start to proceedings.

After Gerhardt Poppe's opening talk on the oft-pondered issues of Fasch's connections with Dresden, there were five sections with papers on the overture-sinfonias heard the night before (Manfred Fechner, who had provided the editions) and philological aspects of Fasch's sinfonia output (Julia Schäfer), a “new” source for one of the composer's most popular works, the chalumeau concerto (it turned out not to be unknown after all, but Steffen Voss's paper was interesting for other reasons), then I spoke about the implications of having found a pair of oboe parts that had music for two players in each (one on oboe, one on flute). Rashid-S. Pegah spoke about

Heinichen's time in Italy, Ute Poetzsch discussed sources for Telemann's music in Dresden, and Mary Oleskiewicz compared music rooms in the palaces of Dresden and Berlin.

That evening, NeoBarock give a recital at Schloss Wendgräben (19 April) that juxtaposed trios by Fasch with his “bosom buddy” Stölzel. There were many interesting reactions to the concert among the conference delegates; some thought it wrong that baroque fiddlers used chin rests; others found Fasch's music much more complex than Stölzel's but were seduced by the latter's obvious melodic gifts. Personally, I don't care what means performers use to entertain me, and – just as they had previously with their CDs (and they told me afterwards that a follow-up disc of Stölzel is in the pipeline) – they certainly did that! Despite the insufferable heat of the small room (clearly not designed to seat the numbers present), they produced some beautiful sounds.

On the conference's second day, Marc-Roderich Pfau had found a printed textbook for a Fasch funeral cantata that seems to have been written for a wealthy Magdeburg merchant's wife, and attempted to identify the composers of works in a cycle of cantatas known as the Dresden cycle (used in Zerbst in 1726, when Fasch spent several months in the Saxon capital), then Stephan Blaut gave a typically authoritative paper on musical materials in Dresden today that might have been sent there by Fasch as part of the so-called *Musikalienaustausch*. The last two papers were by Barbara Reul on a new mandate showing the responsibilities (and rights) of the court trumpeters, and Gottfried Gille, who gave a presentation on the new Fasch Repertorium, his listing of all the known sacred vocal music by Fasch.

As usual, the Sunday began with a festive service in St. Bartholomäi Church, which served as the court church until the chapel in the castle was finished. The church choir was accompanied by Cammermusik Potsdam in a first modern performance of Fasch's 1736 cantata, *Ich danke dem Herrn von ganzem Herzen* (I thank the Lord with all my heart). The fact that Tobias Eger, the local Kantor, continues to perform Fasch's music (and attend many of the festival events) is enormously gratifying. This is the week when Zerbst as a town basks in the focus of the German news machine, and all publicity is good publicity.

That sentiment segues neatly into the following event of the programme which was the unveiling of a plaque to mark the location of the house that Fasch rented during his 36 years of service to the dukes of Anhalt-Zerbst. While rummaging through the local church archives in 2011, I had come upon a book that recorded the individual contributions made towards the establishment of a new

cemetery in 1743; among those who paid some money (it seems the duke sent representatives to knock on doors, asking!) was *Capellmeister Fasch* at Neue Brücke 34. Having planned to lurk in the background, I was obliged to participate in the occasion and have my photograph taken for the local press – I hope I managed to convey in the interview that followed my interest in giving something back to the city that has given music and musicologists plenty in the past!

The final concert (21 April) featured the Belgian ensemble, Il Gardellino, well-known and wonderful performers of Fasch's music. If these were not typical Dresden-style performances (we know for sure that Pisendel used a sizeable string section, not one player per part), they were nonetheless stylish and exciting – opening and closing the recital (which took place in the beautiful Aula of the Franciscum secondary school in Zerbst – which is also a marvellous library, rich in treasures) with concertos for pairs of flutes, oboes and bassoons with strings was a great idea. Unfortunately, star oboist, Marcel Ponseele, had a bit of a head cold and decided he could not manage the world modern premiere of an oboe concerto that some think might be Fasch (I am totally unconvinced).

I was not able to go to some other concerts that happened: *Ars Antiqua Austria* (twice) played music by Fasch, Graupner and Werner with chalumeau (no-one had anything to say about whether or not the performance of the Fasch concerto had been influenced by the “new” autograph source – the version everyone knows was heavily Pisendel-ized!). The famous Dresdner Kreuzchor sang music “from Carl Fasch to Mendelssohn” and everyone who attended was enraptured by both the repertoire and the sounds made by the boys. Other events included the Fasch-Midnight, a cross-over event featuring the Makiko Hirabayashi Trio, the Thomas Prokein Quartett and the Halle University chamber choir, among others, a guided walk around the town, and “Fasch for and with teens – see how cool baroque music can be”, an educational project involving local students and the three young stars of Bach's *Erben*.

The papers given at the conference are expected to appear in print before the end of the year. The next Fasch-Festtage are pencilled in for 2015, though the theme of conference has yet to be settled; personally I would favour something that opened it up to a broader field of expertise. Young scholars are still taking up Fasch's music (Julia Schäfer, for example, as well as being a Fasch-ist is also a bona fide Zerbster!), and there doubtless remain treasures to be discovered – in the last few years, I found a cantata fragment in Copenhagen possibly part of his application for the *Kapellmeister* position there in 1732, and the staff of the Schranck II project in Dresden have identified several new Fasch sources among overture suites consisting of music by various composers (sometimes identified by initials), as well as proposing that various anonymous pieces might be by Fasch. (They did also show that a work previously thought to be Fasch is actually Venturini, and that the overture movements of various “Fasch” suites are actually Handel!) As far as

Zerbst goes, a new project at the Stadt-Archiv, where only three years ago I was told “there is nothing here from before the 19th century”, has already borne fruit with the discovery of an early 16th-century passion play that pre-dates the more famous Oberammergau event, and “many” early “psalters and missals”. The immense amount of documentary evidence in the archives in Dessau and Zerbst itself doubtless also hold many secrets.

I managed to fit in a few days of archival work during the trip, too. Before the conference I spent a day in the Dessau Landeshauptarchiv Sachsen-Anhalt (LHASA), which is located in a renovated water tower. The friendly staff had done their best to look out as much of the rather vast (it turned out) amount of material I had pre-ordered by email, and promised to locate the remainder by the time I returned the next week. Using their stock microfilms (on preservation grounds, many documents have been only shown in exceptional circumstances), I was able to make my own print-outs of parts for one of the few Fasch cantatas that I did not already have for a very reasonable fee. Unfortunately, I had actually wanted to see the originals of another piece on the same film, as I had noted in 1989 that the parts were made from an instrumental work, which I wanted to try to identify on this trip... Other documents I looked at included inventories of ducal funeral estates, which contain exhaustive lists of clothes, furniture and books, but are frustratingly vague about music. When Johann Adolf died in 1726, he left behind no fewer than eight recorders – one of tortoise shell inlaid with ebony, and two made of “terrible brown wood” – and a guitar in a wooden case. (Z89, Nr. 8) Had I wanted to, I could have made digital copies using a very hi-tech camera deck, again for very modest prices.

While in Zerbst, I also spent a few hours in the church archives of St Bartholomäi, where the lovely and extremely helpful Frau Düben remembered my previous visit. She simply opens the cupboards and leaves us to get on with our search for new information. On this occasion, I chanced upon another 16th-century manuscript which explained the rather curious practice of singing the (shortened) mass in German on some days and in Latin on others. According to the “Fürst Georgen Kirchen Ordnung” (Duke George's church regulations), which appears to be written in the same hand as documents on either side dated in the 1540s, mass was to be performed every Sunday; on high feast days, portions of the service would be in Latin, while others would be in German – and elements of the Roman rite could be replaced by “deutsche gesenge” (i. e., chorales). A second document in the same volume lists all those chorales which are appropriate each season of the church calendar. By the 18th century, the practice had evolved even further; on the three principle feasts of the year (Christmas, Easter and Whitsun), the Kyrie, Gloria and Credo were all performed by the Hofkapelle in Latin, while on other days (such as the Duke's birthday and the first Sunday of Advent) the Credo was replaced by *Wir glauben alle an einen Gott*. On other feasts (including Michaelmas, St John the Baptist and Thanksgiving) only the first two movements of the *Missa Brevis* was performed in German.

CD REVIEWS

15th-CENTURY

Choirs of Angels: Music from The Eton Choirbook Vol. 2 The Choir of Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford, Stephen Darlington
 Avie AV2184 74' 05"
Browne *O Maria salvatoris mater* a8; **Cornysh** *Ave Maria, mater Dei* a4; **Davy** *Salve Jesu mater vera* a5; **Lambe** *O Maria plena gratias* a6; **Wylkinson** *Salve Regina* a9

August 1959. Holiday job fetching and carrying books at the British Museum. I was browsing in a touristy second-hand bookshop on my way to Russell Square station on my way home, and was surprised to see vol 1 (Musica Britannica x) of The Eton Choirbook (ECB for short), though I'm not sure if I knew at the time what it was. It was the first musicological edition I had bought. I'd seen vol iv previously: the editor was my Director of Studies. But after my first year at university reading English, I hadn't absorbed much music earlier than Tallis and Byrd. The short note-values of ECB looked confusing, and when, several years later, I heard the music it seemed even wrong. There's a timeless element to it, and somehow time was exaggerated in the short, beamed quavers and semiquavers. I felt the same when I first saw the score of Vaughan Williams' Fantasy on a theme of Thomas Tallis. I expected the minims of The English Hymnal (like the new edition reviewed on p. 2) and was disappointed to see short notes like ECB. I managed to get used to the VW (knowing the autograph helped), but I still find the reduced-value ECB frustrating. Analysing the VW (by listening rather than reading the score) made me know happens where, but I'm happy to let ECB pass around me without trying to relate the lines and chords. I still haven't tried following the facsimile part by part – but I've mostly listened in bed, so it's impractical. The recording sounds marvellous anyway. The music needs time, and Stephen Darlington gets the balance between movement and space. With just one short piece (the Cornysh at 4' 07"), the other four pieces last 70 minutes, yet don't feel long. The singing is perfect: the boys in particular are to be congratulated. If you want to sample a couple of pieces, try the Cornysh and the Wilkinson. CB

Another Eton Choirbook CD by The Huelgas Ensemble will be reviewed in the next issue

De Orto/Josquin Music at the Sistine Chapel around 1490 Cut Circle, Jesse Rodin 149' 27" (2 CDs)
 Musique en Wallonie MEW 1265-66

The starting point for these fascinating CDs is to supply a musical context for some of the works of Josquin by exploring what his lesser-known contemporaries were writing at one of his proven places of employment, the Sistine Chapel. Perhaps one of the unintended outcomes is to identify at least one hitherto unknown genius – Marbrianus de Orto. On the basis of his scintillating *L'homme armé* Mass alone, available in print since the appearance in 1950 of the ground-breaking Hungarian edition of most of the known *L'homme armé* masses but inexplicably receiving its first performance here, this is a composer worthy of attention. This initial impression is richly confirmed by an exquisite motet *Lucis Creator optime*, the quirky Gloria from a *Missa Ad fugam* and a beautiful *Ave Maria*.

As if this discovery were not enough, the other contemporary of Josquin at the Sistine Chapel highlighted in these CDs also proves to be an interesting and distinctive voice. Gaspar van Werbeeke is represented by two motets and a mass movement, each in a strikingly different style. The first CD presents works by Werbeeke, de Orto and Bertrandus Vaquerus in contrast to movements from Josquin's masses *La sol fa re mi* and *Fortuna desperata* as well as the hitherto unrecorded (!) hymn *Nardi Maria pistici*. The Josquin sections serve to illustrate Jesse Rodin's observation that Josquin demonstrates an 'obsessive compositional personality', and indeed the mass movements on the first CD do sound a little obsessive. I understand what he means, but in fact this feature is probably as much due to Rodin's readings of the music as to Josquin's psyche, and simply illustrate that great music such as Josquin's can survive a range of interpretations and still sound great! The second CD contains Josquin's complete Mass *L'homme armé super voces musicales* and the superb de Orto Mass, as well as de Orto's *Ave Maria*, a chant item and possibly the earliest reworking of the *L'homme armé* tune, generally accepted to be the work of the English Burgundian émigré Robert Morton. These are all given full-blooded and exciting readings by the American group Cut Circle, whose performance style seems to acknowledge the

influence of groups such as Graindelavoix and Ensemble Organum. The quality of the singing, the scholarship and the value of the original idea all shine through in this very worthwhile exercise, and the performers have produced two fascinating CDs of top quality repertoire. D. James Ross

16th CENTURY

Joachim von Burck Passion: The Great Unknown Vienna Vocal Consort 54' 23"
 Klanglogo (Rondeau) KL1403
Die deutsche Passion nach Johannes, Im Garten leidet Christus Not + Passio Jesu Christo: Psalm 22 Figulus Meine Seele erhebt den Herren; Othmayr In manus tuas; H. Praetorius O vos omnes

The main focus of this CD are vernacular German settings of the passion by generally obscure composers of the 16th century. If your heart sinks at the thought, this is not entirely without justification – this is very much music of the second rank by Joachim Burck, Caspar Othmayr and Wolfgang Figulus, workaday and provincial polyphony. Not that it is devoid of interest, but an almost entire CD of music of this standard simply highlights its shortcomings. It is a mark of the general standard of the music that the motet *O vos omnes* by Hieronymus Praetorius stands out quite so markedly from the pack. The singing of the Vienna Vocal Consort is generally of a high quality, and only in the opening work by Burck do the rapidly shifting harmonies clearly call for more definition and maybe less reverberation than the generous acoustic provided by Maria am Gestade in Vienna. The package and its stated aim to elevate Burck's profile in the public imagination is poorly served by the lack of texts and translations and a very clunking account in English of a rather superficial booklet note by Matthias Dumpf – 'Whoever's curiosity is awakened and sets out on a quest for information, needs to beware of detraction.' I'm afraid this didn't really awaken my curiosity. D. James Ross

In the company of William Byrd The Byrd Ensemble, Markdavin Obenza, 64' 03"
 Scribe Records SRCD3
 (Paired running order)
Byrd *Ne irascaris Wilder O douce regard*; **Byrd** *Plorans plorabit Ferrabosco I Da pacem Domine*; **Byrd & Clamens** *non papa Tristia et anxietas*; **Byrd** *Libera me Morley Domine Dominus noster*; **Monte Filiae Jerusalem Byrd** *Ad Dominum cum tribularer*. markdavin@scribemusic.com

I should have reviewed this in the April issue (p. 25), along with Doug Fullington's *O splendour gloriae*, but my copy disappeared. The director of this group is listed as tenor on this disc, alto on the previous one, and also responsible for Scribe Records, aiming at one disc a year. This CD has a smaller ensemble (3, 3, 4, 4), ten singers overlapping with Doug Fullington's 19. The idea is brilliant, taking five of Byrd's substantial and sombre motets and pairing them with shorter items. Philip van Wilder isn't such an outsider as might be thought: he worked in England for Henry VIII, and although this is a chanson, could well be contrafacted as an anthem, and Byrd paraphrases its opening for *Ne irascaris*. The only English pair is Morley's early *Domine Dominus noster* now that the once popular *Laboravi in gemitu* is known to be by Rogier, perhaps this should be sung more often. The final item is a change from the usual Monte-Byrd pairing. Well worth buying. CB

Byrd Vienna Vocal Consort 55' 16"

Klanglogo (Rondeau) KL1401

Mass for five voices + *Alleluia Ave Maria* – *Virga Jesse*, *How shall a young man*, *Laetentur caeli*, *Lord make me to know*, *Make ye joy to God*, *Miserere mei*, *Ne irascaris Domine*, *O Lord my God*, *Prostrate O Lord I lie & Terra tremuit*,

These are pleasing if rather undistinguished accounts of a range of songs, motets and the five-part mass by William Byrd. If the intonation isn't always entirely secure, the singing is expressive and decisive, although the account of the Mass sounds rather bland to me. As seems to be the Klanglogo house style, no texts or translations are included, although entire pages of the booklet are devoted to mood shots of crumbling ecclesiastical buildings, and the programme notes are a chatty if insubstantial account of the group's approach to Byrd. Like me, most *EMR* readers will deplore the lack of 'grown-up' scholarly programme notes, particularly in a CD emanating from Vienna, one of the main cradles of the 'authentic performance' movement. The first paragraph of the present notes opens with 'Where is the key to early music?' and ends with the revelation 'the gate opens to a place where heaven and earth converge' – Renaissance polyphony meets 'Fifty Shades of Grey'. D. James Ross

Lassus Biographie musicale II Singer Pur
Musique en Wallonie MEW 1268 57' 14"

This ongoing survey of the life of Roland de Lassus finds him in Munich composing

secular and sacred music for his young Wittelsbach patron, Duke Albrecht V. We hear this most suavely accomplished of composers writing the music which would establish his Europe-wide reputation – faultlessly functional settings of the Mass, elegantly polished and occasionally harmonically daring chansons and opulent motets. I have only one problem with this beautifully documented project, which brings to the fore pieces which otherwise not be heard together and which are beautifully sung here by Singer Pur.

The performances in the same rather immediate acoustic with one voice to a part may be fine for the chansons, but seem to fly in the face of such documentary evidence as we have for the church music. Even the illustration of sung mass in the CD booklet shows a veritable army of singers backed up with wind instruments, and there are equally famous illustrations of Lassus' himself leading similarly lavish performances of his own music at the Bavarian court. Rather perfunctory one-to-a-part performances, no matter how beautiful, do not really do justice to the sacred music here and simply do not bear out the suggestion in the notes that the young Duke was keen to get out of chapel to the hunt!

The CD does contain some mouth-watering delights which were new to me, such as the exquisite motet *O mors, quam amara*, but a lot of the repertoire receives much too short shrift for my taste. Incidentally the titles of tracks 3 and 4, although not their timings, have become interchanged in the notes. D. James Ross

Lassus Hymnus Die Singphoniker 63' 54"
cpo 777 751-2

As chapel master to the Bavarian Duke Wilhelm V, Lassus's duties included the composition of polyphonic hymns for the church, and it comes as no surprise that he went about this rather mundane task with the same utter professionalism as he approached his other musical duties. Printed in 1581, Lassus' settings in four, five and six voices rely on alternating chant with polyphonic verses, and needless to say this rather workaday music is raised to a higher level by the varied talents of this remarkable composer. Die Singphoniker is an all male group which sings one to a part, probably appropriate for this rather functional music, but in a nicely resonant acoustic which particularly allows the sonorous bass tones of Christian Schmidt and the beautifully rounded counter-tenor voice of Markus Geitner to

luxuriate. These are beautifully dignified and elegantly paced readings with just the right amount of drama and dynamic variation and the inclusion of chant verses sets the polyphony perfectly in its intended context.

D. James Ross

Palestrina Missa Ad coenam Agni The
Brabant Ensemble, Stephen Rice 70' 37"
Hyperion CDA67978

+ *Ad coenam Agni providi*, *Alleluia Tulerunt Dominum*, *Angelus Domini II*, *Benedicite gentes*, *Deus Deus meus*, *Haec dies*, *Lauda anima mea*, *Regina caeli I*, *Surrexit pastor bonus & Terra tremuit* see review by Hugh Keyte on p. 17

Richafort Requiem: tribute to Josquin
Desprez The King's Singers 58' 22"

Signum SIGCD326

+ Appenzeller *Musae Jovis*; Gombert *Musae Jovis*; Jacquet of Mantua *Dum vastos Adriae fluctus*; Josquin *Nymphes nappés*, *Salve Regina*; Vinders *O mors inevitabilis*

It is useful to be reminded just what a beautiful sound the King's Singers produce. Of course, the group has none of the original singers left who succeeded in making the group a household name, but more recently they seem to be returning to the more serious business of authentic music-making. In this CD they are working with renowned musicologist and director David Skinner to explore some relatively obscure names as they compile a programme of music dedicated to Josquin. What is striking is the uniformly high standard of the music and the impeccably stylish singing. The group's first counter-tenor, David Hurley, possesses one of the most remarkably effortless male alto voices around today, and while we don't hear nearly enough from him as a soloist, the compensation is his superb work with the King's Singers. Two lovely déplorations on the death of Josquin by Appenzeller and Gombert, in which David Skinner has traced touching homages to aspects of Josquin's compositional style, open proceedings and Josquin's own magnificent *Salve Regina* follows before we hear two of the most interesting works on the CD – *Dum vastos Adriae fluctus* by Jacquet of Mantua and the exquisite seven-part *O mors inevitabilis* by Hieronymus Vinders, both with textual and musical references to Josquin. The crowning glory of the CD is Richafort's darkly superb six-part *Requiem*, one of the finest of the post-Josquin period. It was perhaps not unusual for a master such as Josquin to have had so many pupils and admirers, but to have had so many mark your passing and with music of such stunning quality must be

unique. A telling postscript is supplied by Josquin's own chanson *Nymphes, nappés*, whose canonic melody is quoted by Richafort and Gombert. Masterly programming and masterly singing. D. James Ross

I too am very impressed by the current King's Singers and the music in Josquin's honour – though having heard several recordings and sung parts of the Requiem in the last year or so, I was happy to doze off by then. I was, however, frustrated by not being able to find my copy of the fasciscule in the Josquin Complete Works devoted to motets in his memory which I'd waited 40 years to hear! CB

Thomas Tallis *Missa Salve intemerata* Winchester Cathedral Choir, David Hill Hyperion Helios CDH 55400 67' 48"

The re-release of this 2001 recording of one of Tallis' lesser-known Masses by the excellent Winchester Cathedral Choir is to be welcomed for its fresh tone and energetic singing. Presented as a pseudo-liturgical reconstruction using chants from a variety of Marian services as well as Marian antiphons by Tallis, the CD offers some of the composer's earliest polyphony framing the movements of probably Tallis's earliest Mass setting. The Hyperion recording catches the full character of this fine choir, whose trebles are in particularly fine form, supported by the essence of a building in which they can sing without losing any of the detail of the music. D. James Ross

Christopher Tye *The Western Wind Mass, Anthems and Motets* The Choir of New College Oxford, Edward Higginbottom crd 3405 49' 54"

The re-release of this 1983 recording highlights the interesting fact that here we have some superb treble solo and choral singing such as we rarely hear nowadays. The brave and generally well-tuned sounds Higginbottom gets from his boy trebles is impressive, and his treble soloist in the Mass, Ian Fountain, is outstanding. The recorded sound is also extremely good. Indeed, the only down side to this timely trawl by crd through their back catalogue is the brevity of the CD – just under 50 minutes – an acceptable length for an LP (what's that again?) but a tiny CD by modern standards. D. James Ross

Victoria *Requiem Officium defunctorum* KammerChor Saarbrücken, Georg Grün Rondeau ROP6042 57' 39"

+ *O sacrum convivium, Surrexit pastor bonus & Vidi speciosam*

With frequently recorded works like the six-part Victoria *Requiem* you really ought to have some very good reason to commit the work to CD before you record it. There are several first class recordings already on the market – the Gabrieli Consort's powerful male-voice account and the Sixteen's mixed voice performance are both definitive in their own ways. So what does the Kammerchor Saarbrücken add to this? Well, not a lot. There is nothing terribly wrong with this performance apart from some rather sheepish tenor entries and an occasional pitch mismatch between takes. Having worked very recently on the *Requiem* with my own choir Musick Fyne, I am perhaps being extra critical, but as I listened to this recording the words 'bland' and 'adequate' kept popping up in my mind. There are attempts at expressive singing, but like a tanker in the ocean this is a group which takes time to react to direction, and there is a 'sing-along' feel to a lot of the music here. If Victoria's music cries out for one thing, it is passion, and it is too often lacking in this account. The same goes for the rather fluffy accounts of the three motets which serve as programme fillers. Reading the group's cv, I find it hard to account for my lack of enthusiasm for this CD – perhaps their versatility leads to a generalised approach to differing repertoire. Whatever the reason, this is not an account of the Victoria *Requiem* I would rush out to buy. D. James Ross

Adrian Willaert *Musica Nova – Motets* Singer Pur 226' 45" (3 CDs) Oehms classics OC 835

The research into Adrian Willaert's *Musica Nova* of 1559 is almost as engaging as the beautiful music it contains. In spite of a demanding and prestigious post as chapel master of St Mark's in Venice, Willaert seems to have cultivated musical contacts with a group of émigrés from Florence, and recent research suggests that the contents of the 1559 publication were probably only 'new' in the sense of 'hitherto unpublished' and had in fact been composed over the previous thirty years. The unusual mixture of madrigals (previously recorded by Singer Pur on OC 814) and motets as well as the declaration that the music had been 'hidden and buried' seems to confirm this theory of a discreet and limited circulation amongst a discerning elite. The exquisite music certainly has the sound of work intended for cognoscenti, and the motets, ranging from short works of around five minutes'

duration to the extended sequence *O admirabile commercium* in seven sections or *partes* and in vocal compliment from four to seven voices, display a richness of invention and originality which would have delighted his admirers.

Performing one to a part in keeping with the thesis that this is music intended for private performance, Singer Pur produce a beautifully expressive sound, with an unerring sense of line and an audible familiarity with Willaert's idiom. Along with the same performers account of the madrigals, these are CDs to luxuriate in much as his original listeners would undoubtedly have done, one of whom remarked of a performance of music by Willaert 'in all my life I never knew what harmony could mean until that evening!' D. James Ross

O Rex orbis: Officium in festo sancti Karoli Exultemus, Shannon Canavin, Eric Rice Musique en Wallonie MEW 1267 78' 32"

This performance of a reconstruction by Eric Rice of Vespers and Compline for the Collegiate Church in Aachen on Saturday 27th January 1582 is a fascinating project, presenting largely unknown polyphony by the largely unknown Johannes Mangon. While Charlemagne's canonization by the schismatic Pope Paschall III was never ratified, his status as a Saint was widely observed throughout medieval Europe, and particularly in the Collegiate church at Aachen, later to be Aachen Cathedral where his magnificent golden bust is still to be seen. In the mid-16th century, Mangon was charged with collecting music for the Office of St Karolus, and the present reconstruction is derived from the resulting MSS of chant and polyphony. Most of the recording is chant with the occasional piece of polyphony by Mangon, Michael Wilhelm and the ubiquitous Lassus.

The American ensemble Exultemus performs the chant beautifully, with impeccable pronunciation and an easy familiarity, and also sing the polyphony well. The cavernous acoustic of Aachen cathedral is replaced by the rather more modest acoustic of the Chapel at West Parish, Andover, Massachusetts. It is interesting that the superb and lavishly financed Musique en Wallonie series is beginning to look across the Atlantic for performances and very encouraging that the results are of such a superlative musical and scholarly standard. D. James Ross

17th CENTURY

Buxtehude *Membra Jesu nostri* Ealing Abbey Choir & Consort, Christopher Eastwood 59' 26"
Herald HAVBCD 382

This recording does not really threaten the esteem in which several consort recordings of Buxtehude's cantata cycle are held, though it is not without its own merits. Many of the boys' solos are nicely sung though some duets are less successful, with tuning between the parts not always comfortable. The professional adult male singers and the period instrument ensemble are very capable and reflect the strength of London musicians in these areas. When things are going well the choral sound is rich and satisfying, but the singing does suffer from imprecision of entries after rests. The note tries too hard to justify the recording's existence and the writer should re-consider his use of the word 'chorus' and whether or not the size of Lassus's choir really tells us anything about the forces used a century and 200 miles away by Buxtehude.

David Hansell

Charpentier *David & Jonathas* Pascal Charbonneau *David*, Ana Quitans *Jonathas*, Neal Davies *Saul*, Frédéric Caton *Achis*, Kresimir Spicer *Joabel*, Dominique Visse *La Pythonisse*, Pierre Bessière *L'Ombre de Samuel*, Les Arts Florissants, William Christie 130'
Bel Air Classiques BAC093 DVD

Based on the d'Aix-en-Provence festival run of the production also presented at last summer's Edinburgh Festival, this film is interesting on many levels; of course the singing and the playing are every bit as impressive, not to say intensely moving – readers might recall the tears running down my face during *Jonathas's A-t-on jamais souffert?* The cameramen also do a great job of capturing the Delacroix-style choral groupings on stage, and of making the shifting dimensions of the visible scene all the more convincing. Close-ups of singers, however, are rarely flattering and for all their fabulous singing, some members of the cast's acting (especially facial expressions) was perhaps best seen from the stalls and imagined. That said, and despite purist reservations about the re-ordering of Charpentier's music to satisfy the needs of a theatrical production, this is a wonderful recording, and any fan of the composer will simply have to have it.

BC

Johann Grabbe *Madrigals* Weser Renaissance 77' 34"
cpo 777662-2

The German composer Johann Grabbe was a child prodigy, who like Schütz enjoyed a period of study in Venice with Gabrieli. His pupils seem to have been expected to publish a madrigal book as a sort of dissertation: Grabbe's was published in 1609. His most fruitful years were spent in the Weser court of Bückeburg in the years leading up to the disaster of the Thirty Years' War, where an influx of English musicians sought financial reward by fleeing the rather parsimonious James I. From them, Grabbe absorbed the Anglo-German instrumental ensemble manner. Weser Renaissance's delightful recording, full of energy and vitality with an intelligent blend of instruments and voices, provides an engaging window on a lost world of sophistication and elegance, doomed soon to be utterly destroyed by the privations of warfare. After 1622, in a heartbreaking footnote to this charmed musical career, Grabbe's name appears in court records listed only as a 'grain clerk'. D. James Ross

Hammerschmidt *Also hat Gott die Welt geliebt* Gli Scarlattisti, Jochen Arnold Carus 83.377 50' 56"

Also hat Gott die Welt geliebet, Danket dem Herrn, Der Herr ist mein Hirt, Herzlich lieb hab ich dir, Jauchzet dem Herren, Lobe den Herrn meine Seele, Oster-Dialog, Schmücket dem Herrn & Vom Leiden Christi + Rosenmüller Dixit Dominus

This is the second of two volumes by this ensemble, devoted to the church music of a much under-performed and, frankly, underrated composer. The ensemble pairs youthful sounding voices with cornetti, sackbuts and strings. Hand on heart, the singing is better in the smaller-scale pieces while some of the larger work can sound hesitant. Hammerschmidt has a touch of the Grandi and Rigatti about him, seeming most at home writing for pairs of matched voices. His instrumental ritornelli have lots in common with the other composer on the disc, Rosenmüller. Like the partner CD, he unfortunately again outshines his contemporary with his stunning B-flat major *Dixit Dominus* setting (SATB, strings & Bc) – from the opening instrumental chords, we are in a different world. The tutti singing also changes gear, and I would say this is the outstanding piece and performance across the two discs: BC

Louis Le Prince *Missa Macula non est in te* Le Concert Spirituel, Hervé Niquet Glossa GCD 921627 63' 48"

+Charpentier *Domine salvum fac Regem, Gaudete fideles, Gratiarum actiones pro restituta Regès, Magnificat H.75, O pretiosum + Overture pour le sacre d'un évêque* Lully *O dulcissime Domine*

It is well-known and can be no surprise that communities of monks and nuns had ways of adapting 'mixed voice' repertoire to their own circumstances. Let me say that this 'nuns version' is done here with great skill and performed very tastefully on its own terms. The programming concept is also strong, Charpentier motets being distributed among the mass movements. But I do have regrets that this, the composer's only surviving and otherwise un-recorded work, is not presented as he wrote it. This would be for six part vocal ensemble with continuo. My regrets are magnified by the fact that it is a strong piece which I hope to perform myself soon. Still on the negative side, I also have to wonder whether or not a cloistered community would have tackled this complex music with multiple voices to each part. This was certainly not Charpentier's expectation for the Magnificat (H75) which ends the programme – we even know who his three singers were. Mixed feelings then – fine music very well performed, but should the concept have been realised?

David Hansell

If you Google this composer do not confuse him with the late 19th-century inventor of the same name. DH

Monteverdi *Selva morale e spirituale* Vol. III The Sixteen, Harry Christophers 98' 11"
Coro COR16109

I wrote the following on the assumption that someone else was writing the review and this was an appendage adding a few specific points. That wasn't the case, but it's too late to start again. There is some very good singing and playing, but it doesn't always sound Monteverdian to me.

I'm pretty sure that pieces headed *Concertato* are for solo voices, *Cappella* for a choir. Editions often ignore collating the heading of all the partbooks, including the index: both Malipiero and the *Opera Omnia* fail to pick up such headings, as indeed I did in some of my earlier editions. The first track, *Laudate Dominum II*, is for eight soloists, Magnificat I for choir. The headings above individual parts are not always clear. In the Magnificat a4, for instance, "Et misericordia" is headed a3, which may mean that it is for three soloists or a warning that

only three parts sing. The next section is headed a4, which might mean back to the choir or maybe four solo singers, which is followed by another section a3. The Gloria has no mention of a4 but is obviously choral. Returning to *Laudate Dominum II*, the opening soprano duet has no indication, but must be for soloists, while all eight parts that almost immediately contrast are headed *Tutti*. *Concertato* still implies soloists, *tutti* confirming that the section is for all eight voices, which affects the vocal style. Logically, it might be helpful if the tenor duet was marked a2, but the edition is by no means consistent, nor are the hints in my editions always followed in the recording. However they do get *Credidi* and *Memento* right, despite my omitting *voci da Capella* from the heading. Booklet notes are often written without hearing the recording, and I suspect that John Whenham avoids discussing performance practice because of that; but there should have been some mention of the instrumental interludes from *Il ritorno d'Ulisse* inserted by Peter Holman in the *Pianto della Madonna*, a Latin parody of Arianna's Lament. CB

Monteverdi *Vespers* Vox Werdensis, Himmlische Cantorey, Knabenchor Hannover, Concerto Palatino, Musica Alta Ripa, Jorg Breiding 93' 34" (2 CDs)
Rondeau ROP7012/13

I played this a couple of days after I heard up to 700 voices singing the *Vespers* (see p. 15). Chorally, it was an amazing performance, not in the normal sense authentic, but incredibly impressive. This pair of discs has some pretensions to a 1610 style, but I totted up 45 singers on the back of the booklet, and that hardly corresponds with Monteverdi's Mantuan group of around 10. There is far too much doubling by the instruments – virtually every choral section, and even a sackbut joining the continuo in a solo section. I thought unphrased statements of the bass crotchets in *Laetatus sum* went out of fashion some time ago. *Nisi Dominus* lacks the weight of organ chords to articulate the chord changes – at least, that's how I always play it. Later, there is none of the mystery of the first section of the Gloria. And so often there's a gap in the middle of a word as if text doesn't matter. I think the conductor must have been trained as an organist, and uses variety of note-length for expression rather than shaping the verbal phrase. In *Audi caelum*, "Praestat hanc ergo" was shapeless, each bar the same as the next, and the close, one of the

most poignant sections in the work, lacked poise and the skills of a madrigal sextet. There was a sextet, but it didn't help. There's no need to list further details. Too many *Vespers* recordings are around to justify this. I won't go on with details. And I'm always suspicious of linking the *Vespers* with Venice! CB

Pistocchi *Il Martirio di San Adriano* Alessandro Carmigiani A *San Adriano*, Patrizia Vaccari S *Natalia*, Gianluca Ferrerini T *Claudio*, Sergio Foresti B *Massimiano*, Campagna de Musici, Francesco Baroni 95' 51" (2 CDs)
Pan Classics PC 10282

In the 1690s, Pistocchi was a renowned singer (alto) and successively held posts as a performer in Parma, at the Ansbach court of the Margrave of Brandenburg and in Bologna. This is the only one of his twelve substantial dramatic works to have survived complete and the recording is a re-issue of a 2001 release. His style is similar to that of Alessandro Scarlatti and the most striking feature of the score is the expressive use of varied orchestral sonorities. Although only strings and continuo are available the violas are divided, there is a clear expectation that the ensemble will be large enough to permit a *concertino/ripieno* division, and both *divisi* violas and cellos have *obligato* movements. Unfortunately the title role does not really suit the falsettist to whom it is assigned, though the other parts are sung decently enough. There is a useful multi-language essay but the libretto is in Italian only. David Hansell

Alessandro Scarlatti – *Profano e Sacro/Corbiau*. Avanti 1044-2: 66' 46"

The camp photos of young Belgian countertenor Dominique Corbiau that adorn this CD are reminiscent of the images used for the early recordings of Max Emanuel Cenčić. And like Cenčić, Corbiau started out singing treble in a boy's choir. Whether he will go on to achieve Cenčić's eminence is another matter. On the evidence of this attractive collection of overtures and arias from Alessandro Scarlatti's operas and oratorios, including a number of first recordings, it would seem unlikely. The voice is well produced and Corbiau has a sensitive approach to the music, but he has a wide vibrato and a lack of ability to sustain a cantabile line, which given a choice of arias that largely favours slower numbers does not help his cause. His

Italian diction, too, is at present woeful. But what really rules this disc out of serious consideration is the tasteless orchestral support, which is not only dominated by an extremely active and anachronistic harp continuo, which seems to be rapidly becoming as endemic a problem as 'silly pluckers' (although I suppose it's actually a branch of silly plucking). In addition, a number of items include the quite absurd, superfluous addition of percussion à la Hespèrien XXI's ubiquitous Pedro Estevan. There are also a number of other places where it sounds as if Scarlatti's orchestration has been 'improved', but I don't have scores to hand so cannot be sure of details. No matter, for this is a disc to avoid unless you're attempting to catch up with every note Scarlatti wrote (and in this case more than a few he didn't). Brian Robins

Schütz *Lukaspassion* (SWV 480) & *Die Sieben Worte* (SWB 478) Ulrike Hofbauer, Stefan Kunath, Jan Kobow, Tobias Mähger, Felix Rumpf, Felix Schwandtke, The Sirius Viols, Hille Perl, Lee Santana, Ludger Rémy, Dresdner Kammerchor, Hans-Christoph Rademann 71' 06"
Complete Recording, Vol. 6
Carus 83.253
Erbarm dich mein o Herre Gott, SWV 447

I was hoping that BC would send me the Musica Fiata CD. When people started to propagate Schütz in the UK, the tendency was to look for works of some substance. But that didn't work – or at least, I wasn't convinced. My enthusiasm for Schütz is for the vast range of Latin and German church pieces which can be assembled in groups as the conductor feels desirable. I see no virtue in listening to Passions except at church on the proper day – but UK churches have their own traditions: and even the Seven Words are less effective than one would expect. (Yes: there are enough pencil marks in my score to show that I've played it!) The work that really stands up as a masterpiece is *Erbarm dich mich*, which I see was performed by Peter Holman's Ars Nova with Nancy Long as singer, several people I still know 40 years later, and me playing the organ. It's an amazing piece, but spoiled on the CD by the instruments biased towards the bass and the insistence of the singer on adding superfluous embellishments to music that needs to be plain. How come that no-one has previously recorded it? The Luke Passion is well performed, but what does it do? However, I'm sure the Rademann series will succeed again. CB

Schütz *Musikalische Exequien & Motetten*
Stuttgarter Hymnus-Chorknaben, Rainer
Johannes Homburg, Musica Fiata, Roland
Wilson 62' 22"

MDG Scene MDG 902 1784-6
+SWV385, 388, 432, 433 & 448

This enterprising CD features instrumental music by Johann Hermann Schein, motets by Schütz performed instrumentally, *Das Wort ward Fleisch*, the virtually unknown *Gesang der drei Männer im feurigen Ofen* and the *Musikalische Exequien*. The instruments are the superb Musica Fiata directed by Roland Wilson and the voices the young amateur singers of the Hymnus Choristers directed by Rainer Johannes Homburg. The latter give very dynamic accounts of Schütz's music, and while one is constantly aware of their age and amateur status, the musical experience is generally pretty convincing. The strings and wind instruments allow for completely engaging performances of motets as instrumental pieces, and of the instrumental music proper a major eight-part Pavane by Hans Hake, one of the Hamburg circle of William Brade, is a particular highlight. If you can overlook occasional fluffy choral moments, the best of this CD is very good indeed and the massed voices and wind instruments produce a very fine sound. *D. James Ross*

Weckmann *Conjuratio* Ricercar Consort,
Philippe Pierlot 79' 00"
Mirare MIR204

*Herr wenn ich nur dich habe, Weine nicht, Wenn
der Herr die Gefangenen zu Zion, Wie liegt die
Stadt so wüste & Zion spricht* + organ music

This is an outstanding recording of six fine (and substantial) sacred concertos and three equally powerful organ works, played on the notable Schnitger-based instrument at Steinkirchen. A 'proper' organ is also used for the continuo. (The booklet list of recording venues is not quite correct.) Weckmann was a chorister under Schütz and later organist of the Jacobikirche in Hamburg, for which post he had to pass muster in front of an audition panel that included Scheidemann and Johann Praetorius. Unsurprisingly, his musical style is similar to that of later Schütz, with instrumental parts prominent in the texture and outnumbering the vocal lines. Care has been taken to perform the music in an appropriate mid-17th century style and the results are enthralling. I really can't imagine anyone with early music sympathies listening to the first thirty seconds of track 1 and not being hooked for the next hour or so. *David Hansell*

*Delicatessen: A Choice Selection of Early
English Songs* Kate Semmens S, Steven
Devine hpscd 65' 58"
Devine Music DMCD001

Arne, Blow, Boyce, Croft, Greene, Purcell, Stanley

This was sent to me by Steven to cheer me up: it may cheer our readers too. I was a bit puzzled by the German title: I don't think *Delicatessen* was Anglicised as early as 1700, but the programme was recorded in Germany. The packaging is ingenious, with four foldouts, facsimiles of the title pages of *Orpheus Britannicus* and *Clio and Euterpe*, pictures of Kate and Steven, and any other space filled with small drawings of items of food. An ideal present to leave behind after visiting a friend. As for the music, it really did cheer me up, and I'm happy to recommend it. *CB*

*Hochzeit zwischen Rhein & Themse
(Celebration music for the marriage of
Prince Elector Frederick V to Elizabeth
Stuart)* I Ciarlitani 74' 13"
Christophorus CHR 77371

This CD derives from a programme first performed in 1996 in Heidelberg to celebrate the city's 800th anniversary and marks the dynastically important marriage between Prince Elector Frederick V of the Palatine and Elizabeth Stuart, daughter of King James I of Great Britain, by which eventually the House of Hanover came to the British throne. Accounts of the lavish celebrations of the wedding in London, although not all of the music, have survived, and a degree of borrowing from equivalent contemporary wedding masques has allowed the present convincing reconstruction of the main festivities. It has been possible to integrate contributions from most of the famous musicians who are known to have been in attendance. Something of a shadow was cast over the proceedings by the untimely death of Prince Henry in 1612, and this is reflected in the inclusion of items from the *Songs of Mourning* by John Coprario. Otherwise it is celebration and sycophantic royal praise all the way, and the voices and instruments of I Ciarlitani bring a fine energy and authenticity to the proceedings. The programme goes on to follow Elizabeth into her prolonged widowed exile in Holland as the Winter Queen, marked by Michael East's beautiful setting of *Ye meaner beauties* by her loyal supporter Sir Henry Wotton. *D. James Ross*

*Infernum in Paradise: consort music for
viols (Dowland, Holborne) and consort*

songs (Dowland). Musically Humors led by
Julien Léonard treble viol, with Eugénie
Warnier S 71'59"

A warm welcome to this French group playing English music from around 1600, mostly familiar repertoire. The viols play with lovely shape, beautifully varied articulation, and a full sound, helped along by two lutes and two virginals/harpsichord and an organ. The consorts are mostly dances by Holborne and Dowland with *De la Court* by Robert Parsons. The recording opens with Holborne's pavan *Infernum*, and concludes with the anonymous song *In Paradise*. The playing is unfailingly beautiful, the treble well balanced so that the inner parts, for example of Dowland's *Sir Henry Umpton's Funerall*, come to the fore when needed. The programming is intelligent, with ideas followed through by successive items, sometimes obviously (*If my complaints* followed by *Captain Digorie Piper's Galliard*) and sometimes by association of ideas. All very good players, they ornament freely and with good effect, energetic and exhilarating in the brisk, well-articulated movements, and a lovely, moving legato to the doleful.

The singer has a beautiful voice with excellent technique, and sings with engaging intensity. Her vibrato is controlled and she uses it judiciously, not at all continuously. The lute songs balance her fullish sound by having two lutes, and/or consort of viols, which suits Dowland's *Come again*, its passionate sequence delivered with theatrical drama. Her words are nicely clear, and she sings with real understanding, so that it is a compliment of sorts that one does notice her French accent. The high pitch, on a few occasions such as in *Daphne*, encourages a less appropriate operatic sound on some notes, but this is balanced by the intensity she brings to, for example, *Sweet was the song the Virgin sung*, with lovely top f entries with no vibrato. Her bird calls in *This merry pleasant spring* are brilliant. The ensemble overall is very beautiful, and the variety makes for very enjoyable listening. Highly recommended. *Robert Oliver*

*Tarbh: Ceòl le Raghnaill Mac Ailein Òig,
music by Ronald MacDonald of Morar
(1662-1741) adapted from traditional pipe,
fiddle and vocal settings, and performed
on a replica of the famous mediaeval
Scottish Queen Mary clarsach by Simon
Chadwick 49' 12"*

RGH 3

www.earlygaelicharp.info

I don't know what to make of this and was puzzled why music dating from the decades around 1700 should be played on a reconstruction of a 15th-century instrument. The element of reconstruction of the music itself is very high. We've had difficulties finding someone to write about the CD. Our normal reviewer of Scottish historical music didn't want to review it, I don't have enough knowledge to do so, and BC, though Scottish, is more interested in German baroque music. The booklet isn't going to convert the uninitiated. If anyone would like to give it a more positive review, let me know! CB

LATE BAROQUE

Albinoni *The Collected Concertos for Oboes and Strings* Anthony Robson & Catherine Latham, Collegium Musicum 90, Simon Standage 199' 20" (3 CDs) Chandos CHAN 0792

The collection of the complete Concerti a Cinque op. 7 and op. 9, first recorded in 1995-97, is here re-issued complete in a boxed set with informative notes by Michael Talbot. The shorter op. 7 set fits on one CD, while the more expansive op. 9 are spread over two discs. Op. 7 & 9 each have nos 1, 4, 7 & 10 for strings, 2, 5, 8 & 11 with one oboe and 3, 6, 9 & 12 with 2 oboes. Albinoni's concerti always have a busy, at times unrelenting texture, but there are nevertheless some gems amongst the set, notably no. 9/2 (one of the few in a minor key) and the chaconne-like second movement of op. 9/4, as well as the three-movement operatic Sinfonia on disc 3. Some may find dipping into these works more rewarding than listening to a whole disc in one sitting. Indeed, others may think that the dilettante composer would have been better employed in the family business of playing-card manufacture! It is nevertheless good to have the whole set available in one collection. In spite of the recording being over fifteen years old, it wears well, and the playing is both technically and stylistically always appropriate.

Ian Graham-Jones

Albinoni *Six Sonatas for Flute and Continuo, Op. 6* Ensemble Barocco Padovano Sans Souci (Mario Folena fl Terrell Stone theorbo, bar guitar, Carlo Zanardi bar cello Aldo Fiorentin hpscd) Dynamic DM8032 65' 11"

Albinoni's twelve *Trattenimenti armonici per camera* for violin and continuo were published by Roger in Amsterdam in

about 1711 and twice more in London in 1718 and 1732, the title being translated by Walsh as 'An entertainment of harmony'. There were contemporary transcriptions for flute but Mario Folena has chosen to do his own of the six most suited to the instrument. The result is convincing and only someone familiar with the original score would be aware of the occasional octave transpositions and removal of double stopping. These are stylish performances with lyrical slow movements, lively allegros and plenty of appropriate additions to Albinoni's Italian ornamentation. Folena plays on an Italian baroque flute of about 1730 and is well supported, perhaps occasionally over-supported but never drowned, by a continuo group of cello, theorbo and harpsichord. This recording originally appeared in 1995 but certainly merits a reissue. Victoria Helby

Bach *Sei Solo a Violino senza Basso accompagnato Volume 1: The Sonatas* Gunar Letzbor vln 61' 38" Pan Classics PC 10286

Approach with caution! Letzbor has written in the booklet notes for previous recordings about his quest for what he considers a Holy Grail of recordings – a quality of sound that matches what he actually hears when he is playing. Everyone knows that when one talks over the telephone, one's voice is distorted by the loss of upper and lower frequencies in transmission, so it sounds differently to the listener than it would have, had the conversation been in the same room. Likewise I barely recognise my own voice when I hear it played back on video. There is something to be said for Letzbor's approach, in that this *does* sound like a rather better version of me playing the music, but as I hear it at the violin, but I'm not sure that is actually what I want to hear on a recording, for it is, in its own way, a corruption of reality. The sound seems rough at the edges, and that will surely challenge the most forgiving of critics (even Letzbor fans, I suspect!) BC

Bach *Sechs Sonaten und Partiten* Gottfried Schneider vln 141' 31" (2 CDs) Oehms Classics OC 868

This set of all six of Bach's works for unaccompanied violin was recorded around the same time as the version by Rüdiger Lotter (also on Oehms Classics) that I reviewed in the last issue. The two sets of performances could scarcely be more different. Although he is not afraid

to use open strings and minimal vibrato, they metallic ring gives Schneider away, as do various "modern" technical approaches to the challenges Bach sets all fiddlers who tackle the works (the spreading of chords in the opening sections of the famed Chaconne, for example). Of their class, these are among the best readings I have heard for a long time, and should be played to all aspiring young violinists. BC

Bach *Six Sonatas for harpsichord and violin BWV 1014-19* Catherine Manson, Ton Koopman 99' 33" Challenge Classics CC72560

Ton Koopman's harpsichord playing is always an inspiration – expressive in sound and never dull or routine. It is here matched by Catherine Manson in a likewise controlled and stylistically aware performance of the set. These sonatas are perhaps less immediately attractive than the unaccompanied partitas, for example, but repay careful listening. For within the limitations set by Bach of violin and often the two-part contrapuntal writing for harpsichord lies an astounding variety of textures to explore. Particularly noteworthy are the varied textures Bach exploits in the *adagios* – the pure melody and accompaniment in the C Minor (no. 4) (almost Schubertian in places!) and the amazing double-stopping movement in the F Minor (no. 5). The disc culminates with the grand five-movement G Major sonata, and has the added bonus of two additional movements for this sonata discarded by Bach in the latest revision. The notes (by Christoff Wolff) are both scholarly and informative. Ian Graham-Jones

Bach *Brandenburg Concertos* with Shostakovich *Preludes op. 87 nos 2, 4, 5, 7, 11, 18; fugue op. 87 no. 7* Ensemble Caprice, Mathias Maute dir 92' 55" (2 CDs) Analekta AN2 9996-7

Now there's a whacky idea! Why not have a prelude or fugue for piano by Shostakovich to precede each of the Brandenburgs? At least it could just about fill two CDs. With Ensemble Caprice playing on period instruments, the logic of having a period 1950s piano for the Shostakovich doesn't quite fit, so Maute has arranged the pieces for baroque ensemble – strings, with horns, oboes, flute and bassoon in various combinations, with one (no. 2) for harpsichord solo. These make attractive arrangements and generally give a serene contrast to the hyperactive concertos. Ensemble Caprice

has clearly set out to deliver something different from a 'standard' Brandenburg interpretation. Tempi in the faster movements are, to say the least, 'brisk'. Indeed, after a decisive and crisp opening movement of no. 3, for example, they could not wait to be rid of the two plain linking chords (no attempt at an improvisation, or slow movement) before achieving Mach 3 in lift-off mode for the concluding *Allegro*. Even the slower movements give little feeling of repose; some may find these somewhat over-phrased in places. There is plenty of rubato (try dancing to the *Polacca* of no. 1) and sudden changes of dynamics, as well as ornamentation on repeated phrases or sections that pass you by in a flash. The overall sound is very orchestral, although achieved with a band of chamber proportions. Even with the Shostakovich, the total timing for Maute is four minutes less than two other period Brandenburg recordings I have. If you want to be shocked, try this; otherwise leave it alone!

Ian Graham-Jones

A Tribute to Faustina Bordoni Vivica Genaux mS, Cappella Gabetta, Andrés Gabetta 67'08"

deutsche harmonia mundi 88691944592

Handel Arias from *Alessandro*, *Radamisto* & *Tolomeo* Hasse Arias from *Artaserse*, *Il Ciro riconosciuto*, *Didone abbandonata*, *Numa Pompilio* & *Zenobia*

The name of the mezzo Faustina Bordoni, one of the greatest singers of the 18th century, is inextricably linked to those of two composers: Handel, six of whose London operas featured her, and Hasse, who married Faustina in 1730. By all accounts, she must have been a gift for any composer, an outstanding actress of striking appearance with a near flawless technique. Quantz reported that she 'succeeded equally well in furious, amorous, and tender parts, all of which are represented in this recital, in which the lion's share concentrates on roles written by Hasse for his wife, the recital ending with 'Ah! Che mancar mi sento', the touching aria he wrote in memory of Faustina after her death in 1781. The Hasse group includes among its treasures a number of arias that seem to be first recordings, most notably the big accompanied recitative and aria from *Numa Pompilio* (Hubertusberg, nr. Dresden, 1741). The aria, written in Hasse's most beguiling cantabile style, is nothing less than a love duet between voice and oboe, the two intertwining with a mutual

sensual delight briefly interrupted by a more animated central section. 'Padre inguisto' (*Cajo Fabricio*; Rome, 1732), also new to disc, introduces another kind of heroine much favoured by Hasse, the dignified, put-upon woman who finds strength in adversity. The aria is formally interesting, with an opening section in totally contrasted moods giving it the effect of the cavatina-cabaletta aria that would later become so popular. In addition to the Hasse arias there are also three of his overtures and arias from Handel's *Radamisto*, *Alessandro* and *Tolomeo*.

The much-admired Vivica Genaux is in many respects an ideal singer for this repertoire, since she shares many characteristics with Faustina: a rich, powerful mezzo as capable of shaping a cantabile as throwing off coloratura passagework with brilliant, but unaffected accuracy. She also, mercifully, owns to a trill, a feature for which Faustina was extravagantly praised. I do think Genaux is apt to stray too far from the melodic line in some of her ornamentation, but she always avoids the vulgarity that is too often today such a disturbing feature of decoration. The orchestral playing is highly supportive and accomplished, contributing much to the strongly positive impression made by a lovely disc.

Brian Robins

Corellimania Concerti Grossi Harmonie Universelle, Florian Deuter, Mónica Waisman Accent ACC 24281 72'53"

Corelli Op 6/1, 4 & 7 in D in version with trumpets & trombone; Geminiani Concerto 12 after Corelli's *Follia*; Locatelli Concerto Op 1/4 in e; Mossi Concerto Op 3/2 in d; Vivaldi Concerto for 2 violins in F, RV765

This disc sets out to demonstrate the huge impact of Corelli's op. 6 concertos throughout the baroque period, with three of that printed set with added trumpets and trombones as "an experiment based on historical brass instrumental practice", one of his trios arranged by his most prominent disciple, Geminiani, as well as works by perhaps less likely candidates, Mossi, Locatelli and even Vivaldi. The last piece could hardly have been better chosen to show the Red Priest's debt to his Roman predecessor. While I enjoyed much of the string playing, and while I'm still not entirely convinced about harps in the continuo group (especially in conjunction with lutes and keyboards), there must be evidence for these performers to opt for that approach, and I certainly don't find it offensive. I'm not going to say the same about the wind playing, though – the

bright sound of trumpets does add something of the *solenne* to proceedings, but the trombones are simply overpowering; part of the beauty of Corelli's music for me is the clearly defined lines of the polyphony and rasping brass does them no favours, I'm afraid. I'd like to hear more of this repertoire from these artists, though.

BC

François Couperin Pièces de violes Paolo Pandolfo b. viol with Amélie Chemin b viol, Thomas Boysen theorbo and baroque guitar, Markus Hünninger harpsichord. 59'50"

One of the aspects of Paolo Pandolfo's playing that sets him apart is his dynamic control. If you add to this the freedom his masterful technique gives him, his musical imagination – extravagant, pushing always at the limits of his instrument, the natural eloquence of his playing, a theatrical approach to this least theatrical of composers, and the gorgeous sound of his (attributed to) Bertrand 7-string bass you have an intoxicating mix. He plays with complete freedom within the beat, so the dance movements have a satisfying rhythm, with that whimsical quality, lengthening the dotted notes almost too much, then hurrying the short notes which follow, catching up just in time. He audaciously adds ornaments and graces, with lovely control, and this to Couperin, whose music responds to this like Carew's 'amorous marigold' to the sun. Note particularly the *Sarabande Grave* in the E minor suite, which is ravishing with its Marais-like runs and graces added. It's misleading to single out movements, they are all characterised wonderfully, but an example of his freedom is his spiccato bowing in the *Passacaille ou Chaconne* of that suite.

The recording also includes the two suites and the *Plainte pour les violes* from *Les goûts réunis* for two bass viols, and Amélie Chemin, playing a nicely contrasting Colichon copy, matches Pandolfo's playing beautifully. In fact the continuo team are equal to the drama and impulse throughout, nowhere more so than in the very eloquent performance of *Pompe Funebre*. It almost goes without saying that *La Chemise blanche* is impossibly fast, faster than I've ever heard it, but he draws out the final sequence to the top e' so beautifully and so sweetly that all misgivings are banished. It's a stunning recording – music of the highest quality, played with, in turn, lyricism, virtuosity, and a new freedom, yet respect and insight into this most fastidious composer's clear intentions in

all his paraphernalia of bowings, phrasing marks and ornamentation. My record of the year.

Robert Oliver

Couperin Concert Royaux Clavecin en Concert, Luc Beauséjour 60' 45"

Analekta AN 2 9993

Couperin offers performers various options for the instrumentation of these charming pieces and it may well be that at Louis XIV's Sunday chamber concerts this changed from movement to movement so that all the resident virtuosi had the chance to impress their patron. However, I think it most unlikely that colleagues ever doubled each other or replaced each other at a double bar. Both of those events are regular occurrences here and may well colour your view and enjoyment of these performances. Having said that, what is done here is done outstandingly well and with a certain logic, the highlight being the *Air tendre* of the second concert, a bass viol solo. The English version of the flautist's biography should never have found its way into print.

David Hansell

Handel Alcina

see p. 24

Handel Giulio Cesare Lawrence Zazzo *Giulio Cesare*, Natalie Dessay *Cleopatra*, Isabel Leonard *Sesto*, Varduhi Abrahamyan *Cornelia*, Christophe Dumaux *Tolomeo*, Nathan Berg *Achilla*, Dominique Visse *Niremo*, Aimery Lefèvre *Curio*, Chœur de l'Opéra national de Paris, Le Concert d'Astrée, Emmanuelle Haïm 217'

Virgin Classics 0709399 9 2 DVDs

This production could also be called *Giulio Cesare in Museo*, for it's Handel meets *A Night in the Museum*. The curtain rises on museum hands moving and opening packing cases, and throughout the opera these hands wander on to move more props (and protagonists), and the curator comes in now and then looking confused as his beautifully packed exhibits are not where he left them. Yes, it is French post-modernism, but it works surprisingly well, and there are some nice moments: the first chorus, sung Muppet-style by classical busts; the appearance of Pompei's head (a massive bust); Act II's meeting between Cesare and Tolomeo (they sit in their exhibition cases) and Act III's battle between Cleopatra and Tolomeo (as statues carried by museum hands). The Mount Parnassus scene in Act II is lovely – we go from the classical section of the museum to its 18th-century art section: the orchestral muses appear on

stage in shepherdess' dresses and Cleopatra inhabits a Claude-style landscape.

It's a slight shame that the singers seem to have been left to their own devices as regards acting, and this can sometimes lead to odd behaviour or woodenness: Zazzo must learn to do more, or perhaps less, with his arms; Dumaux's *Tolomeo* is pretty much the same as it was in McVicar's Glyndebourne production, and is never more than a sum of parts. However, the cast is on the whole very watchable (although some of the camera work is unhelpful). Dominique Visse's individual voice may not be to everyone's taste, but he was born to play *Nireno*, a part which he clearly enjoys. Nathan Berg is both a fine voice and a fine actor: he captures admirably Achilla's rough-but-honest rogue. *Sesto* (Isabel Leonard) is a disappointment – the voice is competent but unremarkable, but she has not worked out how a male moves, and so looks awkward and a bit ridiculous. Varduhi Abrahamyan is, by contrast, totally comfortable with the dignified *Cornelia*, despite not being helped by Haïm's tempi (see below). Lawrence Zazzo and Christophe Dumaux have to be one of the best Cesare-Tolomeo combinations around; both are in splendid form in this production. I can't get on with Natalie Dessay's voice, which I find harsh and far too vibrato-laden; however, she is a brilliant actress, and watching her is a much better experience than listening to recital discs. Her accidental revelation that she is Cleopatra is gorgeous, as is her recitative 'E pur così un giorno'. But I had to skip much of the following 'Piangero': too much, too wide vibrato, and tasteless da capo ornaments. That's not quite the right word, for the singers, under Haïm's direction, constantly divert from and pervert the musical line. Surely, if Handel wrote an upwards direction in his music, he meant you to go up? Why can't ornaments and embellishments be just that?

So onto the musical direction. Emmanuelle Haïm has regressed to the mean, and so have her tempi. She has settled into the character of a fashionable Handelian conductor, waving her arms about theatrically to signal Important Moments, and charging in with extra continuo oomph to try to make up for the drama that's lacking because her fasts are too slow and her slows are too fast and her recitatives are staid. This performance is indistinguishable from one by, say, Laurence Cummings or Christian Curnyn: Haïm should be better than this. Nevertheless, this is a good and enjoyable production, and well worth buying.

Katie Hawks

William Hayes Instrumental & Vocal Music Evelyn Tubb S, Corelli Orchestra, Warwick Cole 71' 57"

COR201

'World premiere recordings' announces the cover. Well, yes, in the literal sense they are, having been recorded some two years before Anthony Rooley's fine *Glossa* 2 CD issue reviewed in *EMR* 153. But two of the six cantatas that formed the substance of that set also appear here, one of them, *Ode to Echo*, performed by the same singer, Evelyn Tubb. Incidentally, the opening aria of that cantata finds William Hayes putting into highly effective practice his strong advocacy of mimetic or imitative word setting, a topic that formed a central part of his famous dispute with Charles Avison.

The disc now to hand is more concerned with instrumental music, including as it does two sturdy concerti grossi, a Harpsichord Concerto in G, and a Trio Sonata in E minor dating from 1775, probably Hayes' last completed work. The harpsichord concerto, one of the first to be written in England according to Simon Heighes' note, is particularly notable for a rhapsodic central Andante in the minor that probes unexpected depths, while the concerti grossi, composed for the concerts instituted by Hayes from 1748 in Oxford's Holywell Music Room, are also progressive in being among the first after Geminiani add a viola to the concertino. All this music demonstrates that the Oxford Professor of Music was considerably more than simply a capable academic. The performances by the Cheltenham-based period-instrument Corelli Orchestra are thoroughly satisfying – not always perfect as to ensemble and intonation, but imbued with a winning honesty of purpose and evident affection for the music. Both Rooley's *Glossa* and this disc demand a place in the collection of anyone who cares for 18th century English music.

Brian Robins

Janitsch Sonate da camera Vol. III

Notturna, Christopher Palameta

Atma Classique ACD2 2626

op. 1/5, 3/1*, 4/1, 5/1 & 7/5

This third installment in a projected complete recording of Janitsch's quartets involving oboe (the director of Notturna being himself one of the most lyrical and dexterous oboists of our time, seemingly preferring to carve out a fine career in chamber music). One thing I particularly like about this series is the way Notturna mix up the scorings – this programme has

fabulous pieces for oboe, violin & viola, oboe, viola & cello, flute, oboe & gamba, and two for oboe with a pair of flutes (all with continuo, obviously!) Throughout, each of the three voices is beautifully shaped and the lines balanced so that no one instrument dominates the sound – in fact, it is a virtuoso display of the fine art of musical dialogue. In no small part is this also due to Janitsch's supremely fertile imagination, contrapuntal ingenuity and delight in rhythmic subtlety. If you missed volumes 1 and 2, do order them! BC

Janitsch Berliner Quartette Il Gardellino

Accent ACC 24262 65' 10"

Quartets in C, c, D, G & g ("O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden")

This is a re-release from 2000/2001 and I remember being impressed on its first appearance, especially Marcel Ponsele's beautiful oboe line in the quartet that features the celebrated "Passion" chorale. The playing in general is very fine; what else would expect from such a superstar line-up? The music is not quite so clearly identified as in the previous release (not a crime in itself, since the transmission of the multifarious versions of each of the composer's quartets is complex – quite why these five should be designated "Berlin" works is beyond me, though. If you think a single disc of Janitsch's lovely quartets will suffice, you could do a lot worse than buy this; I'm in it for the long haul with Palameta & Co. BC

Porpora Aminta – Pastoral Cantatas

Marina De Liso mS, Stile Galante, Stefano Aresi 69' 51"

Pan Classics PC 10285 + Cello Sonata in F

This is an exceptionally rewarding addition to the happily ever-increasing Porpora discography, infinitely superior to the poor disc of Vinci cantatas with Stile Galante that I reviewed in *EMR* 148. The reason for that lies with two factors: the intelligence and keen musical sensitivity of mezzo Marina De Liso, and the use of a far more suitable recording location (a chamber in the 14th century Castello Albani, Ugnano) for this intimate music. Despite the common pastoral theme, each of these five cantatas has its own distinctive character, superbly caught by De Liso, whose articulation and projection of text and expressive realization of the frequently enchanting music is exemplary. Two of the cantatas seem to me particularly engaging. While given a pastoral setting, in *Questa dunque è la selva* nature is employed as an evocative back-

drop to the lover's increasingly distracted emotions, emotions that somehow probe more intensely than the usual conceits of pastoral love and loss. *D'Amor la bella pace* takes the form of a narrative in which an unhappy lover eavesdrops on an amorous couple, retailing their words in a surpassingly lovely opening aria in which De Liso's figuration is exquisitely turned. The sole caveat I have about the singing is the occasional tendency to over-egg decoration in da capo repeats, but that is not so difficult to forgive in the light of something like the unforgettable mezzo voce cadence on the word 'deliro' in the final aria of *Questa dunque*.

The instrumental support, two violins and continuo, is refined, while we are also given the Cello Sonata in F and some delightful little keyboard exercises, the latter recently discovered. Stefano Aresi contributes an informative note and full texts with English translations are provided to round off justly a truly memorable production. Brian Robins

Rameau in Caracas Soloists of the Simón Bolívar Orchestra of Venezuela, Bruno Procopio 63' 58"

paraty 512120

Music from *Acanthe et Céphise*, *Castor et Pollux*, *Dardanus*, *Les Indes Galantes* & *Zoroastre*

We wouldn't normally review modern instrument Rameau but this recording, played by leading members of this famous orchestra, might in time be seen as the beginning of period instrument playing in their country. It also includes some unfamiliar repertoire in the shape of the overture to *Acanthe et Céphise* – a richly scored depiction of a firework display. The players clearly took this brilliant music to their hearts – one of them even declared it the best he'd ever played. The only thing that grates stylistically is the intermittent added percussion which simply detracts from those places where the composer asked for it. The interview-style note talks about the recording project and introducing the players to music and a playing style entirely new to them though says little about the programme itself. David Hansell

Rameau Pièces de Clavecin en Concerts & Suite en La Bruno Porcopio hpscd, Patrick Bismuth, François Lazarevitch, Emmanuelle Guigues 79' 01"

paraty 412201

This is a companion release to *Rameau in Caracas* (see above), the harpsichordist here being that collection's conductor.

The *Pièces en concert* are usually deemed a sufficient programme in themselves but here we are given a twenty-minute bonus of solo harpsichord music from the composer's 1728 collection. In some ways, this lively yet unfussy playing on a fine instrument is the most enjoyable segment of the disc. In the ensembles I'm afraid I could not sympathise with the decision to use both flute and violin within a *concert* – for me it's one or the other throughout to give each set of pieces their own integrity – still less their use together either in unison or octaves. The low point of this approach, ironically, is the addition of a piccolo to the *tambourins* of the third *concert*. This is anything but *le bon goût*, even where the technical execution is very good. The note (English and French) is in the increasingly popular interview format. David Hansell

Rameau Pièces de Clavecin en Concerts Ensemble Masques, Olivier Forti 64' 45"

Atma Classique ACD2 2624

Ensemble Masques give us just the five *concerts*, but in the order 4, 2, 1, 3, 5. They do not play quite as fast and loose with the instrumentation as the performance reviewed above but still deny the individual *concert* an overall personality. Though I would be the last person to question the importance of attention to detail in French Baroque music (or any other repertoire, come to that) I do feel that these performers over-emphasise the gesture at the expense of the line. Thus the music comes across as a sequence of myriad moments rather than 16 movements or even five *concerts*. In summary, the playing is rather laboured. The essay is an interesting account of Rameau's socio-cultural milieu and the possible origins of the movement titles. David Hansell

Telemannisches Gesangbuch Klaus Mertens B, Vincent Frisch S, Thomas Fritzsche, Stefan Maass, Michael Schönheit 77' 30"

Carus 83.340

Telemann seems never to have done anything by halves. His 'Collected Lutheran Hymnal' contains 500 chorale melodies (with figured basses) and 2000 texts, and he hoped that users would send him any he had omitted so that a genuinely complete hymnal could be compiled. If I'm absolutely honest I anticipated that listening to a relatively modest selection of 30 might be rather dull; but I really enjoyed it. The performances successfully invoke domestic use of the chorales and it is especially interesting to hear melodies

well-known from JSB's organ and vocal music shorn of his little decorations and elaborate harmonisations. Klaus Mertens sings with incomparable artistry, though is careful to avoid over-sophistication, and his young colleague's contributions have great charm if not always the last degree of finesse. Apart from anything else, their clear diction in this simple music could be studied by non-German singers to their very great advantage. It is a real shame that the booklet gives only texts and no translations. This month's welcome surprise.

David Hansell

Telemann Lukas Passion 1728 Wolfgang Klose, Marcus Ullmann, Christian Hilz, Raimonds Spogis, Thilo Dahlmann *TTBarBarB*, Kölner Akademie, Michael Alexander Willens 102' 45" (2 CDs) cpo 777 754-2

This work is classified as an oratorio passion, as opposed to a passion oratorio... The structure is slightly odd for modern listeners as the story is divided into five sizeable portions mostly consisting of (accompanied) recitative and chorales, each preceded by a "preparation" made up of the more familiar sequences with arias. Another distinctive feature is the fact that, with the exception of the maiden, all the parts of the drama are taken by male voices, although the chorus is the normal mix. Instruments include flute, recorder, oboe, bassoon (one of each) and strings. I found the piece hard work, to be honest. The music is ok, often much better than that, but the singers do not seem to be HIP specialists, and their lack of focus, and the desperate shortage of extended lyrical passages. Some of the instrumental contributions are very beautiful. BC

Vivaldi Le Quattro Stagioni I Musici, Antonio Anselmi 54' 54" Dynamic CDS 760

Also includes Britten's "Simple Symphony" from the group's original 1961 recording of the Four Seasons

50 years after they first recorded Vivaldi's four most famous violin concertos, this group – who were for a long time the only serious advocates of the composer's less well-known output – have issued a new interpretation; with a line-up of 33221 and harpsichord, these are lively and dramatic performances, in the I Musici style, clearly influenced by all of the HIP activity of the intervening years. The solo cello line is restored in Winter's central *Largo*. The filler is unexpected, though historically a logical

choice – Britten's (Anything but) Simple Symphony, given a tremendously youthful rendition. Times may have changed and I Musici may no longer be the first choice for many of our readers, but this recording shows they are still a force to reckon with. Their instruments include two Amati violins, a Guarneri viola, and a Storioni cello (the Beethoven review below reveals a coincidence), all strung – the booklet proudly notes – with Pirastro's. BC

Vivaldi 6 Concertos pour flûte La Simphonie du Marais, Hugo Reyne 60' La Simphonie du Marais 605012 RV 108, 428, 433, 439–441 & 565 (*Largo*)

The French period instrument ensemble La Simphonie du Marais was founded in 1987 and for the last nine years has been based at La Chabotterie in the Vendée where there is an annual early music festival. The group varies in size according to requirements, and for this recording it is a small orchestra with six violins, viola, two cellos, double bass and archlute. Hugo Reyne uses a variety of alto recorders and a voice flute (recorder in D) for his performance of two concerti for recorder and four intended for flute, all at the original pitch. For the concerto in C minor RV 441 he was lent an elaborately carved early 18th century recorder attributed to the Nuremberg maker Gahn which is illustrated in the rather rambling sleeve notes. Reyne writes that he is keen to avoid excesses and exaggerated versions of the concertos, but he is not afraid to add appropriate ornaments and a couple of big cadenzas. Mostly the atmospheric effects are purely musical but the players do enjoy themselves with a one-minute introduction before *La Tempesta di Mare* with seaside effects – gulls, waves, wind and so on, created on their instruments. This is rather fun, but I do wish they had resisted the urge to announce this concerto and the other two with titles, *Il Gardellino* and *La Notte*. Fortunately the announcements are extremely brief and this recording is well worth hearing, with both lyrical and lively playing, a good dynamic range and some really expressive slow movements. Victoria Helby

Alleluia Julia Lezhneva S, Il Giardino Armonico, Giovanni Antonini 60' 46" Decca 478 5242

Handel Saeviat tellus Mozart Exsultate, jubilate Porpora Il cielo stelle clare Vivaldi In furore iustissimae irae

Straight off you are either going to love Lezhneva's voice or you will dislike it with

a vengeance. Crudely, she is like Cecilia Bartoli on steroids – she has slightly more warmth to her voice (without affecting the pitch), has an amazing range and dexterity to match, and yes, lovers of Baroque music, she glitters her way through the most ferocious coloratura and even sings proper trills! Her debut disc, in which she is brilliantly supported by Antonini and Il Giardino Armonico, features three of the staples for any HIP soprano, and one new gem, a four movement cantata by Porpora, with some amazing repeated notes in the *Alleluia*. Her *Exsultate, jubilate* is just the latest in the sequence of recordings where the appoggiatura that were surely expected by the composer are omitted, leaving cadences sounding slightly bare, so I'll still cherish Emma Kirkby's version of that piece. For the others, and for the sheer palpable enjoyment of the music and her virtuosic performance of it, I shall also cherish the present disc. Bring on the next one! BC

Flute Concertos at Sanssouci A tribute to Frederick the Great Emmanuel Pahud fl, Trevor Pinnock *hpscd/dir*, Kammerakademie Potsdam 78'

DVD

Frederick the Great Flute concerto no. 3 in C; Quantz 2 capriccios, Flute concerto in G, Preludio in D; F Benda Flute concerto in e; CPE Bach Unaccompanied flute sonata in a.

This DVD (also available on Blu-ray) was issued last year to celebrate the 300th anniversary of the birth of King Frederick the Great. It is set mostly at a concert in the beautiful rococo theatre in Frederick's New Palace at Potsdam, but during some of the unaccompanied pieces there are tantalising glimpses of the interior of the palace and its gardens where the lonely figure of the king walks with a pair of whippets. The musicians themselves neither wear period costumes nor play period instruments, but they have a great sense of period style, and though Pahud's golden flute sounds unmistakably modern his playing is a fine example of how to perform this sort of music on a modern instrument. Once you have watched the DVD you can ignore the pictures next time and just enjoy the excellent sound. Victoria Helby

The Pupils of Tartini: Sonatas for violin and basso continuo by Straticò, Dall'Oglio, Nazari, Gobbi, Nardini. Crtomir Siskovic vln, Luca Ferrini *hpscd* 64' 02" CDS 723,

Since all these composers bar Nardini were new to me, I was intrigued to hear

this disc. Those expecting a period instrument performance – or indeed a period instrument style performance – would be advised against this recording, as stylistically the playing (on modern instruments at A=440) of this Slovenian duo is straight from the 1970s. Features such as the almost constant vibrato, strange changes of tempo within movements, accents on implausible up-beats and a seeming lack of phrasing are, I suspect, anathema to many EMR readers. Even in the more classical sonatas of Antonio Nazari and Ignazio Gobbi there is a total lack of elegance in Siskovic's interpretation. The harpsichord, too, sounds as though it belongs to that era, though thankfully it is mostly confined to the one 8ft register. Having said this, those wishing to explore the music these minor composers may well be interested in the disc, purely from this angle, though the playing, competent as it is, does the music no favours. The most interesting sonatas are those of Domenico dall'Oglio and Pietro Nardini.

Ian Graham-Jones

The Trio Sonata in 18th-Century Germany
London Baroque 67'

BIS-1995

CPE Bach Wq 158 (H 584), HCF Bach W. VII/3, JF Fasch FWV N:c2, Goldberg Sonata in C, JG Graun Trio in B flat, Telemann TWV 42:G10

Like the sister disc reviewed above, this is a wise selection of some of the highlights of the repertoire, three works in the four movement *sonata da chiesa* format, and the others (by Graun and the Bachs) in three. The Graun calls for a viola instead of the 2nd violin, while Telemann's G major trio requires a gamba. At least as far as Fasch, father and son, go, Charles Medlam's note is not quite as accurate as it might have been, and says less about the music than the composers. Needless to say, that's a small price indeed to pay for such marvellous performances; Richard Gwilt's viola in the Graun sonata is a distinctive voice, while Medlam takes the obbligato gamba in the Telemann with elegance. In an ideal world, London Baroque would now devote a disc to each of these composers – there are several fine sets by Graun, there are plenty by Fasch to fill a disc, and one of works by the Bach sons would definitely sell well.

BC

The Trio Sonata in 18th-Century Italy
London Baroque 77'14"

BIS-2015

Albinoni op.3/3, Bonporti op.6/7, Vivaldi op.1/12, Bononcini Sonata II, Porpora op.2/3,

G. Sammartini Sonata V, Locatelli op.8/8, Gallo Sonata I, Tartini a3.

In contrast to the Italian violin sonatas reviewed above, London Baroque have devised a romp through the Italian trio sonata. Not only is the music chosen generally much more worthwhile than the solo sonatas but, as can be expected of this long-established period ensemble, it is stylishly and sensitively executed. The booklet notes (by Richard Gwilt) make fascinating reading by comparing Charles Burney's quoted opinions of the composer with the music on this record. I must take exception to Burney's comments on Bonporti and Porpora, for these are fine works, as is the Giuseppe Sammartini sonata – all three, coincidentally, in G minor. But I can't agree more, however, with his comments on Locatelli: "music that excites more surprise than pleasure". Domenico Gallo's sonata was a delightful, though somewhat dated work more in the style of Corelli. In contrast, the concluding Tartini sonata offered an interesting, though disturbing element to the selection, with its chromatic passages lending a sense of keylessness almost until the final cadence of the last movement. This was a highly interesting selection of works, and a disc that can be thoroughly recommended.

Ian Graham-Jones

BAROQUE LUTE MUSIC

Light & Shadows: Lute Music of the Italian Baroque Peter Croton lute & archlute
Guild GMCD 7388

Kapsberger, Piccinini, Melii, Zamboni

This excellent CD of Italian lute music begins with two Toccatas and a Corrente by Kapsberger, played on a 10-course lute. The first is a grandiose stop-start affair, snippets of polyphony, moments of chromaticism, fast single-line flourishes, punctuated by dramatic 6-note chords of F minor and C major. I like the way Croton interprets these chords, the first arpeggiated slowly from bottom to top, back down, back up, and ending with a fading trill; also pleasing is the way he arpeggiates a sequence of minim chords. Kapsberger is forever unpredictable, especially in his Toccatas, where the spicy clashes of passing notes is quite extraordinary. The last third of the piece is essentially one almighty perfect cadence, ending with jerky parallel sixths reminiscent of Castello. The second Toccata (no. 5) is in a similar vein but very different. The opening flourish is unconventional

with notes dropping a fourth here, a fifth there; the third quarter of the piece sounds very much like John Dowland, as a melodic point is developed. The set finishes with a sprightly Corrente (no. 12), enlivened by Croton's own divisions for the repeats.

There follows a contrasting set of pieces by Piccinini: four Toccatas and three Correnti. His style is less wacky, but nonetheless exciting. Toccata 24 ends with a long II – V – I cadence consisting of a half-page flurry of semiquavers. His *Corrente Prima* sounds at first like something by Tobias Hume. Toccata 20 has a variety of effects including fast descending scales executed by the left hand alone, and rich bass notes from the archlute's long strings. Although one expects a certain freedom of rhythm with toccatas, I think Croton goes too far with his interpretation of Toccata 19, where there is no clear distinction between quavers and semi-quavers, but I do like the way he dampens strings for articulation and for clarity in the bass.

Less well-known is the lute music of Pietro Paolo Melii, who produced five books (one now lost) between 1614 and 1620. His *Capriccio detto il Gran Matias* is a fine piece. It has a certain jerkiness partly because of Croton's free interpretation, and partly because many of the bass notes of the archlute occur on weak beats. The *Corrente detta la Speranza* skips along nicely, embellished with Croton's own ornaments for the repeats.

The last group of pieces was composed 100 years later, taken from Giovanni Zamboni's *Sonate d'Intavolatura di Leuto* published in Lucca in 1718. The music is essentially in two voices: a high treble and a very low bass, with just occasional chords here and there to fill out the upper part of the texture. There are modulations, sequences, a multitude of appoggiaturas, decoration with triplets, and a more tonic-centred harmony – the sort of things one might expect from a composer roughly contemporary with Leopold Silvius Weiss. Sonata 1 consists of a Preludio, Alemanda, Corrente, Sarabanda Largo, and a jolly Giga from Sonata 3 to replace the Minuet. Sonatas 6 and 9 each have an Alemanda, Giga, Sarabanda and Gavotta, preceded by a well-poised Preludio in Sonata 9. Zamboni's music is quite charming, and easy to enjoy.

Stewart McCoy

Part of each track may be heard with an internet search for "Croton Guild Light"; a Preludio and Giga by Zamboni from Croton's CD are on YouTube.

Johann Gottfried Conradi, Jan Antonin Losy *Neue Lauten Stücke* (1724) José Miguel Moreno *baroque lute* 62'19"
Glossa GCD 920113

I was pleasantly surprised to get this, as I'm no expert on lute music, but I do enjoy listening to it and performing with lute players, so here goes. In my ignorance I had heard of neither of these composers, although Silvius Leopold Weiss certainly knew of Jan Antonin Losy, as he wrote a *Tombeau* for him. José Miguel Moreno, who also made the lute he plays, has selected pieces to form standard dance suites in A major, C major and D minor by Conradi and one in F major by Losy. It's recorded closely, so that one hears the resonance of the instrument intimately, much as if it were playing in the same room.

Almost nothing seems to be known of Conradi – the booklet notes speculate that he may have known and played with C P E Bach. Certainly the music itself is delightful, perhaps typical of German music in the French style. A particularly beautiful example is the arresting Prelude to the suite in C major, which reminds me of Schenck, or even JSB himself. The playing, clean, expressive and beautifully paced, is eloquent as the music demands.

More is known about Losy, an aristocrat from Prague, who had travelled widely, including to France, where his lute playing was widely praised. His suite is more obviously French, beginning with a standard *Ouverture*, followed by dance movements and concluding with a marvellous *Chaconne*, the most substantial movement on the disc. I enjoyed the style *brisé* which always seems to me to work so wonderfully on the baroque lute, leaving resonances hanging in the air, so to speak, while the sonorous bass moves to the next harmonic point. It sounded lovely on this lute, the player, free of mannerism, seemingly letting the music speak for itself, which it did with unfailing charm and energy.

Robert Oliver

***Cantabile: Music for lute* by Silvius Leopold Weiss (1687-1750), vol. 2. Nigel North. BGS Records BGS 120**

This is Nigel North's second recording of music by Weiss. (The first was "The Heart Trembles with Pleasure", BGS 119.) The word *Cantabile* was used by Ernst Gottlieb Baron in 1727 to describe Weiss's way of playing the lute, and perhaps this is the inspiration behind North's own cantabile style of playing. Some of Weiss's music may look mechanical on the page with its

broken chords and sequences but North's thoughtful interpretation makes the music sing, and in so doing evokes a wide range of emotions.

All three Sonatas are from the so-called London manuscript, (London, British Library Add MS 30387) which was originally owned by Johann Christian Anthoni von Adlersfeld, an amateur lutenist in Prague. Although we can see from the back cover of the CD that they are in the key of D, A and G, it is impossible to know exactly which pieces they are. Why not use the S-C numbering of Douglas Alton Smith and Tim Crawford in the complete Weiss edition of *Das Erbe deutscher Musik*? All the music from the London manuscript may be seen online in tablature and staff notation; a search for "Michel Cardin London Manuscript" will take you there via the slweiss.com site.

North's Sonata in D is S-C 18. There is no Prelude in the manuscript for this Sonata, so North takes the Prelude from another sonata in D earlier in the manuscript, S-C 2. He plays this with a certain urgency, now hurrying forward, now hanging back, arpeggiating a series of four-note chords, finishing in 1' 43" compared with Robert Barto's 2' 24". There is a very slow-moving *Allemande*, a *Courante* which skips along with a mix of quavers and semiquavers, a playful *Angloise* developing the rhythm of two semiquavers and three quavers, a restful *Sarabande* with flourishes of hemidemi-semiquavers, a long *Menuet*, and finally the famous *Passacaille* known to classical guitarists the whole world over.

The Sonata in A is S-C 12. Again, there is no Prelude in the manuscript for this Sonata, and I cannot identify what North plays as one. The *Allemande*, as elsewhere, has North's own tasteful decorations and divisions for the repeats; the spectacular *Courante* sweeps up and down and across the fingerboard; the *Bourée* bustles along in a lower register seldom touching the first course; an emotional *Sarabande* cries out with notes at the 9th fret; a sober *Menuet* explores darker tonalities in low positions; and a well-measured *Gigue* swaps places with a *Ciaccona*, each section of which has its own very distinctive character.

The Sonata in G is S-C 22. The Prelude begins with nine four-note chords, which North arpeggiates; it is a short piece ending with a two-octave downward scale. The second movement, unusually, is a *Toccata* and *Fuga*, rather like Bach only different, ending with a few tender bars of *Adagio*;

it is excellent music, and North's fine cantabile playing does it justice. There follow a *Courante*, *Bourée*, *Sarabande*, *Menuet*, and (instead of a *Gigue*) an *Allegro*. The sweet irony of Weiss's music is that so many of these prosaic titles are the same, yet the music is extraordinarily rich in variety and invention.

Stewart McCoy

CLASSICAL

C P E Bach *Testament et promesses* Aline Zylberajch *tangent piano*, Alice Piérot *vln* 71' Encelade ECL1201

Wq. 55, 63/6, 78-80 & 118

As regular readers know, I am not an expert on early keyboards. This tangent piano sounds to me somewhere between harpsichord and fortepiano – sometimes there is a nice metallic jingle to the treble sound and a rather darker one in the bass, there seems also to be a dampening stop that makes it sound like something between a zither and a clavichord; all in all, quite a range of colours, which is exploited to the full by such a virtuoso as Aline Zylberajch, who is clearly utterly in harmony with Bach's flights of fancy. Just as well then that she is partnered by Alice Piérot, who shares both her ability to vary the sound of her instrument, as well as a deftness of touch that allows her to shape Bach's lines in a most telling way. This is the kind of recording that makes me wish I had done more playing in my youth and gone with my passion for C. P. E. Bach. BC

C P E Bach *The Complete Keyboard Concertos, Volume 19* Miklós Spányi *hpscd/fp, Concerto Armonico Budapest, Márta Ábrahám 65' 04"**

BIS BIS-1957

Wq 43/5-6, 44* & 45

Volume 19? Already? The four concertos on Spányi's latest recording all have three movements, some linked or at least prepared from their predecessor. He explains why he decided to play three of them on harpsichord and the other one on fortepiano in a convincing addition to Jane R. Stevens' informative booklet note. The beautifully balanced band consists of 32111 strings with pairs of flutes and punchy horns, and makes a truly gorgeous sound. I have not heard many volumes in this series, but I wish I had heard more! BC

Fritz *Sinfonias* La Stagione Frankfurt, Michael Schneider 66' 22"

cpo 777 696-2

op. 1/5 & 6, op. 6/3, 5 & 6

If you've ever struggled to name a Swiss 18th century composer, here's an answer in the person of Geneva-born Gaspard Fritz (1716-1783), a virtuoso violinist and former pupil in Turin of the great violinist and teacher G. B. Somis. Following his return to Geneva, Fritz himself became a teacher and also the director of an orchestra of English ex-patriots. His compositions consist mostly of chamber music, but there is also a set of six *sinfonias* for pairs of flutes and horns, and strings published as opus 6 in Paris in the early 1770s. It is three of these works that provide the substance of the present disc. All reveal Fritz as a composer of considerable ability, with a facility to handle counterpoint with assurance and write effectively for the orchestra. If his writing has a general weakness, it is an overfondness for predictable sequential writing.

Each of the *sinfonias* employs binary outer movements in proto-sonata form (perhaps an indication that they were composed rather earlier than their publication date) and galant central movements. The most compelling of them is that in G minor, op 6/6, which has a dramatic opening movement foreshadowing the so-called *Sturm und Drang* symphonies of the 1770s, followed by a rather remarkable Andante. That starts as typical rococo andante, but soon moves in surprising fashion to exploit the lower register of the orchestra with a passage including a long, low pedal note.

The other two works included come from a much earlier collection, a set of six 4-part sonatas published in London in 1741 or 2. Despite the fact that they were apparently admired by Handel, they seem to me far less striking, an impression probably resulting at least in part from some untidy ensemble playing of music obviously intended for solo strings. Having said that, some of the playing in the orchestral pieces could be more precise, too, but the performances in general make an agreeable impression. The op 6 symphonies are certainly worth knowing, so it is perhaps a pity Schneider did not give us further examples from that set.

Brian Robins

Haydn Dans la bibliothèque des Esterházy
Yasuko Uyama Bouvard *fp/org* 57' 04"
Editions Hortus 098
Sonatas in C and E flat, Variations in F, Works for mechanical clock

The unusual feature of this recital of late Haydn keyboard works is the inclusion of a selection of the tiny pieces composed in

the 1790s for flute-clock, here played in arrangements made by Uyama Bouvard on the Delaunay organ of St Pierre des Chartreux in Toulouse, where she is organist. They work agreeably enough, though Haydn might have been surprised by the pronounced French accent achieved with the registration in the Allegro in C. The meat of the programme, however, is to be found in the Sonatas in C, Hob XVI:48 and E flat, Hob XVI:49, and the marvellous F-minor Variations, played on a Christopher Clarke copy of an Anton Walter fortepiano of c. 1785. It's a fine, richly expressive instrument across its register, though one might have wished that it had been given a less resonant recording. The programme reveals Yasuko Uyama Bouvard, a one-time pupil of Jos Van Immerseel, to be technically excellent. Her finger-work and articulation are wonderfully clean and she plays all the quicker music with great fluency, though I do find her touch a trifle heavy at times. I'm less convinced by the slower music, which is to my mind often a little prosaic. The Adagio of the Eb, the opening Andante con espressione of the two-movement C-major Sonata and the theme of the variations all fail to reveal that poetic inner quality that is such a hallmark of Haydn's late keyboard music. But Uyama Bouvard shows she has poetry in her soul with entrancing playing of the dripping syncopations of vln 2 of the F-minor piece and she brings the same work to a satisfyingly powerful climax in the penultimate variation. So mixed impressions, then, but overall Uyama Bouvard is a forte-pianist worth hearing.

Brian Robins

Mozart Piano Concertos 18 & 19, K456 & KV459 Arthur Schoonderwoerd, Cristofori
Accent ACC 24278 58' 29"

Mozart is often at his most genial in the mature piano concertos and that is certainly the case here, the second release in what is planned to be a complete survey of the piano concertos which will make us hear them with new ears. The solo instrument is a gentle Walter copy (original of 1782, exactly contemporary with Mozart's own Walter and more or less contemporary with this music of 1784) and the orchestral forces are a literal reflection of the composer's own description of '2 violini, 2 viole ...' i.e. single strings. This gives the performances a lovely chamber feel in which every one of the allegedly 'too many notes' can be heard to its full effect. The woodwind playing is especially good – beautifully in tune and together. For K459

the possibly lost (or never composed) trumpet and timpani parts have been (re-)constructed, adding greater weight to appropriate moments but not really changing the music's nature. (Incidentally, I don't think the writer of the note really understands the meaning of the phrase 'parallel fifths' in the context of traditional harmony teaching.) On this evidence the series will have much to offer, even in such a strong field.

David Hansel

At a recent RFH concert (Budapest Festival Orchestra/Ivan Fischer) the woodwind were seated in front of the strings and around the piano for Beethoven's 1st concerto and the brass and timpani were using period instruments. Would that more non-specialist orchestras were prepared to reconsider standard practices and dip their feet into the HIP bath. It was also apparent that the soloist (the excellent Imogen Cooper) had not played the complete first movement cadenza in rehearsal. This is very long and has several 'false' endings. Some members of the orchestra raised their instruments every time.

DH

Mozart Piano Concertos 19 (K459) & 23 (K488) Ronald Brautigam, Die Kölner Akademie, Michael Alexander Willens 50'
BIS-1964 SACD

Given that Mozart was renowned for his improvisatory powers, it seems safe to assume that when he played his piano concertos they never sounded precisely the same twice. He was a hard, not to say impossible act to follow and with the growth of the concept of the musical score as a sacred, marmoreal object nobody tried for well over a century. Only with the arrival of HIP did performers start to question the idea of the untouchable score. Then the innovative ideas and introduction of added ornamentation by such pianists as Malcolm Bilson and Robert Levin transformed our ideas of how these concertos should sound, giving them an exciting freshness. Ronald Brautigam is one of today's most admired forte-pianists, yet it is precisely that sense of newfound adventure that I miss in his performances of these two concertos, played on a copy of a Walter of c. 1785 by Paul McNulty.

Adopting brisk tempos throughout the sparkling D-major Concerto, Brautigam seems content to see it as little more than a demonstration of the florid exhibitionism that his exemplary technique permits him to display. He is well supported by the orchestra and the all-important wind writing is both beautifully played and well integrated with the soloist. It is an approach that works well enough on its own terms, but ultimately it leaves the work sounding

perfunctory. K.488 has a very different character and here Brautigam does probe more deeply. But I still miss the many 'events' where Bilson in particular makes the listener sit up: the evident relish in turning an elegant phrase, or the occasional winning little touch of rubato. The opening Allegro just fails to capture the warm Elysian sunlight with which the music is suffused, while it somehow seems characteristic of these relatively uneventful performances that Brautigam's approach to ornamentation is extremely conservative. There is, I'm sure, plenty here that will give pleasure to some listeners, but there is considerably more to reveal in both these concertos. Brian Robins

Mozart on the Hass Clavichord John Irving
sfz music SFZMo612 / LC-18271
K. 1a-f, 2, 3, 5, 283, 330, 397 & 570

I suspect that we still have much to learn about the clavichord's life in the later 18th century. The note here makes the point that Mozart viewed his sonatas very much as domestic music and that in the home a clavichord was as likely a vehicle for performance as a fortepiano. This essay (English only) is packed with information and ideas and it is a shame that the general booklet presentation is rather amateurish. The instrument is large by general clavichord standards and the tone and resonance are such that at times one could be listening to a fortepiano. So anyone who fears that Mozart will be in some way belittled by the performances need not fear. Actually, I found the whole experience rather refreshing, not just because of the sound of the instrument but also because of the wide-ranging programme (including both K1 and the Sonata in B flat K570) and the performer's willingness to take a few risks with improvised embellishments within a rhetorical approach. Gestures sometimes threaten the narrative flow but the whole remains satisfying. All promising young pianists should hear this before they become too indoctrinated with the standard received notions of Mozartian style. David Hansell

Mozart Requiem & Clarinet Concerto Benjamin Dieltjens *clar*, Lucy Hall, Angélique Noldus, Hui Jin, Josef Wagner SmSTB/Bar, Chœur de Chambre de Namur, New Century Baroque, L. García Alarcón Ambronay AMY038 65' 40"

This is, to say the least, a rather odd combination, but if only because these are probably his most popular works it makes

sense somehow to combine them; of course, basset horns also have prominent roles in the Requiem, and it is gratifying to read that Benjamin Dieltjens is not above playing along in the orchestra for the choral masterpiece. There are not that many HIP recordings of the concerto, and this one will take some beating – Dieltjens is a nimble and extremely lyrical player, while not at all allowing his contemporary music-making to interfere; he makes a glorious range of sounds, from the most delicate pianissimo to strongly accented fortes, especially in the lower register. As for the Requiem, well, it's the first I've heard for a long time with Italianate pronunciation (though the baritone seems to prefer "shpargens" in the *Tuba mirum*). Alarcón seems to have cherry picked the Beyer and Maunder editions and "completed" trumpet and trombone parts to come up with his own version of the work, so some listeners will not recognise some of it. The Ambronay concert series of recordings is always fully charged with the added excitement of live performance, and this is a typical example. Just occasionally I sensed the conductor's presence more than I would have liked, and apart from the Chinese tenor, I would have preferred rather less vibrato all around. Is there evidence that 18th-century choral singers used it? (Hopefully someone will write and tell us, if they know of it!) Until then, I shall perhaps enjoy this again another day, but it will not be my first choice for the piece. BC

Myslivoček Medonte Thomas Michael Allen *Medonte*, Juanita Lascarro *Selene*, Susanne Bernhard *Arsace*, Stephanie Elliott *Evandro*, Lorina Castellano *Zelinda*, Ulrike Andersen *Taleta*, L'Arte del Mondo, Werner Ehrhardt 136' 26" (2 CDs) deutsche harmonia mundi 88697861242

"When this opera's oratorio was rediscovered in 1928..." starts the blurb on the back of the box, somewhat unhelpfully. So let's first establish that Mysliveček's *Medonte* is an opera seria first given at the Teatro Argentina in Rome in January 1780, in fact his penultimate opera (not, pace Sony, his last). Considered lost until its rediscovery in two MSS in the second half of the last century, *Medonte* has a libretto by Giovanni De Gamerra that was set on at least a dozen occasions. It is a typical seria libretto set in the Roman province of Epiros, ruled by the tyrannical Medonte. Medonte is contracted to marry Selene, daughter of the King of Argos, who some years previously had fallen in love with

Arsace. He is now in the service of Medonte, so when Selene arrives in Epiros for the wedding, cue... but I'm sure I need go no further.

The much-vaunted connections between Mysliveček and the Mozart family, especially his perceived influence on and comparison with Wolfgang, have always seemed to me to do little service to either composer. The Bohemian was an accomplished opera (and oratorio) composer, well versed in the Italian style, but he was no Mozart and one of the finest moments in *Medonte*, the great act 2 scena and aria for Selene while imprisoned in a gloomy underground temple, belongs more to Gluck's world than that of Mozart. This central act indeed seems to operate on a higher plane of musical invention and dramatic intensity than the less than compelling first act, the finale excepted, and perfunctory act 3, which serves only to tidy up matters before the unconvincing *lieto fine* denouement.

This Bavarian recording, taken from a live performance, is in general terms very satisfying. Werner Ehrhardt's tempi are throughout judicious and he obtains fine, spirited playing from the period instruments of L'Arte del Mondo. Soprano Susanne Bernhard's *Arsace* is the pick of the vocal performances, the voice has a lovely creamy quality and is employed with great musicality; she even has a trill! Her Selene, Juanita Lascarro, is at times unsteady, but she sings with considerable dramatic intensity in the scena mentioned above. Thomas Michael Allen (*Medonte*) has an agreeable lyric tenor voice, but is at times overstretched by the wide tessitura of the role, while the remaining parts, all taken by women, are decently sung but suffer from the voices being insufficiently distinguishable. Italian diction is not all it might be and dry recitative is delivered in somewhat pedestrian fashion. But as I hope to have suggested, this is a valuable addition to the catalogue that allows Mysliveček to speak persuasively for himself. Brian Robins

Pleyel Partitas for Winds Amphion Wind Octet 68' 25"
Accent ACC 24276
Partitas in Bb & Eb(2), Eccossois, Sextetto in c

The Amphion Wind Octet have long been a champion of fine Harmoniemusik, and this disc of music by a composer perhaps better known for his string music reveals what a sensitive instrumental ear he had, as well as his widely accepted gift for melodic writing; he is not afraid to have

bassoons duetting over the double bass, or just the flutes and oboes playing. With all this repertoire, the sound of rippling clarinets over pulsating horns and bass is my favourite, and Pleyel duly indulged me. This would make lovely music for a dinner party or even a party (if summer ever arrives!) It's full of moments that will make you smile. BC

Giuseppe Scarlatti *Dove è amore è gelosia*
Lenka Máčiková *Marquise Clarice*, Ales Briscein *Count Orazio*, Katerina Knezíková *Vespetta*, Jaroslav Brezina *Patrizio*, Schwarzenberg Court Orchestra, Vojtech Spurný 143' (88' opera)
Opus Arte OA 1104 D DVD

While you almost certainly would not buy this DVD for the high quality of the music (Giuseppe Scarlatti was keyboard tutor to the daughter of Count Schwarzenberg, and wrote the especially commissioned piece for four singers who included three members of the noble family and the librettist!), it is more than worthwhile having for the behind-the-scenes shots of the famous Cesky Krumlov baroque castle and theatre with all the sets and machines (not to mention a be-wigged HIP band whose music is illuminated by candle-light), and the clever staging; if the singing is a little too professional sounding for an accurate reconstruction of the original performances (which, of course, took place in that very theatre), the present quartet are extremely convincing actors and this period production really did have me laughing out loud with some of the on-stage antics. This is an easy evening's entertainment. BC

Carl Philipp Stamitz *Quartets for Clarinet* Arthur Campbell cl, Gregory Maytan vln, Paul Swantek viola, Pablo Mahave-Veglia cello 65'56"
audite 92.661 SACD
Clarinet quartets opus 8/4, opus 19/1-3

Carl Stamitz (1745-1801) published two sets of clarinet quartets in Paris, the first in 1773 and the second six years later. Although his musical upbringing was at the Mannheim court, where the clarinet was used in the orchestra from 1758 onwards, his travels in Europe led him to a style more reminiscent of Mozart in these attractive quartets. Indeed the first few notes of the first movement of op. 19 no. 2 are almost identical to Mozart's Andante for flute and orchestra K315 of 1778. This well-balanced recording is on modern instruments but Arthur Campbell's fluid

playing has a lovely warm tone and the supporting strings are not over-vibrant. This is music which certainly deserves to be much better known. Victoria Helby

Le roman des lumières Chansons-dans le roman Français (1750-1800) Berit Norbakken Solset S, Trondheim Barokk, Martin Wahlberg 52' 51"
K617 K617240

Music by Dalayrac, F-A Danican-Philidor, Devienne, Duni, Grétry, Krumpholz, Mayer, Schmitt & anon

This is a debut recording by a Norwegian ensemble with an original approach to programming. These songs, arias and instrumental pieces (Grétry, Devienne, Philidor etc.) are mentioned in various novels and are here performed as they might have been in the same domestic circumstances as the books would have been read. It came as no surprise to read that soprano Berit Norbakken Solset has won prizes and is in great demand on her home turf. Expect to see her name in ever-widening circles. The instrumentalists, among whom harpist Chiara Granata is especially prominent, are also very good, making this an auspicious start for the ensemble. Charming may seem only slight praise, but it's the best word for a very enjoyable listening experience. David Hansell

19th CENTURY

Beethoven *Symphonies Nos. 4 & 7* Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, Nicholas McGegan PBP-06 75' 10"

These are two of my favourite Beethoven symphonies and, while HIP performances are now fairly common, not many will achieve the level of excitement generated by these live performances. As always with this repertoire it's the woodwind colours that lend the music a whole new flavour, but that is not to take away from the sterling contributions of the other sections which are well deserving of the rapturous applause BC

Beethoven *Symphony no. 9* Melanie Diener, Petra Lang, Endrik Wottrich, Dietrich Henschel SmSTB, La Chapelle Royale, Collegium Vocale Gent, Orchestre des Champs-Élysées, Philippe Herreweghe harmonia mundi HMA 1951687 62' 29"

I loved the presentation of this re-release; the CD itself is black and the top designed to look like an LP. The packaging and note are also cleverly done – for once, good

things to say in these pages about graphic designers! The recording will speak for itself – just read my comments about the new Brahms recording below and apply them to this performance. It may be 14 years old now, but it will still take some beating. BC

Beethoven *Triple Concerto & Archduke Trio* Storiono Trio, The Netherlands Symphony Orchestra, Jan Willem de Vriend Challenge Classics CC72579 71' 15"

When this recording arrived, I confess it caused consternation and raised eyebrows. Why on earth had the record company sent something that was clearly not for us? The explanation was given in the booklet note: for the project, the Storioni Trio (named after the maker of the group's violin) use an 1815 Legrasse fortepiano, and the Vossen brothers string their instruments with gut. They are obviously also *au fait* with HIP performance, for these readings are not only wonderfully virtuosic, but they are utterly devoid of any "romantic" affectation. Jan Willem de Vriend draws some nice colours from the orchestra, too. Fans of the Archduke Trio op. 97 will be delighted by the Storioni's reading; crisp playing giving textures real transparency, beautiful lyricism from all three. Despite its dubious EMR credentials, this disc is a winner. BC

Brahms *Ein deutsches Requiem* Ilse Eerens S, Andrew Foster-Williams Bar, Orchestre des Champs-Élysées, Collegium Vocale Gent, Philippe Herreweghe 65' 33"
NIFC DVD-003

In an embarrassing display of ignorance, I once told the tutor who auditioned me for St Andrews University Orchestra that I could not stand Brahms... "That's a real shame," said she, "as we'll be doing his *Haydn Variations* this term and then the *Requiem* in the next..." Needless to say, by the end of term 2, I was a Brahms convert; intensive study of the Violin Concerto as a set work did no harm, either! Nowadays I love the Brahms Requiem, though this fabulous DVD is only the second time I have seen a performance. Taken live from a concert in Warsaw, it shows Herreweghe's forces at the very top of their game – just as I experienced them in Edinburgh last summer, orchestra and choir work as a unit, singers' eyes fixed on his every move. The two soloists take their roles very well, although I found the baritone a little boomy – I'm not sure I have yet heard my ideal reading of that part. All in all, this is

a wonderful release and I recommend it on musical and visual grounds – it is a record of a truly wonderful performance from all concerned. BC

Crémont Trios à cordes Opus 13 Trio Concordia 50' 11"
Eurydice LE002 +Duo op. 10/2

No sooner had I described Telemann's hymns (see above) as a welcome surprise when along came another. Pierre Crémont (1784-1846) does not have a Grove entry but this ensemble's leader has given him a wiki page which reveals that his first professional success was at the court in St Petersburg and that he later worked as an operatic conductor in France. The scores of these works are available via Petrucci and extracts from the disc are also online. The musical style is Haydnesque and the writing is quite resourceful, making use of double-stopping to produce fuller textures in the duos, for example. The playing is also very good, giving the music's nooks and crannies full value without giving it more weight than it can bear. It is this ensemble's mission to seek out worthwhile yet unknown repertoire. They've done a great job here. David Hansell

Gyrowetz 3 String Quartets Pleyel Quartett Köln 73' 09"
cpo 777 770-2 op. 13/1, 29/1 & 2

I remember once hearing the Salomon Quartet playing music by Gyrowetz and wondering why it did not feature more frequently on the programmes at the local chamber music club, rather than the same old Haydn and Beethoven quartets. Some readers will doubtless be shocked by my use of "the same old" but seriously, year after year, listening to yet another world-class ensemble giving their version of half a dozen pieces does become tedious... The Pleyel Quartet as a group may not be well known, but the individual players feature on many an outstanding period-instrument CD and their readings of these three fine works will only enhance their reputations and win the group not only many plaudits but also new fans. BC

Schubert Complete Works for Fortepiano
Trio Jan Vermeulen *fp*, Christine Busch *vl*, France Springuel *vlc* (2 CDs)
Et'cetera KTC 1495

As well as the two full trios, opp. 99 & 100, this set includes an early movement in sonata form (1812) and the Notturmo in E flat, op. 148. As one would expect, there

are graceful melodies, witty scherzos, and drama a-plenty. Vermeulen has been working his way through Schubert's works for keyboard, and here he is joined by two excellent string players, specialising in later HIP performance, so utterly at home in this repertoire. I especially enjoyed the way the three coordinate their rubato in octaves... This is chamber music performance at its very, very best. The music was not especially familiar (although I recall a Schubert trio being on at least one concert programme I reviewed many years ago), but it was all enjoyable and I feel confident recommending it – if anyone out there wants to write reviews of future recordings of his music, please get in touch with Clifford! BC

S. S. Wesley Ascribe unto the Lord; Sacred choral works Choir of St John's College, Cambridge : Andrew Nethsingha 77' 10"
Chandos CHAN 10751

It is easy to view 19th-century England as a place of tired convention and prudishness, but the Wesleys are a reminder of what a fiery place it really was. Samuel Sebastian Wesley was the son (albeit out of wedlock) of the great Samuel Wesley, two of whose psalms feature at the heart of this recording. Like his father, he was a composer, but his radically unconventional church music recorded here raised the eyebrows of his contemporaries, many of whom didn't regard it as acceptable cathedral music. Listening to the overt drama Wesley injects into his anthems, it is easy to imagine the scepticism and even outrage which greeted them. There are influences from the 18th century and perhaps even the great anthems of the 17th century, but the ubiquitous presence of Mendelssohn looms large, particularly in Wesley's attempts to dramatise his biblical texts. St John's College Choir goes all out to explore the drama, interacting effectively with John Challenger's organ playing, and if some of the solo singing is a little underpowered, the overall effect is enjoyable. David Hansell

ANTHOLOGIES

Ave Maria Les petits chanteurs du Mont-Royal, Theater of Early Music Choir, Daniel Taylor
Analekta AN 2 9841
Settings by Arcadelt, Bruckner, Byrd (*Ave verum*), Caccini, Gounod, Hildegard (*Ave generosa*), Josquin, Pärt & Schubert + Monteverdi (*Magnificat*)

It's difficult to work out the *raison d'être* of this release, and relatively little of the programme is really *EMR* territory. Daniel Taylor is a brilliant singer, but the 'Caccini' with which he opens is a 1960s forgery (and the 'Arcadelt', sung by the boys' choir, is also spurious), the Schubert with which he continues has added string and choral backing, as has the Gounod with which he finishes. At least Bach's harmony is there as consolation. DT's finest moment is the Hildegard, with gentle drone backing, which I really enjoyed. The Byrd and Josquin receive perfectly capable, if slightly slow, performances from the adult chamber choir. The note claims that the Monteverdi is the six part setting from 1610 but it's actually a four part alternatim setting from *Selva Morale*. I'd rather pass over the performances of this, the Bruckner and the Pärt. David Hansell

In the dark Platinum Consort, Scott Inglis-Kidger 58' 04"

Resonus RES 10110 (download @ £7.99)
Anerio, Richard Bates, Gesualdo, Lassus, James McMillan, Lotti, Purcell, Victoria

I came across this at the end of April, nearly a year after it appeared. It was just a sample, with no information except the choir, the conductor and "In The Dark". I assumed it was intended as a musical challenge to enjoy the varied music and exercise one's skill at guessing the composers. Alas, the game idea was entirely my own: the title came from the second piece, by Richard Bates, an adopted composer of the choir. It's worth listening to. There's a choice that a conductor must make: do I encourage a ubiquitous style that fits some of the music but not all, or do I investigate theories of sound and style from different countries and places. Personally, I prefer the latter, while I would have preferred more difference; but I still found it a worth-while. The performance of Purcell's *Hear my prayer* was definitely several leagues above what the spirit of Margaret Thatcher had to endure at St Paul's! CB

Mediterraneo L'Arpeggiata, Christina Pluhar
Virgin Classics 5099946-54720 66' 13"
+ DVD 26' 32" containing Nos 1-4 & a Mediterranean trailer.

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Mediterraneo L'Arpeggiata, Christina Pluhar
Virgin Classics 5099946-54720 66' 13"
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In this evocative cross-over CD the baroque instruments of L'Arpeggiata directed by Christina Pluhar take us on a musical cruise around the Mediterranean (and Portugal!) and are joined on the way by traditional musicians from Portugal, Catalonia, Italy, Spain and Greece. In this young world of gap-year travel it's all about who you know, and Pluhar has a friends list which would knock you sideways. She recruits the legendary Misia to sing her some Fado, the wonderful Nuria Rial to give her some Catalan numbers, and other big noises in world music such as Vincenzo Capezzuto, Raquel Andueza and Katerina Papdopoulou drop in with contributions. The resulting kaleidoscopic CD is big on local colour, making you want to seek out stuffed vine leaves and retsina and make a night of it. There isn't a lot of scholarship in evidence (not even a comprehensive instrument list on my slimline version) and if riffing harpsichord and cornetto aren't your kind of thing, then this isn't for you. But there is musicianship of the highest order to be heard everywhere and such energy that you would have to be a real grump not to swing along.

D. James Ross

I played this through the evening before I read James's review, which I was relieved to see, since he is evidently more au fait with Mediterranean and Portuguese music (and no doubt cuisine) than I am. This strikes me as far more of a compromise than L'Arpeggiata's mixture of early 17th-century and modern Mexico, which I heard live and was absolutely convinced. Here, the ensemble seems to impose on different cultures. The singing is stunning, the backing is interesting and brilliant, but is it better than the local bands? I don't know. The south side of the Mediterranean is ignored.

CB

CORRECTION

I was tempted to challenge readers to find the missing "not" in the music reviews of the April issue. I was confused because I thought I had made the correction but evidently hadn't. Anyway, here is Barbara's correction, with the not underlined, for the end of her review on pp.4-6.

The composers of the Academy, who were challenged to play *La Stravaganza*, must have balked at the strange time signatures. The protagonist's struggle, compared to a battle of the air with the sea, is expressed in the following brief sections: C – 12/16 – C – 6/8 – 9/6 ("9 quavers instead of 6", or 9/8) – 5/9 (i.e. 5/8) – 8/5 (= 4/4) – C – 7/8 – 6/7 (i.e. 6/8) – 5/6 (i.e. 5/8) – 3/5 (i.e. 3/8) – 8/3 (= 4/4) – 6/8, returning finally to C. These are not proportions: only the number of quavers per bar changes. But the effect of 5/8 and 7/8 is certainly intriguing. Another challenge to the singer is the range, from b to b", both extremes recurring throughout.

Barbara adds:

The point is that the quavers stay the same, while the length of a bar contracts or expands to hold fewer, or more, them. If these were proportions, the length of a bar would be constant and all the values would become shorter or longer to fill the same amount of time, and the music in this remarkable section would get progressively

slower, whereas in fact it becomes increasingly agitated as the number of quavers per bar decreases from 9 to 3 in ever shorter bars before returning to 4/4.

There is another vulnerable point in Barbara's review on p. 4, end of the penultimate paragraph on Rossi cantatas. The detailed passage of mis-underlay of bass figures is mentioned in general terms, but what came through didn't come out with the right symbols. I can't understand how any experienced continuo player would want to play thus, though I'm not quite sure what an "expressed interval" is. The omitted phrase isn't clear, since the squiggle must presumably stand for another syllable. "b3 or §6 or #4 are unambiguous, whereas 3 b, 6 §, and 4 # mean something else and inevitably cause mistakes." The edition can, however, be accessed online.

CB

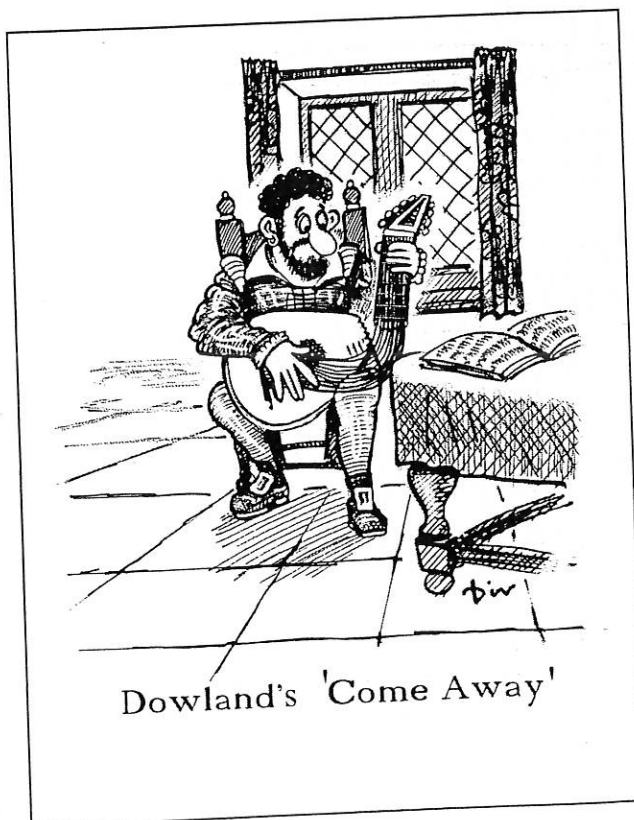
Four-harpsichord Repertoire

Yes, there is the Vivaldi/Bach concerto, but does anyone out there in EMR-land know where I might find a copy of George Malcolm's *Variations on a theme by Mozart* (this can be head on YouTube) or Thurston Dart's quasi-Bach arrangement of another of the four violin L'estro armonico pieces (the E minor, I think)? And what else is there, if anything. Suggestions most gratefully received at dh1685@gmail.com or to EMR

David Hansell

I totted up the number of CD reviews in this issue: there were 82, with eight reviewers + CB and BC, giving an average of just over eight reviews each. There were several regulars who were otherwise occupied, but it would still be helpful if there were a few more experienced reviewers available. If you have any suggestions, do contact us.

CB



Dowland's 'Come Away'