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It was unfortunate timing for *BBC Music Magazine* to proclaim John Tavener's 70th birthday on the cover of the December issue, which arrives early in November. The birthday would have been on 12 January 2014, but he died on 12 November. It isn't always a good idea to get ahead of the field! He was a composer who could reach way beyond most "classical" composers. It hadn't occurred to me until I heard a few days ago that John Tavener and John Rutter both went to Highgate School: Rutter was probably an academic year below Tavener. Was there something in the education there that produced the two composers of their generation that reached beyond the normal approach of "serious" composers? Both wrote religious music, but Tavener seems to have needed to immerse himself in a variety of beliefs. I had minimal connection with Tavener, merely being one of the basses who had to sustain a bottom E flat for a whole piece, but the chord never started right and Tavener was too shy to stop and start again! (I don't know why I was singing bass: I was usually tenor then.) Tavener's sister once told me that, despite the missing R, he was descended from the 16th-century composer – though I haven't seen or heard that elsewhere.

We haven't managed to catch up on books and CDs, but hope to do so in the February issue. I seem to have been obsessed by Monteverdi's *Vespers* lately – the Texan-Bärenreiter one I reviewed in the last issue and I should receive the Carus edition in time for the next issue. It is comforting to hear that the editor Uwe Wolf has played sackbut in the work around a hundred times.

We anticipate a happier Christmas than we have had over the last few years. The corrupt solicitor who aided the fraudsters in events that led to our bankruptcy in 2009 was at last tried at St Alban's Crown Court. He had visited our house to obtain the "signatures" of Clare and John on documents that they could not understand, but signed away their rights of residence. After a week's trial at St Albans Crown Court, he was found guilty of fraud on three counts. (A fuller account can be googled - *Ranbir Dhaliwal solicitor*.) We hope this will lead to compensation and the possibility of securing our home for our children.

CB/EB

REVIEWS OF MUSIC

Clifford Bartlett

FRESCOBALDI III

Frescobaldi Organ and Keyboard Works III. Il secondo Libro di Toccate, Canzone, Versi d'Hinni, Magnificat, Gagliarde, Correnti et altre Partite (Rom, Bordoni, 1627, '1637). Edited by Christopher Stembrige with the collaboration of Kenneth Gilbert. Bärenreiter (BA 8414), 2013. xvi + 120pp, £33.50.

I was surprised to find that I bought all five of Pierre Pidoux's earlier Bärenreiter edition of Frescobaldi's *Orgel- und Klavier Werke* in October 1968. So that pins down the period when I played him a lot. But a year or so after, I got caught up in the manifold concerts of Peter Holman and was so busy playing continuo that my fingers lost the knack of coping with notated keyboard music. However, I've assembled Frescobaldi's music again, look forward to the rest of Stembrige's series, and hope to find time to play it. It is also useful to be able to compare the ways of notation.

There are other editions, but the ones I know are listed here in degrees of distance from the original:

- a. the facsimile (SPES 4, 1978, based on 1637)
- b. Stembrige's edition (2013)
- c. Pidoux's edition (1948)

Before the existence of facsimiles, there was a greater need for representing the original as closely as possible in modern notation. However, once facsimiles are readily available, it should be possible to take advantage of the experience of nearly 400 years to use methods of notation that facilitate performance as long as the significance of the early notation is not distorted. (I'm assuming that the original editions are mostly accurate and generally authoritative.) The most obvious feature of the facsimile is the practice of having six lines on the upper stave, eight on the lower. This, the most noticeable difference from modern notation, has been thrown away by editors, as has the standardisation of clefs. I'm very glad that I don't have to read the music thus, but it makes one wonder whether Stembrige is adjusting trivia. There's an example in the third bar in the book. The left hand begins with a crotchet G (stem down), a quaver D (stem up beamed to semiquavers) and between them, a quaver B, which the facsimile inserts between the upper and lower note, with stem down bending a bit to avoid overlapping with the crotchet. That solution doesn't work in the straight-line modern stem. Pidoux follows the convention of printing the B enough to the right for the quaver stem to descend. Stembrige invents a new device of moving the B a fraction to the right, then having the quaver stem descending from the right side of the note rather than the left: it looks odd, but the Pidoux manner is acceptable and normal, whereas the more recent device is peculiar. Later

in the same bar there is an x above a semiquaver F. I read quite a lot of the editorial material but hadn't seen the sign described. An x could be an indication of a mistake: perhaps it's a reminder that the sharp earlier in the phrase should be omitted, or is it a neat sign indicating an editorial sharp? Checking a few other examples, it's clearly a less obtrusive version of an editorial sharp.

I wonder whether the beaming is important? Almost invariably, sequences of notes are only beamed when they are semiquavers. Does that imply that semiquavers are played in a different way from longer notes on principle, or is it just a convention of the time? (Some triple sections have quavers beamed, in accordance with triple time having longer note-values.) Do players of Pidoux and Stembrige sound different, and if so, should they? I'm puzzled by the odd-looking common-time C.

To turn to context rather than orthography, the editor precedes each of the four hymns by a plainsong verse. This doesn't work with *Lucis creator optime* (at least, not in the historical liturgy): the hymn has five verses and there are three settings, so the first verse must be played by the organ and verses two and four sung, whereas *Exultet orbis gaudiis* has six verses, so can begin either with chant or with organ. *Iste confessor* has five verses with five organ verses (perhaps the whole hymn was played and not sung), and *Ave maris stella* has seven verses with four organ verses, so must start with the organ – so printing the first verse is irrelevant, as is *Lucis creator*.¹

I'm not trying to fly back to the past. This new edition is excellent. Some such series repeat the introduction in full, to added expense: this doesn't. Personally, I would go for the new Bärenreiter, not so much for the notes as for the editorial comments, but the font and layout looks better. One literally superficial advantage to the Pidoux edition is the inclusion of the title of the volume on the cover: the new edition merely has "Organ and Keyboard Works" – and it doesn't help that Pidoux's edition is vol. 4 while Stembrige's is Vol. 3 nor that organ and keyboard mixes a specific instrument and a generic term embracing the specific: an organ has a keyboard, but keyboard is a conceptual level above organ and harpsichord. Frescobaldi's terms are *cimballo et organo*. *Cimballo* is now an archaic term, whereas harpsichord is the most likely instrumental name: you can't mention them all!

If I do eventually manage to retire, perhaps after a 50 year gap I may find time to play through the Stembrige edition and send him a note of congratulation. Some of my comments are deliberately provocative, but I suspect that I will use his edition despite this review.

1. I haven't checked chant sources of the period, but they are standard hymns unlikely to have suffered significant changes.

LA RHÉTORIQUE DES DIEUX

La Rhétorique des Dieux Anthology of 17th Century French Pieces for 2 Baroque Lutes, Vol. 1. Music by Ennemond Gautier and Pierre Dubut. Edited by Joël Dugot. Ut Orpheus (SDS 13), 2013. vi + 11p + 2 parts, £19.95. (Available via Universal Edition)

This volume contains three dances by Ennemond Gautier and two by Pierre Dubut, all of which originated as lute solos to which *contreparties* were supplied (by other musicians). They are representative of a fascinating and quite common practice of creating duets from pre-existing works. The works are high quality, and the edition is smartly presented, with two separate lute parts and a score. Like the lute parts, the score is in French tablature; a study score transcribed into staff notation might have been more useful for the benefit of non-lutenists. There is an introduction in both French and English, but the English version is not fully comprehensible in isolation. The layout is generous and the tablature sized for reading at some distance; however, the rhythm signs are very small compared to the tablature letters, and could have been clearer. Whilst it is wonderful to have such relatively obscure music receiving attention from publishers, I wonder if in this case it would have been more practical to opt for a less sumptuous production with just the lute parts on regular-sized paper, since the price of £19.95 for five very short pieces is high enough to discourage the few who would actually play this music, and the notation will discourage sales from other interested parties. In short, a very worthy venture, but one which might benefit from a rethink of the layout before further volumes are produced.

Lynda Sayce

PERFIDIOUS CUPID

Charpentier Pastoraletta II^a: Cupido perfido, dentr'al mio cuor, H493, edited by Shirley Thompson. Edition HH (65 324), 2013. x + 28pp, £19.95.

This is one of a pair of two pastoralette, a companion to *Amor vince ogni cosa*, H. 492 (the same price: I think that the catalogue means that parts can be printed from pdf files at about £19.95.) I haven't seen *Amor*, but it is described as being stylistically similar to *Cupido*. Neither are in the *Mélanges autographes* but in a non-autograph MS belonging to Brossard (Vm⁷ 71): the editor has discussed the authorship in an article on the edition accessible on the Edition HH website. This is a pair of amorous dialogues between Filli (G2 clef) & Linco (C3) and Eurilla (C1) & Silvio (F4); there is also a chorus of Pastori, with the same clefs and probably the same singers (though the indication *Echo* might require another quartet). The accompaniment is two trebles and continuo. After a brief Preludio (strangely following a later convention of showing all the staves, even though only three of the eight are needed), Scene 1 is Silvio's painful desire for Eurilla, in Scene II Linco expresses a more extreme condition for Filli (though the music is somewhat less powerful). Scene III has Eurilla and Filli scorning each other. Scene IV is about

the same length as the rest put together. The quarrels are solved and the work ends with the singers coming together. The characters are the same as those of the longer *Amor*, apart from the omission of Pan. I doubt if there is really enough contrast to perform both in the same programme, but I haven't seen H. 492 for comparison. A problem for the performer is whether to avoid some of the usual French rhythms. In odd feature of the placing of the headings like *Choro* and *I quattro amanti* is confusing, since there is often little space between systems on the right when the music itself begins on the left.

CORELLI OPUS 5

Corelli Sonatas for Violin and Basso continuo Volume 1, op. 5, I-VI... Edited by Christopher Hogwood [&] Ryan Mark, with contemporary embellishments and a keyboard realisation by Antonio Tonelli (1686-1765). Bärenreiter (BA 9455), 2013. Score & 3 parts, £21.00.

Corelli Sonatas for Violin and Basso continuo Volume 1, op. 5, VII-XII... Edited by Christopher Hogwood [&] Ryan Mark... Bärenreiter (BA 9456), 2013. Score & 3 parts, £21.00.

I suppose my experience of Corelli began with 19th-century realised copies, accompanying various fiddlers on the piano or at Fenton House, where anyone could come and play. But I soon moved on to the reprint of the Augener Collected Works, edited by Joachim and Chrysander in the 1880s and still available in the early 1960s and subsequently issued with op. 1-4 by Dover Books. Facsimiles became available from SPES, Schott, Garland and Fuzeau and I presume that most serious baroque players use them – with or without “Corelli's Graces”. This edition does not present a thorough conspectus of the 36 editions of the solo sonatas before 1800, along with 20 arrangements, most notably by Geminiani: for information on them, you need Vol. 3 of the Collected Works and the thematic catalogue. The interest of this edition, however, is a version copied by Antonio Tonelli (1686-1765), and it is significant that the editors discuss the harpsichord before the violin. Tonelli seems to have had access to a pre-publication copy, so there are a some places where his version is worth considering. The unique value of the edition, however, is the care with which Tonelli's “editing” is taken seriously, a rare example of a baroque violin/bass edition where an keyboard realisation can legitimately have *Urtext* on the cover.

I suspect that most readers who play Corelli will have come across the idea of thick harpsichord chords, and the main reason for this edition is to print all twelve sonatas with Tonelli's realisation. Generally the chords have five or six notes, with a note above the bass on the lower stave. He seems to have believed in having each hand in a comfortable position, with a gap between them, which may be why some low bass lines are put up an octave. In fact, the bass part plays mostly in the octave below middle C. I presume this must relate to the sound of the instrument: if an octave is doubled, it is above Corelli's bass. It is good to see the antithesis to the formal

polyphonic style of realisation, though it needs the right sort of instrument for it to work.

The Bärenreiter edition is in two volumes, each with score and parts (though that is a bit of an over-simplification). The “score” contains treble and bass as expected, but with another two staves containing Tonelli’s realisation. The “parts” comprises a violin solo part, a violin part with decorated versions from 18th-century sources, and a *Violone o Cimbalo* part, which is a plain version of the format in which opus 5 was published: two staves, in the convention of the period of duos being published in score, whereas trios appeared in parts.

As always, CH has a fresh approach, and manages to offer a variety of aspects of performance that should encourage violinists to buy the sets – brilliantly good value: I wonder how much more a scholarly edition of the Tonelli in isolation would have cost! I suspect that many players have played the sonatas without keyboard. Although the point of the edition is largely the Tonelli accompaniment, you only need a cello or a keyboard: to quote CH “To equate ‘o’ with ‘e’ is unwarranted”! It’s good to see the name of Ryan Mark, Christopher Hogwood’s assistant, on the title pages.

ENGLISH BAROQUE SONGS

Jeremiah Clarke *Fifteen songs*... Edited and reconstructed by Timothy Roberts. Green Man Press (Cla 1), 2013. 43pp + extra score with unrealised continuo, £7.90.

***English Baroque Songs – II* ...** Edited by Timothy Roberts. Green Man Press (Cla 1), 2013. 26pp + extra score with unrealised continuo, £10.00

***English Baroque Songs – III* ...** Edited by Timothy Roberts. Green Man Press (Cla 1), 2013. 27pp + extra score with unrealised continuo, £7.90

I’m puzzled. I thought I’d read or played through most of the songs in time for writing the reviews for the last issue. But I can find nothing on my computer, and Cedric (alias the Green Man) assured me that I needn’t look back further – a search of my computer should have shown them up anyway. Perhaps I was thinking of Leveridge and Vol. I of the *English Baroque Songs* (EMR June 2013). The repertoire, from Blow to Boyce skipping Purcell and Handel, is varied and well worth singing. I’ve received vols II & III in the medium voice version – a-f# and a-g’. The top notes seem a bit high (mezzo not alto) for “medium voices”, though the range is probably more comfortable with a harpsichord down a semitone. If you enjoyed vol. I, definitely buy these two.

Jeremiah Clarke’s songs arrived in the untransposed format (c’ – a’). Most familiar is “Blest be those sweet regions”, which strikes me as better for light-voiced tenors, since it covers the complete c’ to a’ compass. By this time, alto or tenor songs were often, when published, notated as now in treble clef, and tenors tended to have a slightly higher range than an octave below sopranos. Most amorous texts are men singing to women anyway. I hope accompanists use the treble-bass version for experience,

even if they don’t dare to perform without realisation. Very good value, especially without the need for buying two copies or having the singer leaning over the pianist.

I’m afraid I left this too late for detailed comments, since I was still hoping to find my first draft; but at least I apologised to Cedric in advance!

DARDANUS

Rameau *Dardanus*... Version 1739... (Opera Omnia Rameau, série IV, volume 5; RCT 35A). Société Jean-Philippe Rameau/Bärenreiter Verlag (BA 8854-90), 2013. xiv + 434 pp, £57.50.

It must have been in the mid 1970s when I heard a concert performance of *Dardanus* conducted by John Eliot Gardiner. The concert programme gives a date (Saturday 3rd February) but no year – a common problem with programmes. There’s no need to praise the opera itself, but a vocal score in particular needs to be considered on practical terms. The crucial issue is keeping the page open while playing then turning it quickly. Singers will find it too heavy, keyboard players will either omit the right hand (or the left if they are not continuo-trained) at turns and when the pages then move back under whatever law makes pages attempt to return to their previous position! The Durand edition of a century or so ago contains 290 pages (8 + 282) and weighs, in a librarian’s hard cover, 950g. The new, soft-cover edition has 448pp and weighs 1050 gm. So weight isn’t the only issue – though unbound copies of Durand are likely to be significantly lighter. Durand is also more compact. The first page of Act I scene 3 in Durand (p. 59) spreads over two pages (pp. 80-81) in the new edition, taking merely the first bar from Durand’s second page. Durand has five voice-and-piano systems, the new score has only four, more spacious horizontally as well. I know that a lot of my editions tend to squash the notation, but it’s usually for convenience. I assume that the setting is French, so I’m not writing another critical review of Bärenreiter. I compared *Dardanus* with the vocal score of Handel’s *Athalie*, which is the same weight. It’s easier to hold and can be forced to stay open more effectively, though both the Bärenreiter vocal scores have the luxury of four voice-and-piano systems rather than five.

My usual policy of writing about editions such as the above is that I approach full scores for their music if they are little-known works, and comment on editorial matters if the novelty is the edition, not the work. If I have a vocal score, I tend to approach practically rather than musicologically. As a publisher, I devote much attention to page-turns, whereas some prefer elegance to convenience.

BACH: TRIO SONATA in G MINOR

Bach *Trio Sonata for Oboe (Oboe d’amore), Viola (Viola da gamba) and Basso Continuo in G minor based on BWV 76/8 and 528.* Reconstruction and Continuo Realisation by Pieter Dirksen. Breitkopf & Härtel (KM2306), 2013. 22pp + 5 parts, €18.50.

Of Bach's six Organ Trios, no. 4 had the most complicated origin. This edition is a by-product of Dirksen's vol. 5 of Breitkopf's *Sämtliche Orgelwerke* (EB 8805, 2010). The final version in the set of six was compiled around 1730. The only specific date for an earlier version is in Cantata 76, where it is a Sinfonia for the post-sermon half of the second Sunday after Trinity, 6 June 1723. But stylistically it belongs to a decade earlier. The slow movement also exists from Bach's Weimar period, and the third movement probably dates from then as well, though there is no specific evidence.

Serious performers are now more aware of the interactions of pitch and transposition. Dirksen offers three performing possibilities:

- a. oboe at A=392 in g, gamba & Bc at A=465 in e.
- b. oboe d'amore, gamba & Bc using figured part, all in e.
- c. oboe, viola & Bc using score or figured part, all in g.

The musicology seems plausible, though a. is the least likely to be heard: gambas are more likely to tune down than up! Organs tuned to play with professional cornett and sackbut ensembles, however, should now be able to play at A=465.

Breitkopf kindly sent this quickly, since I made remarks when requesting it that there was a new Bach semi-discovery that readers might enjoy for a Christmas present. I fear that the three possible versions listed above might be offputting, but version c shouldn't present problems. Version c is the least complicated, so if an oboe and viola wish to come along some time, you would be very welcome.

LA PASSIONE

Haydn Symphony in F minor "La passione" Hob. I: 49...
 Edited by C.-G. Stellan Mörner. Bärenreiter (BA 10973), 2013. 20pp, £19.00.

This is reprinted from Henle-Verlag's *Joseph Haydn Werke*, Series I, vol. 6, published in 1966 (according to the copyright date). It's one of a group of symphonies in the 40s (around 1770) that I got to know well in the 1960s, and for a while they seemed more interesting than the final dozen. Reviewing a recording of Symphony 102 (see p. 39) was a good reminder that the one can't really compare two different types of music: we need both! It's good to have a separate score and parts (strings each £4.50, wind set £11.50) for orchestras who like large-size pages. It is, though, a pity that there is no critical commentary – I haven't checked back, but I probably complain about that every time I get a collected-works score without the complementary information. The source is, however, autograph and the parts are by a regular Esterhazy copyist. There is a single, double-column page in both English and German by Andreas Friesenhagen (dated 2013), with plausible comments rejecting earlier ideas about the piece, and hinting that the literary term "Sturm und Drang" and is of doubtful relevance to music – though Bärenreiter's hand-out to reviewers still uses the term!

I happened to pick up a 2011 Eulenburg catalogue at the Early Music Exhibition on the Schott stall. I was intrigued that most of the 40s Symphonies were available for £3.50, £4.00 or £4.50, though the German price is listed as €8.99 or €9.99: Symphony 49 is the lowest price.

HANDEL/MOZART DAS ALEXANDER-FEST

W. A. Mozart Das Alexander-Fest: Kantate in zwei Teilen von Georg Friedrich Händel bearbeitet von Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, KV 591. Klavierauszug nach dem Urtext der Neuen Mozart-Ausgabe von... Konrad Ameln, Antje Wissemann. Bärenreiter (BA 4527-90), 2013. viii + 125pp, £15.00.

This is based on Mozart's *Neue Ausgabe sämtliche Werke*, Serie X, *Werkgruppe 28, Abteilung 1*, with reference to one of the Hallische Händel-Ausgabe (Serie I Band 3) from 1957; it has a German title page and German as the preferred text, with the English below. There is no objection to Mozart's version being primarily German, and I've ignored the secondary English translations on the title page – I can't imagine that any anglophone choir will want to use it in German. The music is basically OK, as long as one doesn't care about the orchestration. Unfortunately, the Mozart arrangements of Handel were not included in the 1991 complete reissue of Collected Mozart edition. I'm not sure how well they were done – the one gross error I know of in another of the Mozart adaptations, *Messiah*, is that the trombones are only mentioned half-way through the commentary and are not included in the score. It is by no mean uncommon for trombones to be written elsewhere to save space: the original full score of Haydn's *Seasons*, for instance, has the three trombones in their own score at the end of the work. The introduction assumes that an organ was not available for Viennese palaces. I don't have the reference at hand, but I remember reading somewhere that an organ was seen being carried in for a Handel oratorio: chamber organs could be carried easily enough, as indeed they are now. Needless to say, there is no relationship between the Handel and Mozart movement numbers (both, of course, from the same publisher, and I expect any revised HHA Alexander's Feast will be different from the present one and HWV). I gather that the Mozart version survives in Germany, but there is a clash between Handel's brighter orchestration and the style of fifty years later.

Songs in British Sources c. 1150–1300 transcribed and edited by Helen Deeming (*Musica Britannica* 95) Stainer & Bell, 2013. lx + 226pp, £95.00.

Thomas Whythorne 15 Duos (London, 1590) for 2 treble cornetts edited by Timothy Roberts. Published by Jeremy West as a supplement to *How To Play The Cornett*. Cambridge, 2013 (www.jeremywest.co.uk)

Music from the Copenhagen Wind Collection III London Pro Musica (LPM FB15), 2013. 42pp + parts.

Consorts for Five Book 4 compiled and edited by Alison Crum. Rondo Publishing (RPO86), 2013.

+ other editions received at the London Early Music Exhibition.

REVIEWS OF BOOKS

Clifford Bartlett

APPROACHES TO MONTEVERDI

Jeffrey Kurtzman *Approaches to Monteverdi: Aesthetic, Psychological, Analytical and Historical Studies* Ashgate Variorum, 2013. xviii + 288pp, £85.00 ISBN 9781409463337

I'll comment mostly on the latter part of the book. Separate articles have a roman number; page numbers are those of the original printing of each article. These date from 1993 to 2009, and in addition there is a substantial bibliography. I find it interesting, though, that Kurtzman only lists four editions, and despite his inclusion of high and low *Lauda* and *Magnificat* in his 1610 Vespers, the 1610 *Missa in illo tempore* (G2G2C2C3C4F3) *Missa in F* from *Selva morale* (C1C2C3F3) are only at untransposed pitch. "In F" would have been meaningless in 1641, and it wouldn't have been sung at that pitch anyway. Incidentally, in VII p. 149 (and elsewhere), Kurtzman downplays the 1610 Mass. It comes to life if the organist plays chords from the bass, not reading the score: Monteverdi isn't just assembling Gombert's ten themes but creating a harmonic clarity.

VIII *Laetatus sum* (1610)

I was intrigued by the presence of the *Romanesca* used as one theme in *Laetatus sum* (1610). The idea started with John Whenham in 1997 and was extended by Kurtzman in 2007, both of which I must have read without reacting! It hit me musically when, at the end of the lunch break in a day's study and singing of the work with Philip Thorby, he started playing it on an organ. I joined in on another, but still didn't realise the significance of the *Romanesca*. It is heavily concealed by the typical Monteverdian rhythmic flexibility in the vocal parts, whereas the bass goes its own triple way except for some irregularities. Philip assured us (though I don't have a copy at hand to check) that the version of the bass was that of Monteverdi's colleague Salomone Rossi. Kurtzman finds this one of the most structured pieces of the Vespers: "it was not so much words, but rather musical structure that was foremost in Monteverdi's mind" though I wouldn't go so far as to say "individual words and phrases count for little... in this piece" (VIII p. 161).

X Monteverdi's Mass of Thanksgiving: Da Capo

This article runs through the history of the 1631 Mass for the recovery of the Plague. There's evidence for a Gloria and Credo. Once a connection with *Selva morale* was postulated, various theories were made, from the whole of Section A of the 1640/41 edition to none of it! Kurtzman's demolition of the attempts to argue that the two, unidentified mass movements must obviously be relevant should put an end to the theory. The following article in the volume (XI) makes clear that Monteverdi composed for San Marco regularly, so there must have been an extensive range of his music in the composer's or

the Basilica's library. There was much discussion during a century or so over the meaning of *trombe squarciate*; the German translation of *trombe* could legitimately be *posaune* (as used by Vogel in 1887), and English scholars took the German translation to mean trombone, and thus related to the optional scoring of the *Gloria a7*. That became the obvious piece for the 1631 celebration. It is noteworthy that the two Monteverdi experts of the period when I was looking for solid information on performance of Monteverdi, the two Denises (Stevens and Arnold) were rather slapdash – especially Stevens, who invents the story that "after the service, the fireworks, the canon, and the inevitable liquid refreshments, a man deputed to return the music to Monteverdi was robbed, probably by one of the composer's enemies" (X III & footnotes 67-69): I spotted it as phoney even before I read the footnotes. Arnold's problem was in not being explicit that he had changes his mind twice on the *squarciate* issue. The topic reached its peak in the work of James H. Moore, whose research was brilliant, yet ultimately the attempt to link the 1640/41 edition with 1631 failed in the only way possible to get it out of the Monteverdians' system – to go somewhere completely different. The precedent is his last book of madrigals (excluding the posthumous IX). Book VIII was intended to be dedicated to Ferdinand II and appeared in 1638 dedicated to his successor Ferdinand III. *Selva morale* was dedicated to Eleanor Gonzaga, daughter of Monteverdi's first employer, wife of Ferdinand II and mother of Ferdinand III. The connection between Venice and Vienna is now more fully explored, as our reviews have noticed.

XI Monteverdi's missing sacred music: evidence and conjectures is a useful reminder that his published output is probably a small proportion of what he wrote. Very few pieces (an exception is *Il combattimento*, though details of the string parts were changed) can be associated with any particularly occasion; this is especially so with the church music. Much of the liturgy can be performed many times a year, and Monteverdi was in charge for 30 years – but perhaps like Bach in Leipzig, he wrote a lot to start with, then just recycled for the remaining years.

XII Collected Works of Claudio Monteverdi: The Malipiero and Cremona Editions.

Most of us have found that the Malipiero edition is the most accessible, especially the post-war reprints, with the later church music slightly corrected in 1967-68. I wouldn't describe the organ part accompanying the violin duet in the Sonata as "giving the reader the opportunity to see the differences and decide which version might take priority". As I wrote in the last issue, over the last few years I (and more distinguished organ continuo players) play the simplified version, and interestingly no violinist has complained of the accompaniment! I've published a few

madrigals, but we've issued most of what appears in vols 10-16. We often worked initially from Malipiero: BC typesets the work first, noting errors as he does so, then I proof-reading against the facsimile – though if there are complications, I mark up the source(s) first.

One can't do that with the *Opera Omnia*, published under the auspices of the Fondazione Claudio Monteverdi of Cremona. There is no consistency – much worse than Malipiero, which at least improved for the better – and with 16 volumes produced so-far and another four to follow, progress is slow. I only have a few of the volumes, and for the madrigals I'm happy with Ut Orpheus. Frustratingly, the series doesn't retain the madrigal-book numbers, so Monteverdi's Book IX is *Serie I: Monumenta*, volume 5, tomo XIX, which would make more sense if the ample empty pages at the end could list the various series. Tomo XIX is summed up by Kurtzman in the only possible way: "The decision to alter Monteverdi's mensuration signatures, whether to indicate phrasing or triple time, has the most confusing, sometimes bizarre results". Reading the old rhythmic manner is, once you get used to it, far simpler – and also, in music as late as this, there is no guarantee that the mensuration system is always what it used to be. The piece here that I know best (from editing and playing) is the duet *Zefiro torna*. The edition seems to be based on Book IX, as indeed is mine, but the 1632 edition triple signs are different and that edition is headed *Ciaccona*, and I don't see why that isn't added – posthumous editions need as much help as is available from any from the composer's lifetime. The editor attempts to counter the off-beat rhythm by giving the right hand a three-beat movement, whereas the voices sometimes go with the bass, sometimes do sing three-to-a-bar. The realisations look as if they are for keyboard, which isn't the most likely accompanying instrument.

The Cremona Series V, Vol. XV is an extraordinarily fat volume (over 5kg: I wonder how long library copies will last without collapsing). To quote Kurtzman again (XII p. 23), "too much [of the introduction] is simply the fantasy of the editor, Denis Stevens, and has little or no evidentiary basis at all." The most useful feature is the facsimile, fortunately in a separate volume. When the series began, the small-print facsimiles were incredibly useful, but now most of the prints are available on line via IMSLP – even *Poppea*, which a few years ago was available only in a Russian copy of Malipiero, now has the Venice MS, though not the Naples. The 1640/41 *Selva morale* original is full of mistakes. Everyone knows about the two instrumental parts included instead of vocal parts in the *Magnificat* a8. But the more one looks, the more changes can be made involving very little editorial composition! Sadly, Stevens made silly changes, like deciding that the violins were numbered I & II according to which was the higher in the last chord, irrespective of the part-book number.

I've ignored much of the earlier articles, focussing on the areas I'm more involved with. I will, however, quote a sentence from my notes to the Nigel Rogers/Charles Medlam *Orfeo*, recorded almost thirty years to the week

when this should be reaching at least UK readers: "A modern audience can read all sorts of Freudian or Jungian [or any other] interpretations into the myth: a myth survives because it is richer than any single interpretation which can be put upon it." I learnt most of my understanding of Monteverdi by playing for an intelligent conductor – and the playing is important! I suspect that there's a lot to agree with in Kurtzman's articles on *L'Orfeo* (IV & V). But if I were writing an article, I think I'd compare *Orfeo* with Purcell's *Aeneas*. Returning to Nigel Rogers, it struck me more than it did in my note that Nigel's virtuosity was aggressive and his behaviour was primarily selfish: discuss! Both roles are low, in terms of more recent tenor range, but neither work with a baritone. The crucial point in *Orfeo*'s visit to Hades is that he achieves it, not by his virtuoso singing or even his less elaborate and more emotional singing when that fails. For someone who writes little instrumental music, it is fascinating that a low string ensemble of nine bars changes the mood, the same music as began *Possente Spirto*. I used to think that it had some magic effect: Kurtzman suggests more specifically that the infernal influence is Prosepina – but *Orfeo* still goes wrong! (V, p. 365)

Incidentally, the author and I have two things in common: we've both edited the 1610 *Vespers* and have both declined to edit for Raffaello Monterosso (who has a low profile on the couple of editions I have mentioned). Kurtzman rejected the *Vespers* on, among other reasons, the reduction of triple note-values. I was asked to edit *Poppea*; I wasn't worried about shortening triple time notation, since there are different triple conventions within the scores: my objection was the requirement of a notated accompaniment. My existing edition is fully figured, the only difficult bits being places like the prologue which are unlikely to be by Monteverdi. (Curtis came to more-or-less similar conclusions on different grounds.) There's no reason why an academic edition should have a realisation at all – the heavy paper and spacious layout (enlarged, of course, by a realisation) will be incredibly hefty compared (for instance) with Curtis's score at 800g or mine at 620g. And how do you write a realisation when the likely accompaniment is a composer (probably Cavalli) with a second harpsichord and a plucker or two, plus two violins and bass violin if the practice of around 1650 existed seven years earlier.

MUSIC OF THE BAROQUE

David Schulenberg *Music of the baroque*. Third edition. Oxford UP, 2014. xi + 370pp, £51.00 ISBN 978 0 994201 5

I'm puzzled that I have the companion *Anthology of Scores* from 2001 but can't find the first edition of the book, though it seems unlikely that I was sent a review copy of the *Anthology* without it. Googling offers no details of the third edition, perhaps because the copyright date is 2014, though the UK publication date is 3 October 2013. I suspect that most teachers of the baroque period will know and recommend the volume. It reads well, and given the space, it manages to offer some detail on the music selected for attention – helped by the anthology,

which itself has editorial comments. Four pages of keyboard ornament signs are usefully included (information from the first edition). Apart from dipping into the book casually or chasing individual topics, it is arranged to be read in two different sequences. My tidy chronological mind favours the alternative “pathway”, though a third one could (like Gustav Reese's *Music in the Renaissance*) have a history of the central musical language first (Italian for c.1600-1750, just as for the following 150 years it would be German), with France to follow, then other cultural areas. The illustrations are potentially interesting, but not quite clear enough. The copy I have is paper-back, with no suggestion that there may be a hardback (with better pictures).

To match the previous review, where I commented on the latter sections of Kurtzman's Monteverdi anthology, I'll pick up a few comments from the first half of this one.

27. Lassus's *Timor et tremor* is an interesting piece, but lacks the power of Gabrieli's setting inspired by it. I'd expect the Gabrieli to be printed in the anthology, with comparisons back to Lassus. *In ecclesiis* is a fine piece, but entered the anthology repertoire with Davison & Apel in 1949, and Schütz's *Saul, Saul* entered the anthology world through Winterfeld in 1834. Be more original!

44, “Both harpsichord and organ were used in sacred as well as secular music.” This needs to be discussed in terms of liturgical church use and domestic religious music. I can't quote details, but I believe that harpsichords were sometimes used in church to get round the banning of organs in Holy Week – following the letter, not the spirit.

56-59. Monteverdi's *Selva morale* has both 1640 and 1641 for its publication date, but is usually now dated 1641.

It's extraordinary that the *Lamento della ninfa* “is a continuo madrigal in which a solo soprano sings in dialogue with three male voices over a repeating or ostinato bass line.” The Lament is framed by a brief prelude and also rounded off by the three men and Bc without the nymph: the scene is set by the trio rather than someone introducing the piece. And the “repeating ostinato bass line” is better described as a descending minor scale from A G F E, one note per bar.

There is a good bibliography, informally by subject with a few comments. Not much space for individual editions, but it's odd to mention editions of *Orfeo* by me and *Poppea* by Alan Curtis (the interesting thing in comparing my edition is that on different ground I came to similar conclusions), but *Il ritorno d'Ulisse* (which I have also edited independently) is omitted,

The volume ends (apart from a *galant* epilogue, bibliography and index) with the Brandenburg Concertos: I recommend buying John Butt's recording (see p. 32). But what a waste of 16 blank pages at the end. I would have added an appendix of facsimiles: sourcing them from a major and helpful library could have produced top-rate scans while the final proofs were being dealt with!

SCHRANK MSS IN DRESDEN

Schranck No: II Das erhaltene Instrumentalmusikrepertoire der Dresdner Hofkapelle aus den ersten beiden Dritteln des 18. Jahrhunderts, Forum Mitteldeutsche Barockmusik 2, herausgegeben von Gerhard Poppe. Ortus Musikverlag, 2013. ISBN 978-3-837788-29-6. 274pp + DVD.

Over the past few years, nearly four thousand musical manuscripts have been digitized and loaded on to the Sächsische Landesbibliothek (commonly abbreviated to SLUB) website. They belong to the so-called Schranck II collection, named after the cupboard in the Dresden court chapel where they were discovered in the early 19th century by an inquisitive organist, who even had to have a locksmith break the lock! As part of the project to make the contents more readily accessible to musicologists and musicians alike, they have also been painstakingly scrutinized, and a database constructed, resulting in some interesting discoveries such as suites consisting of an overture by Handel and a sequence of dances by Telemann and/or Fasch and/or others (possibly unknown). Hitherto unasccribed works have been identified, and music thought to have been written by one composer has been re-attributed (for example, an overture by Fasch is now known to be a concerto by Venturini). Sometimes manuscripts have been found to contain more than one piece.

This book contains a detailed history of the collection by the editor, Gerhard Poppe, background information on the various personal libraries that were integrated into it during the 18th century, Steffen Voss, detailed information on specific pieces and full discussions of the copyists (oddly, to me at least) arranged alphabetically rather than chronologically, and the watermarks (with copious examples).

The book is accompanied by a DVD with samples of the copyists' handwriting which is all very useful, but I'm not sure that digital images are better than simply printing the images in the body of the book (as with watermarks), and that not using the space on the disc for PDFs of extracts from the remaining anonymous works seems a missed opportunity. Potential readers of the book are surely the most likely people to be able to identify them, and expecting them to download files when there was scope to include them here would have led them naturally to browse the mysterious areas of the collection. (The book has a grateful introduction from the director of SLUB, so surely he could not have objected to their inclusion in the name of furthering understanding of the collection.) On that front, I have identified at least one piece since the book was published: Mus. 2-Q-1,7 is a trio sonata in E by Stölzel (other copies survive in the Amalienbibliothek collection in the German State Library, Berlin – one of them transposed to D). Since I have downloaded all 1793 PDFs that are available via their website, I shall hopefully chance upon more concordances.

As with the other ortus volume reviewed here, this is a beautifully typeset book on lovely paper which is a joy to

use. It is packed with information – much more than some readers might need – on so many different aspects of a marvellous collection. It can only help to broaden our understanding of it, and encourage the discovery of the many gems which remained unknown by the musical – as opposed to the musicological – world.

Brian Clark

Wilhelm Friedemann Bach und die protestantische Kirchenkantate nach 1750: Forum Mitteldeutsche Barockmusik 1, ed. Wolfgang Hirschmann & Peter Wollny. Ortus musikverlag 2012. ISBN 978-3-937788-28-9. 464pp.

This substantial volume contains papers from two two-day conferences devoted to the subject matter, one at the Händel-Haus in Halle, the other at the Bach-Archiv in Leipzig, in 2010, which marked the 300th anniversary of Friedemann Bach's birth. Seven of the papers concentrate on Bach (four on the actual topic addressed in the title by Wollny, Erik Dremel, Helmut Loos and Gerhard Poppe) two of them on his organ music (Pieter Dirksen and Rüdiger Wilhelm), and a the last (Stefan Keym) on his use of "sonata form", while others are devoted to the cantata as a literary form (Irmgard Scheitler), Telemann (Ralph-Jürgen Reipsch, Ute Poetzsch and Brit Reipsch), Rambach (Juliana Heigel), Doles (Andreas Glöckner and Maik Richter), Berlin (Christoph Henzel on general matters, Tobias Schwinger (half of *ortus musikverlag*) on Agricola), C. P. E. Bach in Hamburg (Wolfram Enßlin), Roedelius (Manuel Bärwald), Homilius (Uwe Wolf), even less well known composers (Christine Blanken on Johann Georg Reichard, Tobias Rimek on Georg Gebel, Christiane Hausmann on Tag and the ever-informative Michael Maul on "Wolff"), and two papers on collections of cantata sources in archives (Kathrin Eberl-Ruf on Halle and Helmut Lauterwasser on Celle).

Given that there were two conferences and also that the "und" in the title in many ways links two separate topics rather than limits the discussion in any strict sense to W. F. Bach, there is a lot of information here, though not all of it will be relevant to everyone who reads the book. Indeed, I see it more as a reference library tome into which specialists will delve for snippets of new information – of which there is lots. Although I had known for some time that C. P. E. Bach borrowed music from other composers, I had not realised the extent to which this was his solution to the constant demand for music in Hamburg's five churches (and elsewhere); Enßlin makes the very valid point that, prior to his appointment there, he had had little experience of what was actually expected (although letters to Georg Michael Telemann make it clear that he was not totally taken by surprise). Works by Stölzel and Georg Benda seem to have been his particular favourites.

The text of the book is beautifully typeset and printed on quality paper, with lots of illustrations from source material. My only quibble (with the whole book, to be honest) is the variable quality of the musical examples. The worst examples are on pp. 326–330, where the wrong time signature is printed in two examples, and there are various inaccuracies in the text (Ex. 6 on p. 325, violin II in

bar 61), and some places where the editor should have tidied up the source (if that is the root of the problem), otherwise it looks as if the editor himself were slapdash. Of course there are musicologists for whom the actual text of the music is of secondary importance. When the subject matter is music by a composer that is not otherwise available, it is important that anything printed in a book such as this is as accurate (and edited) as possible, since not applying quality control (in all senses) to these extracts risks undermining the authors' reputations.

This is essential reading for anyone interested in W. F. Bach or the late 18th-century German cantata, and will hopefully inspire new editions of the repertoire discussed so that we can actually hear it.

Brian Clark

NEAPOLITAN OPERA

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

I've had problems in finding a reviewer for this after at least a year and I'm no expert on this subject. The introduction is clear, taking its beginning from the foundation of the Kingdom of Naples in 1734, though the main period studied is from 1775 to the end of the century. Each chapter is based on a general topic illustrated by one work: I won't attempt to write any further. The specific works discussed are:

1. Paisiello's *Socrate immaginario* (1775)
2. *Il convitato di pietra* (1783), bringing Don Giovanni and Pulcinella as opposing styles in the same event.
3. Paisiello's *Elfrido* (1792)
4. Guglielmi's *Enea, e Lavinia* (1785)
5. Guglielmi's *Debora e Sisara* (1788):
a Lenten azione sacra
6. Piccinni's *Gionata* (1792)
7. Ballet d'action *Il ratto delle Sabine* (1780)
8. The Neapolitan Ballet d'action

CB

RECERCARE XXIV/1-2 2012 Journal for the study and practice of early music directed by Arnaldo Morelli. Journal of the Fondazione Italiana per la Musica Antica. LIM Editrice [2012]. 230 pp, •24 (•29 outside of Italy). ISSN 1120-5741 ISBN 978 88 7096 731 9 recercare@libero.it; lim@lim.it – www.lim.it

Readers of *Recercare* will find that three of the six substantial studies in this issue are in English, along with bilingual summaries of all but one, making this issue a hefty one.

It also contains 13 colour and b/w plates regarding the *clavecin oculaire* (the keys of which produced colour combinations) to which a Jesuit, Louis-Bertrand Castel (1688-1757), influenced by Kircher and Newton, devoted 25 years of his life, intriguing some notable figures. Luisella Donato, a forte-pianist, writes about his theories, the

detailed descriptions of differing plans for its construction, accounts of the public “concerts” he gave on it in 1754-55, and the sometimes very critical objections to it (from France and Italy). It seems debatable whether music was intended to be played on it, along with an “analogous” colour show [12 intensities for 12 colours corresponding to 12 semitones], which our optic nerves would then blend and retain, thanks to their lasting effect on the retina; or whether keys were to be pressed only in order to produce what one desired to see! (Diderot, in fact, spoke of a deaf-mute who was very enthusiastic about the “show”.) The ocular harpsichord, from the accounts, was devised to interpret organized sounds, but the complicated mechanism to make moving visual effects were not convincingly analogous to chords, harmonies, and temperaments. Telemann, however, apparently gave such a positive report of Castel’s project that a forte-piano maker (Schröter, in 1739) was soon asked to propose making something similar. He came up with the primitive idea of coloured dampers which would come into view while keys were depressed, a far cry from Castel’s elaborate set-up of candles, lenses, and filters. Is this worth discussing? Given that Castel was a friend of Rameau’s, that Voltaire and Rousseau also left testimony about it, and that an English brochure, *Explanation of the ocular harpsichord* (London, 1757) awaits readers in the British Library, the spectacular illustrations reproduced here may indeed spark some renewed interest.

In “Compositional phenomena in the *Missa Papae Marcelli*” Julian Grimshaw shows that a harmonic matrix or underpinning unifies Palestrina’s freely-composed mass of 1562. The contrapuntal techniques he used were chosen to produce the desired density of texture, and not for their own sake. Palestrina could have combined the subjects and motifs in many more ways, and modified the intervals of the melodies as necessary – but he had other priorities. Very striking are the examples of syncopations based on arpeggio figures, and “flexed fuga” serving to reinforce the tonalities of the mass. While the traditional rules of counterpoint (an appendix cites Morley, Lusitano, de Montanos and Tomás de Santa Maria) explain the contrapuntal technique, exactly how he planned the harmonically-driven result remains an open question.

Andrea Garavaglia discusses theatrical aspects of the Baroque aria, which, like monologues, were codified to suggest the “real” time the soul takes for self-expression, rationalization, dissimulation and in general the verbalization of emotions, according to pre-18th-century aesthetics, thereby also giving “voyeuristic gratification” to those observing the interior events of characters, the spectators themselves needing time to be aroused and involved in the drama. The resulting time-scale of arias reflects the rumination, repetition and circularity of reflection, as opposed to the linearity of normal speech. The citation in the paper’s title (“*La brevità non può mover l'affetto*”). The time scale of the Baroque aria in the light of contemporary culture”) comes from the *Discorsi musicali* (1624) by Cesare Crivellati: his thesis being that contemporary texts for vocal settings were too brief to serve their purpose of arousing feelings.

Four late 16th to early 17th-century cornetts, a late 16th-century dulciana, a mid 16th-century bass recorder and a late 17th-century transverse flute are found in the library of the Sacred Convent of St. Francis in Assisi. Laura Pontecorvo finds these to be the surviving part of a much larger collection bequeathed to the convent by the erudite poet and abbot Francesco Maria Rivi in 1704. The ways in which such Renaissance and Baroque instruments were used liturgically by the Franciscans, even after string instruments predominated, is speculated on, as well as their original, possibly Roman provenance.

In “Frescobaldi’s *Fiori musicali* and Bach”, Peter Williams seeks to show, in general terms and by examples, what influence the earlier Italian organ composer seems to have had on Bach. His reasoning has to be followed together with the paired Frescobaldi/Bach musical examples, and therefore Williams did not provide a summary of this paper. In fact he ends by saying “As with all of the suggestions made in this essay, any direct influence of *Fiori musicali* is more a matter of inference than certainty.” The examples are too out of context to attest to Frescobaldi’s prowess as a masterful keyboard contrapuntalist, but the similarities are none the less striking.

Kees Vlaardingbroek’s “‘The promised land of music’: Jan Teding van Berkhout in Italy, 1739–1741” picks out the references to the musical events this young aristocrat from Delft (1713–1766) reported hearing during his *grand tour* of Europe, which was mainly for commercial reasons. His diaries and letters record his experiences in Brussels, numerous French cities and London as well as Italian centers from Genoa down to Naples and then up again through Florence, Bologna, Venice, smaller cities and Turin. In the end he had a political career and an advantageous marriage, but his account reveals that he managed to take lessons in singing, harpsichord and cello *en route*, hear and meet numerous eminent musicians and composers, and come away with a higher appreciation for the opera theaters and musical salons of Italy than for those of France or England. Certainly not all young diplomats of the time were so absorbed, if temporarily, by music.

After these papers, and before two book reviews by the chief editor, Arnaldo Morelli, there is an appreciative description by Mila De Santis of Janie Cole’s two recent books on Michelangelo Buonarroti the Younger, the nephew, *A Muse of Music in Early Baroque Florence and Music, Spectacle and Cultural Brokerage in Early Modern Italy*, perhaps for the benefit of *Recercare*’s non-English readers who may have missed hearing about them. He finds the direction and completeness of her study especially noteworthy in showing Buonarroti as, at one and the same time, a patron, an intermediary and an artist. Many other studies are mentioned as well, but this is primarily a tribute to Cole’s archival research. Barbara Sachs

ROYAL MUSIC ASSOCIATION RESEARCH CHRONICLE
vol. 44, 2013. Routledge ISSN 1472 3808.

I received this publication from its first edition, but probably stopped when less of its content was early

material. But I was pleasantly surprised by a review copy of the current issue. Members of the RMA presumably still get a reduction. There are four contributions: the last (the shortest) shall be first on the grounds of chronology.

It is well known that William Lawes was killed in the civil war. William Lawes, 'Treasurer at Warr' by David Pinto and Layton Ring is full of information, though a bit confusing to the reader I'm not particularly concerned about his precise death date, but going back over the article a few days after I read it, I gave up trying to check it in the article (24 Sept. 1645). The authors grasp at various peripheral information, which gives a bit more of a concept of Lawes's circumstances in his military activities, and there are traces of him having some status. It's possible that a letter to Henry might undermine all the hints, but we can't expect that. The most personal remarks come at the end, with two paragraphs on his handwriting.

Christopher Page (perhaps in relief from his magnum opus *The Christian West and its Singers: the First Thousand Years*) has been investigating the Spanish Guitar: *The Spanish Guitar in the Newspapers, Novels, Drama and Verse of Eighteenth-Century England*, the earliest use of the term in English being 1652 – see his note 1. The relevant period is "between the last years of Samuel Pepys and the boyhood of Charles Dickens. The article is primarily a list of press mentions between 1700 and 1805.

The Music Collection of Thomas Baker of Farnham, Surrey mostly survives in the eponymous Collection in the Gustav Mahler-Alfred Rosé Room of the Music Library, Western University of the University of Western Ontario (in London – though the name is usually omitted, perhaps to avoid readers looking for it in London, England). Cheryl Martin, the author, is based at Western, and in addition to the account of the collection, she has produced a thorough catalogue. There was a catalogue by Richard Andrewes, published in 1985, the year in which a collector in London Ontario acquired them from the Hampshire Record Office via the leading music-dealers Hermann Baron and Richard Macnutt,

Thomas Baker was born in 1719 in Farnham, Surrey and lived there till his death in 1794. He was a man of varied interests. The music was handled with care, and not unnecessarily scribbled in, though there are pencillings of bar numbers and violin bowings. The repertoire is extensive but not unexpected – except, perhaps, the three-volumes of Boyce's *Cathedral Music*, which must have been quite expensive and not very useful without a church choir. The only unusual example among the six MSS is a 600-page collection of church music of the 17th & 18th century, with some pieces by the compiler William White. The information here is probably as much as it deserves, though it would have been useful if the library could put online some of the less accessible items. And NB: Handel's *Hercules* is not an opera (p. 27).

Margaret Debenham and Michael Cole have investigated the documentation of three early piano makers. They are

Roger Plenius (or Pleunius), 1696-1774, Frederick Neubauer, c.1705-74, and Herman Bernard Viator (or Vietor or Victor), who worked in London from 1759 and in the USA from 1774. There is also a section on Robert Adam's curious harpsichord for Catherine the Great, for which there is a sketch at the Soane Museum. I suspect that this is a contribution that will intrigue, even excite, some readers, who will want to read every single footnote and documentation, but others will pass over it.

There is a typographical problem here. A4 pages need size and space to avoid excessive eye-strain and (particularly on pp. 81-84). I realised right from the start of *EMR* that to economise on paper costs, it was essential to use double columns, with three columns one point lower for the CD reviews. RMA can get away with 9 point, because it is so clear to read – photocopiers are not so good. The Research Chronicle is easily readable, but NOT in long, small-print documents.

JOHN MARSH

The John Marsh Journals The Life and Times of a Gentleman Composer, 1752 – 1828. Vol. II edited, introduced, and annotated by Brian Robins (*The Sociology and Social History of Music*, 10) Pendragon Press, 2013. xii + 429pp, \$65.50

I was well aware that I would be unable to finish this in time to write about it, so have put it aside until this issue is finished.
CB

Benjamin Wardhaugh *Thomas Salmon Writings on Music* Volume I: *An Essay to the Advancement of Musick* and the Ensuing Controversy, 1672-3. Volume II: *A Proposal to Perform Musick* and related writings 2 vols, 2013. ISBN 978-1-4094-6503-4 £90.00

There are two possible reviewers of this for the next issue.

Hugh's Christmas Delights I

John Jacob Niles: I wonder as I wander
two further verses by Hugh Keyte

4. No mammy like Mary the wide world can show,
No husband like Joseph, attendin' her so,
No babe with such bright rays of glory aglow,
No story so joyful – or so full of woe!
5. Now Christmas is ended, and Jesus must flee,
From Herod's cruel soldiers a-searchin' for he,
For to ransom poor sinners is his high destiny,
And the Child in the manger must hang from the Tree.
6. (Repeat verse 1)

Niles claimed to have collected somewhere between one and three lines of this folksong from an unkempt girl in Murphy, North Carolina, on 16 July 1933; Niles completed it on 4 October of the same year. The New Oxford Book of Carols (no. 172) has three verses. Solo unaccompanied voice is ideal, but my (CB's) recollection of it is Robert Oliver singing it to his viol at a carol concert in Huntingdon.

LONDON REVIEWS

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Posh frocks and picnics – Glyndebourne

This year's posh frocks and picnic season included Mozart's *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* at Garsington (9 June) and Rameau's *Hippolytus and Aricia* at Glyndebourne (15 July). French opera is slowly making its way onto the English musical stage, so it was high time for Glyndebourne to present its first ever staging of a Rameau opera. It was an interesting choice, as *Hippolytus and Aricia* is one of his more serious offerings. The setting was contemporary (Diana opens the show sitting on the top shelf in an enormous, stage-high, refrigerator, while Cupid is hatched from a nearby egg – you get the picture?) But the costumes are all-purpose 18th and 21st century baroque, with a degree of usefully colour-coding as to their roles and characters. For those like me who have not seen the back of their fridge for years, it was perhaps no surprise that it is the 2nd Act abode of Pluto along with a dramatic collection of vast creepy-crawlies. The inevitable camped-up dancing in sailor suits is sadly becoming an operatic norm and I suppose it panders to the taste of many in a typical opera audience. One of the key aspects of French opera is the frequent dance moments, and I don't think they should be trivialised. At least here it was gender balanced by the very brief glimpse of a set of female breasts. Equally predictable nowadays was the sight of blood, in this case the slaughter of a deer. I am not sure whose taste that panders too, but it is not mine. The intention of director Jonathan Kent and designer Paul Brown was to "reinvent Baroque opera for the 21st century", although with a work as tragic as this, the use of such contemporary images does risk a sense of confusion – do we laugh or cry? The ending is curious, in the same way.

Production qualms apart, musically this was a success. Sarah Connolly once again dominated the stage in her portrayal of the troubled Phaedra. Stéphanie Degout excelled as the even more troubled Theseus, while Christiane Karg and Ed Lyon portray the youthful love of Aricia and Hippolytus with telling conviction. François Lis's stentorian tones were just the thing for his role of Pluto. I also liked Ana Quintans as Cupid and the three singers who sang a neat trio dressed as bugs. Katherine Watson's Diana was a bit too tremulous for my taste and for the period. It was appropriate that the musical direction was by William Christie (conducting the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment) – he has done so much to introduce Purcell to the English that it seems only fair for him to pioneer the music of his adopted country. It was clear that a lot of time had been spent in rehearsal refining details of ornamentation and articulation. The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment were on their usual sparkling form – they really do walk on musical water whenever they perform.

Not quite such posh frocks and picnics – Garsington

Meanwhile, at the new home of Garsington Opera (Wormsley Park, a Buckinghamshire Getty-pad), we had a thoroughly contemporary updating of Mozart's *Singspiel Die Entführung aus dem Serail*. In these sensitive days, it is perhaps a tricky work to stage, with its late 18th century fascination with all things Ottoman. In Mozart's hands the rather unpleasant Pasha turns out to be a good guy after all, with the inevitable concluding plot twist. Perhaps appropriately given the country park setting, this was set (by director Daniel Slater) in the ostentatious realm of a Russian oligarch Selim, who arrives in a flash car driven straight onto the stage (not difficult, given the layout of Garsington's architecturally impressive demountable opera house), having purchased not just a football club, but the entire European Champions League. Osman is his resident heavy, Pedrillo is an east-end-spiv sports journalist wanting to rescue his Swedish lover Blonde with the help of his oh-so American friend Belmonte, the nationalities of the latter two perhaps an attempt to cover the accents of the two performers involved. Konstanze is Spanish and the Janissaries take on the role of football supporters. The spoken elements were completely re-written to suit the contemporary concept in a multi-lingual form that tested the linguistic abilities of the audience – I think this is the first time in any opera that I have heard anybody referred to as a "bell-end"! But the arias remained intact, and fitted well in the new setting. It is possibly just as well that the singers are spared the usual recitatives (although they do need to be good at the extensive spoken dialogue – which they were), as the arias are notoriously tricky. Examples include Osmin's *O, wie will ich triumphieren* with its two low-Ds, and Konstanze's *Martern aller Arten*, a soprano marathon. Matthew Rose and Rebecca Nelsen were well up to the challenge. The remaining cast included fine performances from Mark Wilde (Pedrillo) and Norman Reinhardt (Belmonte), but I could have done with less vibrato from Susanna Andersson (Blonde). The conductor was William Lacey, reigning in any romantic notions from the modern-instrument orchestra.

Not many posh frocks – ENO's *Fidelio*

If you hadn't read the programme book (or followed the pre-premiere publicity) before you saw English National Opera new production of *Fidelio* (borrowed from Munich), you might have thought you'd turned up on the wrong evening – or, indeed at the wrong venue. But spotting that the director was Calixto Bieito might have given some clues as to what was likely to unfold. One reviewer, responding to Bieito's bodily-fluid soaked ENO Don Giovanni back in 2001, wrote that that he would sooner poke his eyes out and sell his children into slavery than sit through it again. *Fidelio* is not an easy work to

stage under any circumstances, but rather than concentrating his efforts into getting under the skin of the work, Calixto Bieito tossed Beethoven (and all the spoken dialogue) aside and used the piece as a vehicle for his own rather complex imagination. The spoken element of the original is not of the best, but replacing them with snatches of modern poetry really doesn't help in understanding what Beethoven was getting at – or indeed, what Bieito is getting at. Set in an intimidating frame structure, no doubt expressing our own imprisonment, or something similar, the production featured a bewildering array of oddities. For example, when Fidelio and Leonore finally get together after his release from prison (the tension of which had already been reduced by having him appear during the overture), they spent their time dressing up (with Fidelio putting a clean shirt on top of the T-shirt he had worn for years in prison), before he just wanders off. There was no personal interaction between the reunited lovers, no affection, no sense of making up for lost time. All this took place while The Heath string quartet were lowered from the fly-tower in cages as they played part of the slow movement of the String Quartet Op 132. Musically a divine moment, but I really do not get the point that Bieito was trying to make here, as in many other parts of his re-telling. Despite serious misgivings about the direction, musically this was a most impressive performance. Conductor Edward Gardner not only kept the house band on its toes throughout, but brought some real drama and excitement in the music, from the very first chord of the overture – in this case, Leonore No.2, the longest of the possibly options. Key singers Emma Bell (Leonore), Stuart Skelton (Florestan), Philip Horst (Don Pizarro), Roland Wood (Don Fernando) and Sarah Tynan (Marzelline) excelled and are to be congratulated on surviving the directorial ordeal.

Very few posh frocks - English Touring Opera

Meanwhile, in a rather opera-dominated period, the English Touring Opera set out on their countrywide tour of three early Venetian operas, Cavalli's *Jason*, Handel's *Agrippina* and Monteverdi's *Poppea*. They started at the Britten Theatre (4 Oct) with *Jason* (aka *Giasone*), first performed during the Venice carnival in 1649, and clearly influenced by his mentor, Monteverdi. Savagely, but wisely, cut down to two 2-hour acts from the four-hour original (in Ronald Eyre's edition), Cavalli's romp through sexual ethics lost quite a lot of its original depth, particularly in the first half, although the story line remained reasonably intact. Presumably restricted by the need to cart scenery around the country, the set (designed by Smala Blak) consisted of a series of bastardised versions of the opening rather Chekhovian off white staircase hall, which was deconstructed as the tale progressed, starting with somebody leaning against a wall panel which immediately caved in. Whether this was deliberate or not, it was a sign of things to come. Ted Huffman's production was generally conservative, albeit with a few of the oddities expected nowadays. One example of the tests of imagination of the set was that, although Isiphile (but it was actually Medea) was supposed to have been thrown into the sea over the side of a boat, in

this staging it was more a case of defenestration. As for the story, the Golden Fleece hardly gets a mention in this tale of infidelity and passion. Whatever the pros and cons of the production and musical interpretation, it is Cavalli's music that wins out. Slipping effortlessly from recitative into snatches of arioso and full scale arias, without the relentless *da capo* ritual of later operas, the emotions are allowed to flow in a natural way. The key moment is the plea by Isiphile (Jason's first wife and mother of his children) that he stab her to death but without damaging her breasts so that their children can still suckle on her corpse. His other wife, Medea, is made of sterner stuff, and dominated the first half. The singers were Clint van der Linde (Jason), Hannah Pedley (Medea), Catrine Kirkman (Isiphile), Michal Czerniawski (Delfa), Piotr Lempa (Orestes), Peter Aisher (an excellent stand-in as Demus), Andrew Slater (Hercules) and John-Colyn Gyeantey (Egeus). The instrumentalists were the Old Street Band not, I suggest, on their finest form, under the musically sensitive conducting of Joseph McHardy.

They followed this up with *Agrippina* (8 Oct), a far better production for many reasons, not least Samal Blak's clever set with its revolving central structure within a box, allowing three different scenes to be switched. It is an early work (1709) and contains many musical moments that are to recur in latter operas. Paula Sides was impressive as Poppea, although Gillian Webster as her marital opposition Agrippina had rather too much vibrato for my taste. Jake Arditti was a maniacal and overly camp Nerone. The remaining cast were Clint van der Linde as Ottone, Nicholas Merryweather as Pallante, Andrew Slater as Claudio, Luke D Williams as Lesbo and Russell Harcourt as Narciso. Jonathan Peter Kenny conducted the Old Street Band, who were on better form than in Jason, although they were still not quite up to the expected standard of London professional opera. They used a new orchestration which didn't frighten the horses although I did wonder why. I liked the projection of brief summaries of the sung text onto side screens, a welcome change from the sometime awkward direct surtitle translations.

In a nice pairing of operas, English Touring Opera showed how the determination of Agrippina to put her son Nero on the throne was followed by the antics he got up to when he was actually there, with *Poppea*, which I saw the following evening (9 Oct). This meant that their trilogy of operas, as seen in the order that I experienced them, finished as it began with the music (perhaps) of Cavalli and his *Pur ti miro*. Cut by at least a third to clock in at less than two and a half hours, the setting of this production (directed by James Conway) was Stalinist Russia – a reasonable alternative to Nero's Rome. A double height staging allowed for the prologue to be presented as an idealistic Communist tirade from a balcony to a crowd, although if any of them were music lovers, I think they would be put off by the alarming vibrato of the two female singers – an issue that continued throughout the show. There were a number of production issues (including lighting), one of which was the remarkably unruffled state of the bed that Nero and Poppea are supposed to have just popped out of at the start. Paula

Sides remained in her *Agrippina* role as Poppea, and was again impressive, although I wasn't sure if her rather child-like dress really portrayed the naked ambition behind the character, although it did remind us that the historical Poppea and Nero were both just teenagers. Helen Sherman exposed the depths of Nerone's depravity as well as the real erotic tension between him and Poppea. Jake Ardeti was again in manic mode as Amor. The conductor was Michael Rosewell, and the Old Street Band were on slightly better form this time. ETO is not a period opera outfit, and on occasions in all three of these productions it showed. Although they used a period instrument orchestra, I wonder how much they considered their chosen repertoire for this season when it came to choosing the singers. Such is the training of singers in the UK nowadays that very few survive conservatories without having been forced into the sort of vibrato that is very difficult to control, and most of the singers in these three operas provided aural evidence of this. But perhaps one of the ways in which this might change is when opera companies like ETO make it clear that they want to be able to choose singers who are not trained to belt out romantic operas into a vast opera house.

More Monteverdi

The Academy of Ancient Music opened the 40th anniversary season with a spectacular performance of Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo* at The Barbican (28 Sept). The concert hall staging-director Orpha Phelan recast the plot in a way that allowed us to focus on the psychological and very human undercurrents of the protagonists. Drawing inspiration from the mafia world of the Sopranos, Phelan opens the story around the wedding of members of two different clans, the wedding guests having already mingled rather noticeably with the audience in the foyer, and many in the orchestra wearing shades and mob-suits, with varying degrees of sartorial success. All references to the Gods, Hades, and all other things that go bump in the night are gone. Euridice commits suicide (without the help of a snake) in despair at the state of her arranged marriage. Orfeo's journey into the depths is entirely conjured up within his own alcohol-sozzled mind – "hell is in his head". Hope might be abandoned, but not on the banks of the Styx – there is no boat and no boatman. Caronte turns out to be the pathologist attending Euridice's corpse laid out on a mortuary slab (the only prop in the show) while Speranza is a nurse. *Possente spirito* becomes Orfeo's denial-fuelled plea to stop the dissection of Euridice. There is no glance back – the post-mortem appearance of Euridice is only in Orfeo's grief-ridden imagination. Act 4 is set in a bar, with Proserpina as the seductive barmaid who convinces Pluto that drink is the answer to Orfeo's problems, a process already well under way in the opening wedding scene. Although it would take another couple of viewings to fully absorb this radical re-telling, on first sight I thought it worked well, despite the misfit twixt text and actions. As for the music, even if the production had disappointed, musically this was one of the finest Orfeo's I've seen, not least for the staggering (in more ways than one) performance of John Mark Ainsley as Orfeo, a portrayal of enormous

emotional depth and technical brilliance. Others who impressed were Thomas Hobbs and Daniela Lehner. Richard Egarr's direction was revealing, with an imaginative use of the continuo instruments, including six keyboard instruments and a pair of pochettes that made a brief and rather surprising and curious sounding appearance, raising several giggles from the audience.

A Singularity of Voice

Countertenor Iestyn Davies's residency at the Wigmore Hall has been entitled 'A Singularity of Voice', an apt acknowledgement of one of the more recent representatives of that singular vocal genre to hit the public consciousness. England does seem to churn out countertenors, but Davies (born in York, before anybody queries the beginning of this sentence) has gone well beyond the usual cathedral choir circuit to achieve success in the world of international opera. But he returned to English roots for his Wigmore Hall concert 'Flow my tears' (5 July) with music by Johnson, Dowland, Danyel, Campion and Hume, beautifully accompanied by Thomas Dunford and Jonathan Manson on lute and viol. Iestyn Davies caught the contrasting moods and sensitivities of the pieces impeccably, most notably in Danyel's 'Mrs M.E. Her funeral tears for the death of her husband' with its concluding refrain "Pine, fret, consume, swell, burst and die". But I was interested in Iestyn Davies's use of vibrato. The Danyel piece was sung with practically no applied vibrato, but Davies applied it during many other pieces. Many singers increase vibrato with volume, but this wasn't the case here, so I assume that it was a conscious choice on his part. It was certainly not of operatic proportions, and took little away from the purity of his voice, but it just puzzled me. A very welcome addition to the early pieces was the world première of Nico Muhly's 'Old Bones' a Wigmore Hall commission, resulting in a clever reflection on the recent discovery of bits of Richard III in a Leicester car park, contrasting the rather manic outpouring of the lady from the Richard III Society with a poem in praise of the chap who apparently killed him. Not exactly a meeting of minds! The concert was filmed by Sky Arts, a new venture for the Wigmore Hall, and was broadcast in early September.

EUBO's Royal Celebration

The European Union Baroque Orchestra (EUBO) continue with their very welcome St John's, Smith Square residency with their programme of their 2013 incarnation of 'Handel: A Royal Celebration' together with the choir of Clare College Cambridge (3 Sept). Handel made an immediate impression on the Royals, receiving an annuity from Queen Anne almost as soon as he arrived. Her Birthday Ode was Handel's 'thank you', and it opened the second half of this concert, with its magical opening 'Eternal source of light divine' sung exquisitely by countertenor Alex Potter with EUBO trumpeter Sebastian Philpott. The other soloists were drawn from the choir, with varying degrees of success. The other vocal works were the four Coronation Anthems (sung, incidentally, in the presence of at least one descendant of George II).

EUBO's solo moment came in the Concerto Grosso in B flat (Op3/2) with its distinctive movement featuring two cellos (Guillermo Turina Serrano and Nicola Paoli) and oboe (Clara Geuchen). Lars Ulrik Mortensen directed with his usual flamboyant style, expressing his intentions in the form of dance. This concert will be released on CD in December.

Die Schuldigkeit des ersten Gebots

Listening to early Mozart is always a fascinating, if intellectually challenging, experience. How do you judge the work of an 11-year old when you know what he went on to produce? My approach is usually to try to forget that it is Mozart, and try to convince myself that I am listening to a mature work by a hitherto unknown composer. On that basis, many of Mozart's early pieces stand up well, including his *Die Schuldigkeit des ersten Gebots* written in 1767, and presented by the Classical Opera Company (Wigmore Hall, 24 Sept). It is the first part of a trilogy, the other two (now lost) composed by Michael Haydn and Adlgasser, performed during Lent in Salzburg. More oratorio than opera, the subject matter is irritating to the extreme, with its sanctimonious let's-not-have-any-fun presentation of Christianity. After the opening Sinfonia (in Empfindsamer Stil with unison passages and frequent switches of mood, and including the blaring horns that in later works would indicate that somebody was being cuckolded) we witness a tedious (but, in Mozart's hands, musically sensitive) debate between Divine Justice (Mary Bevan), Divine Mercy (Sarah Fox) and the Spirit of Christianity (Robert Murray). They happen upon a dozing Half-Hearted Christian (Allan Clayton) and Divine Justice wakes him by inducing a terrifying dream of the Day of Judgement, with the surprisingly relaxed (given the text) aria *Erwache, fauler Knecht*. The H-HC is momentarily saved by the arrival of the Spirit of Worldliness (Ailish Tynan), who encourages him to laugh, have fun and surrender his troubled heart to sensuality (in the beautifully sung highlight aria *Hat der Schöpfer*). The killjoys soon return, this time in disguise, and the piece ends as the H-HC is torn between the opposing arguments. The text of the other two parts survives, not surprisingly, concluding with a life for the H-HC devoid of laughter, fun and sensuality and, presumably, full of guilt. Mozart provides some fascinating orchestrations, with the interplay of horns, oboe and strings in Divine Mercy's showpiece *Ein ergrimmt*, and an alto trombone/singer duet in the H-HC's *Jener Donnerworte*, the alto trombone being the rather melodious sound of the Last Trumpet. As usual with their chosen repertoire, Classical Opera Company were compelling advocates of this possibly less than perfect work, with their director, Ian Page, taking the music seriously, as well he should.

Hello – and a Farewell

London has another new concert hall, Milton Court, tucked under a 36-storey building housing nearly 300 luxury apartments. Seven of the lower floors now house the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, an overflow

from its adjoining Barbican home, and it also includes a new theatre and rehearsal spaces. At around 600 seats, the capacity of the Milton Court concert hall is slightly larger than the Wigmore Hall's 537 (although the latter's volume and stage is very much smaller), and is between the 420 seats of Kings Place (opened in 2008) and the 900 seats of the Queen Elizabeth Hall and Cadogan Hall. As well as its use by Guildhall students, around 50 Barbican concerts a year will be held in Milton Court, including those of one of its resident orchestras, the Academy of Ancient Music. My introduction to the hall was their first Milton Hall concert (24 October) with a programme of a paired pair of violin concertos and symphonies by Haydn and Mozart. The impressive young violinist Alina Ibragimova (who toured a Bach programme with the AAM last year) directed the AAM in Haydn's Violin Concerto 1 in C and Mozart's Violin Concerto 5 in A. Pavlo Beznosiuk directed Haydn's 'Farewell' Symphony and Mozart's Symphony No. 10 in G, somehow managing to get the AAM players to avoid any sense of the essential key colour of the remote F Sharp minor of the 'Farewell'. Alina Ibragimova is not a natural orchestral director, in the traditional sense of the word. I have not seen her in rehearsal as a director so might be wrong, but she certainly doesn't give the impression of dominating or imposing her style or of any of the other quasi-dictatorial habits that many of that ilk demonstrate. She does the exact opposite. She just comes on stage and plays. Not in the exaggerated, 'look what I'm doing' approach of some soloists, but in a way that draws the other players (and the audience) into her world, encouraging them to listen. And what we all heard was exceptional. Her ability to delve below the surface of the notes is inspirational, as is her ability to play the most virtuosic passages with the apparent ease that comes from years of hard practice. Her encore was the slow movement from Haydn's Symphony No. 6 in D major ('Le matin'). The acoustics of Milton Hall are flexible, but on this occasion sounded just a little too resonant from my seat, although articulation was clear enough. But it is far easier to reduce resonance than to increase it, so that is no bad thing – and it is a nice contrast with some of London's other halls.

An American in London

The American in this case refers to the new organ in Handel's Church, St George's, Hanover Square, built by the American organ builders Richards, Fowkes & Co and opened a year ago. John Scott, previously organist at St Paul's Cathedral and now based at St Thomas Church, New York, was invited to give the first anniversary recital in conjunction by the London Bach Festival (31 Oct). Although based on North German and Dutch organs of the 17th and 18th centuries, John Scott proved how appropriate this organ is for the interpretation of Bach in his programme of the complete *Clavier-Übung III*. His careful use of articulation and gentle musical inflexion was an object lesson for all organists. Not afraid to unleash the full power of this important new organ, he also demonstrated a sensitive approach to the more meditative pieces, notably in his memorable interpretation of the extraordinarily complicated and intense *Vater unser*

in *Himmelreich* (BWV 682), a complex trio movement full of Lomdardic rhythms, into which Bach wove the chorale theme in canon, making a five-part structure reminiscent of De Grigny.

The Night Shift

John Scott's recital finished in time for me to get to the Queen Elizabeth Hall for the latest of the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment's enterprising 10pm Night Shift events, a shortened and more relaxed repeat of the main evening concert aimed at a younger audience who are welcomed by foyer music and can stay until midnight. This time the focus was on the music of Corelli, together with a new work, 'Corelli Leaves' commissioned from Clare Connors, compered by Zeb Soanes, a Radio 4 newsreader, and a distinct improvement on their usual compère. The OAE players, many of whom might not normally mix with the likes of their target audience, take the sensible step of treating the music seriously, without either playing to the crowd or patronising them. And the formula seems to work, although on this occasion the usually impressive audience was somewhat reduced in numbers, perhaps because of the alternative attractions of Halloween.

Toulouse les Orgues Festival

As well as an important international organ competition and several concerts devoted specifically to organ music that I will be reviewing for *The Organists' Review* magazine (including a showing of Buster Keaton's *The General* to an improvised organ accompaniment), the 18th festival *Toulouse les Orgues* also included some events of interest to *EMR* readers. One of these was centred on 'The Orgelbüchlein Project', an international composition project curated by the British organist William Whitehead and aiming to complete the 118 missing chorale preludes in Bach's *Orgelbüchlein* with commissioned and sponsored compositions, alongside contributions volunteered from others. Pierre Mea, organist of Reims Cathedral, included four of these newly composed works alongside seven of Bach's original *Orgelbüchlein* preludes, the whole sandwiched between the 'Dorian' Prelude and Fugue, played on the 1981 Ahrend organ in the Musée des Augustins, based on North German baroque instruments. More detailed discussion of the new pieces is best left for my *Organists' Review* essay, but this recital showed the importance of touch and articulation when playing instruments with historically important flexible winding and when playing into a large acoustic.

One of the last concerts of the festival took place in the Église Saint-Pierre des Chartreux, home to one of the most important historic organs in Toulouse, the four-manual 1683/1783 Delaunay/Micot instrument. Michel Bouvard, the festival's director, played pieces by Jehan Titelouze (the four-verse *Hymne: Ave Maris Stella*), Nivers, Du Mont and Nicolas de Grigny, demonstrating the enormous range of tone colour of the French classical organ. Interspersed between the solo organ works, the group *Les Passions* (a period instrument orchestra from

nearby Montauban), performed pieces by Charpentier for three male voices, including the distinctive French *haute-contre*. They were conducted by Jean-Marc Andrieu with an appropriate sense of period style, and produced a well-integrated sound despite some tiny intonation issues from the singers. For those with internet radio access, this concert will be broadcast on *France Musique* on 3 December at 8pm. I have also reviewed two CDs from this group elsewhere in *EMR* very favourably.

MR. SUZUKI'S BACH CHURCH CANTATA SERIES – JOB DONE!

Volume 55 of Masaaki Suzuki's Bach Church Cantata Series, on the Swedish BIS label, reached me on Guy Fawkes' Day, 2013, accompanied by a useful index which links the individual cantatas to the various CDs on which they can be found and confirms that this excellent series is now complete, some 18 years after it was begun. This latest volume maintains the very high standards that we have come to expect from Bach Collegium Japan over the entire series.

Six of the 200 extant cantatas were omitted from the series, either because they were not written by Bach (BWV 141 and 160 are now attributed to Telemann, BWV 142 to Kuhnau) or because they are not really cantatas at all – BWV 11 is the so-called 'Ascension Oratorio', BWV 118 is a Funeral Motet and BWV 198 a secular Funeral Ode. Some of these works will doubtless be recorded later by Suzuki (if this hasn't happened already). By way of compensation, some cantatas have appeared in more than one version – a piece of typical Japanese thoroughness.

There are several different – but perfectly legitimate – approaches to recording a project as massive as this. Harnoncourt and Leonhardt, who started their famous series in 1971 (when 'historically informed practice' was still quite a novelty) opted to follow the numbering of the Bach-Gesellschaft edition (and how hard it is to believe now that the bound volume containing BWV 1 was published as long ago as 1851.³

Such an approach would render Suzuki's new index superfluous, of course, since if you're looking for a particular cantata, there they all are on the shelf (whether you have the LPs or the later CD reissues) in their numerical order. Musically, though, that arrangement makes no sense at all – it simply represents the order in which those pioneering 19th century scholars found, transcribed and published the cantatas.

3. The chronology of the cantatas was only established in the decade or so after the 2nd World War. They are now often grouped by the Sunday (or Holy Day) to which they belong – the order within each Feast is usually clear. They are also grouped into the five cycles of cantatas – though don't expect five cantatas for each Sunday. Neither of these have familiar numerations – those of the Bach Compendium are not widely used. So the numbering of the cantatas remains those of the arbitrary order of the Bach Gesellschaft. [CB]

A different approach was employed by Sir John Eliot Gardiner in his world-wide 'Bach Pilgrimage' in the year 2000, when Bach's Cantatas were performed (so far as possible) on the appropriate Sunday of the Lutheran Church Year, and recorded 'live'. This approach has many things going for it, as it groups together 'birds of a feather', and shows us how the composer would respond to different moods and texts. The live recordings are often very exciting, too.

Suzuki's approach has been different again – a scholarly overview, using the knowledge gained from studying different papers, watermarks, etc., which have enabled his team to date the Cantatas with some confidence, and then record them in chronological sequence. Recently, I've been playing through the series sequentially, and very rewarding and satisfying I've found it.

You begin to sense, for example, that there were periods when Bach had an outstanding flautist at his disposal, and a string of brilliant flute *obbligati* would result, Sunday after Sunday; or perhaps for a few weeks he had a gifted young *coloratura* tenor soloist available, and the same thing would happen. I am not one who subscribes to the oft-expressed view that Bach 'wrote stuff that he knew perfectly well no-one could sing or play'!

This is not the time or the place to reopen the debate about how many voices Bach was writing for in his 'choral' movements. Suffice to say that Suzuki favours a small choral group, with the soloists leading each voice-part. Starting out with around 20 voices in his choir (5 to a part), he began to reduce those numbers – sometimes down as far as 12 – before settling on around 16.

The bright acoustic of the Kobe Shoin Women's University Chapel (in which the complete series was recorded, providing an admirable consistency of sound) ensures that there is no lack of weight or attack – just try the beginning of this final volume, featuring one version of Cantata 69 (*Lobe den Herrn, meine Seele*), written for the Leipzig Town Council Inauguration Ceremony in 1748 (only two years before the composer's death) – a brilliant 'trumpet-and-drums' affair, with an exciting response from the choir. The other cantatas featured on this final record are also late works: BWV 30 (*Freue dich, erlöste Schar*) and BWV 191 (*Gloria in excelsis Deo*). All of them very well done.

Suzuki has used a number of different soloists over the series – at various times, we have been served by a excellent Japanese and European singers on each voice-line. Eighteen years represents a long time in a singer's career, but the Dutch bass Peter Kooij has lasted the whole series, appearing with great distinction (and remarkable consistency of tone) on the great majority of recordings. The other soloists featured on Volume 55 have also become 'regulars' in more recent times: the Czech soprano Hana Blažíková, the British countertenor Robin Blaze and the German tenor Gerd Türk – a truly international group, and all are in fine voice on this final CD.

Suzuki's instrumentalists have been practically all Japan-

ese, as one would expect, and they have maintained an excellent standard throughout. Because Bach features the oboe so prominently, the playing of Masamitsu San'nomiya throughout the series deserves special mention. Recording quality has also been top-class. Full marks to BIS, too, for the supporting booklets which have appeared with each volume – well-researched programme-notes by Klaus Hofmann, interesting technical notes by Suzuki, biographies, texts and translations – all tri-lingual.

Suzuki contributes to this final volume a rather endearing introduction, harking back to the recording sessions for Volume 1 in June 1995, 'in a Kobe heavily scarred by the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake', and wishing that 'someone would discover a huge pile of undiscovered cantatas', so that he and Bach Collegium Japan could go on performing and recording them forever!

You will have gathered that I have always found Mr. Suzuki's Bach Cantata recordings deeply satisfying, and that I can recommend them wholeheartedly. One of the qualities I most admire in him is his happy knack of finding what Bach occasionally calls the *tempo giusto* – 'just the right speed'. Very rarely indeed, throughout this long series, have I found myself questioning his choice of *tempo*, and his own keyboard-playing (sometimes he uses harpsichord as an alternative to organ, but he always tells us why!) clearly demonstrates his innate rhythmic sense.

The final Volume 55 [BIS-2031] is currently available from amazon.co.uk at £9.99 + p&p. Enjoy! Beresford King Smith

A Visit to the George Malcolm Archive

David Hansell

Earlier this year I was asked to organise a concert featuring JSB's multi-harpsichord concertos. As I now have the time for such eccentric quests, this set me off on the trail of the works for four harpsichords that I knew had been created for George Malcolm and his colleagues in the 1950s (see *EMR*s *passim*). A variety of sources, including the Southbank Centre programme archive, confirmed my memory that these were:

- Concerto after Vivaldi – Thurston Dart (a *L'estro armonico* arrangement, like Bach's)
- Concerto after CPE Bach – Raymond Leppard (expansion of a double concerto)
- Variations on a theme by Mozart by GM himself

Extensive enquiries among GM's circle of admirers led me to the conclusion that the archive was the place to start the search and I would like at this point to record with gratitude the help I have had from Christopher Hirons, GM's executor and by an astonishing coincidence the violin teacher of the leader of the last school orchestra for which I had responsibility. I must also record my thanks to Anna Sanders, the Balliol archivist, who was kept very busy during my visit. (GM's archives are housed at Balliol

College, Oxford, of which GM was both a graduate and an Honorary Fellow.)

The archive is in 26 boxes, mostly of music, though there is also everything the writer of a biography could ever wish to find – concert programmes, diaries, correspondence, discography, reviews etc. A summary list of the collection is available and is accurate though, naturally, not comprehensive. Mine was neither a scientific nor a scholarly investigation of the archive. I was assisted by Martin Hall, a fellow GM fan, and ours was a focussed search for the repertoire mentioned above. Nevertheless, we did note various odds and ends which struck us as interesting for one reason or another.

We regularly encountered fully written out continuo parts (eg for Purcell songs) or decorations (Handel organ concertos). There was no sign of the manuscript of GM's *Bach before the mast* though we did encounter an arrangement (by Clifford Benson) of Alec Templeton's *Bach goes to town* for piano duet. Incidentally, the solo version of this and GM's piece are still available as archive prints via Boosey's.

Box 4 contained GM's elaborate arrangement for strings of Bach's six part *Ricercare* and there were several 'curiosities' among the miscellaneous contents of Box 10. These included what appeared to be sketches for an unspecified solo instrument and piano of two jazz standards in which the incomplete (in the sense that there were gaps in it) piano part consisted of a mixture of figured bass and elaborate figurations which linked the soloist's phrases. This box also included a realisation by Robert Donington of Corelli's *La Folia*, complete with melodic decorations and a fully written out continuo part. I think this was recorded by Malcolm with Yehudi Menuhin in connection with one of Donington's books. In the same bundle was material from GM's collaborations with Julian Bream. These included the Bach organ trio arrangements which they recorded and a *Ground in D minor* for lute and harpsichord by GM. In a different box (13) was another work which must relate to this combination – Joseph Horowitz's *Duo* for lute and harpsichord, which does not appear in the 'official' list of his compositions on the Chester/Novello website.

At the time of my visit, the Britten Centenary weekend was imminent so material relating to him naturally caught the eye. This included a copy of *Rejoice in the Lamb* (16) with detailed registrations marked in the organ part; a carefully written copy of the organ part (11) of the *Missa Brevis Gloria* (was BB's MS not sufficiently clear to be read at the necessary speed?); and GM's conducting copy of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (also 11). This was a vocal score with myriad instrumental cues marked in and was used for some of the early performances. Apparently BB's (pencil) full score could not be read under performance lighting by anyone other than him.

Box 17 included both MS and printed copies of three piano pieces by Clifford Benson together with note of thanks to GM for his help in securing publication and, most charmingly, a copy of 'The Child's First Music Lessons' by

'Lady Macfarren' which was labelled (in an adult hand) 'Georgie Malcolm 20th April 1923' (when GM was 6). On a rather different level was a manuscript copy of W Sterndale Bennett's piano *Toccata Op. 38* and, in box 20, a cadenza for Mozart's two-piano concerto. This piece was played on harpsichords (together with the triple) in one of the RFH concerts, but I wonder if the cadenza was used in later performances (on pianos) with GM's great admirer Andras Schiff? We also came across a flyer for a recital GM gave at Balliol late in his career at which he said that he would play some of Scarlatti's 'less athletic' sonatas. He was still 'up' for JSB's *Chromatic Fantasia and Fugue*, however.

And in Box 13 we did find both the score (in pencil, with few clefs or key signatures!) and parts (in ink) of Malcolm's *Variations on a theme by Mozart*. These have comprehensive expression and registration makings relating to the eight-pedalled instruments used for the performances and recording (on YouTube) and it might now be difficult to bring together 'instruments of the period' to give an 'authentic' performance. But I hope to start work on the material in the New Year and we'll see what emerges and what can be done with it.

George Malcolm was born in 1917 and I (and his many admirers) would like to think that his approaching centenary might bring about a balanced and comprehensive assessment of his achievements. Yes, he did sell his Shudi-Broadwood 1775 harpsichord and favoured the then modern instruments, but he did make harpsichord repertoire mainstream listening, he took French baroque ornamentation more seriously than some do now, his achievements as a choirmaster at Westminster Cathedral are universally acknowledged, and he was a rather more versatile conductor of orchestral music than is often realised. And what wouldn't any of us give for his technique and sense of musical architecture?

A website collecting together Malcolm-related material which is currently dotted about the www (and more) is now under construction. See www.georgemalcolm.co.uk

I knew GM slightly but over some years. A friend and I were invited by another school friend who went up a year early to visit Oxford for a recital by GM – it was probably the first solo harpsichord recital I had heard, but don't actually remember anything about it – I was more interested in Thurston Dart's lavish continuo-playing at the Handel Opera Society. He was one of the directors of Dartington's summer school, where he often played recitals, making the most of the ability to gradually change volume by slow pressing of the pedals. However, what impressed me most was a strictly "authentic" dynamic approach to either Byrd or Bull's 22 or 30 variations on *Walsingham*. He conducted the summer school choir occasionally, but lacked the personality when he shared it with David Munrow. In the 1970s, he turned to orchestral conducting, and often I chatted to him about music, though he refused to believe in hemiolas in dances that now seem obvious. CB

CD REVIEWS

CHRISTMAS

Morales O Magnum Mysterium: Christmas Motets Weser-Renaissance, Manfredini Cordes 69' 18"
cpo 777 820-2

Ave Maria, Ave regina coelorum, Candida virginitas, Cum natus esset Jesus, Ecce virgo concipiet, Exaltata est Sancta Dei Genetrix, Missus est Gabriel Angelus, O magnum mysterium, Pastores dicite, Puer natus est nobis, Salva nos stella maris, Salve Regina, Sancta et immaculata, Veni Domine

I must concede that I have never been a great fan of Spanish polyphony; in a huge simplification, I suppose that comes down to my having been taught to write Palestrina-like polyphony, though never how to step away from the pure mathematics of strict counterpoint to reflect the actual meaning of the text. That, of course, is where the Spanish excelled, though even now it sometimes feels overdone and I long from some neat imitative writing. This disc has challenged all of these conceptions – Morales writes glorious polyphony and conveys the soul of the words using all the devices of his time. I confess that I found the whole CD a real challenge at one sitting; the eight men who make up Cordes' ensemble blend beautifully though, while I can easily understand how a four-voice piece works with eight singers, I am not sure how it works with seven (Track 8) or a five-voice one works with eight (Track 14). These mysteries aside, this is a truly wonderful recording, full of gems – the cross relations on Track 8 justify the price of the disc! The booklet note obsesses (to what purpose?) about Morales' reception across the Catholic-Protestant divide. I recommend leaving it in the case, relaxing and enjoying the music. BC

Christmas in Spain and Mexico Renaissance vocal music La Colombina (Maria Cristina Kiehr, Claudio Cavina, Josep Benet, Josep Cabré (SATB) 70' 17"
Christophorus CHE 0189-2 (c. 1996)
Music by de Brito, Cárceres, de Cristo, Fernández, Guerrero, Morales, Padilla & Victoria + chant

This is a charming selection of vocal music with a Christmas flavour, from Iberia (Portugal as well as Spain) and the New World, originally recorded in 1995. The performances are in general rhythmically alive and musically sure-footed. La Colombina are an experienced group who have this music in their collective souls and respond as one to every nuance of the texts. A problem with programming recitals of this kind is often the relatively short duration of many of the

pieces. La Colombina get round this by including the appropriate plainchant verses in the responsories and hymns, revealing their true shape and stature. Additionally, they include two extended and vivacious vernacular "ensaladas", which for me are the highlights of this disc. The only slight caveat is the rather boxy acoustic, which suggests chamber rather than church. Alistair Harper

Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern: German Christmas music from the 17th century Dorothee Miels, Paul Agnew ST, Lautten Compagney, Wolfgang Katschner 78' 39"
deutsche harmonia mundi 8 88837 68362 3
Crüger, Praetorius, Schein, Scheidt, Schelle, Schütz, Theile, Tunder, Walter, Weckmann & trad.

This is a real Christmas treat. Purists may need to succumb to a glass of glühwein before listening, as it is in part at least a cross-over disc – the "traditional" music of the listing strikes me as more central American than German. The accompaniments to the music by named composers have also been interpreted through a kaleidoscope of instrumental colour, justified by Praetorius's suggestion that, if families of one kind of instrument are not available, then there is no problem in mixing cornetts, violins and flutes or recorders. I'm not sure I recall him recommending the addition of jazzy percussion to his church music, though. The programme traces the Christmas story through mostly chorale-related works, but I confess that I just enjoyed the music for what it was, and the fine performances from both the singers (Miels is glorious in Tunder's *Ein kleines Kindelein*, while Agnew is rather up against it in the tambourine-flavoured piece by Crüger) and the instrumental ensemble, who really relish the introduction to Theile's *Nun ich singe, Gott* – part of the Sing-Akademie collection re-discovered in 2001, and here treated to chime bar obbligato. Now, where did I put that Glühwein? BC

J. W. Hertel Die Geburt Jesu Christi Berit Solset, Alexandra Rawohl, Marcus Ullmann, Wolf-Matthias Friedrich SSTB, Kölner Akademie, Michael Alexander Willens 63' 35"
cpo 777 809-2

I have known *Die Geburt Jesu Christi* for a long time, having spent an afternoon in the library of the Brussels conservatory looking at the manuscripts of many of the oratorio-like works which he composed for the court of Frederick the Pious of Mecklenburg. What

struck me about this piece was its dark opening – a D minor chorus, full of angst – which did little to hint at the joy of Christmas. The text, by the head-hunted cleric, Heinrich Julius Tode, shared his employer's pietist view of the world, and saw the birth of Christ as a one-off opportunity to grasp redemption from sin. The music mirrors the text, retaining the sense of mystery until bright trumpets herald the arrival of the angels. Even then, the poet continues to emphasise the stark choices faced by his contemporaries. In short, there is plenty of scope for dramatic music, and Hertel delivers on all fronts. There are 24 numbers in total, including four chorales, three choruses, four accompagnati (the last of which morphs into an arioso for all four soloists), and one duet for the sopranos, including an extended cadenza. Willens' well-paced reading uses four ripienists to boost the soloists in the choruses and a modest orchestra (43221) to produce a beautifully rounded sound. Hertel's music is much more effective in performance than on paper, and this recording should prove very popular. Anyone wishing to arrange performances of their own next year can buy the scores from ortus verlag. This isn't the sort of things you would choose to listen to while opening presents on Christmas morning, but certainly on a cold winter's morning it will prove very thought-provoking. BC

Carols from the Old and New Worlds Theatre of Voices, Paul Hillier 61' 42"
Harmonia Mundi HMA 1957079

This was first released in 1993, just six months too soon for a review in *EMR*. At the time it must have seemed quite startling – much closer in style and spirit to the New Oxford Book of Carols (Andrew Parrott, Hugh Keyte & CB) than Carols for Choirs (David Willcocks, with orchestral settings by John Rutter), though NOBC itself had only been published in 1992. Paul Hillier's programme is still very refreshing, not least because the choir make an audible effort to sing different sorts of music in different ways. I recommend this strongly for the singing, the repertoire (including Paul Hillier's own very beautiful *There is no rose*) and the fact that the CD looks like a miniature LP – black with a red label in the middle. David Hansell

CHANT

Voices of Byzantium: Medieval Byzantine Chant from Mt Sinai Cappella Romana, artistic dir. Alexander Lingas 74' 24"
SKU 80014538

In conjunction with Holy Image, Hallowed Ground, the exhibition of icons from Saint Catherine's Monastery, Mount Sinai, shown at the Getty Center in 2006-7, Cappella Romana was asked to prepare a concert of related music. The wealth of MSS preserved there offered Ioannis Arvanitis scope for editing a selection in modern notation. For Part 1 The Vespers of Saint Catherine were chosen, and for Part 2 The Service of the Furnace: A liturgical account of the Three Holy Children according to MS Sinai 1527 (late 15th century). The material from this concert for the general gallery public was then recorded in the sympathetic acoustic surroundings of the Holy Rosary Catholic Church, Seattle.

The richly blended mutually supportive baritone and bass voices give a precise rendering of the liturgy with finely mastered ornamentation and occasional deliberate surprises in the modulation. Even better would be to hear this sonorous virtuoso chanting in its proper interactive devotional setting as part of live Orthodox ritual. However, the booklet gives helpful notes for the interested listener who may not be altogether familiar with the history of Byzantine chant or be aware of the virtuoso kalophonic idiom and what has come to be known as the "Byzantine ars nova."

After the performance of the Vespers in Part 1, the "dramatic and mimetic elements" of Part 2, promised in the booklet notes, subtly emerge. Certainly in the composition (track 15) of the early 15th century imperial musician, Manuel Lampadarios of Gaza, one perceives a musical rendering of the writhing agony and comforting angelic breeze among flickering flames in the fiery furnace of Nebuchadnezzar. Reverential humility and exaltation are expressed in the following two tracks, and then comes the mimetic composition later in the 15th century of the Cretan, Angelos Gregoriou, with weeping and crying out, before the CD ends with an expression of gratitude and thankfulness. This dramatic quality, as presented in the Service of the Furnace, is not often the focus of Byzantine chant recordings, and a list of four books for further reading is provided.

Diana Maynard

MEDIÉVAL

Confréries: Devotional songs by Jaikes de Cambrai [Métier, memories and travels of a 13th-

century cathedral builder, vol. 2] Grain-delavoix, Björn Schmelzer 63' 49"

Glossa GCD P32108

Jaikes de Cambrai (7 songs), Robert de Reins La Chièvre (3), Martin le Béguin de Cambrai (2), Chanoine de Saint-Quentin (a), anon (1)

This is the second of three discs relating to a revaluation of Villard de Honnecourt, according to the booklet note "less as a professional architect and more as an interested amateur" in areas beyond just architecture. I hadn't heard of Jaikes (fl.1260-80) before – not surprisingly, since his output is small. The CD has a set of six Marian chansons and a *retrouange* as conclusion. The MS (CH-BESu 389) has poems arranged in alphabetic order, with the seven poems by Jaikes clearly intended to be performed in the same order. There are some staves with no music, but six pieces have earlier tunes. These are listed under Jaque de Cambrai in Wikipedia, which is more informative than oxfordmusiconline.

The booklet notes seem more concerned with modern concepts than working out from the texts and music. I'm not sure to what extent the idea's "offer a manual... which connects devotion, self-articulation and spiritual practice, as well as psychoacoustics and imagery in the context of urban developments in which the cathedral in the middle of the town square functioned as a catalyst".

Musically, attaching nearly everything to instruments tends to make the proceedings rather slow. The *retrouange* struck me as the song that I will remember: it is presumably modern, since the table in Wikipedia gives no musical source, and is refreshingly short. The seven Jaikes songs are followed by six secular love songs, ending with *Chanter m'estuet de la virge Marie*. CB

Machaut Mon chant vous envoy: virelais, ballades et rondeaux Marc Mauillon, Angélique Mauillon, Vivabiancaluna Biffi, Pierre Hamon 61' 11"
Eloquentia EL1342

The main virtue of this enjoyable CD is the time the performers allow for Machaut's music to unfold. The notated melodies are often introduced by free preludes and several verses of songs allow the music to establish itself in generally long tracks. The playing on a variety of wind, stringed and keyboard medieval instruments is beautifully idiomatic and enigmatic, while the lazy and apparently effortless singing style is equally effective. Just occasionally there are some intonation issues in the upper voice in the more complex vocal numbers, but generally speaking the singing, like the playing, is confident and evocative. Alongside the more traditionally presented

songs, we have a track where a poem is recited to the accompaniment of a lute, voice and accompaniment interacting cleverly, as well as a reading of a text by Machaut on the nature of music. This CD is very strong on atmosphere and convincingly presents this music as living and breathing entertainment when it can so often sound dry and academic.

D. James Ross

Il Codice di Guardiagrele: I Corali di S. Maria Maggiore, sec XIV De Bon Parole, Marco Giacintucco 63'34"

I wrote a review for this issue, but facsimiles of the music have arrived too recently to find time to study them, so I need to rewrite it for the next issue. CB

15th CENTURY

Busnois Motets & Chansons The Orlando Consort 62' 38"

Harmonia Mundi HMA 19057333

Missa O Crux lignum + A une damme j'ay fait veu, Amours nous traite honnestement, Est-il merchy de quoy on peuet finer?, Gaude caelestis Domina, Incomprehensibilia, Ja que il ne s'l attende, Resjois-toy terre de France & Vostre beauté

In addition to being a great name for showing off your Renaissance French pronunciation, Antoine Busnois is a composer of considerable merit, nowadays unnecessarily overshadowed by his learned contemporary Johannes Ockeghem. He worked at the court of Charles the Bold of Burgundy, the epicentre of the *L'homme armé* Mass tradition to which Busnois contributed an early example. After his patron's death he continued in the service of his widow, Margaret, and moved to the court of the Archduke Maximilian when the latter married Maria of Burgundy. So this was a composer of first-class reputation and working at some of the finest musical establishments in Europe. As a poet, he may have written some of the texts for his own Italianate chansons. Generally brisk tempi ensure that the Orlando Consort's accounts of his chansons and his Mass are bubbling with energy, and this 2005 recording captures a blend and warmth of tone not always apparent in this group's performances. A genuine attempt at period pronunciation by the singers lends both the secular and sacred content considerable credibility. All in all this is a very engaging cross-section of Busnois' work, performed to a very high standard, and this reissue at bargain price offers an unparalleled opportunity to become acquainted with this gifted early master.

D. James Ross

Caron Masses & Chansons The Sound and The Fury 190' (3 CDs)

Fra Bernardo records FB 1 207 302

Masses Accueillly m'a la belle, Sanguis sanctorum, Jesus autem, L'Homme armé & Clemens et benigna
Chansons Accueillly m'a la belle, Cuidez vous, Du tout ainsi, Hélas m'amour, Le despourveu, Mort ou mercy & S'il est ainsi

Caron is a name I am aware of, but none of the music has been retained in my mind. He was born around 1440 in Amiens. Some chansons appeared in MSS towards the end of the 1460s and he is last heard of in 1475. This should have been passed on to David Fallows, since the only two (of 3) up-to-date articles on Caron are by him in Newer Grove and by Rob Wegman in Fallows' Festschrift. The set of 3 CDs includes seven chansons (out of about 20) and five masses. Grove concentrates on the chansons, but the masses are impressive, and both styles are excellently sung by ATTBB, with a lute for the chansons. Highly recommended. I was longing to see the scores, but came across the chansons only when I was at the final stage of proof-reading, so I won't have a chance to hear and see them till after *EMR* is posted, alas! CB

Gaffurius Missa de Carneval, Stabat mater, motets Il Convitto Armonica, Baschenis Ensemble, Stefano Buschino
Tactus TC 450701 59' 28"

I was surprised to find that the musical theorist Franchino Gaffurio (Gafori) had also composed a substantial body of music, as I don't recall having come across recordings of any of it and the present recording is described as a world premier. A large number of his motets and mass settings are preserved in manuscripts associated with Milan Cathedral where he worked for most of his life, and his considerable reputation as a theorist and the attractive title of the mass recorded here raised my expectations. In fact the mass is named for the period of the church year for which it was relevant and sadly Gaffurio's music turns out to be typical theorist's music, rather predictable and dull. Apart from a little interweaving of the upper voices in the Agnus Dei, the mass is pretty sterile stuff. The motets are little more inspired, and the setting of the Lamentations, which sounds slightly more adventurous, may not be by him. The present performers do their best to breathe life into this rather unrewarding repertoire, presenting the last few motets with a probably spurious instrumental element added, but in my opinion, even this fails to save Gaffurio's reputation. Sadly this seems to be very much a case of 'those who can't, teach', and makes Gaffurio

something of an anomaly amongst the distinguished company of theorists who could also practise what they preached such as Tinctoris and Michael Praetorius.

D. James Ross

Ockeghem Missa cuiusvis toni & prolotionum The Sound and The Fury 108'
Fra Bernardo Records FB 1 302 202 (2 CDs)

Ockeghem is one of the most complex and rewarding composers of the early renaissance. This disc links two of his most impressive works – the *Missa cuiusvis toni* and the *Missa prolotionem*, both of which explore the possibilities of the notation of the period, one tonally, one rhythmically. The *Missa cuiusvis toni*, as its name implies, is designed in such a way that it can be performed in any of the church modes, i. e., starting on any note of the hexachord. The *Missa prolotionem*, in contrast, uses two written lines to generate a four-voice texture, utilising two time signatures for each line. Despite their textual complexities, these works are deeply satisfying to listen to, and carry their learning lightly. The performances are good, though not helped by a rather close recording which highlights the individual voices rather than the overall blend, and makes for a certain lack of tonal variety if the disc is listened to right through. Tempi seem well-considered, giving the often-complex lines space to breathe. Both works have been recorded several times in the past; to my ears, the Clerks' Group versions from the late 90's on ASV are still the benchmark ones, though they perform the *Missa cuiusvis toni* as a compilation of the different tones rather than completely in one tone as here. Another good contender, if you are looking for the latter, is that by Ensemble Musica Nova on Aeon, from 2007, which does the mass complete on Re, Fa, Mi and Sol successively.

Alastair Harper

Musica Disonesta Myths and stories from Humanism Anonima Frottolisti 59' 42"

Tactus TC 490001

Rofino Bartolucci da Assisi, Franciscus Bossinensis, Caprioli, Cara, Fogliani, Demofonte, Patavus (Stringari), Pesenti, Santacroce, Scotto, Tromboncino & anon

This CD is a bit of a puzzle. The absence of song texts and translations and a rather rambling programme note make it something of a joke from which those of us with inadequate Italian seem doomed to be excluded. It appears to be a collection of earthy frottole, either actual folk material or courtly imitations by such as Tromboncini, Pesenti, Scotto and a host of less well known names. The wink-wink nudge-nudge style of performance suggests that they come under

the general heading of 'indecent/disonesta', although without translations I was left guessing, while the rather cod delivery suggests a show incorporating readings and songs which have been committed to CD. Although most of the joke are lost, it is possible to enjoy the earthiness of these lively performances and the sparkling variety of the music, although it suffers occasionally from the 'comic' rendition by a falsetto voice painfully hammed up. 'Humanism' in the title remains puzzling – presumably it is used to set the historical period of the music rather than its philosophical content. Certainly the CD is not the satire on humanism one might anticipate from the title. It is a pity that in packaging this CD for the international market Tactus has not envisaged more of the cultural barriers they needed to help us over.

D. James Ross

Flores de España Orient & Occident in Spanish Renaissance Chant 1450, Mahmoud Turkmani oud 60' 03"
Christophorus CHR 77374

This is a muddle-headed project, which purports to be exploring eastern influences on early Spanish music, but in effect does nothing of the sort. A third of it consists of rather nice choral music by Anchieta, Encina, Ribera, Escobar and Milans authentically if rather lugubriously sung by the five male voices of Chant 1450, but here the interest for *EMR* readers ends and the nonsense starts. A further third of the CD is ominously entitled 'crossover' and consists of the voices singing a plainchant mass in a dull, even style with intermittent interventions by Mahmoud Turkmani improvising in an unrelated modern style on the oud. The final third of the CD consists of free oud improvisations by Mr Mahmoud, apparently completely unrelated to the rest of the programme. So in fact we have three unrelated programmes, one of which would appeal to early music cognoscenti, another perhaps to oud fans, though I doubt it, and a third to nobody with any taste at all. This is in no sense an exploration of anything worthwhile, a fact underlined by the hopelessly arch and unintentionally hilarious programme note. Actual explorations of the inter-action between the Islamic and Christian elements in the Iberian cultures of the Renaissance have been attempted by other groups with varying degrees of success, but this is just a lot of dotted rubbish built around a few early Spanish choral treasures. Slapped legs all round.

D. James Ross

16th CENTURY

Lechner *Mein süsse Freud auf Erden: sacred choral music* Athesinus Consort
Berlin, Klaus-Martin Bresgott 79' 40"
Carus 83.384

I've become quite fond of Leonhard Lechner this year. The Gabrieli/Keyte Magnificat a28 was the main feature for the annual EEMF/TVEMF gathering at Waltham Abbey this year, with Lechner's *Quod Chaos* a24 as supporting item, which deserved more time. This is a varied programme with the music firmly based on the German texts (translations are included), but with more variety than one might expect. Carus will be publishing the music. I reckon that the brief instrumental interruptions might work in a live performance and possibly for the first playing of the CD, but it then becomes irritating. The vocal performances (with ten voices available) are pleasing – the music is well-shaped and unexaggeratedly expressive. Well worth buying (and singing). CB

Luzzasco Luzzaschi *Quinto Libro de Madrigali* La Venexiana 69' 18"
Glossa GCD C80905

Famous primarily for his exquisite compositions for the three Donne di Ferrara, Luzzasco Luzzaschi was a pupil of Cipriano de Rore and went on to teach Frescobaldi. His output embraced sacred and secular music and included eight books of unaccompanied madrigals which very much anticipate the stop-go and highly chromatic style of Gesualdo. They also intermittently engage in the high degree of decoration, which was the hallmark of the *Donne*. In this lovely performance of madrigals from the fifth book (with a couple of fillers from the sixth and seventh) La Venexiana produce delicately nuanced readings, which beautifully capture the ephemeral charm of Luzzaschi's art. Intriguingly they sing alternative versions of four of the madrigals using a trio of ladies voices with instruments, as the works might have been presented in the famous *Concerti delle Donne*. In these versions the ladies perform elaborate ornamentations, in the manner Luzzaschi actually wrote for them. A mouth-watering account of this exquisite repertoire! D. James Ross

Maillard *Missa Je suis déshéritée* The Marian Consort, Rory McCleery 70' 19"
Delphian DCD34130

Mass + chanson; *Ascendo ad Patrem meam, Assumpta est Maria, Fratres mei elongaverunt, Gaudet in caelis, Hodie Maria virgo, In me transierunt, In pace, Laudate Dominum, Omnes gentes attendite & Victimae paschalis laudes*

This is indeed a timely recording of work by the shadowy French composer Jean Maillard, a man highly rated during his own lifetime but who in spite publishing several volumes of masses and motets left practically no biographical footprint and has slipped into almost complete obscurity. It is fitting that this release is on the Scottish Delphian label as a copy of Maillard's motet *Omnes gentes attendite* appeared in the 16th-century Scottish Wode Partbooks. I have to declare something of a vested interest here, having some years ago published and performed this excellent motet as 'an anonymous Scottish Renaissance motet'. The presence of Maillard's motet in a Scottish source does suggest a possible chapter for the missing biography. It is entirely possible that protestant sympathies led Maillard to move to England and or Scotland, although it is odd that many of his motets, including the one in the Scottish source, have a distinct Marian flavour. It is to be regretted that Thomas Wode failed to append one of his pithy and informative footnotes to his copy of the work. The Mass, parodying Cadeac's chanson of the same name, is in the very simple syllabic mid-century French style of Claudin, and in the *Agnus Dei* unusually presents its source material unaltered. The motets are more adventurous, declamatory and cleverly nuanced, with a recognisable house style. The Marian Consort produces a very pleasing sound. Singing one to a part, they invite individual comment, and it is interesting that there is a notable difference in the voice production of their two sopranos and their two tenors – one of each sings with a very pure vibratoless tone while the other has a marked vibrato. Once I had noticed this I found it unsettling, and preferred the performances which used the vibrato-free team – perhaps this is an issue which the group needs to address. In the meantime there is much more Maillard to be recorded, and clearly much more research to be done into just where he spent his life. D. James Ross

Marenzio *Primo Libro di Madrigali* 1580
La Compagnia del Madrigale 67' 37"
Glossa GCD 922802

Marenzio's first book of madrigals published in Venice in 1580 was followed by a

steady flow of such publications which dominated the rest of his life, leaving us a remarkable body of some 500 madrigals. Blessed with a sweet voice and a prodigious compositional talent, Marenzio was by 1580 employed in Rome, and his ensuing career saw him pass through some of the most fashionable courts of Renaissance Europe. This enterprising recording also includes Marenzio's first ever composition, *Donna bella e crudel*, as well as the co-operative setting of the text *Mentre ti fui si grato* by Marenzio and his fellow Musici di Roma, Nanino, Moscaglia, de Macque, Soriano and Zoilo. The excellent notes provide a vivid picture of Renaissance Rome and the context of Marenzio's first book of madrigals, while La Compagnia provide intelligent and beautifully musical accounts of the madrigals themselves. The singing is impeccably expressive and deeply eloquent throughout. D. James Ross

Ortiz *Recercadas del tratado de glosas Roma 1553* Jordi Savall, Ton Koopman kbd, Rolf Lislevand vihuela/gtr, Andrew Laurence King double harp, Paolo Pandolfo & Lorenz Duftschild violas 49' 39" (rec 1989)
Alia Vox Heritage vol. 16 AVSA9899

Diego Ortiz's publication in 1553 of his treatise on improvisation on what he called the 'violone', is, as Savall notes in his essay in the booklet accompanying this recording, "an inevitable reference point for the study of instrumental performance in the 16th century". In two parts, it gives examples of "points" of division in the first part and examples of how one might ornament/improvise a whole piece in the second. As all viol players, and many others, know, the music in this part is absolutely marvellous. This recording includes all the pieces in the second part, Savall playing all but one of them on an Italian instrument dated 1550.

The recording opens with the *recercadas* on what Ortiz calls *canto llano*, now known as *La Spagna*, the first two of which are accompanied by 2nd viol and organ, with lovely contra-parts from Ton Koopman, which immediately sets the tone. Savall plays this music with unmatched sympathy, his accompanists with great freedom and equivalent brilliance, and it is spell-binding – a masterly recording, essential in any collection.

For the *recercadas* on the madrigal *O felici occhi miei*, he switches to what I think is a tenor viol (the booklet doesn't list it) for the second *recercada*. It's a beautiful sound, and it is beautifully played. I wonder if he would now play it on the

bass; after all, the subsequent *bastarda* repertoire requires the player to play higher on the bass than the top *f* in this one. Do take this second chance to own this important recording. Robert Oliver

Palestrina *Cantica Salomonis* Monteverdi
***Messa a quattro voci* Il Canto 56' 47"**

DUX 0910

+ Palestrina *Vestivi i colli* as

If Hugh Keyte (in *EMR* 156) was reduced to the word 'worthy' to describe the Palestrina Ensemble Munich's account of Palestrina's *Cantica Salomonis*, I would have to resort to the term 'unworthy' to describe this curiously unsatisfactory account of a selection of the same works coupled with Monteverdi's four-part mass. Based in Poland, Il Canto has been singing for some twenty-five years and offers an international CV in the programme notes. However, these performances range from the barely adequate to the lamentable, with the group's tenors producing an uncomfortable strangled sound throughout, but all the other voices have frequent uncomfortable moments. The Palestrina is music which offers no hiding places, and the group's shortcomings are cruelly exposed. Things are a little better in the Monteverdi, which has longish passages of relatively effective singing, but even this sounds directionless and bloodless and there are regular weak episodes. Like Hugh Keyte, I am left wondering what possible audience this CD is looking for, particularly as the performance includes barely half the Palestrina set, and there are so many superior accounts of both works on the market. Worryingly, the most accomplished aspect of the CD is its presentation which looks very professional, in the manner of some of the finest labels and ensembles, and my fear is that some people will be duped into buying what they think will be a top quality account of the music.

D. James Ross

Palestrina Volume 4 The Sixteen, Harry Christophers 71' 53"

CORO COR16114

Missa O magnum mysterium + *A solis ortu, Ad te levavi, Ave Regina caelorum, Deus enim firmavit, Jubilate Deo, Magnificat quinti toni, Song of Songs extracts (Fasciculus myrrhae, Ecce tu pulcher es, Introduxit me rex), Surge illuminare*

In volume 4 of their ongoing engagement with the music of Palestrina, Harry Christophers and The Sixteen tackle the magnificent *Missa O magnum mysterium*,

the *Magnificat quinti toni*, a selection of motets and three items from the *Cantica Salomonis*. Listening to The Sixteen these days is like sampling the latest year in a very familiar vintage, and I found myself listening for the very slightly operatic element which I had detected at their Edinburgh Festival performance (see *EMR* 156, p. 25). Recorded in the very resonant acoustic of St Alban Holborn, there is a very slight blurring of the overall sound with a noticeable vibrato in some of the voice parts. Not marked enough to interfere with the clarity of the polyphony and by no means unpleasant in this Palestrina programme, it seems to me to mark a new trace element, perhaps an accumulating maturity, in the sound of this fine ensemble. Harry Christophers remains a firm and decisive hand at the helm, and these are very distinctive interpretations of Palestrina which he has clearly thought long and hard about. The 'full choir' accounts of the items from the Song of Songs sound oddly overblown after hearing many one to a part readings, and while they gain in sacred gravitas they lose the madrigalian dimension which is a major part of their make-up. Palestrina's is some of the most frequently recorded music of the whole Renaissance sacred repertoire, and I find myself questioning the need for a complete account by Harry Christophers and The Sixteen. The presentation of the CD has an oddly tired look to it and the performances themselves, for all Christopher's intelligent readings, have a reverential 'old master' sound which is in marked contrast to the stimulating and cutting edge sound of the Tallis Scholars in their prime, or dare one say of some of the younger ensembles of nowadays. D. James Ross

Sheppard Sacred Choral Works Choir of St John's College, Cambridge, Andrew Nethsingha 70' 07"

Chandos Chaconne CHSA 0401

Christ rising again, Gaude Maria virgo, Haec dies, In manus tuas Domine, In pace, Libera nos salva nos, Spiritus Sanctus procedens, The Lord's Prayer & "Western Wynde" Mass

Listening to this CD I was struck anew by how unusual and distinctive Sheppard's polyphony sounds. Singing it, one is aware of an atypical tendency to write strongly melodic upper lines and to tolerate 'filler parts', vocal lines, often in the middle of the texture, which lack the normal melodic felicity of Renaissance polyphony and sometimes border on the melodically gauche. Listening to the full texture, one is rarely aware of this, but it is possibly

this feature which nevertheless gives Sheppard's music some of its character. The present CD offers a cross-section of Latin motets and English anthems as well as the *Western Wynde Mass*. As the pioneering revival of Sheppard's music occurred primarily under the direction of David Wulstan, it is interesting to hear it performed here without Wulstan's upward transposition of a minor third, also adopted by most subsequent performers – in his notes Andrew Nethsingha reveals that the choir sings the music in the key that best suits the voices. A piece like *Libera nos* is robbed of its stellar high treble sound, but gains a more rooted sound with the use of a deeper bass tessitura. As always, Nethsingha's interpretations are intelligent and profoundly musical, and his choice of generally slower tempi than we have previously heard in Sheppard is revelatory. Personally, I found the sound of the St John's singers occasionally a little fruity and indulgent, a feature which served to mask somewhat the daring harmonic progressions and occasionally pungent dissonances in Sheppard's writing, but this is a big, powerful sound never short on passion and commitment. D. James Ross

Libera Nos: The Cry of the Oppressed Contrapunctus, Owen Rees 69' 33"

Signum Classics SIGCD338

Byrd *Civitas sancti tui, Infelix ego, Miserere mei Deus, Plorans plorabit, Quomodo cantabimus Cardoso* *Sitit anima mea de Cristo Inter vestibulum, Lachrimas sitit anima mea Monte Super flumina Babylonis Peerson* *Laboravi in gemitu meo Tallis* *In jejuniis et fletu, Libera nos, Salvator mundi*

Taking as his theme the sufferings of Catholic composers writing under the oppression of unsympathetic regimes, Owen Rees has assembled the anticipated music of Byrd, Monte, some perhaps less obviously relevant music of Tallis and by the Portuguese Cardoso and de Cristo and the less-known Martin Peerson. If the plights of Byrd and Monte are perhaps an obvious source for clandestine messages in polyphony, the inclusion of Byrd's teacher and business partner Tallis is perhaps more controversial, as is the sympathetic portrayal in the notes of the firebrand Savanarola in association with his psalm meditation *Infelix ego*. The 'reconstitution' of Tallis *Libera nos* as a brief choral work is very effective and the inclusion of the rich music of the 17th-century recusant Peerson is a welcome revelation – perhaps a more extended exploration of this clearly worthwhile composer is called for. If the

nationalist sentiment of the Portuguese composers suffering under the Hapsburg heel perhaps stretches the theme a little, the mood of the music is remarkably consistent. The singing of Contrapunctus is very beautiful through-out, and, essentially for this impassioned repertoire, highly expressive and powerful. The finest music and the most expressive singing of all are reserved for the last – a memorable account of Byrd's *Infelix ego* which concludes this fine CD. *D. James Ross*

Parthenia: Byrd, Bull Gibbons Catalina Vicens, virginals & harpsichords 64' 54"
Carpe Diem CD-16298

Catalina Vicens is a recent and very welcome addition to the growing number of talented young keyboard players specialising in the early repertoire, in Catalina's case including the organetto, or portative organ. She was the first person ever to receive the degree of Master in Medieval Keyboards from the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis in Switzerland. In 2008 she won the 1st Prize at the International Historic "Fritz Neumeyer" Keyboards Competition, so it is appropriate that this, her first solo CD, was recorded in Bad Krozingen Castle, home to the impressive Neumeyer-Junghanns-Tracy collection of historic keyboard instruments.

In this recording of the complete Parthenia volume of 1613, Catalina uses six of them, ranging from an early 17th-century spinettino from Naples to a 'mother and child' virginal (after Hans Ruckers, 1591) and a double manual harpsichord (after Andreas Ruckers, 1620). None of them are English, but they do reflect the international nature of musical instruments and instrument making in England at the time.

Catalina Vicens plays with an outstanding sense of vitality and musicianship and an exquisite sense of the ebb and flow of the music. Her elaborate ornaments are both musically appropriate and wonderfully inventive – it is well worth following her interpretations with a score. Two of the Gibbons pieces have been arranged, very effectively, by Catalina for keyboard and alternatively for treble and bass viol (played here by Rebeka Rusò). The booklet includes a typically eloquent introduction to the historical background of Parthenia by Anthony Rooley. In deference to Rooley's text, see www.Catalinavicens.com/parthenia for Catalina's own notes on her interpretation. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

Il Trionfo di Dori 1592 Gruppo Vocale Ārsi & Tèsi, Tony Corradini 77'
Tactus TC 590003

Anerio, Asola, Bacussi, Balbi, Bertani, Bonini, Bozzi, Cavaccio, Colombani, Costa, Croce, Eremita, Florio, G. Gabrieli, Gastoldi, Giovanelli, Leoni, de Macque, Marenzio, Massaino, de Monte, Palestrina, Porta, Preti, Sabino, Stabile, Striggio, Vecchi & Zerto

An important and fascinating recording. Most British madrigal singers will know of Thomas Morley's *The Triumphs of Oriana*, a collection of madrigals by English composers in honour of Queen Elizabeth 1st, all ending with the refrain "Long Live Fair Oriana". Here, for the first time on disc, is the Italian collection which inspired it; 29 six-voice madrigals by "Altretante Autori", which were published in Venice in 1592. Composers range from the well-known (Croce, Vecchi, G. Gabrieli, Marenzio etc) to the (at least to myself) totally obscure (Baccusi, Sabino, Colombini, etc.), though the musical substance seems amazingly and consistently high. Unfortunately the (essential) texts are only available on the Tactus website, which I have so far been unable to open. The performances are excellent, tuning and blend are exemplary, and the six-voice textures are pleasingly rich. One can only marvel at the sheer quality and variety of the music. Try, eg, track 16 – Ippolito Sabino's *Dove sorge piacevole* – and be charmed! *Alastair Harper*

vox dilecti mei: Renaissance songs of love Ulrike Hofbauer, Keren Motseri SS, The Modena Consort (4 recorders & lute), dir Ralph Stelzenmüller 64' 32"

Pan Classics PC 10289

Brumel, da Silva, dal Aquila, Josquin, Lassus, Newsidler, Palestrina, Ruffo, Senfl, Spinacino/Isaac/Ghiselin + Hans-Jürg Meier Wingert in *der frühe*

I'm not usually enamoured of a solo voice accompanied by recorders, but here they made a steady sound, and I didn't worry whether they played at 8' or 4'. The opening Josquin *Ave Maria* worked very well thus. The scorings were varied but not overdone. The modern piece was spread through the programme, though I've no information on which to comment, since the booklet must have slipped out before I noticed it and it hasn't emerged (unlike the Butt *Brandenburgs*, which kept coming and going). The three Palestrina motets overbalanced the anthology – the title song is enough; but this is well worth hearing. *CB*

17th CENTURY

Buxtehude Opera Omnia XVII: Vocal Works 7 Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra, Ton Koopman 146' 44" (2 CDs)
Challenge Classics CC72256

BuxWV3, 6, 14, 18, 21, 31, 42, 48, 49, 61, 69, 76, 78, 90, 92, 96, 102 & 107

These two discs mix the well-known with the obscure, and the small-scale with the grandiose in glorious performances that serve only to remind us what a great composer Buxtehude was, no matter to which medium he turned his hand. There is some marvellous interplay between the fine singers and the instrumental group. Typically the track listings only name the former, so – for the record – there are three violins, two viols, five gambas, violone, dulcian, lute and organ, though never all at once, of course. Buxtehude was a master of texture and when he uses a trio of fiddles, you can bet he will make the most of them; similarly, his luscious gamba consort writing is gorgeous. These are all one-to-a-part performances. There is a useful note by Christoph Wolff on the background of the works. There are three more volumes to come – hurrah! *BC*

Charpentier Beata est Maria, Les Passions, directed by Jean-Marc Andrieu 56'30"

Ligia 0202233-11

Ad beatam virginem canticum 'Hodie salus' (H 340); Beata est Maria (H 25); Elévation pour la paix 'O bone Jesu dulcis' (H 237); Laudate Dominum (H 159); Litanies de la vierge à 3 voix pareilles avec instruments (H 84); Magnificat (H 73); Ouverture pour l'église (H 524); Pour un reposoir: Ouverture dès que la procession paraît (H 523); Salve regina à 3 voix pareilles (H 23); Veni creator (H 54)

Charpentier's motets for three men's voices are wonderful examples of that very French combination of the very high tenor haute-contre voice, with a more traditional tenor and bass – confusingly called "trois voix égales", which they are not. Charpentier was an haute-contre himself, so understood well the timbre of that vocal genre. The range of musical colour and texture that Charpentier weaves is well represented here, from the steady tread of the ground in the opening Magnificat to the lyrical, almost dance-like *Veni creator*. The conclusion of the *Salve regina* is particularly well done, as is the earlier "Ad te clamamus" section. The delightful repeated-note passage near the end of the *Ad beatam virginem: Hodie salus* reminds me of Purcell's "Cold Song" (and Lully's *Isis*, a possible influence), but here reflecting upon the slow gait of the elderly. Several of the vocal pieces are

introduced by examples of Charpentier's instrumental writing varying from the jovial to the touchingly sensuous. This is an impressive CD, with fine singing, playing and direction, my only quibble being a curiously dominant harpsichord in the *Ouverture "Pour un Reposoir"* and a brief lapse of vocal intonation from one of the singers in the concluding *Litanies de la vierge*.
Andrew Benson-Wilson

Corelli Trio Sonatas Stravaganza (Domitille Gilon & Rie Kimura vln, Robert Smith vlc, Damien Pouvreau *theorbo & guitar*, Olivier Salandini org, Thomas Soltani *hpscd/dir*)
Aparté AP073 6r 12"
opp. 2/4, 3/2, 5 & 8, 4/2, 3 & 10
Giovanni Realì *Capriccio Primo, Folia op. 1*

This is a thoroughly enjoyable recording, including seven trio sonatas by Corelli – currently undergoing something of a renaissance, given the anniversary year – neatly played by a young ensemble. That said, I have two reservations, one personal and the other more important. My own quibble is with the programming; why on earth would you start and end with works by a little-known imitator, especially since his *Folia* is a pale imitation indeed. From a HIP perspective, I have a slight issue with the "orchestration" of the continuo line. When Corelli (or his printer) indicated "organo o violoncello", I think he meant for each work, not individual movements. By all means, play the music on the three stringed instruments, but doesn't it sound rather bare, and wouldn't the cellist have filled in at least some of the chords? Nice as some of this disc is, I think the recent Avison Ensemble complete sets outclass it on every level.
BC

Louis Couperin Pièces de clavecin Bob van Asperen *hpscd* 7r 22"
Aeolus AE-10124

This is volume 3 of Van Asperen's complete Louis Couperin edition and his continued commitment to the composer is obvious both in the quality of the playing and in the extended essay which accompanies the CD. This discusses the complex network of influences, quotations from other composers and varying versions which characterise this repertory. Van Asperen has grouped the pieces into suites, with additional pieces which might be by Couperin or have affinities with his authenticated music. His playing shows a strong sense of purpose, while successfully fusing dance rhythms with the improvisational aspects which Couperin

absorbed from Froberger and Frescobaldi. There is good use of the registrational possibilities of the instrument: the very fine anonymous French harpsichord in Flemish style kept at the Villa Medici in Rome. Altogether this is another fine Van Asperen recording and is strongly recommended.
Noel O'Regan

Danyel Like as the lute delights Michael Chance cT, Paul Beier lute 79' 39
Stradivarius STR 33903

Readers of will know only too well that I (and quite a few others) disagree fundamentally with the notion of falsettists, however good, performing lute songs, because contrary to popular belief, it is very unlikely to have happened in the past, and more importantly, is often a bit naff. It is almost certainly a relatively recent modern performance practice that has become accepted and retro-applied to become 'historical fact', principally because the record companies know that the listening public are intrigued by falsetto singers. The fact of there being no musical evidence that downward-transposed lute songs sung at the higher octave ever happened is simply ignored. Sorry, I realise it's a yawn to listen to me grumbling on about it yet again, but, I should reveal here that it was Michael Chance himself, no less, who some twenty years ago, remarked to a lutenist friend of mine: 'Of course, there's not a shred of evidence that countertenors ever sang lute songs' – a comment which, when reported to me, set me on a quest to discover the truth of the matter.

Danyel's songs represent the very best of this wonderful repertoire, and it gives me no pleasure to report that this recording of these great pieces sounds like just so much 'white noise' accompanied by lute. In fact, to give him credit, Chance takes great pains to articulate every word beautifully, and tries to add as much expression as he can muster to colour Danyel's poems, but ultimately, despite his undoubted artistry, the falsetto voice type itself just isn't up to the difficult job of putting these songs across properly, of 'selling them', and I'm afraid it's just that croony, inexpressive alto sound yet again. I realize that this will not be a popular description for Chance's many fans.

The artists made an unusual choice in deciding to change the order of the songs as published in the songbook. This does not really matter in this age of programmable CD players, of course, but if Anthony Rooley is correct in suggesting

that these songs 'follow, one by one unfolding a sequence of masculine advance and feminine rebuttal', then this careful sequence has been undone here. They also deliberately omitted the viol specified on the title page stating that it 'can easily eclipse the delicate plucking of the lute, rendering Danyel's highly sophisticated counterpoint more difficult to appreciate'. (Sigh) Well, *A Garden of Eloquence* found no such problem with their stunning 'definitive' recording of this songbook (145, Dec 2011, p.34) which is perfectly balanced, and proves that Danyel wished to give his harmony the firm foundation of the viol. Another problem here is that, as usual, all of the songs have been transposed down, though only by a tone this time and not the usual third, so as to avoid the 'stuck-pig-squealy-end' of the falsetto range. Full marks to Chance for being able to sing so well this high without squealing, but it is a strange effect. The final song in the 'cycle' was originally scored for two lutes, two viols and four voices (SSTB). Here, Edmund Fellowes' modern conflation of the two lute parts is used, along with his reduction of the vocal parts to create a bogus duet for two sopranos. Chance sings both vocal parts, giving us, quite literally a second Chance.
David Hill

Dowland Lachrimae or Seaven Teares 1604
Hespèrion XXI, Jordi Savall 70' 54"
Alia Vox AVSA9901

+galiards (Sir John Souch, M. Henry Noell, The Earle of Essex, M. Giles Hoby, M. Thomas Collier, Captaine Digorie Piper, The King of Denmark, M. Bucton); almands (Mrs Nichols, M. George Whitehead); pavan (Sir Henry Uptons)

This reissue of a recording made in 1987 is essential if you missed it last time. Savall assembled a star-studded line-up of viol players: Christoph Coin, Sergei Casademunt, Lorenz Duftschmid and Paulo Pandolfo, with José Moreno lute. Savall himself plays treble. The arrangement of pieces differs from other recordings in that instead of the *Lachrimae* pavans being treated as a sequence, each pavan is followed by a galliard, credible as the numbers match, even if the keys, in some cases, do not.

To make it work, some transpositions are necessary. The *Lachrimae* pavans are all in A minor, the galliards mostly in G minor. Never one to shrink from a problem, Savall transposes the galliards in g to a, which isn't necessary for Giles Hobie or the King of Denmark, both of whom are (as it were) in d. The Almands are played in their notated keys. This detail isn't mentioned in the lavish booklet, but can be

inferred from the reproductions of pages of the original publication – a minor quibble in the face of such a marvellous recording.

The publication is performed complete, and is wonderful listening, with very expressive playing and superbly vibrant, rich sound. The balance of the inner parts and the lute is very satisfying, and the superlative music itself is endlessly enthralling.

Robert Oliver

Dowland *Semper Dowland Semper Dolens*

José Miguel Moreno Renaissance lute, Eligio Qunteiro *theorbo & gittern* 106' 21" Glossa GCD C80109

The music of this excellent double CD is Dowland how he has never been heard before, and although it may not appeal to purists and pedants, it certainly appeals to me. Eligio Qunteiro adds an extra instrument to José Miguel Moreno's renaissance lute: a theorbo for some of the slow, more serious pieces, and a gittern generally for the more lively ones. In his booklet notes Stefano Russomanno explains that by "gittern" they mean a common or garden four-course renaissance guitar. The theorbo adds gravity, warmth of tone and an extra melodic line within the texture, while the gittern invigorates not only with lively strumming but also by frequently adding a second treble. The role of the gittern is surprisingly effective in track 9, the fantasy which appears in Robert Dowland's *Varietie* (1610). Here it shares answering phrases with the lute and also adds an extra line, sometimes in thirds with the top line of Dowland's lute solo. There are high descant notes added to a sedate Frog Galliard, together with some gentle strumming. There is more lively strumming to accompany Sir John Smith, His Almain, and although there is no real bass for some of the time, particularly where the lute has fast divisions, the gittern's strums provide a sufficient back-up. Strumming helps the Round Battle Galliard go with a swing, and a counter melody enhances Mrs Norrish's Delight. One might have expected the theorbo to be used for Dr Case's Pavan, but instead they use the little gittern, plucked – not strummed – producing a light, delicate texture. The theorbo is used for Lachrimae, and provides a pleasant interchange of musical ideas with the lute, although there are far too many rolled chords in this piece for my taste. The Preludium from Margaret Board's lute book is played twice, the theorbo slightly more in evidence the second time through.

Russomanno goes to some lengths to

justify the present line-up of instruments, which though theoretically possible, almost certainly never existed. He refers to Mersenne, Inigo Jones, and others to show that theorboes and gitterns were played at the time of Dowland, but he accepts that in practice such combinations were unlikely: "There is no evidence that in the composer's time his music was performed on these instruments, but if the task of reconstructing History requires solid and incontrovertible facts, the reconstruction of Art can rely on 'possible' facts, or even invent them." There are 32 pieces altogether, full of variety, tastefully arranged, and stylishly performed, which I believe can be enjoyed simply for what they are in these arrangements, without having to invent history to justify them. Stewart McCoy

Falvetti Nabucco Fernando Guimarães *Nabucco*, Alejandro Meerapfel *Daniele*, Fabián Schofrin *Arioco*, Caroline Weynants *Anania*, Mariana Flores *Azaria/Idolatria*, Magdalena Padilla Olivares *Misaele*, Matteo Bellotto *Eufate*, Capucine Keller *Superbia*, Cappella Mediterranea, Chœur de Chambre de Namur, Leonardo Gracia Alarcón 78' 18" Ambronay AMY036

Only two of Falvetti's many known-to-have-existed works have survived, this one dating from the same year as Lully's *Phaëton*, reviewed below. There is some lovely vocal writing here, both solo and ensemble, but I have severe doubts as to the historical plausibility of the instruments deployed in its support and the size of the performing forces in general. The choir is 21 strong, the violins are three to a part and there is a large variety of wind including some folk instruments, standing in for their possible biblical forbears. The elaborate harp continuo also seems unlikely and sounds very self-consciously composed. The conductor's comment "I chose to use" may well be the clue. Don't get me wrong, I enjoyed what I heard, but was it Falvetti's *Nabucco* as he conceived it?

David Hansell

Frescobaldi *Œuvres pour clavecin* Laurent Stewart hpscd 60' 22"

Pierre Verany PV713061

From *Primo libro di Toccate* (and its later re-issue) & *Secondo libro di Toccate*

This is a reissue of a 1994 recording. It has worn well and Stewart is a sympathetic player with a deep understanding of this music. Using an Italian-style harpsichord by Emile Jobin, he includes an

attractive selection of some of the best-known pieces from the two books of Toccatas. The performances are generally reflective, concerned with pointing up Frescobaldi's continually inventive structures and harmonies rather than using them as a vehicle for virtuosity. A little more exuberance might not have come amiss, particularly in the *partite*, but these are deeply-felt performances and well worth listening to. Noel O'Regan

G. Gabrieli *Sacrae Symphoniae* Oltremontano, Gesualdo Consort Amsterdam, Wim Becu 61' 32"

Accent ACC 24282

I feel slightly naughty about having kept this disc for myself, given that both CB and Stephen Cassidy are regulars at the annual Beauchamp summer school where Gabrieli's music is often a focus. But I listened to it before sticking it in an envelope and decided that I loved it so much I should write about it. The programme is an interesting mix of the familiar and the not so well known. I remember playing some of the canzonas (on recorders – yikes!) at university, and then at a fabulous day course in the Borders that Murray Campbell and Sue Smith organized with Jeremy West. Where many recordings of Gabrieli's music have gone for the monumental San Marco sound, Wim Becu's approach to both the playing and singing is slightly understated – and the rewards are obvious; huge groups in cavernous acoustics are (with the best will in the world) ever doomed to produce cloudy performances. But here the interplay between individual lines is clear as day, and the exchanges between choirs not a battle but a shared joy. This has definitely been one of my favourite discs this month. BC

Gesualdo *Sesto Libro di Madrigali* 1611 La Compagnia del Madrigale 77' 55" Glossa GCD 922801

Several of the members of this ensemble will be familiar to followers of other Italian madrigal groups and these eight singers – a sort of super-group – can therefore bring considerable experience to bear on this demanding music. The implications of *chiavette* are observed (though don't pin too many hopes on the English explanation of this – a shame in an otherwise comprehensive booklet) and the benefits of easy intimacy with the language are all too apparent. I found myself drawn into these miniature epics almost to the

point of emotional exhaustion. There are some wonderful sonorities and magical singing to be heard here – try the opening of *Moro, lasso, al mio duolo* (track 17) – but don't take on the whole disc in one sitting unless you are already lying down. Strongly recommended for listening in small doses with full attention. Neither music nor performances will remain in the background.

David Hansell

Gilles *Requiem, Lamentations, Te Deum, Messe en ré, Motets 'Cantate Jordanis Incolae' and 'Diligam te Domine'* Les Passions, Chœur de chambre les éléments. 213' 06" (3 CDs)

Ligia 02020256-13

This is a 3 CD collection of recordings made between 2008 and 2012 of the work of Jean Gilles, an exact contemporary of François Couperin (b.1668). After a whistle-stop career of short-lived posts in the South of France and Languedoc, Gilles became Master of the Music at the Cathedral of St Etienne in Toulouse, a key post in the French musical hierarchy. Soon after his arrival he composed his *Te Deum* to celebrate the Ryswick peace treaty and followed this with several works linked to various ceremonial comings and goings. He died in 1705, and his own *Requiem* was performed at his funeral. This is his best known work, and was performed after his death at many prestigious occasions, including the funeral of Rameau, the King of Poland and Louise XV. During the late 20th century it was generally performed in a later edited version, with added oboes, horns and trumpets, but this CD restores it close to a proposed original state. The *Lamentations* were composed for the Cathedral Saint-Sauveur d'Aix en Provence when he was 24. It combines the Parisian tradition of the Grand Motet with Italian influence harmonic twists. The *Messe en Ré* seems to be a youthful work – the MS is incomplete and the inner voices have been reconstructed for this recording. The lyrical "Et in terra pax" is particularly effective.

The director is flautist Jean-Marc Andrieu, and he provides some very detailed programme notes on Gilles, his music and the interpretation of his works, including an explanation of their attempt to recreate the supposed Latin pronunciation in late 17th-century Toulouse. There were many decisions to be made in these recordings, and the results are impressive. For example, Jean-Marc Andrieu's instrumentation of the *Te Deum*, where

no information was known, includes some lovely writing for the bassoon. The performances are generally good, although there are occasional issues of intonation from the solo singers and the strings. That said, this is a worthwhile exploration of an interesting composer. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

Kuhnau *Frische Clavier Früchte: Seven harpsichord sonatas* Jan Katzsche 58' 50" cpo 777 532-2

This is an attractive collection of keyboard sonatas published in 1696 by the composer who was J.S. Bach's predecessor in Leipzig. Showing a variety of forms and styles, the various movements making up these sonatas represent a compendium of mid-baroque practices and were extremely popular in their day, if later eclipsed by Bach, Handel and Telemann. It is a pity that the translator of the booklet notes uses 'piano' unhistorically to translate 'Klavier', but that apart, Katzche's notes are full of useful and relevant information. He plays on a German-style harpsichord by Dietrich Hein which works well for this music. This is a very valuable introduction to a now generally neglected composer who managed to say a lot within the idioms and styles of his day.

Noel O'Regan

Lully *Phaëton* Emiliano Gonzalez Toro *Phaëton*, Ingrid Perruche *Clymène*, Isabelle Druet *Théone & Astrée*, Gaëlle Arquez *Libye*, Andrew Foster-Williams *Epaphus*, Frédéric Caton *Mérops*, *Automne & Jupiter*, Benoît Arnould *Protée & Saturne*, Cyril Auvity *Triton*, *le Soleil & La déesse de la Terr*, Virginie Thomas *Une Heure & une bergère égyptienne*, Les Talens Lyriques, Chœur de Chambre de Namur, Christophe Rousset 153' (2 CDs)

Aparté AP061 (Limited numbered edition)

This comes as a CD-sized hardback book (English/French) with the discs in the endpapers. The colour photographs give a luxurious feel to the package, even if they are of an empty, though ornate, opera house. The opera (first performed at Versailles in January 1683) begins with the usual sycophantic prologue and then the action unfolds in the usual five acts. The plot is based on Ovid, but introduces romantic and other personal entanglements to his story. Phaëton still perishes at the wrong end of a thunderbolt from Jupiter, however – his punishment for unwise over-ambition. Some of the ladies in the large cast are prone to over-sing at times to the detriment of their tone, but the gentlemen

are more consistent with some fine haute-contre work from Cyril Auvity. The stars are, unusually, the chorus and the orchestra even if I do have my usual doubts about the pitch of the recorders. The lengthy chaconne at the end of Act II is quite superbly played and the many other dances are all alertly characterised. There is applause at the end of this live recording of a concert performance, though if ever a piece needed staging this is it. In Act I Proteus undergoes multiple self-transformations; as already noted, there are many dances; and finally Phaëton fails his driving test in Apollo's sun chariot. What scope!

David Hansell

Monteverdi *L'incoronazione di Poppea* Patricia Schuman *Poppea*, Richard Croft *Nerone*, Kathleen Kuhlmann *Ottavia*, Harry Peeters *Seneca*, Jeffrey Gall *Ottone*, Curtis Rayam *Arnalta*, Etsuko Kanoh *Valletto*, Darla Brooks *Drusilla*, Dominique Visse *Nutrice*, Petra Pendzich *Amore*, Andrea Andonian *Fortuna*, Wilhelm Hartmann *Liberto*, John La Pierre *Lucano*, Anne Schwanewilms *Athene*, Concerto Köln, René Jacobs 151'

Arthaus Musik 102 304

DVD

I was puzzled by the Sinfonia, but the opening scenes seemed surprisingly good. That didn't last. Jacobs is usually in a hurry, and the singers often miss the balance between overt nastiness and genuine (or cleverly deceiving) passion. I'm not averse to some cuts, and Seneca's pomposity might be more effective if there was less of it. The haste is worsened by added instruments (usually flutes, running across the brief rests between lines). One can assume that the new evidence for Cavalli's instrumentation of around 1650 would be more or less valid for 1643; Monteverdi was probably not fit to preside over the performance, and the likelihood that Cavalli was in charge has considerably weight, especially since his wife Maria copied Acts I & III.* The "six players" evidence wasn't known in 1993, the date of Jacobs performance, but the Hickox/CB scoring of 1989 was much less fussy than Jacobs. Hickox's recording (which wasn't slow nor filled with added material) lasts over 40 minutes longer, including all the Venice MS but not the Naples extras.

Monteverdi *Il Quarto Libro dei Madrigali* La Dolce Maniera, Luigi Gaggero 55' 48" Stradivarius STR 33963

Well, these accounts of Monteverdi's fourth book of madrigals can certainly not

be accused of blandness. Mannerisms abound in these very extreme accounts of music, which to be fair does seem to invite quite a mannered response. Quite whether Monteverdi ever envisaged the extremes of tempo variation, chopping around and dynamic mercuriality is debatable, and some listeners may find the constant indulgence unsettling and even ridiculous and grotesque. After extensive listening I found myself in two minds – I liked the extreme readings as an alternative view of Monteverdi's revolutionary music, but found the instability of the readings a little wearing. The interpretations are pushed so far that the tuning is never allowed fully to settle and it often sounds a little precarious. These are probably not interpretations to live with, and certainly not as your only accounts of Book Four, but they are stimulating and thought-provoking. I am unsurprised to find in the notes that the group specializes in performances of music of the 17th and 21st centuries, although I am puzzled by their assertion that they use 'scores retranscribed for the occasion'. D. James Ross

Monteverdi *Missa a quattro voci* see **Palestrina**

A. Scarlatti *Opera omnia per tastiera Vol. IV* Francesco Tasini hpscd 68' 35"
Tactus TC 661914

9 Toccatas, Moderato in c, Vivace in a, Allegro in g

This is the fourth in a series of recordings which parallels the complete edition of Scarlatti's keyboard music of which Francesco Tasini is also an editor. Most of the pieces here are from a large manuscript collection in Turin University Library (Fondo Foà-Giordano Mss. 394 & 401). Tasini links stray movements with sonatas or other stray pieces to form groups in linked keys (though still on separate tracks). In places he has completed missing bars, composed link passages and filled out the harmony. An extended Toccata in G major forms the centrepiece of the disc: lasting 14 minutes, it is essentially an Italian Concerto for Harpsichord. The other toccatas are also multi-sectioned, though these can seem a bit arbitrary as to when they start and finish – they are not as structured as German composers of the period and figurative patterns can outstay their welcome, with Scarlatti at times seeming at a loss as to how to develop them. There are also some exciting moments when the writing takes off, particularly in final fugal

sections. Tasini plays on an original 18th-century anonymous Ferrarese harpsichord at a very low pitch of 340. The instrument has lost some of its brightness but provides great clarity and is well recorded. Tasini is a sympathetic interpreter but as an editor he takes the figuration too literally at times, particular in the arpeggiated passages which would benefit from greater panache and a stronger sense of improvisation. This is a worthwhile project, if not necessarily to be listened to all at one sitting. Noel O'Regan

Scheidemann *Organ Works, Vol. 7* Julia Brown (Brumbaugh Organ Opus 35, First Presbyterian Church, Springfield, Illinois) Naxos 8.573119 70' 02"
WVI, 2, 15, 31, 37, 52 (after Hassler), 59, 69, 83, 104, 109, 114, 122, 125, 127 & 130

Julia Brown's excellent Scheidemann series continues, appropriately, in the anniversary year of his death in 1663. As with her previous CDs, the programme is well balanced, representing the full range of Scheidemann's extraordinary output of organ works, including dance pieces and a Hasler motet intabulation. He was a pupil of Sweelinck and one of the key organ composers of the pre-Buxtehude North German school, centred on Hamburg. The organ, although it has some eclectic elements, including a temperament that is a little way from the meantone that Scheidemann would have known, speaks with an authentic North German voice, and the action is audibly responsive to Julia Brown's delicate sense of touch.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Schütz *Il Primo Libro de Madrigali op. 1* Sette Voci, Peter Kooij 55' 32"
cpo 777 660-2

Sette Voci, an eight or nine voice vocal ensemble topped and tailed by Hana Blažiková and Peter Kooij, Suzuki's favourite soloists in his recent Bach Cantata recordings, promises well. And so it turns out to be: the group under Peter Kooij's direction sing with clarity and commitment. An 8' violone, a chitarrone and a cembalo or organ support them from time to time. Their ornaments are tucked in neatly and the tuning is splendid, revealing Schütz's mastery of the full range of modes at a period when modern 'keys' were beginning to take over. The excellent notes in the booklet explore this as well as the way in which the dramatic nature of Italian as a language begins to develop a genuinely melodic

line. Yet in spite of the variety of texts, the clarity of the words and the vivid characterization in madrigals like *Feritevi, ferite*, the ensemble sounds slightly samey. But that's Schütz early compositions being sung by non-Italian speakers, I suspect.

If you haven't a CD of Schütz op 1, this will be a treat: it's recorded quite closely in a church with enough acoustic for the singers to hear the harmonics of the perfect fifths and tune to the bass line perfectly, and I hope that these singers meet again to do more – they are a much better ensemble than many groups who sing together much more regularly.

David Stancliffe

Simonetti *Ghirlanda Sacra scielta da diversissimi Eccellentissimi Compositori De varij Motetti à Voce sola...* MDCXXV Ensemble Primi Toni, Nicola Lamon Tactus TC 620080 168' 21" (3 CDs)

Simonetti was a boy treble in Graz in the mid-1590s, where he stayed until 1609. He emerged in San Marco, Venice, having become a castrato. He published three anthologies, of which the 1625 is the most familiar. It is available in facsimile (and on Petrucci) and in a recent edition published by Edition Walhall (reviewed in *EMR* 145, pp. 5-6). The leading figures from Venice appear in it, especially Monteverdi and Grandi. I published a few of them in the early days of King's Music, as much for getting accompanists used to reading from the bass as for the singers. The six singers are not quite top standard, but at least the recording enables potential performers to judge the music. The organ bass is strong enough, and I'd suggest that the gamba might more often replace than reinforce the organ. CB

Resveillez vous : Nicolaes Vallet's psalms and lute music Willem Mook, Nicolaes Vallet Luitkwartet, singers 125' 49" (2 CDs) Spaarne 1301

This lovely double CD provides a fine cross-section of the work of a neglected French composer. As a Huguenot refugee, Vallet spent much of his adult life in Holland, where he published music for lute and voices, and he is represented here by a complete recording of one of his collections of Psalm settings and various works for solo lute and lute quartet. Unexpectedly, the latter works are the only music by Vallet that I have come across before on a CD of music for massed lutes (Three, Four and Twenty Lutes, BIS CD341). The settings of his *Een en twin-tich*

Psalmen Davids sound very like the *Lessones on Psalms* being composed by the likes of Jhon Blak in post-Reformation Scotland, with the unadorned psalm tune serving as a cantus firmus to an elaborate and imaginative polyphonic setting, in this case for solo lute. Using a variety of voice pitches, the present performers inject life into music which can potentially sound a little arid and academic, and Willem Mook provides each set of Psalms with an appropriate *Praeludium* from *Regia pietas*, while drawing pertinent parallels in his programme notes with the elaborate organ music of Sweelinck.

The second CD finds Mook exploring music for solo lute from Vallet's two volumes of *Secretum musarum*, the second volume of which also includes repertoire for lute quartet. It is in the free music for his own solo instrument that Vallet's imagination takes flight, and Mook responds with playing which is technically impressive and musically convincing. The sound of the lute quartet, featuring a SATB family of lutes, is charming, and while the repertoire is perhaps more conventional lute-book fare than the solo material, it is none-the-less delightfully entertaining. This double CD is a fascinating window into very rich and rewarding repertoire, the soundtrack to a world much more familiar to us through its visual art, but which unsurprisingly is of a similarly superlative quality. D. James Ross

Music for the cornett in 17th century Italy. Music in San Marco at the time of Monteverdi. (The Golden Age of the Cornett.)
Le Concert Brise, William Dongois
Accent ACC 24261 133' (2 CDs)

William Dongois takes effortless flights through the virtuoso repertoire of Castello, Pandolfi-Meali and the division repertoire in the first of two discs. His predilection for straight cornets (both mute and otherwise) makes for an open direct tone, variously modified by his soft technique. The divisions (which including some of his own) make the elaborations subservient to the fundamental melody. The result is a flow and a journey, rather than an exhaustion of notes. He has an extraordinary freedom on the instrument. Of particular note is the Pandolfi. This is music more obviously conceived for the violin, as opposed to Castello, Fontana and others, where the two instruments can be freely interchanged in much of their work. Nevertheless, in the hands of William Dongois, the Pandolfi is given a further frisson by the cornett. Dongois

completely transcends the instrument and one listens solely to the music, occasionally breaking out of time and re-entering the flow without ever raising a question. Listen especially to the slow movement, a sort of cross between chaconne and saraband in structure but sung over with wonderful independence. I must also mention the imaginative (and sometimes deliciously wicked) continuo, which creates a real conversation with the soloist.

The soprano Julie Hassler joins for the second disc, in chronologically overlapping repertoire associated with San Marco. A violin joins the cornett for more Castello and some Fontana. The songs by Grandi are beautifully performed, but seem just slightly detached from the passion of the texts. However, when we are treated to Monteverdi's *Pianto della Madonna*, the pain and despair are delivered fully, being clearly audible in the tone of the voice without a hint of an "act", and reserved for just the appropriate points. The difference in performing style from the Grandi might therefore have been a conscious choice. In a sensitive piece of programming, the Monteverdi is followed by Fontana's *Sonata undecima*, which both mirrors and relieves the mood of the previous piece. I can't think of another that would have worked so well. The disc is then rounded off with Grandi's *Regina coeli* to send us on our way. A thoroughly recommended pair of discs.

Stephen Cassidy

Lamentazioni per la Settimana Santa
Maria Cristina Kiehr, Concerto Soave,
Jean-Marc Aymes 69' 13"
Harmonia Mundi HMA 1951952
Carissimi, Frescobaldi, Kapsberger, Marcorelli,
Palestrina, Rossi & anon

This set of lamentations for Holy Week combines settings for solo soprano and instruments by Carissimi, Rossi, Palestrina, Kapsberger and Giovanni Francesco Marcorelli with a number of anonymous settings from Bologna Q43 to produce a powerful cross-section of the genre. Featuring the agile and yet full, vibratoless voice of Argentine soprano Maria Cristina Kiehr, we are given a clear picture of how this music might have sounded when sung by a castrato or male soprano, while the accompanying ensemble includes a 1998 reconstruction of a claviorganum by Quentin Blumenroeder and Emile Jobin, which comes into its own in short instrumental episodes. The enthusiastic composition of lamentations by composers in the first

part of the 17th century marks the great demand for works of contrition by the despotic rulers of the time, but also suits the overt expression of extreme feelings embodied by much early Baroque music. The very high quality of the anonymous settings from the Bologna Q43 manuscript suggests at least one major compositional voice in early 17th-century Italy remains to be traced. This latest set of bargain *Musique d'abord* reissues from the Harmonia Mundi back-catalogue are simply presented, with the CD produced in black with tracks to look like a mini-LP (remember those?), although unfortunately in some cases the original notes have had to be trimmed to fit. Like most of them, however, this is a relatively recent recording, and a pure delight. D. James Ross

Lied der Liebe: The Song of Songs in German Baroque Movimento 71' 54"

Christophorus CHR 77378

J. C. Bach *Mein Freund ist mein* J. S. Bach *Mein Mahl ist zubereit* (ex. BWV49) Bernhard *Sie haben meinen Herrn hinweggenommen* Buxtehude *Ich bin eine Blume zu Saron, Ich suchte des Nachts Geist Quam pulchra es amica mea* Hammerschmidt *Ich schlafe aber mein Herz wacht* Kapsberger *Ego dormio* Rosenmüller *Sinfonie à 5* Scheidt *Paduana dolorosa* Schütz *Nachdem ich lag in meinem öden Bett*

This is an interesting programme, interweaving settings of texts (mostly in German) from *The Song of Solomon* with instrumental music (the individual movements of the Rosenmüller *Sinfonia* are played separately). It is nice that the repertoire (for once) is not restricted to one area of the Germany, and especially welcome that composers like Bernhard, Geist and Hammerschmidt are featured. My initial reaction to the voices was not a very favourable one, I must confess, but the more I listened, the less of an issue that became, as the music – richly colourful, as often with these highly evocative texts – is always pleasant listening. Instrumentally, this is very enjoyable, with some lovely ornamentation. BC

Madrigalian Motets from Jacobean England
Quire Cleveland, Ross W. Duffin 62' 33"
QC103

Byrd *Laudate Dominum, Venite exultemus* Ferrabosco Jr. *Convertere Dominum, Ego dixi Domine, O nomen Jesu Kirbye* Vox in Rama Lupo *Miserere mei Mundy* Judica me Deus Nicolson *Cantate Domino* Peerson *Laboravi in gemitu meo, O Rex gloriae* H. Praetorius *Laudate Domino* Ramsey *In monte Oliveti* Ravenscroft *Ne laeteris* Tomkins *Cantate Domino, Celebrate* Jehovam Weelkes *O vos omnes* Wilbye *Homo natus de muliere*

So many scholarly publications reach library shelves only to remain there undisturbed that it is a positive joy to greet this recording of the A-R Editions 2006 volume* with the same title. Few of these pieces are at all well-known and a third of them have required a degree of reconstruction but this has been convincingly done by Ross Duffin (editor of the music and conductor of the choir) and other choral directors need not be hesitant in following his performing path. In his note he concedes that the original performing forces would have been consort rather than choir and the venues domestic rather than ecclesiastical, but in their own terms these are very good performances. Occasionally the lower voices make a slightly raw sound and the sopranos are not quite unanimous on short notes at the start of a phrase following a rest but this is a recording I will value, and not just because of the repertoire. The notes are excellent and there is much more information in the edition.

David Hansell

* *Recent Researches in the Music of the Renaissance* vol. 142

Uno + One: Italia Nostra Tenet (Jolle Greenleaf, Molly Quinn SS, Robert Mealy, Daniel Lee vln, Hank Heijink theorbo, Daniel Swenberg *tiorbino & guitar*, Avi Stein *hpscd*) 53' 19"

Avie Records AV2303

Castaldi, Castello, Kapsberger, Monteverdi & Rossi

This CD of (largely) duets sung by two sopranos has more Monteverdi than anything else (8 out of 13 tracks). By way of accompaniment, there is a pair of violins, a theorbo, a tiorbino or sometimes a baroque guitar and a harpsichord: no details are given for the instruments, but the lutes are very gut-strung in sound – the wire comes from the harpsichord. Castaldi, Castello and Kapsberger contribute instrumental numbers and there is a delightful *Occhi belli* by Rossi. The singers are relentlessly bright and you can hear the fixed smile in their voices, but they certainly sing with accuracy and fluency. If you are used to hearing for example Zefiro torna on two tenor voices, two sopranos with a pair of violins interspersing ritornelli is a bit of a surprise: there is not much 'give', and I don't find that they charm me. It is partly that the singers aren't native Italian speakers, so that in the more languorous moments artifice triumphs over nature. The singer with the less attractive and slightly more powerful voice (Jolle Greenleaf – she is

the moving spirit in the enterprise) always sings on top, so that she is rather more prominent. This is a good – if rather short at 53 minutes – disc, presumably issued as a reminder of a well-prepared recital. If you want to hear what New York can offer in this rather brittle style, here's a good introduction.

David Stancliffe

LATE BAROQUE

Bach Cantatas vol. 54 Ehre sei Gott in der Höhe Bach Collegium Japan, Masaaki Suzuki 75' 40"

BIS BIS-2021 SACD

BWV 14, 100, 197 & 197a (fragment)

This penultimate volume in Suzuki's Cantata Series begins with BWV100, a cantata from the mid 1730s setting all the verses of the cheerful hymn *Was Gott tut, das ist wohlgetan*. The setting of the hymn-text has no obvious Sunday, but may more probably be – it was performed at least twice more – for a wedding celebration. Bach used the opening chorus of BWV99 (on the same chorale), adding a pair of horns and timps, but what shines through the texture are the concerto-like passages for flute, oboe d'amore and violin. The middle verses are set in a large variety of ways and the concluding verse borrows from BWV75, again with the cheerful horns. BWV14, for Epiphany 4 in 1735 where the gospel is the stilling of the storm, fills a gap in the chorale cantata year. After a strict motet-structured opening movement with the melodic material of each fugal entry answered by its inversion – all preparing the way for the instrumental statement of the chorale in augmentation, as complex a chorus as Bach ever wrote, the cheerful horn – clearly a taxing part – and soprano prepare for a stormy recitative, and a bass aria with wind. Plenty of consummate artistry from Hana Blažiková and Peter Kooij here.

BWV197 is definitely a wedding cantata, and the trumpets only appear in the first movement, which has a jaunty, secular feel, and then retire: presumably brass players had the same reputation then as now! The rest has wonderful, richly-scored arias interspersed with recits: the bass one, parodied from the Christmas Cantata 197a, now has muted strings, oboe and a burbling bassoon and comes just *Post copulationem*. This CD of mature and substantially unknown cantatas is concluded by the last four (partially reconstructed) parts of the Christmas Cantata *Ehre sei Gott*, 197a. The music is splendid, and luminously sung and played.

And these pieces do not appear often.

David Stancliffe

Bach Cantatas vol. 55 Freue dich erlöste Schar Bach Collegium Japan, Masaaki Suzuki 68' 40"

BIS BIS-2031 SACD

BWV 30, 69 & 191

This is the final CD in Suzuki's Bach Church Cantata series, and he writes rather wistfully: what are they going to do now? Keep performing them! The formula that they have adopted and the team of players and singers have certainly come a long way since they began in 1995. When I first heard Bach Cantatas performed by Paul Steinitz in the late 1950s in St Batholomew the Great, I could not have dreamed that there would be so many complete sets of recordings competing for attention. In terms of clarity, accuracy and overall evenness, I find it hard to imagine that Suzuki's set will be displaced, even if I often go back to the pioneering performances of Harnoncourt/Leonhardt. Suzuki's soloists – the essential 4 part *coro* to whom he now adds only a dozen ripieno singers in the larger movements – are a beautifully balanced and homogeneous quartet with Hana Blažiková, Robin Blaze, Gerd Turk and Peter Kooij. What could illustrate their artistry better than the aria "Meine Seele, auf" (69/iii) where a trio sonata for oboe, violin and continuo suddenly and effortlessly becomes a quartet, or the final chorale with the trumpets added just to heighten the cadences. Three movements adapted from what we know as the B minor *Missa* (BWV 191) bring the series to an end, as they must have brought Christmas Day to an end in 1745, celebrating the signing of the peace treaty that concluded the second Silesian War. Even in this final CD of the set, the singing and playing sets a standard of thoughtful reasonableness: nothing is too extreme and everything is beautifully balanced.

David Stancliffe

There's a hymn of praise to Suzuki and his colleagues on p. 16.

Bach Widerstehe doch der Sünde Cantatas for the complete liturgical year, vol. 17 Siri Thornhill, Elisabeth Hermans, Yeree Suh, Petra Noskaiová, Christoph Genz, Jan Van der Crabben SSSATB, La Petite Bande, Sigiswald Kuijken

Accent ACC 25317

BWV 54, 134, 168 & 186

Kuijken continues his way through the Liturgical Year, his chosen framework for a

(substantial) selection of cantatas that suit his style and forces. Only one of these cantatas, mostly for the 7th, 8th and 9th Sundays after Trinity, dates from Leipzig: 168 written in 1725. The others all have earlier versions: 186 has an Advent original from Weimar in 1716, 134 (for the third day of Easter in 1724, revived in 1731) is largely parodied from a secular New Year's Day cantata written for Köthen in 1719, and 54 is from Weimar in 1714. This last has five-part strings, and Kuijken says it is ideal for his violoncello da spalla, yet the booklet has only one viola listed and the violoncello da spalla playing in 134. 54 is notated in the NBA in E flat, but is here (correctly) played at Chorton so sounds a minor third higher. Does he follow his own advice and play it one to a part? While the booklet says not, my ears suggest otherwise.

Something is askew here, but the string playing throughout is nonetheless splendid: robust and choppy in the highly rhythmic treatment of 134/iv, yearningly stretched in the opening of 54/i, and as sprightly in its triples as the bass in 168/i. The players listen to each other intently, and the chamber quality of these small-scale performances means that balance as well as rapport between singers and players is excellent. The singers are able, but I do not get the impression that they are all equally at home in this style of performance. We hear three sopranos in as many cantatas, so the – to me – less attractive Siri Thornhill only sings in 186; Elisabeth Hermans certainly makes a better duet partner in 168/v. Perhaps I have been spoiled by hearing Hana Blažiková in Schütz, Luks' B minor and Suzuki's final volumes. David Stancliffe

Bach *Matthäus-Passion* Werner Güra *Evangelist*, Johannes Weisser *Christus*, Sunhae Im, Christina Roterberg, Bernarda Fink, Marie-Claire Chappuis, Topi Lehtipuu, Fabio Trümpy, Konstantin Wolff, Arttu Kataja *SSAATTBB*, RIAS Kammerchor, Staats- und Domchor Berlin, Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin, René Jacobs 159' 05" (2 SACD + 1 DVD) Harmonia Mundi HMC 802156-58

René Jacobs writes interestingly about the spatial and numerical disposition of the Matthew Passion, and argues convincingly (in a substantial booklet of 174 pages) against the conventional layout of two equally balanced bands and singers side by side on a platform. The DVD shows how he actually laid out his forces, and I suspect that the best Matthew Passion I

conducted was laid out like his, with the two groups in two arcs facing each other in the centre of an open space, and the listeners on all four sides.

The first thing you notice is that his second *coro* is not only smaller – 32111 strings as opposed to 54321 – but recorded as if further away. The second thing is that his reading is ultra dramatic, with fast tempi for the turba interventions and a very free hand for the Evangelist and Christus. This has led him to eschew not only a one-to-a-part style, but to go for soloists who are clearly at home in opera and grand gesture oratorio and who do not form part of the *cori*: in the DVD that accompanies the CDs he says, "the sensuality that is typical of the opera is also found in the religious works." He argues for a lute in *coro* 1 and uses it as a regular part of the continuo group in arias as well as with the Evangelist. The DVD also has a revealing passage which shows the solo violinist and the singer taking the lead in decisions about articulation and phrasing as if this reticence on the part of the conductor was uncommon; maybe it is, but I thought that the job of the conductor was exactly that: to help the singers and players listen to each other rather than to impose a lofty, theoretical view of their own.

The result is, a very well balanced, highly dramatic reading. There are period instruments and a boys' choir to sing the chorale lines in the opening and closing of Part 1 – the first of which is very slow and the second splendidly brisk. Everyone should read his booklet and appreciate his understanding of Bach's theology; but whether Bach did manage to hold together such complex music at the opposite ends of the nave of St Thomas' isn't put to the test here, as Jacobs' two *cori* are facing each other within spitting distance.

So although I've been made to think hard by this performance, it won't topple my preference for some others, like Paul McCreech's 2003 version, with its robust use of the two organs in Roskilde cathedral, or even Harnoncourt's original version, with boys' voices; but if you like plenty of operatic drama, then you may like this. David Stancliffe

Bach *Mass in B minor* Hana Blažiková, Sophie Harmsen, Terry Wey, Eric Stoklossa, Tomáš Kral, Marián Krejčík *SmScTTBB*, Collegium Vocale 1704, Collegium 1704, Václav Luks 101' 26" (2 CDs) Accent ACC 24283

I warm to any recording of the B minor

that takes the *Sanctus* at a good rate – I think the parallel is the tempo for the 6/8 Gigue in the 3rd suite – but this is seriously fast! The tempo for the *Sanctus* sets the scene for a fresh new recording, where the *alla breve* numbers are sung in a brisk two-in-a-bar. Václav Luks takes the instructions about numbers of singers seriously, so there are 43545 in the five-part choruses (where the seven who sing arias are supported by an additional 14 ripienists), and different bass singers for the *Quoniam* and *Et in unum* indicate that the director has understood something fundamental about the disposition voices required for the B minor. Some chorus numbers have passages where a quintet of single voices (recorded rather more prominently than when they sing with their ripienists) sings part of the number. This happens in the opening fugal section of the Kyrie (bars 30–72) and in bars 20–39 of the *Et in terra pax*, presumably on the analogy of Bach's markings solo and tutti in the final chorus of Cantata 21, added for the Leipzig performance in 1723. What Luks does not do, however, is to carry this principle of varying the size of the body of singers through into later movements, where I have long thought that the 'intonation' for the Credo (five vocal lines and two instrumental parts over the running bass) would be best served by single voices and instruments; or in the three central choruses *Et incarnatus*, *Crucifixus* and *Et resurrexit*, where their dramatic increase in instrumental scoring suggests to me moving from single voices through a group of a dozen to the full complement of ripienists.

However, this was a performance I thoroughly enjoyed, with a fuller than average organ sound, and 55421 strings, who articulate splendidly rhythmically throughout, especially in the choruses. There is particularly fine playing from the *d'amore* in *Qui sedes*; the *Crucifixus* has fine, choppy chords from the upper strings. The timpanist, as well as the trumpets, is as good as I've heard, and altogether the incisive singing from the singers is a credit to Collegium Vocale 1704's commitment and agility. The Sop II is helpfully distinguished from the Alto, so that both sing in registers that they find comfortable. I much prefer this version to Gardiner, Suzuki, Herreweghe, King, Christophers and the rest: it reminds me of Andrew Parrott's 1985 version in its energy, and has some similarities to Jung-hänel's. There is a dancing energy about it, so that even the slower movements have a sense of forward momentum, and the

recording is clean and well balanced. This is an invigorating performance.

David Stancliffe

Bach Lutheran Masses – Vol. 1 The Sixteen, Harry Christophers 74' 07"
CORO COR16115
BWV 102, 233 & 235

Can there be a better version of the Bach Lutheran Masses than the Purcell Quartet's one-to-a-part set? Here is Harry Christophers with a two-voices-to-a-part version of two of the masses and the Cantata (102) from which much of the material in them was re-worked. The Sixteen are best known as a highly polished choir singing the choral repertoire from Brumel through Victoria to Britten, but here they are exploring a different side of their persona. Of the eight singers in this pruned-down Sixteen, all but one get an aria to sing, so that the basic concept of a *coro*, which is a SATB quartet with a second quartet of ripienists, is tried. The chamber music quality of the balanced sound of a group of musicians who know and respond to each other well is maintained. The performances are clean, balanced and musical, showing that Bach is best performed by intelligent musicians who can listen to each other rather than by superstars who want to display their egos. I look forward to the next volume.

David Stancliffe

Bach remixed: Six "new" sonatas for recorder & basso continuo Michael Form rec, Dirk Börner hpscd 74' 26"
Pan Classics PC 10299

The recorder appears in many of Bach's works, including cantatas and the Brandenburg concertos, but there are no surviving solo works. It's not unusual to hear the flute sonatas and organ trio sonatas played on the recorder but this recording goes much further with music from a variety of sources including the French and English suites, instrumental pieces for organ, violin and lute, and even two vocal arias, all transposed into appropriate keys to create two new sonatas, a French overture and a suite. There are many precedents in Bach's own compositions for the reuse of musical material and on the whole this works very well. Two of the pieces appear in more or less their original layout, the Partita in C minor after BWV 997, a keyboard work copied by Kirnberger, and the Solo in C major after BWV 1033. The latter removes the bass line thought to have been by CPE

Bach from the flute sonata in the same key and is played largely unaltered apart from some necessary additions to the adagio based on the solo violin sonatas. There are extensive notes by Michael Form who selected the transcriptions and Dirk Börner who converted them into works for recorder and obbligato harpsichord. Their performances are fluid and sometimes brilliant and will surely inspire recorder players to look for more opportunities to adapt Bach for their instrument.

Victoria Helby

Bach and the Italians: Pergolesi, Marcello and Conti adapted Monika Frimmer S, Kai Wessel cT, Neue Hofkapelle München, Christian Brembeck 58' 01"
Christophorus CHE 0191-2

This CD appears to be a re-issue of a recording made in 1996. The performance of these pieces – one longish cantata from Pergolesi, a keyboard transcription of a Marcello oboe concerto played here on the organ and a version of a Conti cantata Bach made in Weimar in 1716 (where the notes say that he added parts for two oboes – though only one player appears among the instrumentalists listed, and he just doubles the first violins in the opening and closing numbers) seems very correct if a bit lifeless, though there's some beautiful singing from both Frimmer and Wessel. It is interesting for us to know that Bach thought well enough of these pieces to make performing versions, and I suppose it might be worthwhile to compare the originals with his elaborations in scoring as in other compositions of his own which he parodied for later re-use. The Pergolesi cantata is reset to a rhymed paraphrase of psalm 51 for 2 voices, 3 instruments and continuo, and must have necessitated many small changes, and the Marcello oboe concerto is delightful. But the contrast with Bach's own music is very striking.

David Stancliffe

Bach The Transcriptions of Concertos by Vivaldi Sophie Yates hpscd 76' 28"
Chandos Chaconne CHAN 0796
BWV 972–6, 978, 980–1

These are challenging works to bring off on the harpsichord. Indeed, I wonder whether Bach might not be surprised to find us listening to these transcriptions, made for his own use or to entertain a young patronal enthusiast, when we can easily hear the originals played on strings. As Sophie Yates says in her notes the

subtleties of the Venetian violin do not transfer easily to the harpsichord. This is particularly true in the slow movements where repeated chords on quiet strings can get pretty stodgy on the harpsichord. What is exciting string figuration in Vivaldi's original, if based on relatively simple harmony, can become very repetitive on the harpsichord. When Bach wrote his own Italian Concerto he adapted the style much more to the keyboard instrument's needs and strengths. Yates does try hard here, with good propulsion in the fast movements and a particularly lyrical performance of the Largo in BWV 973. She plays on a Goujon copy by Andrew Garlick, which I find a bit unrelentingly bright. The six Vivaldi transcriptions are joined by Alessandro Marcello's Oboe Concerto and his brother Benedetto's four movement Concerto a Cinque. This last works much better for me than do the Vivaldi transcriptions: one can sense both Bach and Yates enjoying the greater harmonic interest and more varied textures of Vivaldi's younger contemporary.

Noel O'Regan

Bach Six Brandenburg Concertos Dunedin Consort, John Butt dir/hpscd 93'
Linn Classics CKD430

I'm having periods of the CD but not the booklet being missing or vice-versa, though I did at least have both the first time I heard it.* Not that you need a booklet to demonstrate the originality of these performances (though reading the booklet is itself illuminating). For a start, the pitch is a tone below A=440. This is enough to make the concertos feel different – more relaxed, often slower (though that can be the more brilliant when the tendency is contradicted). The shaping of the phrases is free but not continually extreme. The players seem to be inventing their style, no doubt with hints from John. The use of an 8' violone (down a tone) was an inspiration. John's playing of the closing solo section and cadenza that ends the first movement of No. 5 is amazing – I'm afraid I must now move my taste from one friend to another. Maybe not everyone will like this, but everyone should hear it. John is a leading Bach scholar as well as a distinguished performer – but the normal carping of academics has no place in his music writing nor playing. I did have one extraordinary experience. I was dozing in bed with headphones on, and kept hearing the link between the two movements of No. 3 and wondered if I was dreaming. Eventu-

ally I realised that I must have touched the repeat button – I would have welcomed a more musical movement! CB

* They eventually came together, and the notes are definitely worth reading!

Bach *Sei Solo a Violino senza Basso accompagnato, Libro Primo* Sirkka-Liisa Kaakinen-Pilch 147' 44" (2 CDs)
Ondine ODE 1241.2D

This set will be taking its place among the chosen few on my Bach shelves. Kaakinen-Pilch is pictured on the cover, deep in thought as she plays, and I imagine a lot of that went into these performances. They are beautifully paced, sometimes quicker or more slowly than expected, but never simply to be different – the music really works at her chosen speeds, either giving a clearer shape to some phrases, or allowing fresh details to emerge from others; her bowing technique enables her to do all of that with apparent ease; articulated without seeming jagged, or cantabile (even in multiple stopping) without any loss of focus. I have enjoyed listening to these CDs over the past few weeks and I shall return to them frequently, I am sure; this is very fine Bach playing. BC

Those who don't look at title-pages may not realise that Book I is the title of the six solos for violin. CB

Bach *The French Suites vol. 2* Mika Väyrynen accordion
Alba ABCD 361
+ Prelude & Fugue in a, BWV543, Air (BWV1068)

I have already written one review in these pages justifying the presence of an accordion among the many HIP discs. The simple fact, however, is that Väyrynen is such a formidable musician that I reckon even Bach the organist would be flabbergasted by the sheer range of colours he is able to draw from his instrument (with coupling changes – had these been organ pieces, they would be registration settings – between the phrases) and, because the music literally has to breathe on this instrument, it sings in a way that the harpsichord simply cannot. If you remain unconvinced, head to a listening post near you and click on Track 24 – (on the instrument that must breathe, remember!) how on earth is he sustaining that pedal? Sheer genius, that's how! BC

Couperin *Pièces de Violes*, 1728 Jordi Savall with Ariane Maurette, bass viols, Ton Koopman hpscd 43' 45"
Astrée Auvidis E 7744

This reissue of their 1975 recording on the Astrée label, digitally remastered for Alia Vox, is part of the series to make all of Savall's recordings 'available under a single banner', as the lavishly produced booklet puts it. There are photos of the players as they were at that time, facsimile reproductions of some of the pages of the parts, 26 pages cataloguing their recordings, and essays in French, English, Catalan, Castelan, German and Italian. Savall's own essay on the music, written in the year of the re-release, together with a note by Harry Halbreich, and a memoir from the producer of the original Astrée LP, Michel Bernstein, are all very interesting.

But the playing is what one would buy this record for, and although it is short by modern standards it is well worth having. The young Savall plays with great authority, intense musicality, and an involving impulsiveness, which betrays itself in the occasional rushed bow stroke. In the first suite his approach is quite literal, even conservative in his tempi, but the great *Passacaille ou Chaconne* is marvellously controlled. The second suite is beautifully played: the Prelude really drawn out, the *Fuguette* lively, followed by a masterly performance of *Pompe Funèbre*, played so slowly that supreme control from all is demanded and given, followed abruptly by *La Chemise blanche* dashed off in exciting virtuosity. The accompaniment is beautifully judged and the music is wonderful. If you missed it 40 years ago, get it this time. Robert Oliver

Couperin *Suites for Viola da gamba*, 27e *Ordre de clavecin* Mikko Perkola gamba, Aapo Häkkinen hpscd 60' 03"
Naxos 8.570944
1^{re} Suite in e, 2^e Suite in A

Savall, even a young Savall, is a hard act to follow, but this young man approaches this very characterful music with great assurance and considerable intensity. He plays a copy of a Colichon – which some believe was the maker Marais favoured – a rounder sound than the anonymous 17th century French viol Savall plays. The first suite's Prelude has a lovely lyricism, and while in the *Allemande* and *Courante* his flexible rhythm shapes phrases, I do prefer dance movements to be played without rubato. The *Sarabande Grave* is lovely, and the solo viol's high entry in the petite reprise is beautifully done, and he takes the liberty of plucking the final chord – a nice touch. The most technically demanding movement in the suite, by some distance, is the final *Passacaille ou*

Chaconne, and his performance is exciting, if a little rough around the edges. He rushes the closing rapid semi-quaver passage, and his use of rubato is inappropriate in this movement, in particular. The second suite is played with great panache. He is a dramatic player, particularly in *Pompe Funèbre*, and he delivers *La Chemise Blanche* at breath-taking speed, using little or no rubato and bringing it to a close with a lovely sweetness in the final ascending phrase. The harpsichord, a Taskin copy, has a sensuous full sound which goes very well with the viol. It is heard on its own in the 27^e *Ordre de clavecin* in B minor, a delightful piece with which to conclude the recording. I enjoyed this very much, particularly the third movement *Les Chinois*, a character piece, sounding more like an overture than anything remotely Chinese, and the final movement, a brisk *Saillie*. Robert Oliver

Graupner *Orchestral Suites* Finnish Baroque Orchestra, Sirkka-Liisa Kaakinen Pilch 76' 29"
Ondine ODE 1220-2
GWV 450, 451 & 458

The common factor among the three suites recorded here is the employment of the viola d'amore as one of the concertino instruments. In the case of the Suite in G (GWV 458) it is partnered by only the bassoon, but keeps rather more crowded company in GWV 450 in F-major, where the concertino also includes flute and chalumeau. Most extravagant of all is the Suite in F, GWV 451, which finds a solo role for flute, two chalumeaux, and horn. In all three works Graupner tends to use the solo instruments working together as a concertino group in the style of a concerto grosso rather than allowing them an individual solo. The resultant passages frequently boast beguiling sonorities, but do bring with them inevitable problems of balance. Particularly where the bright treble of the flute is involved, the tenor register of the viola d'amore (and to a lesser extent the chalumeau) often becomes submerged, especially when the strings are playing. I suspect indeed that these pieces would work better – and, given what we know of the musicians employed at the Darmstadt court, be more historically accurate – with single strings per part. Still the concertino instruments fare better than the poor harpsichord continuo player, who throughout is upstaged by a lutenist who fills the bass line with arpeggios and all

manner of other unnecessary accretions. The playing of the Finnish Baroque Orchestra is bright and alert and technically of high standard, but to my mind some of the direction is rhythmically mannered. In sum, however, this is probably a better disc than the foregoing suggests and GWV 458 appears to be a first recording. It is certainly well worth investigating by those who enjoy Graupner's ingratiatingly appealing music. And who wouldn't? *Brian Robins*

Handel *L'Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato* Maria Keohane, Julia Doyle, Benjamin Hulett, Andreas Wolf SSTB, Kölner Kammerchor, Collegium Cartusianum, Peter Neumann 119' 18" (2 CDs) Carus 83.395

A fine new recording of Handel's wondrous paean to his adopted country. The text is a cunningly-interwoven compilation of two poems by Milton, *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, the "Moral Design" (Handel's term) being completed by Jennens' own *Il Moderato*. The music is Handel at his most subtle and sublime, richly scored and following every nuance of the poetry. Neumann is an experienced Handelian, and his orchestra, choir and soloists respond well to his expert direction. There are, however, a few minor irritations. The acoustic is a little over-generous, with consequent loss of orchestral detail, especially in the louder movements with brass and chorus. (Incidentally, timpani are used throughout the choral refrain of "Populous Cities" instead of being held back for the "High Triumphs"). The soloists are all good, though it is a pity that Handel's original plan of using male voices (boy treble, tenor and bass) for *L'Allegro* was not used: the two sopranos, though very fine: sound rather similar. Julia Doyle is particularly radiant as *L'Allegro*; Maria Keohane as *Penseroso* sometimes sounds slightly cool, though she rises nobly to "Hide me from Day's garish eye" – arguably one of the greatest settings of English of the 18th century. There is also a certain coolness overall in *Il Moderato* – more could have been made of the final chorus, for example, which feels *Moderatissimo*. Overall, a good buy – if you do not already own this lovely work, you need not hesitate. Those who already possess the King's Consort or Eliot Gardiner recordings might hold back! *Alastair Harper*

Handel *Belshazzar* Allan Clayton *Belshazzar*, Rosemary Joshua *Nitocris*,

Caitlin Hulcup *Cyrus*, Iestyn Davies *Daniel*, Jonathan Lemalu *Gobrias*, Les Arts Florissants, William Christie 165' (3 CDs) Les Arts Florissant/William Christie Editions AF001

This is the inaugural recording of Les Arts Florissants's new record label, a venture that Christie describes as a reflection of the collegial spirit that 'has always given life to Les Arts Florissants'. If this is anything to go by, the recording future of Les Arts Florissants is one to look forward to. Attractively packaged, the CDs come in a cleverly-designed concertina-like cardboard sleeve (no more nasty plastic casing) and with the usual tracklist, biographies and photos comes the libretto, a very clear synopsis, an excellent concise and readable essay by Donald Burrows, an explanation of the score and its reconstruction, and a short explanation by Christie of the new label. Already the recording seems like a luxury event but there is a further item included; a rewriting of the plot in Jean Echenoz's idiosyncratic but highly enjoyable style. I can hear purists grumbling that the music is what matters, and I am usually the last to be persuaded by fancy packaging. But for a niche (period) recording in a minority (classical music) market, Christie quite frankly needed to come up with something that would make people want to buy the physical item. In an age of (sometimes free) downloads, no-one will pay more for a bog-standard CD. Furthermore, it is a joy to see an Early Music Conductor acknowledging so openly the importance of combining scholarship and artistry.

And so to the music. Handel acknowledged his debt to the librettist, Charles Jennens in a letter in which he describes his "delight in setting it to music" and calls it a "Noble Piece, very grand and uncommon". Handel's delight is apparent from his score; *Belshazzar* is a highly diverse and entertaining work from start to finish, and every word of the libretto can be heard clearly and distinctly from every member of the cast. I listened long and hard to the entire work to find some faults, but the most I could find was the odd slip in ensemble between violins and bassi (and even they were few and far between). Caitlin Hulcup was previously unknown to me and although at first I found her voice a little rich (and dare I say vibrato-heavy), I soon realised that it formed an amazing balance with the other soloists. Each of them sounds at their very best and there are particular moments

from each of the sort that make you stop what you are doing just to listen. Nitocris's opening *accompagnato* and *arioso* can be rather heavy-going and interminable but Joshua brings to life every nuance of the text and we are presented with a rich tapestry of imagery and emotion. Particular moments of enjoyment are too numerous to list here but in the spirit of fairness I would recommend Davies's *arioso* 'O sacred oracles of truth', Lemalu's amazing depth of tone in 'Behold the monstrous human beast', Hulcup's calm-yet-sinuous tone in her ensuing aria 'Great God! who but yet darkly known', and Clayton's opening aria 'Let festal joy begin' in which he manages to convey a suitable sense of *bacchanalia* without any lack of clarity in the lengthy runs.

But enough about the soloists. In this recording the orchestra and choir deserve almost equal mention with the soloists, for they really bring all of the dimensions of Handel's score to life. Yes, there is a certain Frenchness in the ultra-clear articulation in the strings (and in the size of the orchestra – no budget production). And the chorus most certainly could not be mistaken for an English chorus – far too much dramatic phrasing. But this is exactly what is required. The chorus in *Belshazzar* fulfils an almost Gilbert and Sullivan role at times and this Christie brings out extremely magnificently. I am reminded of the Les Arts Florissants DVD of Purcell's *Fairy Queen*, by which I was captivated as a young student. Here, though, the drama unfolds so vividly that no visuals are required.

I could go on at length, but instead just go and buy this for yourselves and everyone else. I await the next in the series with bated breath. *Violet Greene*

Handel *Water Music* Haydn Sinfonietta Wien, Manfred Huss 61' 42"

BIS BIS-2027 SACD

+ Overture from *Occasional Overture*

Yet another *Water Music* recording? Haydn Sinfonietta Wien gives us a good, crisp 'no frills' version performed in the order given in the recent Handel (HHA) critical edition, not in the post-war order of the three suites. It always seems a bit of a let-down to finish a *Water Music* recording with the gentle G Major Flute Suite, but Handel's own order fittingly rounds off the entertainment with the stately D Major Trumpet Minuet. Although the harpsichord and theorbo continuo are virtually inaudible in many of the

movements, Manfred Huss adds timpani to several of the D Major movements, adding a flavour for the grand occasion, as Handel could well have done. The *Occasional Overture*, too, makes a good filler. I enjoyed this recording, and have no qualms in substituting it for some of the others I have.

Ian Graham-Jones

Handel Six Piano Concertos op. 4 Matthias Kirschnereit piano, Deutsche Kammerakademie Neuss, Lavard Skou Larsen 67' 32" cpo 777 837-2

The op. 4 organ concertos (of which no. 6 is specifically for harp) on a modern Steinway piano? Perish the thought! The mind boggles at the image of a 9ft grand dominating an orchestra of some 20 players in one of Handel's London theatres, where these concertos would have been played as interval music to some of Handel's oratorios. Kirschnereit's imagination is let loose (as indeed no doubt was Handel's) in some virtuosic extemporisations. With generous amounts of rubato and adagios treated as though they were romantic slow movements, these concerti are cast in a very different light to that which readers would normally expect. If this idea appeals, then try it; otherwise leave it alone.

Ian Graham-Jones

Handel Trio Sonatas Opus 2 The Brook Street Band 69' 49" Avie Records AV2282

What an enjoyable recording this is! An entire disc devoted to a single opus, particularly of chamber music, can be the musical equivalent of a box of chocolates – all individually delicious, but requiring discretion in sampling. Here, one is reminded much more of a joyous reunion with old friends – some merely in new outfits, others having undergone major reconstructive surgery – but all exhibiting Handel's inimitable sense of suave melody, purposeful counterpoint and sheer wit. The Brook Street Band play with superb style and enthusiasm; they have appropriately varied the instrumentation of the individual sonatas, and their programme order makes perfect sense (and with the bonus of the Passacaille to bring their divertimento to a close.) Try the last Allegro of Sonata 4 in F (track 13), with its seemingly endless teasingly delayed cadences, or the meltingly lovely Largo of Sonata 1 in B minor (track 20) and prepare to be beguiled – and without a trace of musical indigestion.

Alastair Harper

Handel Suites for Keyboard HWV 427, 428, 432, 434/4, 435, 467 Daria van den Bercken piano 67' 56" Sony Classical 88765418832

There has been some hype surrounding this recording, even involving the music being played on a piano being towed through the streets of Amsterdam. Playing Handel on the piano is something of self-confessed obsession for Van den Bercken. Making this music work on the modern piano is not easy: figuration, designed to 'not leave the instrument empty' (in Frescobaldi's words) can seem precious or even trite when (literally) given weight. The temptation for the non-harpsichordist is to play the notes literally and in strict time when a more flexible approach with some agogic accents would be more idiomatic to the harpsichord. The fugal movements work best here, where rhythmic constancy is a virtue; in other movements it can be over rigorous. Van den Bercken is certainly a fine pianist whose beautifully clean playing is matched by a similar clarity in the recording. But ultimately a modern piano cannot match the excitement of a harpsichord in full flow in e.g. the Passacaille of the G minor Suite. The disc finishes with a beautifully-judged Allemande in the style of Handel written by Mozart.

Noel O'Regan

Pergolesi Stabat mater Julia Lezhneva S, Philippe Jaroussky cT, Coro della Radiotelevisione Svizzera, I Barocchisti, Diego Fasolis 71' 02" Erato 3191472

+ *Confitebor tibi Domine, Laudate pueri Dominum*

Over the years I have reviewed a number of performances of Pergolesi's little masterpiece, some of them absolute stinkers. This is most emphatically at the other end of the scale with two outstanding singers singing very beautifully, with a secure sense of phrasing, convincing tempos and very stylish and sensitive orchestral support. There is one moment in *Fac ut ardeat* where they try a bit too hard but otherwise it really does sound lovely. The only elements that jarred were a few trills which can't quite decide which century they're in and some strange-sounding vowels. The two lively psalms are a welcome insight into Pergolesi's other sacred music, the end of the second providing a startling (in a good way) conclusion to the recital. This has reached me in a domestic-style plastic wallet with no supporting information so a comment on the total package is not possible.

David Hansell

Porpora Arias for Farinelli Philippe Jaroussky, Cecilia Bartoli, Venice Baroque Orchestra, Andrea Marcon

Erato 50999 9341302 2

Extracts from *Adrianno e Teseo*, *Ifigenia in Aulide*, *Mitridate*, *Orfeo*, *Polifemo*, *Semiramide regina* & *Semiramide riconosciuto*

Conventional collections of operatic arias by one artist have always seemed to me one of the most unnatural ways of listening to music. Consequently it now takes an exceptional artist or unusually interesting repertoire to arouse my interest in such CDs. This ravishing disc ticks both boxes. While interest in the operas of Porpora has in recent years been growing apace, complete performances and recordings are still sufficiently rare for a selection of arias that introduces so much new music to the catalogue is to be welcomed with open arms.

And what music! What singing! As one of the greatest singing teachers of the 18th century, Porpora understood the voice like few others. The music he wrote for it is unfailingly grateful and gracious, while at the same time demanding a technique that has learned all he had to teach in such matters as the articulation of passaggi, sostenuto, turns and trills. Few singers today would pass a 'Porpora test' (on trills, let alone anything else) – but Philippe Jaroussky is one who does so with merit. I know there are some – certainly not me – who do not respond to the androgynous quality of his voice. Surely, though, no one can deny a technique capable of alternating precisely articulated passaggi with the beautifully shaped liquidity of sustained phrases with the apparent ease Jaroussky does in the opening track, 'Mira in cielo' from *Arianna e Teseo* (1728). Then there is an example of messa di voce at the opening of 'Alto Giove' (*Polifemo*, 1735) that should be heard by anyone aspiring to sing the music of this period. Many of the arias here are not about the misery of love, but rather the expectation it brings or the achievement of its joys. Such emotions are exquisitely, sensually conveyed by Jaroussky, as a careful following of the text of an aria like 'Si pietoso' (*Semiramide riconosciuta*, 1729) readily reveals. Or listen to the siciliana 'Le limpid'onde' (*Ifigenia in Aulide*, 1735), with its evocation of sunrise here attaining a shimmering delicacy aided by flutes and oboes. But this is a CD to either talk about at great length that I don't have at my disposal or simply say get out there (or get on line) and buy it without delay if you have any feeling at all

for 18th century opera.

It remains only to record that on two tracks Jaroussky is joined in duets by no less a celebrity than Cecilia Bartoli, here on her best behaviour, as largely are the Venice Baroque Orchestra, the odd exaggerated gesture excepted. The CD is contained in a lavishly produced 112-page booklet that includes an excellent essay by Frédéric Delaméa. Brian Robins

Rameau *Les Surprises de l'Amour* Les Nouveaux Caractères, Sébastien d'Hérin 146' 26" (3 CDs)
Glossa GCD 922702

It comes as no surprise to read that this opéra-ballet was given 60 performances in Rameau's lifetime. The music is absolutely first-class in content and colourfully scored – horns, piccolos and the composer's wandering tenor register bassoon parts all get substantial outings – with the flute playing consistently gorgeous. *Les Surprises* consists of a splendid overture and then three one-act entrées, each of which ends with a substantial group of dances. These are delectable and would have been well worth recording on their own (will there be a highlights CD at some point in the future, I wonder) but it's always a bonus to have the full context. I read the booklet phrase 'very delicate récitatifs' with a wry smile as one of the first comments I jotted down was 'ladies inclined to over-sing the recits' but this was only on CD1 – they are more relaxed later on. The orchestral playing is very fine, as it has to be with an overture marked 'le plus vite possible', with no more than a minimum of questionable percussion and each act flows convincingly in and out of the various styles of music used. The essay tells you what to need to know, supported by the sung texts being given in full with a parallel English translation. David Hansell
If they don't already do so, dedicated Ramistes might like to monitor

www.torch.ox.ac.uk/rameau and/or
www.cmbv.fr/Rameau-2014-C-est-parti. DH

Rameau *Rameau 'Airs & danses d'opéra'* (transcribed by Yves Rechsteiner) UGAB l'univers de l'orgue No 1 – Cintegabelle Yves Rechsteiner organ Henri-Charles Caget percussion (1742 Mouchérel/Lépine organ, Cintegabelle, Toulouse)

Alpha 650 77' 34"

Castor et Pollux *Tristes apprêts* (air); Dardanus rigaudon, prélude, air tendre sur les flûtes; Hippolyte et Aricie tambourins, fuguette, tempête; Les Boréades entrée; Les Fêtes d'Hébé tambourin en rondeau; Les Indes Galantes

ouverture, danse des Sauvages, air vif pour Zéphir et les Fleurs, Tendre amour, gavottes, tierce en taille, air en récit, trio et duo; chaconne; Plâtée musette en quatuor, tambourin, chœur en rondeau, menuet dans le goût de la vièle; Zoroastre menuet en trio, second menuet en duo; air dans le goût de la romance; sarabande en trio.

This is the first of a series of CDs from UGAB (a Biblical name that, arguably, refers to early organ provenance) under their 'the world of the Organ' series. Although it is the name of the organ (and the series) that dominates the CD cover and spine (in long-box format), it is the music on the CD that will most interest readers. Despite holding several organists posts during his life, Rameau left no organ music. But, both in its tonal structure and in much of the music that was written for it, the mid-18th-century French Classical organ has its roots in the world of opera and orchestral colour. So it is entirely appropriate for Yves Rechsteiner to have arranged Rameau's operatic works for the organ, organised as four Suites of works gathered from different works. Although usually associated with the 19th-century English Town Hall organ recitals, there was an older French tradition of orchestral transcriptions. Balbastre, a student of Rameau, was already playing Rameau opera pieces on the organ in 1757 in the Concert Spirituel, at a time when the French Classical organ was approaching its most technically advanced stage. This is a fine exploration of the colours of the French Classical organ (with added percussion effects), but also a valid insight in the world of Rameau the dramatist and emotive tunesmith, the latter most apparent in the "Tristes apprêts" from *Castor et Pollux*, sounding ravishing on a tierce register. The playing of Yves Rechsteiner is outstanding, with beautifully clear articulation and a real sense of the musical capabilities of the instrument. He also provides a detailed essay on the musical background, his transcriptions and the recording. Andrew Benson-Wilson

Rebel – *De Père en Fils* Ensemble Les Surprises 72' 32"
Ambronay AMY303

This is a wide-ranging concert of the kind heard in the private apartments of the pre-revolutionary French aristocracy. All the principal genres of 18th-century French operatic music are represented, drawn from the (joint) works of the younger Rebel (François, 1701-1775) and François Francoeur (1698-1787) while two substantial works by Rebel père (Jean-Féry,

1666-1747) provide a sturdy frame. This is a good way of exploring that world and the performances are alive to all the nuances of the style in general and these pieces in particular, having given the first modern performances of several of them. I do, however, wonder if they don't try a bit too hard with their arrangements/realisations. Is a double bass appropriate in these chamber versions of the various extracts? Should a violin line really be doubled at the octave by a flute when a section is repeated? Should theorbo and harpsichord quite so self-consciously drop in and out of the *Tombeau de Monsieur Lully*? Personally I'd say 'no' to all three but I still enjoyed the disc, and the booklet tells you all you need to know. David Hansell

Telemann *O erhabnes Glück der Ehe* Hannah Morrison, Margot Oitzinger, Markus Schäfer, Immo Schröder, Matthias Vieweg, Christos Pelekanos SATTB, Das Kleine Konzert, Hermann Max 103' 02"
cpo 777 808-2 (2 CDs in a box)

These extraordinary pieces were written to celebrate the golden wedding of one of the Hamburg "senators" (members of the city council); a decree was issued that no operas were to be performance in the city during the period of the Mutzenbecher celebrations. (If the suggestion in Eckart Kleßmann's notes that this was to ensure that all the best musicians were available, Das Kleine Konzert's 44221 string group is rather mean!) The oratorio was performed during a church service attended by all the Hamburg glitterati in their civic regalia, while the serenata was heard while the assembled masses dined at one of the sons of the happy couple's homes. Predictably there is a rather serious air to the oratorio (split in two parts by the sermon, of course), while the evening entertainment (a dialogue between five "essentials of a good marriage") is decidedly lighter in tone, though certainly no less accomplished in style; the arias are tuneful and often feature obbligato wind instruments, but the booklet highlights the fine writing that combines the six solo voices in the final passages – the sign of a consummate opera composer, Kleßmann argues. As for the performances, they are (as ever with Max) impeccable – some glorious singing and always elegant playing. I do just wonder, though, what it would have sounded like with a bigger string band; has Chiari Banchini's attempt to perform Muffat with larger bands already been consigned to history? Needless to say, that would be icing on the cake rather than

highlighting a fault with this recording, which is fabulous on all levels – all known Telemanniacs will be delighted! *BC*

Telemann Sonatas Claire Bracher *gamba*, Ensemble Labyrinthe (Oliver Webber *vln*, Marta Gonçalves *fl*, Julia Veto *gamba*, Sam Chapman *theorbo*, Erik Dippenaar *hpscd*) sfzmusic SFZMor12 71' 51"

Telemann wrote extensively for the viol as a solo instrument, and much of his chamber music also features it. *Der Getreue Musikmeister*, which he engraved and published himself, includes duets for bass viols, an unaccompanied sonata, and a sonata for treble viol and continuo. In addition he published two continuo sonatas, in A minor and E minor, in *Essercizii musici*. This is the first complete recording of all four of the solo sonatas, and includes the bass viol duets, and two trio sonatas featuring the obbligato bass viol, one with flute and the other with violin, also from *Essercizii musici*.

It is very enjoyable listening. There is considerable variety, thanks to Telemann's imagination and resource. The bass viol duets are delightful, brief and full of variety. The sonata for solo viol is a very charming work, displaying Telemann's understanding of the instrument and its techniques – he was a viol player – and, while not being most demanding technically, is very hard to play really well, as it is here. Claire Bracher's bass has a lovely, full sound, even across its registers, and she has a very secure technique, without mannerism. She picks speeds which display the music at its best, rather than for display, but here and there demonstrates great agility, particularly in the E minor vivace. The second viol player, Júlia Vetö, has a brighter, nicely contrasted tone, and plays with an easy sympathy in the duets, and as a continuo bass.

The sonata for Dessus de Viole is beautifully played. It's all too brief, with very charming ideas. It's written in the alto clef, to make it easier for bass viol players to read it, and is sometimes played on the bass, but Telemann leaves us in no doubt that it is for the treble. It's unique in the repertoire, and its neglect has nothing to do with the quality of the music.

The recording concludes with two of the trio sonatas for obbligato bass viol and continuo, one with flute, another with violin, from *Essercizii Musici*. The playing is superb throughout. *Robert Oliver*

De Visée Confidences Galantes Fred Jacobs *French theorbo* 66' 22"

Metronome MET CD 1089
Pièces de théorbe in e, b, g & D

There were two sizes of French theorbo: a smallish instrument tuned to D, the so-called "théorbe de pièces", which was sometimes used for solo pieces; a larger theorbo, rather similar to the Italian theorbo (or chitarrone as it was first known), which was tuned a fourth lower to A, and used for playing solos and continuo. Fred Jacobs' French theorbo was made in 2004 by Michael Lowe. It is quite large, with a string length of 83 cm for the short strings, and 144 cm for the long ones, and is tuned to A at A=415. All the strings are made of gut, and it has a grand, sonorous sound across its range. In his notes, Jacobs says that there is no evidence to suggest that Robert de Visée played a small "théorbe de pièces" for his solo theorbo music. Certainly the manuscript of Vaudry de Saizenay, Jacobs' source for most of the music on his CD, confirms the pitch of the theorbo, for example on page 235, where "C.sol.ut." above the tablature requires the A tuning.

The first group of pieces (not a ready-made suite of ordered pieces) is in E minor: Prelude (Saizenay MS, p. 306), Allemande (p. 303), Courante (p. 305), Sarabande (p. 305), Gigue (p. 304) & Double (p. 310), Gavotte (p. 307), and *La Montfermeil: Rondeau* (p. 308). De Visée's music is highly ornamented with appoggiaturas, trills, slurred notes, notes séparées, and vibrato, all clearly marked in Saizenay's manuscript. For the left hand there are hold signs, indications for barré, and even some fingering. Occasionally Jacobs deviates slightly from the source, for example in the Gavotte (track 6) he plays the notes of the first chord of bar 2 together each time through, although they are clearly notated as séparées. Jacobs' playing is fluent and expressive, and he successfully captures the contrasting character of each of the movements. *La Montfermeil* (track 7) romps along at quite a lick, each section starting with a few campanella notes which exploit the theorbo's re-entrant tuning. There is forward momentum in the Gigue & Double (track 5), where he gives himself no time to breathe before going back for repeats.

The pieces in the G minor group are also from the Saizenay manuscript, and include Prelude (p. 381), Allemande *La Conversation*, (p. 376), Courante (p. 377), Sarabande (p. 380), Gigue angloise (p. 379), Gavotte I (p. 375), Gavotte II (p. 380), and *La Nonette* (p. 382). De Visée's theorbo music is for the most part in two voices:

the upper voice often forced up to the highest frets because of the limitations imposed by the re-entrant tuning, and the slow-moving, ponderous bass growling away at double-bass pitch. Jacobs refers to the 'speaking' qualities of the theorbo when writing about Allemande *La Conversation*, and I am reminded that Anthony Bailes once advised his audience to think of French lute music more in terms of talking than singing.

Apart from another two groups of pieces, in B minor and D major, Jacobs includes transcriptions by Robert de Visée of keyboard pieces by François Couperin – Les Sylvains (p. 296), and La Voluptueuse – and of music by Lully – Chaconne des Harlequins (p. 340) and Logistille (p. 346). The aging King Louis XIV was fond of listening to Robert de Visée perform, and would almost certainly have enjoyed Jacobs' interpretation. *Stewart McCoy*

Vivaldi Concerti per due violini e archi I Tesori del Piemonte vol. 56 Riccardo Minasi, Dmitry Sinkovsky, Il Pomo d'Oro naïve OP 30550 54' 00"
RV508-10, 515, 517 & 523

This is (perhaps) the portion of "The Complete Vivaldi" that I have most looked forward to; I find his solo violin concertos variable in quality, from the dazzling virtuosity and effortless tunefulness of some to the rather formulaic predictability of others. In the double violin concertos he has a broader palette and can take two approaches – the soloists are either equal partners in a musical dialogue, or they can be cast as duelling opponents, each determined to outdo the other. Sinkovsky and Minasi are well suited to the task; their instruments are contrasted in tone and their playing styles differ, too. Both, needless to say, relish the difficulty of the solo parts; they spend a fair deal of time up near the bridge. It seems clear that they have thought about the character of each of the concertos and chosen a performing style to match – the accompanying band are an integral part of that approach and it is impressive that the same group can produce such a wide range of sounds. *BC*

Vivaldi The Four Seasons Zsolt Kalló *vln*, Capella Savaria 59' 06"
Hungaroton HCD32729

• RV222, 237

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"Not another Four Seasons," you hear me cry? Well, yes, quite. In fact, though, this is a very nicely played account (from all concerned, not merely the excellent soloist),

and the two concertos selected to fill out the recording (though not that efficiently – there is room for at least another two) are not the “usual suspects”. Kalló is a very precise fiddler, perhaps a little too HIP for some tastes, I suspect, but I enjoyed his reading of these perennial favourites. It is unfortunate that the disc is so brief. *BC*

Le livre d'or de l'orgue français André Isoir
La dolce volta LDV147.2 (6 CDs)

d'Anglebert, Clérambault, F. Couperin, Dandrieu, de Grigny, Guilain, Jullien, Lebègue, Du Mage, Marchand & Titelouze

This is a must buy for all lovers of the distinctive sound and music of the French Baroque organ – indeed, for all lovers of music. Six CDs of some of the most lyrical, eloquent, fiery and expressive music ever, played with evident relish and *bon gout* by that master interpreter, André Isoir. As is so often, there is no information on when the recordings were made, but it's on the www – 1972-76. The sound quality is fine and the packaging and booklet impressive. Eight organs are used, not all historic but all relevant, and the booklet gives full specifications and colour photos – and architectural delight as well. The organs used on each CD are named on the slip case, but not in the booklet. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

Musica Barocca a Due Hannu Annala
guitar Mari Mäntylä *decacorde* 59' 39"

Alba ABCD 358

Bach BWV 808, 999, 1000; Cimarosa Sonata in g; Falckenhagen Duetto in G; D. Scarlatti Sonata in b; Vivaldi Sonata in d op. 1/8

This highly entertaining CD is an anthology of baroque music arranged for two guitars: the familiar 6-string classical guitar and the *decacorde*, a less familiar 10-string guitar, which has extra strings in the bass descending diatonically as does a theorbo. The *decacorde* was developed in the early part of the 19th century by the guitarist Ferdinando Carulli and luthier René Lacôte. Both the instruments on the present CD were made by Kauko Liikanen of Finland, and they are a well-matched pair.

First on the CD is Vivaldi's Sonata in D minor, op. 1, no. 8 (RV 64), beginning with a nicely paced Preludio, where Hannu Annala and Mari Mäntylä's good ensemble and sensitive phrasing are to the fore. The lowest strings of the *decacorde* increase the available range of notes, and give a pleasant warmth to the overall sound. There follows an energetic Corrente, a stark, thinly textured Grave, and a cheerfully bustling Giga, where lightness

and delicacy of touch predominate.

In contrast is the Duetto in G major by the lutenist Adam Falkenhagen (1697-1761), written in the gallant style of the late baroque. The notes describe the opening Largo as “sunny”, and there are certainly some pleasing interchanges between the two guitars. The third movement, tempo giusto, is more classical in character, and quite charming.

There follows an arrangement of J. S. Bach's English Suite no. 3 in G minor (BWV 808). The opening Prelude is full of excitement and a variety of colours, contrasting with the gentle, unhurried Allemande. The two guitars create a gratifyingly dramatic Sarabande, where a low string of the *decacorde* sustains the opening tonic pedal. This low G comes in handy again with the musette of Gavotte II, and the final Gigue brings the suite to a rollicking close. Having two instruments creates a freedom in the phrasing of individual melodic lines.

Annala and Mäntylä explore another world in Domenico Scarlatti's Sonata in B minor (K 87), where a sensitive mood of tranquillity is sustained. After Bach's well-known Prelude in C minor (BWV 999) and Fugue in G minor (BWV 1000), the CD ends with a transcription of a Sonata in G Minor by Cimarosa (1749-1801), a lively piece where three-against-two rhythms are well co-ordinated. *Stewart McCoy*

Transfigurations: Bach, Corrette, Geminiani et al. Les Esprits Animaux 71' 55"
Ambronay AMY039

This is officially (and accurately) described as “an original and kaleidoscopic approach to the world of variations, metamorphoses, transformations and transfigurations in baroque music”. So we have passacaglias of various kinds; the final canons; Geminiani's sonata elaborations of Scottish folk songs; and a final grand mélange, including improvisation, based on ‘John come kiss me now’. This is an outstanding ensemble, virtuosic in matters of both individual technique and togetherness and the final track would bring any audience to its feet. The only cautionary note I sound is that the Bach fugue is played in its unfinished form. Personally, I burst into tears when all the themes combine in an elegant completion, of which there are a number. Not getting there just makes me gnash my teeth. *David Hansell*

CLASSICAL

C.P.E. Bach *Solo Keyboard Music Vol. 26. 'Fortsetzung' Sonatas 1-3* Miklós Spányi
clavichord 79' 40"

BIS BIS-2040

This latest volume in this complete recording project showcases three of Bach's most accomplished sonatas, published in 1761. For Bach, as for other composers of the time, composition was an ongoing process and all music could be remixed, to use the equivalent modern term. This CD by one of the editors of the C.P.E. Bach edition makes for a good illustration of that fluidity. As well as the published version Spányi has also included a variant version of the first sonata and the composer's own embellished versions of the slow movements from Sonatas 2 and 3. The playing is very fine, with Spányi getting excellent dynamic contrast out of a copy by Joris Potvlieghe of a 1785 German clavichord. The range of expression and rhythmical clarity here is impressive, as is the quality of the recording. This is as good an introduction as I have heard to the music of this intriguing composer. *Noel O'Regan*

C. P. E. Bach *Sonates, Rondos & Fantaisie*
Emmanuelle Guigues gamba, Daniel Isoir *fp*
Agogique AGO012 67' 35"
Wq59/6, 61/1 & 4, 88, 136 & 137

She plays an English viol, dating from the late 17th century, attributed to Edward Lewis, he a fortepiano, a modern copy of a Stein dated 1780. The sound is immediately attractive, recorded close-up, in a resonant acoustic, but intimate, with a full sound from the viol, and a rounded but clear tone from the piano, which has a lovely crisp bass. The player has some excellent imitative ideas to add to the unfigured bass line with which he is provided. The three-movement sonata in C major is beautifully played, with a lovely freedom and expressiveness. It's followed by the Freye Fantasie in D major for piano solo, full of surprises and sudden movement, whimsical and dramatic. The G minor sonata for bass viol and basso follows, though not according to the booklet, which has things in the wrong order – not that this matters in the face of such a fine performance. There is a lively spontaneity and immediacy about the music-making which give the recording a special appeal. The ensemble is terrific, and the blend of sounds is intoxicating. The two rondos for solo piano are marvellously played, and

the D major sonata for viol and basso has all the brilliance, excitement and mercurial flexibility the music needs. Highly recommended.

Robert Oliver

Haydn Lord Nelson Mass Mary Wilson, Abigail Fischer, Keith Jameson, Kevin Deans *SmSTB*, Boston Baroque, Martin Pearlman 62' 03"

Linn CKD 426

+Symphony 102

The obvious point of reference for the performance of the *Missa in angustis* is another recording made in the US: the electrifying Naxos CD under the maverick ex-conductor of Trinity Choir (New York), J. Owen Burdick. The link is given added significance when a check on timings reveals that the two directors have remarkably similar ideas. There any resemblance ends. While Burdick's is a performance that can easily be imagined as forming a part of the rite, the new Pearlman is very much a concert performance, even leaving aside his omission of an organ part. The work, of course, entered the concert hall long ago and many will not give a hoot about the more secular aspects of Pearlman's performance. Yet they have important musical ramifications as well. The so-called 'Nelson Mass' is one of Haydn's most blazingly brilliant conceptions and at big dramatic moments, of which there are many in this work, Burdick's forces sound as if they are playing and singing not only to God, but also for their very lives; knowing their eccentric director's reputation they may well have been. In contrast, Pearlman's performers sound just a tad too comfortable, his choir sporting a little middle-aged flab. I think Burdick has the edge on soloists, too. Mary Wilson, Pearlman's soprano, is nearly a match for the radiant Ann Hoyt on the Naxos, but all three of his other soloists sing with too much continuous vibrato. The orchestral playing on the Linn is superbly detailed. Pearlman has never made a poor record and there is much about this performance that is unexceptionable. But it's not particularly memorable either.

Unusually Pearlman has chosen as company not one of the shorter Masses, but the most (unjustly) neglected of Haydn's 'London' symphonies. It's a fine performance, again distinguished by outstanding orchestral playing – listen to the wind group in the Largo introduction – with the counterpoint of the magnificent development section of the first movement laid out in unusually

telling detail. Might the Minuet have been given a little more sense of momentum? Might its trio section been given more of a lilt? Possibly, but overall this is a thoroughly satisfying version of the symphony.

Brian Robins

Haydn String Quartets Schuppanzigh Quartett 64' 21"
Accent ACC 24223
opp. 20/2, 54/1 & 74/3

Haydn always makes me smile so it's been a cheerful time with him as Composer of the Week on Radio 3. These quartets span his maturity from 1772 to 1793 and all are masterly essays in the genre with innumerable twists and turns to keep both players and listeners alert. (Note that the booklet deals with them in chronological order though that is not the order of performance.) The Schuppanzighs, named (I presume) after Ignaz Schuppanzigh, Beethoven's friend and leader for the first performances of many of his quartets, are no shrinking violets either individually or collectively. Accompanimental chords chug purposefully and with no sense of reticence or deference and everyone makes it clear when they think they have 'the tune'. In short, this playing is the antithesis of bland. The group's previous Haydn recordings have won awards and it will not surprise me to hear that this one has done the same.

David Hansell

Mozart Betulia liberata Margot Oitzinger Giuditta, Christian Zenker Ozia, Markus Volpert Achior, Marelize Gerber Amital, Ulrike Hofbauer Cabri, Barbara Kraus Carmi, L'Orfeo Barockorchester 122' 52"
Challenge Classics CC72590 (2 CDs)

Mozart wrote his oratorio *Betulia liberata* in 1771 to a commission from Don Giuseppe Ximenes, a Spanish nobleman then living in Padua. However, although the score is complete in every detail, it's not known whether it was delivered to Ximenes and the work appears never to have been performed, although the libretto (by Metastasio) was printed in Padua in 1771. Its title-page ascribes the music to Mysliveček: so did Ximenes change his mind and prefer a setting by the experienced Bohemian composer, rather than risk a lad of only 15? Be that as it may, the teenaged Mozart produced an astonishingly mature work, rather in the style of J. C. Bach's serious operas but with plenty of original ideas of his own, such as the stormy D minor overture and a remarkable C minor aria for tenor with

choral interjections.

I wish I could say that this recording is fully worthy of Mozart's early masterpiece, but, although there is much to enjoy, I have reservations about some aspects of the performance. The band is very competent, but I don't like their over-aggressive style in loud fast passages, with every repeated quaver in the bass bashed out relentlessly. Thank goodness there's only one double bass! I also dislike the way many semiquaver appoggiaturas are shortened into acciaccaturas in the 'trendy Cologne' fashion: it's an irritating mannerism without any historical justification as far as I know. I'm glad to say, however, that the singers are pretty good, especially Oitzinger (Giuditta, for once a genuine contralto role) and Gerber (Amital). They can all cope well with Mozart's elaborate divisions, although Zenker (Ozia) sounds a bit strained as he shoots up to top Bb. There is (mostly) a refreshing absence of vibrato. I'm surprised, though, that not one of the soloists can sing a proper trill: attempts range from the just-about-adequate to a rather pathetic slow wobble. Recitatives are well done, with nearly all the unwritten appoggiaturas in place (though the arias could do with a few more). Sometimes the accompaniment is harpsichord alone and sometimes a cello is added, for no obvious reason.

Not quite top marks, then, but certainly worth hearing for some remarkable early Mozart. There's an interesting irrelevance in the programme booklet, which says that Mozart's *Ascanio in Alba*, K. III, was composed a few months later for the wedding in Milan of the Archbishop Ferdinand Karl of Austria. Didn't know such events were allowed! (Could 'Archduke' have been meant, perhaps...?) Richard Maunder

Mozart Die Schuldigkeit des Ersten Gebots Allan Clayton Der Christ, Andrew Kennedy Der Christgeist, Sophie Bevan Der Weltgeist, Sarah Fox Barmherzigkeit, Cora Burggraaf Gerechtigkeit, The Orchestra of Classical Opera, Ian Page 84' 42" (2 CDs)
Signum Records SIGCD343

The score of Mozart's first dramatic work, *Die Schuldigkeit des Ersten Gebots* ("The obligation of the first commandment") carries the description *geistliches Singspiel*. Composed in Salzburg in 1767 as the first part of a Lenten trilogy (the other parts, now lost, were composed by Mozart's senior court colleagues, Michael Haydn and Adlgasser), it falls into the long-established custom of giving such pieces in Lent, when theatres were closed

for secular theatrical performance. In common with most examples of the genre, *Die Schuldigkeit* features allegorical characters that engage in pedagogical dialogue, in this instance the necessity for the Christian not be lured by Worldliness from his love of God. The 11-year-old Mozart's audaciously ambitious work – five of the seven arias are expansive da capos requiring virtuoso singing – is an astonishing achievement, while anyone who still doubts that he was a born dramatist should hear the powerful accompanied recitatives for Christianity and the Half-hearted Christian. There is a considerable use of old-fashioned mimetic descriptive writing of the kind Mozart would quickly abandon, perhaps a mark of the fingerprints of Leopold Mozart some have detected in the work.

Ian Page is now sufficiently established as a fine Mozartian for his sure-footed and sensitively idiomatic direction of the work to come as little surprise, although his predilection for continuo cello chords remains unconvincing to this listener. The cast is a good one, with some especially fine work from the two tenors and Sarah Fox, while only the wayward singing and persistent vibrato of mezzo Cora Burggraaf seriously disappoint. Ornamentation of repeats and decoration of fermatas is for the most part unobtrusive, although Sophie Bevan has an exaggerated rush of blood to the head in the cadenza at the end of 'Hat der Schöpfer' (no. 4). Overall, however, this is a valuable addition to Ian Page's continuing series of Mozart's dramatic works. There is supposedly a short film about the making of the recording at the end of the second disc, but I was unable to find it on my computer.

Brian Robins

Wagenseil Quartets for low strings Piccolo Concerto Wien 97' 19" 2 CDs
Accent ACC 24242

I loved listening to these tuneful delights. Partly it was the lower tessitura of the instruments used (three of the quartets are played on cellos, while three are played on violas) – I remember writing very enthusiastically in my youth about F. X. Richter's Lamentations for the very same reason – voices blending together rather than stark contrasts between very high and very low. As I have aged, I have leaned away from the violin slightly in favour firstly of the viola and then of the cello, and I think this recording taps into that variation in my preferred soundworld. Anyone who read the Bach review I wrote above will see it goes beyond strings. But back to Wagenseil –

another of those names deemed important (or worse still, worthy) because they frequently appear in the many printed musical histories for having had influences on some much more important figure; these six works, played so beautifully by this exceptionally fine ensemble, prove that he truly was a gifted composer and one who certainly merits more attention.

BC

19th CENTURY

Mendelssohn Violin Concerto, Symphony No. 4 Zsolt Kalló vln, Capella Savaria, Nicholas McGegan 56' 03"
Centaur CRC 3287

When I typed in the details of these two works at the early stages of compiling the list that eventually becomes these pages I made one slight oversight. It was only when driving to a volleyball session and I almost crashed my car while listening to the recording that I became aware of it – these are Mendelssohn's most popular pieces, but not as we know them! Now you might wonder what the point of recording a version of a work that was not the composer's final vision of it might be? I remember reading somewhere when the AAM's proto-Brandenburgs were released on L'oiseau-lyre that the earlier version of the Da Capo in the Gigue final movement of Concerto 5 caused the solo violinist, Catherine Mackintosh, to feel like she was jumping off a cliff. Although the overall shape remains the same, some of the pre-Ferdinand David concerto are strikingly different and, in the same way, disconcerting if you know the piece at all well. I cannot claim to have the score of the symphony in my blood to the same extent, but even so I did sit up suddenly at a couple of points. While I don't think I will return to these versions very often, there is definite merit in owning them. The soloist in the concerto is very closely miked and passes the test with flying colours – the high e harmonic at the end of the first solo rings beautifully. It has been some time since I last heard Capella Savaria; they made some lovely recordings of baroque repertoire (including a couple with music by Fasch, before he was as well known as he is today), and on this evidence they have gone from strength to strength. My only slight complaint is the duration of the programme – surely they could have found something else to fill the rest of the CD? Whatever it was, it would have been a treat!

BC

Steibelt Piano Works Anna Petrova-Forster Gega New GD362 66' 06"
Sonatas in c (op. 6/2) & D (op. 82), Concerto 6 in g, Etudes op. 78 (3, 32 & 50)

This disc would not normally have made it into the pages of *EMR* since the music is played on a modern piano. But, as I often write in such cases, that would have been our loss, for it is fine music indeed, and the performances are HIP enough to challenge any prejudices. Two colourful sonatas are complemented by three études and a brooding concerto. The pianist herself wrote the booklet notes, arguing for a re-assessment of Steibelt's work – his is a name frequently encountered in history books but (guess what's coming next?) not too often on concert programmes. Perhaps this finely executed recital will set a revival in motion? Fortepianists of the world, take note!

BC

Zmeskall 15 String Quartets Zmeskall Quartet 185' 54" (3 CDs/audio DVDs)
Pavlik Records PA 0074-2/9

Nicolaus Zmeskall von Domanowetz und Leštiny, to give him his full rather imposing name, was born in northern Slovakia in 1759, but spent the major part of his life as a high-ranking Hungarian diplomat in Vienna. Zmeskall was also a more than capable cellist and dilettante composer who apparently received instruction from both Albrechtsberger and Mozart. His rank brought him into contact not only with the leading members of the aristocracy, but also with important musical figures in Vienna, among them Beethoven, to whom Zmeskall became a devoted friend and loyal supporter. Beethoven reciprocated by making cynical use of the diplomat, admitting in a letter that he cultivated Zmeskall only because he was useful, an unpleasant side of the great man only slightly mitigated by the dedication of the F-minor String Quartet (op. 95) to the amateur musician.

Zmeskall was apparently a prolific composer, although much is now lost or missing. The 15 string quartets recorded here are preserved in manuscript in the Musikverein in Vienna, an organisation of which Zmeskall was a founder member. With the exception of the two insignificant 3-movement student works, the eleven quartets composed during the 1780s and 90s are small-scale pieces with just two movements, often of extreme brevity. The writing is invariably homophonic or chordal, with a tentative approach to genuine part writing. Solos for the first violin or the composer's own instrument abound, at times giving the music a discursive character. Nonetheless, there are some highly attractive movements, such as the Haydn-esque, folk-inflected Rondeau of the G-minor (No. 12).

Given what has gone before, the two final quartets (Nos. 14 in D and 15 in G minor,

composed in the first decade of the 19th century) come as a dramatic revelation. Not only has the scale vastly expanded – both are 4-movement works each running to nearly 40 minutes – but one senses a hitherto unsuspected ability to think over long spans, along with a new-found confidence in the use of counterpoint, effective modulation and touches of chromaticism. What suddenly inspired these two quartets poses an intriguing question; the notes' suggestion that they were 'due to the influence of Mozart and Beethoven' may have an element of truth about it, but surely cannot be the whole story. The period instrument performances are sympathetic and committed, although it is hard to overlook some poor intonation and occasional sour tone, especially in the many exposed and often high-lying solos for the first violin, while the presentation is all that an important document such as this should be, including as it does a detailed work list of Zmeskal's extant compositions. String quartets are hardly in need of new repertoire from the Viennese Classical period, but more adventurous ensembles might find it rewarding to look at the last two quartets, especially if they have a cellist eager to make a bigger contribution.

Brian Robins

20th CENTURY

Anthony Burgess *the Man and his Music*
John Turner rec, Harvey Davies pf 123' 28"
métier **msv 77202** (2 CDs)

I asked for this as a favour from Divine Art because I was at one stage interested in Anthony Burgess as author and (more trivially) a copy of his provocative but lively reviews happened to be by the fax, so I regularly dipped into it until it was certain that the message had gone. I was, however, disappointed that I hadn't realised that there wasn't very much Burgess there: indeed, there were two discs with 23' 10" out of 123' 28" devoted to him. The other 15 composers featured Gordon Crosse, Wilfred Josephs, Herbert Murrill, Alan Rawsthorne, Matyas Seiber and some names I don't recognise. Burgess begins and ends disc 1, and ends disc 2. There is a lot in common between the composers, perhaps because there are problems in keeping the balance between recorder and piano, and to 20th-century listeners who are remote from the recorder world, the recorder (of whatever pitch) seems an outsider to many. I was a bit disappointed in Burgess's skill, but that may have been because his son (for whom the pieces were mostly written) may not have been a skilful player. Alas, he was not writing for John Turner. No doubt the Recorder Magazine will

give this a thorough review. I was intrigued by the idea of *Blooms of Dublin*, a television opera based on Ulysses: Burgess was an expert on James Joyce. The main BBC copyist worked very hard on it, and I occasionally gave it a glance and was very disappointed to miss the result.

CB

ANTHOLOGIES

Anniversaries & Messages Yale Schola Cantorum, Simon Carrington 51' 53"
Delos **DE 3436**

J. S. Bach *Der Geist hilft*; David Lang again; Liszt *Ave Maria* Christopher Theofanidis
Messages to Myself Victoria Missa Alma Redemptoris mater

I thoroughly enjoyed listening to this disc. The Victoria mass is paced to perfection; I find that conductors often opt for slower, "more profound" tempi with Victoria since he imbues his music with more emotional intensity than Palestrina and it therefore needs more space to breathe. It strikes me that Carrington takes the music at face value and, while making space to savour the key moments in the texts, does not allow it ever to become indulgent. The three later works (Liszt included) are very beautifully sung with a lively, focussed choral sound, very well captured by the recording, and the only slight (qualified) disappointment was the Bach – interesting as it is to hear a cappella, it simply sounds rather bare, given (a) Bach's given scoring and (b) the fact that the regular conductor of Yale Schola Cantorum these days is none other than Masaaki Suzuki. That slight caveat notwithstanding, this is an extremely enjoyable CD.

BC

Die helle Sonn leuchtet: Deutsche Kirchenlieder Stimmwerck and guests 66' 11"
cpo **777 792-2**

This disc combines Kirchenlieder in the sense of what Anglo-Saxon will recognise as hymns with more intricate settings (of text and/or melody). The four voices mix and sometimes combine with instruments (the booklet lists cornetto, two gambas, lute and organ), or sing in consort alone. Some arrangements (since I don't think these are all 100% kosher) are more successful than others; I am not convinced that a ritornello of sorts played on gamba with organ continuo works. CB's covering note with the disc wondered if German churches used countertenors. While that debate can rage on without any help from me, it is a matter of record that courts did employ male Diskantists as well as choir-boys (Zerbst for one). The beauty of Stimmwerck is that the four voices blend beautifully anyway, and the countertenor (Franz

Vitzthum) is exemplary at not being permanently in the limelight.

BC

The Merton Collection: Merton College at 750 Choir of Merton College, Oxford, Benjamin Nicholas, Peter Phillips, Anna Stepler org 74' 04"
Delphian **DCD34134**

Byrd *Praise our Lord*, Dunstaple *Veni Sancte Spiritus*, Gibbons *This is the record of John*, Greene *Lord let me know mine end*, Mundy *Magnificat & Nunc dimittis* (2nd service), Purcell *Hear my prayer*, *Remember not*, Sheppard *Libera nos* etc

This release is part of the celebrations marking the 750th anniversary of the college founded by Walter de Merton in 1264. Until 1980 the college was an all male establishment. The subsequent decades have seen the steady development of a mixed choir, initially under the direction of undergraduate organ scholars but since the mid-noughties a modern choral foundation under professional direction. The singers are a mixture of choral scholars and volunteers: the organ scholars remain undergraduates. Nourished by the famous acoustic of the college chapel the choir (which is quite large at 12. 6. 7. 10 on this recording) has developed a sumptuous sound and has attracted considerable praise for its previous recordings. And here comes some more. The basic disciplines of ensemble, tuning and blend are rock solid and they tackle a wide range of music – Dunstaple to now – with confidence. About half the programme might be considered 'early' and, given the academic context and the focus of this magazine, a few remarks on performance practice seem appropriate. Leaving aside the 'inauthentic' mixed choir dimension, the approach to this is subjective and pragmatic. Dunstaple's *Veni sancte spiritus* is transposed down a third from its written pitch and later 16th century music up a third. Purcell's *Hear my prayer* is unaccompanied but the succeeding *Remember not*, *Lord, our offences* has organ support. Also with organ is *This is the record of John* (Gibbons) with the solo line given to a valiant falsettist who sounds much happier in the contemporary *Magnificat* and *Nunc Dimittis* that begins the programme.* This is one of a number of fine pieces in what one might describe as a post-post-modern idiom. They are part of the ongoing Merton Choirbook project, the contents of which are likely to become favourite and valued repertoire for those choirs able to tackle it.

David Hansell

I was convinced long before I'd ever thought seriously about English renaissance pitch that *This is the record of John* sounded much better in F with a tenor.

CB

Organ Concertos Christine Schornsheim, Martin Haselböck, Roland Münch, Franz Lehnrdorfer, Andreas Juffinger (+ Erzébeth Achim, Gabor Lehotka), Wiener Akademie, Neues Bachisches Collegium Musicum, Kammerorchester "Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach" 336' 27"

Capriccio C7172 (5 CDs)

C. P. E. Bach Wq34 & 35 J. S. Bach Reconstruction after Cantatas 146/1-2, 188/1 Handel Concerti 2-6, 13 J. Haydn Hob. XIV: 11, 12 + XVIII: 1, 5, 8, 10 M. Haydn P. 55 Mozart K. 67 (41h), 224 (241a), 328 (317c) & 336 (336d) Rheinberger opp. 137, 166 & 177

This is a 5-CD compilation of recordings from 1975 to 2008, with the inevitable range of performing styles, most, I suggest, unacceptable to readers. The first CD of 1985 Hungarian recordings of Handel concertos is unbearable, the vibrato of the Budapest Strings being just the start of it. The 1985 Bach Concerto on CD2 is marginally better, in a neo-baroque style. Although the jovial CPE Bach concertos that complete the disc are played on the instrument for which he wrote most of his organ music, the orchestral style is dated. CD3 is Haydn, attractive pieces but, again, with the 1985 Budapest Strings. CD4 starts with oldest recording, from 1975, and it shows. The following Haydn concerto, and three of Mozart's Church Sonatas are more recent recordings and are more acceptable. The final CD includes Rheinberger's two attractive Concertos and his Suite for Violin and Organ, in recordings from 1989/90, and rather out of the musical ambit of most readers. Irritatingly, it is only on page 9 of the booklet that the dates of the recordings are given – there is nothing on the CD cover.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Orient-Occident II: Hommage à la Syrie

Hespèrion XXI, Jordi Savall 79'28

Alia Vox AVSA9900

Following Orient-Occident I (AVSA 9848 2006) which brought together music of Christians, Jews and Muslims between 1200 and 1700, this topical CD release doubles the size of supporting text and illustration to pay homage to Syria. After an introduction by Jordi Savall, a time-line, interspersed with italicised quotations, refreshes our knowledge of Syrian history from 9000 years BCE, through Byzantine, Arab, Mamluk and Ottoman Periods up to July 2013 and the massacre of a civilian population. Heartfelt articles by Margarida Castells Criballès, Nathalie Galesne and Charles Glass remind us of Syria's cultural greatness and the depths to which it has now fallen. These articles are presented in French, English, Castilian, Catalan, German,

Italian and Arabic, richly illustrated with historic images and photographs of the instrumentalists. From pages 368 to 399 the listener can find the original Arabic and Hebrew sung texts translated into the same range of European languages. Inevitably there are a few misprints, but this booklet is a masterpiece of scholarly and technical production.

And so to the music – and readers will want to know whether it is authentic. Jordi Savall has wisely given responsibility for the selection of Syrian music to Waed Bouhassoun, Hamam Khairy, Oumeina Khalil and Moslem Rahal, all outstanding vocal and instrumental performers in a 15-strong ensemble playing Middle Eastern instruments almost exclusively. They have covered a variety of genres, all pleasurable to the ear and elaborated with such skilful improvisation as an Arabic audience would anticipate and applaud with excitement. The Middle Eastern experts will have ensured that variations adhere to the rules for each genre, while Savall, Pedro Estevan and others of his regular team had scope for innovation within formal limits. The result is atmospheric and musically sympathetic.

The vocalists give a beautiful and moving demonstration of Arabic singing, either traditional or in a traditional style, in a range of moods and mostly on the subject of love. Incidentally, readers of the translation should not be puzzled by the ideal non-specificity of gender, as this is a classical convention perhaps related to repressed love in a segregated society. Ce Brun Hal asmar (track 9) is particularly seductive, and is, I suppose, the Arabic equivalent of our Nigra sum. If the content of texts in the mawal genre (track 7) seem disparate logically, it should be understood that this is colloquial poetry, perhaps composed impromptu, based on a sound pattern, which the CD listener can observe by looking at the Arabic line-endings on the left.

Ghazal (track 12) is something of a surprise, with its elaborate improvisation, presumably on the theme of love, as a ghazal would be, but without the poetic couplets. Qalaaq (track 13) is an expressive setting, sung by Waed Bouhassoun, of a poem on anxiety by the modern Syrian poet and literary critic known as Adūnis or Adonis, who observed the jolt of a collision between Eastern and Western culture, between traditional Arabic poetry and French poetry, both of which he loved. Moslem Rahal stands out as a creative improviser, and he ends the recording with a piece on the ney, a particularly impressive woodwind instrument when skilfully played.

No doubt, had this not been a special homage with full historical notes, there would

have been some background information on the music and lyrics, but we should surely be content with 431 pages. Jordi Savall has a great following among musicians and I commend his latest book/CD.

Diana Maynard

Oriental Touch: Early Music/Oriental Jazz

Spielleyt, FisFüz 72' 42"

Christophorus CHR 77375

There is no chance I was ever going to like this CD, but it has served to make me think about why I perform early music on period instruments and review early music recordings. Those readers puzzled by the term 'oriental jazz' may be helped if I explain from my limited exposure here that it is jazz influenced by eastern European traditions and klezmer – presumably the term 'early music' needs no explanation! So why do we perform early music on period instruments? Surely to try to recreate the sound world familiar to the original composers and listeners to inform our understanding and appreciation of the music. So to mix in modern instruments and harmonies is to completely negate that purpose. Presumably those who do it think they are creating something new and wonderful out of the ruins – the adoption of a variety of novel instruments by the performers of jazz music has a long tradition but a similar omnivorous approach to early music is just unscholarly and inauthentic. As a player of the modern clarinet who dabbles in klezmer, I enjoyed all of the elements of this CD, and indeed clever musicians can make chalk and cheese more or less fit together, but they don't belong together and bring nothing to each other. When I sit down to my dinner of roast beef with custard, both of which I like, I know what I shall play in the background!

D. James Ross

eX: Possessed Caitriaon O' Learly and Clara Sanabras voice, Steve Player guitars, Paulina van Laarhoven violins, Harvey Brough guitar, psaltery, Andrea Piccioni & Francesco Turrissi percussion) 53' 00"

HERESY012

This is a collection of music from the group's stage show on the general theme of possession/mysticism/trances. The music ranges widely from Hildegard to 2002 and includes a number of folk songs from both American and European sources. The general sound world is a mélange of Anonymous 4, Steeleye Span and various world musics and I don't think any of the Ps can claim to be especially HI. However, I did enjoy the overall experience, the unaccompanied Hildegard piece is very effective and I would like to have seen the show.

David Hansell

The Shadow of Thy Wings: Music for Compline The Merbecke Choir, Huw Morgan
sfz music SFZM0313 66' 07"

Byrd, Campion, Croce, Gibbons, Handl, Palestrina, Philips, Tallis, Victoria + Campkin, Holst, Manneke, Morgan, Patterson & Pickard

This programme of music for Compline, including an entire account of the Office of Compline, sung by the Meerbecke Choir in Southwark Cathedral incorporates Renaissance music from England and the Continent as well as contemporary English choral repertoire. This is clearly working repertoire sung in the building in which the choir regularly celebrates Compline, and Southwark Cathedral comes with a cavernous acoustic as well as the occasional distant background noise of a passing tube train. This is least problematic in the Compline Office sequence, where one can simply imagine one is sitting in on an actual service, but in the other pieces I frequently found myself longing for more immediacy and clarity. This is not the fault of the choir, who sing with admirable projection and articulation, but is simply a product of the building's vast acoustic and the placing of the microphones. Ironically the contemporary material, generally slow and atmospheric, suffers much less from this drawback, while more vigorous antiphonal works such as Victoria's double-choir Ave Regina caelorum are deprived of vital punch. Having said that, if you want to luxuriate in the resonant acoustic of a great cathedral (and the CD does seem in part to be a celebration of the building), you will love this, and the choice of repertoire is interesting and stimulating – personally I would like to hear this fine choir more sympathetically recorded. *D. James Ross*

Times go by Turns: Byrd, Plummer, Tallis
New York Polyphony 77' 58"

BIS BIS-2037 SACD

Byrd *Mass for Four Voices*, Richard Rodney Bennett *A Colloquy with God*, Plummer *Missa sine*

nomine, Smith *Contrapunctus Genitor Deus*, Tallis *Mass for Four Voices* (with Kyrie by Smith & *Ite missa est* by Jackson)

Nowadays special features attaching to the recording process tend to pass me by as the majority of recordings are of an extremely high quality, but this SACD from BIS simply jumped out at me when I started to play it. To say that the four singers sounded as if they were in the room with me is hardly an overstatement of how vividly the sound has been captured. Of course this places tremendous demands on the performers, but fortunately New York Polyphony, a group new to me, more than fulfils expectations. Their performances of three Renaissance mass settings interspersed with three modern works are technically flawless and musically compelling. Even such very familiar works as Byrd's and Tallis's four-part Masses are rendered with such commanding authority that my attention never wavered, while the singers seem to move with ease into the entirely different sound-world of John Plummer's three-part *Missa sine nomine*. This versatility is in many ways a theme in a CD which also encompasses a variety of contemporary vocal styles, and to my mind masters all these spheres with stunning aplomb. Even those of you who buy the disc primarily for the early music content – and with three complete Mass settings this is still money well spent – should give Gabriel Jackson's eclectic *Ite missa est* a whirl!

D. James Ross

Hugh's Christmas Delights II

Swete was the song the Virgine soong

There are four early (c.1600) versions for different scorings, all with only one stanza. An additional two were written by Hugh Keyte for a Westminster Abbey Christmas CD (*Adeste Fideles: Christmas music down the ages*, dir. Martin Neary. Sony Arc of Light CB 841 CDK CF, 1996). The recording comprised:

- a. consort song (in *Musica Britannica* XXII, 64)
- b. voice and lute (The New Oxford Book of Carols, 44/1)
- c. a four-part version based on Thomas Hammond (*NOBC* 44/II)

Other patterns could be used, including either the earliest setting (voice and lute-viol) or the four-part version in the original Oxford Book of Carols – or the three stanzas could be sung to one version. There is also a setting in John Attey's *First Booke of Ayres* (1622) to a different tune.

2. No earthlie song was e'er so swete

As she was fayne that night to sing,
And with fresh graces didde repeat
Unto hir sonne and heav'nlie King:
'La, lullaby, swete Saviour blest,
My daintie doll, my fleur-de-lys!
Fondlie she rockt hir babe to rest,
Nor ceas'd to woo him tenderlie
With 'Lullaby!' - who, thus address'd,
Soon sunk to slumber on hir brest.

3. The starres stood halted in amaze

To hear so fair a melodye:
The angells husht their hymne of prayse
In wonder at such minstrelsie.
'La, lullaby!': th'enraptur'd skye
Gave back to Earthe the lovelie strayne.
When Jesus wak'd to frett and crie
She soong him back to dreames agayne,
And worshipp'd God with 'Lullaby!'
Who on hir lappe did meeklie lie.

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JOED Editions

Jon Dixon's fine performing editions of Renaissance and early Baroque music have been difficult to track down for the past couple of years; they are now once more available from us under the same Terms and Conditions. Only performing sets are available (with generous discounts for large sales), though sample pages can now be sent by PDF for perusal.

Enquiries in the first instance to Brian Clark:

bc16661@hotmail.com

HUGH'S CHRISTMAS DELIGHTS III

Quem pastores laudavere

The melody is as in NOBC 57, with more elaborate lower parts by Hugh.
Verse three breaks the flow of the other verses: it must have been added later and is best omitted.

SOPRANO
ALTO

1. Quem pas - to - res lau - da ve - re,
2. Ad quem ma - gi am - bu - la - bant,
*3. Ex - sul - te - mus cum Ma - ri - a
4. Chri - sto Re - gi, De - o na - to,

TENOR
BASS

3

Qui - bus an - ge - li di - xe - re, 'Ab - sit vo - bis
Au - rum, thus, myrr - ham por - ta - bant; Im - mo - la - bant
in coe - le - sti hie - rar - chi - a: Na - tum pro - mant
Per Ma - ri - am no - bis da - to, Me - ri - to re -

6

jam ti - me - re: Na - tus est Rex Glo - ri - æ!
hæc sin - ce - re Le - o - ni vic - to - ri - æ;
vo - ce pi - a Dul - ci cum me - lo - di - a;
so - net ve - re: 'Laus, ho - nor, et glo - ri - a!

Stephen Murrell Willis (21 June 1929 – 26 September 2013)

Doris Willis

Stephen Murrell Willis was born in Hadleigh Suffolk on the 21ST June 1929. His father died when he was 6 and he and his mother went to live in Dorchester. At the age of 8 he was accepted as a choir boy in Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford. It was there that he developed his love of singing and Renaissance music. He later attended Bloxham School, where he excelled at rugby football as well as Academic studies. After his National Service, when he served in Germany as a cipher operative during the Berlin airlift, he studied to become a Solicitor. He married and practised in Suffolk for several years, during which time his three daughters and son were born. He sang in the Aldeburgh Festival Choir as a counter tenor, later forming a choir from its members, The Suffolk Singers. In 1960 he moved to Sussex as a partner in a successful Solicitor's firm. He there began his choir, The Prodigal Singers, a highly polished small chamber group which gave concerts in local churches. For many years they performed Music for Holy Week at Worth Abbey, Sussex. They also sang at several society weddings and even performed in the English church in Paris.

He greatly enjoyed sailing, and with his second wife Doris, whom he married in 1975, sailed each summer in the Mediterranean. In the same year he was appointed one of the first Solicitor Judges (a Recorder, a part time post) whilst continuing his practice. In 1985 he was made a full time Circuit Judge based in Croydon. He also appointed Magistrates. On their retirement in 1995 they moved to Paphos, Cyprus where they had built a beautiful villa. He continued his musical activities, organising concerts in Paphos for the Italian Ambassador. For this he later was awarded the honour of 'Cavaliere, Second Class'. They continued to attend music courses in England and abroad. As well as singing in the local choirs he organised the Paphos Music Forum, a network to inform the public of musical events. He & Doris organised four Renaissance Singing courses with professional conductors as tutor. His greatest achievement was to open, with the support of his committee, The Friends' Hospice, the first in Paphos and the second in Cyprus. He put it on a solid footing, then retired.

He had many other interests including walking, in Cyprus and abroad, foreign travel, playing Mah-jong and collecting antique sets, collecting fine old drinking glasses, and reading. He loved life, his family and his cellar. He died peacefully on September 26th after a short illness at the age of 84, at home with his family present. He left, as well as his four children and two step children, 11 grandchildren and 2 great grandchildren. His funeral was held at Ayia Kyriaki (St. Paul's Pillar), one of the most ancient churches in Cyprus. Over 160 people attended the service in which recordings of Palestrina, Byrd & Tallis were played. He is buried in Cyprus where he & Doris had lived for 18 years.

From Christina Rowland-Jones

Apart from two delightful musical holidays at Stephen and Doris's beautiful villa on the hillside high above Paphos in Cyprus, my chief memory of Stephen is his coming regularly to the weekend recorder courses I used to run at the Old Rectory in Fittleworth, Sussex. Occasionally no bass recorder player enrolled for these courses and I then had to spend Friday evening teaching a volunteer to manage a bass part. But when Stephen came he not only played bass and other recorders but also the serpent – well enough to sight-read bass recorder parts. The serpent made a splendid bass to a recorder consort. Occasionally it was *de trop*, and Stephen's acute musical sensibility always told him when to switch to the less dominating bass recorder. He was a very good person to work with.

Moreover, Stephen usually brought with him a friend from Crowborough, who is an excellent descant recorder player. I was thus able to persuade the less gifted players to play alto and tenor and leave the top and bottom parts to the stronger players. Very satisfactory – at least for the tutor!

From Jill Davies

I'm organising a musical celebration of the life of my stepfather Stephen Willis – my mum Doris has already sent you an obituary, and it would be great if you could add the following.

My stepfather Stephen Willis, who sadly passed away in September, was a passionate musician, in many guises. He sang countertenor, conducted choirs (my first memory of him is as choirmaster of the church in Cowden, Kent, where I sang aged 9 or so), played recorder, viol, hurdy-gurdy, and various loud wind instruments including the serpent.

I am organising a musical celebration of his life, which will take place on the afternoon of Sunday 27 April 2014, at St James's Church, Hampton Hill – just outside London. I hope many of his musical friends and colleagues will come, and contribute too. We will provide tea afterwards in the church hall.

Please contact me if you would like to come, and if you would like to take part in the musical proceedings.

Jill Davies (Jill Lockhart)
jilldavies23@btinternet.com

At the Early Music Exhibition this year, I had the longest chat I've ever had with Jill – one advantage of not having a stall!

Nicholas Pap – double bassist (4th December 1950 – 12th November 2013)

Paul Willenbrock

Many colleagues, friends and music-lovers in general will be shocked and saddened by the news of Nick Pap's death in hospital in Amsterdam, resulting from a collapsed lung and further complications, at the woefully early age of 63 years minus 3 weeks. As I am but a (bass) singer, I do not feel qualified to say much about Nick's playing – except that I loved it – so this tribute will inevitably have an essentially personal character, and little if any musicological value. In order to justify this amateur approach, let me quote a reaction from fellow bass-player Richard Myron, when I asked him to give an honest assessment of such an individual personality.

Nick was indeed special. More than a bassist, he was an actor with a bass as his voice: he will be missed. However people reacted to him, there must surely be unanimous agreement that more special than Nick simply doesn't exist! And yes, he did actually spend a few years in New York at the end of the 80s trying to make it as an actor – he admitted to me that he often wanted more attention than he got at the back of an orchestra. Not surprisingly, he never missed an opportunity to turn life into (usually) zany, off-the-wall, comic drama.

The second of four children born to Arthur (1921-59) and Pauline (1924-) Pap, Nick was born in the United States on 4 December 1950. The family was frequently on the move from one university position to another because Arthur, a philosopher, was, according to Pauline, very outspoken and so not always popular with department heads! Arthur was born in Zürich, into a Jewish family, his father a bookbinder from Vilnius (Lithuania), his mother from Riga (Latvia); he fled to the United States with his mother and brother in 1939, and studied piano at the Julliard School of Music before dedicating himself to philosophy. The books he produced in his tragically short life have remained standard books in philosophy faculties.

Nick attended Windsor Mountain School in Massachusetts, a progressive boarding high school where, like many of the finest American lutenists, his earliest musical activities were primarily in rock and jazz – on the bass guitar. He turned his attention to the double bass (first only plucking) and attended the Boston Conservatory for undergraduate work in music, and later Cal Arts, a progressive arts school in California where he studied with the cellist and double bassist Buell Neidlinger.

In the early 70s he settled in the Netherlands, studying with Anthony Woodrow in the Hague, and launching himself onto the Dutch and Flemish Early Music scene, becoming one of what might be seen as the "second wave" of "baroques" joining the flow set in motion by pioneers such as Anthony Woodrow, Anner Bylsma, the Kuijkens... to name just a handful... and not forgetting

dear Janine Rubinlicht, who left us about 20 years ago.

He played regularly with La Petite Bande from its earliest days, and over the following 40 years worked with too many bands to mention in full, but in particular Collegium Vocale Gent, La Chapelle Royale, L'Orchestre des Champs Elysées, Les Talens Lyriques, Les Agréments, Concerto Copenhagen, and of course the Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra. It is well worth looking at some of the many videos of the Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra on You Tube to see (and hear) him playing. He also derived great pleasure from singing Gregorian chant with the Schola Cantorum Amsterdam.

Though he always spoke softly and slowly, he could nonetheless be uncompromising and was not afraid to express himself, even if his frankness could sometimes brush the more sensitive colleagues up the wrong way. However, a number of his colleagues have posted tributes on his Facebook page to say how much they loved making music with him – of which here are just two: "He was an amazing bass player and person and was always very generous and open and funny and a pleasure to be around." "I always felt happy when Nick was rockin' the bass!" As a friend I particularly appreciated his openness; indeed he is the only person I've known to whom I could say absolutely anything without fear of his taking offence, and I know he always trusted me not to take offence at whatever he would say to me.

Nick loved literature, whether in English, Dutch, French or German, art, architecture and good food and wine. He was on the whole a health food fan, having done the whole macrobiotic thing in the 70s, after which he relaxed into mainly organic, but always delicious food – much easier to find in Holland, Germany, France etc. than in Britain. I shall always remain grateful to him for introducing me to the delights of Indian and Pakistani mangoes, and natural wines (with few or no added chemicals) when the natural wine movement was still in its infancy in France. During the couple of days I was able to spend at his bedside in his final week, Nick always wanted me to reassure him that I was finding nice things to eat and drink, and he wrote on his note-pad that I simply had to go to the new Rijksmuseum! It was so generous of him to be concerned about MY pleasure while he himself was in great pain and fading away. Even when the doctors were giving him more and more discouraging news, he still found the courage to smile his lovely impish smile.

Although he undeniably enjoyed life's pleasures – living and loving to the full – he did in fact live quite simply: in the beautiful flat he lived in for the last 12 years, directly overlooking Amsterdam's Hortus Botanicus, he had no curtains over the three enormous windows – so that you

could appreciate the wonderful view at any time of day or night.

So if he could be a bit of a showman, clown even, he was also a very quiet generous person and a great, sympathetic listener. A number of people found him just a bit too eccentric, but those who embraced his uniqueness and loved him all the more for it were amply rewarded. Whenever Nick came to stay in Paris, my wife, son and I were always genuinely sad when he had to leave, even though he frequently prolonged his stays. We just couldn't get enough of him, and life seems painfully empty without him, even though we must be thankful for all the happiness and fun that he brought to our lives.

Nick is survived by his mother Pauline, siblings David, Peter and Jennifer, nieces and nephew Ruby, Nica, Marina, Katriona and Jared, and grand nephew and niece Jhai and Kahlila... and by a considerable number of bewildered, heart-broken friends and soul-mates.

His family is discussing starting a scholarship in his memory, and hopes to have a memorial tribute concert next spring or summer. To paraphrase some of the closing words of "the Big Lebowski", Nick abides!!!

PS. I am grateful to Nick's big brother David who has helped me refine my original text to make this depiction of Nick respectable enough to appear in a learned magazine! (Little does he know what *EMR* is really like!) However I know that Nick would be shocked by this almost saintly image that I/we have ended up putting across. So just to redress the balance, here's what his mother told me on the phone yesterday, with all the love of a grieving mother: "he was a real little devil, always taking risks, always teasing" Yes that's more like it: Dear Old Nick, dear old devil – who has all the good tunes!

And finally this tribute from his oldest friend, from schooldays, Peter Harris: "How can one ever describe this wonderful, talented, curious, funny, quirky (bit of an understatement there), thoughtful, sweet, kind, gentle, brilliant friend? Never be another like him, that is for sure. Never."



BRIAN JORDAN MUSIC

Brian Jordan Music Limited, the long-standing and widely valued independent music shop in Green Street, Cambridge, announced that its doors would close for the last time on 31 August this year.

Brian began independently trading music in 1977, sharing premises with the Early Music Centre in Princedale Road, Holland Park, London before opening up shop in Green Street, Cambridge in 1981.

Over the years that followed, Brian's dedication and encyclopedic knowledge of early and classical music earned him an enviable reputation in the music community. Serious musicians visiting Cambridge were impressed by his varied collections, the bountiful second hand department and the shop's unique, often idiosyncratic, atmosphere.

Many long-standing customers first visited Green Street as Cambridge music students, and remained customers into their professional careers. Consequently, many high profile figures the world over have been frequent visitors to the shop.

When Brian died in 2010, his contribution to the music community was met with an astounding volume of tributes, and a fantastic celebration of his life was held one evening at Trinity College Chapel in March 2011.

His widow Anne Jordan, who took over management of the shop, traded very successfully for the next two and a half years, while a buyer for the business was sought.

Regrettably, no suitable person has been found, so Anne and her sons have now decided to close the doors of this unique and treasured family business.

Anne Jordan wrote:

It has been a pleasure to have been involved in the shop, meeting so many musicians and maintaining my husband's legacy. I would like to thank everyone who has shown appreciation for our efforts over the years, and look forward to enjoying music together in the future.

In fact, Anne has not retired. She is still selling music that she hasn't yet got rid of, but has taken back the English Concert Series from CB/EB before we actually did anything very positive about it – except that over the years we have reformatted the series onto A4 for convenience and economy: no longer any fumbling through loose pages! Anne has retained her job as organising music for the Dartington Summer School and will still order music etc for her friends. CB

Our thanks to all our reviewers. The number of CD reviews has increased considerably this year, and we are grateful for the amount reviewers have written. I was wondering whether to thank them individually, but I'll just mention the admin: Brian Clark has been matching CDs with reviewers, and Elaine has dealt with subscriptions, proof-reading and helping Helen Shabetai with the Concert Diary.

Happy Christmas to you all!



What were you expecting - Lutes and Rebecs?