

# Early Music REVIEW

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How are the mighty fallen! Hugh Keyte happened to hear a Radio 3 Choir programme a couple of Sundays ago with an announcer who was amazingly casual, declining offhand to give the most elementary explanation of madrigal text. Around 1970, the BBC (initiated by Deryck Cooke and continued by Guy Protheroe, early assistants being Hugh, Nick Kenyon and Blaise Compton, to mention names I know) created a wide-ranging classical music data-base which sold to the European Broadcasting Union at a profit (or to use the BBC term, negative overspend!) Is it still accessible? It would make an invaluable web site. For those less familiar with early 17th-century wit, I'll quote my abbreviated note from *Oxford Choral Classics: Madrigals and Partsongs*.

*Iceland (Thule)*, at the end of the world (*period of cosmography*) boasts a volcano (*Mount Hecla*) as powerful as three-cornered Sicily's *Mount Etna*. *Cochineal* is a scarlet dye from the female *coccus cacti* insect that lives on a Mexican cactus. *China dishes* are dishes from china, not made in Staffordshire! *Fogo* probably refers to *Fogo Island*, one of the Cape Verde islands: the identification with *Terra del Fuego* is unlikely.

It would be boring if the explanation were given every time, but it's worth repeating where there is an intelligent announcer, but implying that it doesn't matter is insulting.

This issue is unusual for several reasons. First, we welcome an extensive article by Roger Bowers. I've written a longer review than usual on another book built round contributions: what we don't know is whether they wrote at length or if virtually everything written by the experts was reproduced. *The Art of Enchantment* reviewed in the last issue did have some input from the author, which confused rather than clarified quotation-based aspects, whereas Jonathan Arnold's *Sacred Music in Secular Society* is primarily drawing things together. His crucial mistake is the title of the book.

A problem with this issue is the result of a Sunday in great pain in bed then a couple of days in hospital; the pain vanished on the third day, but after a fortnight, I'm still not back to strength. But I wouldn't go as far as compare it with Selene's long-term illness or Elaine's year out of her life thanks to an Arab shooting into a tent in Morocco in 1966. I haven't managed to get through the CDs I was looking forward to review (especially three from Erin Headley of mid-17th-century Roman secular music), and may not be able to squeeze in the recent A-R Editions. I did my homework on two of them, which must wait till Issue 160. But I desperately need someone to review Süssmayr's *Der Spiegel von Arkadien* – with over 600 pages.

CB

## REVIEWS OF MUSIC

Clifford Bartlett

## BOHEMIAN AGNUS TROPS

*Tropi ordinarii missae: Agnus Dei.* Editor: Hana Vlhová-Wörner. (*Repertorium troporum Bohemiae medii aevi, pars 4*) Bärenreiter Praha (H 8030), 2013. 152pp + 8 facs, £26.50.

There is some comparison with the Scarlatti cantata volume reviewed below: the music takes 54 pages out of 152. There is, however, good reason in both volumes. In this case, the introduction covers the Sanctus tropes (*pars 3*) as well as the Agnus Dei ones. This volume only has 19 Agnus tropes, with four supplementary items (3 Agnus and one Sanctus). Academically, it is a valuable piece of scholarship, and vol. 5 will cover Lectiones. I'm not sure what singers might make of it. The mixture of choral chant interrupted by solo interjections is effective for performance. I wonder what connection the University of Bangor has with this publication, which it subsidises. All editorial matter is given in Czech and English, though the Latin texts are not translated – this could be done alongside the printed texts, apart from a few hexameters, though a decision would have to be made on whether the local or the international language should be chosen. There are reviews of vol. 2 (*Kyrie & Gloria*) in *EMR* 130 p. 2 and vol. 3 (*Sanctus*) *EMR* 145 p. 2: I don't think I saw vol. 1.

## SCHÜTZ GEISTLICHE CHOR-MUSIK

*Schütz Geistliche Chor-Music... The six and seven-part motets, nos. 13-29* Bärenreiter (BA5902), 2013. 224pp, £20.00

This is the second half of Schütz's opus 11 of 1648. I was tempted to reproduce the general remarks of my review of the edition of the twelve 5-voice motets in *EMR* 150 (Dec. 2012), but enthusiastic readers may have kept their back copies (perhaps!) This, with twelve motets a6 and five a7, is more than double the size of the 5-voice volume, so the price isn't disproportionate. It has no introductory material: perhaps a very concise introduction (German in the left column, English in the right) could have filled the only blank page. I'm a little puzzled by the promotional page sent with the score. It implies the two basic ways of playing continuo in polyphonic music: double the parts, or shape the harmony by chords. The realisation is in the former style. So taking page 1 as an example, the only relaxation is in bar 8. There is, though, one deviation: bar 9 begins with a three-note chord, surely inappropriate for the first cadence on a stressed word *Gott*. Normally, the accompaniment is in four parts (for a five-part piece). What seems odd is to have the organ play the D above middle C in isolation on the third beat when there is no movement in the parts. What is printed here gives precedence to principle rather than bending it for common sense. But the usual convention is to keep the right hand below the top of the C1 stave, and doubling a G2 line (no. 26) is questionable.

*Selig sind die Toten* (SWV 391) is a good example. I'm not recommending an opening C major, though I might try it (I can't remember if I have in the past, and the copy at hand is unmarked). However, bars 12-13 are interesting. 12 is an A major chord. 13 begins with continuo only playing F with a C entering after a crotchet rest. Surely the isolated F should be a chord: it strengthens the abrupt change of key and the move from *sterben* to *Selig* and also prepares Tenor II for his C natural. The singer without the cue is more likely to miss the change of expression if he is worrying about the note. For the following six bars, the organ needs to be much stiller: continuo playing isn't just a contrapuntal exercise.

I'll draw attention to the pieces with explicit instruments: all are rather more sedate than the voices-only ones. I reckon that sackbuts are the most likely instruments: if you are using standard six-string viols, beware bottom Cs.

24 (SWV 392): *Was mein Gott*. This is a duet for two voices (C3 and C4 clefs) and C4 F3 F4 F5 instruments. The voices sing a chorale in imitation, words perhaps by Markgraf Albrecht II von Brandenburg-Ansbach, melody perhaps derived from Claudio de Sermisy.

26 (SWV 394): *Sehet an den Feigenbaum*. Another vocal duet (C1 and C4 clefs) and G2, C3, C4, F3, F4 insts. Text: Luke 21: 29-31, 33.

27 (SWV 395) *Der Engel sprach*. Two voices (C1 and C4) with F4 part for either instrument or voice: instruments C3, C4, C4, F4. Based on Andrea Gabrieli: *Angelus ad pastores*.

28 (SWV 396) *Auf dem Gebirge*. Two C3 voices; instruments C4, C4, F3, F4, F5. Text: Matthew 2: 18.

29 (SWV 397) *Du Schalksknecht*. Solo tenor voice; insts: C4, F3, F3, F4, F5, F5. Text: Matthew 18: 32-33.

This is a very useful publication, at a good value. I doubt if choirs will buy it, but conductors will welcome it for reference, and there are various editions available if individual pieces are desired.

## 13 FAIRLY EARLY CANTATAS BY A. SCARLATTI

Alessandro Scarlatti *Tredecì Cantate anteriori al 1694* Edizione critica a cura di Salvatore Carchiolo Rome: Istituto Italiano per la Storia della Musica, 2012. clvi + 188pp, €50.00. ISBN 978 88 95349 107

This is a study based on two largely-overlapping MSS, one from 1693, the other probably earlier, since it is a source underlying the 1693 MS, both in Naples (I-Nc 34/5/2 & 33.4.9); none of the other sources listed here are in Naples. They are the first two in an alphabetic series with editorial sigla running from A to X. Dating Scarlatti's cantatas is tricky as well as their provenance. These form a basis of earlyish works (Scarlatti's dates are 1660-1725), about a third of which probably date from around five years from the two MSS.

This substantial volume seems to be firmly bound despite the lack of a hard cover. The allocation of text and music is more skewed than the page-numbering suggests, since 64 pages of the arabic-numbered sequence are devoted to critical commentary (in Italian), making a total of 210pp text and 124pp music. One can imagine a singer looking at the volume and deciding it had far too little music. In fact, it is full of valuable information, though more helpful to continuo players than singers. There is also considerable duplication (for which I am surely not alone in welcoming) with the introductory material (166 pp) in Italian and an English translation by Barbara Sachs, a familiar reviewer in *EMR* (see p. 7). The Foreword by Rosalind Halton is in English alone; she has long been a Scarlatti expert, with editions listed on her web site.<sup>1</sup>

The introduction has three chapters, beginning with Scarlatti and the chamber cantata in Rome and Naples, which seems not to be so valid a separation as hitherto has been assumed. The 13 cantatas are described in some detail, and the third section discusses the realisation of the Bc. The next group of topics is The Edition: editorial criteria, the sources, the list of sources and descriptions of them. The arabic numbers begin with the texts: in view of the substantial English presence, it's a pity the poems are not translated opposite the Italian texts: surely Barbara could have managed it. The editor merely states that orthography is modernised – an Italian quirk, but with only two pages of facsimiles, there's little opportunity for comparing orthographies, despite the detailed annotation of the music.<sup>2</sup> It reminds me of the habit of reducing note-values which is now largely abandoned. And it is annoying when triple bars in minimis are spaced out as if they lasted twice as long as crotchets – which they rarely do. And is there any need to use black notes across triple bar-lines: it was already a superfluous form of notation anyway.

It would be sensible to make the music pages available separately. The print size is quite small (a singer and I couldn't read from the single score), it is quite heavy (just over a kilo<sup>3</sup>) and page-turns could be organised a little better. Also, the publisher might look at recent Early English Church Music volumes, where each piece is preceded by details of sources, texts, translations and commentary – though the EECM musical transcriptions tend to be over archaic.

I'm particularly interested in the styles of continuo playing. The editor claims that the practice of the figuring "should induce us to regard his figuring not as a supplementary element of a piece, but rather as notation indispensable to performing it according to his

conventions" (p. xcixii), though it is mentioned elsewhere that MSS of the same piece have some differences from each other. There are examples of four-part writing as well as the opposite – thick chords with both hands including discords. The style of recitative is different, with less information. The author seems to favour the evidence of Patrick Rogers, though I wasn't entirely convinced when I read his book a quarter-century ago.<sup>4</sup> Carchiolo recommends only keyboard with recits. I'm not sure whether long, tied bass-notes are reiterated or played only once (though perhaps with rich spread chords for dramatic effect): I certainly felt when playing that repetition of chords seemed helpful. The notational convention is that which became normal for secco recit till the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century at least. The second movement of *Lontananza crudele* (no. 7) begins with three tied bars of G minor. The voice has a silent first crotchet, a minim B flat and a crotchet *d*. The next bar has *#f g- a- d d*, the third bar returns to G minor.<sup>5</sup> There's a choice of obeying the ties, but it's tempting (and why not) to begin bar two with G C *#F A* resolving on G minor. If the singer is starting soft, no change of chord is needed, but if she wants to make a fuss on *Miei so-spi-ri dolenti*, the chord is irresistible. Oddly, the G is figured flat, rather unnecessary since the voice's first note is a B flat. There's an inconsistency in the presence of figures. The final note of a vocal phrase with subsequent rests is usually not figured, but how often does it need to be sharpened? In the first movement (an Aria), the first such ending (bar 9) has *A*, but the bass has a crotchet *a*, followed by *f*, which needs a 6/4 chord (unnotated). There are two bars of continuo cadences on *A* and the voice enters on *C*. Is the cadence chord major, followed immediately by minor, because the voice enters on *C*? On the whole, I favour major followed by minor, but there isn't much indication. I prefer editions either to have minimal figuring, so that one knows that one needs to think as carefully as one can, especially when sight-reading! But if the figuring is fairly thorough, it helps if one can rely on it. Bars 7 and 29 are identical, except that the 9 and 8 are missing under beats 1 and 2. The surprising figuring of beat 4 (#6/5/4/3) is, unusually, added in brackets: it is discussed on p. c (English) and with a sample realisation of bars 7-8 on p. l. I think it's sensible for editors to copy figuring at repeats. The volume doesn't offer much on how the music is sung. Nevertheless, the book/edition deserves to be circulated widely.

I was delighted to accompany Alexandra Stacey in a couple of the cantatas.<sup>6</sup> The music is impressive and sophisticated. The singer needs to be alert to quick changes of effect, but not excessively virtuosic. If there is a disappointment in the book it is that the editor, like me, tends to concentrate on continuo rather than the voice!

*See also a review of Carchiolo's Una perfezione d'armonia meravigliosa on p. 7.*

1. Contact [scarlattiproject.com](http://scarlattiproject.com), run by Rosalind at the University of Newcastle, Australia Newcastle. She was in Sydney when we met nearly 20 years ago, arriving from the plane just in time to hear the applause at the end of her concert.

2. I haven't seen enough of the poems to see if the issue is significant, but I would certainly not modernise texts set by e.g. Monteverdi.

3. I've been conscious over the weight of singers' music since Emma Kirkby complained about my Oxford UP *Messiah*. Coincidentally she phoned while we were trying out some of the cantatas, which reminded me to include the point.

4. Patrick J Rogers *Continuo Realization in Handel's Vocal Music*, UMI Research Press, 1989.

5. I use the old pms coding, with minimis shown by upper case, crotchets by lower case and quavers followed with a hyphen.

6. I'm grateful for the opportunity to hear and play some of the music, and she tuned my harpsichord as well.

## BENEDETTO MARCELLO CANTATAS

Benedetto Marcello, *Cantate da camera* Vol I, ed. by Marco Bizzarini. [Collana di Musiche Inedite, of the Biblioteca del Conservatorio di Brescia, n. V] LIM Editrice (Lucca, 2013) 112pp ISBN 978 88 70967 555 £25

This volume of six solo cantatas might be the first of three (?) making eventually available the 18 cantatas of Marcello (Venice, 1686 – Brescia, 1739). They survive in three fascicles in the library of Brescia's Conservatory (I-BRc), a minuscule part of his solo 380 or so cantatas. Actually, only four are directly from the manuscripts in this codex (I-A-11a), which are all in the same hand, and probably datable to 1710-1722: 6 for soprano and b.c. and 12 for bass and b.c., one of which is with instruments. The present Volume I, however, does not present the first four in the order bound, and it supplies two in versions not from this codex at all. Rather than try to understand the plan, if there is one, let me say what the six cantatas are:

*Gran tiranno è l'amor* for Bass, with instruments (2 vns. +vla); *L'aspro nodo e 'l giogo indegno* for Soprano and Bc.; *Son pastorello che amor non sente* for Bass and Bc; *Son pastorella che amor non sente*, this being a reconstructed version for Soprano and Bc; *Zeffiretti che mormorate* for Bass and Bc, and then for Alto with instruments (2 vlns.).

Not only are all of the cantatas in the codex found in other collections, variously transcribed for S, A or B, but it is surmisable that the preponderance of those for Bass here were in fact transcribed or arranged from originals for other voices. This practice might be a nightmare for an editor, but it's an inviting opportunity for performers.

The quality of the music is very high, as one would expect from Marcello, and the instrumental parts exceptionally well-written and important. The introduction and poetic texts are only in Italian. The music is beautifully printed, though users must watch for mistakes (e.g. I noticed on p.10 that in bar 23 the viola and continuo are missing the f#s being played by the violins as well as sung, and in bar 26 the continuo cannot play a C under the singer and viola's d). These and probably others will be easily caught. More serious to me as a performer is the fact that Bizzarini did not put any of his editorial accidentals in smaller print or above the staves. In the critical notes only some (I say "some" to give him the benefit of the doubt!) seem to be mentioned, while we are left to guess whether other dubious accidentals were original, editorial, or unsighted typographical errors. For example, on p.51, he notes the c# he added following two previous ones, but in the very next bar the singer has a very suspicious e flat and f# (similarly reconstructed as a b flat and c# in the version for soprano) where naturals for all of these notes seem to me to be required musically).

There is a beautiful painting on the cover (see <http://lim.it/nuovosit/copertine/9788870967555.jpg>) but it is not identified anywhere. Maybe someone can tell me something about it?

Barbara Sachs

## GREEN MEN

Luzzaschi *Four Duets for sopranos and continuo... from Madrigali... percantare e sonare, Roma, 1601* [edited and published by Cedric Lee]. Green Man Press (Luz 1), 2013. 23pp x2, £7.00.

I'm frustrated! I can't find my facsimile and there doesn't seem to be one at Petrucci/IMSLP. Those who have only heard any of the 1601 edition will be surprised to see that the accompaniment is not just a bass (as in Caccini and Peri monodic publications) but two accompanimental staves: the lower one has an eight-line stave, with bass and tenor parts, the upper one with six for the two higher parts – standard keyboard staves for the first part of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. These four duets are for two sopranos and a four part accompaniment, with the doubling parts simplified when there are embellishments in the voice parts and two parts on the lower stave, and gaps (e.g. the opening bar of the first piece in this volume) filled in. So for once, you can play what's there.

The vocal ranges are Bb to E"b for No. 1 *Stral pungente d'Amore*, B to E" for No 3 *Cor mio deh non languire* & D' to A" for No. 4. *I' mo son giovinetta*. No. 2 G to F" (*Deh vieni hor mai cor mi son giovinetta*) isn't that remote from the compass of the other duets. The tessitura is high, and I'd guess that the clefs might have been in chiavette. There is also an editorial transposition from G minor to B minor, but that requires some touching up of the keyboard tuning to permit D sharp! A-minor would have been better. In terms of range, however, I suspect that singers (the music was probably written for the *concerto di donne* employed by Duke Alfonso II in Ferrara) had sung without the modern voice-characteristics we are used to: they were probably called sopranos because they were women, and covered the female range of over two octaves.

The embellishments are worth learning, though they can sometimes be a bit rough: see p. 5 bar 23, where the upper part ends with four semiquavers g=f=e=d= while the lower part has a=g=f=g=. The texts are set out as verse and translated.

Luigi Rossi *Gelosia, ch'a poco a poco* for soprano and continuo, edited by Barbara Sachs... Green Man Press (Ros. 1), 2013. 16pp + unrealised version, £6.90

So perhaps that's why Barbara was too busy to translate Luzzaschi! Rossi (1597/8 – 1653) wrote over 300 cantatas: one reason for buying the three CDs of Roman music directed by Erin Headley to be reviewed in the June issue is to hear Rossi alongside other similar composers.<sup>7</sup> The main source is a printed one, *Ariette di musica, a una, e due voci, di eccellentissimi Autori* (Bracciano, 1646), with checks against five MSS. It's a powerful piece in C minor (with a one-flat signature). Bass figuring is roughly on a level of the Scarlatti reviewed above. Minor cadences are often not turned into major and are sometimes figured thus. One might expect the cantata to be numbered continuously

7. Erin is also organising a performance of his *Orfeo*, to be performed in Ireland later this year and across the Atlantic in 2015.

through, but the three stanzas are essentially on the same bass so matching bar numbers is useful. Each stanza has two sections: the first duple, the second begins triple. The first and third stanzas of the first section have the closing C figured flat, but no figure in the 2<sup>nd</sup> stanza. In the second section, bars 35 and 53 are unison Cs in all three verses so presumably major. Bar 40 has a flat B flat chord, which may require the C sharp to be adjusted to D flat.

**William Jackson** *Ten Duets for sopranos, tenors, or soprano & tenor and continuo* Edited by Timothy Roberts Green Man Press (Jac 1), 2013. 44pp + unrealised version, £10.80.

Jackson's music hasn't met with an revival yet: it probably needs a recording or two by stylish top singers, using the options listed above. Jackson (1730-1803) spent virtually all his life in Exeter, except for a couple of years studying with John Travers, organist of the Chapel Royal.

The edition contains five songs from his *Twelve Canzonets* op. 9 (1770), two from a second set, op. 13, (c.1782), two from *Twelve Pastorals* op. 15 (1786) and one from *Six Madrigals* op. 18 (c.1798). His wife was a Bartlett, a name common in Devon. He wrote two operas for Drury Lane (1780 & 1783), but was primarily known for his songs. Nine of the duets are notated with two treble clefs. However, they were composed for treble and tenor. The editor assumes that the second part was in tenor clef, which amateur singers could not read – though songs for male voices were sometimes printed in treble clef a century earlier. It is not clear whether Tim made any corrections of supposed adaptations. Number 10 differs in that it is explicitly written for soprano and tenor, though was it really in octave-treble clef? I think the sections on how the second part is notated needed to be more precise. No. 10 is also different in that it has a written-out accompaniment, almost entirely doubling the voices. Would nos 1-9 be played thus if a piano were available? Only one song has a known writer: "Take, oh take those lips away". The music is pleasing, to say the least.

#### EDITION WALHALL

**Jan Ignáz František Vojta** *Triptychon-Sonaten: drei Sonaten aus dem Minoritenkonvent Wien für Violine & Bc.* Herausgegeben von Jíří Květon. Edition Walhall, (EW 877) £19.80. 22pp +2 parts.

Vojta was born in Cernovice around 1660 and died before 1725. He studied philosophy then medicine in Prague, becoming resident physician at St Nicholas Benedictine Abbey. 27 of his works are known of, but only eight have been identified. Codex 726 of the Minoritenkonvent, Vienna, has 102 sonatas for violin & bc, ten of which use scordatura. Nos 70-72 are by Vojta, the first two in B minor, the third in C major. The editor argues that the three pieces belong as a triptych. However, that seems very implausible for two sonatas in one key and a third a semitone higher – it would be slightly more plausible if the three sonatas were each in different keys! The title *Triptychon-Sonaten* doesn't appear to have any authority

beyond the editor and doesn't demand being performed as a set of three. These are, we are told, the earliest Bohemian scordatura sonatas. The music itself is worth investigating by those fluent with the tunings (b f# b' c" for the first two, c' g' c" f" for the third). The bass is fortunately figured; the edition also offers a score at sounding pitch and a separate continuo part. No. 2 is online, and I enjoyed the music, so those with the skills should investigate it.

#### WHO DONE IT

**Telemann** (?) *Sonatina a-Moll "Harrach-Sonate Nr. 2" für Blockflöte und Basso continuo* Herausgegeben von Brian Clark. Edition Walhall (EW 841), 2013. £10.00

The Harrachs were an influential family in the 17th- and 18th-century Austro-Hungarian empire; many were career diplomats, wealthy enough to maintain estates in today's Czech Republic and vast mansions in Vienna. The musical portion of the family's estate is today divided between the New York Public Library and one of the State Archives in Vienna. Amongst the material in the latter is a set of six (possibly seven?) pieces for recorder – a concerto in G minor, which Reinhard Goebel has already recorded under Telemann's name and a series of sonatas with continuo. Some are attributed by the copyist to Telemann, but it has been established that they appear to come from a set by Pepusch. Of the remaining works (one of which seems to be a fragment), two seem more likely to be by Telemann, though no definitive proof is available. The A minor piece has four binary movements: a Sonata-Grave, an Allemande that exploits wide leaps, a Sarabanda and a final Gigue, which twice hits g'''.

#### SIX BACH CHORAL SETTINGS

**Bach** *Festive Choral settings from Cantatas Arranged for Choir and Organ* by Ingo Bredenbach Bärenreiter (BA 7527), 2013. 66pp, £11.50.

This contains six opening movements for the church year with tricky organ accompaniments. The occasions are New Year (BWV 171/1), Easter Monday (6/1), Ascension (37/1), Whitsun (172/1), Whit Monday (68/1) and the 17<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity (148/1). It's an interesting idea, with some movements that are unlikely otherwise to be sung. Four of the six movements are lively, but two have calmer moods: *Bleib bei uns* (the Journey to Emmaus – which always reminds me of the last chorus of the St John Passion) and *Also hat Gott*. It could be useful in cathedrals, chapels and churches with good choirs and organists. Underlay is in German and English.

#### BACH PRELUDES & FUGUES

**Bach** *Complete Organ Works... Preludes and Fugues I* edited by David Schulenberg Breitkopf & Härtel (EB8801), 2013. 139pp, £24.80

*The publisher has suggested that it might be sensible to review this and the imminent vol. 2 together.*

## SAINTE - COLOMBE SOLOS

Robert Oliver

**Sainte-Colombe** *Pour la Basse... The pieces for Viola da Gamba solo from the MS M.3 of the Manuscript of the Bibliothèque municipale de Tournus* Edited by Günter and Leonore von Zadow. Edition Gütersberg, Heidelberg 2013. xviii + 136pp, €42.50

Sainte-Colombe is a fascinating figure, mysterious because as a person he left so few traces, yet there survives a small but significant body of music, technically fascinating and compelling listening. A modern edition of his *Concerts à deux violes esgales* has been available for many years, and there are many marvellous recordings of these pieces. This new edition of his pieces for solo viol is of particular interest and importance, more so now that the facsimile published in 1998 by Minkoff is no longer available. It is in Gütersberg's standard format, clear type face, no mid-movement page turns, in short, entirely practical, sitting on the music stand comfortably, with the pages sitting flat despite its bulk (136 pages).

The relatively brief introduction includes sufficient information for everyday users of the book, and refers to the more extensive introduction of the Minkoff facsimile. The main notational problem, the so-called 'notes perdues' is elegantly solved in the same way as the Hooreman edition of the *Concerts*. The few facsimiles of the MS demonstrate the differences between the original notation and the edition, which attempts to mimic the original as closely as possible. Other changes include replacing unfamiliar clefs, for example the French violin clef, by those familiar to viol players.

The individual movements are arranged, as in the original, according to key, not grouped into suites. There are 97 in D minor, 12 in D major, 13 in G major, 5 in G minor, 16 in C major. Their titles are mostly dance movements: *Allemande*, *Courante*, *Gigue*, *Gavotte*, *Menuet*, *Ballet*, *Sarabande*, something called a 'Pianelle' – for which I can find no explanation – some character pieces called *Petite Pièce*, and a total of 29 *Préludes*, almost all in D minor. A performer would select pieces from a wide range of options to form a suite.

All but the G minor pieces are written for the 7-string bass. Sainte-Colombe is credited with inventing the technique of winding the bass strings with silver, thus making an hitherto too-short string length capable of playing a strong low AA. Naturally the music exploits the enjoyment of this register, newly available to the virtuoso bass viol.

None of the available sources are in Sainte-Colombe's hand. The Tournus collection seems to have been written by the same person who transcribed the *Concerts*, an elegant and accurate professional hand, easy to play from. I hope that the facsimile will become available again.

For those not familiar with this composer, unthinkable after the success of *the film* all those years ago, his music is almost as mysterious as he is. So little is known about him beyond a few small details and a couple of anecdotes. He was a famous player in his day, teacher of Marin Marais and Jean Rousseau. Marais published a beautiful *Tombeau* for him in book two of *Pièces de violes*. Many of the *Concerts* are familiar through recordings, and they are treasures of the repertoire, beloved by players and listeners alike. They are very idiosyncratic, seemingly breaking the rules of composition, yet wonderfully effective in their capacity to excite and move the listener. The melodies take irregular turns, his harmonic directions intuitive and unexpected. The so-called *notes perdues* are unmeasured runs, which usually need to be played as fast as one can, making the bar in which they occur seem unbalanced. The harmonies are fully adequate in themselves, though there have been attempts to 'complete' them.

These characteristics are also present in the music for the solo viol, and it rewards those who take time to understand it. I started with the comparatively measured dance movements, and graduated incrementally to the preludes, which are full of unmeasured episodes, notated both as *notes perdues* and as semiquavers in long runs played with a single bow, making a single bar visually very long. The dance movements' comparative regularity helps the player come to terms with their individuality. The music is constantly surprising, and, particularly in the preludes, needs long acquaintance to make sense of it.

However for the determined pilgrim there are considerable pleasures. *Gigue* 133, in G minor, is fingered and bowed with some arresting and characteristic effects. The final piece, a *Sarabande en passacaille*, in C major, reveals the composer as a truly forceful player, relishing the low-string chords. Also in C major, an extraordinary *Allemande*, no 145. It seems more like a prelude or overture, with the first section in duple time leading to a tripla in the style of a gigue, with a droll, whimsical melody, unexpectedly dropping octaves and with sudden, assertive chords. It is full of humour, utterly belying the unsmiling and severe puritan depicted in the film.

It is an important resource, an essential part of the library of anyone interested in the development of the techniques of the viol. His contribution is as significant as that of his contemporary Christopher Simpson, but quite different with the ornaments and anticipated notes, unusual chords dictating hand positions, slurred bowings, unique to this very special player and transformer of the character of the music of our wonderful instrument. As his pupil Rousseau said, had Adam, in paradise, wished to make an instrument he would undoubtedly have made a viol: 'on peut juger que si ADAM avoit voulu faire un Instrument, il auroit fait une Viole...'

## REVIEWS OF BOOKS

Barbara Sachs &amp; Clifford Bartlett

## RENAISSANCE NOTATION

Rossi, Francesco Rocco *De Musica Mensurabili – Manuale di notazione rinascimentale*. (LIM Editrice, 2013; 2014). xi+236 pp. ISBN 978 88 7096 746 3 €25 [lim@lim.it](mailto:lim@lim.it)

This is a "hands-on" handbook for students and performers of early music, outlining the concepts and rules behind the mensural notation of the 15th and 16th centuries. Its purpose is to enable the reader to transcribe from the original sources and to better interpret transcriptions. Its clarity and organization are superb. I began reading with only basic preparation (I read Willi Apel's *The Notation of Polyphonic Music* about 40 years ago, but actively used mainly the sections on keyboard tablatures), and I could not put this volume down: each exercise (the solutions of which are included) was an irresistible temptation, and satisfying to build upon. All of them must be looked at and done mentally, if not fully in writing, because Rossi's guiding instructions are integral to the text, and only by experimenting with the mensural system can one use in combination the various tools required to read it. The book does not have an index, but its 18 chapter headings and cross-references make it fairly easy to jump backwards or forwards, and Rossi inserts reminders along the way.

Many of the examples and exercises are from the *Pratica Musicae* by Franchinus Gafurius (1496), whose theoretical battles with Johannes Tinctoris' *Proportionale musices* (1480) are only touched upon in passing. Gafurius (Gaffurio) carried mathematical proportions to an extreme, and Rossi promotes his pragmatic approach to calculating and transcribing them. The author opts to use halved values, far better than Apel's quartered values, though he recommends conserving original values for 16th-century music (e.g. Ortiz) even though he does not do so here.

More questionable "might be" (I do not have the authority to say "are") some of his choices of modern time signatures to apply when putting voices into a score, a basic, essential, and sticky editorial problem. If a tenor, for instance, has 24 semibreves or minims in a section delimited *de facto* by a particular proportion in a simultaneous voice, the section might be "barred" in groups of 2, 3, 4, 6, 8 or 12 notes. For the tenor it may make no difference, while the other voice(s) might come out syncopated, dotted, or in oddly grouped notes. For instance, a group of 4 notes in the time of the previous 3 (4/3 or 8/6) are easily notated as quadruplets, whereas Rossi prefers to express the *sesquitertia* with the exact reduction of their durations, resorting to dotted notes of the closest smaller note values: minims transcribed as dotted crotchets, crotchets as dotted quavers, etc. Unfortunately, when the values are halved to begin with, and possibly halved again by diminution, and then notated

as 3/4 of their original nominal value by dotting, the effect is perverse. I found myself, in these cases, looking at the original with boundless appreciation for mensural notation! However, nothing prevents the reader from choosing an alternative barring and/or time signature compatible, but not necessarily coinciding, with the other parts. A transcriber is to some extent in the position of a composer, deciding the best way to express the rhythm.

**Important Warning:** Although only just out, this volume has already been reprinted because the 2013 print was riddled with errors – some significant. New buyers will get the 2014 edition. The LIM, or the author, or I, can provide the *Errata corrigere* to anyone having the 1st edition, and it is also on Rossi's sites: <https://independent.academia.edu/FrancescoRoccoRossi> and <http://musicologiaattiva.wordpress.com> along with his other writings. If you are already immersed in this brilliant Manual, you might have more fun finding and fixing the errors yourselves: follow the gist and read with pencil in hand.

Barbara Sachs

## ITALIAN CONTINUO

Salvatore Carchiolo *Una perfezione d'armonia meravigliosa. Prassi cembalo-organistica del basso continuo italiano dalle origini all'inizio del XVIII secolo*. LIM Editrice, 2007; Edizione riveduta e corretta, 2011. xiii+395pp, €35,00 ISBN 978 88 7096 467 7

I reviewed this authoritative work on Italian continuo practice in *EMR* 124 (April 2008). A revised second printing now corrects mistakes in a few musical examples, making the detailed analyses more intelligible; the numbering of cross-references in the text, for paragraph and section numbers renumbered prior to the first printing; some inadvertent miswordings; and, in the index, page references needing adjustment due to the removal of a repeated page 188. None of these mistakes prevented me from learning a great deal from the 1<sup>st</sup> edition.

Since then I have re-read sections of the book often, especially while playing and editing cantatas, and also while translating Carchiolo's Introduction to his new edition of early cantatas by A. Scarlatti (p. 2) which discusses the continuo appropriate to those pieces. At least that will give English and Italian readers a taste of what his research and experience brings to a subject too often treated superficially. My re-readings of *Una perfezione d'armonia meravigliosa* also taught me something surprising: that books (like recordings) change while they sit on the shelf. At first, a reader gets what he gets; later, he uses what he remembers, or what he thinks he remembers; but eventually the "book" becomes contaminated or diluted by the reader's memory and experience and needs to be read again.

The subtitle “a perfection of harmony” comes from an early anonymous Roman 18th-century MS treatise, possibly from the circle of Pasquini, *Le regole per accompagnare sopra la parte d'autore incerto*, discussed in pp. 209-22. Carchiolo’s book itself shares one of its significant strengths, namely the inseparability of theory and practice: rules of counterpoint and accompaniment as mutually intrinsic. An example of this is the sticky question of when to permit false relations; a more general one is Carchiolo’s tracing the greater use of dissonance and the increasing density of accompaniments, in the course of the 17th century.

I won’t repeat my praise for how Carchiolo shows the scope of each individual treatise, doing justice to each author, in addition to presenting the cumulative historical development of a complex practices. His work is the only one to manage this effectively and my previous review explained how his book was organized to do so. I do repeat my *caveat* that however “we” play comes to sound appropriate to us, and this impedes us from perceiving and integrating a piece according to its specific compositional canons. Carchiolo’s work is more complete than others because he does address this requirement.

One of the appendices (pp. 341-350), unchanged, contains A. Scarlatti’s cantata *Da sventura in sventura*, the purpose here being to present the composer’s written-out harpsichord accompaniment, an “old-fashioned” madrigal texture for 3-6 voices (mainly 4) rather than a “continuo” realisation. The new cantata volume (2013), however, includes the cantata, and argues for a different and more convincing formal plan: AA’-BB’ instead of the AB-A’B’ structure proposed in 2007 and again in 2011. Perhaps Carchiolo had not yet found the A A’ version of it (without the music of the B section), which persuaded him that A and B were separate strophic arias.

If ever a book deserved to be translated into other languages, for its quality and usefulness, this one certainly does. Seven years have passed, and at least we have now a corrected edition: it remains for English readers to tell English-language publishers that they want it! *Barbara Sachs*

#### SACRED MUSIC IN SECULAR SOCIETY

**Jonathan Arnold** *Sacred Music in Secular Society* Ashgate, 2014. xv + 171pp, £19.99. ISBN 978 1 4094 5171 6

I was not very convinced by the Nick Wilson’s survey of the mostly-English early music revival, assembled from interviews with various participants (see review in *EMR* 158, p. 7). The volume reviewed here concentrates more specifically on the ideas of the interviewees: Harry Christophers, Stephen Farr, James MacMillan, James O’Donnell, Peter Phillips, Robert Saxton, Roger Scruton, Francis Steele and Rowan Williams. I wasn’t surprised that eight of the nine were Oxbridge men, with MacMillan only going as far south as Durham. (Where have all the women gone?) This immediately limits the general terms of the title. The sort of church music discussed is primarily that of cathedral choirs and Oxbridge colleges.

This is a minority taste, and the normal sort of church music (of all denominations) is mostly very different. Personally, I find “popular” church music unsatisfactory, though I suffer it because my mother took the grandchildren to the Methodist church when she moved to our area; now she’s gone, but we feel that the congregation welcomed them, despite their handicaps, and Clare in particular is very fond of hymns.<sup>1</sup> However, hymns have largely been replaced by songs, mostly of literary and musical unsophistication. The congregation is in most respects intelligent, but somehow has aesthetic blocks. I puzzle how Charles Wesley hymns could be understood in the 18th century compared with the naïvety of the present songs. Oddly, these songs (our Minister distinguishes songs from hymns) are of their own style, not related to pop music, though dependent on guitars. This is one form of sacred music that cannot be secular – though I can’t detect anything religious in the music of the songs.

There are other sorts of church music – for instance, the choirs and soloists of southern states in the USA and extending to Britain. They have a power that pulls together words and music with expressive singing. It is mentioned by Harry in connection with the spirituals in *A Child of our Time*. Gareth Malone is briefly mentioned because of his mastery of his TV mostly scratch choirs.

How important are texts? A simple example is *Innsbruck ich muss dich lassen* by Isaac (c.1500) with secular text which Bach used for various chorales. Several choruses from the secular cantata *Tönet ihr Pauken* (BWV 214) were given new text for *The Christmas Oratorio*. The emphasis on major religious composers is restricted to certain composers who concentrated on church music, taking less seriously the third of the holy trio – Palestrina, Victoria and Lassus. Lassus is still undeservedly far less performed than the other two, perhaps because he wrote so much else (French chansons, Italian madrigals, German songs and secular Latin motets). And renaissance music didn’t just cover the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century: Josquin in particular, is considered top-notch by scholars but largely ignored in church.

Plainsong is mentioned frequently. As an aesthetic type of music, it was at its peak in the late middle ages. I was involved in choosing music for the new medieval gallery at the Victoria and Albert Museum, and I suggested that one of the greatest artistic creations of the period (and any period) was the fully-developed liturgy, with cycles by the day, the week, the month and the year. In the medieval periods it was largely sung by soloists, with the simpler bits sung by members of the monastery or paid clerics. By the early 17th century, however, plainsong was in decline, and what was revived in the 20th century was deliberately “holy” in a way that probably was unlike earlier styles.

Anglicans have a serious problem in singing psalms and canticles in prose. This is a phenomenon that doesn’t exist in secular society. What is wrong with metrical psalms? Why

1. She manages to sing the last word of each line, and if she tells someone what the hymn was, she says the last word of the first line.

is the Church of England quite so obsessed by the Old Testament anyway? Matins and Evensong have at least one canticle and several psalms. But hymn writers appeared in the 17th century adapting psalms as the basis of Christian, not just Hebrew, belief, set to memorable, metrical verses. Isaac Watts produced fine examples, and his Good Friday hymn is ubiquitous. I'll mention one of our family's favourite hymns, which we programmed to be sung while the congregation left the crematorium at my mother's funeral (though in fact everyone stayed and sang it). *My song is love unknown* has seven verses by Samuel Crossman (c.1624-84), an Anglican priest, with an interesting meter 6 6 6 : 4 4 4 and a fine tune for unison singing by John Ireland.<sup>2</sup> I wouldn't go to church to listen to a choir (though in my Anglican days I was happy to sing in one). But the only piece I remember is highly untypical: Bruckner's *Ecce sacerdos magnus*, with imports of singers and brass from the Royal Academy of Music.

Hymns are, of course, specifically religious, though parodies exist (*Fairest isle, all isles excelling* became *Love divine, all loves excelling*). This book is concerned about whether there is anything religious that comes across in concert halls. Why are Bach's passions so often sung in German in English-speaking countries? One might argue that Latin was, for centuries, a sacred language, but German? Luther's Bible is indeed an important piece of work,<sup>3</sup> but I would expect concerts to be given in German (with the German and English text side-by-side) but churches to perform it in the vernacular. Language is less of a concern with renaissance Latin – the texts are usually short except for the Mass, and they need translating unless the audience is very familiar with them. Catholics and Anglicans are likely to know the Mass, but possibly don't recognise the words, especially in a cathedral.

The book argues that music in itself is religious, and it can embrace religious music which is not generally thought of as liturgical. Verdi's *Requiem*, for instance, is normally a concert piece. More to the point, I was puzzled in my youth why most years a Sunday service was replaced by sections of *Messiah*. I'm incredibly grateful for being able to sing each voice of every chorus and also accompany the motley choir of about 20; it inspired me, but musically. Handel's oratorios were written to keep entertainment and profit going in theatres in Lent and *Messiah* only later became part of the religious experience. I wish I could remember exactly a quote from one of John Potter's books on singing to the effect that only about 10% of professional church singers were believers. This undermines the idea that church singers are religious.

I add a few specific comments.

p. 7. There is nothing untoward about Bach only performing the *St Matthew Passion* four times. He wasn't expected to perform it each year; I haven't got the information to hand, but I presume that the Passions are listed somewhere. There was no expectation that they would be performed after his death, except for being

2. John Ireland (1879-1962) was organist at St Luke's Chelsea (1904-26).

3. I bought an impressive facsimile at a Christmas market stall in Bremen a few years ago, though I'm hardly fluent in it!

adapted by CPE Bach: the idea of a revival in 1829 would have been utterly implausible.

p. 9. How boring – never to include in a concert music which generates laughter.

p. 10. At least one reason for Monteverdi's 1610 *Vespers* was to demonstrate the maximum contrast of musical styles, and with chant more prominent (one might say more blatant) than in virtually any other work.

p. 19. I think that Bach's cello suites are definitely at a supreme level of composition and, in some circumstances, performance – but I find listening to music is often something that gets me by surprise, like hearing Mark Caudle play a couple of suites in his kitchen in Lodz a few months ago. A very difficult example was hearing Tippett as muzak throughout Utrecht station and the shopping area leading across to the concert hall.<sup>4</sup> The best music, I find, is so often unexpected and not necessarily live.

p. 38. The *Gaude, Gaude* that begins the chorus of *Veni, veni Emmanuel* is a strong-weak stress, as indeed is *Veni*. It is probably incorrigible – blame the 1850s carol enthusiasts!

p. 49. James MacMillan seems obsessed with lurking plainsong. If you know the tune, it must have some significance to catholics but of little relevance to most anglicans. In a secular context (a demonstration of Japanese/English medieval faith), I find *Curlew River's* chant climax impressive.

p. 57. Beethoven's instrumental works are considered as sacred. My feeling is that they are reaching out for something beyond normal music, associated with religion as a metaphor. Music that really inspired me when I was a student was Tallis's *Lamentations* (not considered in a religious way), Purcell's *Fantazias*, and the slow movement of Brahms's horn trio (on the strength of a single live performance). A piece I've felt thus right through my life is Vaughan Williams's *Tallis Fantasy*, which I've rarely heard live.<sup>5</sup> The basis is a hymn (not often sung, either to the original or a more recent text). One can imagine it as the sounds of heaven, but VW wasn't in that line of business.

p. 92. According to the author, Monteverdi *Vespers* was written for choral forces and soloists: Roger Bowers established that the total number of singers available in Mantua was around ten – no chorus! And unless he has changed his position over 50 years, John Eliot Gardiner still believes that the *Vespers* were written for Venice.

Sadly, this book needs strong questioning by the author and a broader concept of sacred music – and most of secular society (presumably a very large percentage of the population) won't understand what the book is about. 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

After some delay, I decided that I'd better review this myself. Time was, however, short, so I'm taking it with me on a cruise early in April, which should give me time to read it. CB

4. I'm not sure now whether it was the *Concerto for Double String Orchestra*, heard around 1990, or the *Fantasia Concertante on a Theme of Corelli*, which I caught at a rehearsal at Dartington c.1965

5. most memorably under Roger Norrington for the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary performance in Gloucester, played to the cathedral..

## ‘CHAINS OF (REHABILITATED) GOLD’

Roger Bowers

In his review of the conference of Gold: Rhetoric and Performance in the Verse Anthem held at Cambridge in March 2013,<sup>1</sup> Simon Ravens adverted to the paper which I had given (entitled ‘Chapel, church and parlour: the locale of the verse anthem and sacred domestic consort, c.1590–1625’), and wondered why, in view of research lately published by himself, Andrew Johnstone, Dominic Gwynne and others, I evidently wished to extend to the early 17th century the conclusions which I published twenty years ago on the vocal scoring and performing pitch of English ecclesiastical vocal music prior to c.1558. In defence, I can say only that I have not yet encountered scholarship that impinges sufficiently closely on my actual subject-matter to give me pause before doing so.

At issue is the sounding pitch of church polyphony for voices at that period, and also the existence of the adult falsetto voice as executant of the vocal timbre next below the top. My own paper espoused practice long received, whereby the scoring for standard five-part English church music of the early seventeenth century (in clefs C1-C3-C3-C4-F4) is understood to have been for three upper voices (mean and two falsetto altos) and two low (tenor and bass). However, without discernible exception the conference participants adopted a novel understanding of sounding pitch as having been strikingly low, produced by a scoring of but a single upper voice and four voices in tenor to bass timbres (two tenors, baritone, bass). In modern terms, when applied to the overall compass of twenty notes commonly encountered in this repertory, appreciation of sounding pitch in the received opinion homes in on the range A flat to f, but in the revisionist on F to d. Thus a single piece of music may be sounded in one case by three upper timbres of voice and two low, and in the other case a minor third lower by one upper timbre and four low. To the ear the distinction is wholly radical, and acutely disconcerting.

In resolving issues of absolute sounding pitch in terms of cycles per second nothing can be learnt from examination of the clefs. Each individual clef disclosed the lie on the staff of the diatonic semitones, while the overall configuration of clefs exhibited by each piece disclosed the differentials between the component voices and the extent of the overall compass. Not until well into the 17th century did there begin to emerge the concept of looking to the clef for some intimation also of actual sounding pitch; this thitherto had been determinable only by convention and context. Thomas Morley in 1597 explained the function of the clefs in solmisation terms in association with the part-names bass and treble, but gave no hint that the singer might look to them for any

intimation of exact sounding pitch.<sup>2</sup> Even in avant-garde Italy, so late as 1610 a theorist and teacher so authoritative as Adriano Banchieri could tell a pupil only that the sole job of the clef was to disclose to the singer whether the part he was looking at lay roughly low, middling or high, and whether b was flat or natural.<sup>3</sup> Musical notation had many functions, but prescription of sounding pitch was not yet one of them.

Rather, resolution of this debate involves address to two distinct issues. As a matter preliminary, from mere inspection of the written music there may be established the evolving patterns of overall compass, of vocal lay-out in terms of the differentials between the component voices, and of nomenclature for the several voice-parts. From this there may be established (largely by inference, for prevailing lack of direct evidence) the nature of the vocal timbres engaged for each sounding part, and the actual sounding pitch of the individual timbres and of the overall compass for the repertory.

### The antecedents: vocal timbre and sounding pitch, c.1450–1547

In print I have expressed in detail views on only the Latin repertoire, as performed up to, but no later than, c.1558.<sup>4</sup> However, it is in an understanding of exactly these antecedents that there lies the resolution of this present debate, since the issues exist in no self-contained quarantine; they are part of a continuum stretching from the beginnings of notation to the 19th century. Fortunately, the manner in which composers had been laying out the vocal scoring of church polyphony in England throughout the 150 years or so preceding c.1558 does appear readily ascertainable, and here needs no more than the briefest statement.

In the years between 1450 and 1475 composers effected upon their vocal scoring a radical change. They took the three-part pattern of scoring long prevalent, consisting of

2. He remarked merely that in vocal terms, ‘under *Gam* ut the voice seemed as a kinde of humming, and above *E* la a kinde of constrained skricking’: Thomas Morley, *A Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practicall Musick* (London, 1597), pp. 3–7; also [199]–[200].

3. ‘Questo nome di chiave, altro non significa che uno aprimento al Cantore se la parte sia grave, mezana, ovvero acuta, se la modulatione sia per b, molle ovvero quadro’ (‘This term ‘clef’ denotes nothing other than a disclosure to the singer whether the part is low, middling or high, and whether inflection is by b-flat or b-natural’); Adriano Banchieri, *La cartella ... utile à gli figliuoli, & principianti* (Venice, 1610), p. 22.

4. There remains as yet unpublished a passage extending the story to vernacular church music of the period up to c.1565, excised for lack of space from R. Bowers, ‘The vocal scoring, choral balance and performing pitch of Latin church polyphony in England, c.1500–58’, *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, 112 (1987), pp. 38–76 (reprinted in *English Church Polyphony: Singers and Sources from the Fourteenth to the Seventeenth Century* (Aldershot, 1999), item III).

one untitled voice pitched a fifth above two lower voices of identical timbre and range (labelled as Tenor and, as its duplicate in pitch, Contratenor); and without altering this core in any way, they added both a foundation voice pitched a fifth below, and an upper voice pitched a fifth above. Thus did the men's-voices vocal scoring of the generation of Dunstable and Power, engaging an overall compass of up to two octaves, evolve into that of the Eton Choirbook period and later, engaging an overall compass of up to three octaves and a second laid out for five parts identified in the sources as *Triplex*, *Medius*, *Contratenor*, *Tenor* and *Bassus*.<sup>5</sup> For the earlier scoring the incidence of the diatonic semitones within the music predicated a clef-configuration (prevailing, but far from universal) of *C*2-*C*4-*C*4, and for the later a configuration of that same core book-ended by the two new voices, as *G*2-*C*2-*C*4-*C*4-*F*4. In this configuration the range of *Triplex* was written as *d*'-*g*”, of *Medius* as *g*-*c*”, of *Contratenor* and *Tenor* as *c*-*f*”, and of *Bassus* as *F*-*b*. Schematically, this evolution may be shown as in Figure 1.

executant	Part-name	c.1400-1450	c.1450-70 and beyond	Part-name	executant
I		[not used]		Triplex	boy treble
II	falsetto alto	[untitled]		Medius	falsetto alto
III	tenor I	Contratenor		Contratenor	tenor I
III	tenor II	Tenor		Tenor	tenor II
IV		[not used]		Bassus	bass

Figure 1. Addition, c. 1450-70, of two voices as outer parts to historic three-part texture of composed church polyphony (*preferred interpretation, rational and plausible*).

It will be seen that at 23 notes the great breadth of the overall compass of the five-part scoring offers little room for manoeuvre in respect of the identity of the constituent vocal timbres. Boy trebles sang the topmost part, adult basses the lowest, tenors both third and fourth, and altos the second (*Medius*). The identity of the altos may readily be established. Precisely coeval with this expansion of compass there was adopted at the greater choirs a striking innovation. Thitherto the musical component of the job of Master of the Choristers at the greater churches had not extended beyond his coaching of the boys in plainsong and improvised descant. However, starting in c.1460 there was inaugurated an innovative practice of appointing to this office a practitioner specially skilled in training boys to undertake not these duties alone, but in addition the singing of written polyphony ('pricksong'). It follows that prior to c.1450-60 the voices of the boys had not yet been used in the performance of the repertoire of composed polyphony. It was therefore by adult falsettists that there

5. This was the interpretation of the evidence favoured by the greatest expert in this field: see F. L. Harrison, *Music in Medieval Britain*, 2nd edn (London, 1963), pp. 311-12. For clarity, part-names will be designated by upper-case initial letters, vocal timbres by lower-case.

had always been sung the erstwhile unnamed part; and there is no reason whatever to imagine that the singing of the successor *Medius* parts in five-part three-octave scoring was committed to anyone other than these same adult falsettists.<sup>6</sup>

This interpretation is corroborated by the terms of the endowment under which Robert Shirburn, bishop of Chichester, amplified in 1526 the choral resources of his cathedral church by the conferment upon it of offices for four adult lay clerks. The lawyer by whom his wishes were verbalised expressed them thus within the deed of foundation:

statuimus igitur et ordinamus ... quod sint ibidem perpetuo quatuor clerici laici concinnas voces habentes et musice docti, quorum unus ad minus semper sit basse naturalis et audibilis vocis, aliorum vero trium voces sint suaves et canore ita quod a communi vocum succentu possint naturaliter et libere ascendere ad quindecim vel sexdecim notas,<sup>7</sup> ...

The meaning is clear enough:

wherefore we decree and ordain ... that there be there in perpetuity four lay clerks possessing pleasing voices and learned in music, of whom let always at least one be of a bass voice natural and audible, and let the voices of the other three be sweet and sonorous so that from their voices' common accord they are able naturally and freely to rise to fifteen or sixteen notes...

Those familiar with this style of legal document (an indenture) will understand that the chosen phraseology ruled out all chance of ambiguity here.<sup>8</sup> In respect of the stipulation for realisation of a compass of fifteen or sixteen notes, the wording was so chosen as to require that it be understood to apply solely to the three voices in the direct context of which it was made. Had it been intended to apply to all four voices, for necessary clarity the compiler would have been obliged to write (adopting conventional legal verbiage) 'a communi vocum omnium predictarum succentu' ('from the common accord of all the aforesaid voices').

Thus Shirburn's requirement of these four lay clerks was clear. One should be a bass 'natural and audible', able to negotiate with ease and clarity the lowest reaches of a timbre regularly written down to *F*. The compass of fifteen or sixteen notes to be generated by the three voices remaining was to be that exhibited by the next three upward in the standard five-part writing of this period, written as *c*-*c*” (or even *d*”) and evidently for performance by adult voices of tenor and falsetto alto timbre. The fifth, topmost, voice remained for performance by the boys.

Inspection establishes, therefore, that the five-part ecclesiastical music of the early sixteenth century was being composed for four timbres of voice performing parts

6. See R. Bowers, 'To chorus from quartet: the performing resource for English church polyphony, c.1390-1559', in *English Choral Practice 1400-1625*, ed. J. Morehen (Cambridge, 1995), 1-47, pp. 10-31 (reprinted in *idem, English Church Polyphony*, item II).

7. London, British Library, Cotton Charter xii.60.

8. This observation permits the withdrawal of an injudicious observation made on an earlier occasion (Bowers, 'The vocal scoring, choral balance and performing pitch', p. 39 n.29).

labelled respectively Triplex (written d - g"), Medius (g - c"), Tenor/Contratenor (c - f'), and Bassus (F - b), engaging the clef-configuration G<sub>2</sub>-C<sub>2</sub>-C<sub>4</sub>-C<sub>4</sub>-F<sub>4</sub> and an overall compass of up to the 23 notes written as F - g". Contemporary documentary sources identified as available the four timbres of boy treble, falsetto alto, tenor, and bass; and these are the voices into which the scoring envisaged may be seen naturally to have fallen. When analogous modern clefs are substituted for the original this music does happen to take on (albeit by nothing other than pure but very convenient chance) an appearance immediately realisable by these timbres of voice at modern pitch (a' = 440). Pieces engaging all four timbres and overall compasses of either 22 or 21 notes would have been performed at some pitch comfortable for the voices within the overall range now sounding as F - g".

**The vernacular liturgy: language, voices and pitch,  
1549-53, 1559-1642/6**

For any discussion of the sounding pitch and vocal scoring of sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century music at least the starting-point is thus clear. At least in outline, the further evolution onward from c.1500 to c.1600 is no less clear, and was radical.

1. The five-part scoring prevalent in c.1500, engaging an overall compass of 23 notes realised by four timbres of voice of which it was the second from bottom that was doubled, had by c.1600 evolved into a five-part vocal scoring now engaging an overall compass of only 20 notes, and still four timbres of voice of which it was the second from top that was doubled.
2. Most radically, the Contratenor part had ceased to be, in terms of timbre and pitch, merely a duplicate of Tenor, and had emerged as in its own right a part sung by a distinct timbre of voice sounding at least a third higher.
3. Meanwhile, at all points the feature most crucial for understanding the identity of this transition is the marked compression of the differential between timbres II and III, from a fifth in c.1500 to only a third in c.1600. Juxtaposed, the two scorings appear as in Figures 2(a) and 2(b).

At least two separate stages may be discerned in the course of this transition. Starting somewhat before 1520 and becoming commoner in the 1530s, and apparently as a means somewhat to lighten the texture, some composers began to deploy the established tenor voice in either one or two out of altogether three slightly different manifestations. A 'full-range' tenor realised a range of a twelfth, commonly written c - g'; a 'low-range' tenor a tenth, written c - e'; and an 'upper-range' tenor also a tenth, written e - g'. When these divergences were engaged, commonly the 'low-range' tenor retained the C<sub>4</sub> clef and was copied into the 'Tenor' part-book, while the 'full-range' and 'upper-range' tenor were transferred into the C<sub>3</sub> clef (lately but rarely used) and were copied into the 'Contratenor' part-book. Each of these voices still was

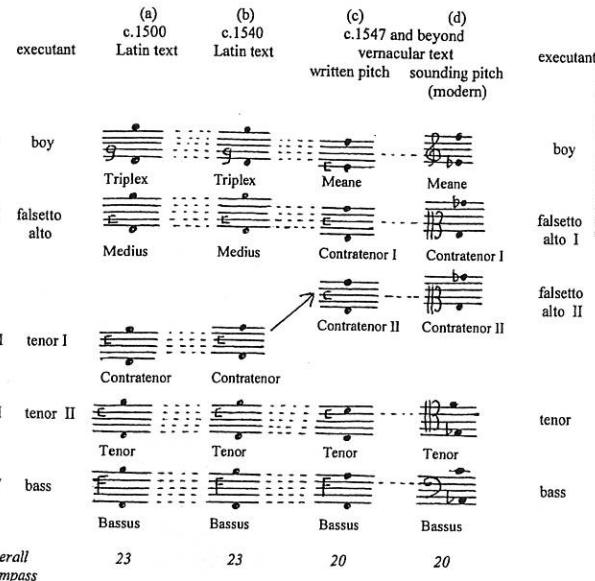


Figure 2. Constituent voices for five-part church polyphony, as at (a) c. 1500 (Latin text); (b) c.1540 (Latin text); (c) c.1547 onward (vernacular text); with (d) constituent voices c.1547 onward (vernacular text) at sounding pitch (a' = 440), disclosing close degree of commonality with sounding pitch c.1500.

of tenor timbre. Meanwhile, for Latin music the Medius part retained the C<sub>2</sub> clef, and Triplex the G<sub>2</sub> clef (Figure 2(b)).<sup>10</sup>

Although the exact sequence of events awaits a full elucidation, it is clear that it was by the introduction of the English vernacular Book of Common Prayer in 1549, superseding wholly the historic Latin service, that the transition onward from Figure 2(b) to Figure 2(c) was ignited and propelled. Together, these precipitated a re-appraisal of the manner in which the four standard timbres of voice could best be applied to the setting of words at all. These four existing vocal timbres – boy, falsetto alto, tenor and bass – naturally continued to sing as far as possible within their accustomed ranges; down upon them, however, there now bore a number of contributory factors precipitating change. None in itself was revolutionary; together, however, they aggregated into a considerable overall transition.

1. In order to obviate difficulties in articulating at the extremes of range the vowels of vernacular English (especially diphthongs) set syllabically, and doubtless also out of compliance with protestant values of restraint and austerity, the range of each timbre was truncated by the forfeit of up to three semitones.
2. Such surrender both of the topmost pitches of the boy's voice and of the lowest pitches of the bass generated a reduction in the prevailing overall compass from 23 notes to 20.
3. To accommodate this retrenchment at the extremes, composers compressed the differential between the falsetto alto timbre and the tenor timbre from a fifth to a third; while the tenor remained in clef C<sub>4</sub>, this compression was registered by location of the falsetto alto

9. It may be noted that venerable 'high-pitch' theories which, when applied to Latin repertory of the period up to c.1558, generated a sounding compass of A flat - b flat" or even c "", have long been superseded, and (except by just one or two choral groups of an older generation) are now disregarded and disused.

10. Bowers, 'To chorus from quartet', pp. 39-43.

voice in clef C<sub>3</sub> and the boy's voice in clef C<sub>1</sub>.

4. The erstwhile 'high-range' tenor timbre was assimilated into falsetto alto, whereby former 'double tenor' scoring was superseded by 'double alto' scoring.

5. The natural propensity of all voices to continue to sing as far as possible within their accustomed ranges meant that sounding pitch now was so located that from their sight of each written note the singers found themselves producing a pitch higher than latterly (the manner of notation having remained constant), by an interval of about a major second or minor third.

6. Working upward from Bassus (or outward from Tenor) the existing part-book names were retained, so that Contratenor books I and II now contained the music for falsetto altos I and II, and Medius contained the part for boy's voice.

The determinants in all this shift were evidently the change of textual language and the adoption of a restrained aesthetic, resulting in the superseding of an expansively melismatic setting of Latin text by a tersely syllabic setting of vernacular.<sup>11</sup> That is, it may be understood that certain of those extremes of pitch that formerly were cultivated were found now to be discouragingly difficult to sing on single syllables articulated on troublesome English diphthongs; and compounding this shift in compositional approach, the austere aesthetic culture of evangelical protestantism militated likewise against expansive vocal range, as a form of distasteful excess in religious expression. In response to both, the lowest pitches of the bass and tenor, and the very highest pitches of boy treble and falsetto alto, always thitherto readily realisable on extended melismas sung to pure Latin vowels, now perforce were relinquished and discarded.

The consequence most immediately evident was a reduction in prevailing overall compass in writing for full choir. Firstly, within such a collection of four-part music as John Day's anthology *Certaine Notes*, published in 1560/65 but containing pieces mostly of the Edwardian period,<sup>12</sup> it may be seen that no voice within that music exhibited the range of eleven notes normal for pre-Reformation Latin music; each had contracted to ten notes or even only nine. Further, comparison of Figures 2(a) and 2(c) shows that in respect of the transition to the vocal scoring of c.1600 from that of c.1500, the prevalent overall compass, despite still engaging four distinct timbres, had contracted from 23 notes to 20. Thus this contraction had been accommodated not by simple suppression of one of the erstwhile vocal timbres; rather, it had been rendered possible by compression in the middle of the compass, between the second timbre and the third. The pattern of differentials between the four successive earlier timbres had been fifth-fifth-fifth. That

between the four later timbres stood as fifth-third-fifth; and, correspondingly, a prevailing pattern of clefs of G<sub>2</sub>, C<sub>2</sub>, C<sub>4</sub> and F<sub>4</sub> for the four vocal timbres had been succeeded by C<sub>1</sub>, C<sub>3</sub>, C<sub>4</sub>, and F<sub>4</sub>.

There is no reason to imagine that at this time any of the four timbres of voice cultivated prior to 1547 – boy, falsetto alto, tenor, and bass – was modified to any degree greater than that which the adoption of a vernacular liturgy and a protestant aesthetic actually required. So there can be no doubt that it was to boy, falsetto alto, tenor and bass that the singing of music in, respectively, clefs C<sub>1</sub>, C<sub>3</sub>, C<sub>4</sub> and F<sub>4</sub> was now committed; and it is apparent that the contraction of the interval between the two middle timbres had been facilitated by the absorption and fusion of the erstwhile 'high-range' tenor (clef C<sub>3</sub>) into the erstwhile falsetto alto (clef C<sub>2</sub>). From these two antecedents was generated a pair of equal voices of predominantly a falsetto alto character, of a topmost pitch somewhat lower than that of the erstwhile falsetto alto but of a general tessitura palpably higher than that of the former 'high-range' tenor.

This pair of contributory voices had metamorphosed naturally into a pair of successors, presented as equal voices sounding above the retained 'low-range' tenor and the bass. For them and their exponents there was generated (from the designation of the part-book next above Tenor, formerly the repository of one of the antecedent voices) the term 'Contratenor' or 'countertenor'. The character of this 'countertenor' timbre, and the manner of its deployment, is evident in the music. One pattern of four-part writing, which discarded the boys' voices but was common for Edwardian vernacular music, engaged an ensemble consisting of the resultant pair of the new countertenors, one tenor, and one bass. Disposed in the clef-configuration C<sub>3</sub>-C<sub>3</sub>-C<sub>4</sub>-F<sub>4</sub>, this was applied within an overall compass of some sixteen notes written as F-g". Meanwhile, in pieces that still used boys' voices their part was written at the conventional fifth above, now necessarily in clef C<sub>1</sub> with written range c'-d".

Thus did the term 'countertenor' first come to designate the falsetto alto; and offering particularly valuable corroboration for this conclusion is the manner in which it is from precisely this period, in 1551, that there arise the earliest instances so far known of the use both of the Latin term *Contratenor* and of the vernacular term *countertenor* in contexts that indicate that these had indeed ceased to denote merely a 'duplicate-tenor' (the actual meaning of *Contratenor*), and were being used to identify both a self-contained and specific timbre of voice distinct from tenor, and also the specific singer by whom it was performed. Thus on 18 June 1551 the chapter of Salisbury Cathedral conferred upon one Patrick Foorde the reversion of the next appointment to a lay vicarage choral in the choir, upon report received from the existing vicars that 'they are destitute of one vicar singing the part called the Countertenor'. A little later, on 19 October 1551 the vicars presented to the chapter, for admission as a lay vicar, one John Seyarde, 'singing on the countertenor

11. For some comparison of the demands made by Latin and English text and pronunciation on the techniques of singing, see David Wulstan, *Tudor Music* (London, 1985), pp. 225-33, 239-40.

12. *Certaine Notes set forth in four and three parts to be song at the morning Communion and evening prayer ... Imprinted at London over Aldersgate beneath S. Martins by John Day* (London, 1560/65). As published, this volume contained no music in only three parts.

part'.<sup>13</sup> Never before had these terms been used in such manners and senses; it is evident that it was by aspects of the change from the Latin service to the vernacular under Edward VI that this evolution had been stimulated.<sup>14</sup>

In terms of sounding pitch, the voices naturally retained as far as possible their historic ranges. Meanwhile, there being no reason to do any other, the bottom note of the bass continued to be scribed as F; and of this resort the consequence for sounding pitch in relation to written pitch was radical, and is illustrated by comparison of Figures 2(a) and 2(d). While its manner of writing remained unchanged, the bass was drawn upward by some two or three semitones and the erstwhile treble downward by some three or two; the tenor was trimmed at top and bottom, while the pressure on the middle was relieved by the generation of the Contratenor part sung by alto within the former alto range. All was now so sung that sight of the written note resulted in the production of a pitch a whole tone or a minor third higher than that which had prevailed before 1547. Bearing in mind that Figures 2(a) and 2(b) fortuitously present the several vocal ranges at modern sounding pitch, comparison with Figure 2(d) shows the extent to which a rise of pitch of a minor third retained as much as was possible of the historic sounding ranges of the respective voices.

In summary, therefore, and starting from the bottom, both the established clef of F4 and the traditional name were retained for the bass. For the ('low-range') tenor, likewise, there were retained both the name and its established C4 clef. The erstwhile alto absorbed the erstwhile 'high-range' tenor, and adopted both the part-book name and the clef, C3, of the latter; it may be understood that it was the surrender of its two topmost semitones that facilitated the erstwhile alto's adoption of the name of 'Contratenor', being that of the timbre absorbed into it. The boys' part was pitched a fifth above in the clef of C1 (thitherto almost never used). Shorn of its upper pitches and thus robbed of its most striking feature, it surrendered its historic name of 'treble' in favour of the logical expedient of adoption of the next name upward; however, in recognition that there was necessary some sign of its change of exponent from adult to boy, *Medius* was commonly anglicised to 'meane'. The deployment of all four voices in vernacular music is well exemplified within Day's *Certaine Notes*, wherein each of the 54 pieces was identified explicitly as either 'for men' or 'for children' (that is, for full choir). The pieces that were

13. 'sunt destituti de uno vicario cantante ad partem vocatam le Cownter tenor': Salisbury, Archives of the Dean and Chapter, Reg. Holte, fo. 29r. 'cantantem ad partem contratenoris': *ibid.*, fo. 29v. For further context see R. Bowers, 'The reform of the choir of Salisbury Cathedral, c.1450-1549', forthcoming in *Late Medieval Liturgies Enacted: The Experience of Worship in Cathedral and Parish Church*, ed. Sally Harper, P.S. Barnwell, and Magnus Williamson.

14. Just at the very largest choirs, after c.1530 the 'full-range' tenor might be doubled to create a six-part texture using the clef-combination G2-C2-C3-C3-C4-F4. However, any suggestion that the Edwardian C3-C3-C4-F4 configuration emerged from the simple retention of the lower four of these voices *without change of pitch or timbre* is negated by countervailing evidence such as (among much else) this establishing the Edwardian emergence of countertenor as a timbre actually distinct from tenor.

designated explicitly 'for men' used a bass voice (written F - a, clef F4, Bassus book) and three voices permuted from tenor (c - d' or e', clef C4, Tenor book) and alto (e - g', clef C3, Contratenor book). Those for full choir were composed for one each of these adult voices, amplified by a part for boys (written c' - d'', clef C1, Medius book). In five-part writing it was the Contratenor part that was doubled, in consequence of its generation from two erstwhile contributory voices.

Thus were generated those features for which the vernacular-texted music of the period following 1547 was conspicuous: the reduction in overall compass, the contraction of the differential between the second and third vocal timbres, and the change of clef for the boy's voice from G2 to C1. These Edwardian revisions to vocal scoring proved eventually to be durable. The rapid rescissions and resumptions of fortune generated by the brevity of the reign of Edward VI (1547-53), the return of the Latin repertory under Mary I (1553-58) and the restoration of the vernacular service under Elizabeth I from June 1559, produced for the music of the church services inconstancies and reversals in the manner of vocal scoring that are evident but not yet fully elucidated. Nevertheless, by c.1570 the pattern exhibited by Figure 2(c) appears already to have been established as largely conventional for the vernacular music of Elizabeth's church. The 'Edwardian' scoring for two countertenors, tenor and bass, already found to be suitable for the setting of vernacular text, was duly revived, now commonly topped off by a part for boys' voices called *meane*. Hereby there prevailed a predominant clef-configuration of C1-C3-C3-C4-F4, for *meane*, two altos, tenor and bass, applied to the overall compass of some nineteen or twenty notes written as F-d'' (or e'') that was conventional for church music set to vernacular texts up until the extinction of the sung service in 1642/6.<sup>15</sup>

Crucially, as observed above, at the time of the transition from Latin to English text the concomitant change in vocal scoring was realised by a rise in pitch in the range of two to three semitones (one whole tone to a minor third), so that the resulting 20-note compass in modern transcription needs to be pitched within the overall compass G - e'' or A flat - f. For this conclusion corroboration comes from a source perhaps unexpected.

Within the Germany known to the early seventeenth-century theorist Michael Praetorius there prevailed not one but a pair of individual pitch-standards, universally separated by one whole tone.<sup>16</sup> The higher was known as 'Cammer Thon' ('chamber pitch'), and the lower as 'Chor Thon' ('choir pitch'). The location of these as a pair within the continuum of sound was in practice not fixed

15. For the operation of these criteria in the ecclesiastical music of William Byrd, see R. Bowers, 'Ecclesiastical or domestic? Criteria for identification of the initial destinations of William Byrd's music to religious vernacular texts', in Richard Turbet, *William Byrd. A Research and Information Guide*, 3rd edn (New York and London, 2012), 134-60, pp. 135-9.

16. Michael Praetorius, *Syntagma Musicum*, 3 vols (Wolfenbüttel, 1614-19), ii, pp. 14-18 (also *Syntagma Musicum II: De Organographia*, trans. and ed. David Z. Crookes (Oxford, 1986), pp. 30-3).

but, from place to place, variable within a narrow margin; the differential between them of one whole tone was, however, constant. In the context of a discussion of sounding pitches published in 1619, Praetorius recorded his awareness that 'among our predecessors, Chor Thon was experienced about one tone lower' than in his own day; and he observed further how over the years at certain princely chapels of Germany, and also in Italy and in England, this pitch had risen progressively to its present level.<sup>17</sup> In England, that is, while the manner in which the music was notated had remained constant, the pitch sounded by singers from their sight of each written note had lately risen, by about a major second.

Praetorius is not known ever to have visited England, and his knowledge of English music appears to have been only slight. Apparently his report was but hearsay, and on its own would carry little weight. However, its happy coincidence with features also directly exhibited by the relevant music bestows upon his report a most helpful degree of corroborative value. Hearsay may in fact be well founded; and in this case it does appear indeed to have been so.

#### Organ pitch and singing pitch

I have encountered no scholarship that countervails convincingly against these conclusions.

Lately there has been published a substantial volume of research on the nature and sounding pitch of the church organ at this time. It derives primarily from resolution that three pipes surviving at Stanford-on-Avon from an English organ of c.1630, bearing original markings establishing their respective pitch-classes as D, E and F, sound in terms of modern pitch ( $a' = 440$ ) 'just over an augmented fourth sharper'.<sup>18</sup> This is work of great erudition and of much interest. However, it can have no bearing upon the issue of the sounding pitch of the timbres of voice engaged for the contemporary liturgical choir. Under any circumstances it would be risky to project as all-encompassing a conclusion concerning the sounding pitch of the English church organ that has been deduced from just a single example that may or may not have been typical of its period. But even less can any such conclusion be considered as bearing some relevance for a determinatory exercise in the elucidation of the sounding pitch of any voices which the organ at this time was called upon to accompany. Although some trenchant claims have been made to the contrary,<sup>19</sup> there is no reason whatever

17. 'Es ist aber der Chor Thon bey den Alten anfangs umb ein Thon niedriger und tieffer gewesen ... Und hernacher von Jahren zu Jahren so weit erhöher worden, als er jetzo in Italia und Engellandt, auch in den Fürstlichen Capellen Deutches Landes im gebrauch ist': Praetorius, *Syntagma Musicum*, ii, pp. 14-15.

18. Andrew Johnstone, "'As it was in the beginning': organ and choir pitch in early Anglican church music", *Early Music*, 31 (2003), 507-25, pp. 508-9.

19. Johnstone, "'As it was in the beginning'", pp. 507-8, 522; also *Early Music*, 32 (2004), pp. 348-9, within a counter-response to observations tendered by David Wulstan. See also Magnus Williamson, sleeve-notes to compact disc *More Sweet to Hear: Organs and Voices of Tudor England*, OXCD-101 (OxRecs Digital, 2007), pp. 22-3.

to imagine that the singing voices were trussed into any sort of mandatory congruity with the pitch of the organ. If the sounds generated by the organ keys were found not to be matching those generated from ostensibly the same notation by the voices, then the organist simply transposed.

Within the limitations imposed by systems of mean-tone tuning, the organ readily transposes. The singers were long established as the principal conveyors of worship in church; the organ was an utter parvenu, only newly introduced into the performing ensemble. When the organ could so easily conform to the singers there was no rational call upon the singers to conform to the organ. The church organ possessed extensive scope and capacity to transpose as required, and abundant evidence testifies to the capacity long expected of its players to do so.<sup>20</sup> Indeed, it may be noted that when, starting in the first decade of the seventeenth century, the office of organist at the greater English churches began commonly to be separated from that of Master of the Choristers, it was the organist who was by far the higher paid. As one example of many, in 1634 at King's College, Cambridge, Henry Loosemore was being paid £20 per year simply as organist, while as lay clerk (£4) and Master of the Choristers (46s 8d) Lawrence Eusden received just £6 6s 8d.<sup>21</sup> A ready facility in transposition was, in every probability, one of the superior skills for which the churches were willing to pay so handsomely.

In no sense, therefore, was singing pitch determined by organ pitch. When accompanying voices, the player would transpose as necessary.<sup>22</sup> The copy from which he played might be scribed at a pitch the same as that of the vocal parts; alternatively, it might be re-clefed to some configuration which either represented directly the pitch desired, or from which the requisite transposition was more easily made. The voices sang as they long had sung; and to that practice, the organ duly conformed.

#### The falsetto alto timbre

Also, there have been made endeavours to dissolve confidence in the existence of the adult male falsetto as a component timbre of the ensemble for ecclesiastical music in England before 1660. These exercises, however, carry little or no conviction. For instance, any appeal made to documentary sources involves apparently a consistent obligation to argue for meanings wholly dissonant from those which the texts certainly appear *prima facie* to convey.<sup>23</sup> Further, one such endeavour

20. See, for example, Johnstone, "'As it was in the beginning'", pp. 509-11 and *passim*.

21. Each also received board and lodging (at a common rate), either in cash (Loosemore) or in kind (Eusden). Eusden also earned himself a further 16s 8d per year as sexton. Cambridge, King's College, Archives of the Provost and Scholars, Mundum Book 1633/34, 'Pensiones et vadia' (for breakdown of Eusden's stipend see *ibid.*, Mundum Book 1608/09, 'Pensiones', fourth quarter).

22. Johnstone, "'As it was in the beginning'", pp. 512-17.

23. See e.g. the discussion of Charles Butler's description (1636) of the countertenor as 'the highest part of a man ... fittest for a man of a sweet shrill voice' in Simon Ravens, "'A sweet shrill voice': the countertenor

executant	Part-name	c.1400-1450	c.1450-70 and beyond	Part-name	executant	
I		[not used]		Triplex	boy treble	
II		[not used]		Medius	boy alto	
III	tenor	[untitled]		Contratenor	tenor I	
IV	bass I	Contratenor		Tenor	tenor II	
	IV	bass II	Tenor		Bassus	bass

Figure 3. Addition, c. 1450-70, of two voices as outer parts to historic three-part texture of composed church polyphony (alternative interpretation, ostensibly neither rational nor plausible).

dismisses almost without discussion the interpretation of the mid fifteenth-century evolution of five-part scoring from three-part that has been suggested here, and proposes instead (if I understand correctly) the transition indicated in Figure 3. Allegedly, a three-part men's-voices scoring of tenor and two basses (clefs C2-C4-C4)<sup>24</sup> metamorphosed for some unidentified reason into a scoring for two tenors and one bass sounding at the same overall pitch but cleffed a fifth lower (clefs C4-C4-F4); above them the choristers were taught newly to sing not one part but two, as boy trebles and boy altos.<sup>25</sup> The two interpretations are not reconcilable; readers may wish to compare Figure 1 (above) and Figure 3, and judge for themselves the simple plausibility and likelihood of each. There may be added the considered opinion of Professor Frank Harrison, than whom no-one has known this repertory better: 'Though the actual pitch was partly a matter of convenience, it is clear that the range of polyphony until the second half of the fifteenth century corresponded to that of the tenor and countertenor voices of today'.<sup>26</sup>

and vocal scoring in Tudor England', *Early Music*, 26 (1998), 123-34, pp. 127-9, 130.

24. '... no piece of extant chant or polyphony from pre-1450 calls for a range which could not be easily accommodated by tenors and basses': Ravens, "A sweet shrill voice", pp. 130-1.

25. Boys could sing parts in alto range, and might well have done so when local practice or liturgical stipulation called for a boys-only ensemble, as often at Lady Mass and for certain festal responsories. Otherwise, in full ensemble work deployment of the boy alto was untypical and uncommon. Such practice emerged around 1500 and, when necessary, contributed to the Medius part a degree of reinforcement requisite to establish vocal balance. Its incidence appears to have been limited to a very small number of choirs that were constituted, most unusually, with more boys than men (see Bowers, 'To chorus from quartet', pp. 35-9: pages for which I would have found a manner of expression somewhat more trenchant had I foreseen how they might be misunderstood). Of these unusual choirs, that of Eton College nominally was one; however, in the light of observations made (Ravens, "A sweet shrill voice", p. 131), it may be noted that the presence there at any one time of numerous scholars formerly choristers of Eton College, King's College Cambridge, and St George's Chapel Windsor, meant that there was no shortage of experienced youthful voices now broken and available to reinforce the lower parts as desired. As pointed out above, the contention that 'the mean was, throughout the Tudor period, a boy's voice' (Ravens, "A sweet shrill voice", p. 130) cannot be sustained in respect of pre-Reformation Latin music (see Figure 1). Some similar misapprehensions may be found in Andrew Parrott, 'A brief anatomy of choirs c.1470-1770', in *The Cambridge Companion to Choral Music* (Cambridge, 2012), 7-26, pp. 15-16.

26. Harrison, *Music in medieval Britain*, p. 311.

The same endeavour also overlooks the need to address so cardinal an issue as the identification of the exponent of all pre-Reformation Contratenor parts as having been actually of tenor timbre,<sup>27</sup> and does not even recognise, let alone confront, the radical upheavals of the mid-sixteenth century that substantially altered the profile of four-timbre five-part scoring and reduced its overall compass.<sup>28</sup>

Moreover, claims that post-Reformation countertenor parts upwardly transposed lie dismally low for falsettists do not accord, so far as I know, with the experience of several generations of professional altos and of the more talented of their cathedral counterparts.<sup>29</sup> In this context, at the conference itself a degree of perhaps injudicious mirth was directed toward recorded performances made by falsettists of the solo part in the verse anthem version of Orlando Gibbons's 'This is the record of John'. Perhaps there lay in the composer's text-setting a degree of subtlety overlooked by the speaker and audience. 'I am the voice of one that crieth in the wilderness' does indeed need to be sung out strongly at a firm point in the tessitura. But the descending phrase on 'I am not the Christ' and that set to 'and he answered No' are rightly placed toward the bottom of the alto register. John the Baptist found himself being asked if he was a reincarnation of one of the greatest of the prophets, or even 'the Christ' himself. As Gibbons appreciated, the appalled denial of someone else's blasphemously mistaken view that you might be the Messiah was something to be undertaken with horrified reticence and shocked humility, rather than trumpeted across the Judæan wilderness with a tenor megaphone.

It can be said only that the conference's live performances of this repertory, realised to a vocal scoring of meane, two tenors, baritone and bass, did this marvellous music no favours whatever. Leached of all colour and vitality, to this pair of ears it emerged as turgid and dreary, leaden, bottom-heavy and monochrome.

Altos, come back. All is forgiven.

For the present writer, the extension up to 1642 of conclusions already published remains work in progress. The views expressed here are but interim; many hundreds of items of music yet remain for inspection, examination and analysis. However, and very broadly expressed, it may be averred that the five-part, four-timbre Latin church music of the first half of the sixteenth century occupied an overall compass of up to 23 notes written as F-g; the five-part, four-timbre vernacular church music of the second half of the sixteenth century and later occupied an overall compass of 20 notes written as F-d. The manner in which these coincided exactly in time, c.1450-75, both

27. e.g. Ravens, "A sweet shrill voice", pp. 126-7, 132 n.5.

28. e.g. Ravens, "A sweet shrill voice", pp. 125 and Ex. 1 (which presents the extremely rare and anomalous 'treble' of post-1600 as if a standard voice). Observations arising from consideration of the stature and physique of 15th-, 16th- and 17th-century English singers, boys and men (Ravens, "A sweet shrill voice", pp. 123-4), appear as yet too nebulous to permit the divination of any quantifiable conclusions, and are not considered here.

29. Ravens, "A sweet shrill voice", pp. 126-7, 128.

the inauguration of the use of boys' voices in composed polyphony, and the particular expansion of the compositional texture from three voices to five and of the overall compass from two octaves to three octaves and a second, certainly identifies the fundamental vocal scoring engaged in the later fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries as having been for permutations of boys' voices, basses, tenors, and falsetto altos. Albeit differently permuted, in two cases differently named, substantially trimmed at certain extremes and adapted to the needs of vernacular text, those four timbres of voice remained essentially unaltered into the early seventeenth century; and in empirical terms, between the two respective manners of notation the best match of individual vocal ranges is achieved by our now pitching the later music set to vernacular text up by about a tone (many editors have preferred a minor third) relative to that of the earlier. Such procedure happens to be happily corroborated not least by the manner in which it coincides perfectly with the hearsay reported by Michael Praetorius.

Experience suggests that it would be naïve to expect that that very much credence will ever be given to the conclusions of some obscure scholar, when they fail to accord with those preferred by a band of high-profile professional directors and performers. Nevertheless, the interpretations offered here arise not from any mere cherry-picking of a handful of selected and possibly untypical examples, but from some appreciation of the entire long-term continuum up to 1642, from comprehensive and systematic analysis of the scorings and of the differentials between the several voice-parts exhibited by over two thousand items of music from the period c.1300-1560 and beyond (and counting), and from prolonged study of the archival sources elucidating the nature of the performing resources available. When I am made aware of an effort of scholarship which from a methodical, sustained and comprehensive replication of such concentrated study has arrived at conclusions divergent or different from these, I will give it, of course, my urgent and undivided attention.



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Gottfried Heinrich STÖLZEL

Cantatas for Maundy Thursday & Good Friday 1749

Brian Clark

This issue's music offering comes from the fourth of a set of six cantatas by Gottfried Heinrich Stölzel (1690-1749) for performances in the castle chapel at Gotha on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday 1749. Stölzel is also believed to have written the poetic texts in the *Sechs geistliche Betrachtungen des leidenden und sterbenden Jesu, aus der Leidens-Geschichte der heiligen vier Evangelisten gezogen* (Six spiritual meditations on the suffering and dying Jesus, taken from the Passion story from the four holy gospels). The alto aria (on fol. 33r-35r of D-B Mus. ms. 21401, has a title page of which reads

*Passions-Musik  
vom Kapellm. Gottfried Heinrich  
Stölzel.  
aus C. P. E. Bachs Musikalien  
Vorrath.*

(Passion music by chapelmaster G. H. Stölzel, from C. P. E. Bach's musical stock). Not only did the manuscript once belong to Bach (he might conceivably have acquired it from his father, whom it seems used Stölzel's music in Leipzig services frequently in the 1730s), he actually used this aria (with one or two small amendments, which appear in the Berlin source) in his own 1771 *St Luke Passion*. A surviving wordbook for performances at Gotha in 1751 (by which time the composer had died and been replaced in his position by Georg Benda) has an alternative text shown above Bars 25 and 26. The text given in the body of the edition is from the MS. In its original context, the fourth meditation (*Christ judged by the Holy men*) would have been performed after the morning service on Good Friday.

Kim Patrick Clow and I had intended to have the set of six cantatas available for performance by Easter 2014, but unfortunately this has proved impossible. We shall, however, endeavour to have them ready before the feast returns in 2015. We are fortunate enough to have been joined in the project by Marc-Roderich Pfau, a specialist in finding cantata wordbooks, and Thomas Braatz, a translator who has a special gift for capturing both the meaning of the words and the flow of 18th-century poetry. If you would like to perform and/or record the set of six, we would love to hear from you. We can start "crowd funding" immediately.

### TEXT:

*Yes, Peter, go out away from here and cry,  
Do cry and shed bitter tears,  
But do think what has caused this to happen to you,  
And also, remember how Jesus looked at you.  
In the loving way that He looked at you,  
Your blissful sun of mercy appears.  
(Or: A blissful light of mercy appears for you.)*

Dritte Betrachtung.  
*Jesus vor dem geistlichen Gerichte.*

[5. Aria]

Grand Oboe  *tr*

Bassoon

Violin 1, 2 *pizz.*

Alto

Continuo

b 6 5 b 4 # 6 7 6 6 7 6

5 *tr*

b 6 5 b 4 # b7 6 5 b 6

Ja, Pe - tre, geh hin-aus und wei - ne, Ja wei - ne, wei - ne bit - - ter - lich,

9 *tr*

b 6 5 b 4 # b 6 5 b 6

ja, Pe - tre, geh hin-aus und wei - ne, ja wei - ne, wei - ne bit-ter - lich, wei - ne bit - ter - lich,

13 *tr*

6 5 4 3 6 5 b 4 b b 4 b b 6 4 b

ja, Pe - tre, geh hin-aus und wei - ne bit - - ter - lich.

17

tr

b 4 b 6 7 b 6 7 #

21

tr tr [k] (b)

Denk zwar an dei-nen Fall zu - rück; Dochden-ke auch an Je - su Blick. In die-ses

b 6 [ Fine ] 6 b7 6

25

tr

zeigt sich ein Gna - den - licht vor dich.

Bli - ckes hol - dem Schei - ne Zeigt dei - ne Gna - den - son - ne sich, in die-ses

7 6 b7 6 4 b 7 6 6

28

tr

Bli - ckes hol - dem Schei - ne zeigt dei - ne Gna - den - son - ne sich, zeigt dei - ne Gna - den - son - ne sich.

7 6 6 7 6 7 6

Dal Segno

Dal Segno

## LONDON REVIEWS

Andrew Benson-Wilson

## JEPHTHA at the BARBICAN

The Sixteen gave one of their walking-on-water performances, this time of Handel's glorious oratorio *Jephtha* (The Barbican 14 Jan). A work better approached for its musical rather than literary merit, Harry Christophers led an excellent cast of soloists and a choir that was on particularly good form, notably the altos, with whom I occasionally have concerns. But on this occasion they were perfect, with a beautiful tonal blend and some very exposed fugal entries to test them. Sarah Sexton, a violinist I first spotted in the Royal Academy of Music Baroque Orchestra some years ago, has recently become leader of the Orchestra of the Sixteen – this was the first time I have seen her in that role, and it suited her. The soloists provided just the right amount of 'staging' to make sense of the text, for example by staying on stage and looking at the person being sung to, something that so many performances fail to do. Sophie Bevan was outstanding as the naively innocent Iphis, gleefully sending her lover (Hamor) off to war before she would agree to marry him (as you do), but with a purity of tone that would have had the same effect on me, had she asked. Despite her considerable operatic experience, she has managed to maintain her ideal 'early-music' voice. Robin Blaze was the hapless Hamor, coping well with his initial offering, an aria that usual gives me the giggles, with its rumpty-tum repetition of 'Goodness shall make me great'. James Gilchrist sang the role of Jephtha with an emotional intensity that was most extremely expressed in his 'Waft her, angels, through the skies'. I had recently read of the appalling case of the 10-year-old Afghan girl that had been sent by her own father and brother as a suicide bomber to a checkpoint, so this (one of Handel's most beautiful moments, based on one of the Bible's most idiotic tales) bought a tear to my eye. Grace Davidson (a singer I had spotted in a tiny step-out role from The Sixteen choir many years ago) was exquisite as the Angel. Matthew Brook was suitably stentorian as Zebul. The only distractions were the frequent and very audible (from my seat, two-thirds of the way back from the stage) sniffs from Harry Christophers, seemingly unrelated to the normal (but usually much quieter) up-beat signals. A recording of this work should appear later this year, hopefully sans sniffs.

*I guess that the concert performance was rather a relief from the staging I saw at Buxton, with Harry and his players, but mostly a different cast except for Jephtha. The 1753 quintet was included at the Barbican – I didn't make any note about it in my Buxton review. Some think it an impudent triviality, others are delighted to hear Handel's only quintet (though Canons pieces, especially Acis & Galatea, had five soloists for the choruses.).*

CB

## OAE play CPE

The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment devoted rather more time than might be thought necessary to the music of CPE Bach, with no fewer than five of his 20 or so symphonies (including four of the Van Swieten set of six) and a curious concerto (Queen Elizabeth Hall, 30 Jan). Part of their 'Gamechangers' series, it certainly showed CPE as a revolutionary composer whose ability to surprise was unsurpassed. A feature of these works is the apparent segueing of movements, blurring the structure of the three-movement works, particularly as CPE delights in massive contrasts between sections. In contrast, the concerto (for the unlikely combination of harpsichord and fortepiano)<sup>1</sup> had enormous breaks between the movements. CPE Bach's music can be frenetic and energetic at the best of times, but I wondered if the direction (by Rebecca Miller, a conductor I had not experienced before) was pushing the pace rather too much, producing some uncharacteristically aggressive playing from the OAE, with noticeably percussive opening transients from all the strings and some consequent intonation issues. Quite apart from the effect on the players, her enormous flamboyant gestures, even in the quieter moments, were distracting. Only in the *Largo ed innocentemente* of the Symphony in A (Wq.182/4) was there a welcome moment of repose in what was becoming a bit of a battering. It was obviously unfamiliar territory for the OAE players, most of whom had their heads in their scores, with the notable exception of the impressive cello leader Luise Buchberger.

## SCHOLL, EK &amp; the AAM

The Academy of Ancient Music completed a short tour with Andreas Scholl and soprano Klara Ek with a concert at the Barbican (31 Jan), directed by their leader Pavlo Beznosiuk. The instrumental contributions came with two concertos by Count Unico Wilhelm van Wassenaer, from the *Concerti Armonici* collection long thought to be by Pergolesi. Published anonymously at a time when composing and playing was something for the servant classes, these are actually rather fine works, with four independent and equal violin parts (the equality not always apparent from Beznosiuk's own playing) and little moments for the likes of the viola players. The spirited and frisky last movement of the second concerto (which Stravinsky borrowed for his *Pulcinella*) tumbles along nicely until it just stops. He was prone to rather overblown movement titles, the third concerto featuring a *Grave sostenuto da cappella* and a rather confusing *Adagio mordante: largo andante*. But, of course, what the sell-out audience had come for was Andreas Scholl. The

1. Even more curiously, this was the only CPE Bach LP that I encountered in the late 1950s!

CB

programme's two *Stabat Maters* were sensibly placed first and last, with Scholl making a very convincing advocate for Vivaldi's effort, although, in my eyes at least, Vivaldi's version remained way short of the standard of the closing Pergolesi. Scholl continues to excel, the more relaxed and natural stage presence he has grown into over recent years being a big part of his compelling performances. And vocally he remains unsurpassed, the purity and sensitivity of his tone amplified by a vivid musical mind that brings new insights to familiar music. Scholl maintained a rather subtle volume throughout, something that Beznosiuk's gutsy instrumental playing and direction didn't always empathise with. There was no evidence that this was an unexpected one-off from Scholl but, even if it was, I would have thought that the risk of the orchestra overpowering the soloists would have been immediately apparent and adjusted for. Klara Ek struggled to compare with Scholl, with a slightly diffident Vivaldi *Salve Regina*, but came into her own when she shared the Pergolesi *Stabat Mater*. Although she showed that she was capable of holding a note without vibrato, it was something she didn't make much use of, in contrast to Scholl whose gentle vocal inflexions were always attractive.

#### THEODORA

You just know that with any Handel event that starts at 6.30, you are in for a very long evening. For the English Concert's *Theodora* (Barbican, 8 Feb) we were finally let out around 10.30. As so often with Handel, the sequence of his brilliant musical gems more than made up for the often curious plot lines, in this case based on the account of Theodora's efforts to get herself martyred, along with Didymus. Under Harry Bicket, The English Concert gave a sparkling performance (supported by fine soloists) that lifted the music from the plot. Tim Mead sang the role of the unfortunate Didymus with a detachment that seemed to suit the personality of a man who so willingly argues for his own death. Rosemary Joshua had the title role. Although she is feted as a Handelian soprano, she sings with far too much operatic wobble for my taste. Sarah Connolly (Irene) had by far the bigger character, and finer voice. Neal Davies relished his role as the Roman governor Valens, spitting out lines like "Racks, gibbets, sword and fire" but also seemingly to reflect his disbelief at the antics of these early Christians to get access to Heaven. Although Kurt Steit might not be a natural Handelian, I was impressed with his clarity of articulation and the sweetness of his tone. The interaction between the singers was good, each waiting until the next aria was well under way before returning to their seat. The English Concert toured this in the US, which might explain the presence of the 24-strong Choir of Trinity Wall Street on these shores. New York clearly does church choirs in a big way: they were very impressive, and also made a pretty good job of English pronunciation. Of the instrumentalists, Lisa Beznosiuk (flute), the two horn players Ursula Paludan Monberg and Martin Lawrence, and theorbo player William Carter all impressed. Harry Bicket controlled the balance between spaciousness and speed well, giving us a performance that never dragged, but equally gave the chance for the mood to develop. The little

organ was completely inaudible from my privileged seat. I find it very hard to believe that the organ in Handel's own performances was not clearly audible to the audience, but it is something that very few conductors encourage.

#### PARED-DOWN, 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY OAE

Although rather outside the usual historic scope of *EMR*, the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment's occasional forays into period instrument performances of later repertoire are always fascinating. Their latest offering came under the beguiling title of 'French Fancies' (Queen Elizabeth Hall, 20 Feb), and included works by Debussy, Ravel, Ibert and Saint-Saëns, starting with the pared-down version of Debussy's *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* arranged by Benno Sachs for Schoenberg's *Verein für musikalische Privataufführungen* (Society for Private Musical Performances). Although arranged for a small group of instruments, the use of the piano and harmonium helped to retain much of the original orchestral colour and texture. The original five-movement piano duet version of Ravel's *Ma mère l'oye* (Mother Goose) suite was performed by Katia and Marielle Labèque, their hands appearing to tie themselves up in knots in the *Petit Poucet* movement. Ibert's 1931 *Divertissement* (conducted by Eduardo Portal) allowed the players to let their musical hair down in the spirit of *Les Six*, the specified policeman's whistle coming attached to a policeman (with flashing blue light on his helmet) chasing two naughties through the auditorium. Ravel's *Introduction and Allegro* for harp, string quartet, flute and clarinet was interrupted by a rather scary series of screams from a member of the audience at the back of the hall whose clearly troubled mind had not been sufficiently soothed by the music. But this was dealt with very professionally by the players and management of the OAE. The evening ended with *The Carnival of the Animals*, the narrator, in a giraffe suit, interweaving Ogden Nash's delightful descriptions of the depicted animals. Fun was again had when the normally rather lugubrious OAE principal clarinet seemed to prance off stage in a huff, only to reappear mid-audience as the Cuckoo in the Depths of the Wood. O how we laughed!

#### LUTE SOCIETY

A little bird suggested that I attend the meeting of The Lute Society (at the Dutch Church 22 Feb) for what she told me would be Anthony Rooley's "last official concert as a lutenist". The day was devoted to the symbolism of the lute, and included talks on the lute as emblem and a talk by Judy Tarling on Constantijn Huygens' 1642 *Harmonic Garden* at Hofwijck (The Hague) with interspersed songs from Roseanna Skikun. Anthony Rooley gave two talks under the titles of 'Orpheus Reviv'd' and 'To pluck or not to pluck, is that a question?'. The day ended with Evelyn Tubb (the "little bird") joining Anthony Rooley to sing songs about the lute as a source of poetic inspiration by John Danyel, Thomas Campion and Maurice Greene. In a touching moment for those that knew the context, Anthony Rooley then handed his lute to Ziv Braha to accompany a performance of 'Orphan Wailings', the extraordinarily imaginative cycle of seven

songs that Tony wrote for Evelyn Tubb for her birthday in 1998, based on poems about the lute. The songs call for an exceptional vocal technique, to which Evelyn added her own inimitably dramatic presentation, the whole making a fitting tribute to Anthony Rooley's exceptional musical life – and Evelyn Tubb's vocal skills. One rather nice moment came when the church bells struck four just as Evelyn was singing the word "sad", which she extended until the bells had died away. The last sequence was of three "brief sighs" by Sir Thomas Wyatt.

*My lute awake! Performe the last  
Labor that thou and I shall wast,  
And end that I now have begon;  
For when this song is sung and past,  
My Lute be still, for I have done...*

These might have been Anthony Rooley's "last public presentation as a plucker", but I don't think it will be the last we will have heard from him.

#### EMPEROR, HUNT & ROSAMUNDE

*EMR* readers in the UK might have already heard the concert given by the period instrument string quartet, Quatuor Mosaïques (Queen Elizabeth Hall, 25 Feb) as it was broadcast live on Radio 3. Approaching their 30<sup>th</sup> year, the quartet shows no signs of easing up or becoming over-familiar with works like the *Emperor*, *Hunt* and *Rosamunde*. Mozart's was one of the six quartets that owed their inspiration to Haydn's 1781 Op.33 quartets and were dedicated to Haydn, who in return commented to Mozart's father on hearing them that his son was "the greatest composer I know". Although only 40 years separated the Mozart from *Rosamunde*, it was clear that we had heard the development of the idiom to its full maturity. Apart from the obvious aural advantages of hearing a string sound that is arguably close to that envisaged and heard by the three composers, with minimal finger vibrato, the purity of their tuning meant that cadences were blissfully still. And it was great to hear a first violin that played as part of a consort of musicians, not as a leader.

#### PISENDEL & TOGNETTI

The Academy of Ancient Music continued their residency at Milton Court with a programme of concertos written for the Dresden Court during the time of the Saxon Elector Friedrich Augustus (The Strong) and his son (22 Feb). Alongside his rather less savoury activities, Augustus continued the tradition of earlier Saxon Electors for maintaining a strong musical life in his court. Initially attracted to the French style in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, he and his son were soon drawn to Italian music and musicians, notably by Vivaldi. Pisendel had studied in Italy before becoming the director of Dresden court orchestra, and continued the strong link with Vivaldi, collecting many examples of his music and augmenting the scoring. Many of the pieces in this concert came from Pisendel's own library, still preserved in Dresden. The programme was book-ended by rarely played Vivaldi

concertos for violin and pairs of oboes and horns (RV562/569, the latter also with bassoon). A more traditional line-up came with the Concerto Op 3/10 for four violins. A contrast in volume, if nothing else came with Fasch's lute concerto in D minor played by William Carter who rather curiously introduced it as "bedroom music". Although the programme and the music were fascinating, AAM's guest director, the Australian violinist Richard Tognetti, encouraged playing from the band that seemed totally out of keeping with their usual performance style. His own playing was frankly bizarre by any accepted 'period performance' criteria. It wasn't just that it didn't seem to owe much to that school of playing, but he seemed to delight in being directly at odds with it. Although playing a 1743 Guarneri del Gesù violin with guts strings, he admitted that he had only obtained a baroque bow the day before this concert. He used it during the first half, but reverted to a modern bow for the second. As well as portamento more associated with a much later repertoire, his aggressive bow attack and inconsistent tone (with crescendos onto most notes) caused intonation and tonal problems, as did his inconsistent speeds. His cadenzas, when not directly borrowed from other works, seemed more intended for personal show than any musical statement. I couldn't help contrasting his direction of the AAM with that of Alina Ibragimova, their styles being almost completely opposite.

#### RODELINDA

A new English National Opera opening is always an event, if only to see what the audience reaction will be. Things have quietened down a bit there nowadays, so the usual boos and protests are not so common. Indeed, the opening of Handel's *Rodelinda* (28 Feb) led to one of the most positive receptions I have heard at the ENO. But I have several reservations with Richard Jones' production, of which more anon. But first, the positives. The playing of the modern instrument ENO house band was excellent, under the inspirational conducting of Christian Curnyn. With only a few period instrument specialists bought in, the orchestra played with stylistic conviction. Christian Curnyn also confirmed his position as a leading interpreter of Handel – his control of the pacing was exemplary. There was also outstanding singing and acting from Iestyn Davies (as Bertarido, the usurped King of Lombardy, and husband of Rodelinda) and from John Mark Ainsley, unrecognizable as Grimoaldo in his incarnation as a mafia brute. Fellow countertenor Christopher Ainslie also impressed as Grimoaldo's unfortunate advisor, Unulfo, who finds himself increasingly blood-soaked as the evening progressed. I found the female singers too operatically wobbly for my tastes in Handelian singing, although most reviewers have praised them. The production, directed by Richard Jones with a set by Jeremy Herbert, has also elicited great praise. But I wasn't so sure. A striking staging saw an ever increasing number of rooms (Ayckbourn-style) with far too many doors to bang and places to run to and from. And I have never thought there could be so much slapstick-induced laughter from a work like *Rodelinda*, particularly in scenes such as the attempts of Grimoaldo to hack Bertarido to

bits with weapons of ever-increasing size. One of the most extraordinary departures from Handel was having the mute role of Flavio (the son and heir of Rodelinda and Bertarido) played by a twenty-something young man, whose appearance apparently appealed to a certain section of the opera-going crowd. I just could not get my head around that change of image, not least as he became increasingly monstrous. He is supposed to be a pre-pubescent boy, naively caught up in the machinations of the surrounding adults. Quite apart from ignoring plot questions of Lombardic succession if Flavio is an adult (Eduige would no longer have a claim to the throne), the key scene when Rodelinda urges Grimoaldo (her husband Bertarido's usurper) to kill her son takes on a completely different mood when the intended victim is a rather obnoxious young man (here revealed strapped to the bottom of a lift-up bed), rather than an innocent child. In this, and a number of other issues, I kept on reminding myself of Martin Constantine's outstanding production of *Rodelinda* given at Iford in 2011, with this evening's conductor, Christian Curnyn, directing his own Early Opera Company with a local lad playing Flavio. This ENO production has since been broadcast on Radio 3 and, to be honest, I think that might have been the best way to appreciate it, shorn of all the toings and froings of this overactive production.

#### THE LOTTERY

Žak Ozmo (recently appointed Director of Early Music at Hull University) and Vanessa L. Rogers have reconstructed the musical score for Henry Fielding's ballad opera *The Lottery*. They presented it at Bury Court Opera with stage direction by Harry Fehr (2 March). Žak Ozmo's group, L'Avventura London, provided the musical accompaniment. With the possible exception of John Gay's 1728 *Beggar's Opera*, the ballad opera has been a little explored and little known genre in recent times. A predecessor of today's musicals, it was essentially a play with frequent songs and musical numbers, often borrowed from well-known ditties of the day. The Lottery was premiered in 1732, with a plot based on the real-life lottery of the previous year, a government plan to raise £800,000. Tickets were sold at £10, but could then be traded for profit, leading to a plethora of unscrupulous stockjobbers who set up an often fraudulent system of renting tickets. The Lottery became one of Drury Lane's most successful shows. The story hinges around the naïve country lass Chloe who is convinced that her lottery ticket is a winner and so spurns her local lover, Squire Lovemore, and heads off to London to live the life of the nouveau riche. Mr Stocks and his brother (the clues are in the names) attempt to scam Chloe by disguising Jack Stocks as Lord Lace — Henry Fielding pokes similar fun at the lottery in his novel *Tom Jones*. Both musically and theatrically, this production, cleverly built on the present day 'am-dram' tradition, is no doubt a reasonable portrayal of the musical and acting standards of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Outrageous over-acting and a bizarre range of cod-accents added to the jollity. By far the best singing and acting came from Nicholas Merryweather, a regular in such opera occasions, with Stephen East and Ross McInroy also

impressing. The staging comprised a clever minimalist series of boxes that could be reconfigured into a variety of forms — eminently transportable for future showings.

#### PINNOCK'S PASSIONS

The new Sam Wanamaker Playhouse, inserted into the previously built external brick shell to one side of the Globe Theatre complex, has the potential to become a major new, if occasional, concert venue for London. It was designed in the style of a Jacobean theatre based on drawings originally thought to be by Inigo Jones, but now reckoned to be by John Webb. It apparently has a capacity of 340, but appears much smaller from the intimate interior. The atmosphere is magical, with two horse-shoe galleries enclosing a convincing looking pit with the stage projecting just over half way into the central area. There is a minstrel's gallery above the rear of the stage, above a spectacular Jacobean-style screen. You sit on cushioned bench seats, generally without a back support. It is worth leaving coats in the cloakroom, as there is no space under the seats to put them. A series of candlelit musical events is already under way. It is early days to form a complete impression, but if the first of the 'Pinnock's Passions' evening was anything to go by, the potential is certainly there. The acoustics were surprisingly good, given the amount of wood in the space and the fact that it was, presumably, designed for speech rather than music. I was sitting on the back (3rd) row of the lower side gallery, so perhaps not the ideal seat for acoustics, but the sound had a warmth and gentle resonance that certainly suited the programme that I heard. On this occasion, the passions of Trevor Pinnock turned out to be JC Bach and Mozart, with Carolyn Sampson singing three arias and the small orchestra providing accompaniment and solo orchestral works, finishing with an excellent performance of Mozart's Concerto in A for piano and strings (K414) played by Kristian Bezuidenhout on an impressive sounding fortepiano. The orchestra was rather cleverly built around the excellent period-instrument Chiaroscuro Quartet and led by their Alina Ibragimova. Earlier, Trevor Pinnock, Alina Ibragimova and Claire Thiron had given a sparkling performance of Mozart's two-movement Sonata for harpsichord, violin and cello (K15). JC Bach was represented by his Symphony in E flat Op. 3/3 and the aria *Cara, la dolce fiamma* from *Adriano in Siria* with Mozart's added ornamentation.

#### ARIANNA IN CRETA

The London Handel Festival opened with their traditional fully staged Handel opera at the Britten Theatre. This year it was the turn of the 1734 *Arianna in Creta*. The back story (essential to the plot) was portrayed during the overture by silhouetted puppets. Simon Bejer's design transformed the stone upon which is written the pact between Athens and Crete into a flight of steps. As David Vickers pointed out in his programme note and excellent pre-concert talk, the stone should have been destroyed as four cupids fly over it, a moment critical to Handel's conception of the opera as "love destroying the old order of hatred and death". But for some reason this key

moment was omitted. The steps were laboriously pulled apart by pulleys (but remained in various formations as a key part of the staging) but instead of the expected flying cupids, we were given an additional acting role of a rather irritating singular cupid who pranced about the stage and the side galleries throughout the performance, for no apparent purpose other than to provide the usual camp sideshow that opera directors seem to delight in. The costumes were a clever mix of ancient and modern, with many of the cast clad in tops printed with Greek images. The most striking of these was worn by Taurode, clad front and back with an image of a youthful male nude, making it less of a trouser role than a testicle role. Perhaps this boyish image was intended to reflect the fact that he ends up being rendered impotent when his magic belt is removed. The role of Teseo (in an above the groin top) is key to this work, written to demonstrate the newly arrived Carestini's vocal skills.

There were dual casts. On the evening that I went (4 March), this extraordinarily challenging role was brilliantly sung and acted by Angela Simkin, her warm, agile and clean voice and clarity of runs being spot on. Her long held note at the beginning of Act 2, a test, for me, of a Handelian singer, was perfect. Arianna was sung by Filipa van Eck, demonstrating a beautifully rich soprano voice and striking stage persona. Morgan Pearse also impressed me as Minos. Most of the other voices lacked subtlety and tonal contrast, with uncontrolled vibrato adding an unsettling nervous edge to their tone. Our conservatories turn out some excellent period players, but still fail to encourage young singers to retain or develop a voice suitable for the early opera repertoire. Surely the world of early music is sufficient nowadays to support and encourage a career that doesn't require young voices to be pushed into that of a Wagnerian wobbler. As ever, Laurence Cummings directed the London Handel Orchestra with his usual infectious ebullience. The only weakness from the band came from some overly prominent and out of tune cello playing at a key moment towards the end of Act 2. The chorus of Athenian victims awaiting their death came from the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama.

#### DANIEL'S JUDGEMENT OF PARIS

The enterprising young group Spiritato! have resurrected Daniel Purcell's masque *The Judgement of Paris* from obscurity, giving both its first modern performance\* (St John's, Smith Square, 5 March) but also its first recording (available to download from <http://www.resonusclassics.com>), both financially helped by crowdfunding. They were joined by the Rodolfus Choir, the whole directed by Julian Perkins. This is the least known of the three surviving (of four) musical interpretations of Congreve's libretto entered for a controversial competition in 1701. The winner was the little known John Weldon, followed by John Eccles and Daniel Purcell; Gottfried Finger, a Moravian composer and viol player who had moved to England in 1685, departed in a huff after coming last in

2. All three extant *Judgements* were performed and voted on at a BBC Prom some decades ago. CB

the competition, destroying his music in the process. Although intended to encourage the fledgling English opera, it proved to be one of the last gasps of the Restoration masque, with Handel and the world of Italian opera already knocking at the door. Spiritato set the work in the context of a concert exploring what could be seen as the missing years between Henry Purcell's death and the arrival of Handel, a time of radical musical change, a change that Daniel Purcell recognised and attempted to follow with *The Judgement of Paris*. The first half opened with Henry Purcell's Act 2 Symphony from *The Indian Queen* (1695), a work completed by Daniel after Henry's death. This was followed by the unfortunate Finger's incidental music from *The Humours of the Age* (1701). Led for these pieces by violinist Kinga Ujszászi, the young players of Spiritato showed an excellent grasp of the spirit of the English High Baroque, not an easy era of music to interpret or perform. The hour-long masque took up the second half. The libretto by Congreve is not surprisingly an excellent bit of prose, especially for his portrayal of the trial and tribulations of Paris as he is confronted by the three lovelies – always naked in fine art interpretations, but not on this occasion. As well as the fully sung sequence of recitatives and arias, there are numerous symphonies for a variety of instruments to introduce the characters. Ashley Riches was a very fine Mercury. He starts by preparing the shepherd boy Paris for the ordeal ahead. I sympathised with him later in the plot when he just managed to stifle a giggle as he sang the words "With my sacred Rod I'll Charm thee" to Paris (Nick Pritchard), already alarmed and in raptures of ecstasy by the arrival of the three Goddesses ("Help me Hermes or I die, Save me from excess of joy"). Juno was the first of the three to present herself (accompanied by a wonderful bit of thundersheet wobbling from the wings), sung by the fine soprano Ciara Hendrick, the imperious opening of her 'Saturnia, Wife of Thundering Jove' being one of several highlights. Pallas was sung by Amy Freston (with rather too much vibrato for my taste) and Venus, the ultimate winner, by Augusta Hebbert. Nick Pritchard and Augusta Hebbert are not on the recording, and might therefore have been less familiar with their roles – I was not quite as convinced with their vocal style for this period of music as I was with the others in the cast. This is a major contribution to our understanding of this fascinating but often overlooked period of English musical history and Spiritato, and their founder, trumpeter William Russell.

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There's something wrong with the almost ubiquitous different aims in opera. Orchestras play as near as the style of Handel (or whoever) as they can. Singers vary: on the whole the men are more historically-minded than the women – perhaps they learnt how to sing in tune and with minimal vibrato in college choirs, but some women have an erratic level of vibrato and a lack of clear pitch. Why can't we have more early-style performances all round, but balance that by having the orchestra playing in modern style – though I suspect that the singers wouldn't adjust their style enough to match. A friend emailed me today for a set of *Dido and Aeneas* parts, which she'll get a jazz band to play: that might be fun! CB

## ACIS & GALATEA (Mid Wales Opera Company)

Stephen Marshall & Clifford Bartlett

### *Acis comes up trumps: Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama, Cardiff, 30 January 2014*

Those wishing to capture something of the 1718 Cannons performance of Handel's masque *Acis & Galatea* should experience the delightful Mid Wales Opera production currently on tour. With C18<sup>th</sup> costumes, stylish singing and imaginative set design to match, this production achieved a refreshing intimacy. As an audience we were lulled into an Arcadian world, eavesdropping on the escapades of nymphs and shepherds, whose only care turns out to be a lovesick giant cyclops.

This, the first collaboration between Mid Wales Opera (MWO), the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama (RWCMD) and Brecon Baroque, is much to be applauded. Its aim, to promote up-and-coming singers and players by pooling the two organisations' talents with the expertise of Rachel Podger's Brecon Baroque, is clearly a recipe for success. The result has managed to capture the real essence of both music and drama in a way that most larger opera companies often fail to do. Authentic instrumental forces (playing from the King's Music edition) under the united directorship of Nicholas Cleobury (continuo) and Rachel Podger ensured well-judged tempi and stylish nuances which were well matched by the MWO's vocal interpretations. Most impressive throughout was the focus on words, each aria's sentiment reinforced from a palette of affecting gestures given to the singers by director Annilese Miskimmon.

A drama that can easily become no more than a static sequence of da capo arias was given an intriguing twist, quite literally, with a revolving and interactive box set designed by Nicky Shaw. Beautifully decorated with Arcadian pastoral scenes, its various partitions could be ingeniously realigned to create both intimate and public spaces for the singers. This Pandora's Box was also equipped with secret doors and panels, through which the cast could frolic about in pursuit of each other's attention. As was Handel's original intention, the soloists sang and enacted all arias and choruses on stage. However, for selected venues the small RWCMD chorus are being placed side-stage to beef up the choruses. For the Cardiff performance they did indeed add a welcome bloom to the sound, though I suspect they might have enjoyed a bit more of the limelight.

Soprano Jane Harrington was a warm and idiomatic Galatea, whose light-hearted vocal flirtations brilliantly mirrored the birdsong of the excellent recorder players Pamela Thorby and Catherine Latham. Oliver Mercer was an equally charming Acis, whose arias had good characterisation and poise. A rather morose Polyphemus, played on this occasion by Matthew Stiff, was cast as a

figure with whom one might actually sympathise, which was perhaps something of an anticlimax after his momentous introduction during the chorus in 'Wretched Lovers', so brilliantly dramatised on stage.

Yet the director, clearly choosing to emphasise the sense of humanity which Handel brought to the English Masque, deliberately avoided many such melodramatic moments, such as Acis's swift demise from a hurled boulder, which can easily become ridiculous. Instead, much was done by simpler means, such as Acis's immortalisation as an eternal spring, here achieved with soft lighting and candlelit procession.

Presenting this opera without an interval (as in 1718) also added a greater sense of pace, making it easier to see why the work gained such popularity during Handel's lifetime. Like Acis's own reincarnation, this MWO production has undoubtedly given the work a welcome new lease of life in our own time.

SM

### *Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge, 21 February 2014*

I've seen four stagings of *Acis* in five years, starting with a pretentious one at Covent Garden, followed by Pam Munks' 80<sup>th</sup> birthday party (in which she was leader) with a mixed East-Anglian ensemble in Aldeburgh, with Charles Mackerras making one of his last performances, both in 2009. The Stour Festival in 2012 was excellent in many ways, but the amateur chorus was out of place.

This 2014 performance was the best I've seen. The simple staging worked: possibly a bit more than the original Cannons performance, but utterly appropriate to the music. What struck me particularly was the "orchestra", though I usually avoid the word when there are only single strings. I'm not saying that they were better than the Stour Festival players: what is noteable is that players are now so subtle in their shaping of each phrase. Sadly, the singers lacked that skill & subtlety: probably not their fault, since they aren't taught how to do it. Perhaps they should pay attention to the better of the one-to-a-part renaissance groups, then adapt it to the later style, either matching the band or, where required, boldly going another way. I'm exaggerating, but with the band so clear, it was the obvious point to make, though I doubt whether most listeners would be aware of it. My review would have been more specific if the local management could have offered a list of performers.

CB

#### Future performances

St David's Cathedral Festival (30 May)

North Wales International Music Festival, St Asaph (26 September)

Ludlow Assembly Rooms (27 September).

Further information at [www.midwalesopera.co.uk](http://www.midwalesopera.co.uk)

## CD REVIEWS

There are fewer CD reviews than usual. I had a batch that I wanted to hear and review, but was delayed, in part by having been ill for over two weeks so far this month, and also by not having a CD-player conveniently accessible. So I have a lot to write for the June issue. We have also been quite busy selling our music editions. Apologies for the delay. CB

## 15th CENTURY

**Josquin Missa Ave maris stella: Celebrating the Annunciation in Renaissance Rome**  
Cappella Pratensis, Stratton Bull 57'  
Challenge Classics CC72632  
Mass + Missus est Gabriel angelus, Mittit ad virginum & plainchant

It's hard to fault this fine disc. Josquin's masterly *Missa Ave maris stella* is performed in the context of Saturday Mass for the Blessed Virgin in Advent, as celebrated in the newly-completed Sistine Chapel in late 15th-century Rome. Much painstaking musicological forethought has clearly gone into this – the plainchant propers of the mass are performed in the appropriate gently rhythmicised fashion of the time, the responses in the Prefatio are done in simple "improvised" harmony and the hymn *Ave maris stella* which precedes the mass itself and supplies its melodic basis is sung using polyphony by Josquin's illustrious predecessor Dufay, as well as two lovely anonymous verses, along with that of Josquin himself, all of which are found in the Chapel's archives. The performances are superb – Capella Pratensis produces a beautifully blended sound which allows the magnificent polyphony to glow, particularly when surrounded by such perfect chanting. Tempi are moderate, though appropriate, allowing the longer mass movements especially full space to develop Josquin's complex compositional arguments. No reason to hesitate, really!

Alastair Harper

## 16th CENTURY

**Steffens Die Musik und ein guter Wein**  
Madrigali & Balletti Himlische Cantorey, Hamburger Ratsmusik, Simone Eckert  
cpo 777 664-2 67' 45"

The last thing I expected to hear on a CD of German music were jolly fa-la-las! Only five of a total of 22 tracks are not vocal; Paduana-Galliard pairs played on gambas with theorbo/guitar, several sounding very English, and possibly later than the

composer's dates would suggest. The vocal music was published in 1618, two years after Steffens' death in Lüneberg, where he had been organist for many years. The singers of Himlische Cantorey will be well known to regular readers – Veronika Winter, Ina Siedlaczek, Henning Voss, Jan Kobow and Ekkehard Abele. Have no fear that such outstanding soloists will struggle to blend in consort; quite the reverse, in fact, the balance between the voices (and between voices and the combinations of accompanying instruments) is skilfully handled. I enjoyed listening to the disc several times – I had not knowingly heard Steffens' music before, but I found there to be a rich variety, sometimes reminiscent of Holborne or Morley, but also foreshadowing the Lawes brothers and Jenkins. BC

## 17th CENTURY

**Biber Fidicinium Sacro-Profanum** Ars Antiqua Austria, Gunar Letzbor 46' 40"  
Challenge Classics CC72575

I have been involved with editing this music over the past couple of years, and I have always thought it difficult to understand – the harmonies are darker than normal for Biber, and the counterpoint denser, with shorter sections seemingly packed to bursting with material. It came as a relief to read that Gunar Letzbor has had a similar experience with the 12 sonatas – in his booklet note, he tells how their early attempts to play them in concert seemed to confuse audiences, most probably on account of the esoteric nature. It has taken 25 years for them to "be ready" to record the six pieces for five-part strings, and the six for four parts (losing one of the violins). The wait has been truly worth it: these performances get right to the heart of the music in all its complexity and really bring it to life, just like Gesualdo's tortuous responsories for Holy Week beautifully sung in tune, or a really telling account of the late Beethoven quartets – that is an analogy Letzbor himself draws in his note, and it totally resonates with me. This is not music for the faint hearted, and for once I will not complain about the short duration of the CD – any more would be too much to handle. This is without doubt the finest AAA recording I have heard in a long time. BC

**Biber Karneval in Kremsier** Ars Antiqua Austria, Gunar Letzbor 75' 01"  
Pan Classics PC 10300  
Arien à 4, Balletti (two sets of each), Balletti Lamentabili, Harmonia Romana, Trombett undt Musicalischer taffeldienst

This re-release of a 1995 recording coincides – rather unfortunately, I would say – with the same group's new Biber *Fidicinium Sacro-Profanum* reviewed above; while there is nothing "wrong" with the performances, and I have no doubt they were ground-breaking at the time and the programming (built around an imagined feast at the Bishop's palace) innovative, there have been so many excellent recordings of Biber's music in between then and now (not least by The Purcell Quartet) that it no longer sounds exciting. The presence of a recorder (every now and then) is a distraction I could do without – as I definitely could with the chiming bell and the staged (overly rapid, I would have thought) dying away of the music. Maybe I'm being an old stick-in-the-mud. BC

**Bruhns / Hasse Complete Organ Works**  
Manuel Tomadin 75' 02"  
Dynamic CDS 7685

A church called Our Lady of Fatima in a town near Turin is not the most obvious place to find a North German Baroque organ, but their new organ is built in that style – and rather successfully, judging by the sounds on this recording. Although he left an enviable reputation, Nikolaus Bruhns only 12 vocal and 6 organ compositions survive. Buxtehude's "best pupil", he was one of the many influences on JS Bach. Tomadin produces some fascinating interpretations of Bruhn's best known works, exploring the various tone colours of the organ. His registration of the *Nun Komm, der Heiden Heiland* Fantasia is exceptional, with its use of the delicate and distinctive sound of the reed stops. Nicolaus Hasse is of similar stock to Bruhns, but from two or three generations earlier. His early life was based on Lübeck's Marienkirche, where his father was organist. His teachers seem to have included the Sweelinck students, Jacob Praetorius and Scheidemann. He was one of the pioneers of the chorale fantasia, as demonstrated by these, his only four surviving organ works. Again Tomadin makes excellent registration choices, but although they are relatively obvious to those that know about such things, it is a shame the

registrations are not detailed in the liner notes.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

**Buxtehude** *Opera Omnia XVIII Vocal Works 8* Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra & Choir, Ton Koopman 125' 01" (2 CDs) Challenge Classics CC72257  
BuxWV32, 34, 36, 67, 73, 74, 82, 87, 93, 97–101, 109 & 121

This is the first of several series which have reached their conclusion. Volume 8 of Buxtehude's vocal works consists of sacred concertos, arias and miscellaneous pieces. Having immersed themselves in the composer's works over the past few years, the performers (six vocal soloists are listed, as well as a string band with dulcian, lute and organ) are perfectly placed to bring their experience onto these slightly lesser-known pieces, and that is absolutely the case – every track receives special treatment. Koopman has his fans and those who do not care for his style of continuo playing, but I must say that I find nothing to upset me here, and indeed the man deserves universal applause for such superb efforts on Buxtehude's behalf! I shall return to all of the discs regularly. BC

**Schütz** *Psalmen Davids* SWV 22-47 (Complete Recording, vol. 8) Soloists, The Dresdner Kammerchor, Hans-Christoph Rademann 141' 23" (2 SACDs in box) Carus 83.255

The 1619 *Psalmen Davids* is the Schütz publication I know best, and the result is that although I've mostly played continuo with amateurs, I'm aware that there are other ways of performing – not drastically different but which don't quite match the way I have reacted to the earlier CDs in the series. Were four days enough for such a varied collection? Some of the tutti texts adopt a rather unsubtle repetition of short notes and gaps between syllables. But perhaps I'm used to a more Italianate shaping. One cannot expect every disc to be perfect, and this is good enough to be worth buying for reference, and who knows – my slight disappointment might be exaggerated because I woke up before 4.00 am this morning! On the other hand, *Ich habe meine Augen auf* (SWV 31), for instance, sounded marvellous. CB

**Schütz** *Auferstehungshistorie* SWV 50 (Complete Recording, vol. 9) Soloists, The Sirius Viols, Hille Perl *gamba*, Lee Santana *Tiorba*, Ludger Rémy *org*, Dresdner Kammerchor, Instrumenta Musica, Hans-Christoph Rademann 60' 48"  
Carus 83.256 +SWV 444, 457, 463, 469, 470.

The *Resurrection* takes about two thirds of the disc. Schütz was largely promoted in the 1960s by his larger works, most of which sounded penitential rather than exciting. Most of my playing experience has been for shorter pieces, like *Christ ist erstanden* a19, which opens with a *Coro di tromboni* followed by a *Coro di viole*, neither going above tenor top A. There are three vocal soloists and two SATB Capellae. It's early Schütz, but impressive. *Alleluia* has variable accentuation: here the words frequently are sung in pairs, and I find that however the first *Alleluia* is accented, the second one needs to be ALLE-lu-ia, unless German punctuation lacks flexibility. The other short pieces are worth hearing, but you buy it (if not buying the whole series) because of the power of the *Resurrection*. I can't imagine a performance like this anything in the 1960s. The chant accompanied by improvisations on the chord now works, but the practice didn't last long (though there's a discussion whether harpsichordists filled recitatives with sound in the edition of A. Scarlatti: reviewed on p. 2). CB

**Strunck, Delphin & Nicolaus Adam** *Complete Organ Works* Friedhelm Flamme (Schweimb organ, St Abdan und Sennen, Salzgitter-Ringelheim & Thielemann organ, Holy Trinity Gräfenhain) 129' 47" cpo 777 597-2 (2 CDs)  
+Complete organ music of Christian Flor, Johann Decker, Dietrich Meyer, Marcus Olter

The latest in Friedhelm Flamme's exploration of the complete organ works of North German Baroque composers has reached its eleventh volume with this two-CD offering. The first is devoted to Delphin Strunck, with his eldest son Nicolaus Adam Strunck and the near contemporary Christian Flor making up most of the second disk. Only single works remain from Decker, Meyer and Olter, Meyer's sole surviving piece being only 47 seconds long. Inevitably, Delphin Strunck gets the most representative showing, with chorale works, intabulations and the extraordinary *Toccata ad manuale duplex*, clocking in at over 15 minutes. Seven *Capriccios* by NA Strunck are contrasted with two more austere *Ricercars*. Flor's surviving works are a series of tiny chorale preludes, two little *praeludia* and a fugue. As ever, Friedhelm Flamme plays with conviction and an obvious understanding of issues of historic concepts of articulation and registration. Recommended. Andrew Benson-Wilson

**Veneziano** *La santissima Trinità* Leslie Visco Vergine, Cristina Grifone *Amor Divino*, Filippo Mineccia *Sapienza*, Rosario Totaro *Onnipotenza*, Giuseppe Naviglio *Peccato* [SSTAB], I Turchini, Antonio Florio 68' 35" Glossa GCD 922607

A most engaging work, composed in 1693 for the sonorously-named Neapolitan Congregazione della Redenzione dei Cattivi. The libretto, by Andrea Perrucci, one of the most favoured poets of the San Bartolomeo opera house in Naples, deals with the (somewhat unequal) contest between Good – the Immaculate Virgin and her threefold creators Omnipotenza, Amor Divino and Sapienza – and Evil, the personification of Sin.

Gaetano Veneziano's music does rather give Satan the best tunes – listen to his spirited summoning of his forces at track 26 and track 35, the latter with striking minor-key shifts in the ritornelli, and to his final fall into the Abyss at track 45, with its *concitato* second half.

The Blessed Virgin, sung originally by the famous castrato Matteuccio, is favoured with a couple of arias of rare beauty and poise – I particularly enjoyed her lovely "Figli mei" (track 43), calling the faithful to their redemption. The Holy Trinity offer her appropriate comment and support, both melodically, in short, tuneful, frequently *Da Capo*, arias, and contrapuntally, in lively choral interjections. There is a rather poignant moment (end of track 26) when they join with Mary to refuse Satan entrance to Paradise. The final chorus, for all the protagonists, skilfully blends polyphony and homophony in an exhortation for all to "Make haste to Mary, the Triad's Temple."

I Turchini's performance brings this lovely work fully to life – the string playing is especially idiomatic and lively. One hopes that further gems of this repertoire are in the pipeline! Alastair Harper

#### LATE BAROQUE

**The Sacred Apokryphal Bach** Mields, Voss, Kaiser, Grobe, Koslowsky, Wessel, Geraerts, Iven, Langshaw, Spägle, Müller, van Berne, Schreckenberger, Sandmann, Alsfelder Vokalensemble, Gesualdo Consort Amsterdam, I Fabiaronici, Steintor Barock Bremen, Hannoversche Hofkapelle, Barockorchester, Wolfgang Helbich 389' 51" (8 CDs)  
BWV15, 141, 142, 150, 160, 217-222, 237, 239, 240, 246, Anh. 21, 24, 25, 29, 30, 159-165, 167, Anh. II 30

This set comes with all eight original

releases in their own jewel boxes (four separate and two doubles) in a cardboard sleeve. They have each been welcomed by our reviewers as they have appeared, and at the new reduced price (I found one website offering it for €40), there is no excuse for not exploring this repertoire – ok, it is no longer considered to be Bach's actual composition, but it was considered so for long enough, and in many cases the attribution came about because he copied out the music himself and most likely performed it, suggested that he valued it, so why wouldn't we? BC

**Bach Toccatas** Amandine Savary piano  
MUSO mu-007  
BWV910-916

Bach on the piano again? It's never going to go away, is it... As it happens, I read an article recently about the effect on modern interpretations of Bach's keyboard works the "school of finger speed" had had, and for all Amandine Savary's facility on that score, this is not a CD I will rush to listen to again. The cover of the booklet features a rather impish photograph, and I imagine that she had lots of fun playing and playing with these wonderfully diverse works; she is especially convincing in the fugal sections, and yes, she has great finger speed! BC

**Bach The Goldberg Variations** Duo  
Mélisande guitars 52'49"  
paraty 113215

I am aware of too often writing reviews of Bach that extol his music's indestructibility; I might have reached the outer limits of that theory here. Not only would I have fallen asleep by the end of the theme, I found the ornamentation too stylised (not to say homogenised) and that there was more emphasis on the actual sound than the music. Fans of the modern guitar might have different a opinion... BC

**Musik der Einsamkeit – Ein Melopoem**  
Bach's Art of Fugue NeoBarock, texts by  
Robert Schneider 94'16" (2 CDs)  
ambitus amb96 966

What does one do with *The Art of Fugue*? A most puzzling work of extraordinary complexity, the 13 contrapuncti and the sequences of canons and fragments are challenging listening, even for the most analytical ears (actually, does anyone fully understand them?) NeoBarock and their collaborator in this project, Robert Schneider (who both wrote the text and presents it), have chosen to offer the music (not quite

in Bach's original sequence) in the context of a "melopoem" – a melodrama without action, I suppose. Schneider's admirably frank booklet note explains that he himself had doubts about adding a superfluous text; interestingly he now feels that while the Bach will, of course, survive without his words, the reverse is certainly not true.

He attempts to mirror Bach's work by limiting his poem to four themes – Bach in dialogue with his son-in-law Altnikol, Bach transported into a modern world and his reaction to it, the older Bach in a state of isolation from the modern music that surrounds him, and (slightly more obscurely) an Internet addict who finds reality and GoogleEarth a little blurred at the edges. The first of the two CDs has 29 tracks – 14 of spoken word and 15 of music (fragments of *Contrapunctus 3* and 5 are heard before the full versions); CD2 has seven musical tracks (including the chorale "Vor deinen Thron tret ich hiermit", which concludes the recording – presumably marking Bach's death) and five spoken. As with every previous NeoBarock recording I have reviewed, the playing is beautiful. The balance between the instruments (violin, violin/viola, viola and cello) is always perfect, in an acoustic that allows their individual voices to be heard clearly without one becoming dominant over the other(s). I can imagine there will be purists who will object to anything that tampers with "Bach's original concept" but I would challenge that point of view – given that the work was left incomplete, is it ever going to be possible to determine what his final intention for it was? NeoBarock have taken a calculated risk in confronting this most arcane masterpiece and finding a new way to bring it to fresh audiences – they are to be commended for such audacity, especially given the way they so clearly cherish the music! BC

**F. Couperin Les Nations – Sonades et Suites de Simphonies en Trio** Rebel *Les Caractères de la danse* Florilegium 65'33"  
Channel Classics CCS SA 33213

This is a technically excellent recording (Hybrid Pure Super Audio) of fine music very well played. Pairs of flutes and violins are used, either as matched pairs or one of each or all together *simphonie* style. In French music above all other much is a matter of taste, of course, but I do find that the equal pairs give the best balance of parts and that one stringed chordal continuo instrument is enough. In the lengthy suites there might be case for the kind of changing instrumentation employed

here (one can imagine Louis wanting to hear all his virtuosi in every concert) but some of the arrangements still strike me as unnecessarily elaborate. Others will disagree. The end of the essay is most odd. The last paragraph, though not marked as such, is surely a quotation which might have been better placed immediately before the poem to which it refers.

David Hansell

**F. Couperin Portrait d'Iris Suites pour viole de gambe et pièces de clavecin** Emmuelle Guigues, Sylvia Abramowicz gamba, Bruno Procopio hpscd, Rémi Cassaigne theorbo / baroque guitar 67'34"  
paraty 409.212

Pièces de violes... 1ere/2eme Suites Les Goûts-Réunis 14eme Concert Pièces de clavecin *La Manon*, *La Garnier*, *Les Ondes*, *Les Graces Incomparables*, *L'himen-amour*, *L'Amazone*, *Les Bagatelles*, *Les Baracades mystérieuses*, *Le Tic-Toc-Choc*

Other than the over-egging of the continuo (see also under Hotteterre), I enjoyed this recital very much. We are given Couperin's two suites for viol (only discovered in the 1930s), the last of the *Nouveaux concerts* (played on the dessus de viole) and two groups of harpsichord pieces drawn from seven different ordres. Notwithstanding the idiosyncrasies of the composer's writing for her instrument, Emmuelle Guigues virtuoso technique enables her to give us both his nobility and his playfulness. In his choice of harpsichord items, Bruno Procopio strikes a judicious balance between the 'pops' and the equally-good-but-less-well-known and plays his "restored from a ruin" instrument in a way that savours and displays its strengths, especially the sonorous bass register. The flowery essays require indulgent reading.

David Hansell

**C. H. Graun Osteroratorium** Nina Koufchristou, Dagmar Saskova, Jan Kobow, Andreas Wolf SATB, Kölner Akademie, Michael Alexander Willens 64'08"  
cpo 777 794-2

It wouldn't be Easter without a seasonal novelty from cpo. Seemingly man of the moment, Michael Alexander Willens gives Graun's oratorio an honest reading, drawing fine performances from the four soloists, the four ripienists who make up the choir, and an especially fine orchestra – special mention must be made of the two bassoonists in the Tenor aria, *Zerstreute Schafe, sammelt euch*. In fact, the work is divided into four sections (the booklet notes do not explain why), each beginning and ending with a tutti, and a sequence of

recitatives and arias between. All four singers also have an *accompagnato*, and there is one duet in Part IV. This work confirms Graun as a natural composer for the human voice, but the choruses also reveal a skilful contrapuntalist, and the *concertato* chorale which closes Part I shows that he had mastered that art, too. All in all, an hour's pleasant and uplifting listening; if you are emotionally exhausted after one Matthew Passion too many, this might be the perfect remedy. BC

**Graupner** *Himmlische Stunden, selige Zeiten* Miriam Feuersinger S, Capricornus Consort Basel 76' 06"

Christophorus CHR 77381

*Ach Gott unter Herr, Angst und Jammer, \* Furcht und Zagen, \* Ich bleibe Gott getreu\* + Tombeau* from GWW413

\* World premiere recordings

Only one of the pieces on this CD has previously been recorded. Three of them are from the church year 1710-11 and set texts by Georg Christian Lehms, the court librarian (but a well-known librettist of operas as well as sacred cantatas). The title of the disc comes from one of them, *Angst und Jammer*; a more melancholic and turbulent representation of these two words would be difficult to imagine. As one of the world's leading publishers of Graupner's music, I must confess that I am often confused by some of his musical grammar. Yet when I hear it in performance (as opposed to the computer's playback!), it suddenly all makes sense. Miriam Feuersinger's effortlessly enunciated singing (not to mention the breathtaking clarity of her high notes) is perfectly partnered here by a one-to-a-part ensemble, who revel in the often dark colours of Graupner's writing – there is a lot of colouring of individual notes within a carefully planned phrasal structure. It is not all doom and gloom – there is joy here, too, both in the music and in the performers. Every lover of German baroque music should definitely own this recording – and don't be surprised to hear one or two pre-echoes of Bach. BC

**Handel** *Peace & Celebration* European Union Baroque Orchestra, Choir of Clare College Cambridge, Alex Potter, Lars Ulrik Mortensen 69' 34"

Obsidian CD711

*Coronation Anthems, Ode for the Birthday of Queen Anne + Concerto Grosso Op 3/2*

This is live recording (with a little judicious patching) of a St John's, Smith Square concert (under the title "Handel: A

Royal Celebration") that I reviewed in last December's issue of *EMR*. It is a timely issue in the anniversary year of the accession of the first Hanoverian King, George I. The talented young musicians of EUBO (a training orchestra re-formed each year) come to the fore in the Concerto Grosso Op 3/2, with its distinctive Largo featuring two cellos and oboe (played exquisitely by Guillermo Turina Serrano, Nicola Paoli and Clara Geuchen). The rest of the piece involves outstanding playing by the two violinists Zefira Valova (the concertmaster for this tour, and formerly a EUBO member) and Roldán Bernabé-Carrión. For the rest of the disc they are in an accompaniment role. The outstanding feature of the vocal works is the opening movement of the Birthday Ode, "Eternal source of light divine", beautifully sung by Alex Potter, with the terrifying trumpet solo played with absolute conviction and surety by EUBO trumpeter Sebastian Philpott. You should buy this CD for this track alone – it is spine-tingling! I noted in my concert review that the other soloists were drawn from the Clare College choir, "with varying degrees of success". The choir as a whole, however, does sound good, even if at times here is occasionally a bit of a wobble from the alto line. In these shaky financial times, EUBO needs the support of funders more than ever. Buying this CD is a particularly good investment in the future of young musicians. Andrew Benson-Wilson

**Hotteterre** *Complete Chamber Music Vol. 1 Suites op. 2* Camerata Köln 75' 15" cpo 777 790-2

"Complete Chamber Music Vol. 1", we are told. Well, let's hope that the rest is as good as this, the Op. 2 suites. As Hotteterre suggests as possibilities, the melody line is taken variously by flute, recorder (nice to hear the voice flute), viol and harpsichord and there's plenty of detail in the playing by way of *flattement* and other decorations, including the use of the composer's pretty "heady" trill fingerings. But we do only hear one melodic colour in each suite, other than no. 2, which is played as a *simphonie*. For me, it's a shame this same restraint (I almost wrote 'good taste') is not maintained in the continuo instrumentation. Surely this should also be similarly approached. The notion of slow/quiet = theorbo and quick/loud = harpsichord is rather less sophisticated than most of the music, and I do find it difficult to believe that the guitar belongs in this repertoire at all. David Hansell

**Marais** *Alcione – Suites des Airs à jouer* 1706 Le Concert des Nations, Jordi Savall Alia Vox Heritage AVSA9903 (52' 45")

This release (recorded 1993) is part of a systematic programme to re-master and reissue the many recordings Savall made with his ensembles in the first half of his career. Almost half of the booklet is an illustrated catalogue of these, though the essay (in six languages) still manages to tell us what we need to know (in five pages per language). These dances are very fine. Though the forms are still essentially those of Lully, there is now some of the harmonic richness of Charpentier and hints of the yet-to-come glories of Rameau, coloured from a rich orchestral palette which included double bass (specified for the first time in a French opera) and percussion. I only wish that this was restricted to those places where the composer asked for it. David Hansell

**Pergolesi** *Stabat mater* Vivaldi *Nisi Dominus* [Gemma Bertagnolli S], Marie-Nicole Lemieux A, Sara Mingardo A, Philippe Jarrousseau cT, [Ensemble Matheus] Jean-Christophe Spinosi, [Concerto Italiano], Rinaldo Alessandrini 122' (2 CDs)

naïve OP 30558

+A. Scarlatti *Stabat mater* Vivaldi *Crucifixus, Stabat mater*

Naïve, no doubt with Easter in mind, have boxed together two discs of their iconic recordings of these works. Although both were recorded some while back (the Vivaldi in 2007 and the Pergolesi/Scarlatti in 1998) they sit well together both thematically and stylistically. Spinosi works with a largish string band for the Vivaldi disc, yet the balance does not seem over-heavy. Both he and the soloists give a dramatic interpretation to the two main works which some may like, though others may find a little overdone. The *Crucifixus* from the G Minor Credo is a filler between the two, and it is worth getting just for this. The singing here is restrained and the two voices are splendidly matched. The earlier date of the Pergolesi recording in some ways shows it age. In spite of using a smaller band – just one to a part with double bass – the instrumental texture seemed heavier than in the Vivaldi disc. It was the extremely slow tempi of some of the Pergolesi movements that I found disturbing, having been used to more forward-moving speeds in later recordings of this work. Nevertheless the well-matched voices essentially capture the spirit of the text in the music. Ian Graham-Jones

**Telemann *Miriways*** Markus Volpert *Miriways*, Ulrike Hofbauer *Sophi*, Julie Martin du Theil *Bemira*, Gabriele Hierdeis *Nisibis*, Stefan Zenkl *Murzah*, Ida Aldrian *Samischa*, Susanne Drexl *Zemir*, Ilja Werger *Ein Gesandter und Scandor*, L'Orfeo Barockorchester, Michi Gaigg 146' 41" cpo 777 752-2 (2 CDs)

It seems the time still has not come when Telemann's wonderful music does not need some special pleading – if this opera were performed under Handel's name, it would be a sell-out and an instant hit, such is the extraordinary high quality of the music (some of the arias are crackers!), yet the exotic *Miriways* will in all likelihood struggle to earn a place in the repertoire. Michi Gaigg's stature as a conductor grows apace – here she guides a cast of excellent singers and her own virtuoso band (the horns are out of this world in this particular recording!) through the gamut of Telemann's styles; solos, duets, accompanied recitatives, choruses and instrumental sinfonias alternate, widely varying in their scoring, ensure that the ear is as often tantalised as undoubtedly the eye would have been in the original production, given the Middle Eastern setting. If you only every buy one Telemann opera, I urge you to make it this one – it genuinely is delightful. BC

**Telemann *Luther Cantatas*** Siri Karoline Thornhill, Stefan Kohle, Susanne Krumbiegel, Tobias Hunger, Gotthold Schwarz SAATB, Sächsisches Barockorchester, Bach Consort Leipzig, Gotthold Schwarz 70' 36" cpo 777 753-2

*Es spricht der Unwisen Mund wohl, Es wollt uns Gott gnädig sein, Herr wir liegen für dir mit unserm Gebet, So ziehet nun an als die Auserwählten Gottes, Wertes Zion sei getrost*

Of the five cantatas recorded here, only one dates from after 1720. Three set texts by Erdmann Neumeister, while a fourth is by Johann Friedrich Helbig. Two have oboes, one has flutes, another two recorders, and the fifth on the disc has oboes and three trumpets. None of them is written for a special feast, but for Sundays after Trinity (two for the 6th, one each for the 8th, the 14th and 23rd). So much for the background; the music itself is consistently glorious – Telemann's imaginative use of instrumental colour deserves most credit (for example, the duet in *Wertes Zion sei getrost* with only the wind instruments and continuo). Five solo singers are listed, though it is not clear from the booklet which of the altos sings

which movements (or why!); they are joined by four ripienists (STBB), which presumably meant the director did not have to sing in the tutti. All the soloists sing well, but I would highlight the beautiful and seemingly effortless voice of Tobias Hunger. The Bach Consort Leipzig (33211 strings with winds, lute and organ) are a stylish band, and I especially enjoyed the flutes and recorders (though it is not clear who played the latter.) But the real star here is Telemann – what music! BC

**Telemann *Double Concerti for Winds & Strings*** Rebel, Jörg-Michael Schwarz Bridge 9421 (64' 40") TWV 52: D5, e1-e3, G1-2

When this recording arrived, I was very excited – every Rebel CD I have reviewed has been a total joy; but then my heart sank slightly when I saw that the flute/recorder soloist was Matthias Maute. I don't know why, but I have always found his approach to this repertoire as inappropriate as I have Rene Jacobs' to opera – unnecessary tampering to the detriment of the music, I would say. But there are fortunately no gypsies in this Telemann, just exciting performances of some great concertos, including two of my all-time favourites, the concertos in G for two violins (TWV 52: G1 and G2 – the latter even survives in a certain Mr Bach's handwriting), as well as the ever-popular concertos for violin & flute and flute & recorder. Less well-known are the violin concerto with obbligato trumpet and cello, and the E minor work for two flutes and bassoon. Even if you already own recordings of some of them, these lively performances will put a spring in your step. BC

**Telemann *Complete Recorder Sonatas*** Michala Petri rec, Anthony Newman hpscd OUR Recordings 8.226909 (44' 40") Four sonatas from *Der Getreue Musikmeister* + two from *Essercizii Musici*

This is quite a short CD, due partly to the fact that Telemann only published six sonatas specifically for the recorder, and partly to the breath-taking speed and verve with which Michala Petri and Anthony Newman play them. This is technically brilliant playing and a lot of it is very enjoyable, but some of the slow movements seem to lack expressivity in spite of some fluid ornamentation by the recorder. Anthony Newman is obviously playing a big harpsichord and a less heavy continuo might help here, though as this comment only applies to some of the slow movements the effect must presumably be

what the players intended. There are excellent sleeve notes by Joshua Cheek.

Victoria Helby

**Telemann 12 *Fantaisies*** Héloïse Gaillard Agogique AGOox4 (58' 39")

Although the title page of the manuscript now in Brussels labels them as being for violin, these inventive pieces have been identified as the fantasias for solo flute listed in Telemann's autobiography. They contain some of the most idiomatic writing for the instrument from the baroque period so I have always been a little wary of performances on the recorder. Héloïse Gaillard has completely converted me to the idea. She uses recorders ranging in size from tenor to sopranino to bring out the varied character of the pieces. Her playing is playful and witty, expressive and tender, enhanced with ornamentation based on Telemann's own examples in his Methodical Sonatas. This really is a most enjoyable CD and the quality of the recording is also excellent. Victoria Helby

**Vinci *Artaserse*** Philippe Jaroussky *Artaserse*, Franco Fagioli *Arbace*, Max Emanuel Cencic *Mandante*, Valer Barnabas *Semira*, Yuriy Mynenko *Megabise*, Juan Sancho *Artabeno*, Concerto Köln, Diego Fasolis 201' (DVD) Erato 46323234

Those troubled by cross-dressing and gender obfuscation should look away now. The audio version of this performance of Leonardo Vinci's final opera was issued with great fanfare on account of a cast of no fewer than five leading countertenors, with just a lone tenor making up the numbers. The reason, as explained in my review in *EMR* 151, is that *Artaserse* was written for Rome during one of the frequent periods (1730) when women were not permitted on stage in the Papal city. The film was made at a performance at the Opéra National de Lorraine in November 2012, more than a year later than the audio set. The only cast change is that of Juan Sancho's waywardly sung *Artabano* (the tenor role) for the excellent Daniel Behle. Otherwise the strengths (fabulous singing from the five countertenors) and occasional weaknesses (aggressive attack and over-driven tempos) are not surprisingly similar, though it was amusing to find that the ridiculous bassoon continuo I complained of in *Artabane's* recits ('like someone blowing his nose') has been dropped. The spurious timpani additions are however still there.

I suspect that the production will meet with a varied response. Some will no doubt see it as a glorious pseudo-Baroque extravaganza, with sumptuous costumes and headdresses (heaven only knows how many ostriches and peacocks were raided for their feathers). That these costumes, owing an obvious debt to the Persian setting of the opera, are suddenly abandoned at the end of act one in favour of 18th century costumes – only to return half way through the third act – is just one of the many conceits of a production that is at times too narcissistically clever for its own good. Indeed there are occasions when it seems the inclination is to parody (even self-parody), an impression enhanced by the constant onstage presence of backstage props and make-up artists as supernumeraries. Yet for a fair proportion of act two, the music is finally allowed to speak for itself, greatly to its benefit and an example of the magic inherent in Baroque operas on the all-to-rare occasions a producer is prepared to trust the composer. At the end of the act, all enchantment is again swiftly dissipated, with the silly literal depiction of the 'simile' aria that concludes it. Here lies conclusive evidence that the place of such pieces in Baroque opera has here been misunderstood.

Despite some striking visual moments, I can't but feel that overall the production misses the mark. Metastasio's darkly powerful drama and Vinci's score complements it to a compelling effect without the over-embellished, sometimes pantomimic effects to which it is subjected in this flawed, if often fascinating production. *Brian Robins*

**Vivaldi Cantatas** Deirdre Moynihan S, Ensemble Nota Velata 55' 04"

Naxos 8.573003

RV649, 650, 679, 680 & 681 (*All'ombra d'un bel faggio, Allor che lo sguardo, Che giova il sospirar, Lungi dal vago volto & Perché son moli*)

This ensemble is an impressive all-Irish group who here give stylish performances of five of Vivaldi's 40 or so secular solo cantatas. I suspect that many *EMR* readers will appreciate Deirdre Moynihan's pure, restrained vocal quality, though some may prefer a more theatrical interpretation of the more dramatic portions of the text. Three of the cantatas are for one or two violins and continuo, but RV 649 and 650 are continuo cantatas, unusually in three movements rather than more Italian convention of the four-movement recitative-aria pattern. The violins impeccably match Moynihan's vocal line, while the continuo playing is always restrained and stylish.

*Ian Graham-Jones*

1700 "Si suona, a Napoli!" 18th-century **Neapolitan Flute Concertos** Renata Cataldi, Le Musiche da Camera, Egidio Mastrominico 61' 45" Dynamic CDS 7674

Concertos by Legrosino (G), Palella (G), Perez (G), Santangelo (D) & Sellitto (G)

"Si suona a Napoli" is reported by Burney to be a flattering comment, which can be loosely translated as "They certainly play in Naples!", made by Corelli after he played there and appreciated the skill of Neapolitan musicians. Renata Cataldi and Le Musiche da Camera have a continuing project to rediscover the instrumental repertoire of a city which was famous for its operas, the area in which all of these composers mainly worked. There are no available dates for the concertos but the composers all lived well into the second half of the 18th century and the music is mid-century in style. All except one, the Perez, are in three movements with lively fast and expressive slow movements. The Santangelo is interesting for having a brief original cadenza. The instrumentation for three of the concertos is just 2 violins and continuo but in all of them Le Musiche da Camera make quite a big sound with two violins on each part and a continuo line made up of combinations of cello, double bass, theorbo, baroque guitar and harpsichord. In spite of this, the style of the music, with alternating orchestral ritornelli and more lightly accompanied solo passages, means that Renata Cataldi's baroque flute is never drowned. *Victoria Helby*

**The Bassoon Abroad: Foreign Composers in Britain** Jennifer Harris, Ensemble Chameleon 69' 25" Carus 83.463

**Galliard Sonatas 1, 2, 5 & 6, The Advice Merci Sonatas 3-5 Lampe** *The Maid's Request + Scots trad.*

How delightful to receive a recording of bassoon sonatas without (much as I love them) any sign of Boismortier or even Corette. Alongside editions of both those composers' sonatas there will almost certainly be an edition of the sonatas of Luigi Merci and Johann Galliard on any bassoonist's bookshelf – this is the first recording of both composers' bassoon sonatas I've come across. Jennifer Harris' recording explores the writings of foreign composers working in Britain in the first half of the 18th century. She demonstrates beautifully the wide range of moods and intensity of emotion in both composers' writing – ranging from the longing tones of the middle movement of the fourth Merci Sonata to the jaunty *Spiritoso e*

*Allegro* of Galliard's second. In between the sonatas, she has included contrasting works taken from a collection of popular songs printed in 1756 – *Apollo's Cabinet: or the Muses Delight*. These pieces (particularly for me, the traditional Scottish melodies) shine out as huge, delicious prelude-like beacons of joyous bassoonery! In her sleeve notes Jennifer Harris says "Quantz's light and shade are all very well, but I need lime green, azure blue, ochre brown, and more, the bassoon must be able to sigh, to speak and to laugh, in short: it has to come alive." In your hands, Ms Harris – it has certainly done just that.

*Maggie Bruce*

**Conversazione II: Duelling Cantatas** Sounds Baroque, Anna Dennis S, Andrew Radley cT, Julian Perkins dir 79' 13" Avie AV2296

**Caldara op 1/5 Gasparini Io che dal terzo ciel** Handel Amarilli vezzosa, Sonata in g, Rondeau in G (attrib.), A. Scarlatti Queso silenzio ombroso D. Scarlatti Sonatas K. 32 & 63

This is a winner – picture yourself, in October 1708, in the sumptuous surroundings of Rome's Palazzo Bonelli, along with one's fellow Arcadian Academicians, the guests of Marquis Francesco Maria Ruspoli. A civilised entertainment of pastoral cantatas and instrumental pieces by "Terpandro Politeo" (Alessandro Scarlatti), his son, Domenico and their colleagues Gasparini and Caldara is galvanised by the appearance of "Il Caro Sassone", the brilliant young Handel, showing off his keyboard virtuosity and his startlingly dramatic vocal writing.

Sounds Baroque have put together a fine programme. The Gasparini cantata has a ravishing pastoral duet at its heart, with pifferarian drone-effects; Caldara's trio sonata is elegantly and elegiacally contrapuntal, while Alessandro Scarlatti's *cantata a due* has characteristically smooth and subtle word-setting – note the beautifully-handled "dying" close. The well-known keyboard contest between the younger Scarlatti and his exact contemporary Handel is convincingly reconstructed (a first appearance on disc?) with a pair of sonatas apiece. It is, however, Handel's extended dramatic *scena* that crowns the proceedings, with the hectic chase of its overture, precipitately interrupted, and completed with a suave major-key minuet; this latter returns neatly at the end, but in the minor key, and with the participants singing in strict (for Handel) canon, symbolising their continuing separation. In between

are four contrasting arias; Daliso's lovely "E vanita d'un cor" is particularly haunting. These performances are wholly alluring; I especially enjoyed Anna Dennis's hard-to-get Amarilli. The continuo team are spot on, both supportive and stimulating, under Julian Perkin's expert direction. David Vicker's scholarly sleeve notes admirably complete a splendid recording. *Alastair Harper*

*Il Diario di Chiara: Music from La Pietà in Venice in the 18th century* Europa Galante, Fabio Biondi 72' 30" (+32' DVD) Glossa GCD 923401  
*Bernasconi Sinfonia in D* Latilla Sinfonia in G  
*Martinelli Vla d'amore concerto in D*, Violin concerto in E Perotti Grave for violin & organ in g *Porpora Sinfonia in G* Porta Sinfonia in D  
*Vivaldi RV149, 372*

From the excellent informative booklet notes by Biondi we learn that the diary of Vivaldi's favourite virtuoso violin pupil Chiara (though there is no evidence that she studied the instrument with the composer), once housed in the Pietà, lies in the Conservatorio Benedetto Marcello, together with many other part-book collections of music from the Pietà girls. The music on this disc, much of which was reconstructed from these part-books, offers an insight into the work of the composers who were employed at the Pietà, mostly after Vivaldi's departure in 1740 (just a year before his death in Vienna). Apart from Vivaldi, represented here by a Sinfonia RV 169 and the virtuoso concerto RV372 written especially for Chiara and impeccably played by Biondi, only two names were known to me – Porta and Porpora. The former's Sinfonia in D is a joyful, energetic work, whereas, Porpora's two-movement Sinfonia in G is a fine piece. Porpora lasted just one year at the Pietà in 1742, following the appointment of Vivaldi's successor, the incompetent D'Alessandro. Martinelli survived the working conditions at the Pietà longest (from 1750 to 1781). His two works represented on the disc are a viola d'amore concerto and a violin concerto in E, both written for 'S.ga Chiarella', who must have been by this time well into her 40s. Thereafter music, mostly in a simpler Neapolitan *galant* style, by Latilla, Perotti and Bernasconi completes this disc, one which all lovers of the Italian Baroque should not miss.

The short DVD, in Italian with English subtitles, traces the decline of the Pietà after Vivaldi's departure through the eyes of Chiara. She tells of the strict discipline and conditions imposed on the residents

(whom we would today best describe as prisoners) and the various incumbents, competent or otherwise, after Vivaldi's departure. Her account is backed by some short excerpts from the CD and other music of the time. It might be worth viewing the DVD before putting on the CD, so that listeners can more informatively judge the merits or otherwise of the work of those composers after the 1740s whose works have hitherto been lost in the mists of time. *Ian Graham-Jones*

*Friends of the Lute* Axel Wolf, Dorothee Oberlinger, Anna Torge, Christoph Anselm Noll 65' 43" Oehms Classics OC876  
*Bach, Baron & Weiss*

The CD gets off to a sombre start with Axel Wolf playing a Fantasia in B flat major by Silvius Leopold Weiss. His lute is tuned a tone lower than modern pitch, at A=392. The piece largely consists of slow-moving harmony and scurrying arpeggios. An unusual feature of the composition is the repetition of certain bass notes, which sounds as if the player was unhappy with a note and had a second crack at it, thereby interrupting the flow of arpeggios.

Wolf is then joined by mandolinist Anna Torge for a four-movement *Concert d'un Luth et d'une Mandoline* by Weiss. This was originally for lute and transverse flute. The flute part is now lost, but Frank Löhr has composed a convincing substitute played here on a sweet-sounding 6-course mandolino made by Günter Mark. The mandolino is tuned an octave higher than a renaissance lute in G, and it is a pleasure to hear its delicate notes in an expressive performance by Torge, enhanced by well-executed ornaments.

A short, intense Prélude in D minor by Weiss precedes a Concerto for recorder and lute by Ernst Leopold Baron. The lute part is not just a mere figured-bass continuo, but a carefully conceived part in tablature adding a second treble often in imitation. Wolf's lute is a gentle foil to Dorothee Oberlinger's chirpy recorder, although the fourth movement (Gigue) ends with an overenthusiastic bass note.

There follows a Fantasie in C major by Weiss, with some surprising modulations and chromaticism, finishing with an extended 4-3 trill. The lute here is much louder than it was when accompanying the recorder.

In the CD booklet notes Wolf explains that Bach's Trio BWV 1025 is an adaptation of a suite by Weiss, and he performs the piece in an arrangement for lute and harpsichord. He includes a

lengthy, fictitious account of how Bach and Weiss might have once had a jam session together, but none of this make-believe helps our understanding of history. There are six movements: Entrée, Courante (with slow-moving arpeggiated harmony and long ratty trills), Rondeau (with many slightly irritating repeated notes), Sarabande (with background gasps), Menuet (with tautological unisons at the start of each section), and Allegro (with a slow disjointed melody on the harpsichord while the lute bustles along with faster notes). The combination of the harpsichord's metal strings and the lute's gut strings is certainly extraordinary. The two instruments sound as if they have been recorded on two well-separated mikes, presumably to achieve a good balance. Unfortunately a natural blend is lacking, and the lute sounds artificially loud. It's a pity, because both players put in an exciting, well-co-ordinated performance.

The CD ends with a brisk Ciaconna in A major by Weiss. *Stewart McCoy*

*The Proud Bassoon: Virtuoso works for baroque bassoon and continuo* Peter Whelan, Ensemble Marsyas 60' Linn Records CKD 435  
*Anon Les Gentils Airs Boismortier op. 50/1 & 2*  
*F. Couperin Treizième Concert Dubourg Eileen Aroon with variations Fasch Sonata FWV N: C1*  
*Telemann Sonata in F minor TWV 41:fr*

A wonderfully varied collection of sonatas which clearly show that the bassoon has a great deal more to offer than its contribution as a continuo instrument. The very comprehensive sleeve notes mention the difficulty that the bassoon had to establish its own personality because of the very different timbre in each register of its range, and this recording demonstrates how composers came to make the most of these differences which add interest and texture to the most simple line. Sonatas by Fasch, Telemann (both with a claim to being the first sonata to name the bassoon as the solo instrument) and Boismortier are performed alongside less familiar repertoire. The first three tracks are taken from *Les Gentils Airs*, an anthology of popular operatic tunes assembled by the Leclerc brothers and arranged for bassoon with keyboard accompaniment – very familiar melodies and wonderful to hear in this quirky arrangement. A sensitive rendition of Couperin's *Les goûts-réunis, ou Nouveaux concerts: Treizième Concert 'deux instruments à l'unisson'* is given here on bassoon and gamba. The final piece is an

Irish air. Handel's first violinist, Matthew Dubourg, made arrangements of the air – Eileen Aroon – both for harpsichord and for bassoon with continuo. The bassoon version is now missing, so this is Peter Whelan's own reconstruction made from Dubourg's harpsichord arrangement. Peter Whelan's playing is always a delight to hear – full of life, interest and variety, and clearly demonstrates why the bassoon has every right to be proud! *Maggie Bruce*

*Tambalabumgá! Early World Music in Latin America* Ensemble Villancico, Peter Pontvik 51'  
cpo 777 811-2

Music by de Chavarria, Fernandes, Flores, de Lienas, de Murcia, de Padilla, de Zéspedes & anon (Cuba, Chile, Peru, Guatemala & Brazil)

Another engaging *ensalada* of *villancicos* and instrumental dances from the rich musical heritage of Colonial Latin America. Peter Pontvik and Ensemble Villancico range seamlessly from the unaccompanied and wholly European-sounding *Tristis est anima mea* by Juan de Lienas of Mexico City to the lively and wholly indigenous-sounding *Baile del Chimo*, *Lanchas para bailar* and *Cachua al Nacimiento*. En route, they include a wide selection of rhythmically and melodically bewitching *villancicos*, many of which were composed for “native” performance; Pontvik’s scholarly booklet note discusses the socially-stratified contexts for which they were written. Much instrumental imagination has gone into realising these pieces, with kaleidoscopic contributions from guitar, flutes and percussion, along with some occasional suitably-abandoned vocalisations! There is also, however, much skilful vocal counterpoint – Padilla, Fernandes and their anonymous companions were no slouches at polyphony! Well worth investigating – and perhaps passing on to one’s “World Music” aficionados. *Alastair Harper*

#### CLASSICAL

*C. P. E. Bach The Complete Keyboard Concertos Volume 20 (Double Concertos)*  
Miklós Spányi hpscd, Tamás Szelendy fp,  
Cristiano Holtz hpscd, Concerto Armonico  
BIS-1967 (59' 48")

The E flat concerto for fortepiano and harpsichord (W47/H479) was the first of the younger Bach's works I ever came across; I have no idea why, but it was on a double LP (yes, vinyl!) of baroque music and I remember being captivated not only by the combination of instruments but by

the gorgeous music itself. It inspired me to go looking for more and I discovered the L'oiseau-lyre release with the Academy of Ancient Music (then, of course, an absolute revelation) playing three quartets which have long been favourites – though the recording seems not to be available. Spányi combines a performance of that double concerto (which can be playful or serious as the music demands, in that other-worldly space that Bach's music inhabits) with equally telling renditions of the Concerto in F (Wq46/H408) and the colourful Sonatina in D (Wq109/H543) for two harpsichords, with eight movements and a very full orchestra – trumpets and drums in addition to horns, flutes and oboes. It is testimony to the attention to detail discernible throughout this hugely ambitious project that the whole ensemble is supported by only one each of viola, cello and bass. With the last CD now released, where will Spányi's imagination take him (and us!) now? Wherever it is, I hope he takes Concerto Armonico with him – might I suggest a disc of J. W. Hertel keyboard concertos (for starters!) BC

*C. P. E. Bach Concertos for various instruments* Jan De Winne fl, Emmanuel Balssa vlc, Marcel Ponseele ob, Il Gardellino Accent ACC24285 65' 34"  
Concertos for flute in D (Wq13, H482/1), oboe in B flat (Wq164, H466), and cello in A minor (Wq170, H432)

Another very welcome addition to the CPE Bach discography – let's hope the rest of the anniversary year continues with such enterprise! Two Il Gardellino groups were involved in the recording sessions (the wind concertos slightly the earlier) but there is no discernible difference, and since the location was the same for both, the sound is uniform across the disc. None of the soloists needs any recommendation from me – De Winne, Ponseele and Balssa are all renowned practitioners of musical arts and CPE Bach provides them plenty of scope for virtuosic display, as well as the chance to explore the darker side of his character in the slow movements. Listening to the flute concerto's *Un poco andante e piano*, I was reminded by the BBC's recent marvellous series on the rococo and Waldemar Januszczak's telling insights into the flip side of what we tend to think of as mere frippery. Il Gardellino enjoy both aspects of the music. BC

*C. P. E. Bach Works for keyboard & violin*  
Leila Schayegh vln, Jörg Halubek tangent piano & hpscd 71' 25"  
Pan Classics PC 10305

Sonatas in B minor (Wq76), C minor (Wq78) and D (H502), Arioso (H535) & Clavier-Fantasie (H536)

This recording is likely to be one of the highlights of the CPE Bach discovery year (though the inhabitants of Berlin are being offered the incredible chance to hear performances of no fewer than four different passion settings – one per Evangelist – on Good Friday; good luck to the performers!) Schayegh and Halubek have chosen some very dark music for this CD (even the A major Arioso has definite serious leanings), and I imagine that this was what drew the inquisitive Johannes Brahms to the two sonatas that frame the recital (Wq76 & 78); the decision to use his continuo realisations is a brave one, but he was far less unsympathetic to the original than many a 19th-century re-worker, and I doubt the uninformed listener would even realise that Halubek was not improvising the accompaniment. Elsewhere the pair are mercurial like the music, producing as wide a variety sorts of sounds from their respective instruments as Bach allows his imagination to explore; they are a perfect match, in fact, and I will not be surprised if this beautiful CD wins many awards. BC

*C. P. E. Bach / Alborea Sonatas for Violoncello & Violoncello piccolo* Jennifer Morsches vlc, Robin Bigwood hpscd/org, David Miller theorbo/archlute, Jane Gower bsn 62' or"

Barn Cottage Records BC013

This nicely produced and high-quality sound recording features world premiere recordings of two sonatas Bach originally composed for viola da gamba (no harm in that), as well as of two out of three sonatas by Francesco Alborea, supposedly one of the most influential cellists of his day (devotee of sonatas by A. Scarlatti, perhaps inspiration for Vivaldi, known and admired by Benda and Quantz). The Bach works are more substantial, lasting almost twice as long as the Alborea, but the latter makes up for that in the technical demands he places on the soloist. Keyboard, plucked and – in one sonata – bassoon continuo support cellist Jennifer Morsches in this entertaining recital. If I am totally honest, I don't think I would sit and listen to a whole CD of cello sonatas (as in any cello sonatas), but I will re-visit this set occasionally, and all HIP cello students should definitely hear it! BC

**Eberl Piano Sonata op. 27, Variations**  
Marie-Luise Hinrichs piano 53' 27"  
cpo 777 605-2

But for this music not being available elsewhere, this CD would not be mentioned in these pages. The two sets of variations treat melodies by Dittersdorf and Umlauff to a succession of metamorphosis without quite shaking off the originals' underlying harmonic patterns. The sonata in G minor was issued at the same time as Beethoven's *Waldstein* (by the same publisher!) and dedicated to Cherubini – it is a brooding work of real breadth, but I found myself disengaging with the pianism of it all; somehow period instruments make one seek out ways to bring drama to this sort of music. BC

**Haydn Piano Trios Nos. 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12**  
Bartolozzi Trio 69' 13"  
Naxos 8.573128

This is the fourth of the Naxos series of Haydn's relatively little-known Piano Trio's, and the first performed by Bartolozzi Trio's, who share the pianist Simon Crawford-Phillips with the previous three CDs, recorded by the Kungsbacka Piano Trio. Although not, apparently, using period instruments, the performers clearly have an affinity with period style, the string players (Matthew Truscott and Richard Lester) both OAE stalwarts. And the sound world certainly sounds 'authentic', with an appropriate delicacy of piano tone and touch, and a violin and string sound that would be difficult to interpret as other than "period". These are early works, simple and straightforward in a way that Haydn always excels in. Only one of the five is in more than two movements – No 12, with its expansive and lyrical Andante. Well recorded, and beautifully played, this CD is a delight. Andrew Benson-Wilson

**Michael Haydn, Complete Wind Concertos**  
Vol. 1 Salzburger Hofmusik, Wolfgang Brunner 63' 44"  
cpo 777 781-2

Flute Concerto in D MH105, Concertinos for Clarinet, Horn, Trombone & Trumpet (from Serenades MH68, 134, 68 and 104 respectively)

What a strange piece of marketing! Only one of the pieces on this CD is actually called a concerto by the composer (the D major flute concerto MH105); the others are movements with solo instruments extracted from serenades (which is why the "Concertino in A for Clarinette" – the reason for the fancy spelling is never made

clear – and that for trombone have the same catalogue number). Some other suitable movements have been avoided as they have already appeared on cpo recordings (albeit on modern instruments), so we have three pieces with only two movements (one pair in different modes), and two in three movements. What is not in question is the stylish playing of the Salzburger Hofmusik (with 33221 strings); only the clarinet and horn soloists are not listed among the band. Wolfgang Brunner directs from the harpsichord. Another thing not in doubt is Haydn's gift for writing neat melodies, and skilfully matching them to the solo instruments; though these are not works that demand a place in the repertoire of any soloist, they are nonetheless very attractive and will sit well in any classical concert. BC

**Haydn Londoner Symphonien Nr. 99, 101, 100**  
Cappella Coloniensis, Bruno Weil  
Ars Produktion ARS 30 063 (72' 20")

The third in the series of Haydn's "London" symphonies, with their distinctive CD covers of iconic London landmarks, by this period instrument orchestra, continues the theme of showing Haydn's increasing confidence in knowing what his audiences would appreciate while composing outstanding music with such artistry. The period orchestra certainly does justice to these works, and is one I would have no hesitation in recommending. There is a bonus CD (32' 36"), which takes someone with the ability to solve a Rubik cube to fathom how to extract it from the case) called 'Explanations', but since this is in German, only those fluent in that language will be able to reap the benefit from this. Ian Graham-Jones

**The A-Z of Mozart Opera** Rebecca Bottone, Klara Ek, Martene Grimson, Susan Girtton, Anna Leese S, Cora Burggraf, Jennifer Johnston ms, Allan Clayton, Andrew Staples T, Mark Stone Bar, Matthew Rose B, The Orchestra of Classical Opera, Ian Page 67' 47"  
Signum Records SIGCD373

Music from *Apollo et Hyacinthus*, *Bastien und Bastienne*, *La clemenza di Tito*, *Cosi fan tutte*, *Die Entführung*, *La finta giardiniera*, *La finta semplice*, *Don Giovanni*, *Idomeneo*, *Lucio Silla*, *Mitridate*, *Le nozze di Figaro*, *Il re pastore*, *Zaïde* & *Die Zauberflöte*

First released in 2007, this is the CD that introduced Ian Page's Classical Opera to disc. It offers a whirlwind traversal of Mozart's operas in chronological order,

including extracts from no fewer than fifteen of the 22 (if unfinished works are included). Page, to my mind one of the most talented of today's younger British conductors, immediately announced himself with this CD as a natural Mozartian. Indeed, one of the chief pleasures is the juxtaposition of graciously phrased cantabiles – listen, for example to the line he achieves in the delectable "Ruhe sanft" (*Zaïde*) – and the dramatically incisive rhythms of an aria like "Se vuol ballare" (*Figaro*), all splendidly played. The singing is more variable, with excessive vibrato a persistent problem; I suspect that there are some voices here that Page would not use today. I think, too, that he has developed his ideas on ornamentation since making this disc, the highlights of which include Klara Ek's charming "Geme la tortorella" (*La finta giardiniera*) and, perhaps predictably, Susan Girtton's winning performance of "Ruhe sanft", though her German diction could have been better. Of several ensembles in which Page shows himself capable of creating a satisfying balance, the quintet from act 1 of *Cosi* fares best. As I've noted in these pages before, I'm never quite sure who this kind of CD is aimed at. Surely not those familiar with the operas, who will find being wrenched from one familiar dramatic situation to another disconcerting. Possibly it could serve as an introduction to a newcomer to what is arguably the greatest of all operatic canons? That it will do admirably. Brian Robins

**De Winter Das Labyrinth** Christoph Fischesser Sarastro, Julia Novikova Königin der Nacht, Malin Hartelius Pamina, Michael Schade Tamino, Thomas Tatzl Papageno, Mozarteumorchester Salzburg, Salzburger Bachchor, Salzburger Festspiele und Theater Kinderchor, Ivor Bolton  
Arthaus Musik 101 677 (158' – 2 DVDs)

This review is long overdue, partly because when my new television system was installed (a bribe from my telephone company to retain their services), the DVD player would not talk to the box. It is all the more regrettable as this is a very nice performance of a much-neglected opera. The sequel to Mozart's *Zauberflöte* (and in all likelihood intended to have been composed by him, too – who can forget the scene of *Amadeus* collapsing at the glockenspiel?) features all the same characters, and a couple more generations of the Papageno family, as well as a new suitor for Pamina's hand. Ivor Bolton's minimal musical cuts (the spoken text fairs

less well) means that this 2012 Salzburg Festival performance is the most complete since the early 19th century. The principle roles are all well sung, for the most part without operatic wobbles, and the various choruses neatly sung. The orchestra play modern instruments but in a stylish way – with Bolton in charge, would you expect any less? In the booklet, he is credited with saying that Winter's music is best when he is not trying to imitate Mozart (the glockenspiel and flute make various appearances), and this enjoyable performance suggests that this is a piece that truly deserves revival.

BC

19<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

**Gluck *Iphigenia in Aulis* arr. Wagner** Camilla Bylund *Iphigenia*, Michelle Breedt *Klytämnestra*, Christian Elsner *Achilles*, Oliver Zwarg *Agamemnon*, Chorus Musicus Köln, Das Neue Orchester, Christoph Spering 114' 18" (2 CDs in box)  
Oehms Classics OC953

What a bizarre idea, you might think. And yet, Christoph Spering and his colleagues are used to taking on the unusual, so it should come as no surprise to anyone that this boxed set (despite my equal prejudice against both composer and arranger!) is a thing of both interest and pleasure. Actually, the pleasure on my part was truly limited by the aforementioned unshakable dislike I have for Gluck and Wagner, but the singing and playing are uniformly excellent, with the period winds giving an entirely different sound (a clarity more than anything else) to the band, which modern instruments could never achieve. Purists doubtless shirk at Wagner's cuts and re-writings, in my book anything that shortens a Gluck opera is laudable, and this set even has room at the end of the second CD for Wagner's concert version of the overture.

BC

**Concertante: Virtuosic Wind Concertos**  
Sinfonietta Riga, Claus Efland 69' 13"  
Challenge Classics CC72621  
**Belloli** Concerto for clarinet & horn Danzi  
Concertino for clarinet & bassoon Jadin  
Symphonie Concertante for clarinet, horn &  
bassoon Lachner Concertino for horn &  
bassoon

This disc gets into these pages using the “not otherwise available in the catalogue” disclaimer. What a clever programme, combining three pieces for different wind pairings and then a concerto that uses all three. I had never heard of Agostino Belloli, but I thoroughly enjoyed his

concert(o) for the unlikely combination of clarinet and horn. The other three works on the disc are equally enjoyable, and this will make an interesting dinner party soundtrack – even the smarty-pants in the group will be challenged to identify any of the composers. Soloists and orchestra alike are great advocates of the music. BC

**Reviving Song: Selected works by Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel, Hélène Montgeroult, Louis Spohr** Pamela Dellar ms, Diane Heffer clarinet, Vivian Montgomery fp  
Oasis 700261394732 (58' 28")  
Contact: v.s.montgomery@soton.co.uk

I have long been a fan of the period clarinet, and of Spohr, so the chance to hear both (albeit in a context in which you would not find me) was a delight, and so – it turned out – was the disc. Spohr's *Six German Songs* cover a range of emotions and he captures them well, creating an interesting dialogue between the singer and the wind instrument, while the piano is relegated pretty much to a background role. The two-movement piano sonata by Montgeroult provides Vivian Montgomery with more chances to shine, and she reveals herself to be a talented musician, carefully shaping both the *Maestoso con espressione* and the *Allegro agitato* (which last over nine minutes each) in such a way that neither outlasts its welcome. I can imagine the composer having been tremendously impressive at salons in her day. There is, however, no denying the dramatic gear change when she is joined once more by Pamela Dellar for an impressive assortment of songs by Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel. Hers is a slightly dark voice, well suited to some of the more serious texts. Personally, I would have reversed the order of pieces and ended with the Spohr – although Hensel's *Zauberkreis* is a lovely ending, (one which Richard Strauss must have known!) BC

## VARIOUS

**Memorandum XXI: Essays & Interviews on Music & Performance** Skip Sempé, Capriccio Stravagante, C S Renaissance Orchestra, C S Les 24 Violons 390' (5 CDs)

Paradizo PA0012

CD1 *Pavans, Galliards & dances* CD2 *Madrigali*  
CD3 *Chaconnes, Frantazias, Sonatas & Suites*  
CD4 *Pièces de clavecin* CD5 *Musique de théâtre*

This is a hardback book the size of a DVD case, printed on glossy paper and containing almost 200 pages in each of English and French which reprint *Essays & Interviews on Music & Performance* fairly evenly spread over the years since 1990,

like the ‘mother’ recordings, though also including an essay by Gustav Leonhardt from 1971. The CDs are in the endpapers and the binding (of quite a heavy volume) has not survived the review process.

Skip Sempé is a director and virtuoso harpsichordist who likes to live on the edge of performing practice plausibility. This is fine, though I could do with a bit less of the “we're right and everyone else is dull” attitude that comes out of the essays. I do think that some of his instrumental combinations are questionable (cornetto supported by viol consort); do the *intermedii* really need quite a large choir (in the modern sense)? is it really appropriate, no matter how ‘exciting’ it may seem, to combine consorts of viols and recorders, as well as lute, harp and harpsichord in a single Byrd fantasia? did consorts of keyboard instruments play together in the 16th and 17th centuries quite as often as he suggests? And I do think that the tempo changes in Purcell's *Three parts upon a ground* are just plain wrong. But at least Sempé has not been afraid to ask and offer answers to those questions and accept that not everyone will agree with his conclusions.

The five jam-packed CDs offer a wide-ranging anthology of music from 1550 for more than two centuries. In general I enjoyed the smaller-scale performances more than the lavish offerings. The harpsichord playing on CD4 is absolutely top class and although the unconvincing Purcell *Ground* is on CD3, so is more fine harpsichord music, and the Marais ensembles on CD5 are very satisfying.

The biggest problem with the overall package is that there is no cross-referencing from notes to CDs or vice versa. This means that the former often refer to music that is not included on the discs and there is no easy way of getting from the CD listings to relevant notes or of going in the other direction. I found this really frustrating. It is probably inevitable that a large issue like this will have overtones of the curate's egg. Listening without thinking may be the best approach – but I don't think that's what Sempé wants us to do. David Hansell

**Tavener *Eternity's Sunrise*** The Choir and Orchestra of The Academy of Ancient Music, Paul Goodwin 65' 03"  
Harmonia Mundi USA HMU 907231

With his death in November of last year, Britain lost one of its leading musical figures. Whether or not you like his mystical approach or are a fan of minimal-

CD marked a collaborative venture with AAM and some of his favoured singers, and includes five works, lasting a little over an hour. I have to confess that I cannot handle the entire disc at one sitting, but I found some of it profoundly moving, none less so than the *Funeral Canticle* (of course). If you have no Tavener in your collection, this could be the one.

BC

### CONSORTS

This "crowd-funded" CD is a wonderful demonstration of the extraordinary level of professionalism attained by students of the early music course at the Hochschule für Künste in Bremen (and, by extension, of the standard of the teaching there). As well as the expected consorts of voices, gambas and recorders, there are groups of lutes, violins, cellos, dulcians (featuring some of the lowest notes I ever heard) and flutes, as well as an excellent cornett and sackbutt ensemble. For those who don't know, "crowd funding" is an increasingly popular way of raising money for ventures by publicising your project online and asking people to make a small donation until you reach your target amount. In this case, not only were the students expected to give outstanding performances of their chosen repertoire (which extends from the voices in Monteverdi madrigals to the four flautists in Reicha), they also had to contribute the booklet notes – a great way to encourage them to find out all about the music they are playing. From a music catalogue perspective, the oboe band's fine rendition of Telemann's C minor suite is most welcome. As I have written in these pages before, I think this a guaranteed win-win undertaking – the students get the experience of recording, the disc is an instant audio CV, and friends and family get to hear them at work (and play!) I have tried to interest British conservatories in a similar project with my on-going German cantatas initiative, but so far no takers. If you would like a copy of the CD, please email: a.heibuehl@hsk-bremen.de

BC

**Elgar's trombone** Sue Addison *trmbn & editor*, Sally Goodworth *pf*, Frances Kelly *hp*, Chi-chi Nwanoko *d/b*, Crispian Steele-Perkins *tpt*, Judith Treggor *picc*, Emily White *trmbn 68' 03"*

Calarecords CACD77016

+ Bridge, Britten, Greenwood, Gurney, Purcell/Quilter, Sullivan, Vaughan Williams,

The Royal College of Music owns a trombone and another by Holst. The informative booklet quotes a PS in a letter

to Jaeger on Dec. 7<sup>th</sup> 1900 "I'm learning the trombone." His wife wrote to Jaeger the following year saying that he had been playing *Nimrod* with piano – it's the second item on the programme; another "variation", *Dorabella*, was amusingly critical. If the VW Studies in English Folk-songs are counted as eight pieces rather than one, the 25 items run to about two and a half minutes average, and the only break from the trombone is Elgar's 4th Piano Improvisation (the longest at 5'25"). Most of the items have piano accompaniment, but some have a harp and the shortest item is for trombones and double bass.

Sue's debut on Elgar's trombone was fittingly the OAE *Gerontius* in 2009: sadly, that wasn't recorded, since there was some stunning trombone playing. This programme is more of the drawing room: mostly relaxing music, some amusing, but some serious. However, unless you're a trombone fan, it may be better not to concentrate on it straight through. I'm an enthusiast for the sackbut, and there are pictures in the booklet comparing the greater size of current trombones and Elgar 1892 instrument which makes a sound much nearer a sackbut. Not that there is any early music here, except for *Fairest Isle*, whose attribution to Quilter is an exaggeration, unlike *The Ploughboy*, rightly attributed to Britten.

Well worth buying. Apart from her playing, Sue deserves support for all her background research and informative booklet. I hope a programme for the Holst trombone will follow, though the only obvious piece I can think of is the tune in *Jupiter*!

CB

### Ortus editions in the next issue.

**Albinoni** *Violinkonzert D-Dur* Violin and piano version by Nicola Schneider. ortus verlag (om121/2) ISMN M-700296-80-3 [viii] + 8pp + part.

**Johann Wilhelm Hertel** *Konzert für Oboe, Streicher und Basso continuo C-Dur*. Herausgegeben von Karl Heller. (om149/1) ISMN 979-700317-66-9 [xiv] + 45pp.

**Jean Gaspard Weiss** *Grands Préludes & Solos für eine und zwei Flöten*. Herausgegeben von Tobias Bonz. ortus verlag (om158) ISMN 979-0-700317-95-9 [x] + 35pp.

**Schaffrath** *Ouverture E-Dur CSWV:A:2*. Herausgegeben von Reinhard Oestreich. (om151) ISMN 979-0-700317-87-4 [xiv] + 16pp + 4 parts.

**Schaffrath** *Konzert für Cembalo und Streicher G-Dur CSWV:C:41*. Herausgegeben von Reinhard Oestreich. (om164/1) ISMN 979-0-502340-10-1 [xvi] + 65pp.

**Nichelmann** *Konzert für Cembalo und Streicher d-Moll*. Herausgegeben von Ullrich Scheideler. (om153/1) ISMN 979-0-700317-91-1 [xvi] + 73pp.

**Carl Heinrich Graun** *Arienalbum für Sopran*. Herausgegeben von Anne-Katrin Schenck. (om119/1) ISMN M-700296-75-9. 104pp.

