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tel +44 (0)1480 452076 fax +44(0)1480 450821
clifford.bartlett@btopenworld.com
elaine.bartlett2@btopenworld.com
Contact for CD reviews bc16661@hotmail.com

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Sometimes I wonder why music publishers are so competitive. A few weeks ago, a customer asked if I could get him parts of Bach Cantata 41. Without checking, I assumed that, with three reliable publishers (Breitkopf, Bärenreiter and Carus, in chronological order) who have been working over the years – twice in the case of Breitkopf – I assumed that at least I could find the parts with one of them. There were sets from Breitkopf (there had to be, because they provided all the music for JEG's survey of all the Cantatas) but not all are for sale. Bärenreiter have been quite slow in producing cantata parts, though they have published all the scores in study-score format as well as the original large format. Carus is probably the most prolific at present, but only has the vocal score of Cantata 41. It's not a piece I know, but it looks impressive. *Jesu, nun sei gepreiset,* for New Year, has an opening chorus running to 54 pages (213 bars) in the Neue Bach-Ausgabe. There are three trumpets & timps, three oboes and strings – but no bassoon, since there is only one basso continuo for string(s) and another for the high organ pitch (the original parts survive). In addition, there is a violoncello piccolo with tenor and Bc which I'd love to hear.

I don't think that Brian had fully recognised the length, even if the remaining five movements take only 15 pages. But it's now done, and I hope people will use it. Carus has a vocal score. Perhaps there should be a new-year party, but maybe not in Scotland, and certainly not at the time of Bach's service, starting with bells at 6.00 am! But the candles are set out an hour later and could be a reminder, for good or ill, of the referendum!

We were just finishing off this issue of *EMR* when Christopher Hogwood's death was announced on 24th September. He was best known for conducting his Academy of Ancient Music, but his career changed over the last decade or so and he became was more concerned with editing and lecturing. He was easy to relate to as player and, as in my case, a helpful friend, with a mind full of knowedge way beyond music. We will miss him. We will print further memories in the next issue: do send in yours. It is sad that Cambridge has lost two very different musicians in quick succession. *CB*

REVIEWS OF MUSIC

Clifford Bartlett

CARUS B-MINOR MASS

Bach *Messe in h-Moll/Mass in B Minor BWV 232* herausgegeben von Ulrich Leisinger... *Full score.* (31.232), 2014.xi + 302pp pb €75.00; hardback €139.00 + CD

I've been using Joshua Rifkin's Breitkopf edition of 2006, almost a quarter-century after his pioneering recording, as basis for a programme note last month: it would have been the Carus version had it come in time. I didn't get the revised NBA edition, (2010) but I did copy onto the out-of-date-before-it-was-published Smend's 1954 NBA edition the differences of the 1733 parts in Bach's hand which were sent to Dresden – this was Rifkin's score and, thanks to Andrew Parrott, I copied his alternative markings from the Dresden parts for his and my benefit. Two different numbering systems are listed on Carus's last page. Rifkin and Woolf (Peters EP8735) has 27 sections, Wolf and Leisinger have 23. The original 1950 BWV catalogue has 25 movements, the 1990 revision has 27 (with the previous numbers in brackets), but the 1998 condensed version reverts to Smend, with numbering of each of the four sections in which he groups the work. (That is also included in the Carus list.)

I've no idea how a century and a half of vocal scores numbered the movements – it's the variation of bar-numbers that can be annoying, but older editions didn't have bar-numbers anyway. The separation of what are *de facto* independent movements but without a gap differ merely by having a number before the title or not. There's a difference between an introduction (as at the Kyrie's opening) and two movements (e.g. *Quoniam tu solus sanctus* and *Cum Sancto Spiritu*) that are essentially independent except for the quaver horns and a crotchet continuo: the second movement enters on the second quaver. More complicated is the link between *Confiteor*, the adagio *Et expecto* and the more extended Vivace e Allegro *Et expecto*. Both interchanges are difficult and can be solved by a gradual change from 121 to half-way through 123 and an accellerando through the continuo's four crotchets at bar 146. There's some sense in the Bc moving on to establish the tempo for 147 by the soprano following the 3rd and 4th Bc notes for his (or these days usually her) "et ex-".

The Carus edition is extremely well set out and the print is bolder and often larger than others. Using the *Dona nobis pacem* as sample, Breitkopf economises in space by having four systems printed two to a page, cutting out the tacet three trumpets & timps so taking up 7 pages: Carus takes 12 more spacious pages. I don't normally conduct – certainly not a work like this – but I think I'd prefer, within reason, fewer page-turns. Weight is no consideration for conductors as it is for singers: Breitkopf is 1.260kg, the Carus paper cover version is 1.350.

Both scores have introductions and critical commentaries. Carus also includes a disc with, among other things, a facsimile of the full score as well as the Dresden parts (see below, but don't be too optimistic!) In Bach's musical career, the term "Mass" refers to the Kyrie and Gloria. He produced a Mass of that nature in 1733 in the hope that the court at Dresden might award him the title (probably largely nominal) as Kapellmeister. Augustus II, King of Poland and Elector of Saxony, died on 1 February, 1733. Official mourning excluded concerted church music from Bach, with no weekly cantatas in Leipzig between the Sunday before Lent and the Fourth Sunday after Trinity, so that gave him plenty of time. Bach mentions his "poor composition" that suffered in diminution of fees, and pleads for a higher status. This reached Dresden on 27 July. The changes in the Dresden parts of the *Kyrie* and *Gloria* were not accessible, so the complete Mass (C.P.E. Bach called it "the great Catholic mass") had none of the 1733 improvements, but other adjustments were made later to the score without awareness of the 1733 parts.

Most of the movements were based on extracts from Bach's own works, sometimes adjusted – for instance, to make a borrowed movement balance in length with an adjacent movement. He was involved in an adaptation of the *Gloria* for Cantata 191, probably to mark the signing of a peace treaty in Dresden on Christmas Day, 1745, but that had no relationship with the Dresden parts. It may have inspired him to enlarge his short mass to a full one, but there is no evidence that he performed any of it.

Bach eventually, perhaps in 1748-50, set the rest of the full mass – *Symbolum Nicenum* (i. e. *The Nicene Creed*: it was more usual to sing the Apostles' Creed), *Sanctus* (including *Pleni sunt coeli*) and *Osanna, Benedictus, Agnus Dei & Dona nobis pacem*. There are various brief problems of legibility; those that were defective because of wear on the score or corrections by CPE Bach can sometimes be checked against the 20 MS extant copies (mostly based on Kirnberger's copy). That also applies to the Kyrie and Gloria, but the 1733 score can also be considered an early draft, in that the parts have detailed changes. Access to the sources is given in the accompanying DVD. It is frustrating that the DVD is only available with the bound copy (apart from exceptions for reviewers). This is an amazing supplement, containing among others:

* The complete autograph score (from 1924 facsimile)
* The 1733 parts
* MS score by Johann Friederich Hering (c.1765)
* Copy by anon copyist owned by Johann Philipp Kirnberger (c.1769)
* Full score (as the edition, for ease of comparison)
* "Et in unum Dominum" (alternative version), etc

What more can the inquisitive enthusiast want? It's not just being able to see the sources but the ability to produce different versions of specific bars. It is definitely worth finding a library that has it. There will at least be several in Cambridge, though fortunately I don't have to make the journey from Huntingdon.

MONODY AT KASSEL

Georg Schimmelpfennig *La buona et felice mano: Italienische Madrigale 1615...* ed by Hochen Faulhammer (Fontana Casselana Reihe B: Singstimme mit ausgesztem Generalbass, 1) Pan (650), 2014. 51pp, €25.00.

I must confess that I haven't come across George Mouldy-Penny (c.1582-1637) before. Were the name only surviving in the MS dedicated to Landgrave Moritz's daughter, Elisabeth, it could be a joke of friendly banter, but his name was familiar as musician (a fellow student with Schütz) then administrator. The editor sees some flirtation in her Italian madrigalian poems (nearly 200), of which Schimmelpfennig set eleven in the solo-and-continuo style of Caccini. Emma Kirkby has recorded *Dolce tempo passato* twice.

The edition is mostly OK. There is one page of facsimile, comparison with the edition is more valuable than editorial comment, though I'd welcome a page with triple time as well – there's room on the final back page – though the page would be better used with an English translation. (The Preface is in German and English.) I'm too worried about regularity of barlines, but editors need to make appropriate choices at ends of line, since there are no barlines there. System 1 of the facsimile, *Fuggime quanto poi*, comes at the end of four minims, so warrants a barline, but line two ends on three beats with three further beats beginning line 3, and the next two bar has six beats, so there perhaps the bar line at the end of system 2 could be omitted. The printing of a bar at the end of system 3, however, is silly when a minim ends the system and the beginning of the next system has three beats to complete a four-beat bar. The editor should surely use discretion. Whether irregular bars caused by line-ends is worth indicating depends on the how obviously the barring works. Performers need to be aware that bars with three or six minims have the same tempo as four or eight with no change in signature, but 3/2 represents mensuration.

I'm also worried about the keyboard realisation. A player can get caught if he sees a sharp twice in the vocal part but only once in the realisation below, implying that one rule applies to the voice part, a different, modern one to the realisation. On the last bar of the first page, for instance, the third beat (F) has a sharp in the voice part but none in the realisation, though both staves had the same note sharpened two notes back. But on p. 17, bar 6 the voice has a sharp before the first note and a bracketed natural at the last and an unbracketed natural in the realisation. It is common to begin the accompaniment with a spread chord, especially if the voice enters after a minim rest: that occures seven times, two with a crotchet and two with no rest. The opening chord needs at least a four-notes spread chord, but the realisation is written entirely in three parts: thickness of accompaniment depends on what the singer is doing, and if he is playing the lute family, it is particularly likely to be flexible.

I am always annoyed by editors not having capital letters at the beginning of Italian lines. I know that it is current convention not to (when did it become normal?) but when reading underlay, it's essential to be able to see where there is a new line by the presence of the capital. It works perfectly well in Handel operas. The German translation is in prose. Incidentally, I got told off by Roger Norrington for a routine 8 7 on the dominant when I was (for the first time) playing Monteverdi's *Orfeo*: but there is a poignant an *Oime!* at a prominent 7 on the dominant leading to the tonic when Euridice dies.

Two misprints. On the cover, *Singstimme* should be translated as *voice*, not *singing voice*, and on the title page the italic section at the bottom spells *Magridal*: apart from the spelling, the M should probably be lower case. But I'm not trying to be petty: there's so much that the singer and accompanist can make out of the music. It's a pity that the editor hasn't grasped additions to the chords.

ALBRECHTSBERGER REQUIEM in C MINOR

Albrechtsberger *Requiem in C Minor for solo voices, choir and orchestra. Score* edited by Matthias. (*Diletto Musicale* 1428). Doblinger (D.19 922), 2013. 72pp, £25.50.

Johann Georg Albrechtsberger (1736-1809) wrote around 35 Masses and 3 Requiems. Two were written in the 1790, but this one was probably written for the Abbot of Melk, Thomas Pauer, in 1762. The work was recirculated in the 1790s, and two flutes were added ad lib, making a prominent difference to the original version, but maybe not appropriate. The basic scoring is 4 voices, 2 clarini and timps (muted), two violins, viola and a bass part, with another bass for organ. The Sequence is deliberately lacking some sections. It looks rather impressive, but there is no indication of parts with the score or on line as far as I can see. Let's hope that performing material appears – I'd like to hear it!

FOR THE NEXT ISSUE

Carl Friedrich Abel *Second Pembroke Connection: Four duets for viola da gamba and violoncello. A3:1-4* Edited by Thomas Fritsch Edition Güntersberg (G250), 2014. €17.50

Carl Friedrich Abel *Second Pembroke Connection: Four duets for viola da gamba and violoncello. Vol. 1: Sonatas 3-7 A2:42-46* Edited by Thomas Fritsch Edition Güntersberg (G253), 2014. €21.50

Carl Friedrich Abel *Second Pembroke Connection: Four duets for viola da gamba and violoncello. Vol. 2: Sonatas 8-10, 13-14 A2:47-51* Edited by Thomas Fritsch Edition Güntersberg (G254) 2014. €21.50

to be reviewed by Robert Oliver

REVIEWS OF BOOKS

Clifford Bartlett,

UPON A GROUND

Martin Erhardt *Improvisation on Ostinato Basses from the 16th to the 18th Centuries*, Translated from the German by Milo Machover. Walhall (EW 905), 2013. 148 pp + 23 CDs, €29.80. Also available in German (EW 821)

This is a useful book, rather more thorough than the usual instruction, but extends to improvising among several players, which may not be most musicians interest. The volume ends with blank staves to write upper parts, which seems to me to be undermining the idea of improvisation. Beyond that, there are two discs, one at A=415, one at A=440, for playing along. But the accompanying sounds tend to be out of style, with too much quiet percussion: the title gives a period for the basses, but the CD doesn't feel at all like the period.

However, there is a wealth of information here, and any players of basses will benefit from familiarity with how bass-pattern music works. Keyboard players should make the standard basses utterly familiar – playable without having to think about them. Sometimes you will be playing with a melodic part as well, and if the harmony is the same throughout, you can play just from the bass. But there are grounds where you have to think very hard if the upper parts has a choice of some chords (I can't remember a notorious one but I've played it often enough); but if there's a problem, spread the chord so that the awkward note is obvious before you play it. But you can amuse yourself for hours at a keyboard or lute working out your own variations (and by that I don't mean writing anything). You should be able to recognise standard grounds, but I (and I suspect nearly everyone else) hadn't realised the pattern in the *Laetatus sum* from Monteverdi's 1610 Vespers, which has three recurring patterns: regular crotchets, semiquaver duets on a static bass, and between them a ground, the pattern repeated several times. There are plenty of composed ostinatos, but there's a difference between improvising chamber music, which was probably used by full-time musicians concentrating on that skill (and is the result anachronistic anyway) and playing grounds as part of the continuo function. Well worth reading.

MORLEY THE PUBLISHER

Tessa Murray *Thomas Morley, Elizabethan Music Publisher* The Boydell Press, 2014. xviii + 265pp, £60.00. ISBN 978 1 84383 960 6

I've known Tessa slightly for many years as the wife of a friend at the BBC. She kindly let me copy her transcriptions of Marini. I discovered many years later that she had taken a commercial career, then on her retirement produced a PhD at Birmingham that is the source of this book

In many ways, Morley is a familiar composer: who hasn't sung *Now is the month of maying* or *My bonny lass she smileth*? But many singers grow out of his lighter works and rather look down on him. Morley's aim, however, was in large part to bring the Italian vernacular forms to England by translating or paraphrasing Italian that amateur English singers might enjoy, producing new texts, printing and publishing his and other volumes. His inspiration was probably the realisation that the 1575 monopoly of Tallis (who died in 1585, before Morley was active) and Byrd was a restriction, whereas "Morley sought it for himself, suggesting that... his main aim was to publish music to meet a public demand, rather than control its supply".

The first chapter gives a fuller biography of Morley than I have seen before, now updated on Grove Online.[1] Much of any musicians career depends on who he knows. He had a successful beginning as boy then adult chorister, but contact with people of wealth, fame or honour was also useful. There is some controversy whether Morley had any catholic sympathies during his visit to the low countries in 1591. It seems that some travellers acted on both sides, but what must have inspired Morley will have been the vast quantity of printed music available in Antwerp.

This could have been a very heavy-going book, but Tessa writes as clearly as possible, helped by the subsections within the chapters. There are five appendices, the most significant being "Thomas Morley's Publications", which list the contents of each work, including text type, structure, clefs, mode and text source. Tessa writes in general terms about the editions published, but sensibly does not offer detailed analyses of individual pieces. The book is quite long enough, and Morley's music would need to be compared with his contemporaries.

THOMAS RAVENSCROFT (c.1590 – 163x)

Ross W. Duffin *The Music Treatises of Thomas Ravenscroft: 'Treatise of Practicall Musicke' and* A Briefe Discourse Ashgate, 2014. xii + 244pp, £60.00. ISBN 978 0 7546 6730 8

This is in some respects similar to Murray's Morley above, especially with respect to a more plausible explanation of their careers and dates. The skill Duffin has in relating brief clauses or even single words are convincing. Particularly dubious are the frustratingly unfixed steps from birth to death and so much in between. The biography of Ravenscroft and various contacts takes up the first 50 pages. Then follow pages of introduction to the two treatises (50-75). *Treatise of Practicall Musicke* (pp. 77-102) is transcribed accurately from BL Add. MS 19758, but not as far as imitating the lines and pages. This is

1. Sadly, only Cambridge and Birmingham have free online access now.

chiefly about note-values and prolation etc. The *Treatise* is followed by 61 notes explaining problems and errors (pp. 103-9). *A Briefe discourse...* was published in 1614. The text (pp. 111-152 + notes pp. 153-161) is a more sophisticated and less inaccurate description of note-values, preceded by introductory material and commendatory poems. The final section of the 1614 publication is of music, in five sections: Hunting (no. 1-2), Hawking (3-5), Dauncing (6-9), Drinking (10-12) & Enamouring (13-20). *A Briefe discourse...* was published in facsimile, and it is included in *Musica Britannica* 93 along with his other secular output.

A Briefe discourse concludes with 20 genuine or parodic vernacular songs. The notation represents the original more closely than the recent *Musica Britannica* vol. 93, published two years ago, including all the printed songs. The visual aspect uses a pseudo-antique font, with diamond-shaped notes, no bar lines, and repeats mostly indicated by a cue. However, the beaming of quavers in No. 2 is anachronistic – you can check it on line. MB 93 expands the repeats, which seems pointless in an academic publication. In both editions, 14 of the 20 pieces can by performed without page-turns, but the smaller pages look much neater when the music occupies either two or four pages. A musical point is the clefs. If this were a collection of anthems, I'd immediately ask: why are the chiavette-clef pieces not transposed down? MB93 makes no mention of the possibility, but the standard C1C3C4F4 clefs are a minority of 6 to 14. However, some of Ravenscroft's rounds have a two-octave range. MB93 has a far longer biography than usual, but it needs to be read in conjunction with Ross. The former favoured 1589 for Ravenscroft's birth, Ross prefers 1590-91 (p. 6). There is also a postscript (p. 49-50) showing that Ravenscroft moved from Christ's Hospital to the service of Richard Weston, Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1622, leaving in 1630. No doubt more information will arise.

RAMEAU COMPANION

Graham Sadler *The Rameau Compendium* The Boydell Press, 2014. xi + 269pp, £55.00. ISBN 978 84383 905 7

An English-language reference work for Rameau is most welcome, and Graham is the obvious person to write it. The series is evidently a task fit for a scholar who has devoted his life work primarily to a single composer, this following Michael Talbot's *The Vivaldi Compendium*. The opening biography is essential reading unless you've read any recent biographies – I confess that I haven't.

The disadvantage of an alphabetical arrangement is knowing where to look. I happened to notice (I admit that I haven't read every entry but have been dropping into the book randomly) the heading ***Tous*** instead, as ikt were, the lingua franca ***Tutti***! It does not imply that all who can play a treble or bass stave should do so. Unless there is indication otherwise, the top string part is doubled by oboes, but not by flutes, and the basses are string instruments and bassoons, but not continuo. There is, however, some ambiguity that is not clear under ***Basse de violon***. This was the normal string bass in Lully's time, a tone below the cello, but French operatic ***pitch*** was a further tone lower. The cello replaced the basse de violin in the first few decades of the 18th century. The ***Contrebasse*** appeared around 1700, but only one such instrument was used in the opera orchestra until 1765. It played with the *petit choeur*, but with some additions: it's part incorporated some simple bass lines. The tuning was as the standard four-string double bass (E'A'DG), but sounding a tone lower. A few more cross-references would help the reader.

The range of topics is wise, and includes later enthusiasts like Saint-Saëns, D'Indy and Debussy. In comparison with Bach and Handel, Rameau's French editors were late, and the operas in particular have only been published accurately since 1998. However, there are no cheap editions that are useful in the way of cheap and not too erroneous of BG and Chrysander. There is a thorough list of works, though without essential modern editions included. Since the first edition takes up more column space than any other, it might have been sensible to have turned the pages on their side, so that the edition information could have rather more space. At least, if Rameau is the subject of a quiz, the information is easily available!

WINTERREISE

Lauri Suurpää *Death in Winterreise: Musico-poetic Associations in Schubert's Song Cycle* Indiana UP, 2014. [xviii] + 224pp, $45.00 ISBN 978 0 253 01100 8

In his new book, Lauri Suurpää aims to demonstrate an underlying narrative trajectory in *Winterreise*, and to illuminate the protagonist's capricious relationship with death. In doing so, he presents his own perspective on the nature of musico-poetic associations in Lieder, and provides a broad survey of analytical approaches both to Lieder and to song cycles.

The main substance of the book is taken up with an analysis of the final eleven songs of the cycle, which Suurpää identifies as the primary arena for Schubert and Müller's consideration of death. For each Lied, Suurpää analyses the text and the music separately, and then discusses structural musico-poetic associations in the light of his findings. The text is analysed with a simplified version of Greimassian semiotics, a structuralist literary theory developed by A. J. Greimas (1917-92). Greimas argued that structure can be perceived as a set of relations between binary oppositions, and he described functional relations in the abstract, replacing semantic content with the language of formal logic. The music is analysed through Schenkerian analysis, which aims to demonstrate, in a similar fashion, hierarchical structural relations in the music of certain composers. A whole host of other analytical tools is brought to bear on the music, including Agawu's ideas on 'structural high-points' and 'extroversive semiosis', and a modified version of Hatten's notion of 'expressive genre'.

Once Suurpää has analysed the musico-poetic content of all eleven songs individually, he groups them according to their position and function in the narrative structure, and

he uses Ronald Barthes' work on narrative to hold these seemingly disparate groups together. Certain songs are labelled 'kernels' and others as 'satellites' according to their function within a group. Thus he formulates an overall narrative for the second half of *Winterreise*.

The list of analytical tools appears fairly intimidating, but the conclusions drawn are clearly stated and manage to be both illuminating and intuitive. Suurpää concludes that the second part of *Winterreise* 'forms a unified whole, whose coherence grows from thematic unity among the poems, the narrative trajectory, the large-scale harmonic scheme and musico-poetic cross-references'. He argues that moments of apparent discontinuity are situated within a deeper-level unified scheme. He identifies the pervasive Romantic notion of *Sehnsucht* as the main topic of the cycle, arguing that the object of the protagonist's longing switches, over the course of the cycle, from the beloved to his own death. In a similar fashion, the characterisation of death develops from the notion of a real, physical death to that of a spiritual state devoid of emotions. Crucially, after choosing a dignified death in *Der Wegweiser*, the wanderer is denied it in *Das Wirthaus*, and presented instead with the ignominy of the benumbed state exhibited in *Der Leiermann*.

The book is nothing if not rigorous, and from my perspective it ends up a little heavy on methodology. Suurpää is justifiably keen to show that he has not plucked his theories out of the air, but the experience occasionally felt a little more like wading than reading. Having said that, one man's tipple is another man's poison, and the book will doubtless give professional analysts plenty of fodder to chew over. Those with a less analytical bent should certainly not be put off; the chapters teem with helpful summations and thorough cross-referencing. The chapters on the nature of cycles and the relationship between music and text are highly informative, and worth reading in their own right. Whilst many of the musical conclusions may be too subtle to effect in performance, this book cannot but help deepen a performer's understanding of the cycle.

Dealing with music and text separately initially is well justified, but the method has one or two irksome features, primarily arising from the fact that the reader will, quite probably, already know the songs. The musical analysis occasionally felt a little laborious since, with prior knowledge of the songs, one's mind instinctively jumps to conclusions, and then we find that we must wait several pages until the musico-poetic analysis marries all the strands. Similarly, I found the few occasions where the textual analysis delivered a result that was different from Schubert's reading deeply confusing, since his interpretation is already so deeply ingrained in my psyche. This is undoubtedly a fascinating observation, but it can be a little confusing to read. As usual, I found myself mildly frustrated by the fact that the Schenkerian analysis ignores some of the most striking moments (for example, the unison passage in *Der Greise Kopf* surely deserves more discussion), but one cannot justifiably complain about that.

The Greimassian Semiotics both filled me with admiration and made me deeply uncomfortable. Suurpää's 'simplified version' appears extremely spartan next to the musical analysis, and I found myself wondering how a confirmed Greimassian might react if presented with one of the analyses. On the other hand, the theory is only a tool, which Suurpää presumably adapted to suit his needs. The reductionist approach is carefully justified and, so long as we are aware of the accompanying caveats, can scarcely be criticised for doing what it is designed to. Suurpää acknowledges Nicholas Cook's argument that meaning is fluid, and depends on the interpretative tools applied. The benefits of the Greimassian approach are threefold: it clarifies and formalises elements that we may grasp intuitively, but find hard to pin down; it separates text from semantic content, allowing for better consideration of the abstract structural relations between music and text; and it can demonstrate that outwardly different poems fulfill the same function when stripped down. Müller's poetry is well suited to the reductionist approach, and loses relatively little in the conversion to logical symbols.

In his analysis of *Der Leiermann*, Suurpää displays a skill which is rare among analysts – the ability to live with uncertainty, concluding that 'any unequivocal assessment of the precise meaning of death in *Winterreise* is, in the end, impossible. From here on, interpretation of the cycle and its ending belongs to individual listeners, scholars, and performers.' This somewhat implies that it is impossible in certain circumstances to derive interpretative certainties. As a performer, the statement makes my heart leap for joy. But whether it sits happily with a book full of Schenkerian graphs, structuralist literary theories and formal logic, I will leave the reader to decide. *Edward Picton-Turbervill*

ITALIAN PERFORMANCE PRACTICES

Sandra P. Rosenblum, *Prassi esecutive nella musica pianistica dell'epoca classica – Principi teorici ed applicazioni pratiche*. Italian translation by Francesco Pareti; introductions to both editions by Malcolm Bilson. LIM Editrice, 2013. xxxvi+591pp, 5 colour plates, illustrations. €40.00. ISBN 978 887096 716 6

Bilson praises both editions of this examination of the expressive language of the classical keyboard repertory in relation to the development of the instruments and changes in performance practices, in what is itself a classic. Rosenblum's *Performance Practices in Classical Piano Music*, Indiana University Press, 1988 is still available. The Italian translation is new, undertaken by the Accademia dei Musici of Fabriano, a city with a museum and restoration laboratory of historic pianos, for a new series of masterpieces of scholarship concerning European music. This volume is more attractive than the original: there are colour plates of five early pianos instead of two fuzzy B&W ones; the copious notes are footnotes rather than endnotes; the typeface is more legible; and the translation doesn't read like a translation at all, except for a few slips. I would recommend the translation over the original even to those who read both languages.

Although the translator is pianist, forte-pianist, harpsichordist, conductor and scholar himself, and probably bilingual, some hard-to-accept differences in Italian and English musical terminology (especially when a mistake seems to make sense) occasionally blur an explanation. But to give him the benefit of the doubt I tested some on my students (musicians with diplomas in music or composition). The verdict is that since Pareti was so good at recasting ideas, these errors, even where core themes of the book are involved, just seem not quite to the point, which is a shame. It helps to know the linguistic traps.

The problem is that Latin cognates are deceptive. Suspensions in Italian are not conceived as held-over suspended notes, but as postponed resolutions, *ritardi*. The incorrect translation *sospensione* suggests a rest or caesura, and if it is used in the context of harmony, ornamentation, or a musical example, the reader may not see why. The same goes for shadings, nuances (not shadows), *sfumature* (not *ombreggiature*): the effects fortepianos can produce; sequences are *progressioni*, not *sequenze* (I kid you not). Words like 'dynamics', 'agogic' and 'articulation' are used differently. So such mistranslations go undiscovered, insofar as the sentences still 'work'.

The book contains a wealth of information for the uninitiated and the expert alike. In 1988, perhaps fewer people knew about specific makes of early keyboard instruments, but even now her research is impressive, and here, too, translating is a challenge. She quotes composers and theorists in prefaces, letters, statements and hearsay, discussing aspects of their music or how to play it. Do such spontaneous comments refer to dynamics or timing; to form, phrasing, or rather the physics of finger movements (articulation /*articolazione*)? So I was a little disappointed that Pareti didn't always catch these ambiguities, and even betrayed his uneasiness by italicizing an Italian word adopted into English, as if Rosenblum had used a metaphor: fermatas are not *fermate* [bus-stops] but, to Italians, *corone*; over-tones are not *sovratoni* but *armonici*; texture is neither fabric nor structure nor tessitura, and *testura* is a totally unrelated cognate. Beethoven relied on Schuppanzigh not to conduct (*dirigere*) the orchestra, but to be its leader (or concert-master). Also, Italian lacks standard words for stems, bar-lines, beams (*travature* is a handy new borrowed one, better than saying "lines that join up the stems", as Pareti does) and beats, so Italian readers are already used to guessing whether *movimenti* are movements or beats and *battute* bars or beats.

Nevertheless, despite such minor problems, this better-looking and more convenient Italian version will be extremely useful. Writing thirty years after the Badura-Skodas published their *Interpreting Mozart on the Keyboard* (1957), Rosenblum organized a great amount of general and specific material. As a player and teacher she described how to approximate intended fortepiano effects (such as pedalling) on whatever type of historical or modern piano one might be playing. 'Performance practices' are inextricable from interpretation in the broadest, most important sense. Ironically, now that there are more early keyboards to play and hear than were had in 1988, the book may be more useful than ever to those who dearly want to play the classical repertoire better – on their modern pianos.

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RECERCARE XXV/1-2 2013 Journal for the study and practice of early music **directed by Arnaldo Morelli. LIM Editrice [201]. 188 pp, €24.00 (€29.00 outside of Italy) ISSN 1120-5741 ISBN 978 88 70967760** recercare@libero.it; lim@lim.it – www.lim.it

As occasionally happens, this issue is almost entirely in English, and, more unusually, none of the four studies are in Italian; all are summarized in English and Italian. Therefore I'll mention first the two long book reviews at the end of the volume, for the sake of Italian readers. Marco Di Pasquale reviews appreciatively and in detail Rodolfo Baroncini's monograph on *Giovanni Gabrieli*, for its completeness regarding the Venetian context and new biographical documentation on the Gabrieli family as a whole (some of which not particularly enlightening, but interpreted brilliantly and speculatively). Patrizio Barbieri reviews Martin Kirnbauer's *Vieltönige Musik...* on chromatic and enharmonic music in Rome in the early 17th century, which I wish I could read, on music or treatises by Doni, Maugars, Mazzocchi, Gesualdo, M. Rossi, Kircher, Colista, and a certain S. Mazzella, and which contains full transcriptions of a lot of pieces by these and others, which one wouldn't need to read German to find valuable.

The issue's four studies are presented chronologically by subject, from late Medieval to late Baroque, and are rather specialistic. The last two should be of interest to recorder players.

Vasco Zara's 'Métaphores littéraires et stratégies de composition: un autre regard sur les rapports entre musique et architecture au Moyen Âge' cannot be summarized by me. I'm totally unfamiliar with the names of writers from the 11th century who adduced principles to justify the planning of churches, and even if 14th century compositional methods are only slightly less obscure, something tells me that the 'ways' structural analogies were manifest or conceived, the intentions behind the construction of anything, are bound to share poetic or arithmetical principles. Yet I must also admit that a small sampling of explicitly expressed conceptions, in transition from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance, and the illustrations (designs of capitals and choirs, melodies in mensural notation from a motet by Philippe de Vitry explained in Latin in *Ars musicae* by J. Boen) might be quite stimulating to other scholars exploring the relationship between music and architecture!

Elisa Goudriaan discusses and includes the extant correspondence between a Florentine marquis, Filippo Niccolini (1586-1666), and musicians, composers or copyists active in Rome, including Marco Marazzoli (composer of 380 known cantatas) and a little known violone player and copyist Giuseppe Vannucci. Since the

dissemination of most music was so very limited, most manuscripts remaining in the aristocratic, accademic or ecclesiastical circles where written or commissioned, these documents illuminate the figure and the private academy of this patron, the significant influence of Roman music on the Medici court, as well as descriptions of compositions in the words of cotnemporaries.

Inés de Avena Braga's *'Three Castel recorders: Rome, Edinburgh and especially Nice'* compares some surprising features of these rare recorders, such as double holes the use of which has yet to be explained. (A possible repertoire is listed). There are 15 enlarged photographs of details (brand marks, voicing, beaks and holes) as well as other technical charts.

The final and longest study, 'A many-sided musician: the life of Francesco Barsanti (c.1690—1775) revisited' is by Jasmin Cameron and Michael Talbot. It weighs all the contemporary and often conflicting or implausible biographical evidence, the few additional facts in the not-so-recent researches of W. Bergmann and I. G. Sharman, and presents new information, following Barsanti's activities from Lucca to Bologna to Massa, to London (between 1720 and 1724, rather than in 1714 with Geminiani), to NE England between 1728 and 1735 (York in 1731, Newcastle, Durham, Ripon, where useful patrons were acquired), back to London (1732-35) where he copied music, composed, and collected 135 solo Italian cantatas, before his most creative period in Edinburgh (1735-43) and points further north. The 'many sides' of his musicianship is an understatement for one who taught traverso and oboe, accompanied singers at the harpsichord, played violin, viola, and timpani, studied, copied, published, and composed vocal and isntrumental music, and probably sold and repaired instruments as well. The authors find clues that would place Barsanti in London copying music in 1743, but working also in Holland until 1750. His interest in 'early music' or the *stile antico*, which had led to composing himself in this style decades earlier, and sneaking his own works anonymously into compilations he published, continued there with his setting of a Psalm in Hebrew, and later (1757) as a member of the Academy of Ancient Music and the Madrigal Society (1759). His Op. motets for 5 and 6 voices (c.1750?) were favourably reviewed and subscribed to. In fact Barsanti had numerous subscribers, especially for his instrumental works, including Pepusch and Veracini, not to mention the earlier activities furthered by Geminiani. This 160-page study may be considered the most complete biography in print of Barsanti, though a detailed assessment would have been beyond its scope, and has yet to be undertaken. *Barbara Sachs*

FOR NEXT ISSUE

Thomas Forrest Kelly ***Capturing Music: the Story of Notation*** W. W. Norton, 2014. xiii + 209 pages. £30.00 ISBN 978 0 393 06496 4

Ellen T. Harris ***George Frideric Handel: A Life with Friends*** W. W. Norton, 2014. xxiv+ 454pp, £27.99. ISBN 978 0 393 06496 4

Neither of these are final versions:, so do not take the pagination listed above for granted. Publication in November.

Robert L. Kendrick ***Singing Jeremiah: Music and Meaning in Holy Week*** Indiana UP, 2014. x + 337pp, $50.00 ISBN 978 0 253 01156 5

Simon Ravens ***The Supernatural Voice: A History of High Male Singing*** x + 244pp, £45.00 ISBN 978 1 84383 962 1

See also his article in this edition on pp. 10-13.

ATHALIA

Julian Williamson

This November offers a rare opportunity to hear Handel's third and highly dramatic oratorio *Athalia* performed by the Camden Choir at St John's Smith Square.

Handel is of course renowned for the quality of his oratorios. However, he only decided to develop the oratorio as a musical form following difficult circumstances with his other work. His early success with Italian opera was beginning to falter, and by the early 1730s his career was in danger of collapsing. Not only was his opera company facing liquidation, but he was also confronted by the enormous success of Gay's *The Beggar's Opera*. This situation seems to have stimulated a reappraisal of dramatic and musical forms on Handel's part and his development of the oratorio.

From the beginning his oratorios were written to have popular appeal. They were in English as distinct from French or Italian and their subject matter was based on stories from the Bible, which would have been very familiar to most of the audience. This gave more emotional impact than the rather remote classical plots he had used in his operas. In addition there was a much freer use of different musical modes; a central role was given to the chorus, and choruses were often interwoven with solo and ensemble pieces, giving variety and offering richer possibilities for expressive and dramatic accounts of the narratives. Performances took place in theatres, not churches, which inevitably gave more freedom in the choice of subject matter.

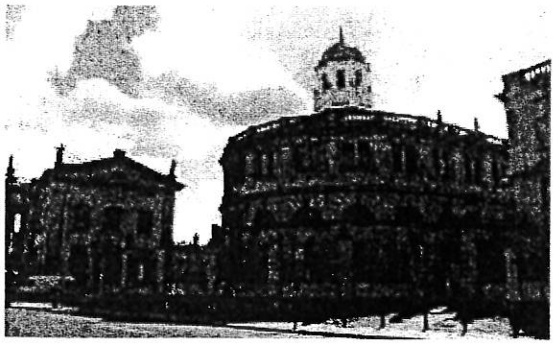
Athalia was the third of Handel's oratorios, and was performed for the first time in the Sheldonian Theatre, Oxford in June 1733. It provided a blueprint as well as a source of some of the finest music for the celebrated oratorios written over the next twenty years. It met with great acclaim, "performed with the utmost applause," according to a local account. Several performances in London followed. Over time however it has tended to be overshadowed by Handel's later and better known oratorios and has inexplicably been performed less often than these.

The story of Athalia is recounted in the Old Testament books of Kings 2 and 2 Chronicles, but the libretto by Samuel Humphries was based on Racine's masterpiece *Athalie*, which drew on the conventions of Greek tragedy, embodying some aspects of both of these traditions.

The biblical account tells the story of Athalia the daughter of Jezebel. She desires to wreak vengeance for her mother's assassination and attempts to destroy, once and for all, the religion of the house of Judah and replace this with the false and idolatrous gods of Baal. The story would have resonated with contemporary English audiences for whom wars and religious conflicts were still live and threatening issues. The choice of subject matter allowed Handel to show support for the protestant Hanoverian monarchy – the libretto emphasises the wrongs of idolatry, clearly aligned with papism in people's minds. At the same time, the idea of the restoration of the rightful line of rulers would appeal to an Oxford audience, then a centre of High Church and Jacobite sympathies.

Racine built his narrative more on the lines of a Greek tragedy-in fact the character of Athalia was sometime referred to as a biblical version of Clytemnestra. Humphries' libretto follows Racine in this respect as the idea of Athalia as a tragic figure allows a more nuanced development of her character. We first meet her in Part One, when she awakes from a terrifying dream. In this dream her mother Jezebel foretells her death at the hands of a young Jewish boy, dressed in priest's robes,of whose existence she had not previously been aware. Athalia believed that she had previously arranged for all the heirs to the house of Judah to have been killed, but in fact the high priest Joad and his wife Josabeth had rescued the rightful king Joas and brought him up in secret. Athalia fails in her attempt to kill the boy and in the end is deserted by her guard and supporters. The true religion triumphs, Joas is crowned king of Judah and promises to rule according to the values of David. Athalia is therefore vanquished and dies, although the libretto, unlike Racine's version, does not make explicit the manner of her death.

This is a story rich in incident and intrigue. It proved to be an ideal dramatic vehicle for Handel's development of this new musical form. The music brings the characters to life, with some beautiful lyrical duets between Joad and Josabeth, interspersed with chorus and including furious and despairing arias from Athalia. he Camden Choir's forthcoming performance of this rarely performed work on November 15 at St John's Smith Square promises to be a most enjoyable and exciting occasion.



The Sheldonian Theatre, designed by Sir Christopher Wren. 350th anniversary concert 16 Nov. 2014

FALSETTO AND FALSE DICHOTOMIES

SIMON RAVENS

It strikes me that one of the great flaws in modern musicology77 – and indeed modern academia as a whole – is its magnetic attraction to the false dichotomy. Nowhere is this more evident than in the rumbling debate about the falsettist. Put simply, the implied question which most writers try to answer is whether particular historic singers were falsettists or not. Occasionally (and particularly in our own time) this is a valid question, to which we can provide a straight 'yes' or 'no' answer. For the vast majority of musical history, though, when falsetto was regarded as a part of every good singer's technical armoury, the dichotomy which the question poses is false: there is another, more valid answer – 'both'.

In another way, too, the falsetto question is bedevilled by a false dichotomy: as participants in the debate, one is seemingly either for or against. Somehow, despite directing a number of recordings in which falsettists feature prominently, I have been placed firmly in the latter category. So much so that evidently my bias and thinking are predictable: Trevor Selwood – 'I know I will disagree with a great deal of what he has to say about the countertenor voice' – certainly seems to think so.[1] For those who are prepared to read my upcoming *Supernatural Voice* book with an open mind, however, I can reassure them that my history charts a practice of falsetto singing which is actually larger and more diverse than the traditional one: it just happens not always to be the history we have been led to believe in. My position is neither *pro* nor *anti*, but nuanced.[2] More than that, my thinking has always been susceptible to change, as new evidence has come to light. Some may regard this as weakness. I don't. Either way, I think it's fair of me to ask that those wanting to pass judgement on my book read it first: in my experience, prejudice rarely proves judicious.

Still, Trevor's article is a refreshingly comprehensible one. He directly asks me a number of specific, simple questions, and I think I can respond to these without compromising the arguments in my book. As far as my lack of a full response to Roger Bowers' 'Chains of (Rehabilitated) Gold' is concerned, that is a rather different matter: let me reassure readers that once my book is published, and its answer to Roger's argument is considered and addressed, I will happily wade back into the fray.[3] If necessary. The problem with offering an interim 'gist' of my own argument, as Trevor says I should, is that I run the risk of bowdlerising 20 years – and in this case about 30 pages – of research. As if to underline this danger, Trevor suggests that in simplifying Locke's words 'superiour parts' to the term 'soprano' I had anachronistically misled readers into believing that Locke was referring to 'a modern soprano or treble range'.[4] In writing 'soprano' for the readership of *EMR*, I had regarded it as axiomatic that Locke could only be referring to the top parts which Chapel Royal singers sang. My apologies for not spelling out that the top lines of Taverner and (come to that) Tavener were unlikely to have been in Locke's mind here, but instead a lower written range of c'-e''. Having cleared this up for me, Trevor asks a good question: if the falsettist was not a feature of English church music before the Restoration, where did the men capable of singing these 'superiour' parts with 'feigned' voices come from? The answer to this (and this takes us back to my opening false dichotomy) lies in an apparent riddle. Can a man sing in falsetto but not be a falsettist? However it might baffle some readers today, to the average 17th or 18th century male singer, the question would be no riddle – and the answer would be a simple 'yes'. From the time of Zacconi onwards, the vocal culture of Italy, which increasingly held sway in Britain, emphasised that singers of every type should utilise their modal[5] and falsetto voices – and should practise to make their union imperceptible. In other words, even though they would not have thought of themselves as falsett*ists*, many of Locke's singers would have known how to sing in falsett*o*. And this brings us to the case of John Abell. What did Evelyn mean by describing Abell, 'newly return'd from *Italy*' as 'the famous Trebble'? Perhaps a clue lies elsewhere in the diaries, where Evelyn describes the singer Thomas Pordage 'newly come from *Rome*', as having 'an excellent voice both Trebble and base': Here, 'Trebble and base' seems to mean 'high and low' or perhaps 'falsetto and modal': in other words, Pordage was probably a singer who had mastered the new dual-register technique. Was this also the case with Abell? In England he was associated with counter-tenor parts. A typical example is the song 'Be lively then and gay', which Abell sang at the first performance of *Ye Tuneful Muses* in 1686. The written range of this song is g-b', with its focus on the lower end of the range. Its likely sounding pitch, though, was around a tone below a'=440. In other words, the range we would think of as that of a highish tenor.

1. Trevor Selwood, 'Falsetto sopranos, falsetto altos and falsetto countertenors in Restoration England: a response to Simon Ravens' letter on the falsetto voice', *EMR* 161, pp.15-17. I'm more grateful to Trevor Selwood than he might imagine for voicing, so clearly, the 'traditional' view of the falsetto voice in this part of English musical history. Although I've never met him, I hope he won't mind me referring to him by his first name in what follows.

2. Readers could be forgiven for thinking that my contribution to this debate is a shameless plug for my book. True, I would like everyone interested in the debate to read it, but that's not how this debate started. That said, here comes the plug: Simon Ravens, *The Supernatural Voice*, (Boydell Press, November 2014).

3. Roger Bowers, 'Chains of (rehabilitated) gold', *EMR* 159 pp. 10-17.

4. Simon Ravens, letter, *EMR* 160, p. 44.

5. I use the term 'modal' here in its statistical sense. Others may prefer 'natural', 'normal' or 'speaking' voice, though each of these carries baggage of its own.

Interestingly, in his later career Abell sang in Germany, where he was heard by a young Johannes Mattheson, who later referred to Abell's 'natural high voice' (*naturliche Alt-Stimme*).[6] Elsewhere in *Der vollkommene Capellmeister* Mattheson specifically refers to falsetto, but noticeably, not with regard to Abell's *naturliche* voice. Even more tellingly, another German composer, Jakob Greber, referred to Abell as an 'English tenor'.[7] Yet for all the evidence that Abell was fundamentally what we would term a tenor (actually a Scottish one) it is highly probable that Evelyn heard him sing in falsetto. The key to this lies in the context in which Abell sang. When Evelyn heard him he was singing in an Italianate chamber style, and this demanded the skilful shift between registers as the voice ascended: this would explain Evelyn's otherwise curious comment that Abell's voice was 'skillfully manag'd'. If Abell's range was higher in secular than court music, surely the reason is staring us in the face: whereas Abell's 'public' voice was predominantly that of a tenor, his 'private' voice could accommodate higher notes by virtue of a falsetto extension. I do not see how Trevor Selwood could say otherwise.

Trevor says he also has 'concerns' about how I will approach the voices of John Howell and William Turner. There is more in the book (about these and the other famous counter-tenors of the time) but here is a brief response. Burney describes Turner as 'a counter-tenor singer, his voice settling to that pitch: a circumstance which so seldom happens naturally, that if it be cultivated, the possessor is sure of employment'.[8] The whole point of falsetto, surely, is that it is produced precisely where the voice does *not* naturally settle. Still, Turner, and Howel [sic] may well have cultivated a falsetto extension to their primarily modal voices. In the vocal culture of the day they would have been unusual if they had not. But this is a world away from saying that they were falsettists, in the style of our modern counter-tenors.

It is 45 years since Olive Baldwin and Thelma Wilson first published strong evidence that two of Purcell's favourite counter-tenors, Freeman and Pate, sang with what we would describe as tenor voices, and since then no-one has seen fit to challenge their argument.[9] Well, it's never too late to try, but those warming to the challenge should be cautioned that its difficulty has recently been escalated, since in 2012 the same two authors extended their argument to include virtually every Restoration counter-tenor of note – including Abell, incidentally, whom they describe as 'a high tenor who, by skillful use of his falsetto technique, extended his range upwards, particularly when gracing his music'.[10] Again, no-one has yet publicly demurred from their evidence or argument. For those who believe that the falsetto counter-tenor was part of a historical continuum from the 16th century to our own age, the time to confront Baldwin and Wilson's argument is surely long overdue.

For those who believe that the falsetto counter-tenor existed before the Restoration and afterwards, but not during, there is of course no need to disprove Baldwin and Wilson's argument. However, they will need to produce evidence that sometime between the 1640s and the 1680s the term 'counter-tenor' changed its meaning entirely. If this had indeed happened, firm evidence should not be that difficult to find, since the writings of men such as Evelyn and Locke offer a running commentary on vocal developments. If the evidence is not found, then airily dismissing its absence by saying that 'the exact sequence of events awaits a full elucidation' won't really do:[11] there is all the evidence we need for a cogent history of the counter-tenor in the middle of the 16th century, let alone by the middle of the 17th, when we're awash with it. We all have our areas of expertise, but the problem with providing a theory for any one period is that it must mesh with what is known of the surrounding history. The notion that the late Tudor and Jacobean counter-tenor was a falsettist might seem to fit conveniently with the modern understanding of what a counter-tenor is: sadly, it doesn't fit with the history which nestles up to it on either side.

Note that in the above, I am careful to refer to *written* ranges. Trevor's article is full of references to specific written pitches, and this is fine. Indeed, an argument about vocal ranges is unlikely to mean much without them. But unless we marry this information to some understanding of what sounding pitch a written note may refer to, telling us that Abell's probable notated range was g - b' can mean no more than telling us that it was *alpha* to *omega*. And yet Trevor declines to offer even an intimation of sounding pitch, and further, tells us that he is 'cautious about all pitches and about arguments that rely too heavily on pitch'. What I suspect he hopes is that by having the case for different historical pitches thrown out for lack of evidence, then somehow we will tacitly accept (we won't) that Abell's g - b' relates to our modern understanding of those pitches (it doesn't). Of course, it

6. Mattheson, *Der vollkommene Capellmeister*, ed. and trans. Harris, part 2, 1:9, (Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1981) p. 95.

7. cf. Harold E Samuel, 'A German Musician comes to London in 1704', *Musical Times*, CXXII (1981), p. 592.

8. Burney, *A General History of Music*, ed. Mercer, (London, 1935) p. 361.

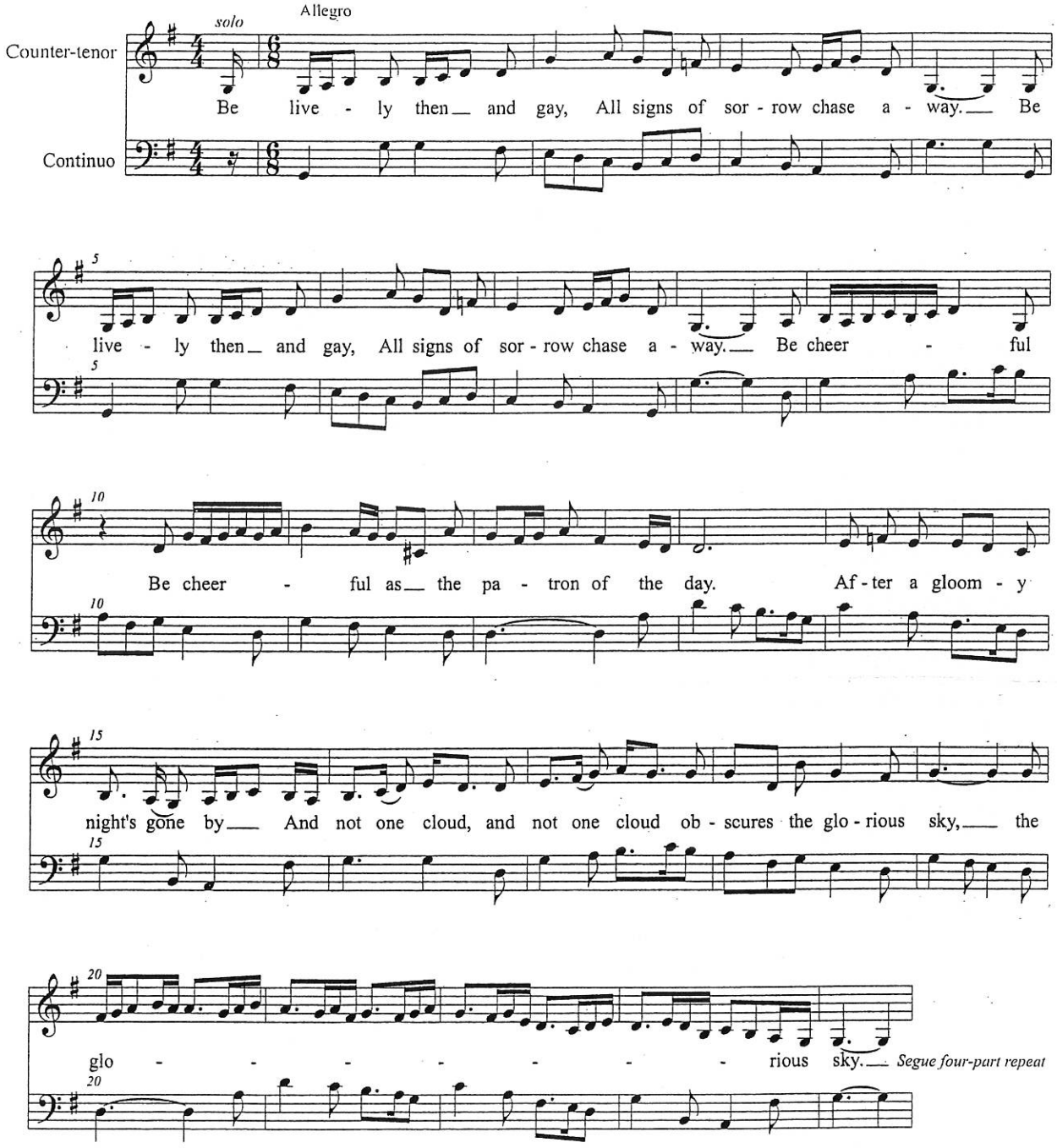
9. Olive Baldwin and Thelma Wilson, 'Alfred Deller, John Freeman, and Mr. Pate', *Music and Letters*, 50/1 (1969), pp. 103-10.

10 Olive Baldwin and Thelma Wilson, 'Henry Purcell's Countertenors and Tenors', *Der Countertenor: die männliche Falsettstimme vom Mittelalter zur Gegenwart*, ed. Corinna Herr and Arnold Jacobshagen (Mainz, 2012), pp. 79-95.

11. This quote (which I take to mean 'this part hasn't yet been explained') is from Roger's 'Chains of (rehabilitated) Gold' article, p. 12, and refers to a presumed revolution in English vocal scoring around 1550. I'm no academic, but when I read it this phrase struck me as contrary to the way I understand that history, in any discipline, is supposed to work. Surely we don't state an argument and, when we can't elucidate its pivotal moment, presume that it is only a matter of time before relevant evidence will come to light. In this case I would argue that the reason we're still waiting for details of the presumed 'sequence of events' is that they simply didn't happen. Consequently, if we are waiting for an 'elucidation' we will be waiting in vain.

may be no co-incidence that in this case, the lower pitches suggested by modern authorities for much Restoration music would take the counter-tenor lines even further below the reach of the modern falsettist. Today's scholars and performers don't stipulate one specific and universal frequency for the Restoration a': but they do point to evidence of a pitch band significantly lower than our own. Ignoring this current consensus (and it *is* a consensus) is, frankly, disingenuous. My own belief is that in the minefield of anachronisms regarding the counter-tenor, no term (with the exception of 'counter-tenor') carries a greater capacity to wreck the debate than the unqualified use of 'a'.

Granted, terminology is a potential minefield of anachronisms. But it was not my intention, as Trevor



Henry Purcell 'Be lively then and gay', from *Ye Tuneful Muses*, 1686.
Music continues with a chorus

Are the first and last notes of the solo section sung in accordance of the time signature or sung with equal length? CB

imagines it was, 'to criticise Roger Bowers for an anachronistic use of the term "falsetto alto" in the context of early 16th-century England'. Roger's anachronism doesn't really concern me. Actually, my concern was more fundamental than that. We all know what Roger means by "falsetto alto", and I'm more than happy for him (or Trevor, or anyone else) to produce 'contemporary documentary sources' which substitute other words in referring to this type of singer. Although Trevor's article is titled 'a response to Simon Ravens' letter', this was the sole question in that letter. And I'm still waiting for an answer!

Etymology aside, perhaps the greatest anachronism in this whole debate is *us* – modern singers. The gist (i.e. ludicrously over-simplified version) of my argument is that modern men are, on average, much taller than 16th and 17th-century men, and shorter men, on average, have higher voices than taller men: ergo, Purcell's singers would have had higher modal voices than ours. In his 'Chains of Gold' article Roger Bowers says that my observations are 'too nebulous...and are not considered here'. Trevor Selwood flatly says that 'I do not agree with his theories', and describes them as 'controversial'. Really? It is nearly fifteen years since I last published on this subject, since when I am not aware of a single attempt to counter the evidence I laid out then[12] We will all have our own ideas about what constitutes a controversy, but surely there's a clue in the word: personally, I think someone needs to contra my verso – until when I'd like to think that a more accurate description of my argument would be 'accepted orthodoxy'. But wait! For anyone ready to fire a riposte, perhaps they should lay down their arms for another few weeks, since my evidence and argument are bolstered and refined in *The Supernatural Voice*.

I began this piece by highlighting the unnecessarily divisive thinking to which false dichotomies inevitably lead, so perhaps I should now highlight an even more curious tendency – towards the false monochotomy. Those firmly on the 'traditionalist' side of the falsetto debate always seem to suggest that what we are now is what we were then: fundamentally, that the falsetto counter-tenor (or alto) we know today has always existed in England. I have never said that the falsetto voice did 'suddenly appear with the advent of Alfred Deller'. Back in 1994 I asked 'whether the synonymity of the terms 'countertenor' and 'falsettist', assumed by many to date back to the twelfth century, may have been a reality only since the Second World War'. That was a genuine question, to which I can now offer a confident answer: no. The first instance I have found of an English 'counter-tenor' who sang exclusively with the 'falsette' dates from 1820. But, before anyone assumes that this date marks a sudden shift to our modern paradigm, the counter-tenor (or alto) line was shared between falsettists, dual-register and purely modal-voiced singers until very recently. The last famous modal counter-tenor I discuss, whose musical lineage can be traced directly to the counter-tenors of early Tudor England, is (as I write) still alive in New York. The last (very) famous dual-register singer described as a counter-tenor died in Los Angeles in 2009. And yes, this is a tease: the answers are in my book!

Allied to this monochotomous thinking about the 'counter-tenor' is a similar reluctance to accept that at various times and in various ways, a vast range of impacting topics – etymology, pitch, human anatomy, vocal technique, aesthetic sensibilities, even gender identity – have been radically different to these topics as we understand them. To me, exploring the infinitely complex questions raised by these interrelated topics – a true polychotomy, if you like – is the fascination of the subject. To some, my answers are too nebulous to consider. To others, my answers will at the very least point them away from the lazy empiricism of believing in monocultures – that what we are is what we were. It should come as no surprise, by now, if I say that I don't claim to provide the *right* answers to all these questions. I would happily settle for *better* – if that meant that I had taken into account all the relevant material I know of, and drawn firm conclusions only when the evidence allows me to do so.

Just suppose, though, that I could prove a certain things about a particular subject. Take John Abell: imagine I could prove that he stood at exactly 5ft 1¼ tall (slightly below average for the time of 5ft 5¾); that therefore he had a modal voice which comfortably took him up to b' at the pitch (a'=392) at which he sang for Purcell in *Ye Tunefull Muses*; and that above this pitch his training in the Italian method allowed him skilfully to a shift into falsetto when performing in the private chambers of the *cognoscenti*.[13] If I could prove this, would I have alighted on the *right* answer to our current questions regarding John Abell? Perhaps on an theoretical level I would, but as a practical musician – performer and listener – I would not. Unless I could find a diminutive singer trained in the dual-register method, and (most impossibly) the same listening sensibilities and social context Abell knew, I would still be left with a yawning gap between his singing and my ears. Assuming this gap to be unbridgeable, to perform the music Abell sang I would be left with an unavoidable compromise between historical and present realities. To take the case to hand, perhaps I might resolve this compromise by performing 'Be lively then and gay' at a'=440, with a falsettist and modern cello as continuo.[14] All of which would be just fine – so long as I did not confuse my realisation with Purcell's. A modern cello is not the same as an early Baroque one. And a modern counter-tenor is not the same as a Restoration one.

12. The chronology of my earlier debate with Trevor is as follows: Simon Ravens, "A Sweet Shrill Voice': The Countertenor and Vocal Scoring in Tudor England', *Early Music*, 26/1 (1998), pp. 123-134. Trevor Selwood, 'Counteraguments', *Early Music*, 27/2 (1999), pp. 349-350. Simon Ravens, 'Countertenor counterblast', *Early Music*, 28/3 (2000), pp. 507-508.

13. I can't prove any of this, incidentally. That said, if I could alight from Tardis in Whitehall Palace at the relevant moment in 1586, no detail of it would surprise me.

14. Although I know of no falsettists who would be happy to sing a piece which, even at the historically inappropriately high pitch of a'=440, avoids the top 4-4½th of their 'standard' range (as given by Trevor on p. 17 of his article).

IN MEMORIAM SELENE MILLS

3 April 1960 – 10-August 2014

Selene remembered by Annabel Morton

I first met Selene during the academic year 1979-80 at rehearsals for a performance of Purcell's *Ode to St Cecilia* at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, where I was an undergraduate. She was reading Classics at Selwyn College and was also a Choral Exhibitioner there. As soon as we started rehearsing, my doubts about the need for bringing in additional singers from other colleges to bolster Emmanuel Chapel Choir were totally dispelled. I was fortunate enough to stand next to Selene on that occasion and realised immediately that I had a long way to go to begin to match her vocal abilities. I later discovered that she had a harpsichord in her Selwyn room, highly unusal at that time when the prevalent view in the music faculty was "why bother with early instruments when modern ones play in tune and louder?" The love of "early" music was evidently a long and deeply held attraction for Selene.

During August 1980 the Emmanuel Organ Scholar, Gary Cole, took a group of singers (which later morphed into the Midlands Chamber Choir and then Regent Chamber Choir) away to Norwich Cathedral to sing the services for a week. Selene stood on Cantoris and I was opposite on Decani. I remember vividly Selene singing beautifully the solo quartet from the evening canticles Walmisley in D minor, which then became her solo on the opening day of many subsequent cathedral trips. She always put so much into her singing whatever the repertoire, and I particularly recall the ecstatic appearance she always had when singing psalms. The text was so obviously hugely important to her. The Midlands Chamber Choir continued until 1993, visiting Norwich in alternate years, interspersed with Gloucester, Worcester, York, Westminster Abbey and St George's Windsor. Selene was always there on the opposite side of the choir stalls, always involved in the planning of excursions and communal meals in our time off from rehearsing and singing the services, once cooking pizza for 25 on the most basic of ovens at our lodgings. She also took part in several recordings with the Regent Chamber Choir including Poulenc's *Mass in G* and Kodaly's *Missa Brevis.*

Once the summer trips away ceased, our paths diverged. It was not until a few years later that I picked up the phone to see if Selene would come at very short notice to make up a vocal octet for an informal evening's music making, something my husband Gerald and I hosted from time to time. To my immense relief she was free, came, and became a stalwart of the group, in due course even bringing another bass in the form of her husband, Nick. Much of the music we sing is "early" and Selene always wore her considerable knowledge in the field lightly, occasionally suggesting repertoire and subtly influencing the proceedings by the way she sang the music rather than imposing her view on anyone.

We gave several concerts, one voice a part, for various charity causes, the most recent being on 1st March 2014 in the Chapel at Christ's College, Cambridge, in aid of the Arthur Rank Hospice Charity which celebrated 30 years recently. Selene wanted to support this cause particularly, as the Charity had given good care to several people she knew. In typical fashion, she was helpful in making suggestions of repertoire and publicising the event. The Chapel was very cold and there were steep stairs to negotiate to the rooms where we could have a cup of tea and change between rehearsal and concert, but Selene coped with the adverse conditions without drawing attention to her discomfort and sang a vocally demanding and emotionally difficult programme brilliantly.

She always was interested in others. She always asked after our two children and my now-grown-up daughter, who met Selene a few times over supper before our singing evenings, regards her life as an inspiration.

For myself, I am immensely grateful for Selene's support over the years and for the connections she made between people, including introducing Gerald and me to Peter Holman and Philip Thorby, amongst others. Also, she kept on and on sending me the details of the summer schools for years and years until I finally managed to leave family behind to attend the Renaissance Course in 2011. What a revelation! I had had no idea that Cambridge Early Music would be as professionally organised and the course as challenging and instructive as it turned out to be and have been going ever since. Long may it continue!

Selene remembered by Peter Holman

I first met Selene Mills in the late 1980s, when the late Michael Procter, then Director of Little Benslow Hills in Hitchin, asked me to start a Baroque opera course there. I soon became aware that one of the people working in the office as an administrator was extremely efficient as well as being enthusiastic and knowledgeable about early music. This winning combination made the complex and seemingly overambitious process of producing a fully staged opera in a week much more straightforward and pleasurable than I would have believed possible, so when she asked the Parley of Instruments to start a Baroque course in Cambridge in 1992 we readily agreed. From small beginnings Cambridge Early Music has grown into a large and successful operation, giving concerts throughout the year (including an ambitious Festival of the Voice this year featuring the Hilliard Ensemble and some of the groups they nurtured while they were running courses for Selene), as well running its core operation, the two week-long summer courses of Renaissance and Baroque music at Sidney Sussex College.

People who go to concerts or buy CDs tend not to realise to what extent the whole enterprise of performing music depends on indispensible people behind the scenes, organising, fund-raising, publicising, and most important, perhaps, supporting and inspiring those on the platform. Selene had the perfect combination of talents for the role she created for herself in Cambridge. She seemed to have an unlimited appetite for hard work, and until almost the end of her life she had an amazing ability to keep dozens of administrative balls in the air. She was an accomplished linguist, with a knowledge of Latin and a sharp eye as an editor of words as well as music. She had a very wide knowledge of early music, and she chose artists for her concerts with an acute discrimination informed by her own experience as a performer. She was an accomplished soprano (changing to alto when illness began to affect her voice) and could be a harsh critic of even famous singers, particularly if their language skills failed to match up to her own high standards. Above all, her love and enthusiasm for all types of early music inspired everyone who came into her orbit. Selene and her husband Nick Webb joined my chamber choir Psalmody in 2001, and their skills as singers and their informed and perceptive contribution in rehearsal greatly helped to develop the choir's potential and to improve my own skills as its director.

When someone dies prematurely – Selene was only 54 when she lost her long battle with cancer – those left behind mostly have to rely on memories as consolation. In my case they include Selene in a white hospital gown throwing herself into the role of the patient in a dramatised performance of the *Gall Bladder Operation* by Marin Marais during our first Cambridge course concert; her delight in her developing skills as a string player, enabling her to experience the seventeenth-century consort music she loved from the inside; her enthusiasm for her favourite vocal music, including Buxtehude's *Membra Jesu nostri*, much of Monteverdi, Charpentier and Purcell, Handel's *Dixit Dominus* (which we hope will be the main item of her memorial concert in Cambridge), and of course J.S. Bach. The last time she sang was on 25 May in a performance I directed of Bach's B Minor Mass. Though frail by then she contributed fully to the performance, buoyed up by perhaps the supreme masterpiece of Western art music. However, Selene has also left an important legacy. Through Cambridge Early Music, Eastern Early Music Forum and the other musical enterprises she chose to be involved in, she must have touched and enriched the lives of thousands of people, and the continued success of these enterprises will be her lasting memorial.

Selene remembered by Clifford Bartlett

My earliest memory of Selene was inviting her to sing at an annual forces dinner at Brampton. I had arranged this aspect of the event for several years, with Selene being sdoloist in 1986 and 1987. 1986 was the year Selene began to work at Benslow. So I must have found time to know her quite quickly, and I played in several duet concerts of varying status.

Selene was from Bertram Mills circus background – I probably wouldn't have believed it if I hadn't seen her on Cyril Mills' *This is your Life* (11 December, 1989): the curious can see it on You Tube. She attended Camden School for Girls in London (1971-79) and Selwyn College, Cambridge (1979-82). She was Assistant Librarian at St Paul's Cathedral from 1984 till she came to Benslow. From 1992, she became Trinity College Cambridge's Chapel Secretary, where she stayed. An advantage was her access to the chapel for concerts when she began another career as a concert promoter. There were various additional activities – one I knew was that she managed Robert Oliver, our only New Zealand CD reviewer, when he and his wife Andrea were in England between 1994-2004.

Cambridge was a marvellous place for the activities she encouraged. The Summer School (two separate weeks in Augst with Peter Holman and Philip Thorby) began in 1992 at Trinity Hall, then moved to Sidney Sussex College, and evidently thrived. Each week included concerts by the tutors and an end-of-week students' concert. Concerts were also arranged for the rest of the year, and those I did attend more frequently.

Selene had always been helpful with the Eastern Early Music Forum, being secretary from around 1987 and membership secretary from 1996 till the last Newsletter circulation. She was always very efficient, and the presence of her (and Nick – a fine bass singer) was always valuable at vocal courses. I've accompanied her far less often than I should have like (Selene was a fine amateur baroque fiddler), but I did join a trio session about a year ago at Anne Jordan's house: she played gamba with Selene and Brian Clark on violins from a collection of early English trio sonatas co-edited by Peter Holman for *Music Britannica* – though I fell asleep after coffee and they played without me!

Over the last half-dozen years, Selene had been suffering with so much treatment, till she could take no more. She tried to keep as active as possible, and evidently kept herself as active as she could. I assume that her motto was "work to survive" rather than "rest... in peace".

SELENE'S FAREWELL

Dear musical friends,

It is is a very difficult letter to write, but I have been procrastinating long enough and now need to write to tell you that I have not long for this world. Having lived with a terminal cancer diagnosis since 2009, the disease has finally defeated the doctors' many and marvellous attempts to stave it off. I was told in June that I had two or three months to live, and I'm still here, but getting quite close to the line.

Please forgive me for not writing to you all individually but I haven't the energy to do that. I am sending out a news bulletin from time to time, and if you would like to receive that please reply to selene@cantab.net. If not, I won't be offended! Cambridge Early Music will keep going: we have just appointed a new Administrator and have great hopes for the future.

It is so hard to say goodbye to people with whom I have made music. There is no more precious gift than making music together, and I have based my life s work on this principle. It doesn t have to be great performances, or performances at all: some of the best moments have been playing tucked away in someone s living room with no one else listening, but those moments are no less valid or important than the times in sold-out concert halls.

I have had a wonderfully fulfilling life and am surrounded by love and prayers from many people; I have no bitterness about going early (I am 54) but am grateful for the amazing times and experiences I have enjoyed. I hope God is kind to you too.

Please forgive me if you have already heard this news, oreceived this letter in another form, or don t know me from Eve. But I can assure you that I am grateful to you for the part, however small or large, which you have played in my life. Even someone who walks in off the street and listens to one concert makes a contribution to the cultural life of our country, and lots of you do a very great deal more than that. Please keep doing it.

With my best wishes,

Selene (31-7-2014)

Handl/Gallus *Ecce quomodo moritur justus*

This happened to be one of the first pieces sung by an unnamed choir which was assembled for me: perhaps we should call it *Cantores sine nomine* and sing Vaughan Williams's tune once a year! Strangely, no-one had sung or heard *Ecce quomodo*, though I'd known it since student days it ws in the *The Historical Anthology of Music* (published 16 years before Selene was born), squashed on two staves and fitting under half a page in small print. I thought that it would be a suitable gesture of respect and affection in the week in which Selene died, and Philip Thorby will no doubt have made it a moving experience (we were in Scotland's Western Isles at the time). Peter Holman has asked me to conduct the same piece for the Eastern Early Music Forum on Saturday 27 Sept. BC has produced a new edition (in four staves). The music is in chiavette clefs (G2 C2 C3 F3) requiring transposition down a fourth. We have printed it in C (down a tone) on one side of two pages and down a fourth at normal size. Standard modern choirs will probably prefer down a tone, and in its published version there will be both pitches at full size.

I.	Eccequomodo moritur justus, et nemo percipit corde: viri justi toluntur, et nemo considerat: a facie iniquitas sublatus est justus; et erit in pace memoria eius.
II	In pace factus est locus eius, et in Sion habitatio eius: et erit in pace memoria eius.

MUSIC FOR SALE

Dear Clifford,
Some of your readers may have known Mary Beverley as a gifted soprano in the 1980s. In later life she paid a number of visits to Central America, as a consequence of which she founded a charity to help fund work with street children in Honduras. Sadly Mary died a few years ago, and her husband has now asked me to help sell her collection of early music to raise further funds for the charity. The collection includes several volumes of Musica Britannica, lute-songs in facsimile editions, and French cantatas. Anyone interested in receiving a full list of the available volumes is invited to contact me at clare@griffel.org. Many thanks! *Clare Griffel*

Those who keep their EMRs might like to look back to the obituaries in issue 133, Dec. 2009, p. 34. A shorter version is repeated below.

MARY YATES

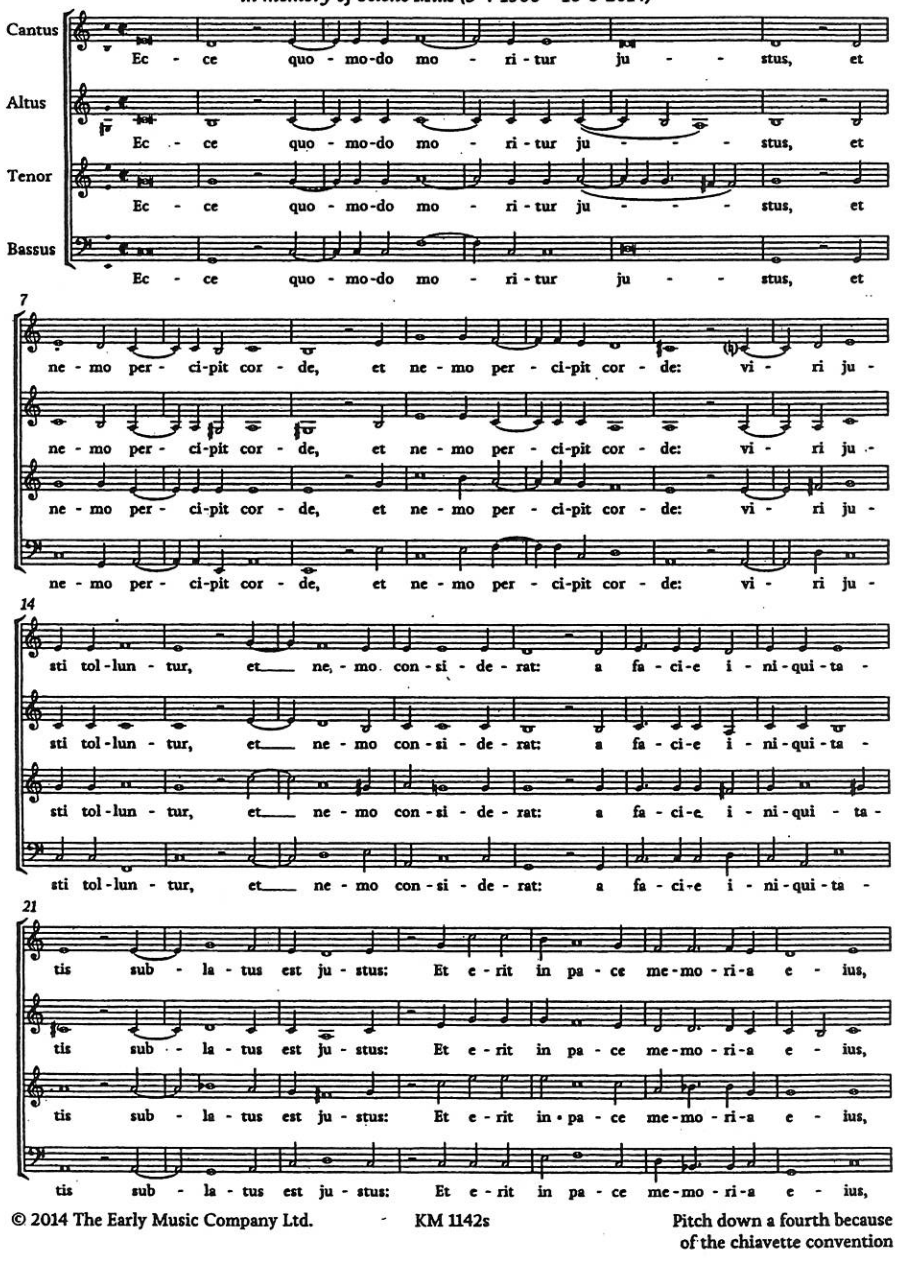
(d. 15 November 2009)

I knew Mary Beverley, as she then was, in the mid- 1970s as a promising young soprano, meeting her with Peter Holman's group Ars Nova. She appears on a David Munrow Purcell recording of 1975, and in that year sang at our wedding (along with Emma Kirkby). I remember her appearing as a soloist with John Eliot Gardiner. We virtually lost contact (apart from exchanging Christmas cards) till a few years ago. We then met several times at musical events, and I was glad to renew our friendship. I last heard from her in July, when she sent a card which concluded 'the sounds of your wedding music still ringing in my ears'. She was involved in musical activity in Bristol, as mentioned in the following paragraph. *CB*

In recent years Mary worked for an IT company, Silverstream, but her musical interests remained an important part of her life. She organised an ongoing series of benefit concerts in the Bristol area under the title *Musica Buena*, raising money for two projects working to help street-children in Honduras. She visited these projects and had a personal connection with them. With her passion and courage she was quite an inspiration to local musicians who took part in the concerts. An indication of her legacy might be seen in the way that a planned concert of Christmas Baroque music on period instruments will be going ahead next month. *Sarah Dodds*

I.	Behold how the righteous dies and no-one takes notice in his heart; the righteous are taken away, and no-one pays attention: in the face of iniquity the righteous is removed: and his memory will be in peace.
II.	His resting-place is made in peace, and his dwelling place is in Zion, and his memory will be in peace.

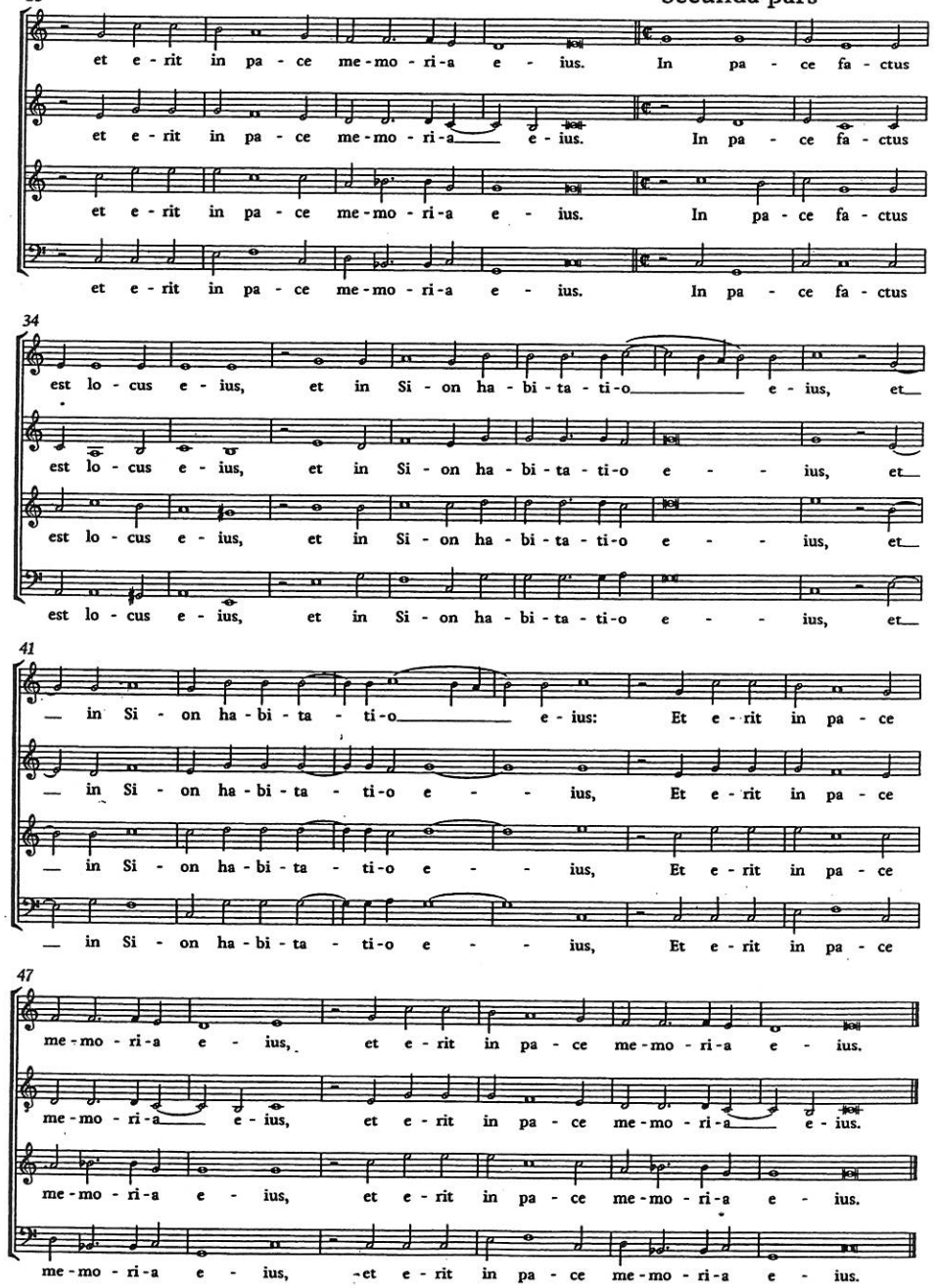
Jacob Handl (Jacobus Gallus), 1550-91
Ecce quomodo moritur justus
in memory of Selene Mills (3-4-1960 – 10-8-2014)



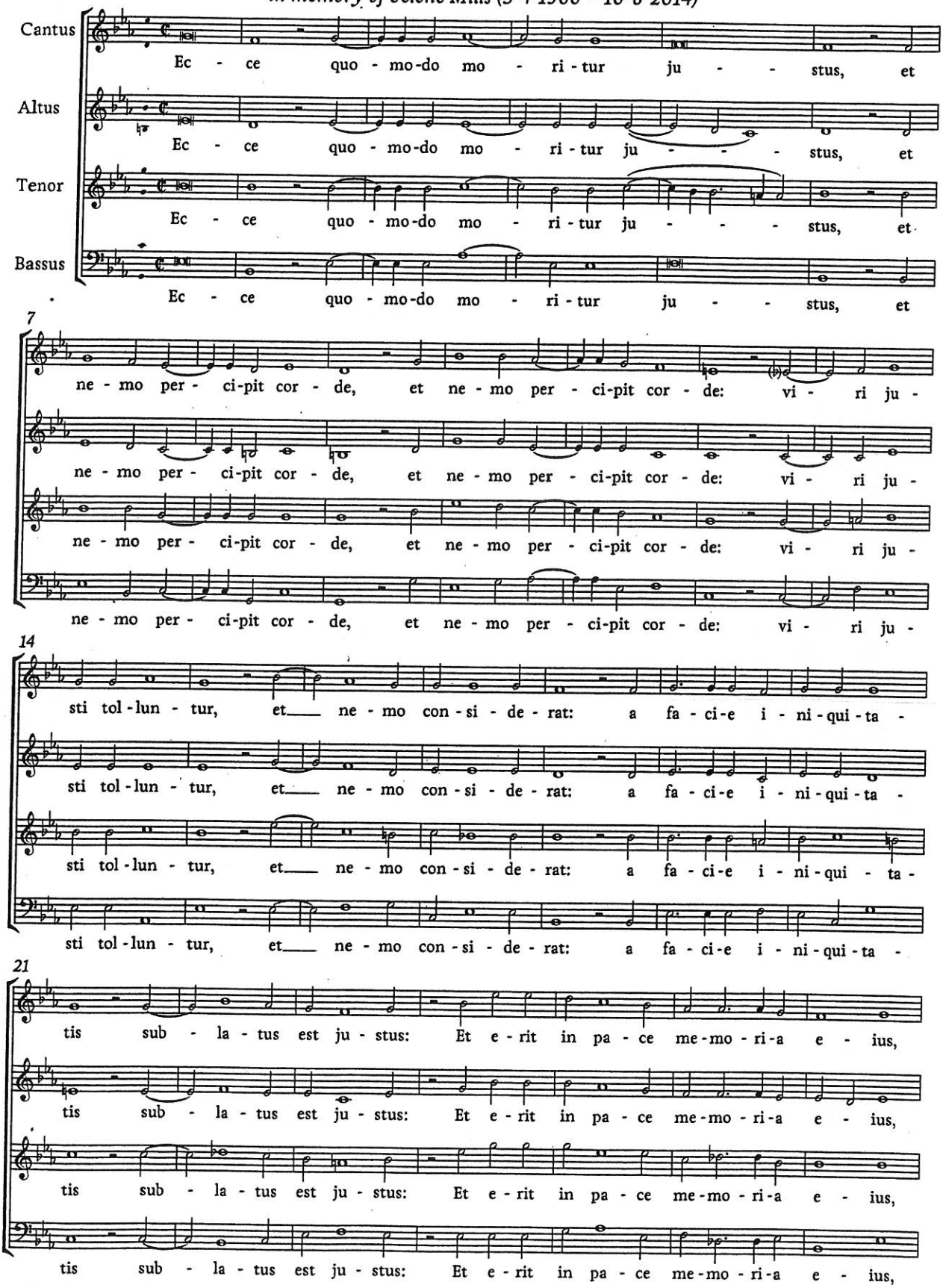
 KM 1142s

Pitch down a fourth because of the chiavette convention

Secunda pars

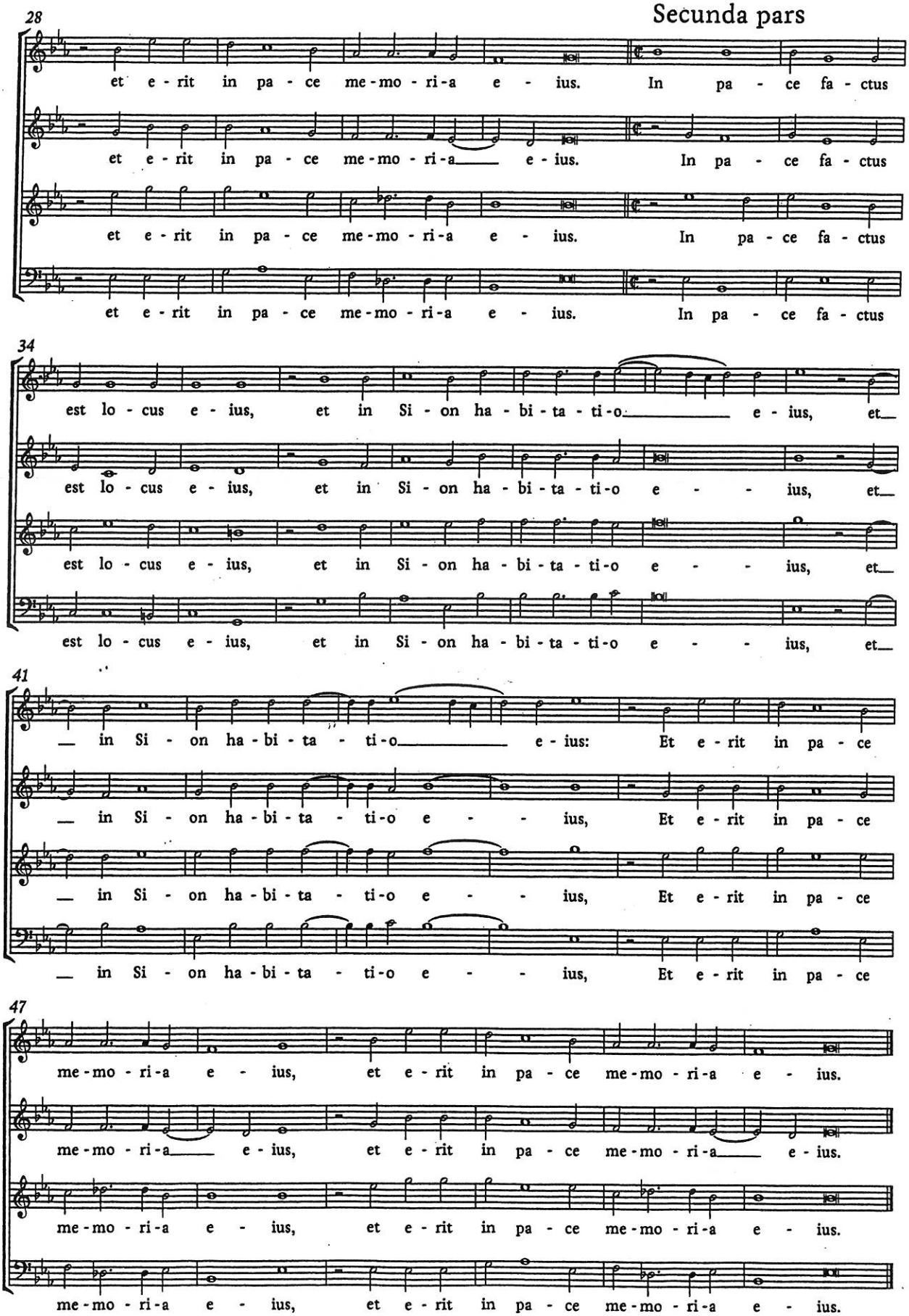


Jacob Handl (Jacobus Gallus), 1550-91
Ecce quomodo moritur justus
in memory of Selene Mills (3-4-1960 – 10-8-2014)



KM 1142s

Transposed down one tone


Secunda pars
28
et e - rit in pa - ce me - mo - ri - a e - ius. In pa - ce fa - ctus
et e - rit in pa - ce me - mo - ri - a e - ius. In pa - ce fa - ctus
et e - rit in pa - ce me - mo - ri - a e - ius. In pa - ce fa - ctus
et e - rit in pa - ce me - mo - ri - a e - ius. In pa - ce fa - ctus
34
est lo - cus e - ius, et in Si - on ha - bi - ta - ti - o e - ius, et
est lo - cus e - ius, et in Si - on ha - bi - ta - ti - o e - ius, et
est lo - cus e - ius, et in Si - on ha - bi - ta - ti - o e - ius, et
est lo - cus e - ius, et in Si - on ha - bi - ta - ti - o e - ius, et
41
in Si - on ha - bi - ta - ti - o e - ius: Et e - rit in pa - ce
in Si - on ha - bi - ta - ti - o e - ius, Et e - rit in pa - ce
in Si - on ha - bi - ta - ti - o e - ius, Et e - rit in pa - ce
in Si - on ha - bi - ta - ti - o e - ius, Et e - rit in pa - ce
47
me - mo - ri - a e - ius, et e - rit in pa - ce me - mo - ri - a e - ius.
me - mo - ri - a e - ius, et e - rit in pa - ce me - mo - ri - a e - ius.
me - mo - ri - a e - ius, et e - rit in pa - ce me - mo - ri - a e - ius.
me - mo - ri - a e - ius, et e - rit in pa - ce me - mo - ri - a e - ius.

LONDON, INNSBRUCK & ANTWERP

Andrew Benson-Wilson

THE PROMS

Norrington's Proms Passion

I would normally avoid concerts that didn't use period instruments, unless there was a good reason otherwise. This year's Proms came up with two 'good reasons otherwise', starting with Sir Roger Norrington. According to Wikipedia, his father, Sir Arthur Norrington (of 'Table' fame, and after whom the 'Norrington Room' at Oxford's Blackwells is named), was known as Thomas while at Winchester College "because of his scepticism of received lore" – something of a family trait, it would appear. Having gone through several decades when no modern instrument orchestra would dare to perform Bach, Handel or the like, period performance pioneers like Norrington have snatched the impetus from the introverted world of period instrument orchestras to return it to the mainstream fold – in Norrington's case, through his work in Salzburg, Stuttgart and now Zurich.

For this year's Proms, the 80-year-old Norrington brought the Zurich Chamber Orchestra and the Zürcher Sing-Akademie over for a performance of the St John Passion (26 June, Royal Albert Hall). Rather surprisingly, this was the first time Norrington had conducted this for many years. This concert was broadcast on BBC4 television; so many *EMR* readers will have formed their own opinions – was I alone in finding the vociferous presenter popping up all over the place to tell us his interpretation rather irritating – and while I am at it, is it really appropriate that a conductor, having just come off stage after a lengthy and exhausting performance, should, before anything else, be given a big hug by a television presenter? I think not.

My starting point with the St John Passion is usually to listen to the balance between strings and woodwind at the very start. This is often a very good indication of the ultimate mood of an interpretation – on this occasion, the upper strings (using gut strings and baroque bows) were a mere murmur through which the clarity and focus of the oboes could project. Indeed, it was the woodwind that were the instrumental focus of the evening, the aria *Von den Stricken meiner Sünder* being an early example. Despite using modern instruments, they achieved the tonal variety and intensity of their 'period' colleagues. There were some instrumental concessions – for example, mute violins rather than *d'amore* were used in *Betrachte, meine Seel'* and a cello rather than a gamba in *Es ist vollbracht*.

Vocally, the honours must go to James Gilchrist, as ever the consummate Evangelist, with Neal Davies as a powerful Christus. The last-minute replacement bass, Hanno Müller-Brachmann, and tenor Joshua Ellicott were both effective, but I found Lucy Crowe's and Clint van der Linde's tone edgy and nervous, not helped by their use of too much vibrato. Of the nerve-wracking step-out solo moments from the choir, Rachel Ambrose Evans had the best voice. The 36-strong Zürcher Sing-Akademie (with Tim Brown as chorus-master) were excellent at portraying their various moods from the breathless chitter-chatter of *Bist du nicht*, the quite calm of the chorale *Durch dein Gefängnis* and the ethereal questioning of their *Wohins*. And I liked the fact that they sang the chorales without scores. James McVinnie was particularly apt at continuo organ, which was rather more audible than usual – apart, curiously from its obligato semiquavers in *Betrachte, meine Seel'*. Incidentally, I was slightly alarmed at the start to the see that the doors of the giant Albert Hall organ console were open but, mercifully, it was not used.

Norrington's direction was, as ever, thought-provoking. His take on the chorales was particularly telling, perhaps most noticeably at the end with the emphatic pulse of *O hilf, Christe* to the final *Ach Herr*, hesitant at first, but building to a confident conclusion. This was not a reading for romantics – speeds were brisk (excessively so, if the evident struggles of several of the soloists were anything to go by) and several moments that are often wallowed over were sailed through. But it was clear that, perhaps because of the length of time since he last conducted it, Norrington Junior is continuing his father's "scepticism of received lore".

Rattle's Proms Passion – and Sellars's staging

Towards the other end of the Proms we had another 'good reason otherwise' occasion, when Sir Simon Rattle brought his Berlin Philharmoniker orchestra to the Royal Albert Hall, together with the Berlin Radio Choir and, very briefly, the combined forces of the Wells and Winchester Cathedral Choristers for the Matthew Passion (6 September). Whereas the St John Passion tells the story of the death of Christ, the St Matthew Passion starts with the fact that he is already dead, and then retells the story, as if to try and make sense of it. This was the point of departure for the staging of the work by Peter Sellars, first performed in Berlin in 2010. At the start the singers (and Rattle) scuttle on together and gather centre stage as if in shock. They settle down for the opening chorus, during which the choral ripieno *O Lamm Gottes* were sung by the boys and girls of the cathedral choirs from the left-hand choir gallery, accompanied by a very high pitch organ stop which, from my seat, was piercing in tone and volume. At the end of their only contribution, the children scampered off up the stairs. It's a shame that they weren't involved in the rest of the evening – the chorales would have sounded wonderful with the addition of these children's voices. The glimpse of the human story behind the oft-told text occurs in the next scene when Mary Magdalena (as the 'woman with the alabaster pot') runs up to the Evangelist and kisses him – the first of many little human moments. Magdalena Kozená (for it was her) then sings the alto aria while massaging the Evangelist's back.

It is the full involvement of the Evangelist into the plot

and action that is one of the hallmarks of Sellars's 'ritualisation' (his term) of the work. As if to emphasise that the story of Christ's Passion is being related after the event, the figure of Christus is sung from the very back of the stage (the distance over-emphasised on the BBC Radio 3 broadcast), later popping up to sing from various side aisles and the upper gallery. It is Matthew who frequently takes on the persona of Christus, becoming the focus of the chorus's attacks. There were frequent pauses during the Evangelist's recitatives and between passages which, had I not have been following the text, I would have found puzzling – but they usually occurred at moments when there was a natural shift in the story, so made perfect sense. For example, in the recit *Und er kam,* when there is a clear change in action from Christ finding his disciples asleep, his going away to pray, and then returning. During Christus's ariosa *Trinket alle daraus,* soprano Camilla Tilling offers a cup round to the surrounding singers and players. The two oboe d'amore players then come forward to stand next to her for her recitative and aria *Wiewohl mein Herz / Ich will dir mein Herze schenken,* which she sings as much to them as to the audience, twirling round in a gentle dance as she sings – perhaps generating the curious little changes of speed during the instrumental interludes (and reoccurring at other times during the evening). At the end of the first part, the choir actively intervene to try and prevent Christ (as portrayed by Matthew) from being bound – and then they also scamper up to the stairs by the organ, leaving with the orchestra without acknowledging the applause.

This was remedied with the more formal start of the second part. There was further interaction between the singers and players, notably in *Geduld* which the tenor sings kneeling in front of the gamba player and in the plea (presented as if by Judas) to 'Give me back my Jesus' while the violin soloist seeming to aurally assault him, his bow within inches of the singer's face. The soloists were not of the usual period-singing stock and at times that showed, as did the occasional wallow from the players. The contrast between Camilla Tilling's stage serenity and stillness and Magdalena Kozená's frenetic agitation was stark, but both were rather too vocally operatic for my taste. Vocally, it was Mark Padmore that held everything together in a remarkable feat of acting and singing.

Only occasionally did Peter Sellars' more irritating habits emerge, one being the occasional silly hand gestures that have dominated his opera directing. The staging consisted of boxes for the two choirs to sit on, together with a few further boxes in the central space. Rattle's podium was at the back of the stage, facing the first orchestra, although he frequently moved to direct the second orchestra positioned to one side. And considering Sellars's habit of subversively wrenching a plot round to suit his own political agenda, he took the premise of the Passion story seriously. Knowing Sellars' ability to shock with gore, it was perhaps fortunate that the crucifixion took place somewhere off-stage.

I was left with the feeling that much of the strength of this performance came from the preparation for the first performance four years ago. Apparently several weeks were spent learning and analyzing the text before any of the instrumentalists were involved – and they also went through a long period of preparation. Whatever differences Rattle and Sellars must have had over interpretation seem to have been resolved reasonably well. It is a shame that this wasn't televised, as the radio recording doesn't always make sense without any idea of the stage action. For a less complimentary review, seek out the Daily Telegraph.

Christie's Proms Rameau

It seems extraordinary that, in the entire history of the Proms, there has only been one performance of a Rameau motet – in 1996. But with his 250th anniversary fast approaching, this was partly made up for by a late night performance of three of his four known *grand motets,* given by Les Arts Florisants, William Christie and six solo singers (Rachel Redmond, Katherine Watson, Reinoud Van Mechelen, Cyril Auvity, Marc Mauillon and Cyril Costanzo), all former members of Les Arts Florrisants youth-wing, Le Jardin des Voix (29 July). Although possibly intended for concert rather than liturgical performance, the *grand motets* represent the large scale musical extravaganzas of the Versailles Chapelle Royale, and were intended to be performed while a priest went through the motions of quietly reciting the Mass somewhere in the aural background. Composed around 1714, these three motets demonstrate the vast range of Rameau's musical ideas, many of which would (much later) form the basis of his operas. As was also the custom in contemporary opera, each of the motets opens with a prolonged section for a solo singer, before developing into a rapidly-changing canvas of musical textures. The first of the evening's motets (*Deus noster refugium*) follows this solo with a dramatic aural description of climatic and geological turbulence type as the earth moved and mountains were cast into the sea – before the bow breaketh and the spear snaps and everybody lives happily ever after. *Quam dilecta tabernacula* adds a couple of flutes to the line-up, reinforcing the pastoral mood from the start. Rather surprisingly, Rameau then sets off with the complex five-part double fugue. The concluding *In convertendo Dominus* is of a different order, its style more operatic, not least in the opening solo from a *haute-contre*

The intense training that the singers would have received through Le Jardin des Voix was evident in their impeccable use of ornaments and the complex conventions of French music. Christie, of course, is at the top of his game and is thoroughly at home in this repertoire. One awkward aspect of the presentation was that the soloists were singing with the choir, behind the orchestra, but then made their way, with varying degrees of urgency, to the front side for the solo spots. Most managed to arrive in good time, and quietly, but there were several unnecessary pauses while the singers swapped places, disturbing the flow of Rameau's through-composed works.

OTHER LONDON CONCERTS

Tallis at the Globe

The new Sam Wanamaker theatre (part of the Shakespeare Globe complex) is building up its repertoire of events, and has now presented their first commissioned

play, Thomas Tallis (4 August). Little is known about Tallis's life or personality, except that he was a "myld and quyet sort", thereby leaving much up to the imagination of the author, Jessica Swale. Three actors played a wide range of characters, ranging from all the monarchs (plus a child playing Edward VI) that Tallis (played by Brendan O'Hea) lived through, an unfortunate priest from the dissolved monastery of Waltham Abbey, the radical protestant Mrs Prest (who wreaked havoc in many Catholic churches before being burnt), a plasterer and Mrs Tallis, amongst others. In a series of vignettes, aspects of the changing fortunes of Tallis's life and the Abbey priest are superimposed within an evolving story line. The music was provided by six singers from The Sixteen's stable, with a lutenist to accompany, all looking rather out of place in their tails amongst the period dress of the actors – although that sartorial conflict was topped towards the end with the arrival of guards toting machine guns. Unfortunately the upper three voices (two sopranos and a countertenor) suffered from grossly excessive vibrato, leaving Jeremy Budd, Tom Raskin and Ben Davies to keep up the vocal standards. Considering the important of the organ to much of Tallis's life, I was slightly surprised that that instrument didn't even get a mention in passing.

The Bach family in the Asylum

I try to look out for concerts taking place in unusual venues, not least because of the opportunity that can give to attract new audiences. One venue that I had never heard of before was a concert at the Caroline Gardens Chapel in Peckham. It forms the architectural focus of an early 19th century complex of almshouses (once London's largest) that served as the Licenced Victuallers' Benevolent Institution Asylum, the word 'Asylum' being used in the sense of a sanctuary, in this case for retired pub landlords – or, as they were apparently known, 'decayed members of the trade'. The theme of decay continued after the near-destruction of the chapel in the last World War, since when it has survived (until recently) as an unused shell with a temporary roof. Although it remains pleasingly derelict, it is now used as a local community arts centre and wedding venue with the title of Asylum. Soprano Kate Semmens and Steven Devine (harpsichord) offered a glimpse of 'An evening with the Bach family' (and, indeed, the Semmens/Devine family) based around a selection of pieces from Anna Magdalena Bach's 1725 collection and pieces by Bach sons (10 August). Some of the songs gave an insight into Bach's style of accompaniment, including the *Aria di Giovanni: Wilst du dein Herz* and *Gedenke dch, mein Geist.* CPE Bach's *Kampf der Tugend,* with its thick chordal accompaniment, showed the later style of the Bach sons. The keyboard solos including the 5th French Suite and the Italian Concerto and some fascinating smaller pieces, including the tortuous Sinfonia in f (BWV 795), its chromaticisms reflecting Bach at his most inventive – or most strange. This was delightful concert, with fine singing and playing in an evocative venue.

INNSBRUCKER FESTWOCHEN DER ALTEN MUSIK

The Innsbruck Festival of Early Music runs for the last three weeks in August and usually includes amongst its many events the Cesti international baroque opera singing competition and three fully staged operas, one of them cast from finalists of the previous year's Cesti competition. I usually try to take in the competition and the related BaroqueOper:Jung opera, and one of the other operas. This year, that meant arriving on 16 August in time (or to be precise, courtesy of what should have been an easy flight, not quite in time) for the last night of Handel's *Almira,* and leaving on 23 August after the first night of the BaroqueOper:Jung production of Cesti's *L'Orontea.* The festival theme was '1685', but it was rather flexibly interpreted.

Lots of *Lascia*

Handel's *Almira* (or, more correctly, *Almira, Königin von Castilien*) was composed in Hamburg when he was 19, and shows his early ability to adapt to the musical tastes of his surroundings. The result was a mixed-language compilation of comparatively short arias (in Italian and German), German compact recitatives, comedy, spectacle (including the opening coronation and a masque) and lots of dance, French-style. The plot is relatively straightforward, by operatic standards. Almira has just inherited the throne of Castile and, according to her father's will, should marry Osman the son of her guardian Consalvo. But Osman loves somebody else, and Almire loves the foundling Fernando. Successions of suitors surround the young queen and the plot continues with the usual round of disguise, mistaken identity and intrigue. The inevitable twist at the end means that they all live happily ever after – or should had done, had not the director had her own ideas, leaving the protagonists looking (understandably) rather perplexed. This production (shared and earlier performed in Hamburg's Staatsoper) took place in the Tiroler Landestheater, under the direction of the Dutch Jetske Mijnssen with the Italian Alessandro De Marchi as musical (and festival) director. The orchestra was Academia Montis Regalis, one of their many appearances during the festival. The staging was simple, based on a large square multi-faceted structure atop an enormous stage revolve. The costumes ranged from courtly Elizabethan to Downton Abbey elegance and contemporary grey suits, reflecting the director's concept of the varying role of women through the ages. With the possible exception of rather too many repetitions of *Lascia, ch'io pianga,* this was musically a very compelling production, with excellent singing from Klara Ek *Almira S,* Sara-Maria Saalmann *Tabarco S,* Rebecca Jo Loeb *Bellante mS,* Viktor Rudd *Fernando bar,* Wolf Matthias Friedrich *Consalvo B* and Florian Spiess *Raymondo B* – and promising acting from two young girls. Of the instrumentalists, credit must go to the leader Olivia Centurioni and continuo harpsichord player, Mariangiola Martello. And for its pure visual amusement, I will also mention a spectacularly ithyphallic contra-bassoon. You can view extracts, from Hamburg, at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DoiULqoVK5g.

The London Connection

One of the many architectural delights of Innsbruck is Schloss Ambras (a Hapsburg stronghold since the 1300s) and, in particular, the spectacular Renaissance Spanischer Saal, built for Archduke Ferdinand II around 1570. Under the eye of 27 Tyrolean rulers, the soloists of the Münchner Hofkapelle explored the 'London Connection' with their programme of music by Geminiani, Handel, Porpora, Babell and Veracini – the latter with the 12th *Sonata accademicha* from his 1744 collection. The programme included solo works for organ, oboe and violin, one of the finest performances coming from violinist Chouchane Siranossian in Babell's B flat Sonata, her ornaments and elaborations beautifully integrated into the melodic line.

And now for...

something completely different, the best way to describe Odisea Negra, given by La Chimera in the Tiroler Landestheater (18 August). Their programme is based on the music of Africans kidnapped and brought to plantations in the Caribbean and Latin America – one of the most unpleasant moments in our history, but one that produced an extraordinary range of music. Examples of the *Negrillas, Habañeras, Merengues* and *Jácaras* dances were interspersed with folk music and pieces from the Spanish conquistadors and contemporary pieces based on these mixed traditions, played by performers from Argentina, Senegal, Guadeloupe, Venezuela, Cuba – and Italy. The instruments were centred round a consort of bass viol/lirone players, with the addition of the kora (an African harp), marimba, cuatro, violin and percussion. Many of the pieces were arranged by La Chimera's director, lutenist, Eduardo Egüez. This was an extremely professional presentation by a group of excellent performers, notably Ablaye Cissoko (Senegal) with his evocative singing and playing of the kora, and the remarkably lithe Venezuelan dancer Maru Rivas Medina.

Matinée-idol countertenors?

The Australian countertenor David Hansen has been described (on his own website) as one of "a new breed of matinée-idol countertenors". If that entails a considerable degree of playing up to the audience (or, at least, certain sections of it), then Hanson seems to have found a marketable niche. In a curious mixture of comedy act, pleas for compassion (making much of his apparently falling over in his hotel shower a day before the concert), self-proclaimed virtuosity and unashamed audience rousing, he gave us his programme of pieces written for the likes of Farinelli (Spanischer Saal, Schloss Ambras, 19 August). Accompanied by the festival's resident orchestra, Academia Montis Regalis (they recorded this programme together in 2013), Hanson strutted his stuff to the evident delight of many in the audience – but not, unfortunately, of me. Of the many disturbing vocal mannerisms, the striking difference in his higher and lower registers was just the start. At the lower end, his timbre is edgy and grating, smoothing out as it gains height, only to become increasingly shrill. There was an almost constant feeling of his not quite reaching a note, particularly in the heights that he relishes, despite his often taking exaggerated portamento run-ups towards the note – or wild shriek-like leaps toward it. On a couple of occasions he used the well-known Baroque device of holding a very long note – great if you can manage it, but unfortunately he couldn't, notably in Vinci's *Sento due fiamme in petto* when both tone and intonation were unstable. His use of ornaments, one of the skills he promotes, had elements of virtuosity, but sadly lacked musical understanding, notably in his habit of prolonging the ornament for so long that the underlying harmony had moved on well before he arrived on the intended note, creating harmonic chaos. I'm not sure how much his shower-falling-over incident affected his performing style, but on this occasion he had a very curious posture, singing with his chin down onto his chest, as though singing to the floor a few feet in front of him. He articulated ornaments by shaking his head, something not visually appealing, and certainly not musically successful. The interspersed instrumental works were a relief, with fine contributions from Olivia Centurioni, violin, Giovanna Barbati, cello, and Maria De Martini, bassoon and recorder.

A little lunchtime Klingzeug

A regular feature of the festival is the Wednesday lunchtime concerts given by younger musicians in the pavilion in the middle of the Hofgarten. This year it was the turn of three members of the Austrian group Klingzeug (Claudia Norz *vln*, Anna Tausch *vlc*, and David Bergmüller *lute/theorbo*) and their programme of music by Schmelzer, Mealli, Stradella, Weichenberger and Mascetti – a nice contrast between the earlier baroque *stylus phantasticus* and the later high baroque of the latter two composers. This is a difficult space to perform in, with all four sides of the pavilion open to the surrounding park – and the elements. At least music-shuffling wind wasn't an issue this time, as it has been in the past – and the gloomily overcast and chilly conditions made for quieter than usual park-life. David Bergmüller produced a beautiful sound in Weichenberger Lute concerto, although this was not perhaps the best venue for such a work. By far the most outstanding performance, both musically and technically, came from violinist Claudia Norz demonstrating a special ability to shape notes even at the quietest of volume – not an easy thing to do. Her undoubted virtuosity was demonstrated at the end of Mealli's *La Biancuccia* Sonata, with its wild cadential figuration. There were a few intonation issues with the cello, but that didn't spoil an excellent little concert.

Gallery music

Although the intentions were clearly sound and admirable, the concert by the Italian choir Cantar Lontano, conducted by Marco Mencoboni, and performed from the hidden galleries of the Jesuitenkirche (20 August) really didn't work. The programme was an interesting one, with Alessandro Scarlatti's Messe *Tutta in canone di diverse specie* for 5 voices, Francesco Soriano's *Canone sopra il fine del soggetto* and Domenico Scarlatti's *Stabat Mater* for 10 voices and organ, although the very un-Italian organ prelude played at the start of the concert wasn't the best introduction. Although singing from galleries can be very successful (and works very well in Cantar Lontano's excellent recording of the Monteverdi Vespers, reviewed

elsewhere), it was aurally confusing, presumably because the singers weren't visible to the audience. But a more serious point was that the quality of the individual voices was frankly far from acceptable, with unsettling vibrato and a lack of any sense of consort, each voice seemingly determined to go its own way. Their intonation was better in the final work when they were supported by organ and trombone, but most of the voices still had an unpleasantly raw tone. The concert finished in some disarray, when the conductor arrived at ground level to make an inaudible speech as the audience were making their way out, ending with an encore given to those remaining after he had found his way back up to the galleries.

The 1588 Ebert organ

Amongst Innsbruck's many musical treasures (which include the Strozzi portrait of Monteverdi and a collection of string instruments by Jakob Stainer, born just outside Innsbruck) is the 1558 Ebert organ in the Hofkirche (which also contains Maximillian's spectacular mausoleum). Unfortunately, this important organ is rarely used by the festival, although I was independently invited to give a recital of 'English music from 1360 to 1600'. As well as the earliest known piece of (possibly) organ music, the programme included pieces from the Tudor period, including Tallis's enormous 1564 *Felix Namque* and Bull's dramatic *Salve Regina*. Enough said!

The Cesti International Singing Competition for Baroque Opera

My own recital was timed so that I could move on to the final of the 5th annual Cesti International Singing Competition for Baroque Opera, held in the concert hall of the Tiroler Landeskonservatoriums. Apart from testing out young singers, this gave an opportunity to preview next year's BaroqueOper:Jung production, Lully's *Armide*, as all the finalists had to sing one aria from that opera alongside an aria chosen from specified pieces by Handel, Purcell and Pergolesi. During the first part of the final, five singers chose the same Lully aria, *Enfin, il est en ma puissance*, and two shared *Suivons Armide, et chantons*. In the second part, we heard pairs of Handel's *Sta nell'Ircana* and *Tu me da me divide*. There were 97 singers from 32 countries in the final rounds, although only 24 got through to the semi-final and 10 to the final. Germany, Italy and France were the most numerous countries represented, with 14, 12 and 11 apiece; South Korea had 8 singers and Great Britain and the USA 6 each. As the singers had to pay all their own travel and accommodation costs, this is an expensive investment for them. All the four prize winners impressed me, as did Frederikke Kampmann, Rosalind Coad and Camilo Delgado-Diaz. The prize-winners were Rupert Charlesworth (1st and Audience prizes of €4,000 and €1,000), Giulia Semenzato (2nd Prize of €3,000), Daniela Skorka (3rd, €2,000) and Miriam Albano (Young Artists Award, €1,500). In addition, some of the finalists will be offered singing opportunities at various festivals and concert venues, many connected to the jury members, who were generally directors. The singers were accompanied during the final by another incarnation of Academia Montis Regalis, directed by Patrick Cohën-Akenine. Continuo players Mariangiola Martello and Giovanni Barbati deserve mention for their harpsichord and theorbo contributions. I also heard the semi-final, and particularly liked the singing of Pietro di Bianco, Tomas Kral, Eugénie Lefebvre, Samantha Louis-Jean, Amelia Scicolone, Guilia Semenzato and Rachel Tremblay. One issue that a number of singers didn't grasp is that this is a competition for singing Baroque Opera, so it is clear that they need to portray some ability at acting, rather than just standing and singing. And inevitably, another issue is the use of vocal techniques better suited (if at all) to a much later repertoire, vibrato being just one aspect of that category.

The Friday lunchtime concert was back at Schloss Ambras, this time to the little neo-Gothic Nikolauskapelle for a programme of music from flute and clavichord from the court of Friedrich II of Prussia. This was given by Linde Brunmayr-Tutz and Carsten Lorenz, the former with strong Innsbruck connections, and both now teachers at Trossingen. Unfortunately, even in this intimate setting, the clavichord wasn't quite loud enough to balance the flute except in the quietest moments. The solo clavichord *Ricercar à 3* from the Musical Offering offered a chance to hear the clavichord properly. However, on an issue of performance practice, I wasn't too sure about the periodic rallantandos, leading to loss of the rhythmic pulse. As well as Bach works, we also heard the Adagio in C from the *Versuch einer Anweisung, die Flöte traversiere zu spielen* by Quantz and Benda's Sonata in E minor.

Cesti's *L'Orontea*

Having heard, and been impressed, by the singers in last year's Cesti Singing Competition for Baroque Opera, it was lovely to see them in opera mode, rather than singing to a panel of judges on a lonely stage. It was appropriate that the opera the competition had auditioned them for was *L'Orontea* by Cesti himself (an Innsbruck resident) – a work premiered in Innsbruck's Neues Hoftheater in 1656. This fully staged performance took place, as planned, in the open courtyard of the Theologische Fakultät (22 August), a tricky decision for the organisers, given the threat of rain. Unfortunately the two particularly impressive leading 2013 prize winners already had other engagements, and weren't available. In 2013, Emily Renard won both First and Audience Prizes as well as a special prize of an engagement at the Theater an der Wien. The young Austrian soprano, Christina Gansch, won the Second Prize, the Atle Vestersjø Young Talent Award and a special prize of a concert at the Vienna Konzerthaus (and went on to win the 2014 Kathleen Ferrier Award). But we did hear the 3rd prize winner, the Portuguese tenor, Fernando Guimarães and another singer who particularly impressed me last year – the young Italian mezzo, Aurora Faggioli. I noted in last year's review that her "extraordinary acting ability shone through in her opening aria from L'Oronte", and that was to prove the case in her outstanding performance as Tibrino.

Usually seen as the first comic opera, *L'Orontea* became one of the most popular of all 17th century operas, and it is easy to see why. The Prologue, with the usual godly tussle

between Love and Philosophy was omitted, leaving the opening to Queen Orontea to announce her rejection of love, despite the entreaties of her advisor and mentor Creonte, sung by Jeffrey Francis, the only singer not within the Cesti competition age bracket but who fulfils a mentoring role to the competitors both during the competition and in their subsequent opera appearance. The bloodied young painter Alidoro (sung by Fernando Guimarães, but originally by Cesti himself) arrives at the court seeking refuge from brigands with what is assumed to be his mother Aristea – a delightful and well acted (and sung) pantomime-dame drag role for David Hernández Anfruns. Orontea promptly falls in love with Alidoro as, one by one, do all the other females in the cast, including the courtesan (apparently in the historic sense of the word) Silandra. The latter role resulted in one of the most outstanding performances of the evening from French soprano Solen Mainguené, one of the singers brought in to replace the unavailable first and second place Cesti winners. Despite apparently having little or no experience of singing early baroque opera, she excelled both as a singer and actor, with brilliant control of a voice that is normally found singing Wagner *et al* in Hamburg. The stand-out moment of the whole evening was her meltingly beautiful *Addio Corindo – Vieni, Alidoro* as Silandra switches her romantic allegiance to Alidoro from the unfortunate Corindo (sung by the impressive counter tenor Michał Czerniawski, whose lament at the loss of Silandra closed the first part). Silandra and Corinda had earlier sung the gorgeous *Pur ti miro* inspired duet *Mio ristoro – Mio desio.* Giorgio Celenza's sense of comic timing made him a natural choice to sing the role of the fool Gelone, while soprano Anat Edri excelled as Giacinta, a later arrival at the Queen's court, disguised as the young boy Ismero. One of the funniest moments came with Aristea's embarrassing attempts to seduce the 'boy' Ismero. The title role was sung by mezzo Giuseppina Bridelli, a sizzling interpretation of a woman simmering on the brink and somebody clearly not to be messed with. Her *Intorno all'idol mio,* along with Anat Edri's *Il mio ben dice ch'io sper* and Solen Mainguené's *Addio Corindo – Vieni, Alidoro* completed the trio of arias that have become well-known away from their opera setting. For what it is worth, Alidoro turns out to be the long-lost son of the King of Phoenicia and is therefore free to marry Orontea, although their final clinch leaves some doubt as to his long-term fidelity, as his former amours attach themselves to him. The impressive musical direction and interpretation was by David Bates, with La Nuova Musica providing the excellent instrumental and rich continuo support. The very effective stage direction was by Stefano Vizioli, making the most of the limited staging opportunities. It was a fascinating experience to be able to sit through several rehearsals as the production approached its opening night.

A number of videos from the festival can be found on the internet.

ANTWERP LAUS POLYPHONIAE

Claudio – in search of the young Monteverdi

This year's Antwerp *Laus Polyphoniae* festival (the 21st) focussed on the music of Monteverdi, particularly his youthful works. The festival lasted from 22 to 31 August, and I was there from the end of the first weekend until 30 August, unfortunately missing the last day, of which anon. Most of the concerts were held in the baroque church of St Augustine, appropriately built at the same time as much of the music we were to hear in a style on the cusp of the late Renaissance and early Baroque. It is now the concert hall of the Augustinus Music Centre (AMUZ), organisers of *Laus Polyphoniae.*

The perfect musician

For me, the first concert was on 24 August and the concert given by Le Concert Brisé under the title of *Musica da camera e da chiesa* – William Dongois's exploration of the role of ornamentation in secular and sacred music from the 16th and early 17th centuries. The solo violin, cornet and a soprano voice were supported by a continuo group of theorbo and organ, with a surprisingly large harpsichord for this repertoire. One of the pieces was Palestrina's *Pulchra es* with ornaments added by Dongois in the style of the recommendations in one of Luigi Zenobi's many letters on 'the perfect musician'. Caccini's warnings against excessive ornamentation (in *Le nuove musiche*) were heeded by all three soloists. Although the vocal ornaments were agile, there was a shrill edge to the soprano's voice which was not helped by a persistent vibrato that affected intonation and the clarity of the otherwise good ornaments. That the choice of such a strong vibrato was not a stylistic decision was emphasised by the fact that it was not used by the impressive violinist Christine Moran.

Organ music from the Po Valley

The Monday lunchtime concert took place in the chapel of Elzenfeld, an ancient hospital foundation now run as a hotel and conference centre, and home to many of the performers (and this reviewer) during the festival. The medieval chapel houses a 1675 Bremser organ, reconstructed in 2008. Liuwe Tamminga, the Dutch organist of San Petronia in Bologna, gave a fascinating recital of music from the Po Valley, the composers being Ingegneri, Fogliano, Wert, Luzzaschi, Brumel, Bargnani and Cavazzoni from the later part of the 16th and very early 17th centuries. The programme was based on the sort of tests that an applicant for the post of organist at St Mark's Venice might have had to endure, with its range of improvisations based on contrapuntal models, including improving a four-part fugue and a just-heard polyphonic vocal work. The resulting Canzonas and Ricercares became the foundation of Renaissance and early Baroque organ music. A succession of 11 Ricercares, 5 Canzonas, one Toccata and a Hymn might not appear to be the most appealing of programmes, but Liuwe Tamminga's fine sense of articulation and the structural flow of the music made for an excellent consort. The meantone of the organ produced relaxing and peaceful cadences. The

concert finished with a Ricercare by Wert, the focus of the evening concert.

Stile Antico sings Wert

In a programme specially commissioned by the festival, Stile Antico dedicated their concert in the stunning St Pauluskerk to the music of Wert (25 August).[1] Possibly born near Antwerp, he soon moved to Italy and was quickly linked with the Este and Gonzaga families, eventually becoming *Maestro di cappella* at the chapel of Santa Barbara in Mantua. Stile Antico based their programme on de Wert's sacred pieces from his *Il secondo libro de motetti* and *Modulationum liber primus,* for five and six parts respectively, both published in 1581. Standing in a circle on a platform in the centre of the nave, the 12 singers (often reduced into smaller groupings) produced an exquisite sound, with a purity of tone and intonation that perfectly matched Wert's often intense harmonies. Their gentle control of changes of volume is exemplary, as is their ability to reflect the contrasting moods of Wert's music, notably in the last two pieces with the sombre madrigalian harmonies of *Vox in Rama* and the virtuosic *Gaudete in Domino.* And all without a conductor or a noticeable leader – they even managed to coordinate their concluding bows, despite facing outwards in a circle.

Oozing emotion and orgasmic cries

From 12 singers without a conductor, we moved to five singers with one. But where Stile Antico were all stillness and calm with absolute concentration on their purity of tone and the music they were singing, the Italian Rosso Porpora Ensemble oozed emotion through curious bodily movements, the sort of hand gestures that some teachers like to encourage (when rehearsing) and the liberal use of strong vibrato. And whereas Stile Antico sang as a cohesive whole, these singers set off on their own individual trajectory, each swelling and dying into and out of phrases, making it difficult to follow the vocal lines as each individual prominent entry (which was often accompanied by a glance towards the audience) was soon drowned out by the next. As well as their use of vibrato, some of the voices seemed to become inherently unstable at anything above *pp*, particularly the soprano, notably with her almost orgasmic *fff* cries at the close of Wert's *Giunto allo tomba.* Their lunchtime programme was *Madrigali della città di Monteverdi* (26 August) with pieces ranging from Gabrieli, Ingegneri, Wert and Schütz from Venice, Cremona, Mantua and Ferrara. Again, the harpsichord was rather large for this repertoire.

Fledgling recitative

The evening concert featured a very much more suitable harpsichord – and better singers, with María Cristina Kiehr and Stephan Macleod joining Concerto Soave for selections form Monteverdi's *Canzonette a tre voci* and the two volumes of *Scherzi Musicali,* the first dating from 1584 when he was just 17, the latter from 1607 and 1632. One feature of many of these pieces was the emerging of the fledgling recitative style, particularly evident in *Più lieto il guardo.* Harpsichord pieces by Merula and Marini were played by Jean-Marc Aymes, the director of Concerto Soave, and violinist Alba Roca also contributed many solo moments.

Troubled Tasso

On three successive evenings there was a late night event in the intimate surroundings of the Rubenshuis, with Marco Beasley reciting from the troubled Tasso's *La Gerusalemme liberata* with Marco Mencoboni adding some harpsichord pieces and joining in the display of Italian charm. This was a jovial and informal event, with much banter 'twixt the two performers and the audience, and some outrageous cheerleading from the former as they encouraged applause for each other. Mencoboni's solo pieces were introduced with some colourful explanations, including linking a Cavazzoni *Ricercare* to a nearby painting of a naked Eve and the frustrations of love. He later pondered to the audience whether he could actually manage to play a Merula *Canzon* as it had "too many notes", in the hope of gaining a little extra applause. In his recitation of the *Combattimento di Tancredi et di Clorinda,* Marco Beasley lapsed into occasional singing, with a fine tenor voice. He finished with a comparison between the Neapolitan language and Italian in Fasano's *Lo Tasso Napoletano.* It was fascinating to compare the lyricism of the spoken Italian with the congested consonants of the Dutch surtitles.

Mencoboni's Monteverdi

Wednesday's events started with a continuation of Marco Mencoboni's charm offensive, courtesy of a lecture describing his approach to the 2009 recording the *Vespro della Beata Vergine* with his group Cantar Lontano. He started by getting the audience to repeat *Bon giorno* several times. See CD Reviews section for my comments on the resulting recording and further details of the interpretation. He mentioned the possible influence of the Jewish population of Mantua on Monteverdi's setting of biblical texts (and the topic of sexual excitement), the visual significance of 'black notes', the choice of instruments, particularly the organ of Mantua's Santa Barbara , *Viola da braccio* and the shawm-like *Pifara.*[2] He also spoke about the perils of modern editions (his musicians sang from copies of the original parts) and his interpretation of time signatures and *Sesquialtera* passages, which he takes much slower than usual, retaining the underlying *tactus.* A fascinating and informative talk – and, as I later found out, a very impressive recording of the Vespers.[3]

Two lutes and a *Missa*

The first of two Wednesday evening concerts was the relatively unusual pairing of two lutes, with Paul O'Dette and Jakob Lindberg playing duets (and the occasional solo) from Italian composers of the 16th and the early 17th century. Starting with Dalza, active in the earliest years of the 16th century, they moved on to Francesco da Milano,

1. I follow the principles of New Grove, with Wert treated as a surname without the *de*: indeed, having *of de Wert* looks very odd.. *CB*

2. The two upper wind parts in bars 19-28 of *Quia respexit* are headed *fifara & pifara* – probably one is a misprint, but which? *CB*

3. I wonder if performing from the partbooks only works if the singers have sung from modern editions for years! *CB.*

who became known as *Il divino* because of his improvisations, ending with the early Baroque pieces by Terzi, Piccinini and Kapsperger. An attractive programme that sounded well in the large space of the Augustine church. For the later evening concert we moved to the former Dominican monastery of St Pauluskerk for the first of three performances of Monteverdi's *Missa da capella fatta sopra il motetto In illo tempore del Gomberti,* this one given by the Huelgas Ensemble. The deliberately *prima prattica* style of Monterverdi's parody Mass was interspersed with *seconda prattica* pieces by composers from the generation or two before. Published in 1610 together with the *seconda prattica* Vespers, the reason for Monteverdi's musical conservative essay was to scupper criticism from a critic that the new generation of composers couldn't compose in strict contrapuntal form.[4] The contrast was noticeable with the first of the insertions, the slippery harmonies of Vicentino's *Laura che 'l verde lauro* with pieces by Rore, Wert and Marenzio to follow. Unlike Stile Antico's concert two days earlier in the same venue, the Huelgas Ensemble stood at ground level in the centre of the nave, rather than on a podium, but in a similar circular form, their conductor moving through the four cardinal points during the course of the concert. Huelgas were far noisier that Stile Antico in their frequent stage movements, the clatter of their chairs being just one of the distractions – the jerky arm movements of conductor Paul van Nevel was another (visual) distraction. Unlike Stile Antico, they grouped their singers in voice order, rather than inter-mixing them, meaning that the focus of the rather prominent sopranos changed as the choir circled through their orb – the text was indistinct at times as well. They tended to keep to the same volume, whatever the number of voices – only in the *Hosanna* did they give us a real crescendo.

Raguel Andueza and Jesús Fernández Baena

Thursday featured three excellent concerts, starting at lunchtime with one of the simplest, and most beautiful, events of the festival – the Spanish soprano Raguel Andueza and Jesús Fernández Baena (theorbo). Their programme, *'Belle Rose',* explored the solo song repertoire from Caccini to Falconieri, a time when the role of ornamentation was a matter for debate as the Baroque style evolved. This was brilliantly demonstrated by Raguel Andueza, with her attractive range of tone colours, the tiniest of natural vibratos, an ability to portray passion and emotion without histrionics whilst retaining an exquisite purity of tone throughout. Even in the more elaborate later pieces, her application of ornaments and figurations was always subtle and appropriate. This was one of the most beautiful voices I have heard in quite a while. I was similarly impressed by the accompaniment of Jesús Fernández Baena, his unassumingly restrained approach being, to my mind, ideal. His natural reticence stretched to a reluctance to take any applause – it was so refreshing to see an accompanist who, in the nicest possible terms, knows their place. His playing of the *Passacaglia* and *Toccata arpeggiata* by Kapsberger was particularly musical.

Il primo interprete di Orfeo

The first of the evening concerts featured another solo singer, this time the Belgian tenor Jan Van Elsacker (a former chorister at Antwerp Cathedral and student at the Muziekconservatorium) with the support of the six instrumentalists of *Il Trionfo* bringing back to life the singing of Francesco Rasi – *il primo interprete di Orfeo.* Rasi was a pupil of Caccini and, as the concert title suggests, sang the title role in Monteverdi's *Orfeo.* Jan Van Elsacker's voice was clear and unaffected, with a rich lower register and a distinctly lighter upper register, and he made an effective use of subtle gesture. The staging was well done, the singer unobtrusively moving from the back to the front of the group. Although there were only two indicated instrumental works, many of the vocal pieces had extended instrumental introductions and interludes, many featuring cornet player Doron David Sherwin. A trombone provided both melodic and bass support together with a continuo group of lirone, viol, theorbo, baroque guitar, harpsichord and a particularly attractive *organ de legno.*

More *Missa*

The late night concert was another performance of Monteverdi's 1610 *Missa In illo tempore,* this time given in the soaring space and expansive acoustic of Antwerp Cathedral by the Belgian group Psallentes, conducted by Hendrik Vanden Abeele with Joris Verdin playing *bassus generalis* and solo organ. Psallentes started with Gombert's original *In illo tempore* motet and then, unlike the earlier performance by the Huelgas Ensemble, incorporated an attractively melodic Gregorian chant between the sung sections of the Mass from a 1599 Antwerp gradual (printed by Moretus) and a Josquin motet. After an organ prelude (played on a large 'box' organ) the Gombert was sung from one of the six side aisles before the choir processed to a central position in the nave, singing across the width of the nave from just under the pulpit. I particularly liked the fact that they started the Mass with a proper nine-fold Kyrie, interspersing chant between repetitions of the three Monteverdi sections. There was a particularly striking chanted *Benedicta et venerabilis* beautifully sung by Lore Binon, its long Hildegard-like melismas soaring into the vaults. The 15 singers produced a well-balanced and cohesive sound, with much clearer diction than the Huelgas Ensemble, despite the much bigger acoustic. The organ interludes were well chosen, notably a long Elevation toccata (based, I gather, on a Josquin motet) that opened with a long homophonic sequence that, if it had been from some years later and from a different religious persuasion, I would have called chorale-like.

Cento partite

Friday's series of concerts started with the lunchtime recital by the Milan-based organist Lorenzo Ghielmi, playing two harpsichords (with different tunings) and a chamber organ. As with the early career of Monteverdi in the world of vocal music, the keyboard side of things was going through a similar transition, with Frescobaldi being

4. However, as I've mentioned several times, Monteverdi's harmony in the 6-voice Mass is such that, even playing from an edition which omits the continuo line, the chords almost fall into place under the hands. *CB*

the keyboard equivalent of Monteverdi in his exploration of new genres. As with Monteverdi, he was capable of turning out Renaissance-style polyphonic works of great intensity in his Ricercars and Canzonas, but it is in his Toccatas that the genius of the new early Baroque style is apparent – a style that took on the title of the *Stylus phantasticus,* with its contrasting moods and musical textures. But he wasn't alone, and Lorenzo Ghielmi's programme included similarly experimental works by Merula, Cima (A and GP), Luzzaschi, concluding with five Frescobaldi pieces, including the monumental (if curious) *Cento partite sopra Passacaglia,* with its extraordinary range of modulations into distant keys, requiring a second harpsichord tuned to a modified meantone temperament, rather than the pure temperament of the other pieces. An addition to the programme was one of Frescobaldi's *Elevation Toccatas,* the essential *Voce umana* effect rather cleverly realised on the chamber organ.

Maratona di Madrigali di Monteverdi

The evening saw the first two of four successive concerts under the title *Maratona di Madrigali di Monteverdi* – a trawl through selections from the first six books of madrigals (1587-1614) performed by three groups, two based in Italy, one in the Netherlands, raising interesting questions of cultural differences in performing styles. We started with the five singers of Ensemble Claudiana and extracts from the first two books. The conductor sat at the low level in front of the players, playing a few introductory (tuning rather than preluding) notes on his theorbo before placing it face down on a chair to start conducting the *a capella* singers. This looked a little odd, and set me wondering about the effect on the theorbo of being rested on its face. There was a sense of the unremitting in this performance, there being little subtlety of volume, tone or pulse, most of the madrigals being essentially fast and loud and sung with forced voices -- at times is seemed as though we were witnessing an argument in an Italian restaurant, with everybody shouting at each other at the same time, their voices getting increasingly agitated. The five voices seemed to be tumbling over each other, rather than co-existing and coalescing. They were rather more successful in the quieter pieces, but these were few and far between. I became aware of the possible cultural divide with the later evening concert, given by Sette Voci, directed by Peter Kooij, singing the third book of madrigals. This was everything that the previous concert wasn't, with clear and unforced voices bringing a lovely variety of shading and contrast and a purity of tuning (despite some vibrato) that the excessive vibrato of their predecessors had rendered almost impossible to achieve. The harpsichord tended to come in with the bass line, immediately changing the texture – I preferred the sound when the chamber organ was used.

Saturday's concert completed the Monteverdi madrigal marathon with two concerts by La Venexiana although, as you will read, they might as well have been given by two different groups. The first concert, with madrigals from the fourth and fifth books, caused me several concerns, not least in their sense of consort. Rather than matching their fellow singers, the sopranos tended to 'sit on top', often with a rather pinched tone. The countertenor voice was noticeably wobblier in that register than in his occasional tenor register, and the habit of the tenor and bass singers to conduct themselves rather grandly was visually disturbing – and the bass was far too loud for most of the time. It was noticeable in their final cadences that one voice was generally more prominent than the others. Fortunately I stayed for their later concert (of book 5 and 6) by the same singers, because that was very different. On this occasion, they produced a more balanced sound, the bass was less prominent, and the group was more cohesive and more restrained in their projection. As in their first concert, it was slightly curious that their theorbo player did nothing other than to give a few tuning notes at the start of each piece – a long way to bring a theorbo for so little. Reflecting on several performances over the week, I did wonder about perceived cultural differences in performance style between Northern and Southern Europe, the Italian contingent prevalent at the festival generally produced gutsy, emotive, vibrato-strong performances strong on individuality and projecting of persona, whereas most of the more northerly based groups were more restrained, more cohesive, purer of voice, less overtly emotional and more concerned with group dynamic than individual display. Coming from the latter cultural background, is it inevitable that I will lean towards that performance style? I certainly find myself preferring a lack of visual and aural ostentation in musical performance, being drawn to performers who absorb and project the *music,* rather than their own personality.

And finally

Earlier on Saturday, Lorenzo Ghielmi gave an excellent masterclass on the music of Frescobaldi, using harpsichord rather than organ, and focussing on the writing of Diruta in his *Il Transilvano.* An experienced teacher in Basel and elsewhere, Ghielmi's ability to relate to students, and the audience, was exemplary, his insights and advisory comments being tempered by a delightful sense of humour.

A couple of fringe events were in contrast to the formal concerts, the first being a performance by children (aged 6-15) taking part in the week-long music holiday, all based on the music of Monteverdi. The other event was aimed at 0-2 year olds (raising the question of what happens between the age of 2 and 6), with a delightful show ('Mudlark Dances') given by London's Spitalfields Music, with two singers (Molly Alexander and Ben Clark) from the junior projects of The Sixteen and The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and three instrumentalists. You can find a video, albeit with different singers, at http://vimeo.com/78334168. I wasn't able to stay for the final day, but will mention the fact that it consisted of three concerts by Concerto Palatino directed by Joshua Rifkin with the third performance of Monteverdi's *Missa In illo tempore,* followed by the Vespers, with the *Concerti* in one concert and the *Vespers* and *Magnificat* in another.

Next year's festival is from 19 to 30 August 2015 with the theme of 'Petrus Alamire'.

on an all-encompassing theme, the artistic directors (and artists themselves) who put together the York Early Music Festival have an enviable knack of putting together a rich smorgasbord of events that present several different seemingly incompatible thematic threads. This summer's offering entitled 'Age of Gold – Age of Enlightenment' cleverly fused music from the Spanish Golden Age (the festival's official 'image' was a detail from Velázquez's *Las Meninas*) with the tercentenary of the birth of C.P.E. Bach, the 250th anniversary of the death of Rameau, and whatever music The Sixteen's annual cathedral tour happens to bring to the party. These various options ensured that the York Early Music Festival continued as normal with its judicious variety of scales and genres of repertoire, stretching from medieval songs to early romantic lieder, via plenty of renaissance polyphony and a passion oratorio falling somewhere between late baroque and early classical style. Amongst all this, the festival also presented its biannual Lifetime Achievement Award to Andrew Parrott – a most welcome public recognition for a scholar-performer of rare integrity and modesty, and whose work in many different spheres of 'early music' from Machaut to Bach has shaped the ways in which many of us think about performance practice, artistic interpretation and composer's intentions.

The Spanish Golden Age was represented in concerts of dances played by Hespèrion XXI, polyphonic works by Peñalosa sung by Ensemble Gilles Binchois, and songs performed by Maria Cristina Kiehr. The small church of St Olave's, Marygate, was a happy match for the subtlety and eloquence of music associated (sometimes firmly) with Catherine of Aragon and Henry VIII, performed by the Rose Consort of Viols with mezzo-soprano Clare Wilkinson; the players used a recently-build set of viols modelled after those depicted in an early Renaissance Bolognese altarpiece dated 1497, and these shallow-set instruments created small, intimate and beguiling sonorities.[5] The song 'Helas madame' seemed too good a composition to have really been composed by Henry VIII himself, and we also heard pieces by Agricola and Isaac contained in the so-called 'Henry VIII Manuscript'. The highlight for me was Wilkinson's sweetly melancholic singing of Juan del Encina's lament 'Triste España' (a commemoration of the premature death of Prince Juan of Aragon – Catherine's older brother). At the other end of the scale, the Quire of York Minster resounded gloriously to The Cardinall's Musick's programme 'When Spain Ruled the World' (ironically performed a few days after Spain's World Cup crown was lost). A selection of plainchants placed Victoria's eight-part *Missa Salve Regina* into a quasi-liturgical context, and the evening sunlight, stained glass, architecture and supremely accomplished singing conspired to create an unusual rapture from such as tightly packed audience. One could hear a pin drop as the chant 'Ite missa est' was intoned, but after the interval Andrew Carwood humorously announced that "the latest evidence has shown that Spanish Kings liked applause during the second half of concerts." The full eight-part polyphony was beautifully done, but I particularly relished the contrasting motets in four or five parts when the singers reconfigured into solo-voice ensembles, such as Victoria's *Vadam et circuibo civitatem* (introduced by Carwood as "the closest thing Victoria ever wrote to a secular madrigal") and Guerrero's spellbinding *Virgo divino nimium*. The concert ended with all nine singers together in Victoria's *Magnificat primi toni*, which was a perfect vehicle for clear and unfettered singing of the highest technical quality and artistry.

These sorts of qualities are customarily expected from The Sixteen, whose annual jaunt to the Minster's gigantic nave was filled with their polished strains in 'The Voice of the Turtle Dove' – a programme of Tudor polyphony by Sheppard, Mundy and Davy from the Eton Choir Book. Unsurprisingly, the Minster was sold-out, and it was a pity about the over-eager applauders bursting in unceremoniously at the end of every final cadence before the washy acoustic had finished transporting us away. I suppose some keen audience members are a little frightened of silence at the end of pieces (I usually call this the Prommer Syndrome). One wonders to what extent of perfectly graded dynamic flawlessness the original Eton choir sang some of this music, such as the intricately complex rhythms for the lower voices in Davy's *O Domine caeli terraeque creator* (an elaborate large-scale piece reputedly composed at Magdalene College in a single day!) Mundy's comparably fulsome and complicated *Vos patris caelestis* provided a more vigorous and colourful climax to the evening, but along the way there was more economical beauty in Davy's three-part devotional song *Ah, mine heart, remember thee well* (sung by nine of The Sixteen), and the harmonic and architectural directness of Sheppard's *Libera nos* showed exactly what The Sixteen does at its best when singing this repertoire in this kind of space.

Those wanting a healthy dosage of baroque were well-served by the French chamber ensemble Amarillis' concert that placed Rameau into context alongside comparable music by Leclair and Clérambault. Some chamber sonatas, including the second 'concert' from Rameau's characterful *Pièces de clavecin en concerts* (here played by recorder, violin, gamba and harpsichord), were fluently sympathetic; soprano Maïlys de Villoutreys was sensational in two cantatas by Rameau and Clérambault depicting slightly different moments in the story of *Orphée*.

C.P.E. Bach's anniversary was commemorated in a couple of concerts by Peter Seymour, whose York Bach Choir and Yorkshire Baroque Soloists were on fine form in the passion oratorio *Die letzten Leiden des Erlösers* (Hamburg, 1770). Although Sigiswald Kuijken made a recording of it for Deutsche Harmonia Mundi in the late 1980s, this intriguing and ambitious work is something of a rarity. It may seem glib to observe that it is a peculiar fusion between the contrapuntal ability of the composer's father and the refined elegance of Haydn's late oratorios, but it is an unavoidable curse that C.P.E. Bach's generation will always be instinctively compared to those better-known luminaries active several decades on either side. However, the emotional heart of the oratorio is arguably the long

5. Review of the new Rose Consort viols to come from Robert Oliver, who is by far our most remote reviewer, in Wellington NZ. *CB*

and deeply sentimental tenor aria 'Wende dich zu meinem Schmerze' (sung mellifluously by James Gilchrist), which in some respects seems rather as if one of Johann Sebastian's archaic passion arias has been transplanted into the middle of something generally closer to the style of Haydn. Perhaps it is slightly unfair to judge that some movements would have benefited from a bit more economy on C.P.E.'s part, such as the over-long soprano duet 'Muster der Geduld und Güte', adorned by an orchestration of muted strings and pairs of flutes and bassoons – an instrumentation not too far from J.S., but written in a graceful rococo style that charms and beguiles but seems to go on a bit more than the text really merits – Bethany Seymour and Catrin Woodruff did a fine job with it. Matthew Brook sang stupendously in the *sturm und drang* aria 'Donn're nu rein Wort der Macht' (with oboes and horns), and his arioso 'Wie froh wird mir der Anblick sein' featured the striking density of two concertante bassoons. Performed without an interval, the pace of the oratorio's content happily picked up towards the end, with a notable upturn in the frequency of what we might call 'Haydnisms', including some endearing splashes of musical humour in the closing chorus of jubilant praise. It was perhaps a good testament of the stylistic diversity and flexibility of the York Early Music Festival that the plethora of music exploring Spain's golden age went hand-in-hand with plenty of post-concert conversations about the fascinations, enigmas and characteristics of the most progressive of Bach's talented sons.

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YORK EARLY MUSIC FESTIVAL 2014

Age of Gold – Age of Enlightenment

David Vickers

Not so much a festival based squarely on an all-encompassing theme, the artistic directors (and artists themselves) who put together the York Early Music Festival have an enviable knack of putting together a rich smorgasbord of events that present several different seemingly incompatible thematic threads. This summer's offering entitled 'Age of Gold – Age of Enlightenment' cleverly fused music from the Spanish Golden Age (the festival's official 'image' was a detail from Velázquez's *Las Meninas*) with the tercentenary of the birth of C.P.E. Bach, the 250th anniversary of the death of Rameau, and whatever music The Sixteen's annual cathedral tour happens to bring to the party. These various options ensured that the York Early Music Festival continued as normal with its judicious variety of scales and genres of repertoire, stretching from medieval songs to early romantic lieder, via plenty of renaissance polyphony and a passion oratorio falling somewhere between late baroque and early classical style. Amongst all this, the festival also presented its biannual Lifetime Achievement Award to Andrew Parrott – a most welcome public recognition for a scholar-performer of rare integrity and modesty, and whose work in many different spheres of 'early music' from Machaut to Bach has shaped the ways in which many of us think about performance practice, artistic interpretation and composer's intentions.

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CAMBRIDGE EARLY MUSIC

Clifford Bartlett

The Cambridge Early Music concert series overlaps with two weeks of Summer School (6 concerts in August, this being the first, on 6 August) and another six concerts between 12 September and 3 January 2015. I attended the first of the Summer School concerts (Selene Mills was still working behind the scenes, six days before she died: see obituaries on pp. xx-xx) and the first of the autumn concerts, both in Trinity College Chapel.

Shakespeare after Shakespeare: Music for Restoration and Georgian Productions of the Plays Philippa Hyde *Sop*, The Parley of Instruments, Peter Holman *dir.*

The Parley of Instruments is 35 years old. The long-standing players are Judy Tarling (leader), Mark Caudle (bass violin and cello) and Peter Holman (harpsichord and director), with more recent members Julia Kuhn (vln) and Rachel Stott (viola). Some years ago, Peter Holman managed to put the name of Purcell on a CD as a way of exploiting him, though with only one short piece. Purcell did slightly better here: five pieces from *The Fairy Queen* and the strange *Curtain Tune upon a Ground* in "Timon of Athens", which balanced the end of the first half in an equally expressive but very different *Curtain Tune* by Locke for "The Tempest" – but it took a little while for the audience, and maybe the performers, to grasp it fully.
As always, Peter has been investigating English music of the period for much of his life and is happy to produce the unknown composer provided that he is worth peforming. The audience seems to be divided into those who liked the post-Restoration period and those of the Georgian period. The person on the next seat commented that the earlier repertoire was more impressive, with which I agreed. But others had opposite taste. I noticed that the audience had diminished a little after the interval, but was that because they were disappointed by the first half or not expecting the second half to be as good?

The balance was indeed good. Philippa Hyde wasn't overpressed, with plenty of instrumental music to give her rest. But when she sung, she was very impressive. The lay-out looked odd. Apart from Mark, everyone was on stage right, the end of the harpsichord just reaching the centre line pointing down the aisle. I think (I didn't draw a diagram) that Mark and Philippa were even more isolated after the interval. There was no problem in balance, except for two pieces. The viola (the bottom instrument) was a bit strong in Purcell's *See, even Night,* over-exaggerating the player's imitation of a cello, and in one song (I can't find my programme to check which) Mark's cello (though not his gamba) was also separated from the harpsichord an exact month later. He hadn't noticed any problem, and I assume that the distance from the harpsichord was the cause, nothing to do with his playing.

There are too many items to make any attempt to write about them. But I will list the names, in order of the programme: Locke, Humfrey, Weldon, Lenton, Purcell, Clarke, Eccles, Corbett, Chilcott, Arne, Dibdin. One could try to arrange the names in order of merit, but that would be difficult.

Ravish'd with Sacred Extasies Elin Manahan Thomas *Sop*, David Miller *lute & theorbo*

This is about the most ambitious 17th-century English programme a singer could undertake. The texts were often complex, with texts ranging from John Donne to Anon, but the poems were powerful. Campian is present as author and composer for two songs. There were twelve songs plus an encore, along with some relaxation from David. The problem for the singer was the size of Trinity College chapel. Elin particularly mentioned at the beginning that the music was for a domestic setting (demonstrated by the difficulty in quite catching her words – and I'm not blaming her!), but most of the songs were serious, recitative (think in terms of Monteverdi rather than Handel) and expressive, sometimes leading up to a short closing song. Even some of the stanzaic poems are nearer to recitative, notable John Donne's *A Hymne to God the Father.* I once by accident went to King's College on a Sunday and encountered a service based as far as possible on John Donne, including the famous sermon; I don't explicitly remember whether the hymn was sung – I'm going back some 55 years but it's in the English Hymnal, so Willcocks probably chose it. The programme was framed by Morning and Evening Hymns by Purcell, the latter closing the concert in such a different mood that the encore *Sleep, Adam, sleep* appropriately returned to the main style. An impressive programme.

Philippa had no problems with the acoustics but Elin found it more difficult. The recits need to be audible, and the size – in particular height – of the chapel prevented it. Reading the programme text isn't the best way to absorb a performance. No particular comparison of Philippa and Erin – stage songs have to be audible, and are written with that in mind. There are various levels between the balance between words and music, and for this programme the words needed to be placed first. If I'd been organising the concert, I would want a smaller building. At a rough check, there were nearly 150 in the audience: there must be more suitable places in Cambridge, and some chapels are likely to be suitable. (My old college Magdalene would probably work, as would Fitzwilliam College, where I have some attachment, and it has parking spaceas well.) A sentence I heard from Erin implied that she hadn't been in Cambridge much since student days. But I'm glad to hear her live. She has a fine awareness of how the music works.

Two specific points. Long notes at the end of a line sometimes loose control, and there were occasional words that appeared to be different between what was heard and what was seen in the programme – though that could be the difference of printed poems and underlaid text. I see that there is a CD available, which we didn't received for review – it may be better to listen to that. The relationship with Dai Miller worked very well, though a suite by the only non-English composer in the programme, René Mesangeau (d. 1638), was, in one movement, either very original or a slip. The relationship between lute and singer was perfect. Congratulations to Elin for risking so sombre a selection, and the diction problem was at least mitigated by complete texts

The composers were Campion, Donne, Dowland, Humfrey, Mesangeau, Purcell; the poets were Campian, Fuller, Norris, Tate and anon

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VENUS AND ADONIS by PARNASSUM

Alexandra Stacey

This production was exquisite. Forgetting the music for a moment, the design, the tableaux presented was like Boticelli's 'Primavera' in the casting of beautiful, slight and very pale skinned young women as shepherdesses and graces. Their sumptuous curls trailed down their heads and they had lovely flowing graceful costumes. They were addressed by a very slight, boyish red-head representing Cupid opening the scene, and during the delightful French overture with their partner shepherds they paid tribute through a series of evolving movement gestures to the myth of Adonis and the changing seasons. A handsome mediterranean Venus in a striking roman matron outfit – sans bosoms or bottom on display as Venus is so often famously depicted – contrasted with the fair nymphs.

To my modern eye it lacked dramatic tension but this really didn't matter as the music, dance and visual impact replaced it in the main. It was only in the visually still moments – without the dancing shepherdesses or lusty hunters – of Venus together with Adonis that this becomes an issue. Adonis was treated too much as Venus's pet puppy without any sexual frisson for us to become interested in their relationship. In this it is very similar to Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas.*

Written for an age when everyone at court danced much of the time, the audience would have recognized some of the tunes and all the dance types such as the 'Gavatt' and 'Saraband'. It is difficult now for me – untrained in baroque dance – to imagine the response of the courtly listener to these dance-based tunes. They are merely lovely now but they must have been absolutely toe-tapping and had the effect of making an audience want to join in. Perhaps they did? So how, in an age where we rarely see baroque dance during dance interludes in operas, do we interpret those interludes? Ad Parnassum's director Maria-Lisa Geyer's solution was to present more of the Adonis myth, of the evolution of the love relationship mirrored in the seasons or furthering the purposes of the storyline in stylized movement, mime and gesture. These singers were well cast for movement qualities, especially Chaira Vinci, who had the advantage of being a fully trained dancer and singer with a lovely promising voice.

At its premiere, most interestingly, one of several of Charles II's mistresses – Mary (Moll) Davies, a singer and actress – played the role of Venus, and their illegitimate daughter, Lady Mary Tudor, was Cupid at its premiere. How apt that she should sing

Courtiers, there is no faith in you,
You change as often as you can:
Your women they continue true
But till they see another man.

SHEPHERD *Cupid hast thou many found*
Long in the same fetters bound?

CUPID *At court I find constant and true*
Only an aged lord or two.

The orchestra for the evening really got the mannered feeling of the French overture and augered well. I'm not sure it was the Venetian band advertised in the programme as there were some decidedly non-Italian names. The direction was handled clearly but discreetly from a virginal by Nicola Lamon. This wasn't a period instrument band but the balance between instruments and singers worked well. I suspect a pitch of A= 415 also would have suited one or two of the singers better as a couple of otherwise excellent moments were a little shrill, but I haven't yet met the string player who will accommodate this and detune their modern violin! The bass playing was a little perfunctory as more could have been contributed in pointing up the tempi and cadences. This show deserves a wider audience with all in all a fine cast of singers and excellent choreography.

CD REVIEWS

MEDIEVAL

Le livre vermeil de Montserrat La Camera delle Lacrime, dir. Bruno Bonhoure, Khaï-dong Luong 61' 17"
Paraty **414125**

The Catalonian monastery began as a hermitage on Mount Montserrat in 888 and was re-founded in 1025: the monastery became an independent abbey in 1409. A decade before that, a substantial MS was copied in 1399, including ten musical items (nos. 2-11 in this CD) – four monodic, six in 2, 3 or 4 parts. It is good to have the music together. The opening piece is a Catalan version of the *Song of the Sybil*, the close is a patriotic song which became the Catalan national anthem in 1993. I've no complaint about the singing apart from tempo, but the instrumental elaboration doesn't match the introduction to *Stella splendens*: pilgrims can sing and dance honest and pious songs in daytime on the church square, but not to disturb those who pray and are in contemplation (compressed from the third page of the French and of the English texts). It's a version that's worth hearing, but I wouldn't buy it as the only version – and one could say the same about any other attempt to create a version that the musicians in 1399 would recognise. *CB*

I've one problem with the first four CDs I have reviewed. I've been playing them when I wake up in the morning – a relaxed time for listening. But natural light is too weak, as is relaxed lighting – so I have to read the booklets separately. I intended to try the smallest print on my optician, but forgot.

Metamorphosis: Greek musical traditions across the centuries Hristos Tsiamulis, Dimitris Psonis, Pedro Estevan 60' 23"
Glossa Cabinet GCD C80111 (© 1997)

It is always interesting to follow Estevan through his development of musical technique through exploration of world cultures. In his latest excursion this year he has chosen the Greek vocalist and instrumentalists well. Tsiamulis is highly regarded in Greece for the beauty of his voice and the pleasing quality of his ornamental improvisations on traditional tunes. Psonis and Tsiamulis master a wide range of instruments between them, to such an extent that with Estevan on the bendir, in this excellent recording the trio at times give the impression of being a large ensemble playing simultaneously.

The 14 items are chosen to represent dances, songs, instrumental compositions and religious music from Greek islands, Thrace, Asia Minor and Byzantium. The booklet notes by Tsiamulis are wonderfully concise for so complex and extensive a subject, informing the reader about the early notation and explaining musical terms simply without tiring the amateur.

For the Greeks, accustomed to these familiar pieces, there may be no surprises; in fact it could be felt that some emotional intensity is lost through a lack of elaborate oriental techniques on the part of the singer, and one has to admit that some items would be more effectively achieved by a female vocalist. The outstanding improviser is surely Estevan with his amazing percussion and the ensemble, recorded in Spain, occasionally has the air of medieval Spanish music. *Diana Maynard*

15th CENTURY

Oswald von Wolkenstein *The Cosmopolitan: Songs* Ensemble Leones, Marc Lewon 79' 45"
Christophorus **CHR 77379**

Has anyone found a recording of Oswald von Wolkenstein without his one-eyed portrait? It is still present in this new disc, but his image is much more sophisticated than that of crude performances of songs and works adapted from pre-existing ones. The words are civilised, the stanzaic tunes are sophisticated but easily recognised. But there are no texts or modern translations. The booklet mentions on p. 16 that these are available as pdf files at www.leones.de, but, as so often, such information is rarely available in time for reviewers, but the tunes can stand on their own feet without for at least the first hearing. Els Janssens-Vanmunster is the leading singer, who doesn't play; there are four singer-players and a fifth who doesn't sing. I reckon that the order of priority descends from *Songs of Peace* to *Oswald* and last *Monserrat*, though *Songs of Peace* has the minutest of text sizes and you have to hope Oswald's web site will be accessiboe soon. *CB*

Courts of Heaven: Music from The Eton Choirbook Vol. 3 The Choir of Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford 75' 45"
Avie **AV2314**
Browne *O mater venerabilis* **Fawkyner** *Gaude virdo salutata* **Hampton** *Salve regina* **Turges** *Gaude flore virginali* **Wylkynson** *Salve regina*

The third recording in this excellent series from this important and spectacular manuscript has all the virtues of the previous volumes: Stunningly effective singing from soloists (particularly the superb boy treble, Binath Philomin) and from the full choir, all of whom negotiate the tricky rhythms and intervals of the Eton idiom with complete confidence and musicality; insightful and precise direction by Stephen Darlington; a superbly captured acoustic which is rich in detail but also has an evocative bloom to it; and finally, performances at the correct pitch allowing the attention to fall on the fascinating inner harmonies rather than constantly being unduly drawn to the pyrotechnics of a stratospherically high treble line. We are presented with the music of John Hampton, Edmund Turges, John Fawkyner, John Browne and Robert Wylkynson, composers of outstanding imagination about whom, as the programme notes observe, we know practically nothing – I have proposed elsewhere that several may be Scottish, providing a musical link with the roughly contemporary Scottish school of ornate polyphony exemplified by Robert Carver. In a previous review I commented that these performances by a superb all-male choir are undoubtedly the nearest we will come in modern times to the sound the Eton masters had in their heads as they composed, and listening to this extra-ordinarily consistent account of extended and demanding pieces I am reminded that the only real difference is the larger number of smaller voices required nowadays to populate the treble line, in contrast to the fewer, more mature voices of the Renaissance treble section. These CDs are a ground-breaking achievement, and I look forward to future revelations as the choir explores further as-yet- unperformed works in the Choirbook. *D. James Ross*

Miserere mei Deus: Music for Passiontide around 1500 ensemble officium, Wilfried Rombach 68' 49"
Christophorus **CHE 0194-2**

These accounts of Bernhard Ycart's *Lamentations*, Heinrich Isaac's *Sancta Cruce* Propers and Josquin's three-section setting of Psalm 50 *Miserere mei Deus* are presented by the unaccompanied voices of ensemble officium, who sing with a warm tone, unfussy but neat articulation and impeccable intonation. The practically unknown Ycart, who moved in the circle of the great composer and theorist Tinctoris, has left one of the earliest polyphonic settings of the *Lamentations*, probably purely by virtue of the fact that, unlike most of the rest of his music, it was published. The setting of the Propers for the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross by Isaac is part of his enormous swansong, the *Choralis Constantinus*, a projected setting of all the Propers for the complete religious year, a labour which he

left incomplete at his death. The fine polyphony recorded here, makes it clear that, notwithstanding the encyclopaedic nature of his task, the quality of the composition never flagged. The CD concludes with one of the most celebrated works by one of the finest composers of the period, Josquin's *Miserere*, a work which enjoyed the same universal popularity as Allegri's setting seems to do nowadays. These are compelling and revelatory performances of largely unfamiliar material. *D. James Ross*

Songs of Peace & Consolation: 15th-century Gregorian Chant from the Low Countries Trigon Ensemble, Margot Kalse
Aliud **ACD BE 064-2** (61' 34")

I must confess that I was unfamiliar with *Devotio Moderna*, dating from the end of the 14th century and flourishing in the low countries. The best-known connection is *The Imitation of Christ* (1380-1472) by Thomas à Kempis from around 1418 – some of his poems are included. The theology and practice developed into a simple devotional and meditative community, which largely failed when Protestantism arrived. Texts are in Latin, printed in full with English translations, but the print is so small. Some look familiar, but the only obvious one is *Salve regina* with minor textual differences and concluding at *exilium ostende*; the usual melody is a bit more elaborate. There is a thorough introduction, including Dutch Latin pronunciation, though it doesn't worry me: most countries or districts had their own sound, but the accents weren't distracting. The three singers are excellent, whether in unison or trio. *CB*

16th CENTURY

Byrd *The Three Masses, Ave verum corpus* The Choir of Westminster Cathedral, Martin Baker 71' 30"
Hyperion **CDA68038**

It is fascinating to hear Byrd's three settings of the Mass as they would almost certainly never have been heard by their composer. Written as small-scale domestic music, it is perhaps a mark of the greatness of the music that it works so effectively sung by a large choir in a voluminous cathedral. This is a working choir, familiar with the great catholic musical repertoire, and this experience is present throughout these compelling performances. Martin Baker's intelligent readings are always going somewhere and always have something urgent to impart, and his singers respond with eloquent accounts which sound as fresh as they must have done to the tiny congregations attending secret services in recusant households in Byrd's own lifetime. The sheer power of a large choir in full cry is something that you miss in one-to-a-part accounts, and who is to say that Byrd wasn't writing as much for the sunlit uplands of the future when great choirs would once again sing church music as they had before the Reformation as for the fearful and clandestine world of the recusant Catholic in a Protestant land? *D. James Ross*

Mr Dowland's Midnight Christoph Denoth *guitar* 54' 44"
Signum Classics **SIGCD382**

It is easy enough for a guitarist to transfer pieces composed for the 6-course lute to the guitar: he simply tunes his third string down a semitone. There is no need for a capo, since tablature does not specify pitch. However, there is a problem with music requiring a seventh course, which Denoth's guitar does not have. He has two solutions. If the seventh course is tuned a fourth below the sixth, he plays notes on that course an octave higher. This is a pity in *A Fancy* [Poulton no. 6], where a low B (assuming guitar pitch) is used at crucial moments, for example to mark a cadence in bars 8 and 14. If the seventh course is tuned a tone below the sixth, as with *My Lady Hunsdon's Puffe*, he tunes his sixth string a tone lower.

The CD begins with a moderately sprightly *Mistress Winter's Jump*, but *Lady Rich, Her Galliard* is played at such a slow, mournful tempo, that even the thought of jumping five galliard steps is beyond the old dear. In contrast, Queen Elizabeth has more punch in *Her Galliard*, and gives a more convincing performance. A slower pace is understandable for *Melancholy Galliard*, which Denoth plays with suitable sensitivity, but not for *Captain Digorie Piper*, whose *Galliard* sounds becalmed at sea. Denoth romps through *The King of Denmark's Galliard*, for whom he even manages to add a few extra touches of his own.

For me, a downside of the recording is Denoth's wayward rhythm. Playing out of time does not necessarily make music expressive. Dotted notes are (carelessly?) not given their full length in bars 11-12 and 15-16 of *A Fancy*. They are introduced unnecessarily in bar 20, but one is acceptable in bar 19, where Denoth sticks to the original notation rather than follow Diana Poulton's emendment. He takes liberties with rhythm through much of the piece, but strikingly at bar 28, where the music almost grinds to a halt. The melancholy of *Lachrimae* derives partly from its slow pavan pulse, yet here the rhythm is never steady: bar 1 begins with crotchet = 80; by bar 2, it is 88, and in bar 30 it is down to 72. In fact, it is difficult to measure the speed in any one bar, because it is constantly changing. The minims in bars 5, 6, 13, 14, 39 and 48 are gratuitously lengthened more or less into dotted minims.

One of the problems of transferring lute music to the guitar is what to do with the ornaments. Would a 21st-century pianist play all the ornaments as notated for harpsichord in music by Couperin or Rameau? Denoth omits many ornaments, and occasionally adds a few of his own. For example, in the first section of *The Frog Galliard*, (taken from 12v of the Folger lute book), there are 23 ornaments, of which Denoth plays just one (at the start of bar 13), which he repeats in bar 45 where it is not notated. I think he is probably right to make this compromise, and he compensates with a range of different tone colours to add expression to his playing.

One feature of this recording is Denoth's own added notes and divisions for the repeats of some pieces. For a *Coy Toy*, rather than dip into *Mrs Vaux's Jig* (virtually the same piece) for inspiration, he creates his own melodic twists and turns, which I think are attractive and enhance the piece. This is less so for *Tarleton's Resurrection* and *Mrs White's Nothing*, where the divisions are more prosaic and predictable. I would like to see him develop this aspect of his playing, because I think he has the potential for creating something really special. *Stewart McCoy*

My favorite Dowland Paul O'Dette 75' 23"
Harmonia Mundi **HMU 907515**

Paul O'Dette recorded all John Dowland's lute solos for Harmonia Mundi twenty years ago, for which he was awarded the Diapason d'Or. The present CD consists of O'Dette's personal favourites re-recorded, and concentrating this time round on versions mainly from later sources, for example those in Robert Dowland's *Varietie of Lute-Lessons* (London, 1610). To identify pieces he gives their number from Poulton & Lam's Dowland edition, but I would have liked to know all the sources used for this recording. For example, where does that minor chord come from, which he plays at the beginning of bars 22 and 30 of Lachrimae? He has written his own sleeve notes (a paragon of clarity, relevance and good English), which betray his own enthusiasm for Dowland's music. He shares my long-held suspicion that Dowland probably composed his pieces initially in five parts in staff notation, from which he later intabulated an idiomatic setting for lute solo, taking out unimportant notes to increase clarity, and adding in divisions, particularly for cadences and repeats. Continental composers in the 1590s, like Molinaro and

Terzi, created more literal intabulations, which were often unnecessarily hard to play. I would add that, from an earlier generation, Francesco da Milano showed how a texture can be thinned to good effect on the lute, and Dowland's contemporary, Anthony Holborne, showed how a dense texture is unhelpful, both to player and listener. O'Dette says that he recently discovered that the theme to Dowland's Fantasy (Poulton 1a) comes from the ballad tune, "Coockow as I me walked". I'm not so sure that Dowland's theme is derived from the song, but O'Dette would have known about the similarity sooner if he had read my email to Wayne Cripps' Lute Net on 8th September 1999.

Another difference between this recording and the one made 20 years ago is O'Dette's lute. It was made by Malcolm Prior and is tuned to A=392, in effect a lute in F, not G. My understanding is that this size of lute is closer to those commonly played at the time of Dowland, than the A=440 G lutes which most of us played in the last two or three decades of the 20th century. Inevitably the larger size gives a warmth of sound, which adds a certain gravitas and enhances Dowland's music.

The CD opens with an unhurried, lyrical *Lady Hunsdon's Puffe*, which sets the tone for what follows. O'Dette's rhapsodic interpretation works well in pieces like *La Mia Barbara*, but I feel he takes it too far in *Sir John Langton, his Pavan, Lachrimae*, and *Semper Dowland Semper Dolens*, where the characteristic pavan pulse is lost, so keen is he to squeeze every bit of expression from these extraordinarily beautiful pieces of music. More successful are the fantasies, in particular his interpretation of *Farewell and Forlorn Hope. Sir John Smith, his Almain* benefits from a variety of contrasting tone colours. O'Dette has fun adding extra notes to a perky *Mrs Winter's Jump*, and *Lady Clifton* is given a spirited performance. I always enjoy listening to O'Dette, but if only the microphone had been placed further away for this recording. One is constantly aware of gasps and heavy breathing in the background, particularly with slow pieces. The effect is similar to the background hiss and crackle of old 78 recordings, and I find it most distracting. *Stewart McCoy*

Le Jeune ***Airs et psaumes*** Claudine Ansermet *S*, Paolo Cherici *lute* 68' 06"
Glossa **GCD C80012** © 2000

This is one of three Glossa re-issues that have come to me this month. The recording (from 2000) offers good sound and an interesting programme: it's always welcome when a composer praised in textbooks actually makes it into sound and I like the idea of inter-weaving short lute pieces among the songs. But I'm afraid that the singer's almost constant *portamenti* made this tough listening for me. The booklet offers an informative note and texts but no translations or artist information. *David Hansell*

Ortiz ***Ad Vesperas*** Cantar Lontano, Marco Mencoboni 70'55"
E Lucevan Le Stelle Record **CD EL 062319**

Nowadays Ortiz is probably best known for his 1553 *Trattado de Glosas*. But his 1565 *Musices liber primus*, composed for the Spanish Vice-Regal chapel in Naples, is perhaps a more important volume, not least in demonstrating music that the Council of Trent disapproved of (two years earlier) in its quest for a far simpler style. As its name suggests, this was the first of an intended two volumes, with the unpublished *Musices liber secondus* to include Mass settings. This recording has the Italian choir Cantar Lontano, combining with other vocal and instrumental groups to reconstruct a Vespers, using three vocal choirs of four or five singers, one four-strong Gregorian chant choir, with two instrumental groups of cornet and trombones, and four viols. Unfortunately, given the interest of the music, the performance doesn't work on a number of levels. For a start, there is a very prominent high tenor voice who, while adding some interesting ornaments, sings in an extraordinarily raucous bucolic fashion as well as persistently lifting onto notes and committing all sorts of other musical sins. He is first heard intoning the *Dixit Dominus* (track 3). I struggle to understand why such a voice should have been included, let alone allowed to be so prominent. If this was perceived to represent the style of singing that Ortiz experienced in Naples (or Toledo), then why have only one such voice. At least Ensemble Organum were consistent in their recordings of Sardinian/Corsican chant, using similarly curious voice-types. As well as this one singer, the other singing is unnecessarily forthright and gutsy, to the detriment of intonation, pitch, tone and comprehension of the text – said *Dixit Dominus* is typical. The same applies to some of the playing – you can hear the almost violent attack made by the viol consort in their bid for volume. This is all particularly unfortunate, as occasionally there is a track that works well – for example, track 4, *Beata es Virgo* and the final expansive and sonorous *Salve Regina*. And, for a sense of balance, I praise Cantar Lontano's more recent CD of the Monteverdi Vespers (see below). The Ortiz was recorded in the expansive acoustic of San Marco Evangelista de Castelbellino, Ancona in 2005. It is also issued (under licence) from the French label as Alpha 108. There are plenty of extracts on YouTube for you to judge for yourselves. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

Palestrina ***Volume 5*** The Sixteen, Harry Christophers 63' 52"
CORO **COR16124**
Missa Iam Chrisrus astra ascenderat + Dum complerentur, Iam Christus..., Laeva eius sub capite meo, Loquebantur variis linguis, Magnificat 4ti toni, Surge propera amica mea, Veni sancte Spiritus, Veni Creator Spiritus & Vox dilecti mei

Having been less than complimentary about a previous volume of this projected complete works series, I am pleased to be able to be more positive about the present volume, the fifth in the series. Some of my reservations remain – do we really need a complete account of the works of one of the most heavily recorded composers in the canon? Do we really need the reverentially distant acoustic which obscures some of the detail? However, in the present volume it seems to me that the quality of the singing is much higher than last time, with much less indulgence in vibrato and much greater precision in the articulation. The *Missa Iam Christus astra ascenderat* is an attractive piece based on the plainchant Pentecost Hymn, which is sung immediately before it on the CD. A selection of motets familiar and unfamiliar precedes this and the Mass is followed by Palestrina's charming setting of *Veni sancte Spiritus*, three numbers from the compendious setting of the Song of Songs and the *Magnificat quarti toni*. Personally, I prefer the Song of Songs sung by solo voices, although Harry Christophers makes the valid point that they were probably never intended to be heard as a complete set and would therefore have been selected individually for a variety of contexts. Looking generally at the CD with its rather unattractive workaday cover giving the impression that people are going to be investing in the complete series regardless of the visual appeal, I wondered precisely what market Coro had in mind. Harry Christophers' introduction seems firmly directed at the non-specialist, but does a non-specialist really feel the need to invest in the complete works of Palestrina? *D. James Ross*

Palestrina ***Il Primo Libro de' Madrigali, Venetia 1596*** Concerto Italiano, Rinaldo Alessandrini 56' 39"
Tactus **TB521604** (© 1992)

Palestrina's first book of madrigals seems to have been printed during his brief period as singer in the pontifical choir in 1555, but it ran to several editions, hence the date in the title (a Venetian print by the printer Scotto). Even way back in 1992 Alessandrini's singers were in a class all of

their own – solo lines intermingle, giving and taking as the movement of the words dictates, no voice dominating the texture (the first six items are sung by a male quartet, while the remainder have a female canto). I'm not sure where the *tremoli* in several pieces come from – nor do I like their interpretation (chords with semitone wavering...) – but otherwise this recording has aged well and must still be among the best interpretations of these little-heard works. *BC*

Nine Daies Wonder The Society of Strange and Ancient Instruments, Clare Salaman *dir*
SSAI 01

The title refers to Will Kemp, the leading comic in Shakespeare's company and a share-holder in the Globe. He seems to have fallen out with the company in 1599, and as an original way of raising money, he danced from London to Norwich. This CD is an imaginative recreation bringing together folk and art music in an imaginative mixture. Pieces like *The Silver Swan, Can she excuse, Sorrow stay* and *Rest sweet nymphs* are unlike most performances, with a freshness that others rarely achieve. The singers are only identifiable by three of the six performers including "voice" in the list of instruments. I don't know Jeremy Avis, but both Ian Harrison and Steve Player, in their different ways, normally have rather more character than the dead sound we hear. (Steve, of course, has a knack of humour from minimal movement: I regret not getting to one of the performances.) The other three performers are Alison McGillivray, Keith McGowan and the co-producer (Clare Salaman), who is also a player as well as director. The mixer and masterer was Ben Turner, whom I probably haven't seen for at least a quarter-century! I haven't read Kemp's account of his journey, so assumed that it took consecutive nine days, but if the rest days are counted, he took 24 days, as shown on the fold-out, an unusual but effective substitute for the usual booklet. I wouldn't like to argue that all the embellishments and scorings were authentic: where does the Hardinger Fiddle fit? But the performers are brilliant. Do try it. *CB*

Serenissima: Music from Renaissance Europe on Venetian violas Rose Consort of Viols 71' 24"
Delphian DCD34149
Music by Augustine Bassano, Byrd, Festa, Holborne, Isaac, Le Jeune, Lassus, Parsley, Parsons, de Rore, Sandrin, Senfl, Susato, Tye, Verdelot & van Wilder

The immediate point of interest in this exceptional and ground-breaking recording is that the consort play on viols all of which are based on the mid-16th-century Linarol in the Historical Arts Museum in Vienna. The original, about the size of a tenor, has no soundpost and a bent top. The maker, Richard Jones, has scaled the other sizes from that exemplar, and describes the process in the booklet. The instruments are strung throughout in gut, at a low tension.

The repertoire covers a wide geographical area: music from Italy (Festa, Isaac, Verdelot); Germany (Lassus, Senfl); France (Le Jeune, Susato, Sandrin, Ortiz, de Rore) and England (Bassano, Parsley, Van Wilder, Byrd, Parsons and Holborne). But several of the pieces are more complex: French Sandrin's *Doulce mémoire*, for instance, is adapted by Naples-based Ortiz.

The consort sound is strikingly different: reedy, beautifully transparent, with an emphasis on the middle registers. The treble has a lovely bell-like yet soft resonance, the bass firm but not boomy, the tenors/altos sounding out with fullness and strength, in a way quite distinct from the consort sounds to which we have become accustomed, and the balance is a particular pleasure. There is pleasure also in the articulation – ranging from very smooth and sweet, to, where appropriate, an almost plucked attack, as though they had a lute (which they don't) to give spice to the start of the notes. With all the information about the instruments, it would be nice to have some about the bows, because the bow strokes are sometimes so clean with a marvellous rhythmic impulse.

I was held in thrall by the whole recording, and it's a real thrill to acknowledge that using the instrumental technology of the period has such a profoundly positive effect on the music. Congratulations to all concerned for undertaking this very significant project, a daring concept, brilliantly successful. This is an absolute must for all viol players, of course, but it will also speak strongly to people to whom all this background is less important than the experience of listening to beautiful music, marvellously played. *Robert Oliver*

Te Deum laudamus: Music on the Freiberg Cathedral Angel Instruments from 1594 chordae freybergensis, Ensemble Freiberger Dom-Music, Albrecht Koch
cpo 777 928-2 55' 48"
Fabricius *Cantate dominum, O sacrum convivium* **Alfonso Ferrabosco I** *O lux beata trinitas* **Lechner** *Si bona suscepimus* **Monte** *Ad te levavi, Missa super mon cœur se recomande*

St Mary's Cathedral was created in the 12th century and was rebuilt after a fire in 1484. The Reformation in the area was introduced in 1537. In that year, a school for 1000 was established, and the secondary boys became choirboys. The other feature was the *chordae freybergensis*, 30 instruments placed in the hands of golden Angels at the end of the century; these have been or are being copied as accurately as possible and will be an excellent way of working on instruments with singers, which was probably their main function. A considerable amount of music also survives, often carelessly copied into choir-books from the more accurate printed parts. The main work is Monte's *Missa super Mon coeur se recomande*. I'm surprised that there's no entry for Freiburg in *New Grove* or the online version, but the music that the cathedral acquired is impressive. I would have welcomed at least one instrument-only piece – the total duration is quite short. But it is a CD well worth hearing. *CB*

Terra tremuit: The earth trembled Studio de Musique Ancienne de Montréal 55' 06"
Atma Classique **ACD2 2653**
Byrd *Terra tremuit* **Brumel** *Missa Et ecce terrae motis,* **Crequillon** *Heu mihi Domine* **Lassus** *Timor et tremor* **Palestrina** *Terra tremuit* **Vaet** *Quoties diem illum*

In an innovative piece of programming this CD has drawn together a body of work from the Renaissance loosely associated with earthquakes. It includes the obvious and now famous Brumel 'Earthquake' Mass as well as William Byrd's less well known and tiny contribution to the genre *Terra tremuit*, and Palestrina's setting of the same text. Thereafter they stray into the more general area of the trembling of the sinner in the face of judgment, where they find a degree of crossover from the point of view of shaking rhythms and disorientating harmonic progressions. Brumel's 12-part mass dominates the CD, and the group supplies an engaging performance, rich in clarity and innovative interpretation if a little light in bulk and not always spot on in intonation. The edition they use does not include the Agnus Dei II from a Danish source which may or may not be the work of Brumel and which is sometimes included to restore the symmetry of the last section of the Mass. The vividness of the reading recalls the pioneering 1976 recording of the Gloria by David Munrow, still regarded by many as the finest recording of this work. The rest of the music on the CD is also of very high quality – Lassus' harmonically restless setting of *Timor et tremor* recalling powerfully the setting of the same text by Giovanni Gabrieli. The music by Jacobus Vaet and Thomas Crequillon is more conventional, but consistently craftsmanlike. This excellent Canadian ensemble are to be congratulated for their original idea and for their very musical execution of this challenging programme. And did the earth move for me? Well, yes, I have to admit it did! *D. James Ross*

17th CENTURY

Boxberg *Sardanapalus: Opera in German, 1698* Jan Kobow *Sardanapalus/Apollo,* Rinnat Mariah *Salomena/Venus,* Theodora Baka *Agrina/Juno,* Cornelia Samuelis *Didona/Diana,* Franz Vitzthm *Belochus,* Markus Flaig *Arbaces/Mars,* Sören Richter *Atrax,* Felix Schwandtke *Belesus,* Kirline Cirule *Misius/Cupido,* Philipp Nicklaus *Saropes,* United Continuo Ensemble, Jörg Meder, Bernhard Epstein 164' (3 CDs)
Pan Classics **PC 10315**

An alumnus of the Leipzig Thomaschule, the singer, composer and librettist Christian Ludwig Boxberg (1670-1729) was a pupil of Nikolaus Strungk, the director of the Leipzig Opera. Strungk's domination of opera in Leipzig gave the young Boxberg opportunity for little else other than as a singer and librettist for Strungk's operas. In 1697 the Leipzig company made an extended visit to Ansbach, where a new opera house had recently opened and the absence of director Strungk gave Boxberg the opportunity to compose three operas to his own libretti. Of these only *Sardanapalus* (1698) has survived, the earliest opera from central Germany to come down to us.

In keeping with German-language opera of the period, *Sardanapalus* employs a mélange of styles that include Italian opera (the predominant influence), Lully – there is a prologue featuring gods and the opera includes a fair smattering of French dance music – and the national quasi-folk style that looks forward to works such as Bach's 'Peasant' Cantata. The plot concerns amorous intrigue and warlike activity in and around the court of the legendarily dissolute Assyrian king Sardanapalus. In keeping with later 17th century Italian opera the pace is rapid, carried forward by an often-witty text punctuated by extremely brief da capo arias or duets (there are no fewer than 112 numbers), mostly requiring little vocal agility.

The present recording was made during performances given HIP staging at Wilhelma Theatre in Stuttgart during spring 2014. The sound is decent, the audience unobtrusive (indeed there are places one would have thought laughter was in order), and the performance as a whole is very winning. If at times it conveys something of a homespun impression that is largely the fault of some less than beguiling wind playing in a score that employs a lot of wind. The singing is overall of a high standard, with fine contributions from the experienced Jan Kobow, all three women and the basses who sing the roles of Arbaces and Belesus, the eventual conquerors of Sardanapalus. Special mention, too, for the pointedly characterized portrayal of the comic servant Atrax by tenor Sören Richter. This is an important, fascinating and enjoyable issue, so it is all the more to be regretted that Pan Classics have not seen fit to provide a translation of the wordy text. There is a non-too-helpful synopsis in English, but such corner cutting is likely to deter all but the most committed buyer.

Brian Robins

Buxtehude *Opera Omnia XIX: Vocal Works 9* Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra & Choir, Ton Koopman 79' 01"
Challenge Classics **CC72258**
BuxWV1, 30, 46, 83, 91, 94, 95, & 104–106

I have spent a lot of my life transcribing and editing 17th-century music; in fact, it all began as an undergraduate when as part of my final year studies I wrote a dissertation on Buxtehude's *Membra Jesu nostri,* which even involved procuring microfilm of the tablature scores from Uppsala so that I could try my hand at deciphering the notation. Ever since then, the composer has held a special place in my heart; one of my most-favourite days was performing it one-to-a-part in Trinity College (along with the lovely Selene), directed, not guided by Philip Thorby. No matter what text he is setting, there is something profound and uplifting about it – even in the depths of despair, he manages through harmonic means more than any of his contemporaries to keep the spirit moving, and ultimately to bring calm and stillness. Ton Koopman and his colleagues have captured the essential Buxtehude perfectly throughout this amazing series of discs. The latest one has only one work with choir (BuxWV1), while the remainder of the pieces are for between one and four solo voices with a variety of instrumental groups. Very occasionally the sopranos find the high pitch (A=465") a bit demanding, but elsewhere it adds sparkle to the texture. While I still have personal favourite performances of individual pieces elsewhere, it is a wonderful luxury to have his complete vocal music readily to hand – thank you, Challenge Classics! *BC*

Buxtehude *Sonatas with Cornett* Le Concert Brisé, Willian Dongois 63' 18"
Accent **ACC 24291**
BuxWV163, 174, 212-214, 252, 255, 262, deest

The comet of cornett music which reached its zenith over northern Italy as the 16th century gave way to the 17th, continued to burn bright as it continued northwards over the rest of Europe. In keeping with this picture, these pieces by Buxtehude, originally written for violin, cello and harpsichord, are here translated with marvellous effect to cornett, sackbut and organ. The pieces are more obviously idiomatic for stringed instruments, but delivered with astonishing flexibility by the players, the result being entirely convincing. It is now hard to imagine them having anything like the same impact in any other rendition. The use of different cornetts for different pieces and the galactic array of tone colours of the organ really focusses the listener on the specific dramatic content of the individual pieces. The response to the music in all its dimensions seems to stem from a complete absence of self-regard from the performers; rather a real search for the composer's intent, and a sensual enjoyment of sound. This is enormously refreshing and exhilarating, especially as it is disappointingly rare in much modern performance. The organ of St Paul, Lausanne is a wondrous machine – clear, characterful and very colourful – used with great imagination in both concerted pieces and solo. The recording is a re-release of the third of a triptych of CDs comprising Italian music, Monteverdi specifically, and Buxtehude – any one of these is well worth possessing. But this is a high achievement, being a perfectly balanced confluence of the best of instrument building, composition, musical vision, technique, and recording skills.

Stephen Cassidy

Frescobaldi *Messa sopra l'aria della Monica, Motets* Il Teatro Armonico, Alessandro De Marchi 68' 38"
Christophorus **CHE 0193-2**

This creditable 1993 recording is an attempt to present Frescobaldi's eight-part setting of the mass to the air 'Monica' in a semi-liturgical setting. Using only Frescobaldi's music it is impossible to supply all the elements of the propers, so the performers indulge in the practice of substitution, a fashion known to have been widely practised at the time. This allows them to interpolate motets and keyboard music by Frescobaldi amongst the elements of the ordinary. The result is a pretty convincing High Baroque celebration of mass, and some very idiomatic singing and playing, complete with appropriate ornamentation, bringing Frescobaldi's music vividly to life. I have never understood the contemporary sneering at Frescobaldi's sacred music, which to me seems every bit the equal of his remarkable keyboard music, and this present recording confirms my opinions in every respect. If one could have wished for just a tad more resonance in the acoustic which surrounds the choral music, and if the style of voice production is just a little dated, these are small gripes, more than offset by the very fine instrumental playing and the rare opportunity to enjoy some of Frescobaldi's finest sacred music in a liturgical context. *D. James Ross*

Monteverdi *Vespers* Cantar Lontano, Marco Mencoboni (2 CDs rec 2009)
E Lucevan Le Stelle Records **CD EL 102327**

This fascinating version of the Vespers was recorded in the Palatine Basilica of Santa Barbara in Mantua, a venue that Monteverdi must have known, although there is no evidence that his music was ever performed in St Barbara's or, indeed, if he ever visited the Basilica. The fact that this is a live recording is made obvious from the start by the brief round of applause, something normally edited out of such recordings. And from the start, it is clear that this is something different. Firstly because of the prominent sound of the 1565 Antegnati organ, secondly the very obvious architectural spacing of the various instrumental and choral groups in the Basilica's galleries and, finally, the relaxed pacing of the various *sesquialtera* passages. These are taken much slower than is usually heard, but are apparently in full accordance with both textural interpretation and the underlying tactus. Marco Mencoboni's lecture (referred to in my review of the Antwerp Laus Polyphonia festival) explored this aspect in depth. The Antegnati organ has split keys allowing for perfect meantone intonation and use is also made of the specific organ registrations noted in the score including, for example, the unusual use of the slightly 'out-of-tune' Fiffaro stop (which, when drawn with the Principale, results in an undulating sound) in the verse *Fecit potentium in brachio suo.* The solo voices are clear and focussed, with a distinctively Italian sound – a refreshing contrast from the pure Oxbridge vocal style we are used to in the UK. Of the many solo vocal highlights, there was one voice which immediately struck me with its clarity and extraordinary timbre – that of Asia D'Arcangelo (apparently a 14-year old girl) in the Hymnus *Ave Maris Stella* and the *Gloria Patri* of the Magnificat. The positioning of the vocal and instrumental groups is well thought out and well recorded – for example, the *Laudate Pueri*, is sung from the distant chancel. The echo passages are also well-judged – apparently the echoist was in a gallery scarily high up in the dome. This very fine interpretation of a complex work is recommended. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

Monteverdi *Vespri solenni per la festa di San Marco* Concerto Italiano, Rinaldo Alessandrini 80'
naïve **OP30557** (+bonus DVD)
Deus in adiuvandum (1610), *Dixit II a8, Confitebor II a 3, Beatus vir I a6, Laudate pueri I a5, Laudate Dominum II a8, Magnificat I a8 (Selva morale), Adoramus te a 5 (1620), Athleti Christi belliger* (text set to *Deus tuorum militum,*), *Cantate Domino* (a6, 1620) + **Buonamente** Sonata a6 (1636) **G. Gabrieli** Canzon 8 (1615) **Usper** Sonata a8 (1619)

How extraordinary: alleged scholarly conductors record the 1610 Vespers in St Mark's, Venice when Monteverdi was working in Mantua, and then along comes 1640/1 [most of the part-books have the latter date] and here is a recording of Venetian music published 28 years after he left Mantua – and the recording was not even where Monteverdi was in charge but in Santa Barbara, enclosed within the palace but a private church with priests and singers independent of the court musicians. I thought that the invention of different vespers had gone out of fashion, but no, I'm reviewing this at around the time I've been asked for two different vesper mixtures that I haven't used for some time.

The performances are good in their way. But where is the evidence for having cornetti echoing with violins or alternating tempi or longish *rallentandi*? In San Marco places *cori spezzati* can be placed across a substantial gap between galleries, whereas Alessandrini's forces did not have a gap between the two sides. Some of it seemed too fast, not helped by the continual embellishments of the cornetts (which has worried me elsewhere). At its best it's brilliant, but with continuous use the effect wears off and the singers tend to be treated as under-raters – can't compete with cornetti! But at least the "choir" was one-to-a-part. If it's new to you, enjoy the thrills. The bonus video may help, but I gave up fairly early because the verbal contribution wasn't up-to-date. Much as I enjoy the *Selva morale* pieces, some of which need editorial thought, there is less variety within each psalm than in 1610. But change from 1610 is well worth hearing in a recording that, despite criticism, is exhilarating and well planned. Have scholars found any more *Domine ad adiuvandums*? the alternative setting I've used is by Grandi. *CB*

Monteverdi *Il Combattimento di Tancredi & Clorinda* Les Sacqueboutiers 62' 39"
FLORA1709
+**Quagliati** *Carro di fedelta d'amore* **Goehr** *Paraphrase pour clarinette solo sur le madrigal: "Il Combattimento..."*

Les Sacqueboutiers present two musical dramas, both centred on love, but with very different outcomes. In the "interval" between them is an exploration of the first by the modern composer Alexander Goehr. Described in the booklet as sitting at the junction of madrigal, opera and intermedi, Monteverdi's *Il Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda* tells the story of Clorinda's encounter with the Christian knight Tancredi, with worldly tragedy (but salvation) resulting from her disguise. The story is dramatically delivered, with a real sense of storytelling. Furio Zanassi as the narrator captures and holds your attention with constant variety of pace and intensity. Les Sacqueboutiers replace the normally expected strings, the interchangeability of instrumentation reinforced by its suitability for both the martial episodes and the smooth crepuscular harmonies of the night scene, and also by the fact that not a single note of the parts needs to be changed to accommodate either instrumentation. The manicured style of the ensemble suits this mannered form. Paolo Quagliati's *Carro di fedelta d'amore* is a smaller scale and more conservative piece, more biased towards the intermedi point of the compass – and with a more saccharine storyline. Alexander Goehr's *Paraphrase pour clarinet sur le madrigal "Il Combattimento..."* is perhaps more of an exploration of clarinet techniques than an exploration of the madrigal, heavily refracted as it is. Elements of the subject material can be discerned and it is fantastically well played by Jean-François Verdier. This innovative recording is musically and dramatically well-centred well worth a listen. *Stephen Cassidy*

Moulinié *Meslanges: pour la Chapelle de Gaston d'Orléans* Ensemble Correspondances, Sébastien Daucé 66' 10"
harmonia mundi **HMC 902194**
+**Boësset** *Jesu nostra redemptio, Populе meus & Pie Jesu* **de Chancy** Allemandes **Constantin** La Pacifique

Daucé and the Ensemble Correspondances remind me a lot of the early sound of Les arts florissants. They are a group trying to find the inner soul of the composer and conveying the depths of his music through a homogeneous sound in which the voices that make up his often dense textures are clearly heard and beautifully shaped. Of course, Christie and co. also recorded some of his music (their 1980 album ended with the same *O bone Jesu* that opens this disc); times have changed though, and the 12 singers of Ensemble Correspondances have a warmth to their colour that the early music world has only discovered in the intervening decades (and, with groups of this calibre, is finally mastering!) Let's hope Daucé has plans to explore Du Mont as well! *BC*

B. Strozzi *Arias & cantatas* Emanuela Galli S, La Risonanza, Fabio Bonizzoni 70' 01" © 2000
Glossa **GCD C81503**

Recordings of Strozzi are not so common that lovers of her music in particular and 17th century monody in general can afford to ignore this re-issue of a 2000 recording. The singing is excellent – stylish, varied and above all controlled and text-focussed. The continuo is more elaborately scored than is necessary but at least there is no bowed bass. Though the essay gives an

indication of each piece's content it is still a disappointment that the booklet does not include translations. Texts are given, however. *David Hansell*

Tomkins ***When David heard: Sacred choral works*** Choir of St John's College, Cambridge, Andrew Nethsingha 62' 21"
Chandos **CHAN 0804**
Almighty God which has knit together, Behold I bring you glad tidings, Clarifica me Pater, Jubilate and *Te Deum* (Great Service), *Magnificat* and *Nunc* (Sixth Service), *My shepherd is the living God, When David heard* + A Sad Pavan for these distracted times, Voluntary in a

This programme of choral works by Tomkins interspersed with some of his keyboard music played on the organ by Freddie James includes some very familiar material as well as some less performed music. The singing is generally sensitive and expressive from soloists and full choir, although in the latter texture I was aware of some intrusive vibrato in the alto and bass lines. One soon becomes unaware of a background ambient 'rumble', more familiar from older recordings, but which is probably the inevitable price of recording in St John's College Chapel. The most spectacular items here are the larger-scale verse anthems such as the eight-part setting of *Almighty God* and the ten-part setting of *Behold I bring you glad tidings*, as well as the ten-part Jubilate from the *Great Service*. The complex interplay of full chorus and soloists is managed beautifully and Andrew Nethsingha's direction is both subtle and dynamic. It is interesting to hear these capable performances of Tomkins' music given by a choir clearly very familiar with singing his music.

D. James Ross

Weckmann ***Complete Organ Works*** Friedhelm Flamme (Johann Patroclus Möller organ, Abteikirche Marienmünster)
cpo **777 873-2** (116' 13", 2 CDs)

Weckmann is one of the most important of the North German organ composers between Sweelinck (the teacher of Weckmann's teacher) and Buxtehude, who brought this important school of composition to its zenith. He was one of the means by which Italian music was made known to the organists of Hamburg and beyond, and was also instrumental in the development of the chorale fantasia and the chorale variation set. It is the latter form that makes up most of this double CD set, although the fantasia form is present in most of the variation sets, notably in the *Secundus Versus* of *Gelobet seist du, Jesu Christ* and the nearly 11 minute *Sextus Versus* of the monumental *Es ist das Heil uns kommen her.* Dating from 1737, the Möller organ is arguably a little late for Weckmann, but after its recent restoration, it sounds very effective, not least in the wide range of solo stops and the very rich sound of the *Pleno.* It is tuned in 1/6 comma meantone, and the bellows are pumped by two calcants, the slight flexibility of winding being just one of the advantages of doing away with the electric blower. As with his many previous recordings, Friedhelm Flamme has an excellent understanding of the sound-world of these pieces, and his articulation and touch are exemplary. For an insight into the way that organ pipes of this period are so different from their 19th- and 20th-century descendants, listen to track 17 of CD1. With such a clear treble line, you might be surprised to learn that this was played using just one stop (the Rückpositiv Principal) – the voicing and positioning of the pipes allows this solo and accompaniment to be achieved in a single stop.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Grounds for Pleasure: keyboard music from 17th-century England Colin Booth *hpscd*
Soundboard **SBCD214** (71' 24")
Music by Blow, Byrd, Croft, Gibbons, Inglot, Purcell, Tomkins & anon
contact www.colinbooth.co.uk

"Marvellous grounds of pleasure" extends the title of the CD, the first word either taken from the booklet or from the reviewer. It deserves such praise. I've enjoyed it immensely. The items range from 0' 51" (a Purcell hornpipe) to 5' 32" (Byrd's *My Ladye Nevel's Grownde*). The chronological range is from *My Ladye Carey's Dompe* to Croft (1678-1727). The programme is varied, with chronology and types of ground mixed to avoid the possibility of boredom. Rhythmic variation must be subtle, and Colin knows exactly how to space grounds virtually without the listener noticing. I know that some keyboard players and listeners find grounds boring, but less is more for shaping these pieces: a real enthusiast writes about them. I won't comment on 22 pieces – just take my word at the variety offered here. *CB*

Ruckers 1604: Works by Byrd, Peerson and Sweelinck Marco Vitale 55' 03"
ayros | raritas **AY-RA01**

The focus of this recording is a Virginals made in 1604 by the Ruckers brothers (here attributed solely to Johannes) which came to light in 2000. As a six-voet instrument its original pitch should have been close to A 440 but it is recorded here at A 392, perhaps because its fragile state no longer allows it to be tuned to the original pitch. As a result the sound is a bit dull and spongy, though the recording quality is good. The musical programme is well chosen, pairing music by Sweelinck with that by Byrd and Peerson, all contemporary with the instrument. These are reflective performances, though occasionally a bit slow, as in the 'Fortune' settings of Byrd and Sweelinck. Vitale's strength is his ability to keep a really steady beat, something that works very well in Byrd's *The Bells* and especially in Sweelinck's *More Palatino* where there are some good bursts of virtuosity. *Noel O'Regan*

LATE BAROQUE

Bach ***Recreation for the soul*** Magdalena Consort, dir. Peter Harvey 63'
Channel Classics **CCS SA 35214**
BWV78, 147 & 150

One might well say of this collection, 'the world of the Bach cantata is here'. The three works date from 1707, 1716 and 1724, and Peter Harvey's note explores the numerical symbols that may be embedded within the music. The blurb notes the ensemble's aspiration to perform with 'historically appropriate' numbers. There are, therefore, only four singers, though I note that the string configuration of 43211 doesn't quite match Bach's 1730 aspiration of 33221.

However many of them there are, the orchestra plays outstandingly well with all the strands of the counterpoint clearly projected. I do not find the singers quite as convincing. James Gilchrist and director Peter Harvey are superb but Daniel Taylor (alto) and soprano Elin Manahan Thomas are less striking. Daniel sometimes disappears in the tutti movements and what for some may be Elin's clarity of articulation sometimes sounds a little desperate to me. Overall, though, there is much to enjoy – not least the superb music – and the sound quality is excellent. A final observation on the booklet – is dark red italic print on a patterned black background really a good idea?

David Hansell

Bach ***Clavier-Übung 1: 6 Partitas BWV825-830*** Martin Gester *hpscd* 150' 24" (2 CDs)
Ligia Lidi 0101266-14

Better known (to me at any rate) as director of the Strasbourg-based group Le Parlement de Musique, on the evidence of this recording Martin Gester is also a formidable keyboard player. He brings an enquiring mind to these performances, searching for meaning and for connections with other works of the period. His intelligent booklet notes define a different character for each partita which is reflected in his playing. These are exuberant readings with good use of registration and some subtle variation of ornamentation on repeats. Gester's desire to keep the line going and to propel the music forward leads to occasional restlessness in the rhythm, and some rushing when he forgets to give the time back, but this all adds to the sense of excitement and commitment in the playing. The Phrygian sixth partita gets a particularly fine performance, but all of them are hugely enjoyable and exhilarating. Gester

plays on a Mietke copy by Matthias Griewisch which is warmly recorded. *Noel O'Regan*

Bach *Toccaten BWV910-912, Fantasie und Fuge a-Moll BWV904* Eleonore Bühler-Kestler *hpscd* <TT>
Charade **CHA3042**

Although recorded in 2013, this short recording represents something of a throw-back to an earlier era. Ms. Bühler-Kestler was a respected player in the former East Germany from the 1950s onwards. She plays on a harpsichord clearly made at that time by Elfe-Christian Bühler; it has a heavy and now dated tone. The playing style, too, is rather dated, being mainly on full throttle with somewhat laboured figuration and no agogic accents. She is at her best in BWV 912, where the different moods are reasonably well characterised, but this must be regarded as a collector's item for those interested in the earlier years of the harpsichord revival. *Noel O'Regan*

Bach *Intégrale de l'œuvre d'orgue* (8) *Chorals de Leipzig* (I) Helga Schauerte (1738 Möller organ in the former Abteikirche, Marienmünster) <TT>
Syrius **SYR 141464**
BWV62, 180, 226, 260, 262, 363, 418, 537, 562, 634, 651, 653b, 656, 658, 661, 663, 665, 666

Although I praised some of Helga Schauerte's earlier CDs, the last few have caused me serious concerns – I repeat what I wrote in an earlier review, that "there is a feeling of rhythmic unsteadiness (including changes of speed), occasional articulation, awkwardness and chords not being played in sync – and the playing is very far from note perfect". It all makes for uncomfortable listening. Apparently the organ retains about 80% of its original pipework, although many of them could have done with a jolly good tuning before this recording. I cannot recommend this. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

Bach *The Six Cello Suites* Viola de Hoog
VIVAT107 (135' 25", 2 CDs)

Handel *Jephtha* James Gilchrist *Jephtha*, Susan Bickley *Storgè*, Sophie Bevan *Iphis*, Robin Blaze *Hamor*, Matthew Brook *Zebul*, Grace Davidson *Angel*, The Sixteen, Harry Christophers 168' 18" ()3 CDs in box)
Coro **COR16121**

A magisterial performance of Handel's last, profoundest oratorio. The underlying theme, set out, as so often by Handel, in the opening *accompagnato*, is the inexorability of fate. "It must be so," sings Zebul; his words are later echoed by Jephtha at the climax of his own great "Deeper and deeper still," and further developed at the end of the final chorus of Act 2 – "Whatever is, is right." During the composition of this same chorus, Handel himself had to stop work 'unable to continue because the sight of my left eye is so weakened' in the middle of the words "all hid from mortal sight," and did not resume for another ten days; the oratorio was finally completed, with difficulty, some months later. It therefore has a particularly poignant place in Handel's oeuvre.

This recording is given complete (indeed more than complete – an extra aria for Zebul is included as an appendix), and is accompanied by excellent and erudite booklet notes by Ruth Smith. Christophers has assembled a fine cast. James Gilchrist is a wonderful Jephtha, heroic when required, but also absolutely heart-rending in the depths of his despair – try the aforementioned "Deeper and deeper still" (track 16, CD2), or the magical pianissimo da capo of "Waft her, Angels" (track 2, CD3). He is ably matched by Sophie Bevan's limpid Iphis; she moves seamlessly from the carefree innocence of her "Welcome as the cheerful light," (track 8, CD2) to the tragic intensity of "Happy they" (track 15, CD2). Susan Bickley brings creamy tone and much passion to the part of Storge, Jephtha'a wife; her "First perish thou" (track 11,CD2) is electrifying! Robin Blaze is suitably suitor-like as Hamor, Iphis's betrothed, rising nobly to his outraged "On me let blind mistaken zeal" (track 12, CD2), and Matthew Brook is a sonorous and subtle Zebul. Grace Davidson ably provides the angelic Dea ex Machina in Act 3.

Much of the weight of the oratorio is concentrated on the chorus, and The Sixteen are fully up to the job. Try the immensely energetic "When his loud voice" at the end of Act 1 (track 13, CD1), or the black despair of "How dark, O Lord, are Thy decrees" at the end of Act 2 (track 17, CD2), and wonder anew at the 'bewigged old genius' (Winton Dean's phrase) who wrote it all! *Alastair Harper*

Handel *Arias* Alice Coote, The English Concert, Harry Bicket 68' 31"
Hyperion **CDA67979**
Arias from *Alcina, Ariodante, Giulio Cesare, Hercules & Radamisto*

This is one that may well divide mainstream and early music critics. The former will probably enjoy Alice Coote's well rounded and evenly produced mezzo, her ability to negotiate passage work, her generally stylish ornamentation and some lovely *mezza voce* singing. For better or worse, I obviously come to it as an early music reviewer and from that angle all sorts of questions arise, many of them concerning Harry Bicket's direction. Quicker numbers are much the best and indeed an aria like 'Stà nell'Ircana' (*Alcina*) comes off well, with some exciting horn playing complementing admirably Coote's vibrant singing. Conversely slower airs are eviscerated by soporifically dragging tempos, not infrequently pulled around for unidiomatic 'expressive' effect. This obviously makes its mark on Coote's singing, highlighting a vibrato already at times too wide and continuous for Handel, in addition to inducing some questionable intonation from the singer. I detect little involvement with texts or vocal acting. If this all sounds unkind, go and listen, for just one example, to the glorious Lorraine Hunt's unforgettably compelling performance of the lacerating 'Scherza infida!' from *Ariodante* (either on YouTube or the complete McGegan recording). And, incidentally, it runs for 8'46", as opposed to Coote and Bicket's interminable 11'41". I rest my case. *Brian Robins*

Handel *Organ concertos* *See under Rameau*

Francesco Mancini *12 Recorder Concertos* Corina Marti, Capella Tiberina 115' 40"
Brilliant Classics **94324** (2CDs)
Concertos 1, 5, 6, 8, 10, 13, 16–20, 114

The Neapolitan composer Francesco Mancini (1672-1737) was deputy to Alessandro Scarlatti as Director of the *Conservatorio di S Maria di Loreto* and *Maestro* of the *Capella Reale* during Scarlatti's absences. Despite writing nearly 30 operas, 12 oratorios and more than 200 secular cantatas, he is best known today for his set of Recorder Concertos (aka Sonatas), twelve of which are included on this double CD. Although the manuscript has the date of 1725 on one of the parts, these pieces are generally considered to be about 10 years earlier, before the influence of Vivaldi arrived in Naples. They are attractively tuneful miniatures, with only one movement exceeding 4 minutes. Although clearly the solo instrument, the recorder part (and Corina Marti's playing) blends into the overall instrumental structure.
Andrew Benson-Wilson

Paradisi *Sonatas for harpsichord* Enrico Baiano 77' 36" © 1996
Glossa **GCD C80011**

Given that the composer lived to the age of 84 (1707-91), these lively sonatas from the early 1750s might be described as from his early maturity. One of the movements became popular in the 1960s when George Malcolm recorded it for Decca's 'The World of the Harpsichord' and it was subsequently a set piece for a graded piano examination. I have reasons to know this! The music inhabits an interesting stylistic world that embraces elements of both Scarlatti and C. P. E. Bach and the player successfully integrates these into a convincingly interpreted whole. The more I listened, the more I enjoyed. *David Hansell*

Rameau ***The Complete Works for Harpsichord Solo*** Ketil Haugsand 149' 50"
Simax Classics **PSC1345**

Rameau's complete harpsichord works have been recorded almost thirty times since the first in 1952. When BBC Radio 3's *Building a Library* 'did' this repertoire in June, Christophe Rousset came out on top of the pile, with an honourable mention for Trevor Pinnock's single disc recital. This new release strikes me as being 'the thinking man's Rameau', with much care being taken over detail and tempos at the slower end of the accepted spectrum. Having said that, however, in the famous *Gavotte et doubles* Haugsand is much closer to Sophie Yate's seven minutes than Pinnock's monumental 9' 29". Where Haugsand scores heavily is in the less weighty pieces where he finds things to say without forcing upon the music pretensions which it simply doesn't have. His harpsichord, which he built himself in 1971, is well recorded though there were times when I did miss the sumptuousness of the French instruments one hears in this repertoire. The playing is strongly supported by a thorough essay in the booklet. *David Hansell*

The Norwegian Ketil Haugsand, now resident in Cologne, won the Prix d'Excellence' at Amsterdam conservatory in 1975 and has since produced a number of recordings of the French repertoire. In this double CD he explores the harpsichord music of Rameau in his anniversary year (Rameau's, that is), playing a late-Flemish style harpsichord that he made himself. A rather curious CD cover has Mr Haugsand (only his face and tie visible against the all-white back-ground) peering over his glasses looking rather bewildered in a quizzical raised-eyebrow sort of way. Haugsand has a rather off-putting habit of leaping off occasional notes and chords, but not always in line with what one might expect in terms of the underlying musical structure. This, together with some other articulation issues (notably lingering at the beginning of many motifs and phrases) and sudden changes of pulse makes for a rather bumpy ride. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

Telemann ***Sonaten, Trios, Concerti***
L'Accademia Giocosa 62' 42"
Oehms Classics **OC897**
TWV 42:D13,* 42:g13,* 43:B1, 50:1, 51:D§ 53:g1
*=première recording; §=1st recording of this version

This is a CD to put a spring in your step – the faster movements bounce along with tremendous energy, while the slower ones are cleverly characterised in a way that I'm sure the composer would have approved of. It is unusual to find a disc that combines "chamber" music with "orchestral", and even more so when the two smaller pieces are played consecutively, but that's easily fixed with the remote control. The two framing works for woodwinds and five-part strings are especially successful. The ensemble is an off-shoot of the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, here without conductor, though they have since worked with renowned soloists and directors; why bother, I say, when you play as well as this? I hope there is more Telemann in the pipeline, or maybe even a disc of Fasch... Just ask someone to double check your claims about première recordings next time! *BC*

Amor & Rosignolo: Barocke Kantaten und Arien in Begleitung verschiedener Instrumente Friederike Holzhausen *S*, Susanne Ehrhardt *bar. clarinet, rec., chalumeau,* Sabine Erdmann *hpscd, org*
Querstand **VKJK 1413** (68' 58")
Corelli Sonata op. 5/8 in a **Handel** *Venus & Adonis* **Joseph I** *Tutto in pianto il cor struggete* **Keiser** 2 arias from *Masagnello furioso* **Mancini** *Quanto dole è quell'ardore* **H. Purcell** *Thus the gloomy world* **Quignard** *Printemps* **A. Scarlatti** 3 arias for voice + trumpet **Strungk** Suite in g **Torri** *Son rossignolo* **Telemann** *Mich tröstet die Hoffnung* **M-A Ziani** *Trombe d'Ausonia*

This disc of soprano arias and sonatas using the recorder and clarinet family nominally takes as its starting point the interplay between human song and that the nightingale, and the associations of both with love, but in fact, the real interest and pleasure here lies in Susanne Ehrhardt's exploration of the early clarinet and its predecessor the chalumeau. The clarinet derives its name from the clarino trumpet, and early clarinets may have been used as a softer substitute for clarino parts. Susanne Ehrhardt certainly makes a strong case here for using the clarinet, with arias by Alessandro Scarlatti, Purcell and Ziani. Scarlatti's *Si suoni la tromba* opens the disc with a fanfare of bright tones and trills that could easily fool the casual listener into thinking that we're hearing a trumpet here. I see no justification for substituting the chalumeau in various sizes for recorder, in the Suite in G minor by Strungk or for violin in Corelli's op.5 Nr 8 sonata, but both work as showcases for the instrument, and I was charmed by Ehrhardt's earthy, mellow tones and expressiveness in the slow movements. Somewhat predictably, the recorder gave baroque composers a short cut to the sound of the nightingale, so there's plenty of material for Ehrhardt to showcase her other speciality. A highlight here is her clean, silvery tone in the florid sopranino obbligato for Pietro Torri's aria *Son rosignolo*. Sadly the excellent playing on this interesting disc is marred by lacklustre singing from Friederike Holzhausen. The voice should float over these accompaniments, but the sound here is thin and unsupported rather than ethereally light. *Jane Shuttleworth*

Characters Karlsson Barock 70' 43"
Footprint **FRCD076**
Avison Concerto 5 **Corelli** op6/8 & 10 **Rebel** *Les Characteres de la danse* **Telemann** TWV44:1 **Vivaldi** RV230, 565

Like the very name of this Gothenburg based group, this debut CD is rather embarrassingly self-promotional – is harpsichordist and director Mr Karlsson really the "world's best Karlsson" as the booklet notes state (written by another Karlsson – perhaps his mother?) I think not. The same programme note makes some alarmingly inaccurate assumptions about life in the Baroque age, perhaps in support of the pre-determined style of playing that the group has chosen. As with the promotional nature of the CD itself, they aim to concentrate on the personality of the composers, albeit with the over-riding aim of the group that music "must be played with fire and blood". That they certainly do in this collection of well-known pieces, with a persistent forcefulness that frequently excludes musical sensitivity, purity of tone, intonation and consort. Perhaps as a further example of self-promotion, the recording balance gives the harpsichord far too much prominence. I am sure that are some very talented players in the group (including the violin soloists Sara Uneback and Per T Buhre and cellist Kristina Lindgård), and I can understand a new group trying to mark out a position in the cut-throat musical world – but I am not convinced that this is the way to do it.
Andrew Benson-Wilson

Flute music by Bach's students Wilbert Hazelzet *fl*, Jacques Ogg *hpscd*, Jaap ter Linden *vlc* 59' 11" © 1997
Glossa **GCD C80802**
Abel Sonata in e **Goldberg** Sonata in C **Kirnberger** Sonata in g, Fugue in f **Krebs** Sonata in e **Müthel** Sonata in D

First released in 1997, this programme of four sonatas with obbligato flute, one for viola da gamba, and a keyboard fugue gives an insight into the musical world of Bach's pupils – despite the shifting artistic sensibilities of the age, each of them had clearly been drilled in the many facets of counterpoint; even when it is not readily audible, it is there, and their part writing also gives in a nod in the direction of musically correctness. The three players on this re-release need no recommendation from me – I did feel that the cello and harpsichord were a little forward in the soundscape of the Kirnberger G minor sonata, but elsewhere this was not an issue. Nearly an hour of gorgeous music, expertly played. *BC*

Vienna 1709: Opera arias for soprano and viol Hana Blažíková, Ensemble Tourbillon, Petr Wagner <TT>
Accent **ACC 24284**
Music by Ariosti, Baldassari, G. B. Bononcini & Fux

The substantial instrumental forces of the Viennese court around the turn of the 18th century encouraged the frequent introduction of obbligato arias in operas or oratorios. Among the more unexpected are these arias featuring the viol, surprising since by this time the cello was in the process of superceding it in most places other than France. This lovely collection reveals a repertoire of exceptional quality. To be immediately captivated, go no further than the opening track, a ravishing aria from *Il giudizio di Paride* (1707) by Pietro Baldassari, about whom almost nothing is known, with its imitative obbligato writing for two viols providing a reposeful bed of sonority for the soprano. This is just one of a number of small jewels, another being the exquisite 'So' che piace' from Fux's oratorio *Il Fonte della Salute* (1716), which finds a pair of viols providing sympathetic support to the penitent sinner. Another Fux aria, this time from his 1709 opera *Il mese di Marzo*, serves as a reminder that the chalumeau was also widely employed in Vienna as an obbligato instrument, here in combination with a viol. Hana Blažíková sings these arias with a clarity and pure freshness redolent of a mountain stream, decorating da capos with judicious style. My only regret is that her Italian enunciation is poor and attention to words sketchy to say the least. She is well supported by Petr Wagner (who takes the leading viol parts) and his colleagues, but I am no more convinced that an organ is the appropriate continuo instrument for Viennese operas of this period than it is anywhere else. Nevertheless, an imaginative issue that makes for beguiling listening. *Brian Robins*

CLASSICAL

C. P. E. Bach *Trio Sonatas – Flute Concertos* Alexis Kossenko, Les Ambassadeurs, Arte Dei Suonatori 214' 39" (3 CDs)
Alpha Black Box **Alpha 821**

Although there are three CDs in the box, only one is a new release – that for the sonatas; four are trios, and there is one each for violin and flute with obbligato keyboard. The other two discs (from 2005 and 2008 respectively) are of concerti, the booklets for which have to be downloaded from www.outhere-music.com. Kossenko plays a different copy of the 1745 Quantz instrument for the latest offering, whose pitch is 392Hz. The low notes are rich and full. He is partnered by violinist Zefira Valova, cellist Tormod Dalen and Allan Rasmussen on harpsichord. The recorded sound is bright and clear without any hint of reverb, given that the sessions took place in a spacious Copenhagen church. As for the concertos (all recorded in Poland), disc one has a string band of 44221 while its partner has one fewer violinist per part. The performances are excellent, though at times I missed some of the edgy playing of the tuttis when the texture was reduced to flute and solo strings. Fans of baroque flute and C. P. E. Bach alike should not hesitate to get hold of this. *BC*

C. P. E. Bach *Klaviersonaten* Davide Pozzi *hpscd/fortepiano* 79' 20"
Stradivarius **STR 33911**
Wq 62/10, 16, 19 & 22, Wq 65/17, 28 & 31

Davide Pozzi shows a real affinity for the music of C. P. E. Bach in this recording on which he alternates harpsichord and fortepiano. His choice of instrument for each sonata works well, using musical features like a prevalence of octave doublings to suggest the fortepiano, for example. He has a strong awareness of the need to use different techniques on each instrument to achieve the same expressional ends. He attains more expressive nuance on the fortepiano where he is particularly light fingered. Both instruments are by Andrea Restelli: the harpsichord is a copy of a 1738 Christian Vater in Nuremberg and the fortepiano copies a Dulken of c. 1795 in the Smithsonian. A worthwhile contribution to the C. P. E. Bach tercentenary year. *Noel O'Regan*

W. F. Bach *Keyboard Works 5* Julia Brown *hpscd* 67' 18"
Naxos **8.573177**
Sonatas in G, C, F, A, E flat and e

This latest volume opens with a substantial G major sonata (F.7/BR A 14), thought to be a late work. It shows what Wilhelm Friedemann was capable of, if perhaps not always attained. The second movement, a lamento, is especially attractive. The even more substantial sonata in A major (F.8/BR A 15) also has an attractive *largo con tenerezza*. The other sonatas, some involving arrangements or rewritings, present relatively short and somewhat inconsequential movements, mixing improvisation and Classical form; some are more purposeful in their wanderings than others. Julia Brown once again proves a very reliable interpreter, sensitive to the various styles and influences on Wilhelm Friedemann's music while doing more than justice to its often virtuosic demands. She and Naxos are doing sterling service in making all of this composer's keyboard music easily available. *Noel O'Regan*

Berlin, Johan Daniel & Johan Heinrich *[Sinfonias & Concerto]* Gottfried von der Goltz *vn & dir*, Alexandra Opshal *cornetto*, Norwegian Baroque Orchestra 54' 47"
Simax Classics **PSC1331**
JDB Sinfonias a5, a6 & a8 (all in D), vn conc in A **JHB** Sinfonia a6 in C

Born in modern day Lithuania, J. D. Berlin moved as a 4-year-old to Latvia and then, at 16, to Copenhagen, where he became a pupil of the Stadsmusikant. By 1737, he had taken up a similar position in Trondheim where he lived out his life, both as an organist and as an engineer – the CD packaging is illustrated by diagrams of his inventions! Four of his works feature on this fine recording, as well as a sinfonia by one of his three musical sons. They are a clear sign that Trondheim's musical scene in the 1760s was vibrant – how many bands in England at that time had clarinets? The music may not be startlingly original but neither is it pedestrian nor dull; rather, it is tuneful with lively rhythms, contrasting slow movements, and – in the A major violin concerto – virtuosic in a way that only violinists like von der Goltz can make seem easy. There is one enigma – the notes talk about a trumpet playing the solo part of the sinfonia a5 in D, but it is very much a cornetto (stunningly played by Alexandra Opsahl), though I wonder if the piece was not intended for the brass instrument, such is the way the part is written (if one ignores what I assume are the soloist's ornaments!) All in all, a very enjoyable release, showing that we are still a very long way from having discovered all the marvellous music that was written before 1800. *BC*

Brunetti *Divertimenti para Trio de Cuerda, Serie IV* Carmen Veneris 58' 02"
Lindoro **NL-3021**

The slightly enigmatic Serie IV in the title of the disc refers to the fact that this was the fourth set of trios for violin, viola and cello that the composer had composed; it is unusual in that there are only five works as opposed to the usual six. While he had penned the other three sets between 1770 and 1774, the present set dates from 1784; they all follow a three movement structure with the minuet placed second and the fastest movement at the end. Carmen Veneris play on period instruments, neatly capturing the essence of Brunetti's lovely music – viola players of the world should enjoy their frequent moments in the limelight. *BC*

Joseph Haydn *Scottish Songs* Susan Hamilton, Pierre Pierlot, François Fernandez, Rainer Zipperling 65' 15"
Flora **FLO0503**

This delightful CD alternates performances of a selection of Baryton Trios by Haydn with six of his settings of Scottish songs and the Lament for Frederick II of Prussia, attributed to Haydn but now

thought not to be his work. The chief delight of this CD are the songs, a tiny selection from the over 400 which Haydn set, and performed here with string accompaniment. Perhaps predictably Haydn warms particularly to two types of song, the frisky jig-like pieces such as *The White Cockade* and the more soulful airs such as *Mary's Dream*. Sometimes a combination of the (to Haydn) obscure Scots text and lack of speed markings on the original tunes leads to a confusion of the two as in the hilariously reverential setting of *Fi gar rub her o'er wi strae!* The performances of both the instrumental and sung portions of the CD are engagingly sympathetic, and even the rather worthy setting of *Deutschlands Klage auf den Tod des Grossen Friedrichs Borussens König* has life breathed into it by sensitive playing and singing. Certainly, this CD underlines the fact that Haydn's Scots Songs should not always be performed only with piano, and would often benefit from a more creative approach by instrumentalists. *D. James Ross*

Kraus *Arias and Overtures* Monica Groop *mS*, Helsinki Baroque Orchestra, Aapo Häkkinen 62' 47"
Naxos **8.572865**
Ouvertures VB19, 32, 41 & 42, Arias in Swedish, Latin, Italian and French

Regular readers will know that I am a fan of both Kraus *and* Aapo Häkkinen's stylish performances, especially at the helm of Helsinki Baroque Orchestra – one of the few organisations prepared to explore the less-trodden paths of the rococo period and beyond. From the opening notes of the present CD, it is clear that this will be an impassioned plea (I cannot believe I'm writing these words *again*!) for Kraus's admittance into the mainstream... And if the precisely articulated string playing, sonorous winds with punctuating brass and the perfectly timed fortepiano interjections fail to persuade you, then you can rely on mezzo Monica Groop to charm your ears in any various tongues! Hers is an instrument of great warmth and power, yet it is never deployed to the detriment of Kraus's fabulous music. If the overture to Gustav III's birthday ode does not energise you, or you remain unmoved by the dramatic opening to the cantata for the same monarch's funeral, then there is no hope. Sorry! I hope this will not be the last Kraus we hear from the Helsinki Baroque Orchestra. *BC*

Mozart *Requiem* Sandrine Piau, Sara Mingardo, Werner Güra, Christopher Purves, accentus, insula orchestra, *dir.* Laurence Equilbey 48'
naïve **V5370**

Recorded in the chapel at Versailles, this is a vigorous performance of the Eybler-Süssmayr version of the Requiem with four outstanding (but not over prominent!) soloists, an excellent choir that is finely balanced and an orchestra that delivers on drama *and* delicacy as required. Of course, deciding how to fill out a CD recording of the work is not easy, but some people will be disappointed that naïve opted not to try. That said, 48 minutes of such satisfying music is arguably plenty for one sitting! *BC*

Mozart *Instrumental Oratorium* Concentus Musicus, Harnoncourt <TT> (2 CDs)
Sony Classics **8 8843026352 9**

In these two discs Harnoncourt propounds the theory that these works, all written within the space of (I think) 48 days, were conceived as a single unit – which he calls an 'Instrumental Oratorium'. Several pointers support his hypothesis: no. 39 is the only one with an introduction; the sudden quiet ending of its last movement, which can lead seamlessly into the 'till ready' opening of the G minor being the most immediate indications; and there are other factors, such as the intense modulations in the development of its last movement (which ends with three G minor chords), leading to the opening of 'Jupiter', with its three C major chords!* One cannot help but be somewhat convinced by his arguments, and it is worth reading the booklet notes in detail before listening to the discs. To illustrate the links, Harnoncourt runs the first two works together without any significant break. It is pity, however, that it was impossible to get all three works onto the one disc and that no. 41 had to go on a separate disc, for Harnoncourt does all the repeats. To do otherwise would have destroyed the symmetry which is such an important aspect of Mozart's music. Concentus Musicus' performances cannot be faulted. Harnoncourt is generous with his tempi, allowing the music to speak for itself. I found his occasional rubato completely convincing. If you have not already got a period instrument version of these works, this one is a must.

* This was a point not mentioned in the booklet which I only was aware of when playing the opening of no. 41 immediately after the last movement of no. 40. *Ian Graham-Jones*

Harpsichords in pre-Revolutionary France Giulia Nuti *hpscd* 67' 16"
deutsche harmonia mundi **88843060462**
Music by Eckard, Hüllmandel, Mozart (K310), Tapray & Schobert

Performer and scholar Giulia Nuti turns her attention to the largely neglected music of composers working in Paris in the last two decades of the Ancien Régime. Continuity with the previous era is provided by Tapray's variations on Rameau's *Les Sauvages*: the original notes inégales are flattened out to a consistent dotted rhythm and much of Rameau's original ornamentation is eliminated, but replaced with new layers of late 18th-century figuration. Three of the composers included here were Germans who made Paris their home. Their keyboard sonatas provide attractive sets of movements which work well on the harpsichord. Of the three, Eckard is the most French and Hüllmandel the closest to Mozart, who admired the works of all three when he visited Paris, playing his own music on French harpsichords. Nuti's performance of the A minor Sonata K310 on the harpsichord is convincing, if a bit lacking in nuance in the outer movements. She plays on an original anonymous Flemish instrument ravalé by Taskin as late as 1788, now in the Castello Sforzesco in Milan. Needless to say it works very well for this music and is sympathetically recorded. This is an appealing recording of mainly little-known repertory and well worth listening to. *Noel O'Regan*

19th CENTURY

Beethoven *The rage over a lost penny* *Rondos & Klavierstücke* Ronald Brautigam *fp* 68' 28"
BIS-**1892**

This recording forms Volume 13 of Brautigam's complete Beethoven piano music series and mops up a variety of pieces often used as encores or played by students. They are in impeccable hands here and each one is invested with the right level of respect, even when Beethoven is hamming it up a bit. Brautigam plays on two fortepianos made by Paul McNulty, copies of an 1805 Walter and an 1819 Graf. Both are extremely well recorded and the performer's completely confident technique allows some magical gradations of sound. Figuration sparkles and fizzes while slower music sings beautifully. Included here are a later revision of the well-known *Für Elise*, the *Andante favori*, some Ecossaises and Rondos and the substantial op. 77 Fantasia, as well as the *alla zingarese* which gives the collection its title. It is hugely enjoyable and makes me want to hear the rest of the series. *Noel O'Regan*

Dobrzynski / Lessel *Piano Concertos* Howard Shelley *piano*, Concerto Köln, Michael Güttler 70' 30"
Narodowy Instytut Frederyka Chopina
NIFCCD103
Dobrzynski Concerto in A flat op 2, Overture to *Monbar or The Filibusters* **Lessel** Concerto in C, op 14

The mention of Chopin might send some *EMR* readers screaming for the hills, but it is easy to forget that he was 17 when Beethoven died. This CD concentrates on

two lesser known Polish composers, Dobrzynski, a contemporary of Chopin, and Lessel (a pupil of Haydn in Vienna) from the generation before. Lessel's Piano Concerto in C was written in 1810, the year that Chopin was born. It shows his debt to Haydn whilst foreshadowing the forthcoming early romantic era, with its tuneful melodies, inventive use of the Classical structural format and virtuosic piano writing. The central Adagio is in variation form, while the concluding Ronda is, appropriately, a mazurka. Dobrzynski was an admirer of Chopin, although the later only mentions the former twice in correspondence. However, there are similarities between this A flat Piano Concerto of Dobrzynski (a reconstruction of the score) and Chopin's F minor Concerto, written later, which might suggest an unacknowledged return of admiration – or a common inspiration. The opening piano theme, with its sharp contrast of bravado and sentimentality, reflects the new era. The final Ronda opens with a distant overture-style fanfare, before settling into jovial jostling between piano and orchestra. The CD starts with a later (c1838) work by Dobrzynski, the overture to Monbar (or *The Filibusters*), opening with an evocative recitative from a solo bass clarinet followed by a theme on the horns, trombones and woodwind, the period instruments of Concerto Köln producing wonderful timbres. Howard Shelley plays an 1849 Erard fortepiano in what are possible be live concert recordings.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

A. Romberg *Quintets for flute, violin, 2 violas and violoncello Vol. 1* Karl Kaiser *fl*, Ardinghello Ensemble 60' 50"
MDG **603 1843-2**
op. 21/1 + op. 41/1 & 3

No, not the composer of *The Student Prince* but Andreas Romberg (1767-1821), one of an extended family of German musicians active in the 18th and early 19th centuries. Born near Münster, he was a prolific composer who enjoyed a peripatetic touring career that took him successively to Paris, Bonn, Rome, Hamburg, Paris again, and finally Hamburg, where he married and settled. Romberg composed a substantial body of chamber music, including the three quintets on the present CD. Three further works for the same forces will complete the recording of his op 21 (1808) and op 41 (1811).

All are cast in four movements that feature accomplished, skilful writing and a grasp of counterpoint without ever aspiring to the somewhat extravagant claims of the excellent Karl Kaiser in his booklet note. Inclined to the Classical style, the quintets at the same time leave little doubt that they stand on the cusp of Romanticism, as a movement like the dreamily nocturnal Adagio of op 21/1 makes evident. But Romberg rarely surprises and the development section of his opening sonata-form allegros tends to lack the sense of the dramatic invariably found in the equivalent movements of the outstanding masters of Classical form. What all this adds up to is a disc long on charm but short on arresting incident, the caveat no reflection on Kaiser and his colleagues, whose playing could hardly be more persuasive. *Brian Robins*

Schumann *The Symphonies* Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Robin Ticciati
Linn Classics **CKD450** (133' – 2 CDs)

Long considered the domain of full-sized symphony orchestras, Schumann's orchestral music has undergone something of a revival since Eliot Gardiner's ground-breaking boxed set revealed that hidden beneath a thick veneer of massed strings and full-on brass were some real gems. His typically sensible approach to the music (exploring it with the open eyes and ears of the composer's own generation rather than projecting more recent aesthetics on to it) dispelled for ever – in my mind, at least – the myth that Schumann had no ear for colour or real talent for orchestration. This new recording (two discs, just the four symphonies) shows that modern instruments are not the block to discovering the inner workings of this music, though; Ticciati and the Scottish Chamber Orchestra are able to whip up more power for the climaxes perhaps, but they are equally adept at dancing through the light-hearted passages and revealling even more details of the instrumentation than the earlier set. When you add Linn's well-deserved reputation for beautiful recorded sound into the mix, this is a definite winner on all fronts. *BC*

Spontini *La fuga in maschera* Ruth Rosique *Elena*, Caterina de Tonno *Olimpia*, Alessandra Marianelli *Corallina*, Clemente Daliotti *Nardullo*, I Virtuosi Italiani, Corrado Rovaris 145'
Unitel Classica **2072648**

Best known today for the operas composed for Napoleonic Paris (the *tragédie lyrique "La Vestale"* of 1807 was a favourite vehicle for Callas), Gaspare Spontini was a product of the Pietà dei Turchini in Naples. Little is known of his earlier life, when his compositions were devoted to Neapolitan comic opera, of which *La fuga in maschera* was first performed at the Nuovo in Naples during carnival 1800. Thereafter it seems to have disappeared until 2007, when it turned up at a London antiquarian bookshop and was acquired by Spontini's birthplace, Maiolati, near Jesi.

The present production, the first in modern times, opened the 2012 "Festival Pergolesi Spontini" in Jesi. The plot, a farcical imbroglio involving a 'who will marry whom' scenario, is fast-paced, enhanced here by lively orchestral playing and an irreverent, witty production in which back-projection allows scenes to be changed seamlessly. Costumes are outrageous period pastiche, with the girls' hooped dresses finishing somewhere around the knee. Among many witty touches the act 2 duet guying *seria* opera with period gesture is beautifully handled. Musically the opera is no lost masterpiece. Think somewhere between Cimarosa and Rossini without approaching the stature of either and you'll have a fair idea of what to expect. There is much syllabic patter writing, both solo and in the substantial number of ensembles; above all the piece requires singing actors and it gets them here in a fine performance led by Ruth Rosique's delightfully gauche Elena. Given my views on faithful staging, I ought not to have liked this. But it is so much in keeping with the *commedia dell'arte* spirit of the piece that I have to confess to finding it great fun and irresistibly entertaining. *Brian Robins*

VARIOUS

Claviermusik aus Nürnberg Ralf Waldner *hpscd, org, clavichord & regal* 76' 05"
TYXart **TXA13037**
Music by Agrell, Hainlein, Haßler, J. & J. Ph. Krieger, Kindermann, Pachelbel, Schultheiß, Staden & Wecker

This recording presents a mini-survey of keyboard music by ten composers based in Nuremberg, composed between c. 1600 and 1748, and played on four different instruments. Apart from Haßler and Pachelbel, these are not household names but the cumulative effect reflects a solid and developing tradition. A number of the works are recorded for the first time. There is a good variety of forms from chorale settings to suites, variations and a sonata; this is heightened by the use of four different instruments, all well-matched to the music. The organ is an 18th-century Neapolitan instrument now in Fürth; the others are modern copies by German makers Michel Klotz, Bernhard von Tucher and Andreas Hermert. Waldner is a careful interpreter who lets the music speak for itself, without any particular excitement or virtuosic display. The result is a carefully documented tradition rather than an aggressive sales pitch, but it presents music which is worth hearing and skillfully recorded. *Noel O'Regan*

Colores del Sur: Baroque Dances for Guitar Enrike Solinis & Euskal Barrokensemble Glossa **GCD P33301** (54' 31")
Music by Kapsberger, de Murcia, Riza, de Santa Cruz, Sanz & D. Scarlatti + trad.

After a few twiddly fiddles on his baroque guitar, Enrike Solinis embarks on Gaspar Sanz' well-known Canarios. This is the tune used by Joaquin Rodrigo for his *Fantasia Para un Gentilhombre*, but Solinis' take is quite different. He sets off at an exciting speed, with light percussive tapping in the background. Some non-Sanz notes are thrown into the mix, and then wham! In come the rest of the band, with lively syncopations, a cool bass line, and invigorating rhythms from the drums and strummed guitar. This is a long way from the dry, more academic approach of a solo guitarist reproducing exactly the notes which Sanz left us, give or take a quibble or squabble over what the stringing should be. It is fun, and very entertaining. Santiago de Murcia's Cumbés is given similar treatment, with jazzy off-beat percussion and solid bass back-up. Solinis strums chords, reproduces Murcia's notes, and adds super-fast guitar breaks.

Six tracks are played on the guitar by Solinis on his own: Passacalle by Sanz, "Errekaxilo" Fandangoa (trad.), and four sonatas (K nos 1, 14, 27, and 380) by Domenico Scarlatti. These sonatas were composed for the harpsichord, but since Scarlatti is thought to have been influenced by the guitar music he heard around him, it is not unreasonable, argues Solinis, to reverse the process, and arrange those pieces for the guitar. The effect is quite charming.

There are four theorbo pieces by Kapsberger: a tender, unaccompanied Passacaglia; Arpeggiata accompanied by long, sustained notes on a violin and cello; Capona with percussion and another theorbo; and a way-out Colassione with violin, violone, and percussion.

There is certainly much variety. There are shades of flamenco in Antonio de Santa Cruz' *Jácaras*, and a middle-eastern sound is created in Makam Huseyni, where Solinis plays the lavta, a plucked stringed instrument from Istanbul. An imaginative CD performed with panache and impressive virtuosity. *Stewart McCoy*

The Delightful Companion: Two-part Music of the Renaissance and Baroque Les Goûts Authentiques (Jan Devlieger, Marcel Ketels *recs*) 66' 58"
Aliud **ACD BE 070-2**
Music by Carr, Hotteterre, Lassus, Loeillet de Gant, Lupacchino, Morley, Tasso, Telemann & Van Eyck

In this age where music is an "industry", it's good to be reminded by discs such as this collection of recorder duets by Jan Devlieger and Marcel Ketels that there is so much music that simply exists to give pleasure and fulfilment principally to those who play it, no matter whether or not anyone is there to listen. *The Delightful Companion* refers here to descriptions of the recorder in English music manuals and also to the idea of two friends playing music together. This spirit of convivial, relaxed music making comes across strongly throughout the recording and is what really makes it stand out. Jacob van Eyck's variations on popular tunes collected in *Der Fluyten Lust-hof* is a staple of the solo recorder repertoire, but duet versions of five tunes were also published. These arrangements are rather clumsy, particularly when set here against fantasias by the likes of Lassus and Morley and their authenticity is doubtful, but played here, with plenty of character – such as the heavy vibrato in *Amarilli mia bella* – they're a lot of fun to listen to. Duet sonatas by baroque composers make up the second half of the disc. Jean-Baptiste Loeillet de Gant is a name probably little known outside the recorder playing world, but his delightful sonatas are excellent material for amateur players (and are staples of the exam syllabi). The two recorders weave sinuously together with perfectly coordinated French-style ornamentation. The light galant style of Telemann's sonata TWV 40:102 brings the disc to a cheerful close. *Jane Shuttleworth*

Don Quixote Adriana Fernandez *S*, Pierre-Yves Binard *T*, Les Sacqueboutiers, Julien Geskoff *dir* (DVD) <TT>
Flora **3013**

A further step in innovation from Les Sacqueboutiers comes in the form of a marionette enactment of some of Don Quixote's fabled exploits, with the instrumentalists and singers cast as both accompaniment and narrative elements. The French have a marvellous tradition of mime and puppetry, and the marionette of Don Quixote is marvellously conceived and animated. The (literally) minor characters are humorously portrayed and magnified by mini-cam cutaways. Other zany elements include an inverted tuba as one (inexplicable) prop and a miniature windmill made of I-don't-know-what. Whilst on the page this description might portray the sequences as unfocussed and bizarre, the elements do fit with the dreamy and unbridled world of Cervantes. The carefully formed playing of the instruments and the rather scholarly renditions of the contemporary songs (many taken from the Cancionero de Palacio) seemed at too much of a distance from the pervading spirit. The occasional interaction between puppets and players could have worked well and integrated the aural and visual elements, but in the event seemed forced and even uncomfortable. Given the immiscibility of the two styles, it would have been better to leave the music aloof as a background tapestry, which would have worked well enough. An enjoyable escapade, but mainly for the visuals. *Stephen Cassidy*

Les Maîtres de l'Orgue Français Michel Alabau, Olivier Baumont, Fabio Bonizzoni, Jean Boyer Frédéric Desenclos, Martin Gester, Gilles Harlé, Aude Heurtematte, André Isoir, Keï Koïto, François Ménissier, Davitt Moroney, Serge Schoonbroodt, Ensemble de violes Fretwork, Ensemble Gilles Binchois Ensemble La Risonanza, Ensemble Pierre Robert & La Simphonie du Marais, Les Demoiselles de Saint-Cyr 508' 17" (8CDs)
Radio France **316045.52**
Music by Jehan Titelouze, Charles Racquet, Louis Couperin, François Roberday, Jean-Baptiste Lully, François Couperin, Louis Marchand, Nicolas-de Grigny, Jean-Adam Guilain, Pierre Du-Mage, Louis-Nicolas Clérambault, Louis-Antoine Dornel, Guillaume-Gabriel Nivers, Nicolas Lebègue, Jacques Boyvin, Jean-François Dandrieu, Louis-Claude Daquin, Jean-Philippe Rameau, André Raison, Gilles Jullien, Michel Corrette, Claude Balbastre, Jossé-François-Joseph Benaut, Jean-Jacques Beauvarlet-Charpentier, Guillaume Lasceux, Armand-Louis Couperin, Gervais-François Couperin, Alexandre-Pierre-François Boëly

This is a comprehensive aural history of French organ music from Titelouze (b.1563) and the virtuosic polyphonic sweep of Raquet's 1636 Fantasie, via the exquisite beauty of De Grigny to the extraordinary frivolity of the likes of Michel Corrette, Balbastre and Beauvarlet-Charpentier in the late 18th/early 19th centuries (some played on a 1791 Erard organ/fortepiano), recorded on a splendid array of mostly historic French organs, with recordings ranging from 1987 to 2013, some of them live. The survey finishes with the noble attempts of Boëly to re-introduce a sense of sober propriety and traditional musical forms into the repertoire on the cusp of a new era in French organ music – the rise of the symphonic organs of Cavaillé-Coll. A few vocal moments are interspersed around the organ pieces. The sound (and the related literature) of the French Classical organ is a unique contribution to Western musical history, and this is a handy introduction to its most creative period. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

Orphan Wailings Evelyn Tubb, Anthony Rooley 46' 28"
The Lute Society **LS001**
Rooley 7 Lute songs for our time + Alfonso Ferrabosco I* *I saw my Lady weeping* Dowland *I saw my Lady weep* Morley *I saw my Ladye weeping* Purcell* *Funeral sentences* * *arr. Rooley*

The first CD to be released by the Lute Society, this is a must-have disc for all in the lute song world. 17th-century lutenists were expected (and trained) to write their own music, even if only to improvise their preludes to fantasias, and here we have a complete cycle by one of the very best of their modern descendants. No one is better qualified to write songs to the lute than Anthony Rooley, and his settings of Elizabethan and Jacobean texts (most of which mention or describe the playing of the lute itself) are the very best modern lute songs I have ever heard. Rooley simply understands the poetry, the voice, the idiom of the lute, and the whole philosophy behind singing to the lute better than anyone else.

I do hope that the music for these becomes available to singers and lutenists, because these songs deserve to become part of every soprano's (and tenor's, may we hope) repertoire* – maybe not the entire cycle in one sitting, but individually, as a welcome compliment to 'the usual suspects' in concert. I have always been a fan of Evelyn Tubb, but this performance took my breath away. The pitching of precise intervals, especially in the two unaccompanied songs, is the kind of thing which every serious singer should be trained to accomplish, but when accompanied by the soft lute, only the bravest will attempt. Never having heard her perform any modern repertoire before, I was delighted by the dexterity, and sheer intelligence of her singing – some of Rooley's songs are very demanding. We glimpse some Berio *Sequenza 3* – like chuckling and sighing, Sprechstimme, and one song (*Today, Hark! Heaven sings*) begins as a delightful Lawes parody that splinters apart after its climax like a falling ember.

As if this was not enough, there follows a sequence of three settings of *I saw my Lady Weep(ing)*; the usual two by Morley and Dowland, but I was gobsmacked by Rooley's arrangement of Ferrabosco's English version of the madrigal that begins with these same words, now cast as a lute song. The highlight of the disc for me, their return to the familiar 16th-century harmonic idiom with this 'old/new' lute song is very powerful, movingly sung.

Clever though Rooley's transcription of Purcell's Funeral Sentences are, when transformed into lute songs, they didn't quite work for me. The sequential passages in Purcell's counterpoint sometimes cause disrupted and repeated sections of text in the soprano line, as well as changes of 'voicing' which, though they work well in ensemble, have the effect of making the setting itself appear fragmented when cast as solo songs. Of course, for anyone who has sung these famous works (and I suspect we all have), it is impossible to avoid mentally supplying each of the lower voices when listening to them anyway, just as I suspect most of us do when hearing *The Silver Swan* performed as a solo. On the other hand, these *Sentences* still sound never less than lovely, so what do I know?

There are several minor discrepancies between the words as sung, and the text printed in the booklet. Minor grouch, but this seems to happen with almost every CD nowadays. *David Hill*

*If they are published, Falsettists – hands off. You will wreck them.

Ostsee **Bertouch, Theile, Vierdanck**
Trondheim Barokk 69' 28"
Simax Classics **PSC1330**
Bertouch *Du Tochter Zion, Mein Herz ist bereit,* Trio sonatas in a & c **Theile** *Ach dass ich hören solte, Die Seele Christi heilige mich* **Vierdanck** Suite

The premise of this disc is that throughout the baroque period there was such as thing as a "Baltic style", a fusion of the Italian with the German; the three composers whose music makes up the programme studied in Saxony but held professional appointments in the north. If I don't quite buy into the idea that there is a specific "school" of Baltic music, it is undeniable that there was such a fusion of varying national styles. If there was something that seems to have fired the imagination of northern composers, it was the way the human voice combines so beautifully with a consort of viols; the two works by Theile (one with a pair of fiddles in addition) are glorious, not least of all on account of Ingeborg Dalheim's singing, floating across the texture with a voice like a well-known brand of velvety chocolate that we are encouraged to hide from our friends – purely in tune, but warm enough to have a presence and to shape the line and enunciate the texts perfectly. The two motets by Bertouch feature alto Marianne Beate Kielland (with continuo only) and bass Njål Sparbo (with the full ensemble); the former also has a ringingly clear voice, focussed lower notes and the ability to use vibrato as an ornament (in amongst the others demanded by the composer), while the latter has a tricky job indeed in *Du Tochter Zion*, whose technical demands are astonishing, with unexpected harmonic twists and wide leaps. The same is true of Bertouch's later sonatas, which are well played by Trondheim Barokk. I hope there will be more from them soon! *BC*

Louise Hjorth ***A Short Story***
CDKlassisk **CDK 1133-34** (2 CDs)
Mealli La Bernabea,Op 4 **Quantz** Sonata in e, QV 2/21 **Ræhs** Sonata II in D **Scheibe** Sonata II in b, Op 1 **Schmelzer** Sonata Quarta + seven contemporary pieces

This debut CD from the award-winning Danish recorder player Louise Hjorth displays her talents in both contemporary and early music, the latter mostly transcriptions on the second of the two CDs. Three of the early pieces are performed by Duo 1702, Hjorth's partnership with organist Katrine Immerkjær Kristiansen, the other two with the harpsichord, guitar and gamba of Jutlander Baroque. The duo pieces played with chamber organ are particularly attractive, the gentle chiff of the organ nicely balanced by the tonguing of the recorder player. In all the pieces Hjorth's sensitive approach to musical line and articulation is apparent, as is her virtuosity. But for the real test of that virtuosity, you need to listen to some of the solo modern pieces on the first CD, notably Moritz Eggert's *Ausser Atem* which uses three recorders, two played together with the human voice. One piece on CD 1 of early music interest is Louise Hjorth's evocative interpretation of Hildegard von Bingen's *Ave, generoso* for solo recorder and live electronics (loops, delay etc) controlled by an effects pedal. Two examples of the Galant style are represented by Ræhs, a Danish composer from Aarhus, and the German Scheibe, who spent 40 years as Capellmeister to the Danish court. The *Stylus phantasticus* style is heard in the pieces by Schmelzer and Mealli. This is a very attractive recording, with the benefit of demonstrating the appeal of 'period instruments' for modern composers.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Six Transcriptions Francis Colpron *rec*
Atma Classique **ACD2 2677** <TT>
J S Bach BWV1013 **Marais** Variations on *Les folies d'Espagne* **Paganini** Caprice 24 **Telemann** Violin Fantaisies TWV 40:17, 21

A recorder player wanting to perform 18th-century virtuoso music unaccompanied needs to look outside the recorder repertoire, so that is what Francis Colpron has done in this varied programme mostly based on pieces originally for violin. In his notes Colpron quotes Voltaire: "Woe to the makers of literal translation, who by rendering every word weaken the meaning". This is the philosophy behind his transcriptions, which have adapted the originals in ways which amply compensate for the recorder's narrow range of notes and dynamics and inability to play more than one note at a time. It's not surprising that Bach's *Partita for solo flute* transfers easily to the instrument, here given a poised and thoughtful performance on the alto recorder, but the Marais variations originally for gamba and continuo are just as convincing. The thirty variations on Corelli op.5 no. 10 by Tartini, selected from the original fifty, are quite breathtaking, while Paganini's well known *Caprice in A minor* (1820), another very technically challenging piece, also works extraordin-

arily well on the recorder. Colpron says that the fundamental thing is to preserve the spirit, playful or expressive, of each piece, and I'm happy to say that he has succeeded. *Victoria Helby*

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"NEW OLD MUSIC"

This issue we have been sent three sets which might surprise readers. Apparently – to some people at least – there is not enough music out there left to explore, so they have composed their own "in the style of..."

Kohlhaas Martin Wheeler & Les Witches
Alpha Productions **Alpha 536** (68' 24")

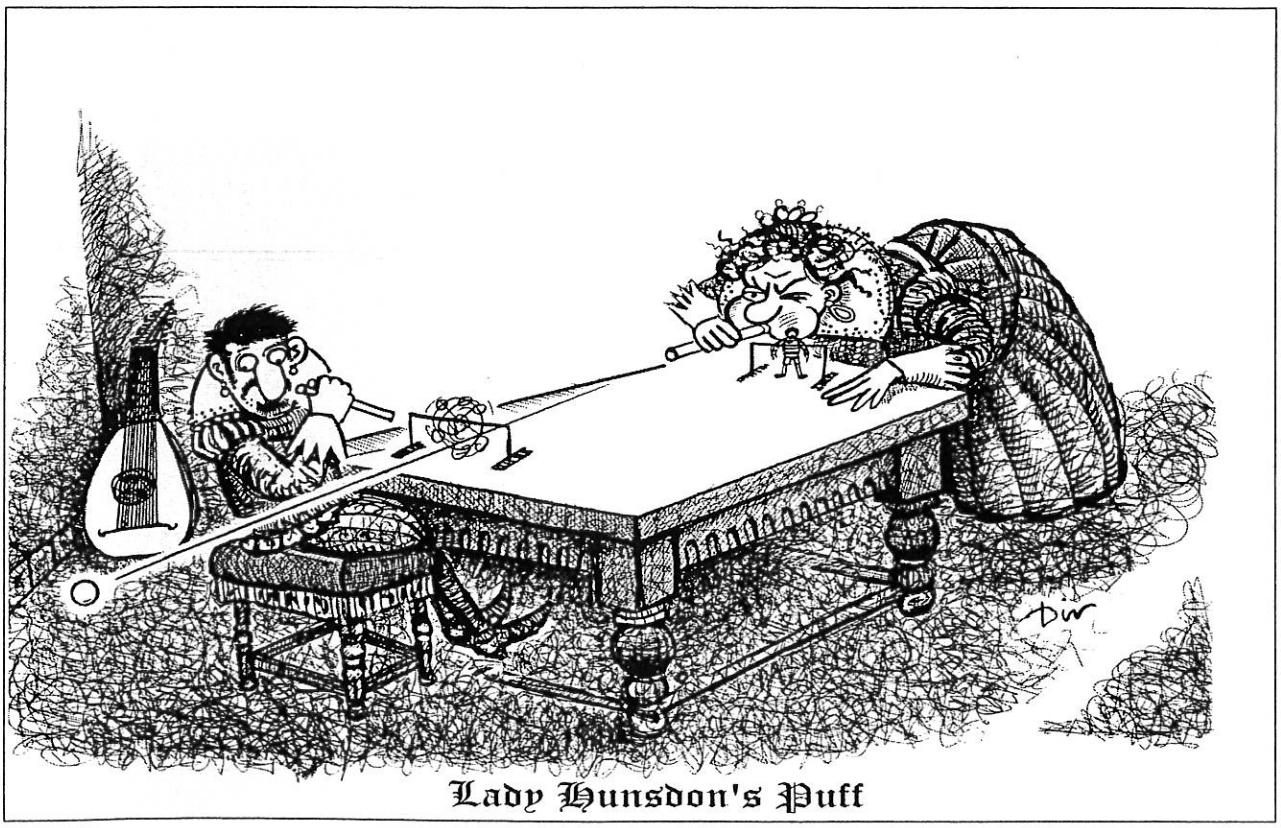
In the case of a film soundtrack I can understand why this makes sense; if you have to cut and chop the music to fit the visuals, better to take total control. This 16th-century story of the abuse of power and collusion amongst German nobility is at the heart of Arnaud des Pallières' 2013 film, and the CD features music from the final cut, but also other tracks that did not get to that stage. Les Witches perform the music of the period, though some of it is then processed by or in conjunction with the composer Martin Wheeler. I cannot imagine in what context I would actually listen to this – I am unlikely ever to host a dinner party for which it could be a suitable musical backdrop, and I rarely enjoy three minutes or so of atmospheric wind and rain effects (Track 1). Perhaps if I had seen the film, so had some visual references for what I was hearing it would be different, but for now, this is just an oddity.

Morini *Solve et coagula* Marco Beasley, Accordone 67' 51"
Alpha Recordings **Alpha 537**

The booklet describes this this work as an "opéra", but don't be fooled. A sequence of movements in different styles, telling the life story of an 18th-century alchemist, it features only one singer, whose voice seems more "natural" than "art", along with single strings with added bass, theorbo and harpsichord. The overture is a very impressive piece of counterpoint, though the angular and chromatic theme is utterly modern – I'm not sure if that is a deliberate gesture to maximise the juxtaposition of old and new, but I don't really see the point; I do however appreciate the artful use of the inverted theme in the second half of a movement inspired by a palindromic Latin motto. Yet, I find it odd that the continuo section is silent. As for the remainder of the work, no matter how convincing some of the parodies are, there is an underlying inconsistency – there is simply too much stylistic variance, with some tracks seeming two centuries older than others. I also wonder why the libretto includes two consecutive arias whose texts are impossible to translate as they use an unintelligible mixture of Italian and Latin sounds "used by jesters and minstrels" – surely one would have sufficed if the intention was to portray something that is impenetrable to in-initiates of alchemy's mysteries. I am aware that these reactions sound negative, but I can only imagine that the effect will be different on the stage.

Rotem *Rappresentatione di Giuseppe e i suoi fratelli: Musical drama in three acts sung in Biblical Hebrew* Profeti della Quinta
Pan Classics **PC 10302** (86' 15" – 2 CDs)

Composer Elam Rotem is also the bass of the five-part vocal ensemble, Profeti della Quinta. Unlike the previous two, this is a genuine effort at "what a Hebrew musical drama from the early 17th century might have sounded like" and in that I have to say he has succeeded. The five voices (CCATB) are joined by a pair of violins, two "chitarronists" (one of whom also plays guitar, while the other plays viola da gamba), a gambist/lironist, organ/regal, violone and harpsichord. This is no pale imitation of 17th-century music – the long passages of narrative text are full of tense harmonic twists, there's more than a hint of Castello in some of the violin writing, and the choruses are masterful imitations. My only reservation as far as the recording goes is the slight edginess and strain of the highest voice of all at the very top of his range – but that really should not put our readers off as there is much to enjoy here. At nearly 90 minutes (three acts!), this setting of the Joseph and His Brethren story is a substantial creation, though one wonders who other than the present line-up could ever perform it successfully? *BC*



CHRISTOPHER HOGWOOD

10 Sept. 1941 – 24 Sept. 2014

I think I first noticed Christopher as a player in David Munrow's Early Music Consort. I was a friend of David from the late 1960s and didn't notice much about Chris until his Academy of Ancient Music was established in 1973. He was particularly engaged in recordings, initially with Arne's 8 *Overtures*, then a few years later the complete Mozart symphonies were recorded, a massive project extending beiond the canonical 41. I got to know him at the BBC Music Library in the 1970s, and we had occasional chats in pubs generally in the direction away from BBC areas! He was always very affable (a word which is so easy to relate to him), and later, when we moved to Huntingdon, he offered 18th-century for me to copy items from his vast music library for facsimile publication. He also had an extensive general library.

Elaine spent much of the evening Chris died listening to his last Gresham Lecture *The past is a foreign country* and music put on the Guardian web page of music he had recorded. I wasn't concentrating too much on what she was hearing – I had too much *EMR* work, and our computers are at opposite ends of my library.

I was, however, stirred to join Elaine when I heard the Overture of *Messiah* I was impressed by what I heard of a 1980 *Messiah*. It had also made a great impression on Elaine, whereas my recollection had gone, and I don't think I have listened to a *Messiah* since my Oxford OUP edition in 1998, though I've played it a couple of times since. I only heard three soloists – Emma Kirkby, Paul Elliott and David Thomas. All seemed to have complete control and imagination, but different in style. I don't remember the 1980 TV performance, but Elaine remembered it clearly, and I reckon that it must have been the best performance I've heard – or perhaps I was just in the mood. What was particularly interesting was the way the three soloists I heard were so skillful in making apparently effortless elaborate embellishments that mostly ran at a lower level than the main notes rather than the operatic manner of pushing them as if written parts (as indeed they often were and are).

Christopher conducted all over the world, with a while at the Boston Handel and Haydn Society. Though He was also a fine keyboard player , though not one who made a fuss of his skill. In the 2000s he concentrated more on producing editions, something that he enjoyed.

The picture below was taken in Chris's garden in Cambridge in 2010. Emma was in the area with Howard Willaims, who took the photo, and I sat in the middle gazing at two of my scores! *CB*