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There can be no unanimity in so personal a matter as aesthetic taste. It would be nice to print comments by a variety of authors on each CD so that the reader could draw his own conclusions. Sadly, that is not feasible within our limitations of time and space. Indeed, in a hundred words or so it is difficult to give more than a general impression, with little chance of justifying it.

We all start from a belief that performers should understand what can be discovered about how the music might have been played in its own time; we also believe that that is not enough. But even using just the first of these criteria, there is enormous scope for disagreement. Continuity of reviewers helps, since the reader can make allowances for known prejudices: if I always disagree with X's reviews, I can take his condemnation of a CD as a recommendation to buy it.

Last month, Brian Clark and I happened to drive to Vienna and back, which provided a couple of thousand miles of joint listening. It was interesting to find the extent of our agreement, despite our different backgrounds. BC has a music degree, CB doesn't; BC is a string player, CB plays keyboard; BC is primarily a baroque man, while CB is more interested in earlier music (despite the contents of the King's Music catalogue); BC is Scottish and a good linguist, CB is English and only knows dead languages; CB is more than twenty years older than BC. Some of our reactions are presented in this issue as joint reviews. The convergence of taste among our other reviewers may not be quite so close, but it is gratifying to hear that our comments have been helpful in enabling some readers to buy CDs that they enjoy.

We do, however, make mistakes. Sometimes they are not of taste but of writing. For example, it has been assumed that I did not favour Christopher Stembridge's Gabrieli (*EMR* 14 p. 18); in fact, I suspect a crucial commendatory adjective was squashed out at the editing stage. One can also listen to something a few months later and react very differently. The 'good taste' of baroque theorists is elusive and variable. *CB*

BOOKS AND MUSIC

Clifford Bartlett

ITALIAN DANCE

William Smith *Fifteenth-Century Dance and Music: Twelve Transcribed Italian Treatises and Collections in the Tradition of Domenico da Piacenza*. Pendragon Press, 1995. 2 vols. ISBN 0 945193 25 4 & 0 945193 25 57 2. $64.00 each (UK £43.00 each from Rosemary Dooley)

This is a magnificent publication, and the price for two large volumes (each has about 330 pages of A4 size, vol. 1 portrait, vol. 2 landscape) is not unreasonable. Vol. 1 has a critically-edited text and parallel translation of the classic texts of Domenico da Piacenza, Antonio Cornazano and Giovanni Ambrosio (Guglielmo Ebreo). The music is given in a diplomatic version and in transcription. There are thorough indices and 20 facsimiles. Vol. 2 contains the variant choreographic descriptions set out for comparison in tabular form. There is, of course, considerable overlap with Barbara Sparti's edition and translation of Guglielmo Ebreo of Pesaro's *De practica seu arte tripudii* (Oxford UP 1993). That has a much more extensive introduction, with facsimiles of the tunes as well as transcriptions. Smith's book has the advantage of setting this into its context with the other texts and digesting the material in tabular form. Quick comparison between editions or checking against the manuscripts are hindered by his specious argument that, because he numbers the lines, there is no need to show the original foliation. The preservation of original line-lengths produces texts that are more satisfactory to consult than to read. His translations rightly keep technical terms in Italian. He gives thorough biographical infor-mation on the writers and has as preface a fascinating selection of quotations showing dance in action. Early dance enthusiasts will need this as well as Sparti's edition, and carrying it around to dance classes so that you have information to hand to discuss knotty problems with your teacher will have an incidental benefit of strengthening your muscles.

VENETIAN VIOLINS, ITALIAN PITCH

Recercare VI, 1994. the latest issue of the journal of the Fondazione Italiana per la Musica Antica della Società Italiana del Flauto Dolce has just appeared (45,000 lire). It has two important articles on Italian renaissance music. Rodolfo Baroncini has studied the records of the Scuola Grande di San Rocco during the 16th century for evidence of the use of violin-family instruments. Names are confusing, but it seems that they can be called *lire, lironi, viole, violette* and *violoni*. From four instruments in the 1530s, by the 1540s there was a group of six specified as *sopran* or *falsetto, sopran, alto, tenor, bassetto* and *basson*. From 1543, they played in the liturgy; before then, on the patronal festival, for instance, the wind group had played, but was replaced by the strings. This is an important article of 125 pages plus an English summary: essential reading for all involved in performing Venetian music of the period.

Equally important is Bruce Haynes' discussion (in English) of pitch in northern Italy in the 16th & 17th centuries. He recognises a distinction similar to that between *Chor-* and *Cammmerton* familiar from Germany, with basically three pitch-levels:

mezza punto (A=c.470) for instruments
tutto punto (A = c.443) some organs and cornetts
one level of *tono corista*
usual *tono corista* (A= c.409)

These pitches are flexible, and the article assumes that they were considered a semitone apart. Organists could easily transpose a tone between *mezza punto* and *tono corista*. Wind players may well have had alternative instruments: they certainly could buy cornetts at both *mezzo punto* and *tutto punto*, and could use their *mezzo punto* instrument and transpose down a tone when playing at *tono corista*. Strings may have retuned. Haynes does not discuss non-choral vocal pitch, but notes that the organ at Santa Barbara in Mantua (a possible site for Monteverdi's *Vespers*) was tuned at *tutto punto*, making A=440 a suitable modern pitch. Were it performed at *mezza punto* (some performances have of late been up a semitone), the practice of using an A=415 organ playing up a tone (nowadays from a transposed part) would seem to be authentic.

LIRA DA BRACCIO

Sterling Scott Jones *The Lira da Braccio*. Indiana UP, 1995. 121pp. ISBN 0 253 20911 0 (in UK from Open University Press, £17.50)

This is, like Smith's dance edition, a model of clear layout, taking full advantage of tables to set out information that can most easily be digested thus. There may be just a slight yielding to the temptation to over-classify scattered and disparate information, and relating a pitiful few surviving instruments (the digits of two hands can count them) with the more plentiful iconographic sources presents some problems. But the information is presented untendentiously. The table that lists players by sex might also have included separately representations of Apollo and Orfeo. Such organological matters occupy the first half of the book. There is then a series of examples showing how to play all possible chords in every key though one wonders how useful chords on F♯ really are, and several examples of actual music, editorial except for a Romanesca from the Pesaro MS. It is frustrating that there is so little evidence

for the music played by an instrument that must have been quite common. We find the absence of a distinctive bass in the chords it plays disconcerting, but I wonder whether that comes from harmonic expectations from later styles. This is an essential book for those interested in renaissance instrumentation as well as for potential players.

RMA MONOGRAPHS

Noel O'Regan *Institutional Patronage in Post-Tridentine Rome: Music at Santissima Trinità dei Pellegrini 1550-1650.* (Royal Musical Association Monographs 7) Royal Musical Association, 1995. ix + 117pp, £19.50. ISBN 0 947854 (Available to non-members from Rosemary Dooley)

It is somewhat incestuous to review a book by one of our CD reviewers and I hope readers will accept that my praise is genuine. Rome is a city of many churches, and at this period polyphonic music was sung in a large number of them, at least on special occasions. The Archconfraternity of the Most Holy Trinity of Pilgrims and Convalescents, whose main function was to welcome pilgrims to the City, did not boast a choir for most of the period studied here. But it had a *maestro di cappella* and employed musicians for major events. Palestrina and Victoria were both briefly involved. O'Regan describes the organisation from the remarkably complete documents that survive and gives a vivid picture of the musical activity. It is clear that generally what we traditionally have considered to be choral music was sung one-to-a-part. A couple of details from 1600 (both on p. 55) intrigued me. The three Piccinnini brothers played the lute after a sermon, and a harpsichord is fixed with beams and nails to an organ (presumably to make a claviorganum). Some incomplete partbooks give a clue to the repertoire and one piece by Asprilio Pacelli, *Tres sunt* a8, is printed in full.

Since I missed Vol. 6 in the series, a brief note on *The Impresario's Ten Commandments: Continental Recruitment for Italian Opera in London, 1763-64* by Curtis Price, Judith Milhous and Robert D. Hume (ISBN 0-947854-05-3; £13.95). The management of the London opera season of 1763-64 was makeshift, to say the least. The impresario Giardini sent Gabriele Leone off to Italy as his agent to secure singers. There seems to have been improper dealing on both sides. The matter came to court, so ephemeral documents and information have survived to give some idea of how Italian singers were booked. It would, of course, have been more interesting had it been for a season that involved operas or singers of greater note, but it is nevertheless fascinating reading. There is an introduction explaining the case followed by a bilingual edition of the correspondence and contracts.

CORNETTO

While in Stuttgart in January we visited Wolfgang Schäfer's shop, with instruments, music and a very affable patron. He gave us a batch of recent publications, all of which are neatly typeset (with a care for compact layout as great as mine) and well-presented. Taking them in chronological order, we begin with a selection of 23 items from *Trium vocum cantiones centum* assembled by Johann Petreius in 1541 (CORN 10-1-0022) and edited by Christhard Schrenk. As with other such educational collections, the contents cover a wide scope, with motets, *tenorlieder* and chansons by composers such as Isaac, Walther, Forster and Jannequin, some with texts, others without. Recorder trios will find useful material here. Transcription is cautiously done, with long bars (lines would be less obtrusive if placed through each stave separately rather than through the whole system) and unmodernised text (e.g. *adiuua*, not *adjuva*); verbal repetitions are not made explicit.

Gallus Dressler's *Psalm 24* (CORN 10-1-0025) is a four-voice setting from his *Zehn deudscher Psalmen* of 1562 which handles the longish text with considerable variety; there is a good balance of contrapuntal and homophonic textures, with an effective change to triple time for 'Machet die Tore weit'. The frequent sequential repetitions could either sound impressive or boring, and twice cause problems with accidentals (bars 31 & 38) which the single editorial accidental confuses by suggesting an augmented fifth. In 31, we really do need to know whether the second or third E is flattened in the source.

Vol. 2 of an edition of Leonhart Paminger's *Primus tomus ecclesiasticarum cantionum* (1573) (CORN 10-1-0015) contains responsories for the Sundays of Advent and the feasts of Barbara and Nicholas (Dec. 4 & 6), together with other music for the two saints, edited by Manfred Hug. The first item is also reproduced in facsimile. The editorial underlay is here more user-friendly. Original clefs are not given, though the St Nicholas responsory *Beatus Nicolaus* is obviously in high clefs and the 8 under the treble clef of the altus part should be omitted. The music feels rather archaic when compared with, say, Lassus and the technique is not always perfect (e.g. in the same responsory, bar 25, where the tenor enters on a G between an A and an F) but it would probably sound impressive; I can imagine it played by cornett and sackbuts. I was going to ask whether the hymns were meant to be sung *alternatim* then looked at the texts and was puzzled, for they are not hymns in the usual sense of stanzaic verse.

There are three further volumes in Manfred Hug's transcriptions from Woltz's organ tablature of 1617. The publisher has a compete transcription of the whole source, but does not intend to issue the more literal transcriptions of vocal pieces. Vol. 1 (CORN 10-1-1007) has canzonas by A. & G. Gabrieli, Banchieri, Guami, Maque, Tresti & Monte. It might have helped the user to have identified Woltz's sources and, indeed, the number of each item in his collection (Book III, 11-14 and 40-50). The 1596 edition of A. Gabrieli's *Ariosa* is set out with Woltz's version for comparison: the latter lacks the ornamentation of the more authoritative publication and probably comes from an ensemble, not a keyboard source.

A companion publication (CORN 10-1-0012) has editorial versions on four staves 'als Zincken und Pußaunen' of the four Canzoni by Maque, the two by Tresti and the Monte, along with facsimiles of Woltz's index (interesting for its listing of tonality) and two pages of tablature (with the Monte & A. Gabrieli). This offers attractive music for four-part ensembles; each piece conveniently fits an opening.

Vol. 5 (CORN 10-1-0016) has keyboard reductions of large-scale pieces, G. Gabrieli's *Buccinate* a19, Erbach's *Dominus illuminatio mea* a7, Hassler's *Herzlich lieb* a8 for two keyboards and smaller pieces by Bianchardus & Walliser. The indications of choirs in the Gabrieli and Hassler suggests that the copies might have been used for continuo playing – maybe further evidence that, at least in some places, organists doubled the voices.

These are available from Cornetto-Verlag, Spreuergasse 25, 70372 Stuttgart, Germany (tel & fax +49 (0) 711 564649)

LAWES CONSORTS

David Pinto *For ye violls: the consort and dance music of William Lawes.* Fretwork, 1995. 194pp, £11.95 ($19). ISBN 1 898131 04 X

David Pinto has known the English viol consort repertoire for many years as a skilled and sensitive player and has edited the music that is the subject of this book, the consort setts for Faber and the Royall Consort for Fretwork (see *EMR* 16, p. 2). He has an idiosyncratic style of writing that sometimes annoys but is redeemed by the memorable phrase: I like, for instance, 'It is hard to find any agreeable aspects to [James I's] character, beyond the fact that he kept a pet kingfisher'. This is primarily a book about the music, with discussion of the sources leading to musical conclusions. But it is closely interwoven with concern about how the music was performed, and considerable evidence is adduced that it was played in a context nearer that of a concert than an introspective gathering of players. Jenkins' music might have been played otherwise, and that is a source of differences between the composers. Some may think the concern over chronology pernickety; but awareness of the creative relationship of Lawes music to what his contemporaries were doing helps to explain the direction in which Lawes moved and the logic behind his choice of instrumentation and form. It is, like all books that attempt to grapple with how music is put together, at times difficult to read, and readers should have no conscience if they skim through it, concentrating on the more general remarks and on the discussion of pieces they know. Congratulations to Fretwork on their first book. Is it a test of the reader's knowledge to fill in the name missing on page 58. (Incidentally, Parry's *Repton* is hardly a typical hymn-tune, so is not relevant to the discussion on pp. 58-9.) It is nicely produced, with the familiar portrait, whose pedigree is discussed within it, on the cover and is a valuable companion to Fretwork's own recordings and to David Pinto's editions.

FAIREST ISLE

By a strange coincidence, having last month written about the former annual BBC *Catalogue of Music Broadcast on Radio 3* I have just received a partial equivalent for 1995 listing as a tailpiece to the *Fairest Isle* project a list of British works from all periods broadcast that year. It begins with an arrangement for *Alla caccia* by Alan Abbott for horn and piano and ends with Denis Wright's *Tam O'Shanter's Ride* for brass band (Wylkinson is spelt with an I so comes earlier). There are some quirks: only two Wilbye madrigals (and *Sweet hony sucking bees* described as a double madrigal, an unexpected term for a madrigal in two parts). I think if I had been editorially involved I would have tried to distinguish typographically between title and medium, but perhaps the BBC's computer technology isn't up to that. A surprising gap is the verse anthems of Locke and Humfrey. Draghi is presumably excluded as foreign, despite his connection with the new Purcell MS, though the Australian Malcolm Williamson and German Handel and Goldschmidt are included. It shows a breaking down of barriers: who would have expected twenty years ago that Radio 3 would broadcast *At Trinity Church I met my doom for voice and accompaniment* and *[The] Man who broke the bank at Monte Carlo* [medium unstated]? Handel received a thorough airing (though more editorial work was needed to make the entries a little more consistent). Purcell's music is listed thoroughly. But a feature in the old *Catalogues* that could have made this list of permanent value is here omitted: the timings. Durations for Purcell's complete works would have been invaluable. Perhaps the Purcell section could be reissued with a final column containing that information as a souvenir of a year of imaginative broadcasting.

I'm not sure how widely this is available: I suspect that if you can claim that you can use a copy to publicise Radio 3, Nicholas Kenyon will respond favourably to a request for one.

BACH ORATORIOS

J. S. Bach *Messe in h-Moll... Neue Ausgabe... von Christoph Wolff. Klavierauszug.* Peters (Nr. 8736), © 1994. 199pp, £7.90
J. S. Bach *Weihnachts-Oratorium... Neue Ausgabe... von Johannes Muntschick. Klavierauszug.* Peters (Nr 8719), © 1992. 171pp, £13.40

In terms of price, the Mass is about a pound cheaper than the most obvious competitor, Bärenreiter, but that firm manages to sell its Christmas Oratorio at the same price as the Mass – odd that, despite requiring fewer pages, the Peters one is so much more expensive. I must confess that I have generally found Bärenreiter vocal scores far less attractive than their full scores. These Peters editions are smaller in note-size, but very neat and clear; I would be happy to sing or play from them if I had to use vocal scores (though since my teens I have always used full scores whenever possible). A corollary of the small music print, though, is a small text-size, and I suspect that many singers will find the words here too tiny, especially in the

Christmas Oratorio, where they are less familiar than those of the Mass. Both editions have thorough instrumental indications in the piano reductions.

The Mass vocal score is based on a new full score which I have not seen, so it is difficult to comment on its musicological content. There is certainly a need for a new edition; Smend's Neue Bach-Ausgabe vol. II/1 is over forty years old, was controversial from the start, and buries useful practical information from the Dresden parts in the critical commentary. An example is the heading *adagio* at the very beginning, which Peters includes, NBA omits. Short appendices give an early version of the opening of the Creed and an instrumental introduction to it by C. P. E. Bach.

The Christmas Oratorio seems not to relate to a complete new edition, though the editor states that it has been prepared in accordance with the present state of scholarly knowledge. I have never had to get invoved with editorial problems in this work, but believe that they are not very complicated; so this can be judged primarily on convenience of use and price. No English translation is included. I would suggest that, for copies marketed in England and the USA, it would be worth appending a translation to help choirs willing to perform it in the original language understand the words. Orchestral material is stated to be available for sale as well as hire.

BRANDENBURGS MYSTIFIED

Michael Marissen *The Social and Religious Designs of J. S. Bach's Brandenburg Concertos* Princeton UP, 1995. 150pp, £19.99. ISBN 0 691 03739 6

This is a stimulating book, asking rather different questions of the work(s) than normal and coming up with answers about which I have considerable scepticism yet provoking a fruitful dialogue with the reader as he does so. Marissen is one of those people for whom 'to get to the other side' is an unsatisfactory answer to why the chicken crossed the road. While most of us would give a practical answer ('because the food is better there' or 'to escape from someone chasing it'), Marissen would find these philosophically or theologically unchallenging. He devotes considerable space to the question 'why six?' The simple answer, which he does not consider, is that sets of six or twelve were fairly standard at the time, even if not quite as ubiquitous as later in the century. Kuhnau published six Biblical Sonatas in 1700, though his earlier keyboard sets have seven suites, like Buxtehude's sonatas (the Locatelli *Collected Works* op. 8 lists sets of ten). But the current Italian fashion (represented by Albinoni and Vivaldi) was for sets of 12 – Albinoni's op. 2, in fact, comprises two alternating sets of 6 sonatas and concertos – and a glance through the later pages of Sartori shows twelve or six by far the most common number for a publication or for subgroups within one, though there are a few tens. The problem seems to be that Marissen comes from a country that has long had a decimalised currency. Those of us who grew up thinking of 12 pence to the shilling or buying goods by the half-dozen, dozen or gross have no need for complex justifications for sets of half a dozen, and not even the Common Market has made us buy eggs in fives.

I am also suspicious of some of his arguments for the coherence of the set. If we turn to Handel's op. 3, we have another set with different layouts for each piece. One can imagine someone a decade or so ago coming up with a complex argument on the care with which the composer presented this variety, though we now know that the composer had little or nothing to do with the set and that the selection almost certainly was determined by the concertos John Walsh could lay his hands on.

Marissen tries to find more subtle reasons for the choice and disposition of instruments other than sheer practicality or convenience. But they are not presented convincingly enough. A perfectly reasonable scenario for Brandenburg 6, for instance, could be that the Prince had invested in a pair of new violas (or found an old pair in an attic) so that Bach wrote a piece to show them off. The use of the gambas could then be, not to give the Prince something easy to play, but a practical solution of how to accompany so unusual a pair of soloists. Marissen touches on one practical problem of modern performances of No. 4: whoever stands up is thought of as the soloist. That would have been ambiguous in the original performances, since all musicians who could play from a standing position would have done so. The ambiguity is preserved on a CD, unless there is a picture of the session in the booklet.

I don't want to give the impression that this is an ill-argued volume not worth reading. I am temperamentally disposed to disagree, but there are many convincing ideas (e.g. that many movements are deliberately contradicting Vivaldi's concerto form, though Gregory Butler in *Bach Studies 2* also stakes the claim of Albinoni) and it is well worth reading.

BACH STUDIES 2

Bach Studies 2 edited by Daniel R. Melamed. Cambridge UP, 1995. xiv + 238pp, £35.00. ISBN 0 521 47067 6

Bach Studies [1] was a useful collection of essays based on a tercentenary conference and published by CUP in 1989; the absence of any mention of it on the jacket or in the preface presumably implies that it has sold out. The articles here make a less coherent whole, and any possible themes are scattered by the arrangement in alphabetical order of authors. So the two contributions by Michael Marissen and Paul Walker on *The Musical Offering* are widely separated. The latter effectively deflates the rhetorical ideas of the Kirkendales. Marissen's theological interpretation may not be incontrovertable, but he makes valid points on the utter difference between the artistic, philosophical and religious assumptions of Bach and of Frederick the Great. Is the solution to Bach's use of the archaic term *Ricercar* and the learned style of the Offering, including canons, and making

even the piece for flute learned and complex) that he was deliberately exaggerating, with tongue in cheek, the image Frederick had of him? Perhaps during the impro-visation session there had been some banter about their differing standpoints and the Offering continued the joke?

The current preoccupation with the idea that many of Bach's forms can be seen as composed against the background of Vivaldian ritornello form (to adopt the terminology of Hans Keller for Haydn quartets and sonata form) is used to help reconstruction of the missing section of the Flute Sonata BWV 1032 by Jeanne Swack, who incidentally has a worrying paragraph about the decay of Bach's MSS even since 1977. Can they all be scanned at the highest possible density, their watermarks photographed, the data transferred to CD (and sold to any library that cares to buy them) and the originals be shut away in the optimum conditions, to be periodically inspected but not used by scholars until a distinctly better technology for preservation or reproduction emerges? Perhaps that could be the major project for the year 2000.

The article bearing most on performance is Joshua Rifkin's documentation of some of the questions that concerned him in preparation for a performance of the *Trauerode*. Few performers have the musicological skills, let alone the patience and access to the sources, to cover the ground that he does. The crucial point, irrespective of the specific conclusions (some of which may be questioned, since the available information is insufficient for certainty), is that he approaches the music through consideration of what musicians were involved and what they performed from. If, as in this case, we don't know, we have to investigate the probabilities. It is, incidentally, a great shame that when a conductor gets a score of a Bach work there is no preface summarising this information.

Daniel Melamed's discovery that a canon a36 in C. P. E. Bach's hand is not by Thomas Selle but Romano Micheli seems at first like the sort of fact that any cataloguer would feel moderately excited at discovering but would not write a twelve-page article about – the sort of article written to boost an author's and department's productivity in accordance with the curiously naive way academic excellence is now judged. But it interestingly undermines conclusions based too naively on number symbolism. With the words 'Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus', the canon can be credited with all sorts of nine-fold symbolism, which is appropriate for the context in which it circulated – the titlepage of Kircher's *Musurgia universalis* – but is less plausible with its original text 'Ludovicus Rex defensor omnium'; even the notes are solmised from the vowels of that text. Just think of the mountains of interpretation the piece would have had if it had survived in J. S. Bach's hand and the connection with Kircher had not been noticed!

Other articles discuss an apparently corrupt version of the *Italian Concerto* that may look back to an earlier version, the relationship of Bach's late works and G. F. Kauffmann (especially the Schübler chorales and the Canonic Variations), the form of the organ Pasacaglia, the reason for and forms of the double choruses in the Matthew Passion, Bach and the 17th century and W. F. Bach's use of his father's cantatas at Halle.

MUSIC FOR THE *OSPEDALE*

Joan Whittemore *Music of the Venetian* Ospedali *Composers: a Thematic Catalogue.* (Thematic Catalogues No. 21.) Pendragon Press, 1995. ix + 184 pp, $56.00/£38.00. ISBN 0 945193 72 6

This is a puzzling book. It contains 1289 incipits (taken from the vocal entry of the first movement) of music by composers associated with the *Ospedali*. There is only one page of introductory information, and that does not give enough information to make this catalogue as useful as it might be. Presumably it is all explained in the author's dissertation (Illinois, 1986): if so, the reader should have been told and the University Microfilms order number quoted. She states: 'The catalogue contains the repertoire that was written initially for one of the *ospedali* then revised for St Mark's or another church and vice versa.' But how do we know, and does this list all the church music by composers associated with the *Ospedali* or only music which shows specific signs of having been performed there. There is an appendix of 'Music of maestri of San Marco, Venice and other composers' whose function is unclear: it is not even all church music. What is the relevance of a cantata called *Tarara* by Francesco Bianchi performed in 1792 in La Fenice. What is the point of recording photocopies of Vivaldi manuscript in the Cini Foundation rather than cataloguing the originals in Turin? What could be a useful document is wasted through lack of a stated purpose and explanation. The information itself is set out by composer under each library – Venetian except for the British Library, University of Illinois (material on film) and the Library of Congress. There is a composer index (by entry number, not title), a list of works that were revised and a list of duplicates (does that mean concordances?) Since I have been looking into sources for the Lotti *Crucifixus*es it is frustrating to see so many entries for masses here without knowing whether they are relevant. I am sure that this is a very valuable publication; in isolation, though, it is difficult to know how to use it.

PHILIDOR

Philidor, musicien et jouer d'échecs. (Recherches XXVIII). Picard, 1995. 262pp, FFR300. ISBN 2 7084 0451 2

The names of the older members of his family seem to crop up more in musicological literature and editions than that of François André Danican Philidor, so this volume may redress the balance. Its core is the publication of a collection of 138 letters he wrote from London to his wife and family in Paris from 1783 to 1795. These have not only biographical value but give historians a French viewpoint

on English life and politics. Since I had Handel's *Giulio Cesare* in mind (see p. 16), I particularly noticed Philidor's comment of 1787 on the opera 'composé en 1724, deux ans avant ma naissance. Cette musique, quoi qu'antique, m'a fait beaucoup plus de plaisir que la plus part des ouvrages modernes.' There are also general essays on Philidor's family (by a current Danican who has a collection of portraits of his Philidor ancestors in his billiard room), his time in London, his style, and his chess, some disappointingly vague. In what way is he 'incontestablement le premier analyste du jeu d'échecs et le précurseur de la théorie moderne'? No details are quoted and no references given to enable anyone interested to find his way through the literature on the history of chess. There are thorough indices (though awkward to use since they refer to the date of the letter rather than to the page number), a glossary of unusual terms in the letters and short biographies of people mentioned in them. The reviews include one of Sylvie Boissou's book on Rameau's *Les Boréades* (Paris, Méridiens Klincksieck, 1992), which those entranced by the reissued Gardiner recording (see p. 16) may wish to read.

THREE-FINGER'D JACK

Samuel Arnold *Obi; or Three-Finger'd Jack*...London, 1800. Introduction by Robert Hoskins and Eileen Southern. (*Music for London Entertainment 1660-1800, Series D Volume 4)* Stainer & Bell, 1996. xxix + 102 + 24 pp, £75.00

The work is described as a Grand Pantomime Drama, perhaps an incongruous event for a composer who proudly proclaims himself as Mus. Doc. Oxon. and who had produced a monumental edition of the works of Handel. It was presented as an afterpiece and remained popular for several years. The story, set in Jamaica twenty years previously, was recorded in Benjamin Moseley's *A Treatise on Sugar* (1799 & 1800), the relevant section of which is reproduced here. There is a fairly detailed list of scenes and some descriptions of the pantomime, but not enough to give any idea of the staging, and the music survives only in piano reduction, though there are more instrumental indications than is normal in such scores. The title-page mentions 'selections from the most Eminent Masters', which include Mozart and Haydn. It is difficult for the imagination to turn plot, a few songs and the piano score into a work which successfully held the stage for so many performances. The editors do their best, and I find the verbal content of this volume far more interesting than the music. It does, however, illuminate parts of English musical and theatrical experience which are easy to ignore.

The Practice of Performance: Studies in Musical Interpretation edited by John Rink. Cambridge UP, 1995. xiii + 290pp, £40.00. ISBN 0 521 45374 7

I requested this from CUP on the assumption that its title was sufficiently similar to 'performance practice' to be relevant to our interests. In fact, virtually all the music mentioned comes from the standard piano or orchestral repertoire. But there are chapters of considerable interest, especially Roy Howat on what notation does and does not tell us, with particular reference to the distortion of composer's notation to agree with publishers' house styles. Some of the scientific chapters seem rather naive, like the chapter on practice and elite musical performance, which is much too concerned with technique. The father-figure of analysis, Edward T. Cone, and Joel Lester each contribute stimulating chapters on the relationship between form and performance. I suspect that one problem with the decline of the sort of formal programme-note that told you (with examples) how a sonata-form movement worked is that, since most of the audience has no formal expectations, the performer cannot play on that expectation in his interpretation.

GALLIC SOUVENIRS

When I was a student I was attracted by the cheap but well-illustrated paper-back series published by Éditions du Seuil in the series *Solfège*. My copy of the Mozart volume cost me 3 francs in Paris in 1961. John Calder issued English versions of some of them. I bought a couple of the series in its 1990s format in Strasbourg on our way back from Vienna (not the direct route, but we went to visit Martin and Aline Gester, who share our enthusiasm for 17th-century music). I must confess that I found so much to read waiting for me at home that I have only dipped into them. But the high quality of the illustrations is immediately striking. The text of Roland de Candé's *Vivaldi* first appeared in 1967, though has been brought up to date. Most of the pictures are familiar, but to have them so well reproduced in a book costing FF59.00 (under £8.00, but probably seeming much cheaper if you are French, since the exchange rate is so poor) is a bargain. Even more striking is *Histoire de la Musique au Moyen Âge. 2. XIII^e - XIV^e siècle* by Bernard Gagnepain, published in January (apparently in advance of vol. 1). What cheap English book has such a wealth of colour facsimiles of manuscripts? There is, for instance, a page and a half of the *Codex Calixtinus* (frustratingly duplicated in the new Anonymous 4 CD, see p. 14). Even if the text was rubbish (which it isn't), it would be worth buying for the pictures which, despite their pocket-book format, are amazingly clear. English publishers, please note.

These books, reviewed above, are distributed in the UK by Rosemary M. Dooley, Crag House, Witherslack, Grange-over-Sands, Cumbria LA11 6RW
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William Smith *Fifteenth-Century Dance and Music.* Pendragon
Recercare VI, 1994. LMI
Noel O'Regan *Institutional Patronage in Post-Tridentine Rome* RMA
The Impressario's Ten Commandments. RMA
Joan Whittemore *Music of the Venetian Ospedali.* Pendragon

Liturgical reconstructions : A Personal View

Christopher Page

I have not yet made commercial recordings of a 'liturgical reconstruction', but I may soon and I write to seek advice from readers who might like to share their thinking about what we do when we record polyphonic mass Ordinaries with plainsong.

A recent edition of the television programme *Timewatch* contrasted the rites of the ancient Egyptian Temple of Karnak – conducted by a priestly caste in a secret chamber – with the Christian mass celebrated in full view of the congregation. The compilers had apparently decided to overlook the circumstances in which High Mass was celebrated before the Reformation. With the loss of longer-term memory so characteristic of the times in which we live, they visualised it taking place in a church with a mid-20th century extension of the altar into the nave.

Indifference to the past is one of the failings of our time. Some discern a 'deliberate neglect of history, a trashing of works which do not fit contemporary fads and prejudices, with the loss of biblical and poetic memory...'[1]. Perhaps we may say that 'liturgical reconstructions' (I will come back to the term) are among the most valuable contributions that early-music performance can make to the civilization in which we live. I have no commitment to the dissemination of Christian belief, but I do have a commitment to the preservation of 'biblical and poetic memory' in an age when 'our inner spaces are [being] jammed with raucous trivia'[2]. The liturgy is a lexicon of such memories, and one that has not yet been entirely overwritten with 'theory': there are few books at present with titles like *Gender and Desire in the Sarum Ordinal* or *Writing the Unwriteable: the Poetics of the Offertory Trope*.

These reconstructions remind us that Europe once had a religion with a complex rite. Whether we have religious faith or not, human history becomes a little more intelligible – and our sense of it becomes a little more compassionate – when we understand what a rite can mean. Rites offer a chance to lighten the burdens upon our conscience by performing scrupulous actions, and we all find it easier to be scrupulous than to be virtuous. We penetrate further into the complexities of the medieval Sarum Rite, for example, and find a thousand chances to be punctilious on every page of a breviary. 'You must sing and do this', the books say, 'but only if conditions X and Y obtain and only if X is not Z and only if conditions A, B and C do not obtain either'. There is something compelling about a religion whose rite relies so heavily upon the quieter and more painstaking workings of our minds but which has always been compounded with our darker and more passionate impulses.

If 'liturgical reconstructions' are important, and I believe that they are very important, then we may need a clearer understanding of what they are. In my view they are not liturgical, and most of them may not be reconstructions. No doubt every instance needs to be considered separately, but something cannot be reconstructed unless it was constructed in the first place. Some (perhaps most) of the services represented on record with polyphonic settings are informed guesses as to what music was used. Strictly speaking, therefore, these recordings are no more reconstructions than 'Hit reyneth; y shal nat forth gon' [It is raining, I will not go out] is a reconstruction of something said by Geoffrey Chaucer on a wet day in fourteenth-century London. He could have said it; all the words existed in his day, and Chaucer presumably sometimes stayed at home when it was wet. But that does not make the sentence a reconstruction.

Can 'liturgical reconstructions' be called 'liturgical'? A recent review in *EMR* 17 p. 17 praises a recording for producing 'an atmosphere of liturgical solemnity overpowering in its effect'. I imagine this means that the grandeur of the music and the performance succeeded for that critic in creating a sense of exalted reverence. However, it is one thing for a performance to be admired for its 'liturgical' atmosphere and quite another for that performance to be called a liturgical reconstruction. Can an abridged and purely sonic imprint of a Mass be called 'liturgical' when there is no eucharist and no act of worship, when the musical items are often experienced by the performers in the wrong order (plainsong and polyphony recorded in separate sessions, etc), and when there is only a very modest sonic trace of ceremonial? The Mass creates a sanctification of space and time; the participants move around the ecclesiastical space, occupying time with different degrees of sacramental intensity as non-musical actions are accomplished: vesting, censing, offerings of mass pennies, and so on. We lose a great deal of this – sometimes we lose all of it – in liturgical reconstructions. Space and time are flattened and contracted. And what of the noises made by those who are not singers? Richard Crocker has recently reminded us that 'liturgy' in Christian tradition is the sum of a number of different assignments: 'the bishop has his liturgy, the deacons and other ministers have theirs [and] the people their own specific liturgy...'[3]. It is the last point, about the people's liturgy, that I find intriguing. In addition to the medieval breviaries and customaries which tell us what the clerics are to do during Mass there are some less well-known documents such as the English *Lay Folk's Mass Book* which might be described as the laymen's customary. No 'liturgical reconstruction' on record has ever used their information and included, for

example, the voices of the illiterate laity repeating their Hail Marys and Paternosters, or the sound of the more learned lay men and women speaking certain key texts as prescribed in their mass books: murmuring the *Ave verum corpus* at the Elevation, saying the Sanctus text with the priest, answering 'Amen' to the 'Per omnia...' during the Secret, and more besides. In short, when CB says (*EMR* 17 p. 16) that Notre-Dame organum 'really does benefit from some liturgical context' I think he means that it benefits from some appropriate plainsong context.

Are we, in fact, producing 'liturgical deconstructions'? We take the sacramental acts out of the service, abbreviate it, suppress the spoken part of the celebrant's liturgy and excise the laity. In simple terms this can obviously be called a 'deconstruction', but that term cuts deeper. I do not mean that record companies are providing performers with the resources to disassemble the liturgy and put it back together again in a form that will serve commercial interests, although that is certainly the case; I mean precisely what I implied in my opening paragraphs but should now say openly, namely that performances in a plainsong context represent (and should do so) the interests of those who contemplate the virtual destruction of the 'old' learning and the trashing of whatever is literate and antiquarian with alarm.

The aim of a 'liturgical reconstruction' is usually an artistic one, and is perhaps twofold. The first aim is to protect the polyphonic movements of the Ordinary from the kind of sequential, 'concert' performance which they were never intended to receive. The second aim is to allow the polyphony to exert something of its original contrastive effect with the choral monody that surrounds it. Neither of these aims requires a 'liturgical reconstruction' to be accomplished. What is required is a plainsong context. Can it be any plainsong, providing the choral monody chosen is extensive enough to establish a stylistic contrast? Probably not, I suspect, if we genuinely believe that recorded services can help to preserve at least fragments of the 'biblical and poetic memory' mentioned above. In Mass and Office we need the relation between a psalm and its antiphon, then the relation of these chants to the readings of the day and the responsories that comment upon them.

When speaking of polyphonic Ordinaries, should I no longer speak of 'liturgical reconstructions' but rather of performances 'in a plainsong context'? This term is a little more candid and more accurate, for it implicitly acknowledges that a recording will give only a selective sound picture of a service. Some might prefer to say a 'fragmentary sound picture', but I am convinced (and here is a piece of poetic memory!) that these are fragments we can shore against our ruins.

[1] Henry Porter writing in *The Guardian*, February 1, 1996.
[2] George Steiner *No Passion Spent: Essays 1978-1996*. London, 1996, *p. 15*
[3] 'Gregorian Studies in the Twenty-First Century', *Plainsong and Medieval Music*, 4 (1995), 36.

Liturgical Reconstructions

Letters and Comments

My deliberately-provocative remarks last month have brought our largest and most distinguished postbag yet: thank you all for writing. This is, of course, not only a topic of concern for early music. Mary Berry has recorded Marcel Dupré with chant. Would French listeners like to hear Herbert Howells' settings of the Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis sung in full reconstructions of an Anglican evensong? Would the Mass in G minor by the agnostic Vaughan Williams be enhanced by a reconstruction of a celebration as at Westminster Cathedral in the 1920s? CB

May I share with you a few personal recollections of liturgical reconstructions?

Many years ago, in Salzburg, at an international congress of singers of Gregorian chant, I went to an organ recital in a major church in the city. Pierre Cochereau was playing Couperin's *Messe pour les Paroisses* on a particularly fine Silbermann organ. Verset followed verset. The nave was overflowing with an audience that would have rejoiced had they been given the chance to sing the *alternatim* chant verses, but no such luck. We all listened in silence to something that was probably an example of technical perfection but nothing else. Divorced from the liturgy – let alone from its context of the chant – this music, in all its beauty, seemed meaningless.

A few days later, in Salzburg Cathedral, a full solemn Requiem Mass was celebrated for the repose of the souls of former members of the Association that had organised the Congress. In this rich liturgy, clergy, choir, chant singers, instrumentalists and a vast congregation of men, women and children (including some fairly vocal babies) all played their parts. Mozart's *Requiem* took wings and came to life in a way I have never heard before or since: each item was heard, spaced out by the chanting of prayers and readings, by orderly movement and ritual. They stood out like gems in a crown.

Back in England, a few years later, we ourselves celebrated a richly ordered High Mass in the chapel of St Catherine's College, with Edward Higginbottom playing Couperin's *Messe pour les Paroisses* and the clergy and choir, under the direction of an inspired Master of Ceremonies, following the 17th-century Rite of Paris. A solo Cantor, following the ecclesiastical prescriptions of the period, briefly but gravely intoned the 'missing words' on a pedal note during the versets. It actually worked! We were VERY late for lunch, by the way, and had to endure the displeasure of the College staff. But no frowns could efface from our memories the lasting impression of that infinitely beautiful music, re-lived in the 20th century – so far as it was possible in such totally different circumstances from those of its composition – *in its full and rightful liturgical context.*

Mary Berry

I was interested to read your editorial on liturgical reconstructions – a fascinating and probably under-discussed topic. It seems to me that we have to be extremely honest with ourselves about what we are actually seeking and achieving in liturgical reconstructions whether live in the 'concert hall' (even, or especially, if that auditorium is a church) or recorded on CD. The liturgical reconstruction as a sequence of musical items has been welcomed by many (though not all – there are some notable exceptions) involved or interested in the early music movement; after all, it is a further ramification of seeking to understand better the context for old music, the ideal of historical-awareness extended to the sacred music of the past. But while this contextualisation must inevitably involve detailed knowledge of the liturgy (in all its broadest aspects of ceremonial, rite and practice), we cannot honestly claim that such performances are in any way liturgical. We are not taking part, even if we wished to be, in even the vaguest religious experience; our appreciation is essentially an aesthetic one that stems from the desire for an enriching way of listening to music of the past but inescapably shaped by expectations of concert-going or CD-listening .

Bruno Turner, himself trained and brought up in the pre-Vatican II Roman Catholic liturgy, has often made this point: that the Latin liturgy as it was known and celebrated in the Church no longer survives (at least, not in the widespread, daily way it did), and we have undoubtedly lost something very precious – that sense of an unbroken cultural tradition. How can anyone, even those who still attend church services, pick up the resonances that the day-to-day celebration of the liturgy and the complex relationship between chant and text or action and meaning or symbol and religious experience as it evolved over the centuries? How can we hope to recreate, then, an idea of what liturgy, and the role of music within it, meant in Machaut's Rheims, Dufay's Cambrai, Peñalosa's Seville or Palestrina's Rome?

The answer – we can't – might be followed in quick succession by an equally negative question: why bother, then? If, as I do, you passionately believe that understanding more about the context for artistic creation enhances appreciation of the results of human endeavour, then the traditional approach to the music of the past – as a series of masterpieces by great composers – won't be enough. True, one can appreciate and enjoy a polyphonic setting of the Ordinary of the Mass as a finely-wrought masterpiece in its own right, all the more easily since the composers so obligingly and so often created a strong sense of unity that runs through the diverse 'movements' through a variety of compositional means that also happened to show off their compositional skills. It is possible, therefore, to listen to a recording of, say, the Tallis Scholars singing a Josquin mass (or their most recent offering, Obrecht's *Missa Maria zart* which, as David Fallows points out in his *Gramophone* review,* is such a substantial work that it fills a CD without recourse to chant) as if it were a vocal symphony: there is plenty of contrast in scoring and pace, thematic develop-ment, structural ingenuity and so on. We have been trained, whether knowingly or unknowingly, to listen in this way, to hear music as a self-contained art-form that need serve only its own ends.

But this is surely not how the music was listened to in its own time. The question is: can a so-called liturgical reconstruction help us disassociate ourselves from the context(s) in which we hear the music now and experience something of its original impact and, by so doing, enable us to understand and appreciate it more? I believe such attempts at musical contextualisation (possibly a more appropriate word than reconstruction?) can achieve this, always bearing in mind the limitations I outlined earlier as regards liturgical re-enactment. For us, the emphasis will inevitably fall on only one aspect – the musical aspect – of a liturgical celebration at the expense of others that were surely more important at the time. Perhaps, however, if we can gain some insight into music's contribution to that celebration, its function within that context, we will at least hear it with different ears.

Music's role within the liturgy was primarily to add to the ceremony, the *solemnitas*, of the celebration of the Eucharist. In chronicles and liturgical manuals throughout the Middle Ages and Renaissance, music and *solemnitas* go hand in hand; singing a text makes it more 'solemn', the sheer presence of singers adds to the ceremonial. It is hard to convey such ceremony on CD (or even in a 'live' performance), although some recordings have tried to take into account, for example, the progress of a procession as it winds its way round various stations prescribed for a particular feast. Different kinds of music – chant, organ (and later, different instruments), improvised counterpoint (fabordon), polyphony, and any combination of these – serve to identify key moments in the liturgy and to articulate the relative importance of feasts within the liturgical year. To listen to a combination of chant, organ music and polyphony, as opposed to just polyphony, can, therefore, recreate something of the immediate aural impact of these contrasting musical strands. In this context, the polyphony, in the words of Gerard Manley Hopkins, will 'flame out like shining from shook foil'. Modern so-called liturgical reconstructions may not be able to do more than give us a sense of the spirit of the age, but this in itself is no mean achievement.

Tess Knighton

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Performing liturgical music out of its context is rather like listening to opera excerpts away from the theatre. In both, we can appreciate the music – and its word-setting – while we are conscious that the 'authentic' experience would add up to something greater, something that would 'mean' more. Like opera excerpts, the extent to which we can appreciate it away from their true context varies from composer to composer. A Haydn mass setting might make

* *EMR* will review it next month

more sense away from the liturgy than one by Palestrina or a plainsong setting, just as extracts of early Verdi make more intrinsic sense than bleeding chunks of Wagner.

Given such a point of view, it might be thought that a liturgy carefully reconstructed for the BBC or for a CD would be a perfect solution. I am not so sure. In its attempt to provide something of the correct context for music the reconstruction can become artificial, phoney and patronising. Its operatic equivalent might be that horror of modern concerts, the opera that is 'semi-staged'. Am I the only listener who cringes when a concert singers starts waving an arm in the direction of a fellow singer while the eyes keep flicking towards the score? And am I the only listener who is embarrassed when some professional singer on the radio launches into a prayer or lesson to the accompaniment of a bell or the clinking of a censer that is not scattering any incense anywhere? In both cases the producer is trying to help us. But the attempt is so self-conscious that we become alienated from the experience, not more involved in it.

Perhaps one could construct a hierarchy of authenticity in listening to liturgical music. Best of all would be attending an actual Mass or Office. Even though the liturgy will inevitably be inauthentic to a greater of lesser extent, the fact that the Mass or Office is being prayed by celebrant and congregation must be the most authentic standpoint for the listener. Lower down the scale would be a concert or broadcast of sacred music presented so as to ensure the audience is aware of the significance of the music and of the order in which it is performed. Below this might be a concert of sacred music held in an appropriate building giving at least an environmental authenticity.

If you are lucky enough to live in or near London (or indeed many other major cities in the world) and have not tried sampling the splendours of musical church-going, may I recommend it? At Westminster Cathedral, Brompton Oratory and many other churches one can hear Palestrina masses interspersed with plainsong propers or Mozart's Salzburg masses with the correct instrumentation (unlike the over-inflated versions so often given in our concert halls). On Palm Sunday one can hear the plainsong passion setting with crowd choruses by Victoria or Byrd. And it's all for free...

Shane Fletcher

****

Your editorial is very appropriate. I have been dreading a Bach Cantata in its liturgical context with an hour's sermon in German between Parts I and II.

A.D.Bolingbroke

****

I agree with much of what you say in your editorial of the February issue and have also wondered about the affinity between the interest in the rubricism of liturgy and railway timetables. I myself have been fascinated by liturgy and ceremonial for many years as well as being a railway enthusiast (especially of French narrow gauge).

You raise two principal points: firstly whether concern with the authenticity of liturgical reconstructions is an aid to a better understanding of recorded performances of liturgical music and secondly, and more fundamentally, whether the understanding of the function of the litany has anything to do with faith and the worship of God. I am myself acquainted with a number of friends whose 'hobby' is liturgy and who are avid church-goers and I find myself wondering whether they consider the correct observance of ritual as of far more importance than the essence of the Christian message itself. Liturgy is indeed a waste of time if it is not an aid to faith and prayer. But traditional liturgy is prescriptive, not to enslave the mind, but on the contrary to liberate it so that it may dwell on the higher mystical truths. There is room and a need for the study of liturgy as there is also a place for the theologian to analyse the fundamentals of our beliefs, but neither study is in itself necessarily an aid to faith.

There is an understandable desire to perform all music in its original context as closely as possible, thus aiding its understanding. When directing a concert I will disperse the movements of the mass with chants, motets or instrumental music in order to reproduce something of the layout of the original context; but the music will only achieve its full meaning when sung as part of an act of worship.

I feel liturgical reconstructions are essentially empty shells which have arisen in an effort to compensate for the immense loss and shameful abandonment by the Church of the Latin liturgy. They are as artificial as a preserved steam railway which goes up and down a line in the middle of nowhere and no longer serves the purpose of transport for which it was designed.

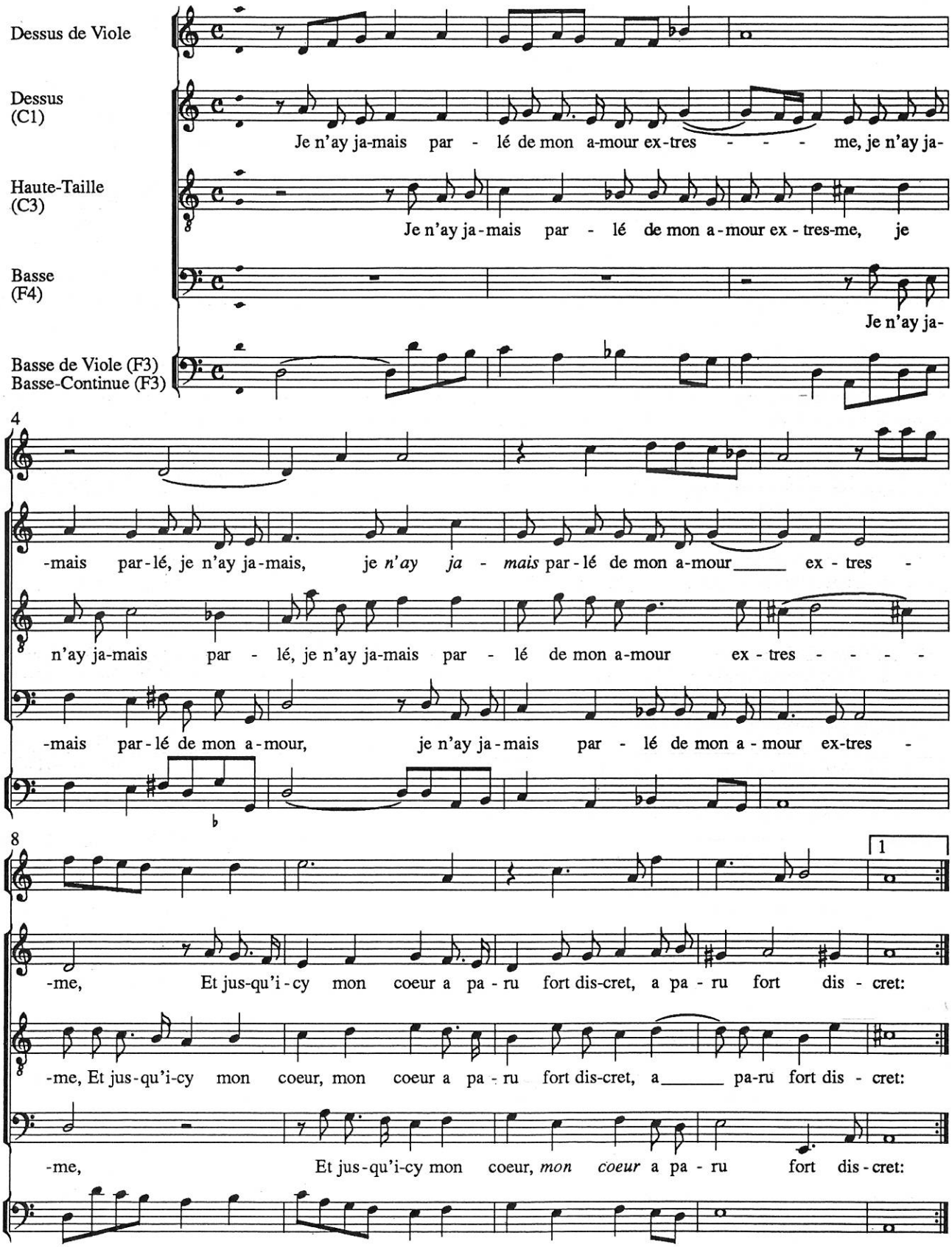
Claude Crozet
(Director of Music, Our Lady, St John's Wood)

On the other hand I have had some very enjoyable there-and-back-again rides on renovated steam railways. The journeys had no useful purpose, but they are there to experience and to excite the imagination. They evoke many memories from times past; the power of the engines and the precision of their engineering never fail to impress. The contrast between the durable simple technology of yesteryear, often lovingly cared for over the years, and today's complex but throwaway machines remind you how differently the world was viewed only a hundred years ago. How does a non-historian, non-conformist and non-musician like me get help in understanding the context of the music without some help from the reconstructionists? Elaine Bartlett

When Christopher Page first broached writing his article for us, I delayed phoning him back immediately because I was so mesmerised by an appallingly bad video on the history of the London underground (which we had just bought at a bargain price) that I could not tear myself away from it. He failed to see that even a good video on the subject might have held some interest; so the link between liturgy and railways is not universal. CB

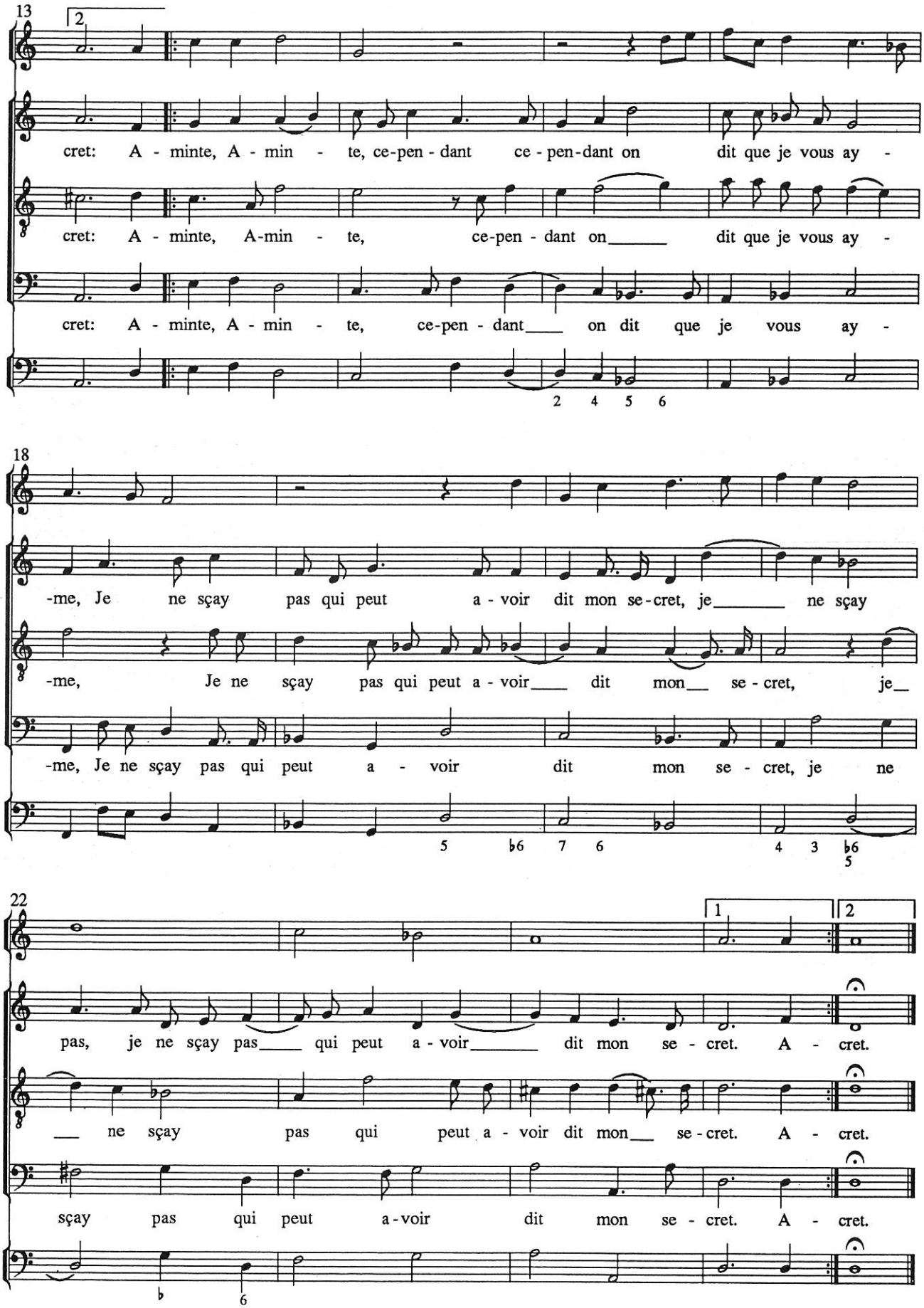
Further letters on page 22

H. Dumont – Je n'ay jamais parlé



 KM 518 *Meslanges*, Ballard, Paris 1657

I have never spoken of my extreme love, And thus far my heart has seemed discreet:
Yet, Aminta, they say I love you. I do not know who could have known my secret.



J'ay fait aussi une quatriesme Partie, de laquelle on se servira si l'on veut, pour un Dessus de Violle, mais qu'il faut toucher delicatement & avec discretion, afin que l'on puisse entendre distinctement les voix. On chante premierement la Piece jusques à la moitié, puis on la repete avec le dessus de Violle, pour faire plus grande harmonie, & ainsi de l'autre moitié.

I have also made an optional fourth part for a treble viol, which must be played delicately and discreetly that the voices be clearly heard. First of all sing to the [repeat mark] and then repeat with the treble viol, thereby enriching the harmony, then similarly the second half.

RECORD REVIEWS

CHANT

Ambrosian Chant In Dulci Jubilo (female voices), Manuela Schenale *solo*, dir. Alberto Turco 62' 19"
Naxos **8.553502**

On hearing the first track, I wondered whether I would spend the next hour longing for Marcel Pérès, so strikingly exotic was one crucial interval. There is a tendency for repeated phrases with GAB in a context where one might expect B♭ because there are Fs in the background to have B♮ as if they were going up to the C. But most of the music is less bold; it may not follow all the rules of Gregorian chant and the forms are different, but the language is basically the same. The ladies sing in an appropriately sweetly rejoicing sound that is most attractive and Manuela Schenale (who specialises in contemporary music and opera) is characterful in the solo sections, despite a rather tight vibrato. Highly recommended. *CB*

MEDIEVAL

Miracles of Sant'Iago: Music from the Codex Calixtinus Anonymous 4 71' 20"
Harmonia Mundi **HMU907156**

Regular readers will have noted that I have not shared the general adulation of the anonymous ladies. This is not through any lack of admiration for the manner of their singing but because I have found their concert programmes monotonous. Here, what we are offered is nicely varied and easier to enjoy without switching off (mentally or literally) after a few tracks. The music in the *Codex Calixtinus* seems to have been intended for choirboys, so the octave-level is right. I found it extremely enjoyable. Some listeners will rejoice that the shape comes from an intelligent contrast of short and long, monophonic and polyphonic pieces rather than an attempt to reconstruct an Iagic liturgy, though that might be entertaining, since it seems to have been the equivalent of the Feast of Fools ceremonies. This is a fine recording enabling us to discover that music that we know from history books really is worth hearing. *CB*

Courts in Colour Cantigas 71' 12"
Move Records **MD3177**
Music from the courts of Eleanor of Aquitaine, Gaon of Tiberias, Saladin Sultan of Egypt & Alfonso X of Castile & Léon
Silks and Spice Cantigas 72' 53"
Move Records **MD3137**
Travellers' Tapestry Cantigas 73' 28"
Move Records **MD 3153**

These three discs are from an Australian group that plays 'a repertoire of mediæval and folk-based music from Europe, Asia and the Middle East'. Regular readers will be aware of my innate suspicion at too great a belief in common traditions between the Christian and Muslim worlds or the influence of modern folk music. But we know so little about how any medieval music was performed that we must keep our minds and ears open and judge all attempts by the degree to which the music-making itself convinces us. Cantigas have worked out a coherent style and perform well within it; the problem is that the repertoire is adapted to the style and a wide range of music sounds too similar. Within that limitation, they offer enjoyable listening, but there are too many songs without words. *CB*
Move Records, Box 266, Carlton South 3053, Australia

RENAISSANCE

Lassus *Sacred Choral Music* Ex Cathedra, His Majesty's Sackbutts and Cornetts, Jeffrey Skidmore 68' 37"
ASV **CD GAU 150**
Motet & Mass *Vinum bonum a8*, Bicinium 3, 9 & 14, *Agimus tibi a3*, *Ave verum corpus a6*, *Bone Jesu a8*, *Christus resurgens a5*, *Justorum animae a4*, *Laudent Deum a4*, *Musica Dei donum a6*, *Quam pulchra es a6*, *Salve Regina a6*, *Tristis est anima mea a5*, *Tui sunt caeli a8*, *Vide homo a7*,

This magnificent disc, built around Lassus' eight-part *Missa Vinum bonum*, is a veritable feast of larger-scale church music from the composer's Munich period, spectacularly performed by voices and brass. The choral forces are almost certainly on a larger scale than those Lassus himself had to hand, but that said, the spirited singing and playing and the lavish music are all uniformly of the highest standard. As CB's note points out, this is not a liturgical reconstruction, but the mass movements alternate with other choral and instrumental pieces, some of which, in only two parts, being judiciously chosen for their contrasting simplicity of texture. A vintage recording – *bibemus*!
D. James Ross

Das Buxheimer Orgelbuch vol. 1. Joseph Payne 73' 58" Naxos **8.553466**

At last – a Naxos recording that I can praise without reservation! And of such wonderful music, from the huge collection in the *Buxheimer Orgelbuch*, dating from c.1450-70 and written within the circle of Conrad Paumann (c.1410-1473) in southern Germany. It is difficult to place this collection of more than 250 pieces (many of them intabulations of vocal works) stylistically: the earlier pieces tend to look back to the Gothic although the last group leads towards the early renaissance and the music of Hofhaimer and Buchner. The *Orgelbuch* coincides with the treatise of Arnaut de Zwolle, the major source of information on the late Gothic organ. The 1982 Metzler organ in Berne Münster is in the same swallow's-nest site of the Münster's Gothic organs and is well suited to the repertoire – clear and vocal in its voicing, and given a good acoustic bloom in this recording. Payne seems at ease with this music – he displays a particularly effective sense of gutsiness in the opening *Praeambulum* and treats the more lyrical pieces with tenderness. He makes effective use of a variety of registrations, essential in a CD of 37 pieces! My sample CD was a bit rumbly, so try to listen before you buy – but do buy!
Andrew Benson-Wilson

EARLY BAROQUE

Alessandro Grandi and Masters of Italian Baroque Musica Antiqua Praha, Pavel Klikar
Supraphon **SU 3017-2-931** 48' 07"

'This alchemy of healing and uplifting vibrations' – Pavel Klikar's description of sound in the liner notes, adequately sums up this recording. There are 10 motets (two of them played rather than sung) and a Sinfonia a4 drawn from Grandi's various publications with two trio sonatas by Giuseppe Scarani and a canzon a5 by Carlo Milanuzzi. The six singers are heard in a variety of combinations and the fullest continuo group on the disc consists of gamba, violone, chitarrone and organ (harpsichord is used for the Scarani). From beginning to end, I was enthralled both by Grandi's eminently singable music and Pavel Klikar's interpretation of it. Regular readers of *EMR* know that I am a dedicated fan of MAP and, having already had a preview of their forthcoming Legrenzi CD, I can only say that they go from strength to strength. If nothing else, such inspired and inspiring performances should at last drag Grandi out of Monteverdi's shadow and encourage others to perform his music – listen to his ultra-simple *Veni Sancte Spiritus* for a taster. *BC*
Grandi-lovers might like to know that Garland are publishing two volumes of transcriptions of his motets by Elizabeth and the late Jerome Roche very shortly.

Rossi *Hashirim Asher Li'Shlomo (The Songs of Solomon)* Kühn Chamber Soloists, Symposium musicum. 85' 22" 2 CDs
Panton **81 1271-2 232**

In principle, the idea of a collection of music with Hebrew texts set by a Mantuan colleague of Monteverdi is intriguing. Rossi's *Songs of Solomon, Psalms, Songs and Hymns* was published in Venice in 1623 (or rather 5383). Neither the booklet nor the modern edition gives much about the background and significance; the interested listener should get hold of Don Harrán's article in *The Journal of Musicology* VII,1, pp.

107-130. Performing the music in the printed order (starting with pieces a3 and working up) doesn't help the listener, since the choir is more impressive in the larger works. High-clef pieces are untransposed (nos 17 & 18 should be a fourth apart). The performances are rather slow and heavy; the larger-scale pieces at the end sound best. I don't know Hebrew, but fortunately we were visited by two Israeli subscribers who told me that Hebrew was a fast-moving language. They found the words of the Czech choir recognizable but not idiomatic and were not very impressed by the Prague printer's attempt at a Hebrew booklet. (Dont' worry: there is also one with English text.) A recording to satisfy curiosity. *CB*

Schütz *Geistliche Chormusik* [& Kleine geistliche Konzerte] Agnes Mellon, Mark Padmore, Peter Kooy, Collegium Vocale, Philippe Herreweghe 60' 34"
Harmonia Mundi **MC 901534**
SWV 182, 285, 291, 310, 316, 377, 378-9, 381, 383, 386-8, 390-1, 392,

A fine mixture of choral motets and concertos for soli, easier listening than the American recording just of the *Geistliche Chormusik* I heard 18 months ago (see *EMR* 4, p. 17). I enjoyed the concerti immensely, but have some doubts about the choral works. Not that they are not carefully-considered performances sung by a choir capable of expressing to the last detail what the director requires. But the style seems to me to be more fitting for solo than choral music, and in some pieces it pulls the music farther than I feel that it wants to go. Others may disagree: you can probably guess from what I have said whether the style will suit you. A bonus promo CD is included with a few tracks of Mendelssohn's *Paulus*. *CB*

A Choice Collection of Restoration Harpsichord Music: Purcell, Blow, Draghi, Locke Richard Egarr 64' 05"
Globe **GLO5145**
Blow *Suites in a & d*; Draghi *Curtain Tune, Suite in G*; Locke *Suite in C*; Purcell *Z. 662, 667, T682, D221, D222*

A nice anthology, showing post-Restoration music at it strongest. Draghi is at his best in what Egarr calls a *Curtain Tune* after Locke's famous example in *The Tempest* on which it is ingeniously based; it is a welcome discovery in the new Purcell MS, where it is untitled. The playing is sometimes quite aggressive, though relaxed when required, and treats the music with a greater seriousness that some rate that it deserves, which is much to its advantage. *CB*

Early Baroque Music for Recorder, Trombone and Continuo Rosenborg Trio 54' 45"
Rondo **RCD 8347**

Böddecker *Sonata sopra 'La Monica*: Brade *Coral*; Bull *Den Lustelijcken meij*; Byrd *The Queen's Alman*; van Eyck *De lustelycke Mey*; Gremboszewski *Canzonetto a 2 voci*; Hingeston *Fantasia*; a Kempis *Symphonia Op. 3 No. 1*; Schop *Koraelen*; Spiegler *Canzon a 2*

This is a rather curious compilation of pieces for an ensemble that is itself rather curious. The three players (Eva Legêne on recorders, Karen Englund on harpsichord/ organ and Mogens Andresen on baroque bass trombone) are outstanding performers, particularly so in the solo pieces. Legêne's articulation will be the envy of many a recorder player, while Englund paces her solos to perfection, with just the right amount of rubato to give the pieces enough individuality. The trio as a unit, though, is less successful: the chirpy descant recorder and the grumbling trombone (some of the intricate passagework is simply outrageous!) were a bit too much like characters in an *opera buffa*, and surely not as the composers intended. *BC*

Lamenti Barocchi vol. 1 Soloists of the Cappella Musicale di S. Petronio, Sergio Vartolo 66' 31"
Naxos **8.553318**
Chant *Incipit Lamentatio... Aleph. Quomodo...He. Facti...* Monteverdi *Piano della Madonna.* Sances *Cantada sopra il Passacaglio.* L. Rossi *Hor ch'in notturna pace; Lamento di Mustafà e Bajazet.* Strozzi *Le tre Grazie e Venere.*

An interesting collection. Its originality shows from the allocation of the Holy Week plainsong lamentation to a counter-tenor who, despite adopting an original style, fails to make it relate to the rest of the programme. I wasn't convinced by the organist in the sacred version of the *Lamento d'Arianna*. The Sances is an impressive descending-tetrachord ground, the second Rossi piece an elaborate dramatic scene which drags a bit. The performances are strong and mostly stylish, sufficiently different from the similar repertoire from Tragicomedia to justify acquiring both, and this is well worth a fiver. *CB*

Vanitas vanitatum, Rome 1650 Barbara Borden, Suzie Le Blanc, Stephanie Mõller, Steve Dugardin, John Elwes, Harry van der Kamp *SSSATB*, Tragicomedia dir Stephen Stubbs, Erin Headley 73' 58"
Teldec *Das Alte Werk* **4509-98410-2**
Music by Carissimi, Landi, Marazzoli, Mazzocchi, L. Rossi & anon.

It is refreshing to have this CD of Roman music, so often overshadowed by that from further north. CB was most impressed by Carissimi's *Vanitas vanitatum*, which he thought the most cohesive on the disc, though BC was, only a little, less convinced. The excellent singing is more disciplined than on the Naxos disc (see above), generally to its advantage, and the continuo playing is incomparable. *CB/BC*

LATE BAROQUE

Arne *Artaxerxes* Catherine Bott, Philippa Hyde, Patricia Spence, Christopher Robson, John Partridge, Richard Edgar-Wilson *(SSSATT)*, Parley of Instruments, Roy Goodman 140' 04" 2CDs
Hyperion **CDA67051/2**

Artaxerxes is an important opera. It is one of Arne's best works, and it was immensely popular for half-a-century after its premiere in 1762. Arias from it were part of the standard repertoire for singers for even longer. It is unique as the only complete Metastasian *opera seria* in English. The published full score, while more complete than was normal for operas of the time, lacks recitatives and the final chorus. These disappeared in the Covent Garden fire in 1808. Peter Holman has rewritten the recitatives, incorporating some of the version published by Bishop in 1813, and taken music from *Comus* for the chorus.

It is fascinating music. The styles vary almost from Handel to Mozart (who may well have heard it), with an inconsistency which can be disconcerting (though Peter Holman argues that this is a structural virtue: see *Musical Times* Feb. 1996, p. 19-21). One of the most famous numbers 'Water parted from the sea' begins like a Victorian anthem and ends with typically weak cadences, but the showpiece 'The soldier tired of war's alarms' is musically strong and Catherine Bott at least sings the notes accurately. She and Ian Partridge are the most skilled singers here, but neither convey much drama. The others are less precise but have more panache. The work was written for the virtuoso singers of the time, and it is a pity that the vocal contribution does not do the work justice. Roy Goodman is unerring at getting the tempi right. The orchestra sounds good, and makes the most of the surprisingly-varied textures in the score. This is not merely an issue to fill a gap in an academic library; Arne's venture into the serious style drew from him impressive music and this needs to be heard, despite the vocal weaknesses. *CB*

Bach *Six Sonatas for violin & harpsichord* Maya Homburger, Malcolm Proud 103' 39"
Maya Recordings **MCD9503**

For the past 12 years, Bach's violin sonatas, have for me been synonymous with the Philips recording with Monica Huggett and Ton Koopman; two truly virtuoso performers in a seemingly perfect combination, making six difficult works straightforward and accessible. This new set is quite different. The music remains transparent and unforbidding, yet the actual performances are slightly understated. Malcolm Proud has the extraordinary gift of sounding like two players sitting side by side at the keyboard, the articulation of the bass line is so distinctive. Maya Homberger's sense of line is absolutely unerring and her controlled use of vibrato particularly impressive. There are differences in reading between the two versions: in the third movement of C minor sonata, for example, the earlier set rationalises all the rhythms to some sort of inégalité while the current performers play it as written. The same track typifies the excellent playing of the set – the final notes on the violin sustained beyond the sound of the harpsichord. I thoroughly enjoyed the entire set (yes, at one sitting!) and would recommend this to anyone, whether or not they have a different set already. *BC*

2 discs in a single case for £22.00 including p&p from MAYA Recordings, Bramleys House, Shudy Camps, CB1 6RA UK, fax +44 (0)1799 584 856

Bach ***Die Kunst der Fuge*** Håkan Wikman on Hagerbeer/Hess organ in the Nieuw Kerk, Haarlem 100' 59" (2 CDs)
Finlandia **4509-98990-2**

It is a brave organist who attempts even to play *The Art of Fugue*, let alone record it. Wikman takes up the challenge with gusto. His playing comes from the solid-and-dependable rather than the in-your-face school of performance. His use of articulation and his depiction of musical line is subtle and sensitive. The organ is the 'other' Haarlem organ, the 1658 Hagerbeer/1791 Hess instrument in the Nieuw Kerk, which was originally in the Groote (St Bavo)kerk until replaced by THE Haarlem organ, the 1738 Müller. The four canons are played after the 14 fugues; this is described in the notes as bringing a very peaceful end to the work, though the registrations chosen do not really follow this idea. Much sentiment surrounds the final incomplete fugue, which several people have completed with its themes combined with the main Art of Fugue theme and B.A.C.H. Here, it is played on full organ and ends in mid-flight where the MS breaks off, the voices dropping out over a couple of bars, leaving eight tenor quavers hanging in the air: a slight easing of the tempo would have reduced the shock and increased the sentiment. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

Bach ***Toccate & Fuge*** Ton Koopman (organ of Grote Kerk, Maassluis) 67' 16" (rec 1983)
DGG Archiv **447 292-2**
BWV 538, 565, 569, 572, 582, 588-590

When this was first released in 1984 it caused something of a stir – or at least, the first note did: Koopman had turned the opening mordent of THE d-minor Toccata into an extended lower-note trill. Wow! We have since got used to Koopman's distinctive ornamentation and interpretations, so this no longer has the same shock value. But it is still an excellent CD in every way. The music contrasts two D-minor Toccatas and the Passacaglia with some lesser-known early works. The playing is strong and stylish, spirited and musical, with a sure projection of musical line. The organ (built in 1730 by Garrels, a pupil of Art Schnitger) sounds wonderful for this repertoire and sustains lengthy *pleno* playing with aplomb. The *Passacaglia* is played straight through, as it should be, on full registration and is worth the cost of the CD alone – a spine-tingling performance. Christoph Wolff's notes are intelligent and helpful; the only thing missing is an organ specification and registrations. If you haven't got it already, buy it – if you have, buy it for a friend.
Andrew Benson-Wilson

Antoine Forqueray ***Pièces de Clavecin*** Jacques Ogg on Dutch copies of Flemish and French/German harpsichords 124' 32"
Globe **GLO 6027** (2 CDs)

I reviewed a CD of Forqueray's Suites 1, 3 & 5 in *EMR* 14 and now there is this equally good recording of all five Suites on two CDs on two excellent harpsichords. Antoine Forqueray wrote them for two viols and his son Jean-Baptiste must have forgiven his father for having him locked up in prison (for more details, read the booklet) because two years after Antoine's death the son published the suites in two separate versions, as gamba solos with continuo and transcribed for solo harpsichord. Many of the pieces are very dark in colour as the original low pitch was kept in the transcriptions 'to keep the character'. However, there is plenty of variety and many of the pieces are highly decorated, Jacques Ogg's playing is very strong and positive and can also be thoughtful, as in *La Regente*. This set will be enjoyed by lovers of French harpsichord music. *Michael Thomas*

C. H. Graun ***Cleopatra & Cesare*** Janet Williams *Cleopatra*, Iris Vermillion *Cesare*, Lynne Dawson, Elisabeth Schall, Maria-Cristina Kiehr, Ralf Popken, Gobert Gambill, Jeffrey Francis, Klaus Häger *SSSATTBar*, Rias Kammerchor, Concerto Köln, René Jacobs 198' 27" 3 CDs
Harmonia Mundi **HMC 901561.63**
Set also includes a sampler of operas directed by René Jacobs: Monteverdi, Cavalli, Handel & de Almeida (51' 34")

This is the second opera on this theme I've listened to this month. The most striking difference musically is the expansiveness of Graun's arias.Their melody-dominated style (accompaniments of the throbbing quaver variety predominate) is ideally suited to the *prima donna* nature of *opera seria* and the singers here are extremely stylish in their *Da capo* decorations. As in the Handel, vocal cadenzas are not always as tidy as they might be. Of the excellent instrumental playing, the bright high horns are particularly worthy of note. Tempi are brisk, but seem appropriate. The real problem here, as with all operas of the period, is the dryness (pardon the pun!) of the secco recitative; without the visual diversion, endless paragraphs of text go nowhere musically and soon I found myself switching off. No criticism of the singers this (indeed, I found the jangling harpsichords more irritating!); quite simply, this recitative does not work on CD. *BC*

Handel ***Giulio Cesare*** James Bowman *Cesare*, Lynne Dawson *Cleopatra*, Guillemette Laurens *Cornelia*, Eirian James *Sesto*, Dominique Visse *Tolomeo*, Nicolas Rivenq *Achilla, Curio*, Jean-Louis Comoretto *Nireno*, La Grande Écurie et la Chambre du Roi, Jean-Claude Malgoire 220' 37" 3 CDs
Auvidis *Astrée* **E 8558**

This review has been delayed. It just missed the December issue and I did not have time to listen to the set for last month. I do, in fact, have a problem with Handel opera on CD. I must have experienced a fair number of staged performances since I was first astonished by a virtuoso singer when I saw Joan Sutherland in *Alcina* at St Pancras Town Hall in 1957. But I do find sitting and listening at home, libretto or score in hand, unrewarding. In fact, I find it more enjoyable just to let it play, ignoring the recits and listening to the arias as pure music. I'm not supporting the old-fashioned criticism of *opera seria* as a concert in costume (though that is probably how many in the original audiences listened), merely recognising that CDs cannot replace the stage; so why not take direct and immediate enjoyment instead of striving to achieve an inadequate substitute?

This is as impressive a recording as any Handel opera I have come across, with a more consistent cast than that of *Berenice*, which I reviewed last month. After my comments on baroque opera singing, I must (almost) eat my words. To mention one example, the duet for Cornelia and Sesto at the end of Act I is outstanding, superlatively sung with expressive ornamentation that adds to the power of the music. Elsewhere, ornamentation sometimes seems irrelevant to the mood of the aria, diminishes rather than increases expression, and brings with it a loss of vocal control. But the standard is in other respects high. Despite a few problems at the low end of his range, James Bowman is in command, and Lynn Dawson is an impressive partner. The stable-boys are far more accomplished than they used to be and Malgoire's speeds are well-judged.

The booklet is disappointing. The history of *Giulio Cesare* is complex, but no information is given about the various versions (I don't necessarily expect a CD to follow one consistently, but do expect to be told the status of what is recorded) and the arias are not typographically distinguishable from the recitative. *CB*

Rameau ***Les Boréades*** Soloists, Monteverdi Choir, English Bach Soloists, John Eliot Gardiner 162' 3 CDs (rec 1982)
Erato **4509-99763-2**

Gardiner's first modern performance of Rameau's last theatrical masterpiece was a revelation. Twenty years later I still remember its impact. The 1975 performance used modern instruments (though the orchestra includes a fair number of players now familiar as period players; did Alan Hacker really play the catchy final *Contredanse* on a modern clarinet?) It was recorded on early instruments seven years later and is now one of a number of recent reissues of early Gardiner recordings on CD. It may not be a compliment to Rameau's operatic skill to say that it is the orchestra one remembers rather than the singers. I can imagine that a fresh recording might sound even more brilliant; but brilliance can be overdone, and I am very happy with this. Gardiner's edition of the score, sadly, was not published because of a quirk in the French copyright law; the Stil facsimile is now available from Fuzeau. *CB*

A. Scarlatti ***Toccate per Clavicembalo e per Organo*** Milena Frigè 72' 30"
Stradivarius **STR 33386**

Overshadowed by the vast output of his son, Alessandro's keyboard music has ben unjustly neglected. It's quality is variable – sometimes he falls back on sequential passages that don't go anywhere – and it is

formally looser than the Sonatas of Domenico (though that does not worry me). It is enjoyable music, and is here given a spirited performance on harpsichord and organ. Just one mannerism annoys: excess use of a pause before a full chord. It may be an standard expressive device for the harpsichordist, but if the listener is continually aware of it, it is being overused. What happens when you employ a translator ignorant of the subject is shown in the note on the sources ('reviews from J. S. Shedlock' meaning 'edited by...'). The Higgs MS is now at Yale. *CB*

Telemann ***Der harmonische Gottesdienst*** (vol. 2) Ensemble Barocco Padovano Sans Souci 51' 54"
Dynamic **CDS 130**
Ach Seele hungre dürste, Ich werde fast enzückt, Schaut die Demut Palmen tragen, Was ist das Herz? Zerknirsche du mein blödes Herz

Three of these cantatas come from Telemann's second set of cantatas for the church year, written for voice, two solo instruments and continuo; these are far less known than the set for a single obbligato instrument, from which the other two come, so the disc is welcome for drawing attention to them. We enjoyed the singing by Eva Lax and Sylva Pozzer (the listener is left to deduce who sings what). Their German enunciation is excellent and both are equally skilled in lyrical and gymnastic passages. The oboist Giuseppe Nalin leads a refreshingly relaxed ensemble. *CB/BC*

Telemann ***Tafelmusik: Trios & Quartette*** Musica Antiqua Köln, Reinhardt Goebel
DGG Archiv **447 296-2** 69' 22"(rec. 1989)

Trios and quartets by Telemann are ten a penny; it's therefore all the more amazing that they are so full of wonderful music! The six which the composer published in *Musique de table* are simply great fun for players and listeners alike. The line-up of performers reads like a list of Who's Who in European early music (two flutes, recorder, oboe, two violins, cello and harpsichord) and, under the supervision of Goebel (only three of the pieces feature his violin playing), the performances are never anything less than first rate. *BC*

Vivaldi ***Concerti*** Florilegium 61' 30
Channel Classics **CCS 8495**
RV 63, 87, 92, 101, 107, 541-2

This CD comprises concertos for chamber ensemble, concluding with the brilliant *La Follia* of op. 1/12. The playing is marvellous and the music shows Vivaldi at his best. There is just one problem; the intonation between the organ and the other instruments is not spot-on. For that reason only we prefer their previous CD, *Le Roi s'amuse*, a fine collection of Leclair (op. 8 & 13/3), Boismortier (op. 34/1) and Corrette (*Les Sauvages et la Furstemberg*) which we missed last year (**CCS 7595**). The performances have wit and vitality and stand up to strong competition from elsewhere. *CB/BC*

Saturday 9 March

St. James's Church, Emsworth
7.30 pm
Telemann's *St. Matthew Passion* (1746)

The Consort of Twelve
The Consort of Twelve Baroque Singers

Details from Ian Graham-Jones

01243 371128

Zelenka ***I Penitenti al Sepolcro del Redentore*** Magdalena Kozena *A*, Martin Prokes *T*, Michael Popisil *B*, Capella Regia Musicalis, dir. Robert Hugo 67' 40"
Panton **81 1389-2 231**

This work is not an oratorio in the sense of sacred opera, but rather a meditation on the death of Christ and it's implications for mankind. The three solo singers portray Mary Magdalen, King David and St Peter; there are 11 movements in total, a substantial Sinfonia leads into a series of recitatives and arias (one for Peter, two for the others) and a concluding ensemble (the soprano singer, like the players of the orchestra, is unidentified). The whole work is conceived on a fairly large scale – the shortest aria is just under six minutes, David's second aria (with its imaginative pizzicato string ritornello, representing the king's harp) lasts over 11 minutes. The music itself is first rate (several ideas also appear in the composer's *Missa Dei Filii*) with extensive chromatic ritornelli full of interrupted cadences and a stubborn refusal to settle in a particular key. The three singers have beautifully clear voices and are agile enough to cope with the demanding lines. Some information about the performers would have been welcomed, though admittedly the booklet with its three translations is already rather fat. *BC*

Barroco Español vol. 2: „Ay Amor", Zarazuelas Al Ayre Español, dir Eduardo Lopez Banzo 61' 46"
Deutsche Harmonia Mundi **05472 77336 2**
Music by A. de Literes, S. Durón & anon.

This introduced us to a selection of early 18th century Spanish operatic music, an unfamiliar repertoire of which we are eager to hear more, provided that it is performed as brilliantly as here. The small band (2 vln, ob, vlc, db, 2 pluckers, hpscd & percussion) is outstanding – initial fears of excess local colouring from castanets were unfounded. The music is of high quality and interest, and Marta Almajano's singing is utterly convincing. Definitely our favourite record of the month. *CB/BC*

The Baroque Flute Hans-Joachim Fuss *fl*, Nicolau de Figueiredo *hpscd*, René Schiffer *vlc* 67' 15"
Discover International **DICD 920256**
Sonatas by Barsanti (Op. 2 No. 2), Anna Bon (Op. 1 No. 5), G. B. Bononcini (G major), G. Ferrandini (Op. 2 No. 1), Locatelli (Op. 2 No. 4), Platti (Op. 3 No. 6) and A. Santini (Sonata 5 in d)

There is some pleasant playing here, but it is not of such outstanding quality that the listener feels impelled to attend. We found it pleasing enough as background music – by a strange coincidence we played it while we were trying to find our way without a map across Stuttgart, where Fuss teaches. Afficionados of baroque flute music should buy it for the rarities, but it is not strong enough to convince the general listener, and the harpsichord is rather plonky. Some of the music was originally for recorder. *CB/BC*

Le Livre d'Orgue de Montréal Rejean Poirier
Ariane **AJI/140** 68' 43"

Jean Girard (1696-1765) arrived in Montréal on 20 September 1724 with a 540-page MS of organ music, which he no doubt used at the parish church of Notre-Dame. None of the nearly 400 pieces are ascribed, though 16 are by Lebèque. A reasonably-priced facsimile was published by its owner, the Fondation Lionel-Groulx, in 1981; a 3-vol. edition is produced by Editions Ostiguy in Québec. This first CD devoted to it is played by a québecois organist on a French instrument built in 1761-2 by the Micots at Vabres l'Abbaye and intelligently restored by J.-C. Koenig in 1976-78. It includes two Magnificats, a Pange lingua, a Gloria and a high mass, all anon but relating to the style of Nivers (whose *Premier Livre* Girard took to Canada) and Lebègue, as well as two pieces by the latter in the slow, ornamental style adopted by Bach (eg in *Schmücke dich*). The quality of both music and interpretation and the splendour of the Micot organ make this a disc to seek out. *Robin Freeman*

CLASSICAL

J. C. Bach: Concertos pour Orgue Le Parlement de Musique, Martin Gester
Accord **205282** 54' 47"
J.C.Bach *Concertos op. 7/2, 5, 6; Sonata op.5/2 arr. Mozart (K107/1)*

Bach's op. 7 was published for *il Cembalo o Pianoforte*; that, indeed, was how it would have been played by the genteel ladies who purchased it. But in public, the organ was far more likely as a solo instrument, since there was in England a tradition of the organ concerto going back to Handel in the 1730s. These concertos work very well thus, even if played on a larger instrument than Bach may have envisaged; Gester's model is more that of the Epistle Sonata. The published string parts are supplemented by a pair of horns, delightfully prominent in the single-string ensemble. *CB*

Boccherini ***Los Últimos Trios*** La Real Cámera (Emilio Moreno *vln*, Enrico Gatti *vln*, Wouter Möller *vlc*) 68' 14"
Glossa **GCD 920302**
Op. 54/2, 4-6 (G.114, 116-8)

Those who love Boccherini as a composer of charm and surface elegance would do well to avoid this disc, for La Real Cámera have a very different outlook. Their performances of four of his last group of six trios (1796) dig deeply, finding in these

works a nervous energy and tensile strength which blows the absurd old epithet about Boccherini being 'Haydn's wife' sky high. But there is a price to pay, for such a dramatic, trenchant approach doesn't come without rough edges and some may be disturbed by the near-violence of sforzandos and a wide dynamic range encompassed in a close and tight recording. This is Boccherini full of Spanish fire – immensely stimulating, but not for the faint-hearted.

Brian Robins

Galuppi *Sonate per Clavicembalo e per Organo* Fabio Bonissoni 66' 29"
Stradivarius **STR 33389**

Fabio Bonissoni's recording makes for very enjoyable and cheerful listening. His playing is very clear and he is obviously at ease with Galuppi's lively and witty sonatas. The booklet tells us that there are 120 sonatas catalogued so-far, with perhaps more to be discovered. Of the ten included here, three are played on a charming, bright little Italian chamber organ. His music has not recently enjoyed the popularity it had in his own lifetime, where he had enormous success as an opera composer and harpsichordist in London, Vienna and at the Russian court as well as in Italy; even Mozart borrowed two of his tunes. Perhaps listeners of this spirited recording may re-assess his worth. *Michael Thomas*

Haydn *Divertimenti for wind instruments and strings* Schönbrunn Ensemble 64' 20"
Globe **GLO5137**
J Haydn *in C (H.II:11), D (H.II:D8), G (H.II:1);*
M Haydn *in C (P. 98.)*

The Schönbrunn Ensemble continue their series of Haydn's *Divertimenti* with a more interesting disc than the one reviewed in *EMR* 14. The three examples by Joseph Haydn are crisply played by the group, the combination of flute, oboe, 2 violins, cello and independent double bass providing an unusual texture. Two have interesting *Andantes* in two-part writing; that of No. 11 in C recurs as a set of variations in its finale, while D8 has an even more appealing wind duet. No. 1 is perhaps the shallowest of the set. The CD concludes with a 6-movement Divertimento by Michael Haydn; the scoring for oboe, viola and double bass is its most striking feature. *Ian Graham Jones*

Haydn *Piano Trios vol. 5* Patrick Cohen, Erich Höbarth, Christoph Coin 55' 11"
Harmonia Mundi **HMC 901572**
Nos 43-45: Hob XV:27 in C, 28 in E, 29 in Eb.

This well-recorded disc has a great deal to commend it; the performances are extremely musical, with the slightly nasal quality of the Guarnerius violin adding bite to the first *Allegro*. The pizzicato strings in the first movement of the E major trio balance perfectly the *staccato assai* bass of the Walter fortepiano and the sustained melodic line in the treble. It is moments like these that make one realise what contemporary instruments have to tell us about the music. The excellent recording by the Beaux Arts trio on modern instruments includes an extra trio, and they tend to take the fast movements at a slightly quicker speed – this gives the first movement of the C major sonata a special cheeky quality. But their slow tempo for the *Allegretto* of the E major sonata turns it into an andante – very expressive, but I think that the tempo on this disc is more what Haydn had in mind.

Margaret Cranmer

Vanhal *String Quartets in Eb, G & A* Stamic Quartet 69' 31"
Panton **81 1431-2 131**

Played as it is on modern instruments, this would not normally feature in our magazine. But these are world premiere CD recordings of quartets which would sit comfortably alongside any by Haydn or Mozart. My experience of playing Vanhal quartets is something akin to playing violin concertos with only three accomplices: while there is a degree of interplay between the instruments, the virtuosity of the top part, never distracting one from Vanhal's considerable gift for writing 'good tunes'. Let's hope there will be more to follow – perhaps the Salomons can take up the challenge? *BC*

19th CENTURY

Field *Nocturnes* Joanna Leach on pianos by William Stodart (c.1823), John Broadwood (1823) & Thomas D'Almaine (c.1835)
Athene **ATH CD1** 75' 39"

Athene were so delighted at Robert Oliver's review of their Schubert (*EMR* 16) that they have sent us their first CD, recorded in 1991. The front bears the title *Three Square*, referring to the three square pianos used. Field's music can sound a little pale on modern instruments, so it is refreshing to hear it so well played on these. *CB*

MISCELLANEOUS

Beethoven *Christus am Ölberge*; Adelaide op. 46, Resignation WoO 149, Mailied opl 52/4, Der Kuß op. 128; **Rosenmüller 3 *Lamentations*** Fritz Wunderlich etc. 76' 54"
Bella Voce **BLV 107.003**

This is of interest to our readers primarily for an amazing performance (recorded on 24 March 1957) of the Rosenmüller. The harpsichord is rather solid, but the singing rings out so clearly that the record is worth getting for this alone. The Beethoven songs are also impressive, though we doubt if our readers will enjoy the oratorio. *CB/BC*

The Battle: Organ Music from the Gothic period, Renaissance and early Baroque Kalevi Kiviniemi *organ*, Markku Krohn *percussion*
Finlandia **4509-98036-2** 60' 20"
Cabezòn, Dowland, Gervaise, Haussmann, Hofhaimer, Kleber, Kuhnau, Mainerio, Moderne, Neusiedler, Peerson, Playford, Praetorius, Valente & anon.

The picture of the organist presents him as a Victorian showman, and this recording has some of the spirit of that world, though there is more restraint than I expected. The list of contents fails to distinguish between composers, arrangers and publishers, which gives the impression, confirmed by the playing, that we have a selection assembled by someone who is insufficiently aware of the repertoires and contexts from which it comes. The bitonality of *Der Juden Tanz* (as in HAM 105b) was shown to result from a mistranscription as long ago as 1960 and the curiously-titled *Piece without stops* is not a breath of refreshing Cagean silence but a mistranslation of *Piece without rests*. Strangely missing are any of the substantial Spanish *Battalas*. There seems little point in recording most of this on the organ, even if some of the pieces might entertain at a recital. *CB*

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I knew there would be problems with moving the list of reviewers from the front at the very last stage of preparing the February issue, and there were mistakes in printing the names on the back page. We managed to get Brian Robins doubly wrong as well as miscapitalising Eric Van Tassel (who is writing on the Norrington Wagner CD for next month). Peter Phillips also suffered the loss of an l. (I always have problems with him and with Bruce Phillips at the Clarendon Press: can someone explain where the extra l comes from, or doesn't it derive from the Greek for horse-lover?)

But there are organisations who make worse mistakes than us. I can't resist reporting a double howler on Classic FM which ran, with a little cutting of extraneous chat: 'It is a quarter to one' [it was a quarter to two] 'and here is Beethoven's fifth' [we heard the *Adagietto* of Mahler's fifth, played, of course, *adagio*]

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We were amused that one of our reviewers was unwilling to comment on a solo vocal record on the grounds that his ability to judge singers was suspect since he was recently rejected as an Associated Board examiner. At a trial, he gave a distinction to 'a super singer' he would have liked in his baroque choir, whom in fact he should have just let scrape through on a low pass, while he reckoned that a singer on a video shown as an example of a distinction should have failed. I have confidence in his judgement.

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Roland Wilson phoned to justify the penultimate chord of his opening fanfare (*EMR* 17, p. 15): the passage was borrowed from a genuine work of Gabrieli. The problem is that we don't know what sort of music trumpets might have played with trombones; it sounds untrumpetish to me, but who knows?

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Did anyone listen to Radio 4 on the afternoon of Sunday 18 Feb? I half-heard in another room while proof-reading this issue something about a female baritone and a short snatch of a recording. Who is she? Might singers like her have been capable of singing Vivaldi's bass parts?

DIDO in DAMASCUS

I was surprised one day a year ago to receive an order for 50 copies of *Dido and Aeneas* from the British Council in Damascus. What was happening? Perhaps the staffs of the various Western embassies had a choral society or opera group? No; it was one of the Council's big Purcellian promotions, with a full-scale production for and, to a large extent, by the Syrians themselves.

I heard no more about it until, last month, I received an invitation to a showing of a video of the event. This proved fascinating. Some 25,000 Syrians saw the production, which took place in the Damascus opera house and in two Roman amphitheatres. (How many saw the work live in England last year? The Syrians, however, had the advantage of no admission charge, the only exclusion being children under five.) There were about 180 people involved in the production, all local except for a dozen (including the soloists). There is no operatic tradition in Syria, and virtually everyone was seeing or participating in an opera for the first time.

The production was in many ways an old-fashioned one, and all the better for it. There was a proper, solid set, with the chorus mostly placed on scaffolding at the back. The lighting was impressive. The music, too, was old fashioned. I feared the worst when the overture started 8-in-a-bar; it got better, but not a lot. The performance as a whole, however, worked amazingly well; I found it far more moving than any other I have seen except Opera Restor'd.

The video showed a few minutes of what the locals saw before the opera began. A native story-teller set the context, accompanied by local musicians (who were, incidentally, given a small part to play in the opera itself: there are two grounds required whose music is not given in the sources). During the bit we heard, they took a phrase from the Overture, so I wonder what other interaction was generated.

This is surely justification for giving the British Council money for artistic activity. The event introduced an aspect of British culture to an area that was totally unfamiliar with it. It engendered an enthusiasm which will be encouraged by offering the opportunity for those excited by it to study it further; and it produced an imaginative artistic event for a comparatively small outlay. *CB*

CUPID in CAMBRIDGE

We do not regularly print concert reviews. But a singular feature of a trio called 'Hot Ayre' is that its two singers, Jennie Cassidy and Robert Oliver, are regular contributors to *EMR*; the lutenist, Michael Fields, is a contributor to this issue. My own role was not quite that of Cupid, rather a musical Panderus in that I was responsible for suggesting that Robert and Jennie would make a good duo.

A Day in the Life of Cupid was an ingeniously-designed programme performed on a cold and frosty night in the acoustically-ideal Old Library of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, a library distinguished by a complete absence of books but having an ideal shape for a concert for voices and lute. There was a double thread (perhaps the advert design should have had a double helix as well as a balloon) taking the listener through 24 hours from dawn to dawn, different times being associated with stages in the Progress of Love. These were described as Meeting up, Chatting up (rather a euphemism for Campion's Jamy, who does not say anything to the sleeping Bessy), Weighing up, Breaking up, Making up and Waking up. The repertoire was from the early 17th century, mixing Dowland and the lutenists with continuo songs and including a few French pieces with contemporary English translations.

The songs (all of fine quality) were not tied to a single story, but the sequence had strong dramatic elements. An interesting feature was the varied levels of presentation. Some were sung as they might be at a normal song recital, but others were treated dramatically, with visual participation between the singers even when musically they were solos. This inconsistency might have been confusing to the audience, but in fact the style for each song was obvious and one listened and watched accordingly. The enormous thought that had gone into presentation certainly paid off.

Jennie's voice is one that those who scorn authenticism would love to hate – absolutely clear, vulnerable even, with not a spot of wobble to hide behind. What was new at this concert was the loosening of expression, a change from virginal purity to something much more knowingly sexual. I have generally heard Robert primarily as a viol player and was very pleasantly surprised by his singing. Even Jennie let a few words slip, but one could hear every syllable that Robert sang without feeling that clarity of diction usurped other musical qualities. Michael gave good support in accompaniment, but I was not entirely convinced by the solo instrumental contributions from either Robert or Michael.

I look forward to Hot Ayre rising again when Robert returns from a few months in his native New Zealand. *CB*

A consequence of Robert's absence is that we will not have any CD reviews from him for a few months. We will miss them.

The LATVIAN QUEEN

Michael Fields

In Latvia, Midsummer Day is the major national holiday: an acknowledgement of the rhythms of nature and the bounty brought by the sun, celebrated in song and dance. Although it is in many ways a hard country where people are struggling to make a decent life for themselves, it is also a society with great heart. When I was invited to direct a production of *The Fairy Queen* in Riga, at first I wondered what appeal a piece of baroque theatre created for leisured aristocrats could possibly have for these people. But I need not have worried, for the production which we created together became also another celebration in song and dance of those good things available to us all for free: the beauty of the changing seasons, the passions and joys of love, and the playful, childlike (*fairy*like) quality of wonder that is just below the surface in people, waiting for an invitation like the magic of the theatre to bring it out to share and be seen.

Here the glorious Masque of the Seasons became the heart of the whole work, symbolic of the drawing together of all the various elements of the play, the music and the dance into a balanced and unified whole. Seen through the eyes of people who still celebrate the dance of the seasons before the sun, I felt there the strength of this masque as a living symbol of life's vitality and promise (rather than the degraded caricature of this scene we were recently offered in London, which I fear spoke only of our estrangement from both nature and from symbolism).

Perhaps it is this feeling of celebration of art, and enjoyment of magic, mixed with a certain naivity, that has made it necessary to look abroad and to amateur productions at home to find the more complete and authentic attempts at putting Purcell's dramatic operas on the stage last year. From *The Fairy Queen* in Australia and Latvia to *The Indian Queen* and *Dioclesian* at Dartington, some people with sufficient respect for the original form of these works have had the courage and the trust to say that perhaps there is some point in doing them for what they are: *dramatic operas* – a balanced multi-media display of words, music, dance and theatre.

I, for one, believe that we will never get any hint of the power in these works – and of what pleasures a Purcell (Henry and Daniel) or an Eccles drew from composing some of their best works for this genre – if we continue arrogantly to 'solve the problem of the text by omitting it' (as one director of baroque opera recently stated in *Early Music News*). There may have to be compromises and abridgments for many reasons, not least economic; but it seems to be a rather lop-sided, musically biased view to feel that it is alright to give concert performances of the music only, yet still congratulate ourselves that we are doing something 'authentic'. I doubt very much if Purcell's audience would have seen it that way.

In Latvia there were certainly compromises – one overall director, one dramatic director and a conductor could not begin to work together without compromise! So we had the singing in English and the spoken text in Latvian, and we reduced the running time by cutting equally from the play and the music, striving to present a balance which preserved the integrity of the whole as a unified work of art. At the end of our fortnight in Riga, I left feeling that it had been a step forward in my own appreciation of the theatre of Purcell's day, and also a fine example of how, through working in the arts, we can take small steps towards mutual appreciation and co-operation between people, cultures and nations today. Working together with the conductor Andris Veismanis and director Mara Kimele in Riga, dancer/choreographer Barbara Segal (UK) and Frank Perenbum (Holland) and the wonderful singers and orchestra was by turns exciting, inspiring, frustrating and rewarding. Above all, it was a heart-warming human experience of humility mixed with humour and friendship; I will always be grateful to the British Council and our friends in Riga for making it possible.

LETTERS

Dear Mr Bartlett,

I read your cover piece on early music singers with interest. This is far from a new topic, of course, but that it still bears comment and discussion is in itself significant. I agreed with almost everything that was said, until the final phrase: 'if more volume is needed, use microphones'. Please, Mr Bartlett! I though we learned our lesson in the 60s and 70s. Microphones are for *recording*. Bad balance in performance cannot be rescued by speakers and microphones. Ours is an organic art, and if the acoustics are wrong, or the hall is too large, 'sound re-inforcement', as it is euphemistically called, will almost always make it worse. Find the right acoustic, the right-sized hall. I'm certain that this was a big problem in the old days as well as our own. But inserting electric mayhem in our carefully-crafted assemblages of more-or-less authentic instruments and playing techniques cannot solve the acoustic problem.

Joseph Spencer

Joseph Spencer runs The Musical Offering, *a Classical Record Shop and Cafe opposite the campus in Berkeley. I dined there on my visit to the first Berkeley Early Music Festival in 1990, for which he had (and I think still has) considerable responsibility.*

If you are setting up a specifically early-music event, I thoroughly agree. But standard-repertoire opera houses want to perform early opera, and I am all for encouraging them. When I wrote, I was thinking specifically of The Fairy Queen *at the London Coliseum; it is a vast theatre with a vast stage, and any sort of authentic performance is very difficult to project. The harpsichord and theorbos were amplified to excess, and there were rumours that some of the singers were as well. I don't know the truth of that; but I think I prefer a sweet-voiced singer artificially enhanced to an over-vibrant one who can reach 2000 listeners unaided. I called into the Staatstheater, Stuttgart, last month to hear how the version of* Il ritorno d'Ulisse *I had edited with Alan Hacker was surviving after three years in repertoire. There, I think the lutes were amplified, and very good they sounded. It is a smaller house than the Coliseum, so there was no need to help the voices. Such decisions must depend on the circumstances and be tactfully done, but should not be ruled out on principle.*

****

Dear Clifford,

Having just completed a survey of Monteverdi *Vespers* recordings for my own publication, I read with interest your remarks in the February *EMR* about the recordings by The Scholars (Naxos) and Junghänel (DHM). I am afraid that your memory about the Scholars' recording is faulty, as they explicitly state that they did not transpose the Magnificat down a fourth nor, to my ears, did they transpose *Lauda Jerusalem*. Junghänel did not transpose the Magnificat (and I wish Tim Carter had argued the case for not doing so in his notes) but, again relying on my ears, did transpose *Lauda Jerusalem*. Leaving aside questions of pitch, it seems to me that there is simply no comparison between Cantus Cölln's world-class singers (including the delicious Maria Cristina Kiehr) and the well-intentioned but very ragged singing of The Scholars. It might also interest some that The Scholars omit the recorders and flutes (or shawms) from the Magnificat, leaving the cornetti to make rather poor substitutes.

Finally, I must say how pleased I am to see serious discussion about the use if inappropriate vocal techniques in Baroque operas provoked by your comments about McGegan's Handel recordings. There are singers whose vocal style is perfectly acceptable historically and who are also intensely dramatic performers (for example Julianne Baird) but the big-name early-music conductors stubbornly use Verdi-style wobblers whenever they are casting an opera. Can anyone explain why?

Andrew O'Connor

The dangers of memory! My apologies for misleading readers. I was very happy with the motets on the Cantus Cölln record, but it was the tempi of the Psalms that worried me. I used the Scholar's timings as the simplest way of showing this (I keep a photocopy of the back of each CD we review to keep track of who is reviewing what each month, so had them at hand). On another occasion, I might have been more enthusiastic. But I found it difficult to be excited by yet another Vespers *in the face of the new repertoire also on view. I have been quite critical of other Cantus Cölln CDs: in one case I heard later that the singers were not too happy about the recording either.* BC *seems to have had better luck in the CDs of theirs he has reviewed, and also had a higher opinion of their* Vespers *than I did.*

Yes, I too would like to hear detailed arguments for not transposing the Magnificat and for doing Lauda Jerusalem *down a tone, though the latter is something I recommend on practical grounds to performers who want a high Magnificat.*

****

Dear Clifford,

We need to establish facts and priorities in 'reconstructed' services ('Mantuan & Venetian Vespers', *EMR* February, p. 14). Credit for this movement belongs primarily to Monsignor Giuseppe Biella, who wrote an illuminating article *'I Vespri dei santi* di Claudio Monteverdi' in *Musica Sacra* (Nov/Dec 1966). I tested his theories, found them sound, and conducted part of Monteverdi's 'Christmas Vespers' at the Proms on 13 August 1969. Ten years later Novello published the score while my article 'Monteverdi's Other Vespers' appeared in the *Musical Times* (September 1979) and *Nuova rivista musicale italiana*, xiv (1980) p. 167.

A summary was printed, with acknowledgment to Mons. Biella, in my *Monteverdi: Sacred, Secular, and Occasional Music*, London 1978. From then onwards, 'reconstructed' services positively hit the fan (but without acknowledgment to Mons. Biella) and some trod in the resulting mess. In 1989 Philips released a CD of the *Vespri di S.Giovanni Battista* under Leonhardt. In my review in *Musical America* I pointed out that Leonhardt, or someone advising him, had chosen an obscure motet by Natale Bazzino (published 1628). A glance at my book would have revealed that Monteverdi himself wrote an excellent motet for the feast of St John the Baptist, *Fuge anima mea*, published in 1620 – the very year in which Constantijn

Huyghens wrote his enchanting little memoir about visiting Venice with friends and coming across a Vespers for St John (conducted by Monteverdi!) in the church of S. Giovanni Elemosinario near the Rialto Bridge. This memoir is quoted in my revised edition of *The Letters of Claudio Monteverdi*, p.216 (OUP 1995).

You say that 'Franz Raml is credited with the conception of the [MDG] disc'; but if so I would like to know where he spent the previous nights. Since his 'conception' (which you say is 'not entirely immaculate') also makes use of the Bazzino piece and ONCE AGAIN leaves out Monteverdi's own contribution, I put this down as yet another example of stolen material, unacknowledged pioneers, and messed-up results.

It would be a salutary thing if some of these novices would verify their references and contact, in a civil manner, those who first launched the idea. This is ultimately of far greater importance than questions of pitch, which will always remain questions no matter how frantic the pros and the cons (excuse pun) push their wares.

Denis Stevens

Your fellow-subscriber Franz Raml had as good reason for not using Fugge anima mea *(keeping Malipiero's spelling which, if accurate, reminds us that that Italians did not always carefully distinguish their language from Latin) as he did for not using Monteverdi's setting of* Ut queant laxis*: his Vespers are purely vocal (apart, of course, from continuo) and avoid music with other instruments. Huygens' account of the 1620 service is of an event with pairs of cornetts, bassoons and violins, together with a 'bass viol of enormous size' (echoes of Coryat at San Rocco; but one really does need the original word, in whatever language, to make sense of instrument names, cf p. 2).*

More generally, I think that the practice of liturgical reconstruction did not arise by a single evolutionary process from an only begetter. Another influence was Frank Ll. Harrison's Music in Medieval England, *published in 1958, whose whole approach was liturgical. When those reviving early performance practices started looking for different formats other than conventional concerts (which they were doing for all sorts of music, not just church music, in the early 1970s), the idea of performing liturgical music in imitation services was an obvious one. I suspect that your claim to have set the trend lies more in your 1961 performance and edition of the 1610* Vespers.

****

Dear Clifford,

Gift horses are not looked in the mouth, but may I comment on a fetlock? Your very kind review of my recent book *The Sacred Vocal Music of Antonio Vivaldi* confesses to not finding the passage 'where Talbot states that the San Marco liturgy was used quite widely in Venice'. The reality is that it wasn't. On pp. 29-30 I explain that the Marcian (Venetian) rite was confined to the *diocese* of Venice, to which only San Marco and four minor local churches belonged, whereas the rest of the city, including all four *ospedali grandi*, came under the *patriarchate* of Venice, which employed the ordinary Roman rite. Since Vivaldi, inconveniently for the local tourist industry, never wrote for San Marco, his chance of composing a *Cinque Laudate* sequence of psalms were knocked on the head. And that is also why, after this brief mention, I do not return to the subject later.

Michael Talbot

Dear Clifford,

I hesitate to disagree with someone whose writing I so much admire, but it is only a small matter. Professor Talbot rightly suggests that in a major edition (such as Vivaldi's Collected Works) bar numbering should be system by system. But numbering by fives and tens is not 'bad practice' in other contexts. I do some conducting of amateur and student recorder groups with music in score and parts. If a group is tackling an unfamiliar piece, possibly with awkward entries in polyphonic fancies, or difficult rhythms, there is a likelihood that some players will get lost, or barge ahead regardless to the considerable detriment of the music, not realising they are 'out'. When this happens I shout a bar number. I cannot do this if the number in score and parts do not coincide; and it is easier and more effective to call 'sixty' than 'sixty-seven' so that 'lost' players can catch the downbeat and hopefully put themselves right. And it reassures other players!

So if the numbering is not, at the least, by tens, I have to write it on all the parts when preparing the music, which is rather a bore. I hope Professor Talbot will look kindly on our shortcomings.

Anthony Rowland-Jones

Some prefer rehearsal letters to numbers, since they can be placed at musically significant points. The particular instance upon which I commented was one where there were so few bars to a page that, with numbering in tens, no number was visible. In this case, at least, numbering in tens did not work.

Whenever John Catch writes a letter he includes quotations of interest. The mention of fancies is a cue for the following:

Luckily the chief part of them are so artless and insipid a kind, that no loss would accrue to judicious and reasonable lovers of Music by their utter annihilation. *Burney*

He also quoted an advert The Consort is the latest mower from Atco and costs £289 *and a trade sticker for* John Jenkins HAND MADE BY MASTER CRAFTSMEN Made in Czech Republic.

****

Dear Clifford,

Many thanks for getting the *Haman and Mordecai* material ready in time for the Midlands Early Music Forum's Handel Workshop in Birmingham with Nicholas McGegan. It's an enjoyable piece to do – a bit quirky here and there but with some lovely arias and a really splendid final chorus which must be the longest he ever wrote! Nic made us laugh with two matters arising from the not-very-good libretto. After Haman's opening (and heavily antisemitic) aria, an Officer responds enthusiastically,

Our souls with ardour glow
To execute the blow.

Nic emphasised the inherent dangers of mispronouncing the initial 'our'. He also referred to Ahasuerus's aria *How can I stay*. Evidently a lady who was present at one of the early performances wrote down what she thought she heard Handel's Italian tenor singing, in less-than-perfect English. The text reads: 'I come, my Queen, to chaste delights'; she wrote: 'I comb my Queen to chase de lice'!

Beresford King-Smith

There are similar pronunciation dangers in the solmisation syllables (frequent puns in Italian madrigals) if the initial consonant of 'fa sol' or 'la sol' is not clearly audible.

Dear Mr Bartlett,

I enjoy the magazine very much. How about some trio sonatas in your music supplements? (Two flutes for preference!) Your Xmas recipes are wonderful. Can we have an Easter one too?

Nina Morgan

Your request has been passed on to our culinary correspondent; I hope she will be flattered enough by my remarks on her singing (see p. 19) to make a contribution next month. The problem with trios sonatas is that it is difficult to find one that will fit onto two pages. Perhaps we could print one by instalments, as in the German musical magazines of the mid-18th century.

****

Dear Clifford,

May I comment on John Turner's review of *The Cambridge Companion to the Recorder* in your February issue. A 'Companion' does not necessarily profess the completeness of a history of encyclopaedia. Its compilation is rather like an opera director's setting out his ideal cast for a particular work. A and B may not be available so C and D are engaged; D then falls ill and E is brought in but proves unsuitable so is replaced by F, who promptly has a row with the producer and walks out, until the final list bears only a slight resemblance to the original. In the recorder world there is a finite number of skilled communicators and we were fortunate to obtain a good representation of many of them. There was never any intention to challenge or supersede Edgar Hunt's *The Recorder and its Music.*

In any such volume there is much that goes on behind the scenes that a critic is not necessarily aware of. For instance, we approached an eminent maker to write on recorder designe, but he declined. We tried to bring an equally eminent authority on acoustics into the team, but faulty communications in a certain musical establishment meant that he did not receive our letters. I approached at least one European authority for a contribution on contemporary European performers and their styles, again without result. As editor, I may have wished to include your reviewer's evocative pen-picture of David Munrow (which I actually commissioned), but my publisher declined it and I believe it has now been printed elsewhere. This explains some of the 'gaps', though ideally we should have liked to prevent this and will have an opportunity to do so in subsequent editions.

I cannot believe that Anthony Rowland Jones's chapter on 'Further reading' may be 'otiose' (i.e. futile or superfluous) in the light of Davis Lasocki's recent guide. Not every reader will purchase David's book: Anthony Rowland Jones brings a different persepective and sense of values.

These quibbles aside, John Turner's review, written from a lifetime's experience of playing and publishing, provides valuable professional insights. *John Mansfield Thomson*

A SURFEIT OF EXHIBITIONS

The Early Music Shop has announced that the previously biennial London Exhibition is now to become an annual event. (York became annual last year). While it is encouraging that early music appears to support an increasing market, we wonder how many exhibitors can afford the time and expense to attend, and suspect that the London event will no longer be the one that exhibitors from all corners of the globe try not to miss. Somehow there is much more compunction to go to a biennial event than one you could attend the following year if you miss this one. An alternation of London and Paris (like Boston and Berkeley) was fine. Maybe not many customers attended both, but it provided a regular pattern for exhibitors. At a time when interest in early instruments and music is expanding geographically and there are more and more exhibitions (there is a new one in Budapest at roughly the same time as the London one this September), we suspect that the way forward is to hold each exhibition less frequently, either every two or every three years. Then each will remain a major event in its own country; exhibitors will be able to attend it knowing that they will meet most likely customers and colleagues in that country.

Admittedly, we are not in a strong position to make suggestions, since we did not reply to the Early Music Shop's request for comments on the idea.

The Vienna exhibition was a most enjoyable experience; Brian and Clifford were received with considerable enthusiasm, the boxes of music were examined very thoroughly, and we even sold a fair amount. We have a choice between Berkeley, Regensberg, Rüsselsheim, and Sligo in May/June – it will probably be Regensberg – York and Bruges in July, Utrecht London and Budapest in September, then Paris (of which Paris is the only one we will defintely be attending). There are no doubt others we do not know about. When do exhibitors get any work done?

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